

**GLOBALISATION AND THE COSMOPOLITAN NOVEL:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE LATER NOVELS BY
J. M. COETZEE AND KAZUO ISHIGURO**

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Signed

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Summary

Unlike J. M. Coetzee's and Kazuo Ishiguro's past works—the former engaged with themes of colonialism and engaged frequently with life in a politically-troubled South-Africa, while Ishiguro created Japanese protagonists who found themselves unable to move on from the historically-traumatic past—the later novels by these authors not only provide a critical and aesthetic reflection on the complex political realities, inherent contradictions and ethical quandaries within perceived conceptions of global culture, they also reflect on what is at stake within a cosmopolitan position, particularly with regards to the tensions between local affiliations and global responsibilities. My purpose in analysing their recent works is to discover what it has meant for these authors to write a cosmopolitan novel and how the writing of such a work grapples with a critical consciousness of states of multiple belonging.

Chapter 1: Introduction

J. M. Coetzee's past works were engaged with themes of colonialism and with life in a politically-troubled South-Africa, while Kazuo Ishiguro's earlier novels concentrated on Japanese protagonists who found themselves unable to move on from a war-torn past. Unlike these previous narratives, the later novels of these authors do not only provide an urgent reflection on the increasingly complex political realities, inherent contradictions and ethical quandaries within perceived conceptions of global culture, they also serve to reflect on what is at stake within a cosmopolitan position, particularly with regard to its critical consciousness of states of multiple belonging or the seemingly irresolvable tensions between local affiliations and global responsibilities. My purpose in analysing their later works is to discover what it has meant for these authors to write a cosmopolitan novel and how the writing of such a work—to use Katherine Ann Stanton's words—"challenges one of our everyday assertions about living globally: that we cannot do enough" (23).

The starting point and the wider context of my interest in the cosmopolitan novel is globalisation. Nevertheless, like Stanton, I wish to refer to the novels as cosmopolitan fictions instead of global fictions, so as to engage with "[the] contestory power of this genre that *global*, in its attachment to . . . seemingly inevitable processes [of globalisation], may not at first convey" (23). Because of the growing pervasiveness of globalisation, a critical engagement with its effects via the notion of cosmopolitanism becomes increasingly necessary. Cosmopolitanism can, at first sight, be interpreted, as suggested by Bruce Robbins, as "a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance" (1998, 3) that is created as a result of globalisation. Defining globalisation as a concept, Fredric Jameson has written about how it "falls outside the established academic disciplines" and is "the intellectual property of no specific field, yet which seems to concern politics and economics in immediate ways, but just as immediately culture and sociology, not to speak of information and the media, or ecology, or consumerism and daily life" ("Preface" xi). But I think all of us can agree that globalisation is the consequence of "the intensification of international trade,

fiscal and technology transfer, and labour migration . . . and the rise of global hybrid cultures from modern mass migration, consumerism, and mass communications in the past two decades [which] have combined to create an interdependent world” (Cheah 2006, 20). The interconnected reality of globalisation seems to take on the sense of a greater urgency in our present time when, as Jameson puts it, compared to the past, “current world networks are only different in degree and not in kind” (“Notes on a Globalisation” 54), a fact that can be illustrated by the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 2009. At this summit, British prime minister Gordon Brown had this to say to rally the world’s participation in confronting a current global recession, “This is a time . . . for the world to come together as one.”¹ We are all in it together; we must now be aware of this more than ever before. Like the protagonists in the novels discussed here, we are constantly reminded of our subjective connections to a larger globalised world.

If the rallying emphasis on the growing importance of these connections within the context of globalisation might seem abstract, heavy-handed or contrived, I would suggest that cosmopolitanism then becomes a way by which we might critically and convincingly confront such connections. At this point, I would like to provide a short history of cosmopolitanism as well as to review it for my purposes here. The term, “cosmopolitanism,” has been used to describe a wide variety of views in moral and socio-political philosophy. A central, anti-parochial aspect shared by most cosmopolitan views is the idea that all human beings, regardless of political affiliations, do, in fact, belong to a single community, and that such a universal community should be cultivated. The idea of cosmopolitanism began as early as the fourth century B. C., when the Cynic, Diogenes of Sinope, radically pronounced that he was “a citizen of the world” (Laertius 1925, 65), as opposed to just the individual city-state which represented the broadest sense of a social identity in Greece at the time. Etymologically, the concept is derived from “kosmopolitês,” a coupling of the Greek words for “world” and “citizen” (Cheah 1998, 22). Vinay Dharwadker writes with regard to the cosmopolitanism

¹ Quoted in *The Guardian* 30 Jan. 2009. 1 Dec. 2009
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jan/30/gordonbrown-davos>>

practised by the Stoics, as well as the early Buddhists, that the concept had already been “a validation of inclusive, egalitarian heterogeneity, of the tolerance of difference and otherness” (2001, 7). Dharwadker’s more recent and heterogeneous version of cosmopolitanism is not as well known, however, as the dominant view of how cosmopolitanism was conceived by the Greek philosophers of antiquity, as put forth by Martha Nussbaum. Inspired by Kant who had been drawn to the Cynic/Stoic conception of cosmopolitanism, Nussbaum has emphasised a world-community of human beings and promoted a universal ethic that “urges us to recognise the equal, and unconditional, worth of all human beings, a worth grounded in reason and moral capacity, rather than on traits that depend on fortuitous natural or social arrangements” (2002, 31). But her ethical imperative to imagine a world-citizenship that transcends the irrational forces of patriotism and xenophobia has been easily criticised for promoting a “boastful universalism” and “an unjustifiable pride in our ability to reason our way to universally applicable moral and political standards.”² Inspired by the Stoicism derived from Seneca, Cicero and translations of Marcus Aurelius,³ Immanuel Kant wrote in the eighteenth century that the “cosmopolitan condition” was a necessity linking nations on the grounds that, in a modern age, “a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere” (1991, 107-108). It is important to note that Kant’s notion of cosmopolitanism did not rise out of a vacuum. There has been historical evidence, according to Margaret Jacob, which suggests that in the eighteenth century, with the development and growth of urbanity in Europe, the cosmopolitan was becoming a viable ideal because, even amid nationalistic rivalries, select enclaves were flourishing where religious and national boundaries were habitually crossed and the beginnings of an expansive social experience were being established. The cosmopolitan ideal proclaimed by an Enlightenment writer like Kant matured because of the richness and diversity of such experiences during his time: “Cities were becoming the natural habitat of the cosmopolitan” (Jacob 2006, 13). Recent developments of globalisation in the

² Yack, Bernard. “Cosmopolitan Humility.” *Boston Review*. Vol. 20, No. 1 (Feb./Mar. 1995). 1 Dec. 2009 <<http://bostonreview.net/BR20.1/yack.html>>.

³ Lutz-Bachmann, Matthias. *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997. 53.

1980s and '90s have led to the revival of interest in such cosmopolitan visions defined by Kant, particularly his “accounts of global civil society and the international public sphere” (Cheah 1998, 23) in a time when public discourses are still trying to make sense of an increasing global movement and interaction of people, capital and ideologies.

Although such universalist-humanist philosophers from Kant to Nussbaum highlight the positive, moral and transnational dimensions of cosmopolitanism, I would stress that their idealism, albeit commendable, becomes unrealisable in actual socio-political contexts. The optimism of such philosophers seems particularly misplaced closer to our century, when it “makes the inflated claim that humanity is entering a period of universal human rights, perpetual peace and global governance,” as such a claim can easily be matched by “a reactive disillusionment which holds that nothing has changed, the world is an ever more dangerous place, we are subject to a new imperialism, and self-interest, bigotry, contingency and violence continue to be the true motor of human history” (Fine 2007, xvi). National-realists emerging in the later half of the '90s have disagreed with the universalist fantasy at the heart of such humanist-ideals. Nussbaum, for example, has been said to hold onto outmoded definitions of the cosmopolitan even in a period sensitive to the charged intricacies of socio-politics and identity-formations; the disagreement extends all the way to Kant's Enlightenment values that inspired Nussbaum's own position, in stressing how such universalising tendencies easily ignore diversity, identity politics, power inequalities and the need for politically viable solidarities (Hollinger 2002, 228). The “darker side of cosmopolitanism” can quickly be represented by the multinational corporations which cast the inescapable, economic, often oppressive and homogenising net of their influence across the globe and “feel no particular bond with any society” (Reich 309-310); Robert Reich is, in fact, rehashing a nineteenth-century, Marxist sense of paranoia about how “a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere” (Marx and Engels 476). The downside of cosmopolitanism is also highlighted by recent supra-national

political acts, such as the invasion of Iraq by both the United States and fellow members of the United Nations in 2003. When universal-humanists attempt to speak of a common humanity built on universal values, they tend to disregard the politics behind such values, such as whether they can really be applied to all societies, or whether they only benefit those with the most political power and influence. For E. San Juan Junior, a form of universalist-humanism in the United States that ostensibly accounts for cultural diversity in the name of a singular multicultural democracy, for example, hides the dangers of dismantling nation-states in favour of an implicitly American-imperialist position. As San Juan puts it, “The self-arrogating universal swallows the unsuspecting particulars in a grand hegemonic compromise . . . multiculturalism celebrate[s] in order to fossilise differences and thus assimilate others into a fictive gathering which flattens contradictions pivoting around the axis of class” (2007, 13). American multiculturalism becomes an insidious way of maintaining “white supremacy . . . as a political system in itself” (2007, 3). American capitalism remains uncontested and globally universal because it protects those who already own the money and the power, namely the white, middle and upper classes, whilst the reality of social and economic inequalities are fixed in place according to racial categories of labour (2007, 14). Such universalist-humanist forms of cosmopolitanism become severely inadequate if they are not sufficiently sensitive to the Other, that is, those belonging to ethnic minority groups and lower economic classes.

On the other side of the fence, there have been theorists who have tried to salvage “cosmopolitanism,” rescue it from parochialism or insidious imperialistic tendencies, and restore its aspirations of negotiating more critically and humbly between the local and the global. In the face of a historical impasse, Pheng Cheah has suggested that “where neither post-Enlightenment universalism nor nationalist communitarianism is a viable ideological-institutional vehicle for freedom, cosmopolitanism as a philosophical ideal is up for modest reinvention” (1998, 290). Just like the cosmopolitanism promoted in the novels that I will be discussing in subsequent chapters, the types of cosmopolitanism suggested by theorists such

as Homi Bhabha and Kwame Anthony Appiah are tentative and critical models that are more tenable than previous universalist-humanist positions. Within the context of postcolonial studies, Bhabha has come up with the paradoxical notion of a “vernacular cosmopolitanism,” a concept that proceeded from “Frantz Fanon’s insistence on the ‘continuance’ of an anti-colonial struggle that combines local concerns with international political relevance . . . a seemingly complicit relation with colonial and neo-colonial discourses as a form of geopolitics that grants real political power to postcolonial subjects” (2001, 38). Vernacular cosmopolitanism is derived from the marginalised worlds of national and diasporic minorities “which measures global progress from the minoritarian perspective,” with their own “claims to freedom and equality” (Bhabha 1994, xvi-xvii). For the postcolonial, such cosmopolitanism facilitates a translation between and across cultures in order to survive, not in order to assert the sovereignty of a specific, civilised class. Such a translation empowers the colonised subject while urging the coloniser into a space of cultural hybridity that promotes a productive opening to difference and Otherness. In a similar promotion of an openness to difference, Ghanaian philosopher, Kwame Appiah, has proposed a “rooted cosmopolitanism”⁴ to conceptually and substantively link universalism and particularism, albeit in an over-formulaic, oxymoronic way: “cosmpolitanism is . . . universality plus difference” (xx). Appiah is against a “malign universalism” of “fundamentalism” that is intolerant of differences and in favour of “conversation between people from different ways of life” (xxi). What these theorists have in common is the concern for “*different* local human ways of being” (Appiah 1998, 94), the avoidance of a homogenising universalism within a conception of cosmopolitanism, when, as Judith Butler points out, “what one means by the ‘universal’ will vary, and the cultural articulation of that term in its various modalities will work against precisely the trans-cultural status of the claim” (1995, 129).

Similar to Bhabha’s and Appiah’s formulations of cosmopolitanism, the later works by Coetzee and Ishiguro work to conceive a more critical, productive and self-conscious

⁴ Quoted in *The New York Times* 12 Jun. 2005. 1 Dec. 2009
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/12/books/review/12FREEDMA.html>>.

model of cosmopolitanism that actively reconsiders and confronts the local subject's inevitable engagements with the global. Unlike Appiah's universality-plus-difference model, however, the novels advance a model of cosmopolitanism that is much less about formulating a universalist ethic than about wrestling with multiple perspectives and states of belonging. It is a model that is constantly mired in contradictions, but one that needs to be formulated. Such a model of cosmopolitanism advocated by the novels is also a reconsideration of what Bruce Robbins has referred to as an "actually existing cosmopolitanism"; such a cosmopolitanism is no longer "a luxuriously free-floating view from above" (1998, 1), but one which already describes how the global has inexorably invaded the local, "a sense of complex and multiple belonging" (1998, 3) that already pervades contemporary societies. The novels discussed here not only elucidate the tensions and contradictions that occur because of such existing cosmopolitanisms but they also argue for a critical consciousness to accompany this inevitable sense of multiple belonging, a cosmopolitanism that is constantly negotiating between local and global affiliations in order to turn their "invisibly determining and often exploitative connections into conscious and self-critical ones" (Robbins 1998, 3).

Because cosmopolitanism will always remain a contingent concept, "a location of dense, overlapping, overdetermined arguments, convictions, and confusions" (Lutz 57), I would argue that the concept provides a useful framework in discussing Coetzee's and Ishiguro's later novels. These novels do not only work to provide more successful and productive cosmopolitan engagements, they are sustained attempts at building an explicit cosmopolitan model that will always and paradoxically remain a battlefield, one fraught with tensions within its perpetual to-and-fro negotiation between a local and a global identity. Yet they also aim to show that grave injustices would be committed if there were to be no critical engagements at all between the local and the global. Jacques Derrida has insisted that the problematic and paradoxical dimension of cosmopolitanism *should* inspire us to think of cosmopolitanism as "forms of solidarity yet to be invented. This invention is our task; the theoretical or critical reflection it involves is indissociable from the practical initiatives we

have already, out of a sense of urgency, initiated and implemented” (2001, 4). With regard to the articulation of a cosmopolitanism that points towards an ethical project, a culturally-contingent potential with no assurance of realisation, Judith Butler has described that such an articulation is really “a difficult labour of translation” that “may never be fully or finally achievable,” while contending that it remains a potentially useful and powerful idea (1995, 131). Coetzee’s and Ishiguro’s later novels do not only point to the exploitative connections that occur as a result of an increasingly homogenised global culture characterised by “a proliferation of Western styles, products, and tastes” (Jay 39), i.e. the inequalities that occur when some countries reap the benefits of wealth while others only grow poorer, the novels also aspire towards new and critical forms of solidarity, articulating new forms of “allegiance, ethics, and action” to accompany the cosmopolitan’s sense of “multiple belonging” (Robbins 1983, 3) that have been left unconsidered in the ever-evolving discourses of globalisation.

In building a critical cosmopolitanism, Coetzee’s and Ishiguro’s later works also self-consciously foreground the individual’s problematic engagement with reified notions of globalisation. They react against tendencies of global capitalism in defining diasporic and hybrid cultural forms in absolutist, homogenising and pseudo-emancipatory terms. One of such tendencies is to describe the diasporic experience as an unproblematic, self-empowering, cosmopolitan enterprise, ignoring the difficulties and power-inequalities that manifest when negotiating between an affiliation to the homeland, on the one hand, and the need to conform to a foreign cultural context on the other. For example, diaspora has been described as a universal ontological condition by Paul Rabinow, who proclaimed that “we are all cosmopolitans” (1986, 258). Pico Iyer, in a 2006-end issue of *Time*, announced that “a common multiculturalism links us all—call it Planet Hollywood, Planet Reebok or the United Colours of Benneton” and emphasised that we were already part of a global village defined “by an international youth culture that takes its cues from American pop culture,” proclaiming that “the transnational future is upon us” and that “America may still, if only symbolically, be a model for the world” (qtd. in Brennan, *At Home* 121). Opinions like Iyer’s promote a falsely

inclusivist representation of global culture that can end up being what Timothy Brennan has termed “a discourse of the universal that is inherently local—a locality that’s always surreptitiously imperial” (2003, 81). Iyer is subtly shaping through his rhetoric an environment conducive to a form of hegemonic, capitalistic (as well as American) neoliberalism. Sim Wai-Chew has written that such idealistic visions of the polycultural or the transnational future are “as susceptible to commodification as any phenomenon confronted by the co-optive powers of commodity culture” (2006, 20). Cultural hybridity is wrongfully idealised and commodified when it “resonates with the globalisation mantra of unfettered economic exchanges and the supposedly inevitable transformation of all cultures” (Kraidy 1). Ella Shohat also attacks such an idealisation of hybridity as it “fails to discriminate between diverse modalities of hybridity, for example, forced assimilation, internalised self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence” (100).

Coetzee’s and Ishiguro’s narratives render impossible any utopian, over-generalised, or commodified conceptions of globalisation by revealing the inequalities and necessities of grappling with diverse, often dissonant, socio-cultural realities. Sim Wai-Chew, in writing about Ishiguro, has pointed out that the latter’s career raises “implications left unconsidered when the search for epistemologies adequate to the increased globalisation of experience and outlook subsumes all cosmopolitan texts under a monumentalised conception of diaspora and- or hybridity” (2006, 2). Coetzee’s novels draw out these implications as well and the following chapters of my thesis will consist of analyses and comparisons between the later four novels by Coetzee and those by Ishiguro to show how these authors formulate critical and self-conscious cosmopolitan positions in relation to these problematic and pervasive structures of globalisation. Such cosmopolitan positions are really—to quote Appiah again—“the name not of the solution but of the challenge” (xv) in dealing with the tensions between the particular and the global. In a few of the novels, I will show how both writers suggest that such positions are even ontologically impossible, even as, paradoxically, they still insist on

wrestling with the tensions within cosmopolitanism, its central engagement with states of multiple belonging, the overcoming of parochialism, and its potential failure in negotiating productively between the local and the global. This desire to be critical is necessary because without such an engagement, exploitative connections between the local and the global will continue to be unquestioned and unchallenged.

In the first of my chapters following this introduction, I will look at how Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989) and Coetzee's *Youth* (2002) work in similar ways to make a case against professionalism, defined here as a case against a naively idealised cosmopolitan position. I aim to show the shape that an idealised cosmopolitan identity can take—and its relation to the notion of a “grander process” of globalisation—for their protagonists (one a South-African, diasporic migrant who aims to become a writer who transcends cultural affiliations, and the other a servant who supports his employer's international group affiliations when the latter decides to help the Nazis before the Second World War), the dramatic consequences of this kind of cosmopolitanism in their lives, and the corollary ethical complications which force these protagonists to question and finally undermine their own cosmopolitan aspirations. I will argue that both novels illustrate the hollowness and self-destructiveness of any form of cosmopolitan position that is taken to an extreme, particularly when the lead character in either book is ultimately unwilling to venture beyond the parameters of this naive self-identification into a more tentative position of vulnerability and painful (but potentially rewarding) self-renewal. Both novels hint at the point of their conclusions that their central protagonists hover on the brink of entering a revelatory mode of interpenetration between the local and the global that promises to modify, even enrich, their cosmopolitan identities.

In the next chapter, I will examine how both *The Unconsoled* (1995) by Ishiguro and Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* (2004) go further in exploring the unresolved ethical demands upon the individual in the ever-advancing context of the globalised world. Both texts insist—to borrow Katherine Stanton words—upon “the everyday experience of the unfinished” (23)

in relation to the ethical dimensions of living as a cosmopolitan who has to negotiate between a personal and a global sense of responsibility. Their narratives even suggest that there might be *no* ideal cosmopolitan position to be conceived after all. Unlike Stevens and John from the previous novels, who could be dismissed as being tragically naïve about their limited spheres of influence, both personally and upon the world at large, the next two novels feature highly influential artistic professionals as protagonists. Both Ryder and Costello are sought after across the world by disparate audiences for their artistic and intellectual authority and experience. They operate as functions of discourses, to borrow Michel Foucault's terms. I wish to argue that Costello and Ryder are symbolic manifestations of this homogenisation of art and culture across the world, but in this global process of homogenisation, these characters struggle to negotiate with a multiplicity of demands upon their status as culturally symbolic figures. Within the word "cosmopolitanism," derived from "kosmo-polis," the aspect of the "polis" highlights the notion of the city that is central to the term. As a citizen of the world, the world inevitably becomes a city in this original definition of cosmopolitanism.

Unconsoled features a small town that swells into a labyrinthine world as it aspires to be a global city, within which the arrival of the novel's protagonist ignites an explosion of tensions between the particularities of the city's localised culture and its dream of global significance.

In *Costello*, the world shrinks into one sprawling city for its actively mobile and roving protagonist who fails to enter an ideological space of accord with a multiplicity of perspectives and individuals who remain dramatically opposed to her views, even till the novel's Kafkaesque conclusion. In both narratives, the protagonist discovers that his/her individual form of cultural universalism might either be damaging or ontologically and practically impossible. If the novels discussed in the earlier chapter attacked the potential naivety of cosmopolitanism, *Unconsoled* and *Costello* stress the dangers of an arguably mature cosmopolitan position that is nonetheless energised by arrogance and complacency, such that the eventual lack of successful engagement with multiple perspectives renders the cosmopolitan position as a perpetual problem to be grappled with.

Then in Ishiguro's detective story about a British sleuth solving the political problems of Shanghai in the early 1900s, *When We Were Orphans* (2000), and Coetzee's novel about a French man who endures a crippling accident while living in Australia, *Slow Man* (2005), we will see how both authors move on from the pessimistic implications of cosmopolitan ideals to engage positively with what it means to live with an *enforced* cosmopolitan identity. Both novels attack the diasporic tendency to simply fit in or conform to the ideologies of a predominant cultural milieu, be it British imperialism in *Orphans* or contemporary Australian society in *Slow Man*. Transnationalism has become a too convenient catchword for cross-border mobility of immigrants or goods, possessing an idealistic subtext of social heterogeneity and a tolerance for plural nationalism. *Orphans* and *Slow* draw readers into the internal worlds of diasporic individuals who are forced to enter an arduously difficult cosmopolitan position of doubt and uncertainty while attempting to negotiate between cultures and political ideologies. Both novels also force the reader to reflect upon the disparate realities and political loyalties that earlier notions of cosmopolitanism have failed to account for in harmonious ways; their protagonists, as unwitting cosmopolitan figures, are able (unlike those in the novels discussed in the preceding chapters) to find unique and provisional solutions to the inequalities that previous cosmopolitan positions have failed to resolve. An optimistic and successful formulation of cosmopolitanism becomes clearly available in these novels when their protagonists exhibit a final self-awareness and renewed consideration of a cosmopolitan position that is now both "plural and particular" (Robbins 1998, 2), when before they had mistaken cosmopolitanism for an alienating "detachment from the bonds, commitments, and affiliations that constrain nation-bound lives" (Robbins 1998, 1).

In recent years, however, the diasporic's desire to settle in a place of economic and socio-cultural stability has come to be soured with the global economic crisis. At the start of 2009, American congressional leaders announced a deal on a US\$789 billion stimulus package that President Barack Obama insisted would avert an economic "catastrophe" and

create or save up to four million jobs.⁵ The capitalistic structures of globalisation seem to be temporarily under threat. Countries with once affluent economies are now floundering economically, while developing countries like Thailand are becoming more in debt after borrowing billions of dollars from international agencies like the World Bank.⁶ It is almost possible to believe that there could be no worse time to think about anything else beyond the fundamentals of survival, both at the personal and the global levels. But the fact of this ongoing recession also does not ensure that scientific and technological developments are grinding necessarily to a halt. The development of nuclear weapons and terrorism continues to take place, regardless of the global economic gloom; just months before I wrote this sentence, the Taliban pulled off a series of coordinated suicide bombing and small-arms attacks at the Ministry of Justice in downtown Kabul in Afghanistan.⁷ The Al-Qaeda, who were famously behind the Twin Towers disaster, is as much a product of globalisation today as a growing sense of interconnectedness or the rise of transnational immigration, as such terrorism is ultimately an act of resistance and “rage against an American-led expansion of the world market, whose financial and military might is symbolised by the World Trade Centre” (Leiwei Li 275), the target of their Sep. 11 attack in 2001.

The terrorists are not alone in their engagements with violence, when Israel and Palestine continue to get caught up in their internecine conflicts, drawing support from countries across the globe, and the threat of a future disaster looms out of North Korea and Iran as they stubbornly build up their nuclear capabilities, while we watch in trepidation on our television sets from the comfort of our homes. In the next two novels that I will be discussing, I will show how Coetzee and Ishiguro are engaged with these aspects of globalisation, from the unhindered advancements of its scientific discourses to the ideological frameworks of democracy and terrorism, to explore their unsettling ethical implications for

⁵ Quoted in *Reuters* 5 Feb. 2009. 1 Dec. 2009
<<http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idUSN0540772220090206>>.

⁶ Information from *Gulf News* 31 Jan. 2009. 1 Dec. 2009
<<http://www.gulfnews.com/BUSINESS/Economy/10280908.html>>.

⁷ Information from *Time* 11 Feb. 2009. 1 Dec. 2009
<<http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2009/02/11/today-in-afghanistan>>.

our globalised world, implications which will nonetheless stay relevant during, as well as after, the end of our present-day global financial crisis. If *Orphans* and *Slow Man* ended on notes of hope for the future, the authors' subsequent novels move now into critical spaces of ambivalence and scepticism about the state of the globalised world. Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) are, in one sense, the accumulation of all the concerns of their earlier works.

What is not said in a novel by Ishiguro is often louder than what is actually said. *Never* is a narrative about Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy, three clones brought up in a boarding school in a dystopian Britain and reared solely for their organs. In depicting the globalised world, Coetzee's *Diary* is far less connotative and cuttingly direct. Like *Never*, Coetzee's plot centres on three main characters and with a growing, but complex, love triangle between them: an aging writer, who is potentially Coetzee himself, a Filipino immigrant, Anya who accepts his invitation to be his typist for his upcoming collection of essays, and Anya's Australian investment-consultant-husband, Alan. At the height of its scientific progress and capitalist successes, its Ox-fams and the evocation of an vacant but sprawling natural landscape around it, a dystopic depiction of England in *Never* becomes an analogy for a globalised world gone terribly wrong. Ishiguro's novel posits a question as to who truly gets to belong as rightful citizens of the city and who gets relegated, like the clones, to the disempowered status of animals. When Diogenes described himself as a citizen of the world, did citizenry, at least in his case, also extend to those that a majority of others might deem less than human (such as slaves or animals)? *Never* draws up a fantasy world that might come true, in which the very definition and status of a cosmopolitan—a citizen of the world—is called into question and deconstructed to reveal its hierarchical structures, inherent contradictions and delusions. In *Diary*, the three protagonists operate collectively as symbolic and conflicted parts of a single cosmopolitan consciousness, a three-way structure that is not unlike the superego-ego-id formulation in Freud's depiction of the human mind. Each aspect plays and comes up against another to suggest the tensions between the formulation of a cosmopolitan ideal, on the one hand, and the seemingly baser or more practical desires for

survival without consideration for any kind of cosmopolitan perspective on the other. What is at stake in both novels is a reconsideration of what it actually means, in contemporary reality, to be cosmopolitan; both works promote a reassessment of who gets to be the cosmopolitan (defined as a citizen granted full human rights in *Never*, or as a public intellectual in *Diary* whose opinions transcend cultural boundaries) and a reconsideration of the minority subject as a potentially self-conscious and critically empowered cosmopolitan within the ever-advancing context of our globalised world.

The novels discussed here present a form of critical cosmopolitanism that is rooted fundamentally in a sense of failure, not just in the ways that characters fail to meet the demands of multiple realities, but also this failure is evinced at the level of representation. From the failure of naïve cosmopolitans to recognise the outward ramifications of their actions in *Remains* and *Youth*, to the irreconcilable problems of cultural homogenisation as facilitated by the symbol of the travelling artist in *Unconsoled* and *Costello*, to the ways in which diasporic individuals recognise profound limitations in existing ethically and meaningfully amidst fluid to hegemonic cultural discourses in *Orphans* and *Slow*, to the doomed lives of unexpected subjectivities such as clones in *Never* or the failure in *Diary* to accept that such surprising subjectivities can be critical cosmopolitans too, the novels present failure at every turn when faced with the problems of living authentically within a globalised world. The surrealism of Ishiguro's narratives as manifested not just at the level of plot but in meandering descriptions of Kafka-esque scenes which highlight that nightmarish feeling of a journey to nowhere, and a lingering sense of detachment in Coetzee's novels evinced by the ways in which his narratives lean more toward the tonalities of intellectual discourse and psychological introspection than toward a richly evocative rendering of sights and sounds surrounding the characters' lives, all point to a self-reflexive failure of representation. Such failure is linked analogously to the specific failures of the characters, framing in an augmentive way their self-delusions and their limitations in grappling with their various globalised contexts. I would argue that this pervasive sense of failure is tied inexorably to the

novel's explicit to implicit sense of critical cosmopolitanism, in that the books are emphasising that any attempt to make sense of the globalised world, with all its exploitative connections and multiple cultural demands, *should* be rooted in a sense that one will inevitably fail. It is only through an understanding and acceptance of the role of failure that one might humbly begin to recognise the limitations and potential mistakes that arise when negotiating between private and public or local and global responsibilities. The novels suggest that to begin from a point of failure is better than to act based on idealised and arrogant imaginings of the success and positive future of such reconciliations. Unlike, say, models of cosmopolitanism by Appiah or Bhabha which wrestle similarly with the paradoxical tensions of local-versus-global or particular-versus-universal, these novels present a critical cosmopolitanism that is founded on a passionate and dramatic recognition of failure, such that even in thinking merely about the globalised world, we must understand that we are, always and already, failing to do so. But it is through a continuous wrestling with this failure via the lives of the characters and the persistence of the narratives in charging onward with the surreal to realistic depiction of their struggles (even when more potential failure awaits them beyond their horizons), that the novels emphasise, paradoxically and self-consciously, the importance of never giving up.

The novels constantly show how cosmopolitanism should be a continuous process, rife with unending conflicts and apprehensions about an overriding potential for failure. But this does not mean that we should stop trying, as the books also urge us to think and act as critically-engaged cosmopolitans, so that we may affect the seemingly immovable ideological and discursive structures of the globalised world. In referring to African-American or Asian-American texts like Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* or Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* respectively, Tom Lutz has suggested that such texts, regardless of how they have been catalogued as models for cultural identification, are, in fact, portraying unstable and incomplete cultural identities; in doing so, they can be considered cosmopolitan texts because they are not didactic or partisan to *particular* politicised positions—"any attempts to find in

the texts . . . literary allies in cultural or economic insurrections, be they left, right, or center, are doomed” and this is because “the politics of the literary text is, in the main, an engaged politics that does not take sides, except on literary matters. These texts are, in a word, cosmopolitan” (2004, 57-58). However, Lutz points to an overtly discernible distinction between pronounced political positions and literariness that is problematic, since, as I will argue with regard to Coetzee’s and Ishiguro’s novels, one can most definitely forge a clear political position *through* aesthetic and literary practices.⁸ As I hope to demonstrate, Coetzee and Ishiguro have produced narratives that struggle and engage with cosmopolitanism’s potential for critical re-invention and development, founded on a profound and empowering recognition of the role of failure. Unlike in Lutz’s formulation, Coetzee’s and Ishiguro’s novels *are* cosmopolitan because they take sides on matters of identity-formation, and the current state or future of the globalised world. The texts succeed in doing so simultaneously at the levels of literariness as well as partisan politics.

⁸ In the case of Kingston, an Asian-American identity can be said to be portrayed as one that is always-in-formation, an aspect emphasised (even didactically) through the novel’s literariness and openendedness that does not necessarily deny the fact that it is still an identity, or a politically-charged position to be contended with.

Chapter 2: Naïve Cosmopolitanism

Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989) and J. M. Coetzee's *Youth* (2002) work in similar ways to make a case against professionalism, construed here as a case against an idealised cosmopolitan identity. These novels work as a form of global or—to use my preferred term—cosmopolitan fiction. As Thomas Peyser describes, such a fiction “takes as its subject those phenomena . . . such as pervasive cosmopolitanism, transnational group affiliations, cultural hybridity, international flows of capital, and the increasing mobility of workers . . . across the frontiers of sovereign nations,” even as globalisation remains something of a fiction, since “a good deal of imaginative labour lies behind our ability to conceptualise such diverse phenomena as aspects of a much grander process that undergirds them” (1999, 240). In analysing both *Youth* and *Remains*, I aim to show what an over-generalised cosmopolitan identity looks like, its relation to a “grander process” of globalisation, the dramatic consequences of this kind of cosmopolitanism, and the corollary ethical complications which force these protagonists to question and finally undermine their own transnational aspirations. I wish to argue that both novels operate to show up the hollowness and self-destructiveness of any form of cosmopolitan position that has been taken to an extreme, particularly when the protagonist is ultimately unwilling to venture beyond the parameters of this self-identification into a more gratifying position of vulnerability and even maturity. The naivety of each protagonist turns his mode of cosmopolitanism into a paradoxical perspective that is at once extraordinary (particularly in their eyes) but also banal, a position that has devastating effects both privately and externally. In *Remains*, this naivety is evinced when the lead character overestimates and universalises local affiliations at the expense of external ones, while in *Youth*, the opposite occurs, such that an obsession with external affiliations underestimates and compromises valuable, local connections.

There is in both books an abnormal detachment from ordinary emotions, particularly in the context of interpersonal relationships, which forms a root cause of their naïve cosmopolitan ideals. This detachment results in tragic consequences in the personal lives of

the protagonists in both novels, energising their cosmopolitan imperatives in conscious to unconscious ways. Coetzee's *Youth* (2002) is the second volume in a memoir-trilogy which began with *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* (1997) and ends with *Summertime* (2009). This second volume depicts events from 1959 when Coetzee, as a version of himself portrayed through a third-person perspective, is planning to leave South Africa for London. The memoir extends to the early 1960s when its central protagonist, the "youth," is on the verge of departing for academic work in linguistics in the United States. In all three memoirs, Coetzee has depicted himself from a distance, creating an angle of vision which the author has defined elsewhere as "autrebiography" (*Doubling* 394). This coinage refers to the use of a detached, over-intellectualising and self-doubting third-person narrator who reports memories in the present tense. He depicts his past self—both the "boy" from *Boyhood* and the eponymous youth in the second memoir—as an *autre*, an unknown other who is a continuing presence and an unresolved problem. The writing of such an experimental autobiography is, in a sense, a problematised answer to the question, "Who am I?" The answer is problematic because there is no clear or comfortable answer. In trying to discover who he is, as well as who he can become, the central character of Coetzee's *Youth* flees from the racism and political unrest of South Africa as well as from the emotional pressures of his family. In his experiences in England, however, the youth re-enacts the emotional struggles of his childhood through failed love affairs and inconsequential friendships.

In the opening section of *Youth*, we are introduced to the central character's desire of moving away from his family home. He facilitates such a move by supporting himself in Cape Town with several part-time jobs while completing his undergraduate studies in Mathematics and English. We are told, in a single-sentence paragraph, that by separating himself from his family, "He is proving something: that each man is an island; that you don't need parents" (3). The assertion reverses John Donne's well-known aphorism of interconnectedness: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent" ("Meditation XVII," qtd. in *The English Reader* 32). In addition to this implicit

rejection of Donne, the youth becomes didactic and even a little desperate and hysterical in generalising from one's personal desire to asserting a universalised claim that "you don't need parents" (3). An idealised state of cosmopolitan homelessness hides a frantic need to flee his South African familial text when the youth marvels about how there are places in the world "where life can be lived at its fullest intensity: London, Paris, perhaps Vienna" (41), as if to disappear into idealistic visions of such cities would ensure future happiness or existential fulfillment. In fact, a barrier to the youth's achieving of maturity is preemptively identified as a hidden childish weakness or vulnerability that is never resolved in the course of the book: "There is something essential he lacks. . . . Something of the baby remains in him. How long before he will cease to be a baby? What will cure him of babyhood and make him into a man?" (3). "It was to escape the oppressiveness of family that he left home," Coetzee writes, and in this family, the overbearing love of a mother who only wanted to "coddle him" (18) is what ensures that the youth will fall into a pattern of indifference with regard to others who will care for him in the future.

It is an indifference that is developed out of a difficult ambivalence regarding his mother's love that was first established in *Boyhood*, in which the youth initially feared losing his mother's love. After observing the traumatic collapse of the marital love between his parents, the youth (as a much younger boy) came to believe that his mother "chose" to love him as she chose to love his father, and that she could choose to reject him if she wished (*Boyhood* 162). Her love had appeared to him to be contingent, dependent upon his ability to meet some unnamed criteria which he did not understand. At one point in the first memoir in the trilogy, the boy says that the "debt of love to his mother baffles and infuriates him" (*Boyhood* 47); the boy decides that "he would rather be blind and deaf than know what [his mother] thinks of him" and "live like a tortoise inside its shell" (162). Later, in the second memoir, the narrator writes about how his relationship with his mother, even while the youthful protagonist is now living in London, remains a cross-border "trap he has not yet

found a way out of” (99), since he is constantly forced to confront his childhood past while being obligated to write letters to remind his mother that he is still alive.

Emotional anxieties stemming from his childhood are conflated with a keen sense of cultural dispossession and ignominy in the period of the collapse of European colonialism in South Africa after World War II. As a white, South-African provincial, Coetzee’s experiences can be said to belong to a shared experience of those who did not wish to “*perish of shame*” (*Youth* 124) as racist and colonialist structures became discredited. Coetzee’s anxiety can be read as a “generational issue” (Bollas 259) and not merely a private instance of individual suffering. The youth indicates this generational aspect when stating that, as a European, he felt as if he had no legitimate claim upon the land of South Africa. He expresses that, as white colonials, he and his friend Paul were “on this earth of South Africa on the shakiest of pretexts” and feels, from Africans in general, “a curious, amused tenderness” or “a sense that he must be a simpleton if he imagines he can get by on the basis of straight looks and honorable dealings when the ground beneath his feet is soaked with blood” (17). But this harsh political reality is not understood by Coetzee’s mother, who uncritically or ignorantly believes that “Blacks in South Africa are better off than anywhere else in Africa” (100). “South Africa,” the narrator writes in the second memoir, continues to be “like an albatross around his neck. He wants it removed, he does not care how, so that he can begin to breathe” (101); the complex anxieties of growing up in South Africa arise from a painful mix of unresolved, political and emotional ambivalences and uncertainties that do not only force the central protagonist in the memoirs to eventually leave his homeland—these anxieties lead to the breakdown of close to every relationship that the central protagonist attempts to build in *Youth*.

In attempting to escape from private to political anxieties, the youth flees from his parents and South Africa in general. After he arrives in England, he develops a cold insensitivity towards everyone he meets and is more concerned with trying to elevate himself to the idealised status of a writer. The provincial who travels from his homeland in search of

maturity expects the cultural energies of a metropolis like London to inspire emotional and artistic development. In addition to freeing himself from childhood trauma, he must define himself in a state of independence from his South African home, and he must find a cultural purpose provided by his cosmopolitan Modernist fathers. The emotionally blighted youth expects to achieve artistic and psychosexual fulfillment in London, which he sees as an idealised centre of Modernism.⁹ He is following in the footsteps of such early twentieth century literary icons as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, whom Coetzee has described as “young colonials struggling to match their inherited culture to their daily experience” (*Stranger* 6). But for the youth, his eagerness to flee and inability to come to terms with his colonial and familial past only ensures that he is unable to enter the present, as well as his newly inherited society, in any rewarding way. Romantic liaisons take on the dimension of a recurring lack of passion. In one such affair, his relationship with a woman called Jacqueline collapses after she reads his diary and finds extensively recorded critical comments about herself and their brief affair. Her enraged departure upon reading the contents of the diary compels the youth to analyse, in a cold and detached way, the issue of truthfulness with regard to the recording of memories, whether in a diary or in verse: “If he is to censor . . . ignoble emotions—resentment at having his flat invaded, or shame at his own failures as a lover—how will those emotions ever be transfigured and turned into poetry? Besides, who is to say that the feelings that he writes in his diary are his true feelings” (9-10).

Such questions concerning the veracity of his revelations belong to a repeated pattern of self-ambiguation and questioning in the memoir that ultimately works to mitigate or avoid dealing directly with private failings. The youth’s relationships with women are almost always selfish, unfulfilling, and downright dishonorable. With Sarah, a lover he makes pregnant, he is “fainthearted and, worse, incompetent” (35) in the way he treats the loss of her baby after she stoically agrees to an abortion: “Is Sarah still due to enter a time of mourning? And what of him? Is he too going to mourn? How long does one mourn . . . for the little thing

⁹ Lee, Hermoine. “Uneasy Guest.” *London Review of Books*. 11 July 2002.

that bobs in the waves off Woodstock, like the little cabin-boy who fell overboard and was not missed?" (36). The "thing" that the youth describes as the aborted baby is clinically rendered as an almost aesthetic object to be held up in the mind without any sense of tenderness, empathy or loss; the baby is detached from any profound emotional significance when juxtaposed in relation to a mere simile. The youth's callousness is more apparent in his seduction and subsequent neglect of Marianne, a South African college student who comes to London with her cousin, Ilse. After sleeping with Marianne, the youth views the sheets bloodied by her damaged hymen with sheer disgust; he is quick to send Marianne home in a taxi and neglects to check up on her afterwards. Instead of attaining depths of passionate feelings that he hopes to discover within himself by moving to another country, he realises that "the depths he has wanted to plumb have been within him all the time, closed up in his chest: depths of coldness, callousness, caddishness" (131) which rise to the surface whenever he encounters a woman who displays any sort of affection for him. Throughout the memoir, "women and their needs are usually a mystery to him" (87). We soon learn that the youth's experiences while growing up in South Africa have contributed to his inability to understand or accept any erotic interest in him, such that when a Jacqueline, Sarah, Caroline, Marianne, or Astrid shows interest, the youth is unable to comprehend why such a woman would desire his company.

Caroline, in particular, a South African drama student with stage ambitions, mirrors the youth closely by possessing similar ideals of striving to become an internationally-acclaimed artist whose contribution to the arts would echo throughout history. But unlike him, however, she is able to quickly find her feet to fulfill her artistic aspirations and her romanticised version of a cosmopolitan life: "her CV has gone out to all the theatrical agents; and she has a flat in a fashionable quarter, which she shares with three English girls" (69). For unknown reasons of her own, Caroline is soon revealed to be as emotionally detached as the youth, although in her case, her detachment is due to a practical need to constantly gain new contacts in her professional field, since "without contacts her career will never take off" (70).

Caroline's mind is always "elsewhere" (70), while the youth is all habitual "glooms" and "sulks," as he thinks himself addicted to unhappiness which is more like a drug, even a sedative, than an intense emotion that provokes action or continual gestures of love or romance (70). As a pair of detached individuals, the tenuous relationship between Caroline and the youth breaks apart easily, even though they reflect each other in terms of where they have come from and the imperative to survive and succeed in an unfamiliar social milieu. At one point near the end of the relationship, the youth makes excuses for why it does not work, claiming weakly that "Caroline may not be the mysterious, dark-eyed beloved he came to Europe for, she may be nothing but a girl from Cape Town from a background as humdrum as his own," yet he also admits that "she is, for the present, all he has" (70). It is for knowingly selfish reasons that the youth finds himself unable to break off from Caroline even though he is fundamentally indifferent about what he feels for her in the first place: "Is he passionate about Caroline? He would not have imagined so" (70).

Dispassionate and evidently self-centred, the youth goes on to reach one of his lowest points of emotional detachment when, in a desperate and outrageous attempt to experience the meaning of "passionate love and its transfiguring power" that his beloved poets have depicted (78), he begins to toy with the idea that he might be a homosexual. In London's Sloane Square, he allows himself to be picked up by an older man whom he allows "to touch him through his clothes," while offering "nothing in return" (79). It is a form of non-commitment that echoes and re-emphasises the lack of emotional investment that has already existed at the heart of his problematic encounters with women. In a usual bout of impotent self-questioning, the youth asks, after such an occasion of sexual experimentation, "Is that homosexuality?" He concludes, "There seems to be nothing at stake . . . [Homosexuality's] a game for people afraid of the big league; a game for losers" (79). But in ending this chapter with such a moment of pathetic and uncritically homophobic revelation—at the end of this desperate attempt to enter some semblance of this "big league," which entails being "transported into brightness beyond compare" of love as depicted by the poets he admires (79)—the narrator

implicitly sums up the state of the youth's pathetic existence so far, as simply having "nothing at stake: nothing to lose but nothing to win either" (79).

In Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, this sense of a life predicated on detachment and meaninglessness is, at the start, conveyed in the title. Aside from its more literal meaning, "The Remains of the Day" has two other and interconnected connotations, one of which refers to the remaining years of a life, while the second points tragically to the inconsequentiality of a life without purpose and meaning; a life that has been reduced like a body to a symbolic pile of decomposed remains. *Remains* revolves around the self-repressed and emotionally detached butler of an old English house that has stood through two world wars. In July 1956, Stevens embarks on a six-day road trip to the West Country of England—from Salisbury to Weymouth to the west of Darlington Hall, the house in which Stevens resides and has worked as a butler for thirty-four years. Although the house was once owned by the now-deceased Lord Darlington, it has come under the ownership of the American, Mr. Farraday. The intention behind Stevens's road trip (which is encouraged and partly funded by his American employer) is to meet Miss Kenton, the former housekeeper who left twenty years earlier to get married. Stevens has received a letter from Miss Kenton, and believes that her letter hints that her marriage is failing and that she might like to return to her post as housekeeper.

Quoting from a newsletter from the Hayes Society about how a great butler is one with a certain measure of "dignity" (33), the central protagonist Stevens, through whose skewed perspective past and present events in the novel are presented, deems that a great butler has to maintain his dignity at all times, restraining what is private from the public sphere. This is in the service of greater efficiency and reliability as a servant to Lord Darlington. Stevens' character is a spoof of classic butlers in literary fiction from the early twentieth century; Ishiguro has himself confessed that he was attempting to "rewrite P. G. Wodehouse" (qtd. in Kelman 73-74), a deconstruction of a previous English cultural form by which the butler is disabled, instead of enabled, by supposed virtues of stoic detachment and loyal servitude. Already at the start of the novel, while at a guest house in Salisbury, Stevens

reveals one of the primary inspirations behind this idealised state of professional detachment—his father. He recounts a story that has been told and retold by his father, who was also a butler at the Darlington House before Stevens. This “apparently true” story features a butler who had travelled to India with his employer and served there “for many years maintaining amongst the native staff the same high standards he had commanded in England” (37). While in India, the butler had noticed a tiger under the dining table. Upon this discovery, he had asked his employer in the drawing room for permission to shoot the animal, after which he reappeared before his employer who then asked the butler if all was well. The butler, in Stevens’ account of his father’s story, replied with great professional calm and detachment, “Perfectly fine, thank you, sir . . . Dinner will be served at the usual time and I am pleased to say there will be no discernible traces left of the recent occurrence by that time” (37). Stevens’ father would repeat that last phrase – “no discernible traces left of the recent occurrence by that time” – with a laugh and an admiring shake of the head. Stevens’ father “neither claimed to know the butler’s name, nor anyone who had known him, but . . . he must have striven throughout his years somehow to *become* that butler of his story” (37). In Stevens’ mind, his father became idealised as having achieved this professional ambition to become like that butler in India. Stevens’ fond recollection of this story this early in the narrative reveals the intimate connection between his father’s dream and Stevens’ own desire to become not just a good butler, but the kind of butler his own father had been (it is the closest Stevens can ever hope to be to his father—by recalling as well as emulating the latter’s fantasy about the perfect manservant). Stevens’ repressed feelings of estrangement from his father form a poignant, emotional undercurrent to the recounting of the latter’s story.

It was this quality of detachment that damaged the relationship between father and son long before the passing of Stevens’ father made a traumatic impact on Stevens’ life. At an international conference held at Darlington Hall in 1923, during which diplomats, clergymen, writers and thinkers gathered to think of ways to revise the Treaty of Versailles to alleviate the economic situation in Germany after the first World War, the damage caused by this

sensibility of detachment is enacted, as well as temporarily disabled, during a moment when Stevens' father is dying. Father and son share a moment during the hustle and bustle of the conference that Stevens has to manage professionally:

'I hope Father is feeling better now,' I said.

He went on gazing at me for a moment, then asked: 'Everything in hand downstairs?'

(101)

This scene which illustrates the father's stubborn unwillingness to engage intimately with his son's rare moment of emotional vulnerability and implicit concern is soon followed by a startling moment when the father withdraws his arms from under bedclothes and stares tiredly at the back of his hands. Then the older butler confesses to Stevens, "I hope I've been a good father to you . . . I'm proud of you. A good son. I hope I've been a good father to you. I suppose I haven't" (101). Stevens suddenly *becomes* his father in expressing discomfort at this sudden display of love mixed with regret, as when he noncommittally responds to the elder Stevens, "I'm afraid we're extremely busy now, but we can talk again in the morning" (101). It is also telling that when the father was making his confession, he was directing it to his hands, as if it were too painful to express such feelings directly to Stevens. This crippling inability to connect with another person has been inherited fully by the son by the end of this chapter in the novel, when Steven concludes by telling the reader he was proud of himself for displaying a dignity that was "at least in some modest degree" worthy of his father: "For all its sad associations, whenever I recall that evening today, I find I do so with a large sense of triumph" (115). But the narrative, even though told through Stevens' perspective, reveals that Lord Darlington later catches Stevens crying; the latter quickly explains his behaviour as merely the result of having suffered "[the] strains of a hard day" (110). The "day" echoes the last part of the novel's title but with a new connotation of a life that has, in one sense, become hard, as in obdurate, or possessing a heart of stone. Even as Stevens has become his father's son in terms of embodying a personality of stubborn self-repression (for the sake of an inherited professional ideal), this embodiment is clearly imperfect. Cracks occasionally

appear on Stevens' guarded exterior and vast undercurrents of emotion are hinted at through such moments in the formal surface of the narrative.

Such an exterior of professional equanimity is so all-consuming to Stevens that he often *becomes* that exterior, as demonstrated figuratively through the narrative that, as constructed by Stevens, reveals no account of actual crying until a third party such as Lord Darlington points this out to him. And even after the fact that Stevens is told that he has cried, he still refuses to acknowledge it, or to even begin to grapple with the significance of such an uncontrollable outburst of emotion (110). This sense of self-delusion disguised as a conscious to unconscious detachment from emotions is also what prevents Stevens from coming to terms with his feelings for Miss Kenton, the housekeeper at Darlington House. Although Miss Kenton's feelings for Stevens are apparent at various instances, such as the almost erotically-charged moment when she pries Stevens' reluctant fingers open to see the romantic novel that he is reading but is "anxious to hide" from her (175), Stevens' feelings are more consistently buried (but not totally forgotten). The latter's emotions betray themselves in instances such as when he practically snaps at Miss Kenton for being too tired for engaging in conversation with him during their meetings over hot cocoa. It is telling when Stevens insists that he does not wish to add "unnecessary addition to [her] burden" (184) after Miss Kenton continues to apologise, revealing how much Stevens *actually* values such regular moments spent with her. But this unwillingness to come to terms with this fondness for Miss Kenton is what eventually drives her away—to the point that she accepts a proposal of marriage from an "acquaintance," Mr Benn (229). When she announces this proposal to Stevens, he only offers his briefest "congratulations" (229) before rushing, yet again, to manage Lord Darlington's important conference.

It is this incapacity to openly reciprocate Miss Kenton's love that eventually results in Stevens' "heart . . . breaking" (252) near the end of the novel, after she confesses that she has wondered what "a *better* life" (251) she might have had if both of them had gotten married. In terms of his internal life, as suggested often indirectly and involuntarily through Stevens' own

repressed narrative, it is not difficult to argue that Stevens' emotional existence has been one long train-wreck. Stevens has not only failed to have an emotionally rewarding relationship with his father, but the woman he has secretly loved for so long has ultimately slipped out of his life. Aside from such heartbreaking interpersonal failures, Stevens has trouble even engaging socially and semi-intimately with people he is not emotionally close to. With his new employer, Mr Farraday (who keeps trying to develop an easy, informal relationship with Stevens), for example, the butler reductively defines a casual conversation with Farraday as a matter of "business," this "business of bantering," which he is careful to practice for fear of "catastrophic possibilities" (16). Stevens is determined to maintain an emotional gulf between Farraday and himself, between employer and employee. At a bar in Taunton, Somerset, six or seven people make a joke about how Stevens would not get much sleep at the inn (at which he is staying) due to the frequent and loud arguments between its proprietor and his wife. Stevens feels that he should respond in kind and describes the mistress' voice as a "local variation on the cock crow, no doubt" (138). It is a gauche remark met with uncomfortable silence by everyone in the bar, marking yet another instance in the novel when Stevens is so socially-alienated, as a result of his inveterate inability to express himself, that he ends up making blunders in his attempts at trying to relate with others. Banter of any kind, Stevens seriously considers, during the course of the narrative after this incident at the bar, requires "the necessary skill and experience" (140) which Stevens suggests that he would only have to practice—mostly, with himself, aided by radio programmes on the wireless—in order to master.

Just like the youth in Coetzee's third-person memoir, Stevens suffers from a sense of crippling detachment that occurs as a result of emotional issues inherited from within his family. This detachment can also be said to be a result of social and historical forces. The passing of the aristocratic and "gentlemanly" values of British-imperialism in the case of *Remains* (indicated by the passing of ownership of the Darlington House to the American, Mr Farraday, for example) shows up the anachronism of Stevens' principles, while the distant

politics of apartheid in *Youth*, which the protagonist fled so as not to “perish of shame” (124), had definitely influenced his inability to commit to forming meaningful relationships with anyone in his new country. Formed by both familial and socio-cultural forces, this sense of detachment has ultimately ensured that both Stevens and the youth suffer a devastating void in their personal lives. Both *Youth* and *Remains* switch constantly between accounts of private to interpersonal disasters and justifications for untenable cosmopolitan perspectives, as if the latter served to compensate for the former in a redeeming way. In both novels, an over-idealistic cosmopolitanism serves repeatedly to hide or make up for feelings of emptiness at the heart of both Stevens and Coetzee’s youth. In *Remains*, a projection of the local into the realm of the global takes place when Stevens elevates the English landscape, the significance of being a butler, as well as Lord Darlington and the imperialistic paradigm he represents. Such a celebration of the local reaches a feverish pitch at moments that coincide with the departure of first Stevens’ father and later Miss Kenton. This elevation of the local reveals itself to be an escapist strategy, one that, in fact, paradoxically avoids a coming to terms with loss *within* the context of the personal and the local.

Wandering through Salisbury and armed with Jane Symon’s encyclopedic book, *The Wonders of England*, a seven-part photographic epic about the countryside to guide his tour of his local landscape, Stevens thinks about the “breath-taking photographs of sights from various corners of the globe” (28) that he has gleaned in the past from *National Geographic Magazine*. He confesses that he has “never . . . seen such things at first hand” (28). He recalls the images from this magazine because, in his mind, “the English landscape at its finest . . . possesses a quality that the landscapes of other nations, however more superficially dramatic, inevitably fail to possess,” and that such a quality of “greatness” stems from the landscape’s “very *lack* of obvious drama or spectacle . . . In comparison, the sorts of sights offered in such places as Africa and America, though undoubtedly very exciting, would . . . strike the objective viewer as inferior on account of their unseemly demonstrativeness” (29).

In Stevens' celebration of his local landscape above all others that he had only gleaned from a globally-distributed magazine, as readers, we are easily tempted to pounce on the naivety behind such a presumptuous verdict, since Stevens has never, in fact, experienced these foreign places first hand. However, it might be possible to argue that mere photos of foreign landscapes are sufficient in formulating a verdict on which country has the most impressive physical geography of all, when an anthropomorphic sense of demonstrativeness is the only aesthetic criteria that informs Stevens' worldview. Nonetheless, such a worldview can still smack of nationalistic, even imperialistic, condescension and superiority when one has never actually travelled to other parts of the world, or when one does not take into account the limitations of simply experiencing other places through the browsing of a magazine. But this does not automatically mean that those who have no means to travel have no right to forge credible perceptions of the world, particularly when people can access distant cultures through the media (in the novel's context of the 1950s, one could have—like Stevens—read about foreign places through books and print-media, for example). Magazines are an example of the way media facilitates the growing sense of interconnectedness that is a recognisable dimension of globalisation. In discussing what it means to be a cosmopolitan, Terhi Rantanen has written about how for the majority of those without the means to travel as tourists, they might still be able to enjoy a mediated cosmopolitanism, especially when media and communications provide their main channel to other parts of the world: "The possibility of cosmopolitanism draws heavily on access, be it physical or visual" (Rantanen 122), such that locals in one part of the world may become acquainted with what is happening elsewhere through popular means of mass-communication. Yet this also raises a fundamental question about this kind of cosmopolitanism: "what does it mean to be able to see, but not reach?" (Rantanen 123). For Rantanen, the ability to see but not reach (to "reach" here does not just mean arriving physically in distant territories—it also means engaging with the politics and culture of foreign societies) might allow one to develop a cosmopolitan mindset, but it also exposes, simultaneously, the limitations of mediated forms of cosmopolitanism. In the case of *Remains*, Stevens' insistence that the English landscape "*alone* would justify the use of this

lofty adjective” (29) of “great” (as in “Great Britain”), and not the landscapes of other countries, might seem culturally conceited; he is expressing what sounds like a nationalist sentiment, yet he does not seem won over *completely* by the singular greatness of his country. His language has moments of tentativeness and ambivalence—“somewhat immodest,” “I would venture that . . . ,” “if I were forced to hazard a guess” (28-29)—that belies a degree (albeit small) of unwillingness to commit wholeheartedly to the opinion that Britain is undoubtedly the best. Stevens might be naively, even unconsciously, pushing a position of geo-political superiority (centered on the overdetermined personality trait of emotional restraint) but it is not a straightforward position, since Stevens also exhibits a nascent, critical awareness of multiple contexts that is mediated through *National Geographic* (such a magazine would have allowed him to pore over the landscapes of other countries too before he deemed his own homeland’s geography as the greatest). Such mediated cosmopolitanism, no matter how limited, should not be discounted, since it remains one of the ways in which individuals from different social and economic classes are enabled to see and think about the world, even as, ultimately, Stevens *does* jump too readily and un-self-critically to the conclusion that his homeland trumps them all in terms of a subjective impression of undemonstrative greatness. The narrative in *Remains* soon reveals that Stevens’ celebration of the local—as the greatest in the world—is shaped by an intense personal desire to commemorate a father who demonstrated restraint within his professional context of being a butler.

The undemonstrativeness of the landscape of Great Britain is linked to the self-restraint that is the fundamental quality of “a ‘great’ butler” (29) in Stevens’ mind. The first and most significant example of such a butler has been, of course, Stevens’ father. As Cynthia Wong has suggested, “Stevens’ idolatry of his father explains the self-abnegation that comes to dominate the narrative” (60) of *Remains*. More than what Wong has suggested, Stevens’ idolatry of his father results in the exaltation of the latter’s self-abnegation as a virtue that defines Stevens’ subsequent professionalism and his overestimation of the local (by exhorting

it in terms of the global). Stevens recounts an example of his father's greatness when the elder Stevens was able to "hide his feelings" (43) while executing a personally and emotionally difficult job. His father was so "great" a butler because he successfully served a certain General, a friend of his past employer, Mr John Silver. Stevens senior had great loathing for the General as the latter had been responsible for the death of Leonard, Stevens elder brother, who served as a soldier under the General's command during the Britain Boer War. Stevens senior was called upon to act as the General's valet when he had come to Mr Silver's house for a visit. It was a job that Stevens' senior executed with impassive dedication, to the extent that the General even commented on the senior's excellent service. In reference to such a professional butler like his father, Stevens tells us, "The great butlers are great by virtue of their ability to inhabit their professional role and inhabit it to the utmost . . . they wear their professionalism as a decent gentleman will wear his suit: he will not let ruffians or circumstances tear it off him in the public gaze; he will discard it when, and only when . . . he is entirely alone" (43-44). The sense of being "alone" is prophetic, and also ironic, since Stevens does end up truly alone (and lonely) because of his professionalism; yet even when he is alone, he still fails to utterly discard his self-repressiveness and engage internally and productively with private emotions.

So far, Ishiguro's novel has been generating a metonymic chain of symbolic associations that sum up a pervasive model of nationalistic pride, a "mythical version of England that is peddled in the nostalgia industry" (Ishiguro, qtd. in Kelman 73-74), a version that Ishiguro obviously operates to debunk through his narrative. Such a chain includes Stevens senior's portrayed sense of restraint and professional dignity, which has, in turn, inspired Stevens' own sense of professional self-worth as a butler, to global events hinted at in the text, in which Great Britain played a major, often self-serving and ultimately damaging role. One of such key global events is the Boer War (1899-1902), the battle that Steven senior's son had died in. Stevens himself recounts the Boer War in terms that are slightly unflattering to Britain's political self-image, when he perceives his brother's death as a

casualty of “a most un-British attack on civilian Boer Settlements . . . irresponsibly commanded with several floutings of elementary military precautions, so that the men who had died—my brother among them—had died quite needlessly” (41). Long before the issue of British appeasement of the Nazis that is referred to later in the novel, this moment in the novel “already puts under the severest pressure the concept of ‘dignity’ as the professional ethos” of both the serving and upper classes (Rose 65), when the damage inflicted by Britain on the Boers was anything but dignified. The Boer War revealed how, as Jacqueline Rose suggests, “a whole class, caste, category of Englishness . . . which prides itself on civic virtue” (Rose 66) was implicated as morally problematic, particularly when such virtues of civic mindedness, honour and dignity served as spurious justifications for exploitation and murder on foreign soil. The Boer War had followed from a Boer ultimatum targeted against the reinforcement of a British garrison in South Africa. The Brits had found the Boer state “quite unsuited for the free growth of capitalist enterprise, while the Boers regarded these Uitlanders (outsiders) as fit only to be taxed and obstinately kept political power entirely in their own hands” (Morton 470). The crisis started with the refusal of the South African Republic, under President Paul Kruger, to grant political rights to the primarily English and non-Dutch population of the mining areas of the Witwatersrand, and the aggressive attitudes of British politicians like the British high commissioner and Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, in response to the Republic’s obduracy. An underlying cause of the war was the presence of gold in the Transvaal, an area of northern South Africa that was one of the largest gold-mining areas in the world. This was an area beyond direct British control at a time when the world’s monetary systems, preeminently those fronted by the British, were increasingly dependent upon gold. The English business and Cape prime minister, Cecil Rhodes, sympathised with his imperialist government and “hoped to overthrow Kruger’s government so that Britain could take over the Transvaal with all its gold” (Fick 1981).

What Stevens has cursorily described as an “irresponsibly commanded” and “un-British attack” was in fact an all-out-war in which Boers’ farmsteads that might have

sheltered guerrillas were burnt to the ground. During this time, even in Britain, “many Liberals and socialists were outraged at the increasingly brutal treatment of the Boers, particularly non-combatants” (Liddington 45), such as innocent Boer women and children who died in concentrations camps built by the British. The General that Stevens senior had great loathing for belonged to the military arm of Great Britain that inflicted such harm on Boer territories in the name of countering a Boer ultimatum (while really coveting untapped South African goldmines so as to fill the coffers of Great Britain’s capitalist economy). Here we already have a taste of the exploitative processes which undergird the structure of globalisation, led by an imperialistic, capitalist country like Great Britain, when the latter takes what it wants from another country in the name of ostensibly honourable interests. The General in *Remains* is complicit in such exploitative, surreptitiously imperialistic processes, and although Stevens senior may hate the General, the elder Stevens too is, in fact, complicit. This is because, as the novel shows us, Stevens’ father has loathing for the General only because of how the General was implicated in Leonard’s death; the General is implicitly accused by both Stevens and his father for merely engaging in “several floutings of elementary military precautions” and *not* for taking part in a larger, oppressive, political campaign to exploit the wealth of South Africa. In other words, Stevens’ father still only has his own self-interests (the loss of family) at heart, in the same way that Great Britain was merely self-serving in taking on the Boers. The cursory way in which acts of bloodshed overseas are abstractedly summed up by Stevens’ father as “irresponsibly commanded” fails to sufficiently recognise the evils of imperialistic exploitation commandeered by his imperialist government.

What Stevens senior and the General have in common is an unquestioning and blinkered sense of loyalty and professional duty, the former to servitude, full of the appearance of professional restraint, while the latter serves imperialist politics that attempt to veil exploitative intentions. Later in Lord Darlington’s case in relation to the Nazis, this sense of professionalism takes on an insidiously cosmopolitan dimension that is emulated by

Stevens junior. But for now, the novel shows us the origins of this over-determinedly English model of professionalism that is founded in ignorance and a problematic sense of conservative, nationalistic pride. This is the very atmosphere of imperialistic complacency and self-affirmation that Stevens has been born into. The imperialistic paradigm that Stevens was indoctrinated into was also a patriarchal one. This is suggested by how the novel tells us nothing about Stevens' mother. The only women in the novel appear with the key character of Miss Kenton, minor ones like Mrs. Taylor in Moscombe (whom Stevens lies to by pretending to be Darlington) and the Jewish maids that were fired. Also, Miss Kenton is known as Mrs Benn, since she is married to Mr Benn, and Mrs Taylor has also presumably taken the surname of her husband. The insular world of England between two major World Wars portrayed in the novel is clearly a male-dominated one, and the sins of the father are clearly passed onto the son, as Stevens inherits, internalises and celebrates this self-affirming discourse of imperialistic patriarchy.

Writing between these two major world wars, Virginia Woolf expressed her distrust for nationalistic attitudes and “old patriarchal forms of control and domination” (Wussow 43) in England during this time, pointing out that “war is a profession; a source of happiness and excitement; and it is also an outlet for manly qualities, without which men would deteriorate.”¹⁰ The absence of women in Ishiguro's novel pointedly suggests that an English conception of dignity is implicitly a male-oriented one, one passed on from one generation of men to the next; whereas the women are subordinated and subjugated in ways that serve only to support the men, both at home and in their colonising activities overseas. Stevens inadvertently augments the pervasiveness of this ideological notion of British dignity by projecting it onto the physical landscape itself in a crude sense of pathetic fallacy. He elevates the landscape as being the greatest on the global scale through an unreflective mode of mediated cosmopolitanism (via a mere flip through the pages of *National Geographic*). Yet he is also doing so because he wants to remember, celebrate, as well as *become* (as close to)

¹⁰ Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas*. 11 Nov 2009. 1 Dec. 2009
<<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91tg/chapter1.html>>.

his father in being a perfect butler. As such, Stevens inadvertently promotes a paradigm of patriarchal, English imperialism through his romanticisation of the roles of both the servant and his employer in the realms of both the serving classes and the larger political structures of Great Britain that such classes faithfully support. Stevens later intensifies the cosmopolitan dimension of this romanticisation at a moment of great personal crisis during the 1923 conference held at Lord Darlington's estate.

In my introduction I mentioned that the novels examined here draw the readers attention to what is at stake within a cosmopolitan position, with regard to its critical awareness of the to-and-fro tensions between local and global affiliations. By this point in *Remains*, we have seen that Stevens is a man who is not only a victim of his social, serving class, but of an imperialistic paradigm of England that constantly reaffirms its self-image of honour and dignity while simultaneously and forcibly colonising the globe, casting its political, military and economic net across the world. By 1922, after the Boer War and the end of the First World War, the British Empire held sway over a population of up to one-quarter of the world's population, and covered approximately a quarter of the world's total land area.¹¹ It is not difficult to see how imposing one's colonial might on foreign territories was ethically un-cosmopolitan, when such an imposition ensured that countries which challenged British power were militarily, culturally and economically exploited and debilitated. In the Darlington house in 1923, Lord Darlington holds a meeting to discuss, with various influential political representative like M. Dupont from France and Mr Lewis from America, "the strong moral case for a relaxing of various aspects of the Versailles treaty, emphasizing the great suffering he had himself witnessed in Germany" (96) after the first World War. Bruce Robbins has suggested that *Remains* makes "a case against cosmopolitanism" ("Very Busy Right Now" 426), a cosmopolitanism exemplified by Lord Darlington in subscribing to an over-idealistic sense of "loyalty and solidarity at a distance" ("Very Busy Right Now" 427). Although Robbins does also argue elsewhere that Darlington

¹¹ Maddison, Angus. *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective*. 15, 98 and 242.

might have been right about freezing Germany's war reparations during the inter-war period ("The Village of the Liberaal Managerial Class" 27), it is a certain arrogance that informs the cosmopolitanism demonstrated by the likes of Darlington, an arrogance that is nonetheless dangerous and morally problematic, whether or not the actual decisions might have been beneficial in any way. A case made against such a cosmopolitanism is made dramatically when an inebriated Mr Lewis accuses Darlington and the other guests at the same conference table of being amateurs: "All you decent, well-meaning gentlemen . . . still believe it's their business to meddle in matters they don't understand . . . You here in Europe need professionals to run your affairs. If you don't realise that soon you're headed for disaster" (106-107). Mr Lewis' implicit claim that American politics is more "professional" is, of course, problematic; he is suggesting that his government is more pragmatic and far-seeing. Professionalism, in Lewis' case, might be tied to greater political awareness but it is not by that token free from the taint of exploitative imperialism that informs Britain's international politics.¹² But during this moment in the novel, it is the harm inflicted by Britain's cosmopolitan aspirations and its over-confidence in its own imperialistic influence that take centre-stage. Lord Darlington and his guests, in helping the Germans to promote their Nazi cause in Europe, prove Mr Lewis to be right to a large extent, particularly when such aid inevitably leads to the Nazi atrocities of the Second World War and the Jewish Holocaust. Lord Darlington responds to Mr Lewis by replacing the latter's notion of "amateurism" with that implicitly English concept of "honour" in his response about wanting "to see goodness and justice prevail in the world" (107). The novel reveals at this moment that Lord Darlington's sense of cosmopolitanism is fundamentally obtuse, when such a position is founded on a projection of essentialised British ideals (of honour, in particular) beyond one's local context onto a foreign culture (Nazi Germany), in the belief that the latter would share in these same ideals. A more critical and informed conception of cosmopolitanism might have

¹² One can see how American imperialism only takes over from British imperialism after the latter's decline, as already suggested by the passing of the Darlington house into Mr Farraday's hands. American imperialism has its own self-delusions, such as when it promotes democracy in other countries while really exploiting them for their resources. An example of this closer to our century is, of course, its 2003 invasion of Iraq which I mentioned in my previous introductory chapter.

anticipated the possibility of *difference* in political and cultural inclinations, instead of simply imagining the Other as conforming readily to one's own ideology.

Stevens buys enthusiastically into the same misguided sense of cosmopolitanism and of the "important" nature of Darlington's connection to global affairs when he asserts to the other servants about the conference, "History could well be made under this roof" (81). Although he is won over by the global significance of the conference, the novel quickly reveals why he submits so readily to the inflated perception of his employer's importance. Such submission does not only serve to inflate Stevens' sense of importance in relation to his higher-class employer, but it is also how Stevens evades overpowering private emotions vis-à-vis devastating personal relationships. This is demonstrated when his professional enthusiasm for Darlington peaks during the moment when his father collapses in the midst of the conference: "He had dropped down on to one knee and with head bowed seemed to be pushing at the trolley before him . . . I went to my father and releasing his hands from their grip on the edge of the trolley, eased him down on to the carpet. His eyes were closed, his face was an ashen colour, and there were beads of sweat on his forehead" (97). In this moment, Stevens's psychological state remains, on the surface of the narrative, a mystery to the reader; he reveals nothing about his feelings even as he pries his father's hand from the trolley. Stevens senior is a tragic-cum-ludicrous figure of obstinate professionalism at the moment when his aged body has finally failed him. Although Stevens is gentle with his father at this moment, no profound grief is expressed. In fact, the moment suggests that Stevens is merely behaving as a detached professional in easing his father to the floor, before returning, with gusto, to handling the conference. Even when Miss Kenton asks him later about whether Stevens wants to see his father while the latter is dying, Stevens only has this curt reply: "I'm very busy just now" (111). However, when Lord Darlington spots tears dribbling down his employee's face (the one visible sign that Stevens expresses a sense of loss about his father and a rare moment when he expresses *any* emotion) and asks, "Stevens, are you all right" (109), Stevens remains in a state of denial of his grief, confessing only to being a victim of his

own “hard work” (110). The scene with Stevens and his father is also suggestive of how Stevens might end up, as a victim of his own detached professionalism one day.

But we cannot guess if Stevens has made this connection to this image of his possible future. In fact, the absence of self-awareness and any semblance of emotion is accompanied by an over-eagerness to run the conference proceedings like a complete professional. This suggests that Stevens has escaped headlong into his self-important work; in Stevens mind, he even marks *this* moment of the conference as “a turning point” in his “professional development” (114), since he was able to avoid dealing with potentially explosive emotions for the sake of the higher good—supporting Lord Darlington through the facilitation of a globally-significant event. For all its “sad associations,” Stevens will always recall the conference day with “a large sense of triumph” (115) because he believes that he has contributed indirectly but crucially to “the course of history,” having performed his role “at the very fulcrum of great affairs” (147). He has been a critical component to Darlington’s cosmopolitan enterprise in shaping global events—and all at the expense of having been absent at his own father’s death. This need to compensate for a profound failure to engage with personal loss manifests itself in Stevens’ desire to belong to something larger than himself. Darlington’s misconstrued, cosmopolitan objective in helping the Germans is what Stevens’ latches on to fill his life with an overwhelming sense of purpose, a vicarious cosmopolitanism that is, once again, mediated—this time through Lord Darlington.

Furthermore, it is difficult to excuse Darlington’s and Stevens’ naivety for being well-intentioned, particularly when we learn of their racist actions that were enacted to please the Germans. While wandering through Moscombe, Stevens starts off on a mitigating note by stressing that the Darlington house had hired “many Jewish persons” throughout the years and “they were never treated in any way differently on account of their race” (153). But on account of the supposed influence of a certain Mrs Carolyn Barnet, Lord Darlington had instructed Stevens to fire the Jewish maids “for the good of this house” (155). Darlington is hoping to please his German guests when they arrive at the house for the international

conference. Stevens loyally concurs, of course, but Miss Kenton warns him that to do so “would be simply – *wrong*” (157). Yet the deed was done. In firing the maids, both Darlington and Stevens had acted unethically in the name of a larger, cosmopolitan cause.

Even though Miss Kenton protests about the unethical nature of the dismissing of the Jewish help and threatens to leave her own post as housekeeper, she does not quit her job in the end. In his usual insensitive way, Stevens, a year later, points out this inconsistency to her, “It’s rather funny to remember now . . . you were still insisting you were going to resign” (160-161). Culpability thus falls on all the characters, from Darlington to Stevens and even Kenton, for being complicit in the mistreatment of the Jewish maids. Unlike Stevens, however, Miss Kenton, at least, expresses remorse at her moral failing when she responds regretfully to Stevens, “How seriously I really thought of leaving this house. I felt so strongly about what happened. Had I been anyone worthy of any respect at all, I dare say I would have left Darlington Hall long ago . . . It was cowardice, Mr Stevens. Simple cowardice. Where could I have gone? I have no family . . . There, that’s all my high principles amount to. I feel so ashamed of myself” (161). Miss Kenton reveals her shame while also admitting that she had stayed on without protest at Darlington house on the basis of survival, since she might not have been able to find work elsewhere. In the novel, Darlington clearly deserves most of the blame for helping Germany in the name of honourable intentions, while the absence of genuine remorse in Stevens reveals the moral spuriousness of his vicarious, over-romanticised cosmopolitan position and blind loyalty to Darlington. In an implicit way, Miss Kenton actually inventories the accusations that a man in Stevens’ or Darlington’s shoes would necessarily deserve from an ethical standpoint: the requisite loss of respect, the charge of cowardice, the absence of “high principles” and the obvious lack of shame. As members of the serving class, Stevens and Miss Kenton might be forced to play by the anti-Semitic rules of Lord Darlington, but it is Miss Kenton who openly laments the moral ambivalences of her position, while Stevens remains, for most part, with his head stuck in the clouds of professional idealism.

This account of Miss Kenton's confession is one of many accounts that Stevens evokes that involve his favourite housekeeper, whom he is traversing the English landscape to meet. He hopes to invite her back to the Darlington household. This sense of hope is born out of reading a letter from Miss Kenton hinting that her marriage is failing. Throughout the novel and during Stevens' evocations of the past, readers will be able to sense what Renata Salecl has described as the "unspoken passion" between Miss Kenton and Stevens, a passion born potentially out of (yet also simultaneously stifled by) the oppressiveness of the professional and social institutions that rule their existence ("I Can't Love You" 181). Although Salecl is also determined in pointing out that, for Stevens, "all of his love is in the rituals" (185) that he shares with Kenton, meaning that it might be impossible to locate any "hidden love" (185) in Stevens, I would argue that the novel remains more ambiguous than Salecl's reading. It boils down to how love should be defined in any case, whether even within the rules of professionalism, there might exist a romantic inclination that has nothing whatsoever to do with them. Regardless how one defines "love" and whether or not it results from "the perspective of submission to the codes of their profession" (Salecl 185), from the moment when Stevens recalls how Miss Kenton used to liven his room at Darlington with flowers, to Kenton's confession at the novel's end of her love for Stevens, it is the tragedy of an unrequited love that haunts Stevens and the novel. The fact that Miss Kenton left the house to get married to Mr Benn remains a suppressed moment of personal crisis and anguish that is hinted at in many moments of Stevens' retelling of his memories. While reading Kenton's letter again at an inn in Somerset, he admits to the reader, "I did spend some long minutes turning those passages over in my mind last night as I lay there in the darkness, listening to the sounds from below of the landlord and his wife clearing up for the night" (149). The darkness of the scene and the sounds made by the landlord and his wife, evocative of the marital bliss that has been denied both Kenton and Stevens, render Stevens' underlying feelings of loss, as well as his unspoken desire for Kenton, with a sense of tragic melancholy.

Although suppressed feelings of love and loss over Kenton's parting are constantly suggested through Stevens' memories, such memories quickly dovetail into recollections of what *had* remained a reliable source of contentment for Stevens—the globally-significant events that Stevens had successfully and professionally managed at Darlington. During a retelling of a moment when Kenton and Stevens had fought about the shoddy work of the new maids in Darlington, Stevens comes close to revealing how sorry he is (particularly when she is no longer working for him) for all the times when he had hurt her feelings. During this particular quarrel, Stevens had pointed out to Kenton about how “one of two things [had] fallen in standard just recently” (187) with regard to the new servants under Kenton's care. Kenton had testily replied, “You needn't press your point” (188). Stevens reveals how he had always thought about this incident, and admits to “forever speculating about what might have happened had such . . . a moment turned out differently” (188). The use of the adverb “forever” hints at the pervasiveness with which Miss Kenton continually haunts his memories and the recurrent desires that he keeps bottled up inside himself.

Soon after this moment, Stevens meets Mr and Mrs Taylor, a local couple in Moscombe who extend their hospitality to him and allow him to stay with them in their home. Many neighbours and friends of the Taylors come over to meet Stevens over dinner, during which Stevens embarks on a charade that goes beyond his usual inflation of self-worth. To Mrs Taylor's question about whether Stevens had ever met Winston Churchill, the latter replies, “Mr Churchill? He did come to the house on a number of occasions. But to be quite frank, Mrs Taylor, during the time I was most involved in great affairs, Mr Churchill was not such a key figure and was not really expected to become one . . . it's rather gratifying to have consorted with him” (197). Before, Stevens had only lived vicariously through Lord Darlington, basking in the shadow of the latter's cosmopolitan aspirations. Now Stevens is pretending to *be* Lord Darlington. We had seen how Stevens had rushed to celebrate the triumph of his professionalism at the moment of his father's death. By this point in the novel, it is clear how an inherent but unacknowledged sense of emptiness in Stevens' life is

repeatedly animating his inclinations to become something other, or more, than himself. Repressed feelings of loss and unrequited love and the corollary escape into an idealised self suggests a stark duality in Stevens' mental state. He could be said to suffer from a Dr-Jekyll-and-Mr-Hyde personality that is born out of that crippling inability to confront failures of personal to interpersonal crises. His personality consists of extremes: he desperately longs to occupy a position of inflated self-importance, on the one hand, while ignoring and exacerbating intense and unresolved emotional wounds on the other. Yet it is these very wounds that continue to energise his self-perpetuated illusion of an idealised professionalism, to the point that Stevens gets carried away and lies not only to himself but to everyone else around him.

Particularly with Stevens, readers are shown "an ever-widening gap between definition and illustration" (Guth 126), a disconnect between a self-defined sense of professional dignity or greatness and a submerged narrative about the formation of a political alliance with the Nazis, the unethical commitment to anti-Semitism, and a refusal to engage meaningfully and intimately with others, which progressively undermine the basis and purpose of Stevens' life (Guth 126). Stevens is not what he claims (to himself and his implied readers) to be. Neither is the man he exalts, Lord Darlington. What Stevens has celebrated about Darlington's cosmopolitan affiliations and the latter's greatness quickly become suspect when Darlington confesses to preferring a form of fascism (inspired, no doubt, by his intimacy with Nazi allies) during a conversation with Stevens: "Democracy is something for a bygone era. The world's far too complicated a place now for universal suffrage and such like . . . Germany and Italy have set their houses in order by acting. And so have the wretched Bolsheviks in their own way . . . Look at Germany and Italy, Stevens. See what strong leadership can do if it's allowed to act" (208). If my definition of a critical cosmopolitanism involves an active consideration of difference and a sustained engagement with opposing perspectives, fascism can be regarded as its opposite since it entails the unilateral suppression of such differences. Darlington is not at all great and there is nothing honourable about his

links to the Germans—a political manoeuvre disguised as an ostensible act of compassion that eventually leads to the fatal suppression of millions of Jews in the Second World War.

However, Stevens' deluded idealisation of Darlington's cosmopolitan identity is necessary for his own self-image as a dignified professional who has played a laudable part on the global stage. Stevens' fascistic disengagements from private emotions and people have resulted in the flawed understanding of Darlington, himself, and the supposedly important roles both played in shaping the course of history.

The widening of that gap “between definition and illustration,” between the idealisation of one's self-formation and the incongruous personal realities that undermine the former, occurs as well throughout the narrative of Coetzee's *Youth*. If Stevens in *Remains* was naïve for believing that Darlington and himself were great men committing acts of great cosmopolitan significance (vicariously or otherwise), the much younger John in *Youth* is naïve for believing he is destined for greatness without having to resolve troubled emotional realities concerning home and family. Coetzee's protagonist, John, like Stevens, chases after an idealised cosmopolitan identity while fleeing from interpersonal disasters and unresolved psychological wounds. Caught in the growing gulf between unacknowledged emotional issues and transcendental cosmopolitan aspirations, John finds himself increasingly lost and alienated, unable to connect intimately or meaningfully with himself or anyone. Coetzee's novel continually showcases the back-and-forth nature between painful private realities and escapist self-delusion.

At the end of Coetzee's second chapter, John already admits to the indignity of having to escape from “the oppressiveness of family” (18), citing this as one of his main reasons for leaving South Africa: “Now that he has his own income, he uses his independence to exclude his parents from his life” (18). This is because, according to John, “all his life [his mother] has wanted to coddle him; all his life he has been resisting” (18). Consequently he “must harden his heart against her. Now is not the time to let down his guard” (18). John's family, particularly his mother, treats him like a child, when he really longs to be an adult. It

is a mixture of childish embarrassment and adolescent frustration that compels John to escape. This closing sense of urgency about hardening his heart and not letting down his guard suggests not only childish desperation, but a lingering connection to a mother that John nonetheless hopes to disavow for the sake of independence. It is a connection that fills the immature youth with embarrassment, yet it is one that persists. Without resolving such conflicted feelings within himself, John cuts off literal ties with family and home, and quickly romanticises states of disconnectedness and departures via the life of a Modernist icon, Ezra Pound, in the next chapter.

In this subsequent chapter, the author writes, “Infuriated by provincial smallmindedness, Pound quit America [and] was accused of aiding and abetting the Fascists,” and while “working on his life’s project, the *Cantos*,” Pound “suffered persecution” and was “driven into exile,” “labelled a madman,” and “sacrificed his life to his art” (20). Comparing himself to Pound, John feels that he too “must be prepared to endure all that life has stored up for him, even if that means exile, obscure labour, and obloquy” (20). John has diligently studied and memorised Pound’s diasporic struggles and literary career. The impassioned references to monumental aspects of Pound’s existence suggest that John hopes to make his own life worthy of comparison. John too longs to be a great poet and to be well known for creating a literary masterpiece of his own one day. He has hope that the embarrassment of his troubled relationship to South Africa will be a mere stepping stone on the imagined, almost mythic arc of his life; that is, if he does end up as famous as Ezra Pound. The Modernist icon had suffered exile, obscurity and obloquy, but all of which had been sacrifices in the name of a successful artistic career, or so John thinks. Pound is the monumental cosmopolitan artist, an American who moved to London then to Italy, whose success (in John’s eyes) had not been dependent on where he had come from and under what circumstances he had been forced to leave. To John, it would be considered “provincial smallmindedness” to reduce Pound’s life to the sum of its disreputable parts (the short-lived love affairs, the Fascistic sympathies, the mental illness etc.), for Pound turned out, after all, to be “great.” John does

not wish to end up an anonymous migrant who fled the shame of being a white man in apartheid South Africa, bearing unresolved mother-issues, then ending up with a string of failed romances under his belt and an inconsequential artistic legacy. It is his hope that any private conflict and interpersonal failures will vanish in the final light of his overall success as a famous, cosmopolitan, literary artist, in the same way as he believes that Pound's reputation as a poet and philosopher overtook every negative aspect of his life.

But John's version of his Modernist idol as the ideal cosmopolitan is highly problematic. Like John, many of us would recognise Pound to be "the father of Modernism" (Pratt 3) and know him for his famous dictum, "Make it new." The dictum itself was known to be created originally by the Chinese emperor, Cheng Tang, founder of the Shang Chinese dynasty from 1766-1753 B.C.; Pound was inspired by the emperor and used the imperative "as his creative principle throughout the process of writing *The Cantos*" (Qian 117). Pound's intellectual and artistic engagements with Chinese poetry and aesthetics have added to the cosmopolitan aspect of his reputation as a Modernist poet and philosopher, including how his Cantos included personal, lyrical reactions to a range of writers across time and cultures, from the Greek poet, Homer, to French Symbolist, Remy de Gourmon. Although the Cantos have shown Pound to be a creative genius and a "cosmopolitan aesthete," critics have, however, also accused the poet of intellectual or "dilettante eclecticism" (Alexander 46). The most famous criticism of Pound revolves around his controversial English-language radio broadcasts from Italy during the Second World War. One critic described his speeches as a "confused mixture of fascist apologetics, economic theory, anti-Semitism, literary judgment and memory" (Read 273). During these speeches, Pound had attacked the policies of the American and British governments in its war against Italy. In them, he also "[attacked] Judaism as part of his denunciation of monotheism . . . adapting the stereotypical association of usury and Jews," using "the stereotype of the usurious Jew because it served his polemic in his fight against . . . what he regarded as the implementation of 'good economics'" (Liebregts 227). This subtle distinction between the individual Jewish financier and the Jews as a race

eventually got lost in Pound's exploitation of anti-Semitic rhetoric in his war against usury and his battle for economic justice, and "culminate in his anti-Semitic attacks in his Radio Rome talks that cannot be defended or mitigated" (Liebregts 227-228). In spite of his acclaimed artistic output, Pound's intellectual position during the speeches ultimately exposed him as an "ideological fanatic" (Pearlman 104) and a racist. Coupled with rumours of mental illness, all of these dints in Pound's reputation readily undermine John's unswerving idealisation of this Modernist pioneer. John's enthrallment over Pound's poetic career at the expense of the latter's less than favourable dimensions point to John's uncritical and unsophisticated way of thinking.

But John's misguided thinking about life and literature might be, as the novel's title already suggests, a sign of youthful immaturity. This immaturity is rooted in an unwillingness to engage with a past weighed down by an oppressive family and the burdens of racism in South Africa. To use Coetzee's own words elsewhere, John is an example of what happens when we fail at "understanding ourselves not only as objects of historical forces but as subjects of our own historical understanding" (*Stranger* 13). Whether this history is personal or political, John's emotional and physical disavowal of the past pushes him into a state of detachment from present realities. What the novel seems to suggest is that in order for John to become an adult, he has to first confront his memories. If not, what happens is that John becomes not only disconnected from the present, but his existence becomes a growing source of frustration and existential emptiness, one that he can only compensate for by turning to stereotypical conceptions of literary artists and cosmopolitan fantasies. The youth asserts, for example, that any artist should have tasted all manner of experiences, "from the noblest to the most degraded" (164); and women who give themselves to artists will recognise "the secret flame" within them (5). But as John becomes numbed to real-life, it is the Modernist paradigm of impersonality expounded by T. S. Eliot that attracts him the most, since it comes closest to endorsing his mounting sense of detachment.

This turn to Eliot's impersonality arises when the youth is working as a computer programmer at IBM. While at work, he enters a crisis-stage of unbearable boredom, lamenting that "he is exhausted all the time. At his grey-topped desk in the big IBM office he is overcome with gales of yawning that he struggles to conceal; at the British Museum the words swim before his eyes. All he wants to do is sink his head on his arms and sleep . . . he cannot accept that the life he is leading here in London is without plan or meaning" (59). Nothing gives him meaning, neither his job nor his private escapades into the world of literature during his visits to the British Museum. He compares himself to the poets a century ago who had stoned themselves on opium or alcohol, living intensely on the brink of madness. He is keenly frustrated that "living on the brink of psychic collapse" (59) is not the same as the supposed states of madness that are, to him, essential to being a great poet. This psychic collapse as a state of acute exhaustion and numbness continues to be a far cry from the psychological depths and intensities that John hopes to achieve, but never does in the novel. Faced with such exhaustion and an inability to feel, he attempts to justify his condition by comparing himself to the other Modernist icon, T. S. Eliot.

John recalls that Eliot, another diasporic artist who migrated from his homeland to London, "worked for a bank" (60). In John's view, Eliot too had suffered a dreary, brain-numbing job before becoming a world-renowned poet. John hopes that his lack of feeling and engagement with life can be rescued from mere banality by associating it with Modernist impersonality, as this might be a way through which his feelings of inadequacy can be elevated, projecting him unto an imagined path to potential literary greatness. He points out that, according to Eliot, "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion . . . ' Then as a bitter afterthought Eliot adds: 'But only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things'" (61). John hopes that he is not different from Eliot in possessing "a horror of spilling mere emotion on to the page" (61). But this is really a moment of self-delusion, as well as a moment that reveals his misunderstanding of Eliot's famous statement about poetic impersonality. John assumes that

Eliot had been “bitter” in wanting to escape from emotions, when the bitterness could simply be a projection from John’s sense of failure over his own empty life. Also, when Eliot wrote about impersonality, he was referring to the “impersonality of intuition . . . for the sake of revealing an underlying reality” (Douglass 76), a reality that is the heart of an artistic and intellectual revelation within a poem. Moreover, Eliot once wrote in his introduction to Paul Valéry’s Symbolist poetry collection, *Le Serpent*, that no good poetry can be “divorced from personal experience and passion” (qtd. in Douglass 76). The calibrated intuition to repress feelings also carries the assumption that there *are*, in the first place, feelings available for suppression. John’s misreading of Eliot gives the deluded impression that the youth has been repressing an intense and emotional personality in the service of artistic ambitions, when no such personality has ever existed that he would have to render it extinct. Other times, John has acknowledged that he is “cold and unresponsive” because he suffers from a great “poverty of spirit” (95), but during a moment when this “poverty of spirit” proves unbearable, the youth subscribes to the delusion that he is enacting a Modernist trope of self-extinction for the sake of a higher artistic calling.

John longs to envision himself as potentially belonging to the same league as Eliot. The latter started out working in Lloyd’s Bank in London and eventually became a cosmopolitan writer, one who not only transcended national boundaries but also turbulent emotions to become a free-floating iconic artist. This is, of course, John’s implicit conception of Eliot. His desire to become like Eliot is a cosmopolitan ambition, but it is founded upon delusion and self-denial. John’s sense of denial extends to the work that he finds himself executing while in IBM. He finds himself trapped within a country and a job he does not like. Ironically, the International Business Machines Corporation that he finds himself a part of evinces a global reach, providing the grounds for modes of cosmopolitanism if he only bothered to look and even play a conscious part in. IBM is a leading company within an expanding technological discourse that is one of the chief means through which globalisation is shrinking the world, due to “the multimodality of meaning-making and meaning-taking

practices” (Edwards and Usher 130) opened up by computers and the internet, a phenomenon that is fast becoming universal, penetrating first and even developing countries alike. John starts to think more critically about such practices and global interconnections when he finds himself working on computer programmes that are indirectly linked to political conflicts overseas. The darker dimensions of this reality hits him when he is tasked to work on the TSR-2 Atlas Project computers in weapons research: “he has joined the TSR-2 project, become part of the British defence effort; he has furthered British plans to bomb Moscow. Is this what he came to England for: to participate in evil, an evil in which there is no reward, not even the most imaginary?” (83). Just by working as a computer programmer, John realises he is indirectly taking part in military warfare beyond the shores of England.

Having escaped, in part, from the political shame and guilt of being a white South African during apartheid, John now learns that he has become both a beneficiary and a supporter of the development of nuclear weapons in the Cold War. The youth fled the political turmoil of his homeland where white Africans had bullied the blacks, only to now help England in “siding with the Americans who behave like bullies in Europe as all over the world” (84). John has become a semi-active agent in the exploitative processes of globalisation and a worldwide diffusion of military technologies that has resulted in “the emergence of a world trade in arms . . . and the institutionalisation of global regimes with jurisdiction over military and security affairs” (Held 88). The corollary of this has been the dominance of corporate interests of a few superpower nations over those of smaller nation states; the weakened states are no longer able to reign in weapons corporations and are disempowered militarily and economically by the superpower nations. America is such a dominant superpower. In *Remains*, the British empire was already being overtaken by the U.S. as a result of the latter’s growing military industrial complex and the decline of Pax Britannica after Britain has been drained from conflicts in colonies overseas and the depression of the 1870s.¹³ Globalisation has come to mean that the world military order

¹³ Ben-Porat, Guy. “The Decline of British Hegemony.”

become “highly stratified and highly institutionalised” (Held 88). The U.S. has emerged as the highest stratum in that order and it has used its power to influence the world in favour of its corporate and military interests. But before one too quickly dismisses America for having abused such its power and for being an imperialist “bully” (to use John’s word) on the global-political, economic and military stage, there is also another side to the story. Military historian, Max Boot, has argued, for example, that “U.S. imperialism has been the greatest force for good in the world during the past century. It has defeated communism and Nazism and has intervened against the Taliban and Serbian ethnic cleansing. It has also helped spread liberal institutions to countries as diverse as South Korea and Panama.”¹⁴ Caught in the period of the Cold War and indirectly implicated in furthering America’s imposition of military might on Russia, John has begun to enter a critical, cosmopolitan perspective of his position as a South African living and working in England while helping indirectly to fight a war for the United States as part of the TSR-2 Atlas Project. On the one hand John wonders if he can help Russia surreptitiously by doctoring TSR-2 cards and “do his bit to save Russia from being bombed” (83); on the other hand he acknowledges that “in the face of Kennedy’s threats, Khrushchev capitulates” (86) and America has at least won the day and circumvented a nuclear crisis with potential ramifications across the world.

For a brief moment, John seems on the brink of engaging, in a sustained, critical, and emotional way, with the political interconnectedness and cosmopolitan dimensions of his present life at International Computers, instead of simply lamenting about his detachment and pining for a future place in an imagined literary hall of fame. John’s nascent cosmopolitan engagement is certainly more considered than Stevens’ cursory mention of the “un-British” and “irresponsibly commanded” (41) attack on Boer settlements and his conscious or unconscious evasion of the topic of the Jewish Holocaust in his evocations of the past. Stevens was naïve to believe that notions of honour and dignity would make up for the horrors inflicted by Britain on the world’s political stage. There was, in particular, nothing

¹⁴ Boot, Max. “American Imperialism? No Need to Run Away From the Label.”

honourable about the acts of anti-Semitism committed under his own purview within the Darlington household. If Stevens manifested any profound sense of remorse, it was not over the awareness that injustices had been committed, but over selfish reasons regarding the loss of his father and the resignation of Miss Kenton. Coetzee's youth is, at least, intellectually concerned with turning "invisibly determining and often exploitative connections into conscious and self-critical ones" (Robbins 1998, 3) by questioning whether what he has been doing in IBM is right. But such a moment of critical self-awareness is short-lived. This is demonstrated during a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament rally in Trafalgar Square, which the youth attends, believing, at least, that it is the right thing to do. However, he decides only to stay "on the fringes as a way of signaling that he is only an onlooker" (84-85). Even at the rally, while watching the demonstrators protest against the use of nuclear bombs, the "fist-shaking and slogan-chanting, the whipping up of passion in general, repel him" (81). He is still incapable of feeling deeply for the demonstrators' cause. Even though he is distantly sympathetic, his chronic detachment ultimately undermines his ability to be a critical cosmopolitan, since he is fundamentally immature and unable to care about anything for long.

In the end, John leaves IBM, and this is not due to any sort of critical consciousness. Ostensibly, John informs his employer that it is due to "a lack of friendship," but the real reason, which he keeps secret, is this: "I am leaving IBM in order to become a poet" (109). From a more critical mode of cosmopolitanism, John has slipped back into that childishly indulgent dream of becoming a rootless and iconic poet. Although he has no regrets about leaving IBM, he reaches another mode of existential crisis; "on his way to becoming a proper Londoner . . . the city chastens him, chastises him; like a beaten dog, he is learning" (113). The way he describes this chastisement is poetic, but the meaning is still banal and the same as before; John is frustrated because he is, once again, bored and numbed to his present realities. His mind drifts to thoughts of Eliot again, as he wonders if the Modernist was "secretly dull to his depths, and might Eliot's claim that the artist's personality is irrelevant to his work be nothing but a strategem to conceal his own dullness" (116). John is hoping to

bring Eliot down to his level, in order to justify his own dulled sensibilities. He yearns to believe that a “dulled” person like himself is capable of becoming a famous cosmopolitan artist too, in spite of his shortcomings. What *Remains* and *Youth* have demonstrated so far is that there is an inevitable connection between a naïve longing for an over-idealised cosmopolitan ideal and an unwillingness to resolve private emotional issues resulting in interpersonal disasters. The more failures John has in connecting sympathetically with people (with women, as a recurring example) and situations, the more he dives headlong into muddled fantasies of an artistic cosmopolitanism. After his callous mistreatment of Marianne, for example, John inevitably compares himself to Ezra Pound again, but this time he realises that, unlike John, there was “passion aplenty in Pound – the ache of longing, the fire of consummation” (133); John finally seems to realise that he is *not* like Pound, and that perhaps he will never be like the Modernist writer. John is coming into the realisation that he might never be capable of passionate feelings. This crisis of a permanent sense of emotional void, coupled with his inability to garner “permission to reside in the united Kingdom” (140) after the loss of his job at IBM, leads John to fantasise about modes of cosmopolitanism again, but this time stripping away the aspirational dimensions of literary success and international recognition: “He can quit his present address and melt into the masses. He can go hop-picking in Kent (one does not need papers for that), work on building sites. He can sleep in youth hostels, in barns” (141). It is still a crude and unthinking mode of cosmopolitanism but now it is founded on anonymity, navigated solely by mere survival, without a concern for locality or direction. Frustrated by the aimlessness of his life and the realisation that his dreams of literary greatness might come to naught, John is suddenly filled with the desire to vanish; the ultimate act of escapism from oneself and one’s problems without resorting to artistic and cosmopolitan ideals.

Both *Youth* and *Remains* provide lessons on the consequences of living for a narrowly constructed, cosmopolitan identity. *Youth* is semi-autobiographical and reflects Coetzee’s own diasporic position as a white South-African writer and his internal difficulties of living in

London as a young man. John's issues of alienation and uncertainty are certainly shaped by his "cross-cultural or cross-civilisation passage" from South Africa to London, a passage that "must involve some significant tension between the source and the target cultures" (Paranjape, "Displaced Relations" 67). This tension is common to all diasporic experiences but which John has refused to confront in a critical and committed way; his tension arises between past affiliations to family and the fraught political situation in South Africa, and the current experience of being in the U.K. that constantly fails to match up to unrealistic expectations. Unable to engage with both the past and the present, John returns repeatedly to his fantasy of being a cosmopolitan writer. Then when the fantasy no longer seems viable, the youth yearns to disappear. In *Remains*, Stevens similarly yearns to "disappear" from emotional and interpersonal inadequacies by submitting himself uncritically to inherited discourses of professionalism, drawing cosmopolitan fantasies around his status as a mere butler in the service of a misguided employer. The delusions of greatness that both Darlington and Stevens suffer from conceal exploitative connections and represent the larger, ideological self-deceptions of imperialistic England. Salman Rushdie, who was the first to connect Ishiguro's work to Wodehouse's novels about Jeeves, the comic butler, has argued that Ishiguro indicts the comfortable myths of Wodehouse's world: "*The Remains of the Day* is . . . a brilliant subversion of the fictional modes from which it at first seems to descend. Death, change, pain and evil invade the Wodehouse-world: the time-hallowed bonds by which both live, are no longer dependable absolutes but rather sources of ruinous self-deceptions" which turn Darlington or Stevens "and his kind into tragic-comic anachronisms" (*Observer* 53). Wodehouse's comic novels about Jeeves, written in the early part of the 1900s, follow the scatterbrained Bertie Wooster and his butler through various improbable and unfortunate situations, which Jeeves always manages to extricate his employer from. Ishiguro has subverted the stereotypical figure of the English butler and turned him into a fool who has been duped by his equally foolish employer, as well as by an entire imperialistic and patriarchal discourse. Ishiguro's novel indicts the complacency of Wodehouse's ideological world. The latter's novels usually end happily and in them, England remains the imperialistic

power that would never be seen to oppress its colonies or collaborate with the Nazis.

Ishiguro's novel reveals the unreflective hollowness of Wodehouse's world through the delusions of both Darlington and Stevens when they believe that they are acting like influential cosmopolitans in the name of honour and nationalistic pride.

Complacency and self-deception are precisely John's problems in *Youth*, but as the novel reaches to a close, John seems on the verge of moving out of his mode of detachment from the cosmopolitan realities of his existence. Having decided before to quit IBM to pursue his fantasies about being a transcendental artist, the need to survive and avoid being shipped back to South Africa (where his oppressive family waits) draws him back into the same technological industry. He becomes a programmer again, this time for International Computers. In this new company, John becomes progressively interested in his work. International Computers is working on "the biggest computer in the world" which threatens to "strike a blow for the British computer industry from which IBM will take years to recover" (143). A growing sense of passion for what he is doing is a step in a newfound and potentially optimistic direction for John. But he has not departed from his arrogant need to become merely more than himself, as when he marvels about how he is "an undistinguished graduate from a second-class university in the colonies, being permitted to address by first name men with doctorates in mathematics, men who, once they get talking, leave him dizzied in their wake" (157). The fact that he is treated as somebody on par with these doctorate holders fills John with a childish thrill. But such pride also encourages him to become more invested in his role in the organisation. Working for computers inspires him to even create assemblage poems which he submits to literary magazines, leading him to become known as "the barbarian who wants to replace Shakespeare with a machine" (161). Art and real-life are merging for John, when these aspects had once been kept separate. The youth is increasingly caught up in making something meaningful out of his job.

Concomitantly, John also becomes less detached from the people around him. This is most clear when he meets Ganaphy, a fellow computer programmer colleague from India.

With Ganaphy, John finds himself increasingly capable of empathy. He realises that both of them and two sides of the same coin. As a diasporic Indian, Ganaphy has been starving himself in a kind of grief over his separation from his mother. John realises that he too had been wrestling with conflicted feeling about South Africa and his parents back home. There has been a foreshadowing of this kinship with Ganaphy earlier in *Youth* when in Satyajit Ray's *Apu* movie trilogy at the Everyman Cinema, John saw his own "trapped mother" and "feckless father" in the characters of the Indian film (93). In John's recognition of kinship with Ganaphy, he has entered a potentially enriching connection with both another person and a different culture. Ganaphy has helped John to realise that he has to confront the psychological tensions of his state of multiple belonging, such that he can no longer deny the hang-ups of his South African past while trying to forge a meaningful life in England. John, it would seem, is finally growing up. He realises that if issues of the past are left unresolved, both Ganaphy and himself might end up becoming "locked into an attenuated endgame playing himself, with each move, further into a corner and into defeat. One of these days the ambulance men will call at Ganapathy's flat and bring him out on a stretcher with a sheet over his face. When they have fetched Ganapathy they might as well come and fetch him too" (169). John has reached a significant juncture in his life, in which he is become emotionally and critically responsive to the interconnected realities of the world around him, when before he had been detached and indifferent. He can be said to have become a more critical cosmopolitan, a migrant worker in a foreign land who is more analytical and conscious now of the workings of the society and the technological discourses that he finds himself in, as well as capable of empathising for once with another diasporic individual. This awareness was brought about by the epiphany that if John had continued with his route of dreamy detachment, his life would had become an "endgame," one that would simply end without purpose and meaning.

Unlike John, Stevens in *Remains* enters, as Ishiguro's title suggests, the remains—the final phase—of a life, a wasted existence concluding in a final sense of futility and

pointlessness. Stevens is urged towards such a conclusion after meeting Miss Kenton, the woman he had secretly desired and whom he had traveled for a large part of the novel's narrative to meet. During the meeting, she confesses to Stevens about the state of her marriage to Mr Benn—"What a terrible mistake I've made with my life" (251)—and wonders what kind of life she could have had if she had married Stevens instead. After confessing (to himself and the reader but not to Miss Kenton) that the moment caused his heart to break (252), Stevens sits on a bench at a pier with a stranger, with whom he discusses how the evening is "the best part of the day, the part they most looked forward to" (253). It is a banal moment consisting of inconsequential banter regarding work (during which Stevens shows off his Darlington-past again) that segues unexpectedly into an emotional confession: "The fact is . . . I gave my best to Lord Darlington. I gave him the very best I had to give, and now – well – I find I do not have a great deal more left to give . . . Since my new employer Mr Farraday arrived, I've tried . . . to provide the sort of service I would like him to have. I've tried and tried, but whatever I do I find I am far from reaching the standards I once set myself . . . I gave it all to Lord Darlington" (255). Stevens even cries, a fact that Stevens still cannot admit, but which is indirectly revealed when the stranger offers him a hankie. This grievous outburst, with its suggestive repetition of that lament about giving one's best to Darlington, contains an oblique indictment of Lord Darlington, an accusation that the latter had played a major role in wasting Stevens' life. It is as close to a condemnation of the role Darlington had played in terms of his past wrongdoings that we, as readers, will ever get to hear from this repressed protagonist. Even at this moment, Stevens is too stubbornly "professional" and loyal to Darlington and to the delusions of his past to expose self-deceptions and reflect on their moral implications. Whether Stevens gave his "best" or his "all" to Lord Darlington, a suppressed anger underneath the outpouring of grief is almost palpable in his speech. Stevens' life is wasted because it had been for nothing. In the end, his life in professional servitude had not been redeemed by any form of praiseworthy, cosmopolitan significance or connected to the upholding of virtues like dignity and honour. Lord Darlington, or the self-important imperialistic discourse he belongs to, has been nothing more than a sham. More than this,

Stevens realises that he had been too uncritical to see through the lies. And now it is too late; the “best” of Stevens has already been lost to a past founded upon delusions of grandeur and global significance. Hints of frustration and even rage bubble beneath the surface of his grief.

But these hints remain hints, in the end. Stevens fails to enter a position of greater critical awareness or to learn from the mistakes of his past. Even as we do not know how Stevens might evolve after the novel is over, the narrative closes with Stevens swearing to submit himself once again to a mechanical sense of loyalty and professionalism, as when he declares in the last moment of *Remains*: “I have . . . already devoted much time to developing my bantering skills . . . I will begin practising with renewed effort . . . to pleasantly surprise [Mr Farraday]” (258). Stevens is, more likely than not, going to end up like his father, a butler-automaton, devoid of the faculties for critical thought, emotional depth or genuine empathy. The fact that his new employer is now American hints at the “actually existing cosmopolitanism” (Robbins, 1998: 1) that would describe the shifting realities that surround him now; if Stevens were less naïve and more critically aware, he might acknowledge (perhaps even with humour) the passing of an aristocratic era (now overtaken by American capitalism) and react self-reflexively to the ironic transformation of its symbols into nostalgic emblems of an anachronistic past (such as the Darlington House when it is currently in the hands of Mr Farraday or the incongruous figure of the self-repressed English butler in the present day). But by the end of the book, Ishiguro leaves us with the feeling that Stevens is not capable of reflecting on such matters or of being critically attuned to current cosmopolitan realities. Just like Coetzee’s *Youth*, *Remains* implicitly advances a preferable, critical mode of cosmopolitanism by showing us a pitiable protagonist who has suffered from not having been critical enough. Unlike John who *does* eventually become more conscious and aware, however, Stevens only turns into his master’s servant all over again, remaining impervious to potentially new ways of thinking about himself and the shifting realities of his present.

Chapter 3: Unconsoleable Cosmopolitanism

Both Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled* (1995) and Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* (2004) insist—to borrow Katherine Stanton words—upon “the everyday experience of the unfinished” (23) in relation to the ethical dimensions of living as a cosmopolitan who has to negotiate between personal and global obligations. Unlike Stevens and John from *Remains* and *Youth* respectively, who could be dismissed as being naïve about their limited spheres of influence, both personally and upon the world at large, the next two novels feature highly influential artistic professionals as protagonists. Also unlike the first pair of protagonists, Ryder and the eponymous Costello are autonomous beings who are not victims of circumstances in the way that Stevens is arguably a product of a highly hierarchised English society predicated on imperialistic values and class-divisions, or in the way that John is forced to negotiate his diasporic status after being compelled to leave a politically-troubled South Africa. Ryder and Costello are, in a sense, empowered, successful and influential individuals who are sought after all over the world for their artistic and intellectual authority and experience. As compared to Stevens and John, they are prominent free-agents and they also operate as functions of discourses, to borrow Michel Foucault's terms. I wish to argue that Costello and Ryder are symbolic manifestations of this homogenisation of art and culture across the world, but in this global process of homogenisation, these characters struggle to negotiate with a multiplicity of demands upon their status as culturally symbolic figures. Both figures navigate within cities as they struggle to meet these multiple demands. Within the word “cosmopolitanism,” derived from “kosmo-polis,” the aspect of the “polis” already highlights the notion of the city that is central to the term. *Unconsoled* features a town that turns labyrinthine in its aspiration to become a global city, within which the arrival of the novel's protagonist ignites an explosion of tensions between the particularities of the city's localised culture and the dream of global significance that the city has been aspiring to fulfill. In *Costello*, the world shrinks to become like one sprawling city that gives us an intense host of dissenting voices, interrogating Coetzee's roving protagonist who fails to enter an

ideological space of accord with them. In both narratives, the protagonists discover that their individual forms of cultural universalism might either be damaging or ontologically and practically impossible. If the novels discussed in the earlier chapter attacked the potential naivety of cosmopolitanism, *Unconsoled* and *Costello* stress the dangers of a cosmopolitan position that is energised by arrogance and complacency, such that the lack of productive engagement with multiple perspectives renders any cosmopolitan position as a perpetual problem to be grappled with.

The narrative of *Unconsoled* is hallucinatory from its opening pages when Ryder, the world-renowned pianist, appears at an empty hotel reception desk in an anonymous European town. He first meets Gustav, the hotel's porter whose verbiage far exceeds the realistic length of time that it takes for Ryder to ride an elevator to his hotel room. Gustav is clearly a symbolic link between *Remains* and *Unconsoled* as his personality and behaviour are immediately reminiscent of Stevens and Stevens' senior in their desperate recourse to notions of professionalism to redeem a life. Such a link sets up a humorous contrast between the disempowered Stevens vis-à-vis the successful and influential professional of Ryder whom Gustav clearly admires. A "comic parallel" (Li 2004, 242) between the Stevens/Gustav-type figure and Ryder is set up when Gustav extols past to present attempts to raise the professional bar for porters in the town by carrying suitcases for the guests and continuing to hold them even while in the lift: "When I was younger, when I first made these rules for myself, I would always carry up to three suitcases, however large or heavy. If a guest had a fourth, I'd put that one on the floor . . . [and when] four years ago I had a period of ill health, and I was finding things difficult, and so we discussed it at the Hungarian Café . . . [that] there was no need for me to be so strict on myself. After all, they said to me, all that's required is to impress on the guests something of the true nature of our work. Two bags or three, the effect would be much the same. I should reduce my minimum to two suitcases and no harm would be done" (8). Gustav's garrulousness betrays an underlying sense of desperation that was only subliminally hinted at in *Remains* with regard to Stevens' own justifications for his

professional standards as a butler. The overestimation of a small detail in Gustav's handling of luggage as grounds for professional self-congratulation leads on to the bathetic moment when Gustav alludes haughtily to "something of the true nature" of the work of porters. This is, of course, meant to impress Ryder, in the way Stevens has hoped to impress anyone with his appeals to dignity and self-restraint as the true marks of a "great" butler, when greatness in *Remains* belies a crippled, emotional state and a sense of intellectual and moral slackness. Gustav repeatedly drops an implicit invite for Ryder to attend his porters-meeting at the Hungarian Café in the hope that Ryder would raise the profile of the porters from being a mere "laughing stock" (7-9). This indirectly points to Ryder's own position as a respected cosmopolitan artist, whose presumed professionalism as a celebrated musician far exceeds the carrying of any number of bags by any number of diligent porters. The novel then establishes more directly Ryder's reputation and influence when Hilde Stratmann, an employee of the Civic Arts Institute, welcomes Ryder with the comment that he might just be "not only the world's finest pianist, but perhaps the very greatest of the century" and that he has "such a following in this town" (11). But the surrealism of the scene with Gustav and the bathos of his extended speech in the lift actually cast a shadow of uncertainty over Ryder's self-assured position.

The surrealism is further compounded when Ryder appears to know what is troubling Gustav even when the latter has revealed nothing more than his professional fantasies: "[It] occurred to me that for all his professionalism . . . a certain matter that had been preoccupying him throughout the day had again pushed its way to the front of his mind," a matter "about his daughter and her little boy" (13). The opening moments of the novel have introduced us to a surrealistic world in which the passages seem to operate like moments in a Kafkaesque narrative in which "each sentence says 'interpret me'" (Adorno 246). In a dream-like way, time appears to expand and contract during Gustav's speech while Ryder is suddenly able to read minds, which suggests, from this early part of the novel, a symbolic link between all the characters, such that they are more connected to each other than readers might at first realize.

It is a peculiar connection that has pushed its way into our readerly attention in the way Ryder is able to tell in no uncertain terms that “a certain matter” had “pushed its way to the front of [Gustav’s] mind.” In spite of the aura of regard and influence set up around Ryder in this opening chapter, Gustav’s ludicrous overvaluing of the “true nature” of his work as a porter casts initial doubt on the nature of Ryder’s professionalism and position in the town. The revelation that Gustav is haunted by interpersonal troubles is reminiscent of Stevens’ predicament in *Remains*. Just like in this earlier novel, the narrative unfolds through the first-person perspective. This spells all sorts of similar troubles for the novel’s narrator, Ryder, particularly with regard to the misplacement of priorities such that one’s private life is wrecked at the expense of a romanticised cosmopolitan ideal. Gustav is Stevens in a different guise and the novel is already preparing us for the possibility that Ryder, the first-person narrator, is potentially no different from these working-class characters. Ishiguro has himself stated that *Unconsoled* is an attempt “to move out of a straight, naturalistic, realistic landscape and emphasise the mythic or the metaphorical aspects of [his] work” (qtd. in Lewis 143). This mythic aspect, as presented earlier in *Remains*, was linked to a deluded mythologising of the self and its incorporation into a mythologised vision of history perpetuated within imperialistic England. Ryder’s ability to see into Gustav’s mind already suggests that for all his glamour as a cosmopolitan musician here to grace a provincial European town with his sought-after professional presence, this sense of self-importance might turn out to be a damaging delusion. (Ryder’s estrangement from his own family and his negative impact on the private lives of the townsfolk are the major ways in which the damaging effects will manifest later in the novel). Unlike Stevens and Gustav, however, Ryder is clearly in a position of much greater power, authority and influence. Gustav is eager for the central protagonist to grace his porters’ gathering while Strattman is quick to acknowledge Ryder’s standing as a world-class pianist. Ryder has been invited to this unnamed and anonymous town to perform, emphasising his significance as a cosmopolitan artist, one who presumably negotiates in autonomous and influential ways between different cities (anonymous or otherwise) across the world.

Elizabeth Costello has clearly the same international clout as Ryder but in the discursive realm of literature. Her significance as a global writer and her autonomy in being able to spread her influence beyond local affiliations are established elaborately at the start of Coetzee's novel in passages that read like parts of an official biography:

By birth she is Australian . . . Elizabeth Costello is a writer, born in 1928 . . . She has written nine novels, two books of poems, a book on bird life, and a body of journalism . . . [She] made her name with her fourth novel, *The House on Eccles Street* (1969), whose main character is Marion Bloom, wife of Leopold Bloom, principal character of another novel, *Ulysses* (1922), by James Joyce. In the past decade there has grown up around her a small critical industry; there is even an Elizabeth Costello Society, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico . . . [She travels] to Williamstown, Pennsylvania, to Altona College, to receive the Stowe Award. The award is made biennially to a major world writer . . . [and is] one of the larger literary prizes in the United States. (1-2)

Unlike in *Youth*, Coetzee's novel before this, Costello travels because she wins prizes overseas, whereas John is forced to flee the private and political infamy of his homeland. Costello travels and asserts her authority on literary matters wherever she goes in the world, and she is famous for a novel that responds intertextually to a Modernist icon, James Joyce; John was inspired by his own preferred Modernists, Eliot and Pound. Costello is clearly the successful version of John, or the literary great that the diasporic John has been aspiring to become in order to disavow fraught notions of family and home. Just as the figure of Gustav casts doubt on the professional aura surrounding Ryder, the connection from the failures of John's life to the apparent success of Costello's career suggests that there might be more in common between them that readers might at first suspect; for example, Costello might be suffering—like John in *Youth*—from self-deceptions of her own with regard to her position as a cosmopolitan writer. This is a point that will be steadily fleshed out as the narrative progresses and when Costello later confronts characters who challenge her position.

Unlike the youth, however, Costello is a widely-regarded intellectual and writer. This might cause readers into believing that Costello is another version of Coetzee himself. Coming after *Youth*, which was clearly an *autre*-biography about the author, critics have suggested that Costello is simply Coetzee re-creating himself in new form, using Costello to vocalise private, real-life opinions. James Wood, writing for the *London Review of Books*, has suggested, “Far from being evasive . . . Coetzee is passionately confessing, and that his entire book vibrates with confession” (16). This is with regard to *Costello*. Yet Wood himself is ambivalent in the same review about whether the link between the author and the protagonist is as straightforward, irrespective of their resemblance in professional reputation, their shared stance on vegetarianism¹⁵ and Coetzee’s professed penchant for “uniting the aesthetic and the ethical” (qtd. in Gutmann 3). This is because Wood also writes about how Coetzee “who instead of tying himself to a series of propositions puts them in the mouth of a fictional creation and slips away behind her” (“Frog’s Life” 15). This slippage is made clear during the observations by Costello’s son of his mother. The fact that the son is also called John already suggests that Coetzee is not necessarily Costello or vice versa in any simplistic way. John (every reference to John is henceforth a reference to Costello’s son) may be a teacher of physics and astronomy in the narrative, but it is also possible that John is a way by which Coetzee may implicitly criticise dimensions of the characteristics and extreme views shared potentially by *both* Costello and Coetzee. Costello and John could operate as aspects of the author’s intellectual concerns pitted against each other. At one point, John throws doubt, for example, on the meaningfulness of Costello’s profession as a cosmopolitan writer who travels and asserts her influence when he “thinks of her as a seal, an old, tired circus seal” (3). By that token, John is also calling the entire global circuit that seeks Costello’s professional endorsement and authority a circus.

¹⁵ Coetzee had presented the same views through the evocation of his fictional character, Costello, during the 1997-98 Tanner Lectures, sponsored by the University Centre for Human Values at Princeton University. The views were subsequently published in his essay collection, *The Lives of Animals* (2001).

Costello might be an influential and sought-after literary figure, but her son reveals ambivalences about his mother that undermine her aura as an iconic writer. He reveals, for example, that Costello is the same woman who, as an earlier bipolar self, “*stormed around the house in Melbourne . . . screaming at her children, ‘You are killing me! You are tearing the flesh from my body’*” (30). Yet John also professes that he “does not hate her” and even “serves at her shrine [as a] mouthpiece for the divine” (31). If John is Coetzee’s critical mouthpiece, carping about private flaws and a sense of predictability and weariness that accompanies Costello’s cosmopolitan enterprise, Costello can also be said to be a version of the idealised writer that the author secretly aspires to become. It is a version that is born out of psychological depression but the result is an uncompromising and towering literary giant who has no qualms expressing controversial and individualistic views. One of such views is based on the secret life of Kafka’s Red Peter, the ape from his surrealist story, “A Report to an Academy.” In line with her hardliner stance on vegetarianism, Costello uses Kafka’s text in a literal way, asserting that members of an audience, who had just bestowed upon her a cheque and a medal for her contribution to the literary arts, should imagine the internal life of Kafka’s “poor educated ape” (32) after it has been captured by humans. John echoes the audience’s reaction in not wanting to hear about “such a grim chapter in literary history” (31). It is a reaction that Costello refuses to deal with since she is adamant that everyone should, like her, respect that animals are just like humans in possessing thoughts and feelings. Coetzee, like Costello, has popularly been known to be “eccentric and even arrogant” (Herlitzius 151), as well as confrontational, whenever he does assert his opinions in public. Unlike Costello, however, Coetzee has mostly been known to be “asocial” (Herlitzius 151) and to shy away from public appearances. This taciturnity can be said to manifest when the author occasionally expresses his opinions in public through the fictionalised voice of Costello.¹⁶ It is possible that Costello even signifies a desire on the author’s part in aspiring to possess a greater sense of conviction and courage about expressing such contentious views.

¹⁶ Ibid.

However, through the figure of John, Coetzee is keen to divorce himself from Costello too. At one moment in the novel, John (as both Costello's son and arguably Coetzee himself) even seems determined to disavow any connection from Costello. This moment occurs after Costello leaves her prize-reception ceremony and both John and the protagonist are on the plane; John watches and describes his mother after he has imagined himself as her divine mouthpiece: "She lies slumped in her seat. Her head is sideways, her mouth open . . . He can see up her nostrils, into her mouth, down the back of her throat . . . No, he tells himself, that is not where I come from, that is not it" (33-34). John's seemingly final but ambivalent assertion that he does not come from his mother's mouth pivots on the trope of ventriloquism and on the female novelist as a mouthpiece for Coetzee, a notion that is both acknowledged but also rejected. Yet, as Jane Poyner writes, "the play on 'John' as articulating Coetzee's refusal is also challenged. If John is a stand-in for Coetzee, then his relationship with Costello disrupts the idea of characters and the text being parented by the author, since John is Costello's child, rather than her parent" (219). In other words, Coetzee is simultaneously repelled *and* inspired by the uncompromising yet influential figure of Costello. Coetzee might have parented or produced the text and its characters, and they might even contain ideals that the author is a child of, yet Coetzee is not a completely loyal child—he is, at the same time, judgmental and wary (like Costello's son) of these ideals. Central to these ideals is the position of Costello as an authoritative, cosmopolitan novelist. I will argue that the novel even comes close to rejecting the tenability of the cosmopolitan enterprise of a writer who represents the spread of literary culture, and whose opinions are heard, around the world. As a globally-recognised novelist himself, Coetzee too has traveled and presented his views in different parts of the world. His work, *Elizabeth Costello*, becomes a vicarious way by which author and reader may reflect on such a cosmopolitan enterprise that is, at first glance, successful (going by Coetzee's Nobel Prize and Costello's achievements as inventoried at the start of the fictional narrative). But it is also an enterprise that quickly begins to look problematic when observed through the eyes of Costello's son in the early stages of the novel.

Costello's reputation as a renowned writer which takes her from Pennsylvania to the African continent (in the same way that Ryder in *Unconsoled* presumably accepts invitations across the globe to perform on a regular basis) and her acceptance of literary prizes from far-flung institutions suggest that she is a symbol of a cultural discourse with a worldwide audience eager to subscribe to it. John suggests and critiques this when he talks about protecting his mother "against the relic-hunters and the contumelists and the sentimental pilgrims" (30), fans and admirers eager to use or respond to Costello in the hopes of aligning themselves with this much-respected discourse of contemporary English literature. At one of her award-receptions, John encounters a mother who tells him, "Our daughter is at Altona . . . writing her honours dissertation on your mother" (15); John subsequently notes that the mother and her spouse "have the look of money, old money. Benefactors, no doubt" (15) of the literary prize that Costello receives. The implications of this scene are various: Costello's work is important enough to be studied in prestigious schools and the reference to money means that the support of English literature has wealthy benefactors. Cynically viewed, literature becomes a mutually beneficially discourse—esteemed writers like Costello benefit through the prizes they receive while benefactors like the family John talks to gains respectability by being seen to appreciate the critically acclaimed works by Costello. John suffers—but, perhaps, he also benefits—from the favour Costello receives as a symbolic figure for a certain homogenisation of literary culture when the fictional feminist literary theorist, Susan Moebius, sleeps with him in order to learn more about Costello. Moebius herself has written an academic book on Costello, and hopes to figure out what makes Costello tick as a writer. John gives in to Moebius' advances, knowing full well of her manipulation, and he lets on to her that his mother is "measuring herself against the illustrious dead . . . paying tribute to the powers that animate her" (26). What animates Costello is also what animates both theorists like Moebius and the benefactors of literature alike, which is the subscription to a global literary discourse that provides them with a sense of purpose in both the professional as well as the existential senses. Costello's "tribute" can be defined by the way she successfully responds to or writes/inserts herself into an internationally influential

discourse of literature in English, while Moebius responds academically to Costello, and wealthy benefactors pay literal tribute by pumping in donations of “old money” for the prizes Costello takes home. In the centre of it all, Costello becomes the “illustrious,” cosmopolitan symbol of this literary discourse that everyone pays tribute to. (Illustriousness also suggests that prestige is one of the more superficial intentions for subscribing to Costello.) John even describes the upholding of his mother as such a symbol in dark and violent terms:

He has a vision of his mother in her big double bed, crouched, her knees drawn up, her back bared. Out of her back, out of the waxy, old person’s flesh, protrude three needles: not the tiny needles of the acupuncturist or the voodoo doctor but . . . knitting needles . . . who has done it? The needles have not killed her, there is no need to worry about that, she breathes regularly in her sleep. Nevertheless, she lies impaled. (26)

It is never clear why John prefers to see “knitting needles” instead of sharp voodoo doctor’s needles, but the effect is of a banal sense of seeming harmlessness that can, in fact, produce harm. What is harmful is Costello’s fame and John’s mother is paying the price, even as the latter might not know it. Everybody wants a piece of this cosmopolitan writer for reasons of personal gain while (in John’s eyes) Costello only grows increasingly vulnerable and subject to “loneliness” (27) in her old age. John views this desire in her followers as a form of passive-aggressive and eventually damaging violence to his mother’s aging state of mind. His question of “who has done it” hints at the anonymity of the perpetrator, perhaps because there are so many of them. This is what it means when everyone wants to take a figurative stab at a world-famous writer so that they can partake vicariously in her eminence, the “illustriousness” of her influential position, while simultaneously (and aggressively) perpetuating the discourse she symbolises for purposes of personal glory. The fact that Costello does not “die” from the metaphorical impaling suggests that she is like a force that cannot be put down; as an iconic and global promoter of English literature, Costello might be wearied by her professional demands but the successful expansion of her discourse is also, in a sense, monstrously unstoppable. I am reminded again of the earlier John in the novel, *Youth*,

when the protagonist, in a sense, does injustice—one can also conceive this as a form of interpretive violence or damage done—to the memory of dead Modernist icons like Pound and Eliot for immature, self-gratifying reasons. In the case of *Costello*, the protagonist is the literary icon who has been “impaled” by followers of her career and the international discourse that she represents and advances. But the advancement and acceptance of literature in English across the globe can also result in a homogenising discourse that violently edges out competing literary discourses. Costello is really both victim and perpetrator. Suman Gupta has noted that the global spread of English through publishing and the dissemination of English literature in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century cannot be underestimated, and argues that “the centring of the global publishing industry in English” may well “perpetuate and extend the cultural imperialism of Englishness and Americanness in new guises” (162). Costello might not be a J. K. Rowling or a Stephenie Meyer but her success as a producer of English-language novels and the hegemonic pervasiveness of her Western literary discourse are constantly emphasised in Coetzee’s narrative through her travels as a professional writer and through encounters with other writers who ideologically oppose her. As a cosmopolitan artist, neither Costello nor even Ryder in *Unconsoled* is sufficiently critical of the discourses they represent and the homogenising effects of their influence. But in featuring them as uncritical protagonists, Coetzee’s and Ishiguro’s novels are, in fact, exhibiting their own forms of critical cosmopolitanism. In the case of *Costello*, the constant opposition its protagonist faces across the world in relation to her status as a renowned author of English novels forms a repeated motif throughout Coetzee’s work.

From associating Costello’s literary discourse with tropes of violence (with Costello being both the victim of discursive aggression, as well as its perpetrator), Coetzee shifts to the trope of disease. This time, instead of using Costello’s son as a critical mouthpiece, Coetzee invokes Paul Zumthor—a real-life, literary theorist from Canada—through the character of Emmanuel Egudu, a fictional writer from Nigeria, in order to indict Western literary discourse and the corollary marginalisation of other discourses. This takes place on a cruise-ship where

Costello has just presented a talk on the future of the novel, in which she talks about how the novel (like history) consists of fictions that “lock well enough into one another to give us what looks like a common past, a shared story” (38) which empowers us in the present to envision the future. But during her talk, Costello realised that she was bored by what she was saying, as her audience did not seem to understand her, even though they were “of her generation and ought therefore to share with her a common past” (39). In a superficial way, perhaps her reflective and dispassionate way of speaking puts her audience into a state of bored indifference. In any case, Costello starts to doubt herself. She wonders if she herself has merely lost faith in fixed systems of belief in general: belief, in her mind, could be no more than an ephemeral “source of energy, like a battery which one clips into an idea to make it run” (39). In dramatic contrast to Costello, Emmanuel Egudu follows on after her to lecture in a more convincing, self-assured, and passionate way about how, unlike African literature, Western literature is disembodied, since the former is grounded in performance and orality. Egudu quotes from Zumthor: “‘Since the seventeenth century,’ writes Zumthor, ‘Europe has spread across the world like a cancer, at first stealthily, but for a while now at gathering pace, until today it ravages life forms, animals, plants, habitats, languages. With each day that passes several languages of the world disappear, repudiated, stifled . . . One of the symptoms of the disease has without doubt, from the beginning, been what we call literature; and literature has . . . become what it is . . . by denying the voice’” (45).

Speaking through fictionalised mouthpieces about the homogenised state of literature in the world might allow Coetzee to separate his own private views from the views expressed by his characters, but his novel nonetheless presents a consistent discussion on the perils of literary homogenisation in the world. Such homogenisation is presented here as a symptom of a Europe-led process of imperialism. Violence is still conveyed here in the ravaging of plant and animal life, and the destruction of languages in the wake of the spread of this homogeneous cancer, a homogenisation aided by the “gathering pace” of globalisation driven by a few superpower countries. African orality has been marginalised and gradually stamped

out by the spread of Western literature, one of whose forms has been the English novel that Costello has only been speaking about a couple of moments before. Unlike Costello, who was clearly comfortable (to the point of boredom) within her discursive field during her own talk, Egudu works to use the English language against itself, using it to critique the privileging of writing in English over oral forms in other languages that have caused the extinction of the latter. Egudu's speech is full of passion and determination to right the injustices of cultural imperialism enacted in the west over the centuries, while Costello's talk—"The Future of the Novel"—is presented with "a worn, unconvincing air" (39). Her boredom can be said to be symptomatic of a general complacency about how the western novel (regardless of the oppositions of Egudu) will always have an assured place in the future, due to the historical successes of imperialism that Egudu has openly criticised. It is not difficult to assume that Europe's successful, literary homogenisation of the world in the present day will continue to be the norm for a long time to come, regardless of Egudu's immediate call to action. His audience on the ship might applaud enthusiastically after his speech (more enthusiastically than for Costello's talk), but we have been warned earlier in the chapter that the audiences for such talks are made up of "discriminating persons who take their leisure seriously" (36), an oxymoronical description that suggests that, as leisurely people, these audiences might only have superficial interests in what these authors have to say; at worst, they are only listening to Egudu and Costello to pass the time whilst pretending that they are more cultured and intellectually interested than they really are.

Egudu's words fall, more likely than not, on "discriminating" (not necessarily in the intellectual sense, but probably in the way a wealthy person discriminates, for example, between which branded goods to buy) but ultimately apathetic ears. Coetzee's novel is not only attacking Costello's role as a symbol for English-language literature but it is also critiquing the worldwide audiences who passively submit to her homogenising discourse. The audience will clearly not privilege speech over writing because Egudu says so; they take their "leisure" far too seriously to be profoundly moved to action. Egudu's talk is only one of many

talks that the audience will attend with a sufficient level of intelligence and sensitivity but the processes of cultural homogenisation will always remain too inexorable to be overcome by a vociferous African literary activist or a gathering of rich tourists on a cruise-ship. I would suggest that it is far more likely that Egudu's audience would *not* want anything to change, and go on preferring the written text over orality. They would continue to support the "proliferation of Western styles, products, and tastes" (Jay 39) resulting from the economic success and political clout of just a few western countries. As readers of Coetzee's novel, we too might feel implicated in the novel's criticism of such audiences. In this way, the novel is also urging us to be critical cosmopolitans ourselves, by mirroring and stirring us out of our possible complacency with regard to the imperialistic dimension of a homogenised, globalised literary culture. In talking about the popular rhetoric of globalisation as a form of "triumphalism," Molefi Kete Asante emphasises how globalisation is more often "a celebration of Western conquest," by which dominance is maintained by "controlling access to privilege, resources and open channels of communication. Enshrined in the discourse between nations or between different peoples is suspicion based on the degree to which Western influences have been accepted or not" (155). Regardless of the degree of suspicion, the most popular books in the world are still written in the languages of the western metropolis (such as English), the consequence of "a linguistic homogenisation that attest to the capital currency of the most powerful economy in the world" (Nethersole 640). Just as how Wai Chee Dimock has described a global condition as the "'McDonaldisation' of the world," a general homogenisation of culture "presided over by global capital" (2007, 2), Costello belongs to the global spread of the western novel as the most universally accepted form of literature, as Ryder belongs, in *Unconsoled*, to the high-culture, internationally-accepted discourse of Western classical music.

Ishiguro's novel features an unnamed European town that is eager to subscribe to a larger cultural homogenisation brought about by the process of globalisation and represented by Ryder's much-anticipated presence. Ryder and a large number of important people in the

town, including one of its civic leaders, Mr. Pederson, meet at a cinema screening of the iconic 1968 film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, directed by Stanley Kubrick. In a surreal moment, Pederson and Ryder exchange words as if no one in the cinema may hear them, while Ishiguro carefully highlights what is happening in the movie that is being screened behind them as they are talking: “Clint Eastwood was talking into a microphone to his wife back on earth and tears were flowing down his face . . . Yul Brynner comes into the room and tests Eastwood’s speed on the draw by clapping his hands in front of him” (100). The movie takes place while Pederson is explaining to Ryder, “Our city is close to crisis. There’s widespread misery. We have to start putting things right somewhere and we might as well start at the centre” (99). The novel never makes clear the exact nature of this crisis with its corollary consequence of “widespread misery.” The invitation for Ryder to perform in the town and the backdrop of a world-famous movie during Pederson’s vague explanation point to how the town must somehow elevate itself to a position of global relevance, which involves giving in to a larger homogenisation of international culture. Members of the city like Pederson hint that such a process is vital for the city’s survival, which is suggestively connected to an eventual position of international, cultural standing and a desire to eventually reap the benefits of the influx of global capital (through tourism as a possible income-generating avenue).

The fact that no one in the cinema seems to be watching the movie (everyone is busy talking to one another) strongly suggests that this process of homogenisation is already being passively received without any sense of critical engagement. The dissemination of Western films across the world has regularly been described a form of cultural homogenisation and imperialism facilitated by the “predominant American ownership of key resources for the manufacture and transmission of culture, including satellite systems, information technology manufacture, news agencies, the advertising industry, television programme production and export, and the film industry” (Holton 166). In both Kubrick’s classic movie and the novel by Arthur C. Clarke that it was based upon, cultural homogenisation has become a fact of life, as

the world is portrayed as being managed by the dominant cultures of both the Americans and the Soviets, whose advanced technological capabilities allow them to even colonise the moon. Framed against the backdrop of Kubrick's film, the issue at the heart of Ryder's and Pederson's conversation, this desire of a town eager to fit in with a larger homogenised global culture, becomes eerily amplified. The fact that Ryder confesses to how *Space Odyssey* is a film he is "never tired of seeing" (93) only affirms his status in the town as a sought-after cosmopolitan symbol of this process of homogenisation; it is as if the film screening was arranged for Ryder's pleasure alone, since no one is truly watching the action on screen. Also, the actors that Ryder sees in Kubrick's film are wrongly named; they are not Eastwood and Brynner but really Gary Lockwood and Keir Dullea. Eastwood and Brynner are famous for starring in iconic American films as the *Dirty Harry* (1971) series and *The King and I* (1956) respectively. This peculiar mistake in the remembered names of the actors serves to highlight further the politics of cultural imperialism behind the town's desire for global significance and Ryder's presence in the town. In mistaking Lockwood and Dullea for Eastwood and Brynner, Ryder reveals his own unwitting and unthinking role in the processes of cultural homogenisation; he both subscribes to and facilitates the uniformity of cultural practices without, in fact, knowing what he is doing. Ryder's name itself suggests that he is someone who is merely and complacently riding the wave of his own global success and influence. Ryder's mistaking of the actors as American icons potentially suggests that he too might himself be American, although Ishiguro's novel remains ambiguous about Ryder's nationality; the dreamlike way in which he meets his wife and son in the town, who are not, at first, acknowledged as his wife and son,¹⁷ suggests that a significant part of his early life unfolded in this obscure city. But, again, the novel ultimately confirms nothing of Ryder's actual background. Yet his unconscious perception of the lead actors in *Odyssey* as Hollywood icons hint at an individual memory brought up on American movies. A

¹⁷ Sophie formally addresses Ryder (at first a stranger) as Mr Ryder (*Unconsoled* 34) during their first meeting, but later she seeks an emotional reconciliation with Ryder as if they had once been in a troubled marriage; she asks that the three of them—Sophie, Ryder and Boris—have a "great feast" together: "We've got to put the past behind us. We've got to start doing things together again" (225).

contemporary real-life musician who mirrors Ryder in terms of an international could even be Paris-born American, Yo-Yo Ma, a globally-renowned cellist who has performed in possibly every prestigious venue in the world and who is still alive today. Unlike Yo-Yo Ma, Ryder is a pianist; but like Ma, Ryder might have been European first before becoming American and studying at such prestigious American institutions as Julliard and Harvard University in the States. This is the kind of career path that a classical musician has often taken before becoming an international success, with landmarks in one's life such as a performance at Carnegie (a distinctively *American* venue) to ensure the path to global recognition. One can easily imagine Yo-Yo Ma consenting like Ryder (and vice versa) to perform in obscure European towns eager to be known for hosting such cosmopolitan artists.

But the novel's ambiguity surrounding Ryder suggests that it is really not important whether he is American or not, as any sense of American-ness is only itself symbolic of larger political forces at work which determine and shape the uniformity of culture in the world; such homogenisation is made possible not just by the economic might of a few countries but by the weaker societies that allow themselves to be overtaken by this homogenisation. The moment between Pederson and Ryder in the cinema emphasises the eagerness of an anonymous city to be endorsed by a figure like Ryder who represents powerful global forces that impose and standardise cultural practices across the world. Neither Ryder nor the town is aware of the potential negative impact of such a thoughtless submitting to homogenisation. In the movie alluded to in the novel, the presence of Russian scientists, coupled with the fact that Yul Brynner was a Russian-born actor who moved to the States, serve to further emphasise that it does not matter which country has led the cultural homogenisation of the world (in either the film or Ishiguro's novel), as the allegorical focus is on the sense of isolation and hopelessness that the characters (in both the movie and *Unconsoled*) experience as a result of this homogenisation. In the film, as underscored in the scene presented in the cinema, humans are shown to become emotionally estranged from each other as a result of technological progress and the desires of nations to spread their influence to outer space. As portrayed in the

novel, a space-traveller in the film talks to his wife back on earth and his wife cries; this intimate moment of grief-filled separation between husband and wife hint at a deeper concern in *Unconsoled* that was also present in *Remains*—the pain of interpersonal failure that was the consequence of chasing cosmopolitan fantasies. When Pederson talks about starting at the centre in putting things right for the town, he is inadvertently and preemptively hitting the nail on the head for Ishiguro’s narrative which, as I will elaborate later in this chapter, reveals that cosmopolitan aspirations are inconsequential if one’s personal or interpersonal life is in shambles. This time, unlike in *Remains*, the crisis in *Unconsoled* is not just exclusive to a singular protagonist but to an entire town choosing to fulfill a cosmopolitan delusion, by surrendering itself to a worldwide process of cultural homogenisation endorsed and perpetuated by Ryder.

Costello and Ryder operate as functions of discourses, to borrow Michel Foucault’s terms. Although the latter was writing about the function of the author, both author (Costello) and musician (Ryder), in this case, can arguably be understood as “objects of appropriation” (Foucault 1977; 124). With regard to just the author, Foucault stressed that the author’s name usually “points to the existence of certain groups of discourse and refers to the status of this discourse within a society and culture” (123). Since the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the author has become part of a larger “function” that works to establish a set of beliefs or assumptions governing the production, circulation, classification and consumption of text, as well as the legitimisation of particular discourses (Foucault 1977; 136). Such a function can be said to describe not just Costello’s position but Ryder’s role as a professional musician as well in that both operate to fix in place discourses (literature or music) which have been generated, regulated and continually reproduced by societies of economic and political influence. In the context of globalisation, such functionality can work to establish certain cultural practises as more legitimate and respectable than others across the world, and serve to consolidate the ideological and cultural dominance of these few influential societies. In my formulation of a critical cosmopolitanism, I defined such a

cosmopolitanism as a reflective and sustained engagement with states of multiple belonging, particularly in a global context. An inevitable tension then arises between the possibility of such an engagement and the kind of cosmopolitan enterprise that Ryder and Costello have embarked upon in an uncritical way, when they persistently operate as symbolic manifestations of a standardisation of cultural practices around the world. There is often the belief that there is something “infinite” or timeless in both literature and classical music; psychologists have suggested that there is something in the appreciation of western classical music, for example, that points to “a universal ideal of beauty” (Mathews 177). But in both *Unconsoled* and *Costello*, such universalism is, in fact, shown to not exist. Both novels exhibit a sense of critical cosmopolitanism by repeatedly undermining this assumed universalism (through the oppositions and setbacks faced by their protagonists on their cosmopolitan enterprise) and the complacency of artists promoting culture without sufficient consideration for discursive difference and heterogeneity. As supposedly renowned and authoritative cosmopolitan artists, Ryder and Costello push the cause for their respective artistic fields, music on one hand and the novel on the other. But they come up against all manners of resistance to what they stand for. Ryder’s and Costello’s cosmopolitan enterprises are constantly being challenged and seem tantamount to failure. These cosmopolitan agents presumably travel from city to city across the world; in Coetzee’s and Ishiguro’s fictions, both “city” and “world” can seem inextricably connected and even interchangeable as concepts. This recalls the aspect of the “polis” that sits originally at the heart of the concept that is “cosmopolitanism.” Ryder might seem to navigate within a single town but Ishiguro’s novel turns the European municipality into a singular world upon itself, such that Ryder has trouble traversing it completely. Costello’s travels are compiled in Coetzee’s narrative with such proximity to each other that the novelist seems to be moving within the interconnected space of a singular city; this sense of interconnectedness brings together an intensified host of problems for Costello as she finds herself swiftly encountering one perspective after another, each resisting her agenda and her position.

Allegorically conceived through Ryder's movement within an unknown city or town, Ishiguro's rendering of his protagonist's cosmopolitan journey becomes a meditation on its failure and its impact on both Ryder and the town's community. The town is small both in size and in its insularity with regard to its obsession with creating "a *turning point* for the community" (482) through Ryder's performance—as well as its obsession with private dramas between local characters, such as the need to repair the relationship between Leo Brodsky, a recovering alcoholic and conductor, and his old sweetheart, Miss Collins (a reconciliation that will presumably spur Brodsky on to properly direct the orchestra for Ryder's show). But this sense of smallness is contrasted to the town's aspirations which constantly stretch far and wide to encompass the globe. Such aspirations expose the town's people's desires to collectively attain an elevated state of self-importance. At a party where Ryder is an invited guest, members of an elite artistic circle gather to discuss the seemingly trivial disaster of the death of Brodsky's dog and how this death might affect Brodsky's state of mind before the monumental performance with Ryder, leading to arguments and accusations until Jakob Kanitz, described as someone who only works at a "dull clerical post," exclaims, "Other cities! And I don't just mean Paris! Or Stuttgart! I mean smaller cities, no more than us, other cities. Gather together their best citizens, put a crisis like this before them . . . They'd be calm, assured. Such people would know what to do, how to behave" (128). Ryder is in a town that secretly dreams of being a Paris or a Stuttgart, and if not these famous cities, at least a smaller one that is similar in stature and importance. The novel never reveals with clarity the precise nature of this importance that it hopes to attain, in the same way that Ishiguro never divulges the past "crisis" that the town is currently recovering from. As readers, we can guess that the town has tried before to become like a Paris or a Stuttgart and failed, and with the upcoming advent of Ryder's and Brodsky's joint performance—a collaboration between cosmopolitan and local personalities—the town will fulfill its dream of becoming a *polis* whose reputation will resound across the world. The townspeople long to see themselves as becoming a city of "best" or self-important, cosmopolitan citizens. The comedic generality that the people from cosmopolitan cities like

Paris must be “calm” and “assured” when faced with a similar “crisis” only highlights the shallowness of the town’s shared, cosmopolitan fantasy. The desperate and irrational sense of urgency with which the town longs to know “what to do” and “how to behave” in order to stand on its own amongst the world’s famous metropolises is satirically portrayed without being necessarily explained in great detail.

The longer that Ryder stays in the town, spatial and temporal distortions occur to analogically suggest that the town’s global aspirations are essentially hollow. Such aspirations can be metaphorically presented as elliptical or circular pathways that seem to go on forever, leading nowhere but to a feckless starting point again. This gives the surreal impression that the town is expanding into a world that seems untraversable, before returning unbelievably to its original condition. Such a distortion of space and time occurs, for example, in the moment when Ryder, the guest-of-honour, attends an introductory party hosted by the town’s Countess. The Countess welcomes Ryder by exclaiming, “Everyone here is so eager to meet you” (125), reminding readers once again that Ryder is the town’s hope for global significance. Then she takes Ryder (who, having been woken rudely out of bed to attend the party, is dressed only in his pajamas’ a fact that, surreally, nobody notices) around the room and introduces him to everyone. This is how Ryder himself describes the moment: “I had assumed she was leading me either to a particular spot in the room or to a particular person, but after a while I got the distinct impression we were walking around in slow circles . . . I felt certain we had already been in a part of the room at least twice before . . . an odd quality to the whole atmosphere in the room – something forced, even theatrical about its conviviality – though I was unable immediately to put my finger on it” (125). Clad in only his pajamas, Ryder becomes lost to his surroundings, only to realise, after a seemingly long time, that he has been circling the same spot twice in the Countess’ spacious house. Before the room becomes fully familiar again, it becomes unfamiliar another time when he suddenly notices its false sense of conviviality. This references not just the surrealism of the scene (in which Ryder is moving in circles whilst in his pajamas) but also the artificiality of the proceedings,

in which people are over-eagerly trying to convince one another that this party is important for the town. There is an undercurrent of hysteria to the proceedings. The circular way in which Ryder finds himself walking also hint farcically or over-literally at the objectives of a town eager to transform into a worldly city. Ryder's "slow circles" suggest that such objectives are meaningless, and that the town is somehow imprisoned by their desires, irrespective of their ultimate futility.

This expansion and contraction of time and space become more dramatic later in the same scene when Ryder realises that although he had thought to have left the hotel for the party, he learns how he had not left the hotel after all. To reach the dinner party, he had been brought there by Stephan Hoffman (the hotel's manager's son who is himself a budding pianist) in a car from the hotel. Yet towards the end of the evening, Ryder realises that the dinner party is being held in an annexe of the hotel that he is staying in. Ryder tells Stephan that he would like to go back to the hotel to rest. Stephan's reply takes him by surprise:

"I'm very tired now too," Stephan said. "I'll walk back with you."

"Walk back?"

"Yes, I'm going to sleep in one of the rooms tonight . . ."

For a moment his words continued to puzzle me. Then as I looked past the clusters of standing and seated dinner guests . . . to where the vast room disappeared into darkness, it suddenly dawned on me that we were in the atrium of the hotel. (147)

Having been driven from the hotel, Ryder (as well as readers) was given the impression that the dinner party was held far away. But the Countess' gathering turns out to be simply downstairs. Past the falsely convivial scene of dinner guests on their feet or seated casually at tables, Ryder directs our gaze towards a vast room disappearing into darkness. It is a moment that opens up, in a fleetingly nightmarish way, a spatial and temporal sense of meaningless depth and infinity that quickly closes upon itself the instant Ryder realises where he is—at the very beginning at the hotel from which he had never left. This expansion and contraction of

space and the loss of time it had taken to get to the party remind us that no one in this story is going anywhere, whether this is meant literally or aspirationally. It is an artistic and implicit indictment of both Ryder's cosmopolitan enterprise to spread his culture of music and the town's belief that to become a global city (via Ryder's upcoming performance) is of utmost significance. When it is "dawned" on Ryder that he is back in the hotel's atrium, the meaning of "dawn" contrasts sharply and ironically with the sudden glimpse of "darkness" in the previous line; it is ironic because what dawns on Ryder is merely a spatial shift, when that other possible revelation has failed to dawn on him at all, the revelation that his presence in the town might not be meaningful after all. Ryder's presence only ends up becoming a catalyst that exposes the town's shallow ideals, delusional aims that the town hopes to fulfill at the detriment of local affiliations and the breakdown of familial relationships.

One of such relationships is between Stephan Hoffman and his parents, the initial breakdown of which Ryder provides a glimpse into. This happens after Stephan asks Ryder to listen to him rehearse. Stephan is scheduled to perform on the same night as Ryder as a way of winning the hearts of his parents, who had grown distant from him after realising that their son might not have the talent to become a global superstar. Upon hearing Stephan's earnest request, Ryder politely and reluctantly declines, "We're bound to find a mutually convenient time before long. But tonight, really, if you don't mind, I really must get a good night's sleep," after which Ryder realises that Stephan "seemed unduly disappointed" and recounts the moment that follows like this: "I caught sight of his profile in the changing light and realised he was turning over in his mind a particular incident from several years ago. It was an episode he had pondered many times before – often when lying awake at night or when driving alone . . . the occasion of his mother's birthday" (65). Not only do spatial and temporal parameters temporarily break down in Ishiguro's narrative, but the barriers that separate one mind from another are capable of collapsing as well, such that Ryder (just as he did with Gustav before this) is able to enter Stephan's memories and emotions. Ryder's presence in the town grants him the ability to watch it expand and shrink and now his

consciousness is capable of expanding and extending omnisciently into the thoughts of people within the town. But the fact that Ryder is the only one who experiences these distortions and crossing of finite boundaries suggests that he is both the cause and the centre of these occurrences. It emphasises again the extent to which the town is obsessed with Ryder and the global homogenisation that he represents, and how powerfully the abstract dream of global success rules the lives of its residents.

Ryder's godlike powers in entering minds suggest that he is like a god to a town eager to bow down to his cosmopolitan authority. What he sees in Stephan's head is the memory of when the latter's parents were disappointed after hearing their son play the piano. It is a moment that not only drives a wedge between son and parents, but between father and mother as well; his father's head, when hearing Stephan play, had "become so bowed" while Stephan's mother resorted to "looking in the other direction" while "wearing the frosty expression Stephan was so familiar with" (69) whenever Stephan disappointed her. This disappointment is founded on a central inability to achieve global success. This success is the town's *raison d'être* which unites an entire community whilst paradoxically driving familial relationships into disrepair. Ryder's entry into the town causes it to literally and figuratively balloon with the expectation that it will become globally recognised, and when defamiliarised circumstances revert or shrink back to normal, we are left with Ryder (standing alone after a party, or after exiting from Stephan's mind, at a symbolic starting point inside a hotel atrium, which is also where Ryder first enters the town at the start of the narrative) as the cause and inspiration for the distortions and the community's aspirational desires. Similar to how a balloon has nothing but air inside itself, the world of global desires that the town inflates into is really full of nothing but "darkness" (147) and void; and just like how a balloon can burst when over-inflated, the town's mounting desires might lead to its eventual breakdown as a community.

If *Unconsoled* features a town capable of expanding literally and symbolically into a world of empty desires, the reverse happens in *Costello*, where the world shrinks to behave

like a singular city for the novel's roving protagonist. As a cosmopolitan writer, Costello jumps from country to country or continent to continent from one chapter of the novel to another, between places as far away from each other as Pennsylvania, Australia and Amsterdam where she has been invited to speak. By appearing in a different part of the world with each chapter, the novel emphasises that the interconnected reality of a globalised world is never more keenly experienced than by a professional artist as influential and actively mobile as Costello. The novel is capable of shifting from one country to another with such ease that Costello even lands up in a dreamed-up country from an alternative realm; as if having run out of countries in the world to speak at, Costello is now compelled to cross into an alternative world, a form of afterlife that is surreally accessible as any place on the globe. In the last chapter, she becomes "a petitioner before the gate" in an unnamed, Kafka-esque "country" or "town" (194) where she is questioned in front of a panel of judges before she may move on to what is presumed to be heaven. Both *Unconsoled* and *Costello* present cosmopolitan professionals who navigate through cities across the world. The former features one such city that expands to allegorically represent a world bursting with global aspirations, while in the latter, the world shrinks to the smallness as an individual city for the cosmopolitan artist. In either case, the artist stands at the centre of the relationship between the "polis" and the world, representing a force of cultural homogenisation that encounters a whole series of problems or opposing forces which occur precisely because of what these artists stand for. In forcing us readers to encounter the artist in this way, the novel is not only critically attacking their respective cultural discourses and their reception but our own potential complicity in the global hegemony of such discourses too.

Costello even encounters the world as seemingly contracted into a single place whilst she was on a cruise ship. This was where she encountered Egudu, the Nigerian writer who opposed the dominance of the written word (represented by Costello) at the expense Africa's oral tradition. The ship is described as follows: "The crew of the *Northern Lights* is Russian, as are the stewards. In fact, everyone . . . is Russian. Music on board is furnished by a

balalaika orchestra . . . The leader of the orchestra, and occasional singer . . . has a smattering of English . . . [and the musical] piece sounds Hungarian, sounds gypsy, sounds Jewish, sounds everything but Russian . . . [Costello] is there with a couple from . . . Manchester” (48-49). Later Costello speaks to the Russian singer in “German, imperial tongue of the new Europe” (57). The luxury cruise ship could be a crude representation of a multinational corporation (the owners are Swedish, the underpaid labour is by Russians, the music performed has a mix of Hungarian to Jewish influences, while the ship’s guests include Costello, who is Australian-Irish-Catholic, and a Nigerian speaker, as well as various tourists). What Lawrence Buell has described as a “planetary consciousness” (234), although in a different context, has been applied by Gilbert Yeoh to this moment which mirrors the all-pervasive global effects of capitalism that have become a way of life in most parts of the world, such that many cities are, a point borrowed from Bruce Robbins again, always already cosmopolitan. Even while adrift in the middle of the Antarctica, the cruise ship is like a mini-representation of such cities in which the world can be readily experienced as having simply become smaller and intensely interpenetrated. While on the ship, Costello’s internal thoughts are also interpenetrated with distant places, as when “her thoughts go back to Kuala Lumpur, when she . . . spent three nights in a row with Emmanuel Egudu” (58). The notion of interpenetration takes on a more literal and erotic sense when we learn that both the Russian chanteuse and Costello have slept with the Nigerian writer. When Costello realises that the Russian has slept with Egudu, the notion of six degrees of separation, made popular in the play by John Guare,¹⁸ comes to mind, the idea which purports that everyone in the world is connected to everyone else by a chain of no more than six acquaintances. This was an idea first promoted by Hungarian poet and playwright, Frigyes Karinthy, who believed that the contemporary world was getting “smaller” due to this ever-increasing connectedness of human beings, of which globalisation is a central cause (“Chain-Links” 21).

¹⁸ *Six Degrees of Separation: A Play*. London: Vintage Books, 1990.

But as all the events are centered around Costello's perspective in Coetzee's novel, readers are made aware of the way in which this particular protagonist has to negotiate a shrinking and intensely interconnected world, in which she represents a global commodification of literary culture that is made to repeatedly compete or react against contradictory and opposing forces. Earlier, I wrote about how Egudu's stance on African orality was antagonistic towards Costello's position as an English novelist, as he had hinted that western literature had oppressed the traditional oral form. Costello is less concerned with the truth of this oppression than she is with Egudu's self-assured and overtly dramatic personality, which she despises. In a discussion with Egudu that takes place in front of tourist-onlookers, she argues, in an attempt to settle a private score with Egudu, that African novelists are not worthy of note because they have to constantly perform their "Africanness at the same time as (they) write" (51). When Egudu responds in what she perceives to be a condescending way—he pats her on the shoulder and exclaims, "you put it very well"—she thinks, "*If we were alone . . . I would slap him*" (51). Costello's hostility towards Egudu is so irrational that it is almost violent in nature. Even though such antagonism is undoubtedly personal, it still resonates with what Egudu has hinted at earlier, about how there is something repressive about the way the homogenisation of culture can oppress and even eradicate opposing attitudes or other cultures.

This echoes John's earlier evocation of his mother as "a god" that is "wheeled from village to village to be applauded, venerated" (31). The trope of worship is apt when Costello travels from continent to continent receiving awards, while readers and institutions are eager to both affirm and subscribe to her authority as a cosmopolitan artist. This is in spite of even Costello's own self-reflexive efforts in exhibiting philosophical ambivalences about her profession. During her acceptance speech at Altona College in Pennsylvania, she comments on the instabilities of language and the implicit performativity of the writer: "There used to be a time, we believe, when we could say who we were. Now we are just performers speaking our parts. The bottom has dropped out . . . one of those illusions sustained only by the

concentrated gaze of everyone in the room. Remove your gaze for but an instant, and the mirror falls to the floor and shatters” (19-20). Costello is clearly alerting her audience to the contemporary ethos of postmodernism which has, as one of its dominant tenets, Jacques Derrida’s concept of deconstruction that “took issue with the idea that all phenomena were reducible to the workings of systems, with its implication that we could come to have total control” (Sim, Stuart 5). Derrida was concerned with the instability of language and the loss of any absolute conjunction between signifier and signified to guarantee unproblematic communication. Slippages of meaning are always possible, since words always contain echoes and traces of other words; this accounts for language’s instability, and meaning becomes “a fleeting phenomenon that evaporates almost as soon as it occurs in spoken or written language (or keeps transforming itself into new meanings), rather than something fixed that holds over time for a series of different audiences” (Sim, Stuart 5). Language’s unstable nature has destabilising implications for the position of the writer or anyone who communicates meanings to others. Such a position is the “mirror” that “shatters” and its apparent fixity is but an illusion. But this admission about the instability of meanings does not ultimately diminish Costello’s status as a literary icon. Costello’s son sees the university Dean and others “fussing around his mother . . . [They] want her to go home thinking well of them and of the college” (21). Costello remains the figure that practically everyone reveres, just as how Ryder in *Unconsoled* is the centre of attraction of a town eager to seek his cultural endorsement.

Yet in the way Coetzee’s novel is organised, such that Costello moves across the globe from one chapter to another and the world seems to shrink to the navigable size of an interconnected city, inevitable conflicts arise between Costello and people she meets on her travels. The potential of such conflicts became evident right at the start when Costello was at Altona College, when after her speech, the “clear, confident young voice” of a young unknown woman “cuts through the Dean’s” just as the latter is following up from Costello’s speech with a few closing words; the voice demands to ask “a question for the speaker” (21).

But the Dean simply brushes this voice (it is not revealed who the voice belongs to) aside by thanking Costello and switching off his microphone. The fact that this voice was about to ask a question to oppose Costello's views is evident as it was a rude interruption to the Dean's own speech. We sense the voice's hostility also in Coetzee's description of the interruption as having left "a bad taste" (21) on the rest of the evening. "Frostily [Costello] gazes into the distance" at the owner of the voice after she hears it, emphasising the speaker's invisibility and ultimate insignificance in relation to the evening's proceedings, which have been focused on the famous writer and *her* opinions. In a similar way, the title of Coetzee's novel itself suggests that the narrative revolves around Costello, but the novel soon reveals that the seemingly inconsequential young woman who had dared to try and ask her question is not alone in her opposition towards Costello. Clashes of opinions between Costello and her audiences will increasingly steal the limelight from Costello's central authority. Susan Moebius, for example, expresses disappointment when she tells John that his mother should not have resorted to "self-ironisation" and that Costello should have been "more personal," since, in her opinion, "[a] woman doesn't need to wear all that armour" (25). Moebius' view implies a gendered and stereotyped perspective of how a writer should behave in public, a perspective that Costello clearly does not fit. As a woman, Costello is obliged to be more intimate with her audiences, more vulnerable and personable; conversely, male writers are implicitly given to be colder, more detached and intellectual when presenting in the public sphere. As Costello's unofficial proxy, John objects by arguing that his mother has moved on "beyond the man-woman thing" (25).

Yet John himself is not necessarily on the same page as Costello with regard to her professed views, as when he earlier objected to his mother's grim reference to Kafka's Red Peter in her discussion on realism. From Moebius to John and later Egudu on a travelling cruise ship, Coetzee presents us with examples of increasing antagonism towards Costello's opinions and position as a globally prominent cosmopolitan writer. The novel's growing attack on Costello could be urgently signalling its readers to become more and more critical

too about Costello's influence as a novelist, as well as more critically reflective about our own relation to the literary discourse that she symbolises. This is not to say that Costello is not sometimes critically reflective about her role in the process of cultural homogenisation, as when she describes herself and Egudu as not fellow writers but "fellow entertainers" (52), or when she stresses that the transmission of meanings is always already unstable. She also highlights the impermanence of the publishing industry when she reminds her audience that "the British Library is not going to last for ever . . . [It] will crumble and decay, the books on its shelves turn to powder" (17) during her prize-acceptance speech at Altona. Costello is clearly unafraid to admit that not only is her use of language unstable but her shelf-life as a writer is hopelessly finite. So it seems a little hypocritical when she continues to travel from country to country, collecting medals and cheques in tacit acknowledgement and even promotion of her importance as a literary figure. Critically self-aware or not, Costello does not admit, for example, that she might only be in it for the money. While arguing on the cruise ship with Egudu, Costello has no answer when a tourist expresses disappointment about how Costello seems to "treat writing as a business" in her arguments, and the way in which she identifies a market for writing and then supplying it—without talking at all about what inspires her (52). Costello's unwillingness to talk about inspiration suggests that she has just a marginally ambivalent and ultimately jaded acceptance of her role as a symbol of literary culture. The stranger who had asked about what inspired her becomes embarrassed and what ensues from his question is "an awkward silence" (52), one that Costello chooses not to alleviate. Instead she only thinks to herself that the people on the ship "bore" her as much as they are fundamentally indifferent to what she has to say (52). Costello might be the writer that everyone wants to meet and listen to yet, paradoxically, a disconnect exists between audience expectations and the realities of Costello's stance on being a cosmopolitan writer, a growing gulf that Costello can only comment on philosophically and ambivalent but remains uncommitted to bridging.

Just as we are not supposedly unable to claim to know what Red Peter is thinking in Costello's interpretation of Kafka's story, the novel demonstrates that Costello's audiences are unable to relate to her even though they continue to respect her. This disconnect irks and alienates Costello, as well as causes her to withdraw into a position of greater idiosyncrasy. Her views on "The Lives of Animals" (the main heading of two of the middle chapters in the novel), for example, become more intransigent, causing her to further alienate and offend her audiences. While talking on the subject of animal rights, Costello attempts to not only emphasise that animals possess "reason, self-consciousness, a soul," she even compares the systematic killings of animals to the Jewish Holocaust: "The particular horror of the camps, the horror that convinces us that what went on there was a crime against humanity, is not that despite a humanity shared with their victims, the . . . horror is that the killers refused to think themselves into the place of their victims" (79). The comparison of the killing of animals in "the places of slaughter to which . . . we close our hearts" (80) to the killing of Jews in World War Two draws particularly stern resistance from Abraham Stern (the pun on his surname stresses, perhaps, the oppositionality of his outrage), a Jewish poet who writes to her: "If Jews were treated like cattle, it does not follow that cattle are treated like Jews. The inversion insults the memory of the dead. It also trades on the horrors of the camps in a cheap way" (94). Yeoh has written about how Costello speaks from within a globally-homogenised structure of ideological "fixity and immovability" by pointing out naturalised aspects of evil hidden by the banal predictability of the everyday (83). But what is the point of this insistence on vegetarianism when Costello, for all her purported sway as a literary icon, is unable to convince anyone, not even her own family, of the supposedly unethical slaughter of animals? When Costello saw herself before in an ironised position as a cosmopolitan "entertainer" who stood apart from what her audiences expected of her, Costello's intensified stance on vegetarianism further drives a wedge between even family members and herself. Norma, John's wife, accuses her of playing a "sick game" and of trying "to turn a private fad into a public taboo" (113-114). After Norma's angry response, John has to cradle his mother when Costello cries in the car on their way to the airport (a signal again that she is the illustrious

cosmopolitan traveling to speak in another country). Costello breaks down after exclaiming to John, “I seem to move around perfectly easily among people . . . Is it possible . . . that all of them are participants in a crime of stupefying proportions . . . Am I dreaming, I say to myself” (114-115).

Costello is not just a passionate proponent of literature but also an animal-activist who applies literary references in pushing forward her cause, from Kafka’s ape to Rilke’s poem about “The Panther” or Ted Hughes’ about “The Jaguar” (95). Her self-acknowledged failure in convincing others of her views pushes her into a state of distress and confusion. Rilke’s and Hughes’ poems draw on the limits of trying to envision the internal lives of caged animals; Costello argues that the poems are “the record of an engagement” (96) with animals without pretending to truly understand their thoughts. Despite the fact that she is still the cosmopolitan writer everyone has come to see, it is Costello who ironically becomes like the caged animal she referred to that nobody has any real understanding for. Her growing intransigency and alienation from her audiences cause her much grief and confusion, yet she is also unwilling or unable to revise or mitigate her trenchant views. Despite her awareness of how difficult she is making it for others to accept her, Costello still yearns poignantly for understanding. In the chapter, “The Problem of Evil,” for example, which documents her attendance at a conference in Amsterdam, Costello reveals that she is tragically caught between the consequences of her uncompromising views and her longing to be accepted. Costello has accepted an invitation to this conference in response to a novel by Paul West, *The Very Rich Hours of Count Von Stauffenberg*, about the aristocratic officer who headed the ill-fated July Plot of 1944 to assassinate Hitler. She knew that West would be at the conference and had planned to publicly express her disgust over the novel’s description of the execution of the conspirators, who were hanged on Hitler’s orders in degrading ways and for the fascist leader’s enjoyment.

Costello’s professed position at the conference is that there should be limitations to what one can and cannot write about acts of such evil and about the final thoughts of the

executed men; she insists that the “last hours belong to [the executed] alone, they are not ours to enter and possess” (174). Yet, maybe because she is aware of the increasing estrangement between audiences and herself—at one point, she imagines that they see her after her talk as a “strange woman from Australia” (176)—Costello is thrown into a state of uncertainty about her position. At this point, perhaps, Costello, as the cosmopolitan artist, is momentarily and subconsciously aware of the futile and possibly sham nature of her professional enterprise as a travelling writer. Her previous complacency about her capacity to influence others as a respected novelist now stands on shaky ground. But instead of seriously addressing the increasing alienation caused by her position as a cosmopolitan writer, she prefers not to think about her position at all, and instead indulges in self-pity. This happens when she wonders if she has merely grown “prim” or irrationally conservative in her old age, wanting ugliness to be “wrapped up and stored away in a drawer” (179). Yet that overriding sense of alienation returns without warning, even as she is never truly willing to engage with it. In a sudden panic, she yearns at least to encounter Paul West himself, whom she had not seen at the conference. In the chapter’s final moment, Costello longs to bump into him in a corridor, hoping that “something should pass between them, sudden as lightning, that will illuminate the landscape for her,” granting her morning with “shape and meaning” after her feelings of uncertainty, but the corridor remains empty and she never meets West. This ultimate failure to encounter West speaks of Costello’s larger failure to connect with anyone even while she continues to be invited, as an esteemed guest, to literary events and conferences from one country to the next. Coetzee’s novel does not only demonstrate that the role of the cosmopolitan writer can leave much to be desired in terms of its homogenising tendencies and its potential failures to win over audiences universally, the novel also shows Costello as suffering the alienating effects of being such a writer. As uncritical as Costello remains by keeping to her role as a literary symbol, she too ends up suffering as a result of her lack of critical awareness. At the same time, despite her whinging, she does not suffer enough to try and become more aware of a present lack in her role as a cosmopolitan writer. By showing us the figure of a writer who is too self-centred and incapable of doing more to reflect upon and

reassess her position as a global representative of literature, Coetzee's novel is challenging us to think about what it means for any cosmopolitan figure to be "living globally: that we cannot do enough" (Stanton 23). Costello could be doing more to mediate between her views and the views of others, permitting the latter to modify the former through meaningful dialogue, yet she continues to be too arrogant, uncompromising and uncritical in defending herself and her literary discourse.

Perhaps the strongest blow and resistance to Costello's status as a writer and her literary discourse comes from Blanche—Costello's sister—in the chapter, "The Humanities in Africa," in which Costello is compelled to engage with Blanche's dismissive view (while visiting her in Africa, where Blanche works as a medical missionary) about not just literary matters, but about the humanities as a whole. Blanche, who has become ordained as Sister Bridget, raises the question of the decline of the humanities: "The *studia humanitatis* have taken a long time to die, but now, at the end of the second millennium of our era, they are truly on their deathbed. All the more bitter should be that death, I would say, since it has been brought about by the monster enthroned by those very studies as animating principle of the universe: reason, mechanical reason" (123). Implicit in Sister Bridget's argument is that anyone who subscribes to the humanities and their "secular vision of salvation . . . without the intervention of Christ" is already damned (133). A definition of the humanities still relevant today is that they encompass the studies or academic disciplines "which centre attention on the life of man" (Immroth 1236). Since the Renaissance, the term was used to define the newfound interest in antiquity and the secular world; "human learning of the Renaissance was contrasted with the divine learning which had been the chief preoccupation of the Middle Ages" (Dudley and Faricy 10-11). In the fifteenth century, for example, English diplomat and writer William Caxton (1422-91), who introduced the printing press to England, was one of the first to promote the idea that "humanity was distinguished from divinity, as the one dealt with man on merely the human level . . . and the other embraced the whole scheme of revealed religion (or the order of grace)" (Immroth 1236). The dimensions of rationality and

spirituality become represented by Costello and her sister respectively. Sister Bridget is implying that because the humanities and their proponents are animated by rationality and corporeality alone, that these very proponents will not be rescued by the divine, having lost their connection to God's grace after the Middle Ages. She even suggests to Costello that the latter has backed the wrong Greeks from "the classics of antiquity" (123) made popular during the Renaissance to learn about the human condition—Apollo instead of Orpheus. For Costello's sister, Orpheus represents the "ecstatic instead of the rational" (145), since Orpheus can come back from the dead, a theme that occurs centrally in Christianity through its revelation about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But Costello will not give up in the face of her sister's resistance to her fundamental sense of purpose as a writer and a symbolic representative from the humanities. Even as Costello is only here in Africa to visit her sister and pick up an honorary degree, Coetzee has titled the chapter in which all this occurs as "Lesson 5: The Humanities in Africa," as if Costello *is* in fact representing and defending, in an official way, what she signifies as a novelist, much in the same way that she affirmed her authority or asserted opinions on literary matters when she was in Pennsylvania to accept an award or on a cruise ship discussing the novel's future. Just like in these previous scenes, the crucial "lesson" is yet again of Costello's inability to reconcile with those who oppose her position. Unlike in the earlier chapters, however, Costello here is more earnest in trying to bridge the gulf between her stance and that of her sister on the topic of the "true nature of the humanities." After she leaves Africa, she writes a letter to Sister Bridget, "I do not want to give up on our dispute yet" (148). Contrast this to the novel's second chapter when she was condescending and dismissive of Egudu for his supposition that Western literature was killing the African oral tradition. In that moment, she was determined to write him off by implying that African writers were too concerned with performing their African-ness and that, like such writers, Egudu was simply "exoticising himself" (53) to please a global market. She had even wished to slap him, instead of taking what Egudu said with any level of seriousness. With her sister,

however, Costello is far more thoughtful and self-conscious in her attempts to win Blanche over to the side of the humanities. In her letter, Costello writes about a moment when, as a younger woman, she had posed nude for a sickly, old man, a former love of their mother's, a painter and Lothario weakened by a laryngectomy.

Through this account of the past, Costello wants to convince her sister that there is comfort in the beauty of art in the face of mortality. She wants her sister to remember that “the humanities teach us humanity. After the centuries-long Christian night, the humanities give us back our beauty, our human beauty” (151), a beauty that is separate from spiritual truths or the notion of eternal salvation through transcendence of physical concerns (which, to Costello, is not a given certainty). If Costello represents a cultural discourse, from literature to the humanities at large, foisted upon the world through the effects of globalisation that shrink the world and allow for an increasingly interconnected “cosmos”—a term that can mean either the world or the universe as “an ordered and harmonious system”¹⁹—to become easily and progressively homogenised, the novel emphasises repeatedly through its “lessons” that such a homogenisation is never harmonious. Coetzee’s work exhibits a strong sense of critical cosmopolitanism even while its leading protagonist does not, in presenting the numerous pitfalls of behaving complacently as if cultural homogenisation is guaranteed. The novel’s chapters consistently demonstrate that Costello faces resistance everywhere she goes in the world. Perhaps because Sister Bridget and Costello are so alike—they are both, to borrow Costello’s word for her sister, hardliners (133)—and because they mirror each other in their intransigency, Costello is moved, unlike in the previous chapters, to articulate her position to her sister. She no longer emits the fierce sense of disapproval and condescension that she possessed when speaking about animals at Appleton college in Massachusetts, where she had made the controversial reference to the Holocaust. With her sister, Costello is far more imploring, vulnerable and revealing—literally so too, in a sense, as when she confesses to getting naked for an old man in her letter—in trying to convince Sister Bridgit of the secular

¹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary* online. 9 Jan. 2010.

beauty and value of the humanities. Yet even after this letter, Coetzee chooses not to show us how Sister Bridget responds; the hint is probably that the latter would never be won over by Costello. The intellectual and spiritual chasm between these opposing figures will never be bridged. Costello highlights her sense of helplessness and frustration over this impasse when she exclaims (a cry that is never heard by her sister) in the anguished, concluding lines of the chapter, “*Blanche, dear Blanche . . . why is there this bar between us . . . do not die in a foreign field and leave me without an answer*” (155).

Impasse is the central motif of Ishiguro’s narrative, in which the town Ryder loses himself in reveals internal oppositions to what he represents as a force of cultural homogenisation. Sim Wai-Chew has written that, with regard to *Unconsoled*, “an allegorical reading of the novel is encouraged, one which identifies the book as a parody of the cosmopolitan artist’s commodification as a supplier of . . . authenticity” (*Globalisation* 29). Compared to Costello, Ryder is an unreflective automaton in the process of homogenisation, as both its representative as well as its promoter when he endorses the desires of the townsfolk in their longing, not just for authenticity, but for a way to elevate their town into a future position of global respectability (the novel never quite delineates what such a position would finally look like, but such an abstract but desired position is always implied). *Unconsoled* can be read as a parody because it makes surreal fun of the fact that Ryder’s cosmopolitan enterprise is a failure and that the townsfolk are doomed to be dissatisfied by their endorsement by Ryder and the high-culture he brings into their lives. There are even moments in the narrative when we see the town trying to preserve past and local affiliations. This conflicts with a sweeping and all-consuming desire to graduate from such affiliations and to eradicate the past for the sake of a renewed future. Caught between conflicting desires, the town is caught in the impasse of never fulfilling its mission to become a global city; neither does it succeed in preserving local affiliations. This central tension is set up, for example, in a café scene when Ryder is exposed by Christoff (a cellist whose musical

reputation has fallen into decline in the town) for having posed for journalistic photographers beside the Max Sattler monument.

In the novel's usual, mysterious and connotative manner, no exact details are revealed about the history of the monument. We can only guess that Max Sattler was once a respectable, local musician whose ideas had eventually become unpopular, since those ideas had never brought the town to a state of international prominence. In the scene where Christoff accuses Ryder of not caring about the town's local conditions, we are meant to assume that this overdetermined reference to the past is crucial to the town's previous identity. This allusion to the importance of the town's historical context is made when Christoff first accuses Ryder of not respecting the "conditions" of the town (199). Then he verbally attacks the pianist in front of other supposedly important townspeople, "Yes! I saw him! When I picked him up earlier on. Standing right in front of the Sattler monument. Smiling, gesturing towards it" (200). This is followed by a "shocked silence" in which the others "seemed to grow embarrassed, while others . . . stared at [him] questioningly" (200). Before I argued that the town had seemed to bloat metaphorically into a world of global aspirations, but in such a moment, the town seems to reveal a possible rip along the seams of its ambitions, when there is doubt or ambivalence about whether such aspirations are worth achieving at the expense of its past identity (of which the Sattler monument stands as a symbolic testament). Ryder has been seen and interpreted as mocking the Sattler monument by posing beside it for pictures. Ryder himself is not conscious of the significance of the monument as he had merely been set up by photographers eager to take a controversial picture. The "shocked silence" in the café and the embarrassed, questioning way in which the townsfolk stare at Ryder in the café provide a glimpse into an undercurrent of irrationality and uncertainty bubbling beneath a general longing to move on from the past. The moment, however, quickly ends, when hysteria takes over and one of the townsfolk, Dr Lubanski, jumps in to Ryder's defence, "If Mr Ryder chooses to make such a gesture, it can only indicate one thing. That the extent of our misguidedness is even deeper than we suspected"

(200). To hold to the past is to be misguided, which is the implication of Lubanski's statement, to which everyone agrees, and their previous certainty as a community returns in the form of rage and potential violence, as they gather in an "angry circle" (203) around Christoff, threatening to physically attack him. The reference to circularity again echoes, yet again, the over-literal, *global* aspirations that I mentioned earlier; this time, such aspirations encircle Christoff as if to symbolically strangle and silence him. Christoff disappears amidst the mob of people gathering all around him and Ryder exits the scene, unconcerned for Christoff's safety, to meet his son, Boris, outside the café; the chapter ends with father and son walking "out of the building into the sunshine" (205). It is a dramatically emblematic moment as Christoff becomes overwhelmed and erased from the scene whilst Ryder leaves coolly to enter daylight, suggesting that a larger, culturally-homogenising enterprise trumps presumably outmoded, local conditions. Yet the moment before this demonstrated that the town suffers doubts about its own aspirations, even as it might desperately and temporarily quash internal divisions and ambivalences.

The impasse with regard to whether the town should subscribe wholeheartedly to Ryder's form of high-culture at the expense of local conditions also takes on the literal shape of a wall that extends forever. Such a wall bars Ryder from the town's main auditorium where he is set to perform. After walking through countless bends and turns in the road, Ryder encounters the wall and describes it like this: "A little way ahead was a brick wall running across my path – in fact, across the entire breadth of the street. My first thought was that a railway line ran behind the wall, but then I noticed how the higher storeys of the buildings . . . continued unbroken above the wall and on into the distance . . . [Only] when I was virtually right up to the wall, it dawned on me there was no way to get past" (387). Then as if for comic effect, and to simply satirically reiterate the figurative point about the wall, there is a gift shop close by that sells postcards "proudly featuring the wall" (388). The town is now not only untraversable, it also has a wall to literally stand in Ryder's way. The message could not be clearer: what was meant to be achieved by Ryder's presence in the town will never be

achieved. For this small European town, at least, Ryder's cosmopolitan enterprise of bringing high-culture to it is destined to be a failure. The town will never succeed in subscribing fully to the high-culture Ryder represents while Ryder will never fulfill an implicit obligation to satisfy the town's global aspirations. It is a town that will remain stuck in between reaching for its global fantasy and the preservation of its local affiliations—the wall is the dramatically literal manifestation of an irresolvable state of ambivalence. Ryder's suspicion of there being a railway line running behind the wall is evocative of the constant traveling that a cosmopolitan artist like him must do in order to spread the word of his culture across the globe; the hint of a "railway" suggests that Ryder will soon depart from this town for yet another European city without having made any difference to a town that has so desperately wanted him to perform.

The presence of the wall hints that the town has a mind of its own, and that the town itself is secretly resistant to the form of global homogenisation promised by Ryder's presence. The gift shop selling postcards of the wall is also suggestive of a town that still manages to remain proud of its local attributes, or proud of its resistance to Ryder's cosmopolitan authority and influence. It is a town reluctant to become a replica of another Stuttgart or any other metropolis in the world, irrespective of what its civic leaders say. If I were to continue to anthropomorphise the town in this way, it is because the narrative's surrealism allows for such a reading. I would even suggest that the town has a vindictive persona, one that resents the fact that its own occupants are striving to become another Paris or London. The town's mocking vindictiveness could be an internalised manifestation of the occupants' suppressed sense of frustration and bitterness about having to succumb, as a community, to external pressures in transforming into a high-culture metropolis. This becomes evident when the town literally cuts the conductor, Brodsky, down in a traffic accident, so he later conducts the orchestra while using an ironing board as a comical crutch. Having made Ryder lose his way on more than a few occasions, the town now arranges for Ryder (who has decided to drive a borrowed car to the concert hall) to knock Brodsky down. When the accident happens, Ryder

has no idea that it has even taken place. He is simply stopped by “two figures standing waving ahead” and by a childhood friend, Geoffrey Saunders, whom Ryder had promised to have tea with but failed to deliver on his promise, causing Saunders to look “a bit cross” (436-437). This is how Ryder describes the moment of realisation that he has run Brodsky over: “I looked about me and saw with a start . . . a large tangle of metal . . . [To] my horror, I saw Brodsky in the midst of it. He was lying with his back to the earth and his eyes watched calmly as I approached him” (440). In the same scene, a passing surgeon helps to extricate Brodsky with a hacksaw, using it to saw off Brodsky’s leg, causing the latter to “let out a hideous cry that rang through the trees” (447).

The gruesome scene is made even more bizarre when Ryder chooses this time, of all times, to call his wife, Sophie (he is inspired to do so when he unexpectedly spies a nearby telephone box in the darkness). While Brodsky is being hacked from the wreckage that he had unknowingly caused, Ryder calls and promises Sophie that he “won’t be traveling much longer” as a cosmopolitan musician; that he will “find something soon . . . Somewhere really comfortable” for them to stay in and settle as a family (446). After that, Ryder gets back into his car, and shouts at Saunders (who is still waiting to hound him about meeting up for tea) that he has simply too many “responsibilities” and that they will have no time to meet while he is in town (447). Not only has the town made sure that Brodsky is struck down, it brings Ryder in touch with two of the people to whom he has continued to make bad promises. The rude way in which he dismisses Saunders and the apathetic attitude that possesses him as he drives away from Brodsky’s outcry towards the auditorium all suggest that Ryder will only break his promise to his family as well. Ryder’s parting statement bellowed at Saunders—“I just don’t lead the sort of life you do” (447)—as the excuse for not being able to catch up with him, draws the reader’s attention back to the reality that Ryder will always behave as the stereotypical, cosmopolitan artist. He will always be too busy shuttling from between venues and cities to ever form long-term or meaningful attachments. Ryder will always be caught up in his role as an ambassador for a cultural discourse without reflecting critically on what

negative impact such a discourse might have on the places he is invited to, or whether his job detaches him from anyone who needs him for longer than a spot of tea or the length of a piano-concerto (actually, Ryder does not even fulfill the latter when he is in this town, which highlights how ridiculously “busy” he is). What Bruce Robbins has described as the “very busy just now” aspect of *The Remains of the Day*, with its “close historical link between professionalism and cosmopolitanism . . . the intrusion of work into the intimate sphere of the family” and its “basis in the late twentieth-century integration of capitalism on a global scale” (“Very Busy Right Now” 429), has become intensified with Ryder’s desire to maintain his cultural authority within the domain of the international. Through its central protagonist, *Unconsoled* seems “to elevate harriedness into a sort of ontological principle, a description of Being itself” (“Very Busy Right Now” 430). However, unlike Robbins, I disagree with his point that the novel “jokes ambiguously about the plenitude of additional commitments that it would be possible to take on . . . if only the usual limits of time and space did not apply” (437) and I would stress that precisely because time and space are limited in reality, the novel satirises the internal and external aims and ambitions of the cosmopolitan hoping to achieve everything. There is nothing ambiguous about Ryder’s failure in the novel to please everyone or to fulfill his aims, despite the elasticity of time presented by its narrative. The failure might be funny but it is also sad and implicitly critical of busy-ness as a cosmopolitan condition. The novel exhibits an unambiguously critical cosmopolitanism by warning us in a hyper-surrealistic way about what it means to be carried away unthinkingly with the busy-ness of the cosmopolitan enterprise.

Busy-ness is a feature of globalisation that anyone can recognise. Globalisation is often linked to a “time-space compression . . . an extraordinary speed-up of social life on a global scale together with the shrinkage of physical space through technology and the reduction of time to a perpetual and schizophrenic present” (Harvey 240). Ryder is perpetually required to make appointments he cannot keep, particularly with close family ties and supposed friends, who continue to assail him in the town even as he is always pulled

away from them to head for the next destination. The town with its elastic wall serves as an allegorical reminder of a fundamental untenability of Ryder's cosmopolitan enterprise; it is an enterprise that will provide no definitive satisfaction to either Ryder or the town. His quick misconception about how a railway exists behind the wall is another reminder that his consciousness is always and already tethered to a point elsewhere—to the next gig or performance. At the novel's end, Ryder ends up on a tram where he is told by an electrician that the streetcar can take anyone "anywhere you like in the city," before he takes his flight to Helsinki, another destination that he looks forward to arriving at with irrational "pride and confidence" (533-535). The constant references to modes of transportation evoke the speediness and the busy-ness that define the essential nature of Ryder's life, one that the cosmopolitan artist might have no control over, even as such a life is ultimately meaningless and damaging for everyone concerned, including Ryder himself. He is both an unreflective representative of a global standardisation of culture, as well as its unconscious victim, one who has been so carried away by ambition and by the affirming forces of globalisation that he never once stops to realise this for himself. He is, and will always be, too "busy" to care.

Unconsoled consistently paints a picture of Ryder's cosmopolitan existence as rooted in inevitable failure. In trying to please *everyone* as an artist and as a campaigner of globally endorsed culture, Ryder ultimately pleases no one. The novel is a surreal and allegorical indictment of the potentially dissatisfactory and untenable nature of any superficial, homogenising, global enterprise. The novel also seems to suggest "that work-related blockage of emotion in the intimacy of the family is also a figure for blockage of emotion on a transnational scale" (Robbins 2001, 435), and that to participate in an internationalised standardisation of culture is to potentially submit to the dehumanising procedures of eventual estrangement from others on a transnational scale, without the hope of forming deep and authentic relationships. However, it can also be argued that *Unconsoled* tends toward an overtly one-dimensional view of the implications of global homogenisation, since standardisations in culture are not always guaranteed in real life. The novel does not consider,

for example, the productive dialogues and meaningful resistances that can occur when people do challenge the processes of homogenisation. *Costello*, for example, features articulate positions that critically oppose what Costello's stands for as an activist and proponent of literary discourse, although Costezee's novel frequently returns readers to its protagonist's unproductive position of intransigency or an irresolvable impasse between conflicting perspectives. *Unconsoled* nightmarishly reiterates the point that nothing meaningful will come out of either Ryder's presence or his music. Neither Ryder nor the town will be satisfied by that fantasy of global relevance, even as they remain perpetually carried away by the hope that a permanent sense of existential fulfillment will one day be assured.

Both *Unconsoled* and *Costello* indict any cosmopolitan enterprise that sets out to eradicate difference—one of the oft-criticised consequences of cultural homogenisation. But *Costello* also hints that a preferred form of cosmopolitanism might be possible, a critical position that is, as Paul Rabinow has described it, “an oppositional position . . . suspicious of sovereign powers, universal truths . . . [and] moralisms high and low” (258), a challenging position that strives to take differences into account even as it acknowledges that a perfect universalism remains paradoxically out of reach. A lack of appreciation for this difficult paradox within any cosmopolitan enterprise can result in complacency and arrogance, as demonstrated by Costello in the chapter, “At the Gate.” Close to the end of the book, this is a Kafka-esque moment of reckoning—a satirical, “*too literary*” (225) take on the Judeo-Christian and Muslim concept of the final day of judgment when God weighs the moral worth of His children before allowing them into heaven. Costello's failure as a globally-celebrated novelist to connect with her disparate audiences has lulled her into a state of boredom that she irrationally equates with a loss of faith in absolute systems of belief. This irrationality is suggested during the scene when Costello is asked by a panel of judges about her beliefs. She does not, in her response, restate what she had so vehemently spoken up about in her earlier chapters, which included her protectiveness over the rights of animals or the limits of writing about evil. Instead she refuses to give what she considers a vapid answer as “I believe in life,”

since she considers herself “*worth better than that*” (219). Taking herself far too seriously, she answers convolutedly and noncommittally that as a writer, her occupation is to be a “secretary to the invisible” (220), and that such a secretary “should not have beliefs. It is inappropriate to the function” (220). It is easy to see that Costello has confusedly turned her sense of alienation from her audiences into a position of exception from everyone. Costello irrationally longs to believe that as a “secretary to the invisible,” she is, unlike everyone else, exempted from having to subscribe to fixed beliefs. Having no fixed beliefs can suggest a frightening state of uncertainty that Costello has now elevated to a fantasised position of exceptionality and self-aggrandisement. One of the judges who determine whether she will pass through the gate asks if Costello speaks for herself, to which she replies, “Yes and no,” insisting that she is “not confused” (221). The judges cannot help themselves but howl with laughter after one of them delivers this mocking riposte, “Yes, you are not confused. But who is it who is not confused?” (221). Before while on the cruise ship, Costello realised that, as a cosmopolitan writer who travels to connect with readers all over the world, she no longer seemed to have “a common past, a shared story” (38) with her audiences. Having transformed her growing sense of boredom and alienation with a sense of self-exception, she is now ridiculed for her conceit and her deluded sense of self.

The chapter then ends with a scene in which Costello asks an anonymous custodian at the gate, “Do you see many people like me . . . ?” The latter answers impatiently, “We see people like you all the time” (224-225). This last line of the chapter stresses dramatically that Costello’s initial sense of alienation is unfounded, since she should have realised there was nothing exceptional about her uncertainties regarding the value of literature, the stability of language, or the ultimate meaningfulness of existence. Her sense of alienation from her audiences was founded on nothing, after all. The gatekeeper’s statement emphasises that self-doubt is the only certainty that is shared by everyone and Costello is made to acknowledge that she is not special at all, even though she may be a successful novelist. She is not any different or more uncertain than the audiences she has grown to look down upon. As a

cosmopolitan writer who is constantly confronted with contradictory positions and ideological oppositions, she should have recognised that this inability to enter the certainty of “a shared story” with her audiences is, in fact, a condition that is paradoxically universal. But this is what also makes the cosmopolitan enterprise even *more* necessary, since it can inspire the forging of what Appiah has termed “a shared citizenship” (*Cosmopolitanism* xv), even if it is simultaneously and ironically an impossible goal; at the very least, such an enterprise can help others like Costello feel less alone in their confusion and uncertainty. Yet, in ending the chapter suggestively in this way, Costello’s realisation might have come too late, since she is already at heaven’s gate (if heaven is where the gate presumably opens to) and she would not be able to exercise what she has finally understood in this dreamlike chapter within the living reality of her cosmopolitan existence.

Unconsoled is far bleaker than *Costello* because no one in Ishiguro’s nightmarish world comes close to arriving at such a potentially rewarding, life-changing revelation. Everyone remains caught up in their global aspirations at the expense of private relationships or local affiliations. The hole of meaninglessness at the centre of Ryder’s cosmopolitan enterprise is most dramatically represented by Ryder’s non-performance near the end of the narrative. After being blocked by a wall in the middle of town, then losing himself amidst the corridors, staircases and “heavy swing doors” (493) of the concert building, Ryder only ends up on the side of the stage, watching Brodsky conduct the orchestra “from a sharp angle” in the wings (494). Incredibly, instead of being a part of the performance, he is simply described as listening while “a disaffinity between a conductor and his musicians” (494) grows between Brodsky (who has been conducting with a baton while using an ironing board as a crutch) and the orchestra. He then watches as Brodsky’s body begins “twisting and clenching to some rhythm of its own dictating” (495) due to the pain from having been hacked earlier on. Brodsky soon collapses and the performance comes to a shuddering halt, with the other musicians finally realising that Brodsky had lost his leg, and that it was “a wonder he took this long to pass out” (496). Ending up as a mere observer to the fiasco of Brodsky’s collapse

and a grossly interrupted concert, Ryder demonstrates that he has brought nothing of meaning and value to the town. Brodsky, as a symbol of his local community's desire for global success, ends up as a gruesome joke, conducting farcically on one leg and falling in excruciating pain. Ryder's cosmopolitan enterprise of bringing high-culture and global recognition brings no consolation at all to a town desperate to transcend its own anonymity.

Ryder reveals that even as the successful cosmopolitan musician, he is himself unhappy when he realises that his parents have not come to the concert as he thought they would. After Brodsky's fall, Ryder goes to see Miss Stratmann about his parents and when he is told that they did not even come to the town, he reacts as follows: "I collapsed into a nearby chair and . . . started to sob. As I did so, I remembered all at once just how tenuous had been the whole possibility of my parents' coming to the town" (512). Just as Stephan Hoffman has disappointed his parents with his incompetent musical skills, Ryder distraughtly reveals that he too must have, in some way, disappointed his own parents, such that the latter have decided not to come and watch Ryder play. Although it is never revealed in detail, we can safely assume that the disappointment is closely linked to Ryder's life as an artist who is always on the move, and how such a life might have eventually estranged him from his own parents. Disappointment and estrangement at the interpersonal level occur at every turn within the lives of everyone within *The Unconsoled*, and their cause is ineluctably tied to that irresistible desire for artistic and cosmopolitan success.

For a novel that many critics have described as "a difficult book to summarise" (Wormald 235) or "resistant to easy pigeon-holing" (Lewis 143), Ishiguro's peculiar tale is ironically very simplistic in its overall vision. The consistent return to states of despair and heartache (to even actual bodily harm, such as in Brodsky's case) in the lives of the novel's characters urges readers to view any desire for worldwide success as always tied to punishing failure and meaninglessness. A global homogenising of culture has brought nothing but pain to an anonymous, European town in the nightmarish narrative of *The Unconsoled*. Even Ryder, who is the ideal everyone longs to become or be legitimised by, has not been made

happy by his professional success as an influential musician. The longing for international recognition contaminates even the potentially romantic ending between Miss Collins and Brodsky, when the latter begs for Miss Collins (after he falls on stage in agony and the curtains close to hide the public embarrassment of his collapse) to approach and express her love for him one last time. He implores to her, “Come and hold me. Embrace me. Then let them open the curtain. We’ll let the world see” (497). This allusion to the “world” here suggests that even the success of a love-affair has to be held up to more than public admiration in order to be considered legitimate. Miss Collins is no better, as when she accuses Brodsky of caring more about his “silly little wound” (498) than about her. This wound is a figurative one and it could be interpreted as the existential void that sits at the heart of any artist who creates in order to grapple with such emptiness. Miss Collins might accuse Brodsky of being too in love with his “wound” to be a “*proper* conductor,” but she is no better in believing that the townsfolk have been better than Brodsky for trying to “become something worthwhile” (499); being something worthwhile, in Collins’ mind, is only linked to the town’s global ambitions that the novel has repeatedly shown to not bring any joy or meaning to anyone. In fact, I might even argue that Leo Brodsky is, at least, honest when he acknowledges that he suffers from a sense of existential despair, and that he hopes to overcome this overriding sense of emptiness with passion and romantic love. This is Brodsky’s brave and unique hope that is crushed when Miss Collins implicitly refuses to acknowledge that such a “wound” might, in fact, be a universal condition. In a godless cosmos like the one created in *Unconsoled* (unlike in *Costello*, where Sister Bridget, at least, represents an adamantly alternative view on spiritual matters), the fact that everyone is chasing a futile, cosmopolitan fantasy already suggests that everyone is possibly running away from confronting an unshakeable sense of existential hollowness in all their lives.

Just as *Costello* is made to realise that self-doubt and uncertainty is a universal condition, Ishiguro’s novel emphasises that everyone has an existential “wound” to bear—one that can be overcome through the formation and maintenance of deep attachments to places

and people. This simplistic way of overcoming the void is promoted in probably the happiest moment in *Unconsoled*, when Ryder reunites with his son, Boris, on a bus-tour of the town. It is a scene in which everyone, especially Ryder, is temporarily freed from any obsession with notions of global recognition or successful homogenisation. Ryder describes his sudden sense of relief and contentment on the bus as follows: “At the back of the bus a few of the passengers began to sing. I felt very relaxed and sank deeper into my seat” (207). Ryder finally tells Boris how much he loves him and how “happy” that they are together. Later a stranger kindly recommends that Ryder refrain from taking his son to “the artificial lake” (where it would be too chilly) as previously planned, but to take him to view the “Maria Christina Gardens,” where there is “a boating pond . . . the young man might like” (207). The artificiality of the lake (a “false” location built in the town to attract tourists), when contrasted with the Gardens (with the obvious emphasis on an aspect of the town that is authentic and local), drives home the point that cosmopolitan fantasies are, in a sense, artificial and delusional, whereas the town’s local conditions are what are truly meaningful and worth preserving. Here the appreciation of one’s local conditions is closely and almost too simplistically connected, of course, to one’s commitment to intimate relations. Home, meaning one’s local environment as well as one’s family, is where the heart should remain. It is the only context in which happiness is truly possible, whereas anything beyond the affiliation to one’s home remains a terrible illusion. This is the idea that the novel keeps returning readers to, leaving one with no positive future for the cosmopolitan enterprise, whether for Ryder or for a town eager to transcend its provinciality. After this bus-scene, predictably, Ryder bids farewell to Boris again and gets caught up in the whirlwind of his professional career. He gives Boris this familiar excuse, “I’d like nothing better than to stay at home with you and mother . . . But you see . . . I have to keep going on these trips because, you see, you can never tell when it’s going to come along . . . the very important trip, the one that’s very very important, not just for me but for everyone” (217). Importance here equals global success, and Ryder believes that if he finally achieves it (whatever “it” really means, in the end), everyone will benefit.

Both *Costello* and *Unconsoled* serve as warnings as to what happens when we take any cosmopolitan enterprise too seriously. While Coetzee's novel suggests that a universalism *does* exist and that it can give the cosmopolitan artist reason to try and forge bridges between multiple perspectives—even as such bridges seem impossible to build (impossibility becomes, then, the reason for building such bridges)—*Unconsoled* offers no such consolation. For Ishiguro, it seems, the cosmopolitan enterprise is a bleak farce without any rewards and that we should all stay at home and treasure what we already have: home and family. As one-sided as the novel's overall perspective might sound, *The Unconsoled* is, after all, a nightmarish fable, an allegorical dreamscape as surreal and bizarre as a painting by Salvador Dali, whose purpose is “to peer into the dark wells of the subconscious” (Soby 24) and imbue their contents with a life of their own that is separate from corporeal and conscious realities. *Costello* might have ended with a Kafkaesque scene, but one can almost certainly argue that the moment is simply a dream that Costello would eventually wake up from. The fact that Costello herself deems the situation “*too literary*” already suggests that the scene might be too unreal or ludicrously constructed to be taken as anything more than a passing dream. Costello might (or might not, since the novel does not ascertain this for us) resume with her cosmopolitan life without remaining obstinately uncommitted to engaging with conflicting perspectives in more productive ways. *Unconsoled*, however, is an unremittingly bad dream. But just as a Dali painting only shows us one side of the picture, the subconscious dimension, Ishiguro's hallucinatory novel captures the cosmopolitan adventure or a global homogenising of culture as a one-dimensional nightmare for everyone concerned. The narrative, however, can be used as a skewed mirror to remind ourselves that any desire to become part of something larger—a globally-accepted cultural discourse, as the chief example in this case—might not give us the enduring sense of purpose and happiness that we are truly looking for. It could most likely compel us to neglect the things that would prove to be the most valuable in the end: our loved ones, or more specifically, the awareness that the most rewarding relationships can be forged between individuals who consciously share the “wound” of doubt and uncertainty—about the meaning of life, art, or even of love itself—between them.

Chapter 4: Positive Cosmopolitanism

In Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans* (2000) and Coetzee's *Slow Man* (2005), which form the focus of this chapter, we will see how both authors move on from the pessimistic implications of cosmopolitan ideals to engage productively with what it means to live with an *enforced* transnational identity. Just like the Jews who were exiled to Babylon from the sixth century, whose migration as a people inspired the word "diaspora," the diasporic protagonists in these two novels are forced to survive, since childhood, in foreign cultural environments, a process which problematises their sense of belonging to any one country. According to Allison Harell's definition, "transnational identities . . . refer to a sense of belonging that is not confined to the geographical boundaries of the nation-state" and that for diasporic individuals, although their transnational identity "reflects both their country of origin and their new host country experiences" (646-647), an individual sense of cultural dislocation and alienation is inescapable. Both Coetzee and Ishiguro focus on this sense of dislocation, but they also feature the diasporic's inspired negotiations with new forms of positive cosmopolitanisms. Their novels offer concerted, literary responses to the hegemonic suppression or censorship of minority histories or economic and political realities which undermine the ethical viability of the entire globalisation enterprise. Most notions of globalisation have at their basis what David Leiwei Li has described as the "world-wide domination of free-market capitalism and its local accommodations and resistances" (2001, 275). Ishiguro's novel particularly exposes the dark side of these capitalistic structures and meta-economic forces, as well as the "local accommodations and resistances," which hide behind popularised representations of globalisation, while Coetzee's narrative draw our attention to the problems of rootedness and territoriality that confront the formation of any transnational diasporic identity, in spite of popular perspectives of globalisation as a yellow-brick road (as Pico Iyer puts it in a 2006 issue of *Time*) to "the transnational future," "a common multiculturalism," or the idealised "global village" (qtd. in Brennan, *At Home* 121). This idealistic vision of the polycultural or the transnational "is as susceptible to

commodification as any phenomenon confronted by the co-optive powers of commodity culture” (Sim 20) for, as Karen Kelsky also writes, “One can cross a border on a plane or in a car trunk. Although growing numbers of people may have access to experiences classifiable as discrepant cosmopolitanisms, these experiences never operate independently of the histories of class, gender, and racial privilege” (14). Both novels featured in this chapter explore how individuals navigate, and ultimately locate themselves, within successful and rewarding modes of cosmopolitanism, with all its inequalities and challenges for the modification of a diasporic identity that accommodates multiple states of cultural belonging.

From the start, the narratives of *Orphans* and *Slow* present protagonists who are diasporic individuals existing in a state of cultural and ideological complacency in relation to their countries of origin. If *Remains* can be read as a satirical response to P. G. Wodehouses’ novels, then *Orphans* can be interpreted as satirising the elitist and escapist tendencies of Golden Age detective novels by Agatha Christie. In Doyle’s and Christie’s narratives, a conservative, Edwardian type of modernity is often portrayed in which the world is devoid of “class conflict, racism, imperialism, even women” (Thompson 62). Doyle’s narratives were also rooted in “the values of empiricism—the emphasis on quantification and utility over qualitative considerations . . . that have come to structure and regulate capitalist economies”; Doyle was able to celebrate, using a sense of adventure as an “energising myth,” a distinctive mode of capital accumulation represented by Empire (Thompson 67-68). Such a myth belied the exploitative processes that have historically served as part of the foundation for the whole capitalist, free-trade enterprise. Although Doyle and Christie do not engage directly with the processes of globalisation, they implicitly endorse the global, economic influence of imperialistic capitalist countries. In the opening pages of *Orphans*, the first-person narrative buys ostensibly into this celebratory myth about the economic and imperialistic successes of the British empire by circumscribing the apparent domain of the detective novel. Ishiguro introduces us to the character Christopher Banks taking a “leisurely walk” (3) over to Knightsbridge in London to acquire “a Queen Anne tea service, several packets of fine teas,

and a large tin of biscuits” (4) in preparation for the most quintessentially British of activities—afternoon tea with a friend. With his friend, James Osbourne, Christopher Banks, discusses politics to “philosophy or poetry or some such thing” (5) in a leisurely scene that leads to Osbourne remembering aloud that Banks used to be an “odd bird at school” (5). This is the only moment when Banks becomes a little annoyed and disoriented within this Wodehousean scene which is almost picture-perfect in its English, gentrified setting. In this same scene, Osbourne invites Banks to a party to illustrate the former’s sense of “well-connectedness” within English society. This party would later set off a chain of events leading to Banks being encouraged to finally solve the mystery of his parents’ disappearance (which happened during the early 1900s, when Banks used to live as a child in the International Settlement of Shanghai) that would presumably lead idealistically to a halt in the tensions between the Japanese and the Chinese on the brink of World War Two.

But for now, readers are introduced to a detective existing in a self-assured world of imperialistic England in a scene where he is having a casual conversation with a friend from back in school. There is hardly any sign here of Banks’ diasporic dimension or that he has moved to England from Shanghai when he was eight years old. The only sign of this surfaces in his “annoyance” at Osbourne’s “odd bird” (5) remark, which leads Banks to reveal that he used to emulate the “turns of phrase and exclamations . . . the deeper mores and etiquettes” (*Orphans* 8) of his surroundings in order to fit in at English school. He also reminisces: “I had spent much of my first few weeks in England wandering about the common near my aunt’s cottage in Shropshire, performing amidst the damp ferns the various detective scenarios Akira and I had evolved together in Shanghai” (11-12). These scenarios were a feature of his childhood that he had to abandon in order to appear less introspective to his aunt who was now taking care of him after he was moved to England. Growing up in England was a process of assimilation that Banks had gladly and successfully taken on, and for Osbourne to point out his oddness in school is a slight jolt to his ego, particularly when he has believed himself to have eventually entered English society as both a bona-fide English citizen as well as a

budding detective. The detective scenarios that Banks and Akira (his Japanese childhood friend back in Shanghai) used to play were designed by Akira to instinctively mitigate feelings of loss after Banks' father mysteriously disappeared; the games would involve a search-and-rescue of Banks' father in various imagined scenarios with Banks always finding his father in the end. This fantasy-play, along with Banks' natural sensitivity to people around him and his surroundings, were factors that inspired Banks to become a detective. His heightened sense of alertness was also what helped him to fit in at school when he would imitate the gestures and attitudes of his friends. Aside from this passing mention of Banks' oddness at school and his own annoyance at this remembrance of his assimilative energies, Banks' strategies to fit in and his obsession with the detective figure since a young age emphasise his private idealisation of British culture and the classic, English detective figure. Banks remembers that friends used to tease him for being "too short to be a Sherlock" (11), drawing readers' attention to Banks' secret longing to become *like* this idealised English hero, as well as to the setting of Ishiguro's novel as one that is, at first sight, similar to a Conan Doyle's crime-narrative in which a central detective, Banks, is about to embark on solving an significant mystery.

This echo of the world of Sherlock Holmes highlights how much Banks wants to believe in the idyllic world of England, such that he not only wants to fit in with his friends and surroundings, he also wants to become an iconic English detective himself. This romanticisation of Englishness was already encouraged when he was living in Shanghai, when he was "absolutely forbidden" (64) to stray outside the International Settlement and his home consisted of a "carefully tended 'English' lawn" and a house with "a huge white edifice with numerous wings and trellised balconies" (61). The Chinese slums outside the Settlement were prejudicially described by Akira to Banks as full of "dead bodies piled up everywhere" (65) and Banks had no way of clarifying if this was true for himself. Cloistered within the English Settlement in Shanghai, Banks was encouraged from an early age by his parents to live in a bubble-representation of English culture. This representation becomes a resource for

his escapist tendencies as a child particularly when his parents fought or whenever he longed to imagine what England was like. This childhood isolation is mirrored by his childhood friend, the Japanese boy Akira, when the latter confides that the growing distance between Akira's parents was a result of him being "not enough Japanese" (86); this leads Banks to wonder if his own parents' disintegrating marriage is due to Banks' "not behaving sufficiently like an Englishman" (87). Faced with his parents' constant fighting (whose cause he did not understand as a child) and a growing isolation as an English boy in Shanghai, he turns to his only other relative in the Settlement, Uncle Philip, to find out how to be more English. Even when Uncle Philip extols the advantages of growing up as a migrant in a foreign land, insisting that living with other cultures helps one to grow up "a bit of a mongrel" (90), Banks remains unconvinced and begs him to teach him how to be an Englishman, stating that his identity might "scatter" like the twine of the blinds on the window if he did not learn how to fit in with his English origins (91). Uncle Philip uses his own notion of cosmopolitanism to try and convince Banks that if everyone was a "mongrel," "we might treat each other a good deal better" and all worldly conflicts might end (90-91). In spite of this appeal to the advantages of one kind of cosmopolitanism, Banks is still only a frightened and uncertain child and does not appreciate Philip's argument about the potential merits of being a cultural mongrel.

Banks' reminiscences of his childhood constantly show how, along with Akira (who shared Banks' predicament of a dysfunctional family and that diasporic struggle of living in an unfamiliar country), each of them reinforced his own distance from the Chinese environment that they were forced to grow up in. In the early stages of the novel, Banks' memories are, despite their impressions of sadness from parental estrangement, not fully formed. The memories are framed by what Banks himself admits to be "a child's vision" (61), such that he remembers mostly the good parts, particularly the times he spent playing games with Akira. From a simple incident like a conversation with Osbourne, Banks finds himself remembering his childhood past in bits at a time, as if something that has been repressed is

only slowly beginning to surface in his adult mind. This recalls Sigmund Freud's notion of "the return of the repressed" (1911, 67-68) by which the conscious mind is withdrawn from unacceptable memories (such memories occurred during Banks' childhood regarding the mystery of his parents' disappearance). Such memories will only surface later on when they are least expected, as the mind is supposedly unable to keep them repressed forever. Yet what these unacceptable memories are still remains to be seen; the childhood memories will continue to surface throughout the novel and when Banks finally decides to search for his parents back in Shanghai, the repressed memories will eventually burst through and jolt his existence. At this early moment in the narrative, Banks only recalls an incident when both Akira and he had stolen into Ling Tien's room. Ling Tien was Akira's family servant and Akira had drummed up the nightmarish scenario in which Ling Tien "had discovered a method by which he could turn severed hands into spiders. In his room were many bowls filled with various fluids in which he soaked . . . the many hands he had collected . . . [then] set them loose, as spiders, all around the neighbourhood" (109).

Together, Akira and Banks summed up the courage to enter this forbidden room to see these bowls of fluids and spidery hands for themselves. This childish fantasy of the supernatural Chinese servant, coupled with the notion that life outside the Settlement was filled with corpses and slums, demonstrated how sheltered their lives in Shanghai had been. Positing the world outside their cloistered lives as filled with frightful things, Akira and Banks further hemmed themselves into their respective cultural bubbles—Akira into his Japanese culture and Banks into his English one. Just as Akira even began to enjoy wearing his kimono, Banks receded into his fantasies about being an English detective as a way of dealing with their isolation from the world at large and with their parents' constant quarrels. The desire to be as English as possible is removed even from the context of England as when, while on a boat *en route* to England after his parents' mysterious disappearance, Banks briefly laments, "I was bound for a strange land where I did not know a soul, while the city steadily receding before me contained all I knew" (33). The world of England that Banks celebrated

and lived in as a child was one built ironically on Chinese soil. Yet, as shown during the conversation with Osbourne and with his current success in fitting into English society, Banks has clearly entered that childish fantasy of England for real in his adult life. He now even hopes to be introduced to supposedly famous detectives like “Matlock Stevenson, or perhaps even to Professor Charleville” (13) by Osbourne at the party that he has been being invited to. Banks is coming closer to becoming the famous English detective he had always dreamed of. Sim Wai-Chew has written about how *Orphans* operates as “an engagement with the nostalgia industry, or rather with its efflorescence in certain aspects of detective fiction” (242) which looks back uncritically at the achievements of imperialist countries in terms of their success in terms of world trade and cultural domination. In an analogous way, Banks (in his love with anything English) can be said to represent this nostalgic turn in detective fiction which looks back complacently at Great Britain as an ideal to be celebrated (without taking into account aspects of exploitation and the imperialistic oppression of other countries). Yet this notion of England as a childish fantasy will soon be disrupted the more Banks delves into the mystery of his parents’ disappearance.

Banks’ complacent relationship to his conception of his presumed cultural origins is arguably mirrored in Coetzee’s *Slow Man*. It is echoed in the way Coetzee’s protagonist does *not* confront the issue of living between two cultures, an issue he is eventually forced to reckon with in order to emotionally and intellectually mature. Right off from the first page of *Slow*, we read how the protagonist, Paul Rayment, a sixty-something, Australian photographer, is knocked down in a cycling accident. He is struck down by the young motorist too-appropriately named Wayne Blight. Rayment loses a leg from the knee downwards as a result. The choice of surname for the stranger who crashes into Rayment is too consciously literary on the part of the author, who overstresses the ruinous effect the accident has on the protagonist. The accident and the narrative’s increasing wordplay form only the start of surreal events to occur. When Rayment is taken care of by a Croatian nurse, Marijana Jokić (a figure whom Rayment becomes increasingly smitten with), Coetzee decides

to bring back his fictional novelist-character Elizabeth Costello to try and teach Rayment a lesson on how to lead a more reflective and passionate life. Coetzee practically throws realism out the window by telling us that Rayment came to Costello as if in a dream—“words in my sleeping ear” (115). The actual words that told her that she had to come help Rayment were really the words Coetzee himself wrote in the novel’s first page to describe Rayment’s accident: “*The blow catches him from the right, sharp and surprising and painful*” (81). In an attempt to wake Rayment to the possibility of love with someone else, someone more like him in terms of physical handicap, Costello gets him to sleep with Marianna, a blind woman, whose name echoes Marijana’s and whose recent disability—“as the result of a malignancy, a tumour” (96)—is supposedly commensurate with Rayment’s own physical tragedy. As David Attwell suggests, these too-literary gestures and self-referential interferences into the central narrative about Rayment are part of Coetzee’s larger thematic concern with place as “a site of epistemological dualisms, of failed self/other relationships, of incommensurability, of aesthetic destruction” (229). Rayment was from “peasant France” (195) before he was uprooted as a child by his parents to live in Australia. Before the appearances of Marijana and Costello, Rayment is presented to readers as simply a grumpy and aging Australian man. It is only through these women that Rayment begins to discuss and grapple with his own cultural origins in the novel. These incommensurable “self/other relationships” that Attwell mentions are in reference to the diasporic’s internal dissonances when negotiating internally between disparate cultures. It is a struggle that forms the crux of Rayment’s existential predicament as he tries to make sense of his life while managing his feelings for Marijana and Costello’s constant, intellectual badgering. The difficulty of this struggle can be said to be reflected in the way the novel breaks away from realism, as if the novel, as a work of art, possesses (to use Coetzee’s own words) “too much truth for art to hold” (*Doubling* 99).

At the start of *Slow*, Rayment does not yet grapple with “too much truth” (which I interpret as referring to exigent circumstances too dire and complex to be straightforwardly dealt with in a realistic novel) as a diasporic citizen and is seemingly comfortable with his

status as an Australian citizen. Just as Banks is briefly reminded in *Orphans* by the artificiality of his veneer as a man pretending to be a bona fide Englishman, Rayment's complacency with regard to his own diasporic status undergoes a slight ripple of doubt when he first recognises Marijana as Yugoslavian. Marijana has been hired by him to clean both his home and his amputated body and Rayment soon recognises her as another diasporic—a cultural Other in the larger context of contemporary Australia. Inspired by his attraction to Marijana, Rayment starts thinking about how Yugoslavs ended up coming to Australia, and wonders, particularly with regard to Marijana and her family:

Where does Marijana fit into the Yugoslav picture, Marijana and the husband who assembles cars? What were they fleeing when they fled the old country? Or was it simply the case that, growing sick and tired of strife, they packed their goods and crossed the border in quest of a better, more peaceable life? And if a better, more peaceable life is not to be found in Australia, where is it to be found? (40).

This is the first time that Rayment becomes interested in not only Marijana's cultural beginnings but also her family. He projects a question (about finding a more peaceable life in a foreign land) into the Jokić family's mind that might as well have been the question Rayment's own parents must have posed themselves before heading to Australia with Rayment in tow. This projection reveals—particularly when he asks, “where is [a better life] to be found”—that Rayment does not think the Jokićs have, in fact, found happiness in Australia, a projection that, in itself, points to an early possibility in the novel that Rayment is himself discontented with having to settle Down Under. It is only when Marijana asks him if he has family in Adelaide that he reveals that he has family in Europe and was born in France: “Didn't I tell you? I was brought to Australia when I was a child, by my mother and my stepfather . . . My sister was nine . . . She died early, of cancer. So no, I have no family to take care of me” (43).

This is the first time that we hear this much about Rayment's personal history, aspects of which would not have manifested if Marijana had not entered the narrative picture. It is Marijana who first brings out the diasporic dimension of Rayment's private history and exposes his complacent position as a French man living in Australia. He has neglected to remember and thoughtfully consider his suppressed affiliation to his French past and its impact on his present life in Adelaide. This seeming indifference to his immigrant history is manifested even more keenly when Marijana and he discuss the old photos that he has been keeping as a photographer and archival collector of images documenting the "early mining camps of Victoria and New South Wales" (48). Central to Rayment's collection is a series of old photographs taken by the late Antoine Fauchery. Fauchery (1823–1861) was a French photographer who was famously commissioned to accompany French troops and photographically document their part in the Anglo-French military expedition to northern China during the Second Opium War in 1860.²⁰ When Marijana asks Rayment if he likes saving books (she was dusting his shelves), Rayment had promptly showed her these photographs and confess his past penchant for saving images of Australian history, relaying too that it would "depress" him now to attend auctions to buy such photos. The only link between Rayment and the Faucheries is the French connection. But the similarity ends there. Rayment has chosen to focus on collecting pictures of Australian miners in their Sunday best, men with "the look of grave confidence that came naturally to men in Victoria's day, but seems now to have vanished from the face of the earth" (48). It is not explicitly explained why buying these photographs would depress Rayment now, but readers can assume that it has something to do with the passing of time, the lack of reverence for the past manifested in an age of digital photography and the march of economic, cultural and technological progress that marks contemporary society in Australia. The expression of "grave confidence" of the miners emphasise Rayment's concern with the death of history in the hands of a pragmatic present that is continuously obsessed with the future.

²⁰ Reilly, Dianne. "Antoine Fauchery, 1823–1861: Photographer and Journalist *Par Excellence*." *La Trobe Journal*. No. 33 Apr. 1984. 6 Feb. 2010. <<http://nishi.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-33/t1-g-t1.html>>.

These photographs are supposed to be Rayment's legacy when he dies, as he would like to donate them to Adelaide's State Library, and be recognised as having been an archivist for one aspect of Australia's past. For a geriatric divorcee without children, this can be interpreted as a way of immortalising his own name by associating it with the preservation of Australia's history. The French link with Fauchery may be coincidental or it might signify a lingering, subconscious desire to connect back to that part in Rayment which he still considers French, irrespective of how long he has lived in and assimilated into Australian society. "French-ness" might just be an artificial construction of private identity but Rayment could actually believe that it is, in fact, still a fundamental part of his authentic identity. But even if such a subconscious desire to connect back to France exists within Rayment, it is suppressed by the more ostensible desire to preserve Australia's past as if he himself has always been Australian. It takes Marijana, whose Balkan exoticness and "sturdy calves and well-knit haunches" (50) that have begun to attract the lonesome protagonist, to tap unknowingly into Rayment's unconscious uncertainties about being Australian, particularly when she talks about what a good job Rayment is doing as an archivist. She tells him, "Is good you save history. So people don't think Australia is country without history, just bush and then mob of immigrants. Like me. Like us," to which Rayment wonders about what she means by "us": "Marijana and the Jokić family; or Marijana and he?" (48-49). Marijana is inadvertently forcing Rayment to wonder about existing similarities between Marijana's position *vis-à-vis* his own diasporic place in Australian society, sowing the seeds of uncertainty with regard to his complacency about being Australian. This uncertainty is sown further after Marijana talks about how potential migrants tend to view Australia as possessing "Zero history" (49), as a cultural *tabula rasa* where migrants can start new lives for themselves. To Marijana, Rayment's archival project is praiseworthy and noble for helping to abolish this myth; Australia's has its own history too. By helping to preserve the Faucherics, Rayment mistakenly believes that he belongs to this uniquely Australian history.

But now he begins to realise his mistake when this conversation with Marijana reminds him of a photograph he has neglected to show her, one of a woman and six children huddled in the doorway of a mud cabin: “All of them wear the same expression: not hostile . . . but frightened, frozen, like oxen at the portal of a slaughterhouse” (52). At first Rayment assumed that, like other Australians, he too had “come from the cold and damp and smoke of that wretched cabin, from these women with their black helpless eyes, from that poverty” (52). Yet, in his current remembrance and description of the photograph, the atmosphere of violence surrounding the image suggests that such an easy affiliation to the past is itself an act of aggression. The fact of photographic documentation is easily interpreted as an exploitative act in which these early immigrants become, in a sense, victimised (like oxen at a slaughterhouse) in a present-day pursuit for historical affiliation and cultural linearity. In an unexpected state of lugubriousness brought on by Marijana’s comments (which is ironic considering that he is simultaneously excited by her in a more carnal, less-than-intellectual way) about preserving Australia’s past, Rayment suddenly doubts this affiliation to the early Australians in the picture: “Would the woman in the picture accept him as one of her tribe – the boy from Lourdes in the French Pyrenees with the mother who played Fauré on the piano?” (52). Rayment is suddenly confronted by thoughts of his own intrinsic foreignness.

Rayment is slowly remembering and made anxious by the fact that he is a diasporic living in Australia. He is being forced “to rethink the relationship between identity and difference . . . a [dis]location or positionality in which the global and the local are always co-implicated and in which inherent in adopting a location is the recognition that there is a dislocating of other possibilities” (Edwards and Usher 141). When the movement of immigrants across nations has become an established fact of globalisation to this day, whether a result of socio-political or economic factors, this moment in Coetzee’s novel emphasises how even though such immigrants fit themselves seemingly without issue into their new home countries, they often do so at the expense of their own histories. Rayment’s complacent relation to his suppressed French past is temporarily shaken and he concludes that for any

diasporic, “Fate deals you a hand, and you play the hand you are dealt” (53). Just as fate had brought him to Australia as a French boy, fate has now not only removed his leg in a random accident on the road, but also forced him—thanks to Marijana—into a unexpected position of self-doubt about the meaningfulness of his diasporic existence so far. But such doubt soon disappears again, which is typical of Rayment, who is never keen to dwell too long in modes of uncertainty. His thought about fate is also a sign of Rayment’s pragmatic and unimaginative personality; Rayment prefers to deal uncritically with whatever hand he is dealt with without too much reflection. This lack of reflection is emphasised (in Coetzee’s recognisably overt, literary manner) by how Rayment habitually covers his bathroom mirror to not only “save himself from the image of an ageing, ugly self,” but also from looking at a self that he “finds above all boring” (164). Unreflective and boring, Rayment is, true to his own admission, unwilling to evolve. His is a crudely reactive and self-pitying personality, one that will be forced to change, particularly when Costello next enters his life.

In similar ways, both Rayment and Banks from Ishiguro’s *Orphans* suffer from naivety regarding their lives as diasporic individuals. Both are too eager to fit into their present-day cultural environments. But as Ien Ang has pointed out, for the diasporic, “any intercultural exchange will always face its moment of incommensurability, which disrupts the smooth creation of a wholesome synthesis” (198). As someone who spent his growing up years imitating others, the figure of Banks as a detective is founded on performativity. Banks plays the detective so well that he becomes naively arrogant about the capacity of this quintessentially English hero to make a long-lasting difference in the world. This dimension of arrogance is strongly brought out in Banks by Sarah Hemmings, a woman known in snooty social circles as someone eager to date anyone in a position of power and influence. In a scene when Hemmings attempts to flirtatiously persuade Banks into escorting her into a Meredith Foundation dinner, Banks not only betrays his own private attraction to Hemmings, but also his own preening over his self-image as a successful detective: “I was rather enjoying the notion of all these people – many of them very distinguished – seeing me arm in arm with

Sarah Hemmings. I fancied I saw in their eyes, even as they greeted us, the idea: ‘Oh, she’s caught *him* now, has she? Well, that’s natural enough.’ Far from making me feel foolishthis notion rather filled me with pride. But then suddenly – and I am not sure what caused this – quite without warning I began to feel a great fury towards her . . . when I unlinked her arm from mine . . . with a steely resolve” (44). In this moment, Banks is self-conscious and intelligent to know that he is being played, but not smart enough to tear into his own conceited self-image. His sudden fury could be an unconscious sign that he *might* recognise the artificiality of his own position, but has yet the courage or critical irony to burst this bubble completely. He could even be angry that it took a social butterfly like Hemmings to show him up to be a potential fool, one who is too secure in his sense of self-importance. His secret desire for Hemmings is itself suggestive of how he might see something about his own vulnerability and pretensions in Hemmings, an unashamed desire to be associated with larger discourses of power. If Hemmings is longing to live vicariously in the powerful shoes of another, Banks can be said to have forged these shoes for himself *in order* to gain power for himself too. In any case, one thing is certain: Banks has built up the figure of the English detective so successfully for himself that he proudly enjoys the attention and the influence without doubting that it is just a charade.

The charade is compounded further when Banks believes that, as such an important detective, he is capable of making a difference in the world. Such naivety or arrogance is mirrored elsewhere in the figure of Sir Cecil Medhurst, the man Hemmings has set her eyes on and eventually chooses to be with (a fact that Banks later notes with jealousy). Medhurst is probably the first, significant example of someone with the deluded and arrogant belief in the power of his cultivated connections and global influence. The trope of connectivity is well established from the start of the novel when Banks is impressed with Osbourne and how potentially “well-connected” the latter might be to the “higher walks of life” (5-6). The trope is emphasised again with Hemmings repeated desires to land a well-connected man, one who will “really *contribute* . . . to humanity, to a better world (55), so that she can, indirectly,

become well-connected herself. Medhurst is also presumably the ideal cosmopolitan whom everyone praises at the Foundation party “for his contribution to world affairs, and in particular, for his role in building the League of Nations” (49). Medhurst’s naivety is a reflection of the naivety of an entire empire which believed that, after the First World War, in which Great Britain had played a pivotal role through its newfound technologies, no more war would ever take place again. His, as well as a whole country’s, naivety is captured in Banks’ account of Medhurst’s speech at the party: “We had all surprised ourselves with the rapid development of our engineering might, and the consequent ability to wage war with modern weaponry . . . Having been reminded of the horrors that could be let loose among us, the forces of civilisation had prevailed and legislated. His speech was along some such lines, and we all applauded it heartily” (49). Medhurst (and, by symbolic proxy, Great Britain), has tried to heal the world through the building of the League of Nations and now he speaks of the fundamental goodness of mankind which will prevail in spite of the violence demonstrated in the last Great War, a goodness that Medhurst implies is in Britain’s power to promote and uphold. Everyone’s hearty applause suggests also a serious lack of irony in this admiration for Medhurst and what he stands for; the “we” that Banks refers to is obviously referring to a primarily English audience who subscribes uncritically and passionately to what Medhurst is saying. The Foundation party is an illustration of an empire eager to congratulate itself for its cosmopolitan influence and its supposedly positive impact on the world. Just like in Ishiguro’s earlier novel, *The Remains of the Day*, there is no awareness or mention of the ills of colonialism, with its examples of exploitation and plundering of other countries, examples of which that could easily undermine this overriding sense of ideological self-affirmation. In applauding for Medhurst, Banks himself is not only applauding as a patriotic Englishman—a self-empowering identity that had already evinced the cracks of its own performativity and artificiality earlier in the narrative—he is also stoking the fire of his self-confidence in being able to positively affect the world.

When Medhurst has left for Shanghai to fix the world's problems from there, bringing Hemmings as his new wife with him, Banks himself becomes inspired, not just by Medhurst but also by the fact that Hemmings is there, and believes that Shanghai is *the* place to go to stop a potential world war. A passing remark from an Inspector friend about how Shanghai is "the heart of the serpent" (161) leads him to believe simplistically that the fate of the world rests on the ability of an Englishman who can extinguish the evil originating from that part of China. Once again, the narrative relies much on suggestion and implication and we are never told explicitly what the true nature of this evil is. We only ever see Banks become carried away by the repeated allusion to Shanghai as the centre of the world's mounting ills: "Tensions continue to mount the world over; knowledgeable people liken our civilisation to a haystack at which lighted matches are being hurled . . . with the advent of yesterday's letter, it might be said that the last pieces of the jigsaw have come together. Surely the time has finally arrived for me to go . . . to Shanghai, to go there and – after all these years – 'slay the serpent'" (172). This lack of tangible information about the actual importance of Shanghai in the interconnected, political geography of world affairs suggests that there might be no concrete proof, after all, that Shanghai is the real cause of the world's problems. Instead, Shanghai becomes a cipher, a vague focal point around which the likes of Medhurst and Banks (and by association, the whole British empire itself) rally in order to establish their own importance as cosmopolitan movers and shakers. For Banks, the absence of substantial justification for going to Shanghai is highly suggestive of how he might simply be reacting to an unconscious desire to return to his childhood, a desire now compounded by the fact that Hemmings, the woman he secretly desires, is also there. In fact, the plot itself, by never illuminating the real cause of Shanghai's importance, draws greater attention to the sense of that return of the unconscious within Banks that compels him to act. Ishiguro's persistent use of metaphor—the civilisation as a haystack and Shanghai as the heart of the serpent—in lieu of actual facts and explanations further emphasises the over-compensatory way in which characters persuade themselves to act while being unaware of powerful but inadmissible desires. Banks' melodramatic conclusions about how "the last pieces of the

jigsaw have come together” and “the time has finally arrived for me . . . to ‘slay the serpent’” further heighten his grandiose conception of himself as the detective who has been called upon by destiny to the rescue because of his much-lauded skills of empirical and intellectual deduction. Ironically, for all his intellect and delusions of self-control, his existence is really manipulated by invisible forces within his conflicted subconscious.

As a diasporic individual who has been orphaned, Banks seems to have forgotten that at one point in his childhood, he had made a heartfelt promise to his Japanese friend, Akira, that “We’ll live in Shanghai for ever” (134). Shanghai was the home that he had never wished to leave. If he was a diasporic individual already in Shanghai as a young boy, he is no less a detached outsider when he ended up orphaned and surviving in England. These are crucial factors that have shaped his psychology, but which Banks has yet to fully come to terms with as he is preparing to “slay the serpent.” Even though he was an outsider in Shanghai, Banks was paradoxically more at home there than he is in England, but he cannot yet appreciate this fact fully. He is, in fact, an orphan who is suffering an ironic sense of homelessness while living in his supposed homeland in London. This is not to say, in any simplistic way, that Banks is really a Chinese diasporic (on the inside) trying to survive in an unfamiliar English environment. In spite of his appearances (his performed identity as simultaneously an Englishman *and* a famous, British detective), he has the anxieties of a diasporic individual coming to terms with schizophrenic notions of home. Banks’ sense of homelessness is further augmented by the fact that he was orphaned from an early age. The disappearance of his parents who brought him to England opened up a void within him that he has been compensating for by becoming more English than the average Englishman and by modeling himself into a contemporary version of Sherlock Holmes. But such a void cannot be resolved by the mere pretence of having fitted in English society alone.

Leo T. S. Ching has described the fate of the diasporic as connoting a sense of “both physical separation and geographical dislocation, yet also a lingering psychological, if not cultural, affiliation with the homeland” (“Into the Muddy Stream” 179). Ishiguro subverts this

familiar diasporic predicament by further de-essentialising the very notion of home. Banks might suffer the common anxieties of the diasporic of being caught between two cultural worlds, but he is also nostalgically linked to a place that would not predictably be classified as his homeland. He longs to return to a place that most would conventionally be defined as foreign to his cultural “DNA”; Shanghai is, in a sense, the “homeland” of his childhood memories of Akira and also the last place where he has known his parents. The novel clearly problematises, even potentially indicts, any stereotypical conception of the diasporic condition by showing that not all diasporic predicaments are the same. Home might be where the heart is but the heart is also complicatedly subjective. Banks has lived successfully, to a large degree, in England, but he has yet to resolve this affiliation to this complicated notion of the “homeland.”

Home for the diasporic is more often than not a source of contention and conflict and this is what Banks still has in common with many diasporic individuals. Presented with the opportunity to return to Shanghai, Banks is persuaded immediately to act upon it to ostensibly save the world. But a central goal that compels him is really to find his parents—it is the one mystery of his life he has never been able to solve. In a way shaped by his need to see himself as a detective-hero, the solving of his parents’ disappearance is linked grandiosely to the saving of the world, an obviously far-fetched connection that emphasises the irrationality of Banks’ desires to come back “home” to Shanghai. This naïve, self-aggrandising conception of his cosmopolitan enterprise is one bolstered by not only the precedence set by Medhurst, but by his fellow Englishmen when he arrives at a party in the Palace Hotel in Shanghai. Just beyond the party, the Kuomintang (led by Chiang Kai-shek) are struggling to keep the Japanese, who are concurrently bombing Shanghai as the party is going on, from occupying Shanghai. When the British guests at the Hotel are discussing whether the conflict will end, one of them exclaims, “hasn’t Mr Banks turned up” (191), as if Banks’ presence would automatically fix everything. Banks gets swept up by their enthusiasm by responding, “I would not be here now if I were not optimistic about my chances of bringing this case . . . to a

happy conclusion,” upon which a jazz orchestra suddenly starts up within the hotel ballroom (191). The sheer coincidence is reminiscent of the surrealism previously present in *The Unconsoled*, yet still remaining within the comfortable parameters of realism (unlike in Ishiguro’s previous novel, where space and time had warped in blatantly bizarre and suggestive ways). Banks himself even notes the subtly surreal coincidence of the music as rounding off his statement “rather nicely” (191). In *Unconsoled*, the elements of surrealism in the narrative had operated to expose the untenability of Ryder’s cosmopolitan enterprise, even disallowing him from fulfilling his fundamental goal of performing in a nameless European town. In *Orphans*, the surrealism serves a not so dissimilar function—the narrative is faintly mocking the seriousness with which Banks and the Englishmen are taking themselves with regard to their influence over the events in Shanghai. It is also a subtle but important suggestion that Banks is not only naïve at having come to China with the hope of affecting the war, but that he will ultimately fail.

In Coetzee’s novel, failure is on the cards for Rayment too, when he wishes that something satisfactory and life-changing will happen between the happily married Marijana and him. Rayment’s life, especially after the accident and losing his leg, is filled with a loneliness and emptiness that are now also tied to unresolved issues regarding his diasporic identity. Ironically, Marijana’s presence rejuvenates (albeit in a possessive and carnal way) him but also alerts him to these suppressed, diasporic anxieties, his status as an outsider in a country that he had complacently called his homeland, whose history he is trying to preserve. Costello’s initial solution to the quandary of Rayment’s predicament is to set him up with the blind Marianna. In this situation with Marianna, herself another diasporic individual (Rayment guesses, on account of her exotic-sounding name), Rayment asks if she is French, and when she says no, he thinks, “Not French. A pity. France would be something in common, like a blanket to deploy over the pair of them” (105). First, Marijana had reminded Rayment that he was a cultural alien, having been brought to the “zero history” (49) of Australia as part of an immigrant family, yet he had not thought long and critically (beyond a

few initial doubts about his relation to Australia's past) about how this might ultimately affect the meaningfulness of his present existence *as* an Australian. Now, through Costello's extraordinary appearance and intrusion into his life, he is forced again to think about his French past upon encountering Marianna. The highly literary sense that they are both handicapped seems to suggest that being a diasporic is akin to suffering a crippling disability. The narrative, with its significant insertions of Marijana and Costello into the central plot about Rayment's life as a post-amputee, is unmistakably pushing, even jolting, Rayment into a renewed state of consciousness about his own existence. The fact that Rayment even wishes that Marianna was, at least, French, points to the beginnings of a new, successful phase in Rayment's thinking and self-awareness as a diasporic. But these beginnings are troubled, for Rayment would much prefer to slip back into a previous naivety about himself. This happens when he quickly recovers from his disappointment that Marianna is not French and attempts to speak in romantic terms to reassure her, "There is no need . . . for us to adhere to any script. No need to do anything we do not wish. We are free agents" (105). But the fact of the matter is that Rayment *is* clearly caught in a metaphysical script of some kind, one that Coetzee is weaving all around him, such that he is not truly free at all to decide how to act or feel. The surreal presence of Costello is already a sign that Rayment is meant to step outside of his mental comfort zones to take a new and considered look at his preconceptions of selfhood. Yet here, with a blind woman in his arms, Rayment is escaping into comfortable self-delusion by assuring not Marianna, but really himself, that nothing is wrong with him, after all; there is nothing, he thinks, that he has to change within himself. Rayment asserts this self-delusion by attempting to dismiss Costello's peculiar and sudden interference into his life, "[Costello] is of the opinion that until I have crossed a certain threshold I am caught in limbo, unable to grow" (112). Once again, we see Rayment suspended on the threshold between newfound realisation and escapist self-delusion; and the novel is constantly leaving readers in suspense about whether Rayment will cross the threshold or stay his old, obdurate self, forever unable to evolve. There is the hope that once Rayment crosses this crucial threshold, he might make something out of his private dualities as a diasporic, as well as come to terms with both his

mortality and the loss of his leg, all of which will in turn compel him to mature from being just an embittered, lascivious, unreflective and old man.

As diasporic individuals, Rayment, as well as Ishiguro's detective-protagonist, are forced to grapple with states of multiple belonging, conflicted positions that they, at first, deny or suppress by being carried away with the role of the heroic English detective, in Banks' case, or by living as a closed-minded, Australian curmudgeon, in Rayment's case. In *Slow*, Rayment crudely distracts himself from his misery by turning a plain-faced Croatian nurse into an object of beauty. Yet, with the appearance of Marijana, signs of uncertainty and conflictedness stemming from his existence as a French-Australian manifest involuntarily and ironically within him. As if Marijana is not enough to bring Rayment into a direct, critical confrontation with these internal divisions with his selfhood, the author resorts, in a surreal and disconcerting way, to subverting the expectations of realism and inserting a character from his previous novel into Rayment's life. Called forth by the author through his own description of Rayment's accident, Costello is forced to travel to Rayment and force her presence upon him, telling him what to think and how to act, much to Rayment's reluctance and resentment. The encounter she forces him into with Marianna pushes him further towards confronting his conflicted sense of self, but Rayment soon pulls himself back out again by sheer force of stubbornness and habit. Costello is then forced to contend that Rayment will have his Marijana no matter what. Rayment will continue to resist the novelist's calls for him to look beyond his immediate concerns of impressing himself upon the Balkan nurse and leading an existence without consideration of his diasporic past.

As Rayment's metaphysical nemesis, Costello's disruptive presence urges him into a reluctant state of self-awareness about the multifarious as well as cosmopolitan dimensions of his life. Although he openly wonders why she is bothering to help him when he is admittedly "so dull, so unresponsive" (117) to her schemes, his curiosity is piqued enough for him to find out more about the novelist. Leafing through one of her novels, *The Fiery Furnace*, Rayment stumbles upon this extensive passage: "*He rolls the plasticine between his palms until it is*

warm and . . . pinches it into little animal figures . . . The pristine cakes of brick red, leaf green, sky blue have bled into each other by now and become a leaden purple. Why, he wonders – why does the bright grow dull and the dull never bright? What would it need to make the purple fade away and the red and blue and green emerge again, like chicks from a shell?” (119). After reading this, Rayment responds in his own head, “The answer is simple: the red and the blue . . . will never return because of entropy, which is irreversible and irrevocable and rules the universe. Even a literary person ought to know that . . . From the multifarious to the uniform and never back again. From the perky chick to the old hen dead in the dust” (119).

His response is revealing not just of Rayment’s psychology at this moment but also suggestive of his existential *raison d’être*. The passage from Costello’s novel is clearly about an artist lamenting the lack of control and the erosive nature of time that undermine his paradoxical aspirations towards immortality through art. But Rayment, deliberately or otherwise (perhaps out of annoyance with Costello’s presence), misunderstands the rhetorical nature of the lament; he implies that both Costello and the artist in the passage are fatuously stating the obvious about how nothing lasts. As such, according to Rayment’s worldview, the artist is wasting his time in even attempting to stall the inevitable, when the power of art also lies in the tragedy of its ephemerality, that already existing awareness of art’s failure to stand the test of time. Rayment’s obtuse reading of the passage is suggestive of his own mental state regarding his life as a diasporic citizen. Having been uprooted from France and being forced to fit into Australian society, the passage from Costello’s novel can be read as an allegory for Rayment’s own diasporic experience; the multicoloured nature of the diasporic’s cultural makeup is reduced to a state of uniformity, symbolised by the banality of the colour “purple” in the text. The colours of “the red and the blue” are also reminiscent of the French flag which are suppressed under the eventual layer of “purple.” This is a subtle analogy for that enforced and difficult process of cosmopolitanism that Rayment is only now beginning to properly confront, when before he had only occupied a position of unthinking affiliation to his

Australian environment. The process is difficult because Rayment is now struggling with his earlier denial of multiple states of belonging. This is shown when he resorts to talking snappily and empirically about entropy and the rules of the universe in justifying how the different colours decompose into uniformity. Because the suppression of the past is, in Rayment's stubborn mind, "irreversible and irrevocable," the mental state that he has maintained as a diasporic is, to him, a legitimate consequence of reason and pragmatism. As an unthinking "Australian" citizen, Rayment's personality is defiantly of a uniform colour, *sans* the richly variegated and potentially clashing cultural components that can simultaneously exist in the diasporic's mind. Yet Rayment's response to Costello's writing is not without its trace of bitterness, a trace that speaks of suppressed attitudes about his sense of dislocation in his present society. His comments about how the multifarious entropies to uniformity, and the transition of "the perky chick to the old hen dead in the dust," barely hide an undercurrent of resentment about the emptiness of his immigrant life thus far, an emptiness now further compounded by his dwindling mortality and, of course, the loss of a leg. These complex feelings of frustration, uncertainty and mounting sullenness form part of the internal evolution that Rayment is beginning to embark on, willingly or not, egged on by Costello towards a future stage of critical self-awareness. It is an optimistic stage that he potentially might not—in lieu of his stubbornness and the author's desperate tactic of warping the parameters of realism in affecting Rayment's life—even reach.

Just as Ishiguro's protagonist is naively caught up in the Englishness of his present identity as a contemporary Sherlock Holmes with a global mission, with a growing but still limited connection to memories of his past in Shanghai, Rayment in Coetzee's semi-realistic narrative is caught up in his Australian present. Rayment, in a similar way as with Banks in *Orphans*, is being forced to engage with the past in the way memories or allusions to his French origins increasingly occur in his thoughts. Such occurrences of this return of the repressed take place especially when Marijana and Costello are in the narrative picture. But Rayment really "just wants [Costello] out of his life" (130), such as during the scene when he

unceremoniously tosses her out of his apartment, insisting that she take her heavy suitcase with her by herself. Costello is herself “not exactly rejoicing” (136) that she has to grapple with Rayment’s intractability. Yet she is compelled to force herself on him for no clear reasons of her own; she is simply without choice, a metafictional instrument with Coetzee as the invisibly omnipotent and omniscient hand that wields her. In spite of his obduracy, Rayment is not completely unswayed by her, as when he agrees to sleep with Marianna, whom, along with Marijana, serve as mirrors to the dimension of foreignness in his own diasporic life. These women instigate him into remembering that he too is not without anxieties about his exoticity. At one point when Rayment refuses to deal insightfully with his internal complexities, Costello laments the moment as part of a more general deadlock in the plot of *Slow Man*. She does this after Drago arrives with her to Rayment’s apartment to escape ructions at home. Rayment had offered to pay for Drago’s education, which had resulted in the father’s stern disapproval and caused Drago’s parents to quarrel. Costello describes Drago, his unhappy parents, Rayment (whose “unhappiness is second nature to him”) and herself as akin to “tramps in Beckett . . . wasting time, being wasted by time” (141). This overt literary reference to Beckett emphasises, somewhat melodramatically, the overall, existential stalemate in Coetzee’s plot caused by the author’s dullard, one-legged protagonist. From the exotic Marianna, the Jokićs, Costello (who is herself of Irish descent) to Rayment himself, Costello’s description of themselves as Beckettian tramps waiting for Godot, or just for something meaningful to happen, effectively highlights that this is a cast of diasporics with Rayment at its centre, upon which the larger plot pivots or grinds to a halt. In this gathering of multiple, cultural identities, a cosmopolitan nightmare is born in which no one is happy—and it is up to Rayment to reflect critically on what he has to do and feel, then make a crucial decision that will, in turn, move the plot along in a hopefully positive direction. Dramatic suspense is thus generated as to what Rayment will do next at this point in the narrative, which is still far from over.

What both Rayment and Banks in *Orphans* need to do is to reassess the past, such that the past can affect their futures in meaningful ways. In his fear of cultural mongrelisation that he earlier confessed to his Uncle Philip, Banks repressed the part of himself that grew up in Shanghai. Yet what was once repressed has come unstuck, incomplete memories and nostalgic emotions now drawing him back to China. Under the ostensible guise of halting a potential world war in his proud capacity as a famous English detective, Banks lands himself back in the cultural surroundings which had begun to surface in his memories with growing urgency. Fixing global turmoil is irrationally conflated with a private agenda to find his parents, but this return to Shanghai is also a symbolic way in which disparate parts of Banks' diasporic identity are slowly and dramatically coming together. In *Slow*, Costello compared the state of non-progress in the novel's plot which feature Rayment as its central cause as akin to a Beckettian play; the plot would only move if Rayment came to terms with the disparate cultural components within himself, aspects that manifest more prominently particularly through his dealings with the Jokićs. In *Orphans*, when Banks first returns to Shanghai to start his work of finding his parents, the scene that Ishiguro sets is a cosmopolitan situation that is disharmonious and uncomfortable. It is a dissonant sort of cosmopolitan context on a vaster scale than the stalemate predicament described by Costello and faced by Coetzee's central cast of diasporics. Through Banks' adult eyes now, Shanghai looks like this: "something . . . has come to be a perennial source of irritation: namely, the way people here seem determined at every opportunity to block one's view . . . English, Chinese, French, American, Japanese, Russian – subscribe to this practice with equal zeal . . . within Shanghai's International Settlement, cutting across all barriers of race and class . . . [this was] the root of the disorientation which threatened to overwhelm me for a time upon first arriving here" (181-182). This status quo of discord and hostility between the different cultural aspects in the International Settlement is not only an analogous reflection of unresolved tensions within Banks' diasporic makeup (similar to how the standstill between the different characters of *Slow* reflects Rayment's internal intractability as a French-Australian), but it is also a sign of problems on a larger, global scale.

What Banks perceives to be just a curious quirk—a merely “local custom” (181), as Banks also puts it—of how people generally behave in the Settlement is emblematic of a status quo that extends beyond just the parameters of Shanghai. We must remember that earlier, Banks and Medhurst before him have both subscribed to a vision of a world reaching a newly evolved state of harmony after the horrors of the First World War, with Britain at the forefront of pushing the boundaries for civilisation without future conflicts. Medhurst himself was credited for helping to found the League of Nations, a transnational collaboration fostered by England as its foremost and celebrated architect. A League of Nations gives the impression that its members *are* capable of forming a harmoniously interconnected world. But upon leaving the self-congratulatory, ideological cocoon of London and entering Shanghai, Banks is assaulted (although he tries to dismiss his discomfort as quickly and humorously as he can) by a chaotic, cosmopolitan state of affairs that flies in the face of this earlier, idealistic vision of a world striving towards peace. Open hostilities with different cultural identities jostling for space within the cramp and chaotic Settlement all suggest a more Hobbesian, global situation in which selfishness or aggression is the norm. As the novel’s unreliable narrator, Banks is constantly riding on the high of his heroic identity while half-admitting that the past is returning to haunt and shape his life. Now as he returns to Shanghai to embark on his extraordinary mission, he insists on viewing the pandemonium of the Settlement through a blinkered perspective of a discernibly English sense of detachment and dismissive humour. But the narrative of *Orphans* is larger and more unpredictable than Banks’ limited worldview, one that is being changed by events both external and internal. Navigating through the Settlement, an over-idealistic vision of the world promoted by the formation of that League of Nations is really crumbling before the reader’s eyes, even as Banks himself might not see it. At the very least, he recognises the present chaos as “a perennial source of irritation” but as readers, we can begin to see an earlier idealism about the world being taken over by bedlam. It will only get more chaotic because the Japanese are in the midst of invading Chinese soil, just as the Communists and the Nationalists are fighting amongst themselves whilst also defending themselves against the Japanese.

A previous, grand narrative about how the world is becoming civilised, through its League of Nations as exemplifying this progression, trail-blazed by England as a shining, benevolent, imperialist and capitalist superpower, is being increasingly ridiculed. Repressing his own culturally-conflicted dimensions, Banks has been eager to believe this grand narrative by morphing into the figure of the courageous, English detective, a symbolic figure of imperialistic pride. Even as Ishiguro's plot has Banks as its moving centre and observer, in the above scene, Banks becomes just another individual swallowed up by a mad and uncontrollable throng of multiple nationalities who have no qualms about getting in each other's way. The unruly crowd is itself an external reflection of internal chaos as unexpected bits and pieces of his Shanghainese past also jostle for attention within Banks' mind, governing his actions through the narrative. Banks is not really in control of anything. He underestimates the irrepressible nature of his fundamentally mongrelised and uniquely diasporic self, one in which disparate cultural contexts and memories are running against each other, shaping and re-shaping who he is. Just as his internal narrative about being a successful English detective is showing itself up to be an artificial one, a larger narrative about imperialistic England being a force of good in the world is also turning out to be false. Within the context of how the different cultures navigate with intense inconsideration towards each other within the International Settlement, Great Britain, which Banks represents in his self-important way, might just turn out to be the most aggressively self-serving and self-delusional of them all. This slowly occurs to Banks when the childhood memories that start to return to him include those of his mother's fight against Britain's opium trade with China.

In one of such memories, Banks remembers an English inspector coming to warn his mother about keeping servants from Shantung who might have resorted to thieving or contracted illnesses due to widespread opium addiction. His mother, in Banks' description of the incident, reacts with great indignation: "There followed a tirade of controlled ferocity in which she put to the inspector the case . . . that the British in general, and the company of Morganbrook and Byatt [where Banks' father works] especially, by importing Indian opium

into China in such massive quantities had brought untold misery and degradation to a whole nation . . . [She also] asked him: ‘Are you not ashamed . . . as an Englishman . . . [and is] your conscience able to rest while you owe your existence to such ungodly wealth?’” (71-72).

Banks further describes his mother as “the Great Opium Dragon of China” (72). What is most telling about such remembered sequences in the narrative is the elaborate way in which Ishiguro, in a peculiarly pedantic and moralistic way via Mrs Banks, explains and emphasises how the opium trade had filled the English coffers. It is as if the novelist is concerned that the reader might not be acquainted with such events as the Opium Wars and how the English had become the major drug-trafficking organisation in the world by the 1830s. Growing opium in India, the East India Company (of which Morganbrock and Byatt is presumably affiliated to, or at least a renamed version of) shipped opium from India into China, which the imperialistic country traded for China-manufactured goods and for tea. Such exploitative forces were frequently hidden from view within the hustle and bustle of the English metropolis. Sim Wai-Chew draws from both Fredric Jameson and Carl Trocki in describing these exploitative forces and invisible connections. Jameson refers to an aspect of alienation between the consumer and transnational capitalist structures like this: “A significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis . . . in colonies over the water whose own life experience and life remain unknown and unimaginable for the subjects of the imperial power” who are unaware of the “radical otherness of colonial life, colonial suffering, and exploitation” (“Modernism and Imperialism” 50-51). With regard to the transportation and sale of opium, in particular, Carl Trocki writes that the emergence of such a trade was intimately connected to the pecuniary pressures exerted by the tea remittance as well as by Europe’s historical trade deficit with Asia. He tells us that “for three centuries, European trade with Asia was marked by [the] one-way flow of exotic chemicals” (8) such as nutmeg, cloves, pepper, coffee and finally opium, which was the first product to make possible a change in that trade imbalance. It made up for the tea remittance that was causing a bullion drain from Europe. Opium thus allowed the English to get their foot into the door of the Asian commercial system, even though the

English “were not ignorant of the sort of substance they were selling . . . [for they] knew it was poison . . . [this is because] the British colonial records and other contemporary materials are full of quotations that indicate a perfect acquaintance with the nature and power of opium. It is in the creation of the opium trade that we can see the invisible hand of capitalism at work” (32).

As someone who grew up in Shanghai, and with his mother as the Opium Dragon of China, Banks is surprisingly not *more* concerned about these exploitative connections between England and China. Since leaving Shanghai, he has only disappeared into “the very embodiment of English propriety and circumspection” and an “inflated sense of his own importance in the worldwide fight against evil” (Kakutani 1695-96). This, as Kakutani writes, is a character trait repeated before in Ishiguro’s previous novels (namely, *Remains* and *Unconsoled*) about an unreliable narrator who suffers from delusions of grandeur and hides behind a facade of professional detachment (1695-96). Yet, unlike Stevens or Ryder, Banks’ detachment and self-delusions actually crumble with great urgency, permitting him to act in productive ways. Already, the memories of the past, such as the one above of his mother, are recurring and adding up in his mind to a growing jigsaw. As a uniquely diasporic protagonist, Banks is being controlled and moved by invisible connections between past and present, between cultural forces that cannot be repressed; instead, they determine whatever Banks chooses to do next in Ishiguro’s narrative. These invisible connections that become increasingly evident to Banks are echoed metaphorically through what Sim Wai-Chew has described as the serpentine iconography that occurs in the narrative. For Sim, serpentine iconography is mostly an allusive reference to the international and domestic transportation networks utilised in the distribution of opium. In Banks’ ostensible pursuit of the serpent’s evil heart, as Sim argues, the novel operates as “an allegorical dramatisation of such phenomenological limitations as they impinge on cultural production and reception” (216). In interpellating for intellectual and artistic reflection a global political economy, the literary work is in itself a focal point to broadly understand the global system by linking together the

metropole and the periphery and the implications of their relationship about the complex structures of globalisation. Sim uses Jameson's terms to suggest that *Orphans* provides a "cognitive mapping" (1984, 85). Just like how a ratiocinative detective would bring disparate clues to form a picture of the murderer's intentions, *Orphans* bridges a critical gap "between the realm of culture and that of the socio-economic" (Sim 237), mapping out socio-economic terrains otherwise left unexplored in the minds of consumers who might never recognise their own ethical relations to those capitalist structures of an exploitative world order.

Sim's argument is supported quite evidently by Ishiguro's over-explicit and belaboured references to the opium trade as recollected and dramatically outlined by Banks' mother when she scolds the company inspector. But it is all not just about exploitative connections within a capitalistic world alone. From Banks' boast about slaying the serpent to the description of his mother as an Opium Dragon (another reptilian figure), such serpentine references suggest that the pervasiveness of evil can be snakelike without having a clear head or tail. Banks might be claiming grandiosely to slay the head of the serpent in Shanghai, but as the novel progresses, and as more memories surface about his past, the serpent becomes an impossible hydra with many undetectable heads—the evil that Banks ultimately aims to vanquish does not necessarily have a straightforward origin. Imperialistic England might itself represent one of these heads, as exemplified through its exploitation of China through the opium trade. Ishiguro is critically aware of how interconnected the world is, such that the trail of clues that build up to a global narrative about exploitation and political conquest can start and end anywhere—Britain might very well be the originator of all the world's ills as a result of its imperialistic influence and the once oppressive stranglehold of its empire. This was strongly implied in *Remains* when Ishiguro had set out to decimate any illusion that Britain retained any moral right to equate itself with the values of honour or gentlemanly values.

In *Orphans*, evil has become more sublimated, such that there is no longer any one source; Ishiguro has made it a deliberate point to show that everyone is, to a large degree,

guilty. As a detective, Banks has to follow snakelike trails that lead him everywhere from Britain to Shanghai. Britain might have been guilty for exploiting China for opium (a point the novelist drums home pedantically), but the brutality of the “Yellow Snake Killings” (an event that Banks has to investigate on his way to chasing the over-determined serpent’s head in China) whereby Chinese nationalists and communists are engaged in gratuitous killings of each other, with “Reds murdering relatives of one of their number who’s turned informer on them” (185-186), serve to illustrate (with the name for the killings alluding again to the trope of the serpent) that evil can happen anywhere. For Banks, the notion of the origin of evil hits even closer to home when he later learns that one of the snake-like forces of evil extends from the heart of his own family—his treacherous, but once beloved, Uncle Philip. Serpentine iconography in the novel emphasises that as a diasporic detective who finds himself pulled mentally and geographically between disparate cultures, between grand global concerns and private familial pains, Banks is being urgently ruled by both external and internal forces that are far beyond his control. This sense of a central detective’s ironic loss of control is further emphasised when Banks constantly loses himself in the winding streets of Shanghai, when he is always complaining about how he has “lost [his] bearings” (239). In another moment during his investigations, as he enters an unfamiliar house, it starts “dawning” on him that he is in “what used to be the entrance hall of [his] old Shanghai house” (219). As a detective grappling with fraught, half-conscious tensions between past and present, Banks is continuously wrestling with subconscious, serpentine forces that steer him every which way into repeated confrontations with unresolved aspects of himself. These aspects progressively expose the artificiality of the narrative that Banks has forged for his existence and identity as a self-assured, English detective. The truth is infinitely more complex—and Banks will ultimately be forced to come to terms with the conflicted dimensions of his diasporic self, which will in turn help him to solve the mystery about his parents. It is a mystery that, when solved, will help Banks move on with his life into a happier future.

The overall, implicit as well as surreal, sense of a lack of individual control that Banks experiences can be compared to the mystifying way in which Coetzee's protagonist is also ruled by forces, both realistic and unreal, beyond his control. Thrown (and quite literally too, as the plot of *Slow* begins with Rayment being flung into air) into a baffling and helpless existence in which he finds himself forming fraught and awkward bonds with the Jokiés and with Costello, Rayment is forced to confront the meaningfulness of his diasporic existence. No longer just a realistic and straightforward story about a grumpy, one-legged Australian who falls in love with his exotic nurse, *Slow* has turned into a critical as well as metafictional reflection on one's man place in his Australian society. James Clifford has argued that contemporary societies like Australia are characterised as much by travel as by dwelling and residence; in an increasingly apparent way, such spaces are "culture areas, populated by strong, diasporic ethnicities unevenly assimilated to dominant nation states" (110). *Orphans* might consist of a moralistic exposé on the exploitative aspects of capitalistic structures suppressed by grander narratives of global advancements (perpetuated by an English imperialistic superpower and a central detective who perceives himself as its symbolic champion), but Ishiguro's novel also exposes the complexity of Banks' diasporic identity as one that is not readily categorisable or summarised. Diasporic identities, as well as their private cultural histories, are complex; as the novel progresses, Banks finds it harder to deny this as he grapples with irrepressible connections to his Shanghainese past. Coetzee's novel contains a similarly critical attack on the suppression of cultural diversities and immigrant histories by dominant nationalistic narratives. Difficult, personal narratives of travel and emigration on a global scale for the purposes of survival become trivialised, and their cultural implications over-simplified, when societies evince implicit to explicit expectations of conformity from immigrants for the sake of preserving the nationalistic status quo. For purposes of legitimation and conformity, complex immigrant identities have to suppress or disguise their own radical differences in order to gain successful entry into a dominant culture. Writers like Makarand Paranjape have pointed out that "considering that no human community has ever remained entirely static, we can argue that there are no pure natives

anywhere—that, to some extent, we are all diasporic” (“Afterword: What About Those Who Stayed Back Home?” 229). As such, societies are *already* spaces of implicit diversities that are often suppressed or altogether erased, a point symbolically referenced by the passage from Costello’s novel *The Fiery Furnace* where, in *Slow Man*, Rayment read about colours merging into a dull purple (119). Through Rayment’s conflicted perspective about his own diasporic condition, the novel pointedly implies that Australia is really a country made out of immigrants from places like England and Ireland, and that it has somehow lost its diversity as a result of a normalised homogenisation of culture. Such homogenisation was first referenced by Marijana when she talked about how when immigrants come to a new country like Australia, they enter a state of “Zero history” (49) in order to fit into the predominant culture they have chosen to survive in, their previous identities obviated to become a *tabula rasa* “on which global capitalism’s moving finger writes its message, leaving behind another homogenised consumer as it moves on” (Appiah 111). Although Appiah suggests that such a perception of the globalised diasporic self is condescending and oppressive, it is still a common one which diasporics like Marijana subscribe to for reasons of survival. Rayment’s resentful, initial response to Marijana—“Do you cease to have a story when you move from one point on the globe to another?” (49)—shows how he is being forced (ironically by Marijana) to rethink his own individual place in Australia, and what kind of personal cultural story he has himself repressed after assimilating into Australian culture. Rayment’s presumption of infallibility with regard to his own mortality and identity becomes undermined when his right leg is removed and he feels like he has entered “a second world” (122). The threat to his sense of infallibility extends to his identity as a French-Australian too, which he had not thought long and hard about before the accident, and especially not before Marijana and Costello.

It is Costello, most of all, who is Coetzee’s literary device to set Rayment off in talking incisively about his previously unacknowledged, French past. In his attempt to appease Costello’s demands that he reflect on his life and his intentions to take care of

Marijana and pay for her son's education, Rayment relates: "[Once] upon a time I was a pukkah little Catholic boy. Before the Dutchman uprooted us and brought us to the ends of the earth I had my schooling from the good sisters of Lourdes . . . In my earlier life I did not speak as freely about myself as I do today . . . [Since] my accident I have begun to let some of that reticence slip. *If you don't speak now*, I say to myself, *when will you speak?* So: *Would Jesus approve?* That is . . . the standard I try to meet . . . [and so with regard to] Marijana and her children – I want to extend a protective hand over them" (156). In the midst of this, Costello eggs him on in his personal and slightly disjointed outpourings by telling him that she herself was once "a proper Irish Catholic girl" (156). It is through his reluctant confession that we learn that Rayment's reticence was a result of his French-Catholic upbringing, a reticence that he came to regret particularly after he was blighted by a motorist and especially after meeting the Jokićs. The emptiness of his life before meeting Marijana is causally linked to his French upbringing, a fact that Rayment has never admitted before. Yet Rayment is still not digging further enough into himself. He is still too timid to delve into what this reticence or his French upbringing might mean for his present identity. He is even not being completely honest. He admits as much (but only to himself) that he is not telling the whole truth to Costello: "What he has said about discarding reticence . . . is not, strictly speaking, true" (157). This begs the immediate question: what is the complete truth then? Rayment is being forced into a corner by Costello to confront his French past but he is only revealing a limited amount of information, and offering a tentative reflection on this information. Costello eggs him further on by suggesting that perhaps Rayment is more "dark-hearted" or "complicated" (158-159) that he likes to believe he is. She wants him to stop "dithering" and to snap out of his "poor, cold" state of being (160-161). In response, Rayment gets predictably defensive: "I cannot make myself exceptional just for your sake. I am sorry" (160). To Costello, Rayment is dancing on the cusp of some profound revelation of selfhood that bridges the past and the present; the French past and his present diasporic reality. But coldly, Rayment will not have anything to do with complexities of thought, or with viewing his own intentions and selfhood as anything but straightforward, even good and pure. Yet Rayment also thinks this to himself

with regard to the difficulty he faces in expressing himself to Marijana: “*I too am feeling my way, I too am on foreign soil*” (165). Rayment is aware that he is, like Marijana, foreign; the conflation of the notion of “foreignness” as non-familiarity (in relation to the expression of emotions) with the meaning of foreignness in that more literal, immigrant sense, suggest that Rayment *is* becoming more intellectually alert to the complexities of his selfhood.

As both a creative writer herself and a metafictional device, Costello cannot help but encourage a play with Rayment’s surname that belongs to a general, potentially grating and gratuitous sense of over-literariness pervading the novel. The narrative gives the impression that its central protagonist is simply so dull and thick-headed that such blatant literariness is necessary to shock him out of his comfort zone, forcing both Rayment and readers to seriously (re)consider what it means to live a diasporic existence. Regardless of the novel’s inclination towards too much self-reflexivity and literary cleverness, such over-literate playfulness still manages, however, to alert both Rayment and the reader to layered significances in Rayment’s diasporic personality. This happens when Costello makes fun of Coetzee’s protagonist and teases him like this, “Such a proper Adelaidean gentleman that I forget you are not English at all. Mr Rayment, rhyming with payment” (192). Rayment responds with surprising self-revelation, “Rhyming with *vraiment*. I had three doses of the immigrant experience, not just one . . . I was uprooted as a child . . . then when I declared my independence and returned to France; then when I gave up on France and came back to Australia. *Is this where I belong?* I asked with each move. *Is this my true home?*” (192). Costello’s teasing allusion to “payment” is suggestive of the price that Rayment has paid in donning the raiment of conformity as an assimilated immigrant. In French, *vraiment* means “really” or “truly” and this suggests that Rayment is, perhaps, willing to peel away the layers of self-delusion and stare hard into his past experiences in order to decipher who he “really” is. The central reality that Rayment discovers in his confession to Costello is that he had never been able to answer the question about his sense of belonging. As a diasporic, he has been living in a state of cosmopolitan confusion, as well as in denial of this confusion through self-

imposed delusions of cultural conformity. The truth of the matter is that Rayment has always been intrinsically homeless; he has never felt at home anywhere, be it in France or Australia. In the past he had tried to locate feelings of being at home in France, but being uprooted from an early age had forced him into the position of a cultural outsider, even in peasant France where he was “not successful . . . not, shall we say, embraced” by his own kind (196). In France, he was looked upon as the “gangly fellow with the funny accent . . . the stranger in the corner at family gatherings” and even nicknamed *l’Anglais*, although he had “no ties to England, had never even been there” (196). This further cemented the estrangement between him and his own French family. It is an essentially diasporic predicament that he describes in having occupied a position of cultural dislocation and displacement all his life, frustrations and anxieties stemming from which he had buried under the guise of being obdurate, aloof and detached even from himself.

The memories flood the narrative now as Costello engages Rayment, whom she has worn down with her constant badgering, followed by his more honest, reflective and emotionally-charged conclusions: “A pigeon has a home . . . I have a domicile . . . Home is too mystical for me . . . I can pass among Australians . . . English has never been mine . . . I have always felt myself to be a kind of ventriloquist’s dummy” (198). Then privately within the silence of his own mind, Rayment confesses further, “*I am hollow at the core*” (199). Although Rayment might be able to pass off as an English-speaking, white Australian, he is, in his own words, a dummy, a hollowed man without a culture and a society to call home. This has implications for why he might have invested so much of himself into the lives of the Jokićs, falling in love with Marijana on one hand, but also negotiating with her hostile husband, on the other, convincing Mr Jokić that his intentions in helping to pay for Drago’s education are harmless. Literally legless and nearing the end of his life, a culturally and emotionally homeless Rayment is desperate for *some* semblance of a home. It is probably no accident that the family situation that he desperately longs to be a part of belongs to a family of Croatians whose diasporic position in Australian society echoes his past familial situation.

It is also poignantly telling that a man who has felt like an outsider all his life within Australia has found comfort with a family from the Balkans, particularly with a Croatian nurse whose verbal malapropisms and lack of fluency in English stirs up feelings of belonging within him. Home, as Rayment points out, is constantly too “mystical” and too contentious a concept for many diasporics like Rayment and the Jokićs who are struggling simply to survive (we are told, for example, that Marijana gave up life-affirming work as an art-restorer in Croatia to come to Australia as a nurse) and fit “successfully” into the dominant nation state. As a diasporic torn between multiple states of belonging, between a French past and an Australian present, Rayment, like many diasporics, is nowhere at home. This is perhaps why, for Rayment, a “home” with the Jokićs seems like such a good idea.

Coetzee has written that the novel possesses within itself the capacity “to show up the mythic status of history” (“The Novel Today” 3) and this is what both *Slow* and *Orphans* have done in exposing the artificiality of grander processes of globalisation that hide or suppress narratives of exploitation or immigrant histories. Orphaned from an early age and haunted by his Chinese past, Banks is not the Englishman he thinks he is and memories of the International Settlement in Shanghai lead him to confront his diasporic condition of homelessness. In a similar way, both Rayment and he are cultural orphans struggling to bridge multiple states of belonging in order to feel at home. In *Orphans*, Banks’ memories lead him not only to Shanghai where he does little to stop another world war, the clues that he picks up on as a dedicated “English” sleuth only lead him back to his Uncle Philip. The latter tells Banks that, in trying to make the opium trade unprofitable for the English, he had appealed to bandit warlords like Wang Ku, who only ended up stealing the opium and selling it themselves to their fellow Chinese. Eventually, the English had stopped exporting the opium. However, not only the warlords but the nationalist army itself had taken over the opium trade and exploited their own countrymen. As Philip puts it: “The trade had simply changed hands . . . It was now run by Chiang’s governments . . . to pay for Chiang Kai-shek’s army, to pay for his power” (345). As the novel dramatically reveals, no one is innocent in

this business of the opium trade; the British might have exploited the Chinese but the Chinese too were willing to exploit their own for profit. For Banks, the worst of the revelations really comes when he learns that his mother, Diana, had been enslaved by Wang Ku. After she found out what had happened with the changing of hands, she had slapped Wang Ku and with the help of Uncle Philip (who secretly lusted after her and was angry that she did not desire him), forced Mrs Banks to become Wang Ku's concubine. Diana only agreed because, in return, Wang Ku agreed to take care of the costs of Banks' education in England. Philip explains to Banks, "Your schooling. Your place in London society. The fact that you made of yourself what you have. You owe it to Wang Ku . . . [and] to your mother's sacrifice" (344). The myth of the self-sufficient detective, the embodiment of English empiricism and reasoning, is completely destroyed at this moment as he realises that who he is as an Englishman is linked to the fruits of one Chinese warlord's criminal exploits. Banks is also made radically aware of how interconnected the world really is; no longer can he believe in the mythic ideal of the "League of Nations" whereby capitalist superpowers like Britain are leading the way towards an eventual horizon of peace and civility. Exploitative connections are exposed and Banks stands symbolically at their invisible crossroads and as their unwitting beneficiary.

But this is not the only thing that Banks has to confront with regard to revelations about his past. Ishiguro cannot resist rehashing the same formula for scenes of suggestive surrealism, which he applied extensively in *Unconsoled*, by putting Banks through the paces of a painstakingly dreamlike excursion through the ruins of an embattled Shanghai, in which the detective literally goes nowhere and bumps into someone who might or might not be his childhood friend, Akira. Such an excursion is a figurative allusion to the ruins of an idealised version of history perpetuated by Medhurst and his ilk, including Banks himself. Climbing through holes in walls and rubble while following a lead that Banks hopes would lead him to his missing parents, the detective stumbles upon a Japanese soldier that he is convinced is Akira; the soldier, albeit wounded and in a hazy state, does not disagree (the novel neither

confirms nor denies this). Before he stumbles upon “Akira,” he describes the continuous scenes of debris: “Not all the walls were still standing; sometimes we would pick our way through the debris . . . [Roofs] were almost all smashed, often absent altogether, so that we had plenty of daylight . . . [My] foot slipped painfully between two jagged slabs or sank ankle-deep into fragmented rubble” (283). Banks is continuously “drifting further and further” from his route and even passes through the stink of excrement (291). Banks’ movement is symbolic of the character’s inward journey in coming to terms with the loss of his parents on the one hand, but also of the ruins of imperialism and history on the other. Such ruins are also reminiscent of Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” in which the figure of the *Angelus Novus*, whose gaze, turned toward the past, contemplates the ruins of history. In his own allegorical vision, Benjamin was attacking the idea of history as a march of progress, emphasising that history is really founded upon oppression, barbarism and discontinuity (4). All this stench and debris that Banks stumbles through facilitate a figurative indictment of what lies beneath the ostensible successes of global capitalism when its successes have been founded on grounds of violence and exploitation. The debris also symbolises an impending state of a world in which superpowers from China, Britain to Japan are coming to a full-fledged war, resulting in a widespread death and destruction.

But it is not all doom and gloom for the world in the novel. Ishiguro himself pointed out that by getting Banks to retreat into memory and the site of his past in order to bring hopeless resolution to impending global conflict, the author was, at the same time, trying to “give nostalgia a better name,” hoping that it might serve as “the emotional equivalent of idealism” (qtd. in Mackenzie 17). An individual return to the geographical and psychological site of childhood memory becomes a trope for the revamping of idealism relating to the state, and also the future, of globalisation. In helping Akira to safety, protecting him from the Chinese eager to kill any Japanese soldiers they find, Banks believes wholeheartedly that this soldier is indeed Akira. For whatever reasons that we will never ascertain, Akira plays along, perhaps purely for his own survival. Together, they vaguely reminisce about games they used

to play and Bank tells him at one point: “Now we’re grown, we can at last put things right” with regard to a world falling apart around them; when before, as children, they had both been helpless (309). Akira chimes in with Banks’ stubborn hope and inclination towards nostalgia: “Very important. Nostalgic. When we nostalgic, we remember. A world better than this world we discover when we grow. We remember and wish good world come back again” (310). Sim Wai-Chew has tied Akira’s response to Fredric Jameson’s notion that memory can serve as a mediator “between the psychological and the political”; memory can be revolutionary, since “the loss or repression of . . . freedom and desire takes . . . the form of a kind of amnesia or forgetful numbness, which the hermeneutic activity, the stimulation of memory as the negation of the here and now . . . has as its function to dispel” (*Marxism and Form* 113-114). Banks’ deliberate amnesia of his Chinese past collapses as memories of his childhood flood and influence his thoughts, negating and dispelling a present complacency with regard to not just his English identity but also his idealised perspective of the world. The exploitative and oppressive dimensions of capitalist and imperialist expansion are exposed during Banks’ revolutionary path towards a new form of idealism about the future, one that garners its energies from an unrepressed, childhood fantasy about a utopian world which both Akira and Banks had once innocently shared. In such an idealism, imperialism’s and capitalism’s past crimes and injustices are acknowledged as part of an empowering movement into a renewed, and potentially better, future.

This process of acknowledging the darker dimensions of the past so as to improve the future was already signalled by Banks’ relationship to another orphan, his adopted charge, Jennifer. After having lost her parents, Jennifer has told Banks who had wondered about whether she suffered from grief over such a tragic past: “You have to look forward in life” (157). As a conflicted diasporic negotiating between past and present, between Shanghai and England, Banks has had to come to grips with the memories and subconscious desires that pulled him to Shanghai under the guise of saving the world. He not only fails to save the world but discovers that his uncle was a traitor, his father has died, whilst his mother became

a concubine who was abused and who ended up in a mental-asylum in Hong Kong. He also never sees Akira again because the latter gets arrested by his own Japanese colleagues for having potentially alerted the Chinese to their whereabouts. But the failure of his more ostensible objectives also paved the way for a new form of individual success. Although Banks discovers for himself that the dream of a civilised “League of Nations” is a sham, he is able to admit that Shanghai was “hardly a foreign land” to him and that it was where a part of him had lived all his life (325). Instead of being imprisoned by the past (which, in being suppressed, had nonetheless pulled him to itself), he is now able to bridge his Shanghainese past to his English present; he later says about China, “It’s only now I’ve started to make my journey from it” (325). But far from moving symbolically away from Shanghai forever, Banks really carries within him the lessons of the past, and gains, as a result, a renewed perspective on the world, incorporating past inequalities with the hope and optimism of a better future. Back in London, after fulfilling a promise to consider staying with Jennifer, with whom he has developed a rewarding relationship, he reminisces proudly to himself about the cases he used to solve in the past. At the same time, he also thinks in terms of the collective “we” with regard to all orphans like himself (from Jennifer to Hemmings): “our fate is to face the world as orphans, chasing through long years the shadows of vanished parents. There is nothing for it but to try and see through our missions to the end, as best we can, for until we do so, we will be permitted no calm” (367). The reference to “parents” in this reflective outpouring could mean not just literal parents but also the cultural spaces from which a diasporic individual might have become estranged or orphaned after having to leave for new cultural spaces. In seeing his own individual mission as a cultural orphan to the end, Banks has resolved tensions within his self, come to terms with the past and has accepted the complexity of his diasporic identity. No longer the classical English detective, Banks is nonetheless proud of what he has achieved in the past, but as he has now occupied a new position of positive cosmopolitanism, he has disabused himself of past delusions about imperialistic England and his celebrated place within it. Banks no longer claims for himself a popular form of cosmopolitanism characterised by “its independence, its detachment from the

bonds, commitments, and affiliations that constrain ordinary nation-bound lives” or its “luxuriously free-floating view from above” (Robbins 1998, 1), which he had previously ascribed to as a sleuth with a mission to save the world from ruins. His is now a more measured and critical form of cosmopolitanism that acknowledges that he *is* affiliated to more than one culture. He is also now able to couple the horrors of the past, the tragic exploitative dimensions of history, with a positive vision for the future. As a diasporic and widely-travelled detective, he will continue to solve cases to improve the world one step at the time, *sans* the self-aggrandising illusions he once subscribed to, whilst entering a personally enriching relationship with Jennifer, whom he will be able to share a happy life with because of their common experiences as orphans.

Rayment is a cultural orphan too, a diasporic without a meaningful sense of belonging to either parent-country of France or Australia. As such, he has become desperate for what he perceives to be an idealised state of homeliness exemplified by the Jokićs. Sławomir Masłoń has argued that Rayment’s desire for Marijana is really a symptom of a desire to “fall in love with himself again” (202). For Masłoń, Marijana in Rayment’s eyes is a figure made up of “‘Balkan’ clichés . . . based on pure prejudice (‘Balkan marriage,’ etc)” and Rayment is really projecting a “fantasmatic” self-image of physical and emotional wholeness onto Marijana that the latter probably does not live up to (202). Unlike Masłoń, however, I am uncomfortable with such a clear-cut psychoanalytical reading, as Rayment’s feelings for Marijana are never defined beyond his own expressions of desire and protectiveness over her family. Rayment’s “love” for Marijana is ambiguous enough for another reading to be also possible, which is that Marijana mirrors Rayment’s own position as an outsider in his own country. Masłoń’s point about the Balkan aspects that Rayment underscores in Marijana’s personality may also demonstrate that such exoticised aspects resonate with Rayment precisely *because* of potentially “exotic” aspects of his own diasporic self—a conflicted self that contains cultural components both French and Australian. Alas, such components have been buried in Rayment’s longing for normalcy within Australian society. Through Costello’s intellectual badgering of Coetzee’s unfortunate protagonist, *Slow Man* explicitly indicts the

diasporic tendency to simply fit in with the predominant cultural milieu. With Costello's unwanted help, Rayment is forced into a renewed, cosmopolitan position that reconsiders the unresolved tensions between past and present cultures. Compared to Ishiguro's cosmopolitan sleuth in *Orphans*, however, Rayment has no grand mystery to solve; his only positive realisation so far has nothing to do with the politics of capitalism or the state of an increasingly globalised world. He has only learnt that fitting into Australia has rendered him emotionally impotent and unfulfilled. He is a hollow man who has been leading a life of emptiness, exacerbated further by the loss of his leg. He is an old diasporic man who is also un-self-critical and reluctant to admit that his intentions in winning over the Jokićs might stem partly from desperation or selfishness. Yet, inspired by Costello's egging for greater self-reflection, he does acknowledge, "We should shake ourselves up more often. We should also brace ourselves and take a look in the mirror, even if we dislike what we will see there" (210).

But such epiphanies are minor and ephemeral in Rayment's life, in spite of Costello's best efforts. The narrative itself has bent over backwards, warping the boundaries of realism, in trying to change this man, with limited success. The narrative, with its self-reflexivity and over-literariness, mocks Rayment through what Mike Marais has called its "sheer artificiality, contrivance, and stylised nature" (207), such as during the moment when Marijana's little daughter, Ljuba, innocently teases Rayment in the novel, "You aren't Rocket Man, you're Slow Man" (258). Marais is pointing out that the narrative is capable of parodying its own metaphors, such that Rayment, as the eponymous "Slow Man," is not just slow as an aged amputee, but also slow in the head and slow to change; the parody occurs as the novel seems to be making fun not just of its protagonist but of its plot, which (because of Rayment's irritating slowness) seems to plod along, going virtually nowhere. But such a parody can, in my opinion, gratingly overstate the point. At the same time, Rayment's unwillingness to budge mentally may also cue readers to the commonplace intractability of diasporics like Rayment in real life, the countless immigrants who have chosen, in the end, a simpler state of mind, or total conformity to one's dominant culture, without dwelling unnecessarily on one's

cultural baggage, as the preferred, uncomplicated solution for survival. When Rayment lost his leg, his inclination towards self-pity compelled him to refuse a prosthesis for his missing leg and he preferred to dwell on time “gnawing away at him” (10-11). The refusal of the prosthesis and a stubborn but deluded belief in self-sufficiency is ironic. This is because Rayment is anything but self-sufficient, at least not psychologically and emotionally. The confluence of factors from Marijana’s presence and Costello’s winding him up all force him into a position of vulnerability that exposes how lacking in self-sufficiency he really is. His version of self-sufficiency was really an embittered and productive state of self-pity that repressed real desires to connect with not just another human being but also with aspects of his past.

Compared to Rayment, however, Marijana’s son is less inclined to lethargy and self-pity and more willing to make the most of his diasporic predicament, albeit in an arguably childish way. Stealing one of Rayment’s Faucheries, Drago doctors the photograph and superimposes his grandfather’s face onto it. Rayment is furious when he discovers what he considers to be a betrayal of his trust, considering how much (both financially and emotionally) he was willing to invest in Drago and his family. But Costello dismisses Rayment’s anger: “But there was no malevolence behind it . . . [It was just] a joke . . . [You] did tell him . . . that the pictures were not yours, you were merely guarding them for the sake of the nation’s history. Well, Drago is part of that history too, remember. What harm is there, thinks Drago, in inserting a Jokić into the national memory” (220-221). Drago’s insertion of his grandfather’s face into the Fauchery photograph is symbolic of a more common desire to make our individual marks upon the overarching narratives of history. It is really not so different from Rayment’s desire to be immortalised through the eventual archival of his Fauchery images. As a second-generation diasporic, Drago subverts the desire to simply disappear into the cultural milieu, as Rayment and Drago’s parents had themselves done, by *mocking* the very process of assimilation. If Drago’s prank had succeeded, no one in the future would have known that a Croatian man’s face had inserted into the photo of Australians posing a Fauchery portrait. Yet Drago would have the self-satisfaction in proving

to himself that documents of history are all too fallible and potentially suspect. It is also a symptom of a larger frustration that Drago has chosen to doctor history in this way, a frustration stemming from pressures to fit in with hegemonic narratives of cultural linearity and enforced assimilation. Such pressures form the challenge that Rayment has been reluctant to face until confronted by Costello and manipulated by a narrative eager to shake him out of his complacency as a mentally inert and emotionally cold diasporic.

Drago's ironising of the processes of historical linearity by digitally inserting a Croatian face into a Fauchery of dead Australians is, at best, futile, as such processes remain hegemonic, regardless of how many Dragos are in on the joke. Diasporics from the Jokićs to Rayment will continue to contend with larger narratives of cultural essentialism and uniformity that suppress the rich diversities of immigrant histories. Near the end of the novel, however, Rayment enters an unexpected space of newfound cosmopolitanism which is—compared to Drago's ultimately fruitless act of culture resistance and childish vandalism—far more enriching and life-changing. This moment occurs when he discovers that the Jokićs had come together, including Drago, to build a recumbent bicycle (based on a modification of his old, damaged bicycle) for him. Rayment suppresses the part of him that instinctively dislikes the gift in the same way that he had previously disliked the notion of "prostheses" and all manner of "fakes," the part that had been in bitter denial of the loss of his self-sufficiency after losing a leg (255). When the bicycle is presented to him, Rayment comes to terms with not just his amputated physical self, but also analogously with the incompleteness of his diasporic self—the hollowed self that had never felt at home anywhere. When before he was cold-hearted and obdurate, he starts to "feel a blush creeping over him, a blush of shame . . . He has no wish to stop it. It is what he deserves. 'It's magnificent,' he says" (254). Earlier tropes of coldness and slowness are symbolically overturned with the event of Rayment's warm blush and the generosity of a present that will allow Rayment to move freely. The change in Rayment is a dramatic progression in his perspective on his place in the world. When before he was a stubborn, self-pitying diasporic leading a life of suppressed hollowness, he is now flooded with an unexpected sense of gratitude and humility as a result

of the Jokićs' kindness. Such kindness also shames Rayment because it is offered as an unconditional act of generosity from one diasporic to another, when Rayment's intentions (his lascivious desire for Marijana, for example) had started out being less than pure.

This moment of a newfound sense of connectedness with the Jokićs—a surprising and gratifying feeling of having finally found a symbolic sense of “home”—demonstrates what a meaningful position of cosmopolitanism can look like for the culturally “homeless” Rayment. He no longer subscribes in the same way to the kind of patriotism and loyalty to Australian culture that had rendered him hollow and alienated as a diasporic man. In her essay, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” Martha Nussbaum has argued that patriotism is a parochial ideal that causes blindness (to the potential diversities of immigrant histories, for example) and is antithetical to the development of a more expansive, cosmopolitan worldview (1996, 2). Robert Pinsky offers an alternative way of thinking about cosmopolitanism. Rather than pitting patriotism against cosmopolitanism, Pinsky suggests that the patriotic impulse can be founded on an *eros* of the local. Patriotism is not necessarily an immature passion that we blindly cling to for fear of facing difference. Instead of looking at patriotism from the outside, Pinsky shows that when one seriously thinks about what it means to live as member of a country or a community, the meaning of patriotism changes. Pinsky illustrated this with his experience of the Brooklyn Dodgers. The Dodgers are domesticated; an American institution; yet when one looks closer, the Dodgers also resemble the city they play in. Brooklyn is “historic and raw, vulgar and urbane, many-tongued and idiosyncratic, a borough of Hispanic blacks and Swedish carpenters, provincial enough to have its own newspaper yet worldly beyond measure” (2002, 2). This dual-nature of the local should inform us that patriotism, far from being a simplistic passion that leads to blindness, can team with contradictory forces that are always already in process.

The bond forged between Rayment and the Jokićs at the end of the novel, which allows the Jokićs to include a new family member in their midst, while also allowing Rayment to overcome private feelings of homelessness, is symbolic of the possibility of what a successful form of patriotism can look like when accompanied by a willingness to look

beyond narrow conceptions of cultural conformity. Such willingness allows for diasporas to transform the face of a previously oppressive societal narrative—no longer Marijana’s notion of “Zero history” in which diasporics are forced to enter as “blank” subjects and conform to the nation’s dominant culture—by establishing spaces for mutually rewarding, intercultural bonds. As Ien Ang also points out, diasporas provide “suitable sites for a reflection on the ramifications of globalisation for social relations in contemporary societies, societies which we still tend to define predominantly in national terms, even though the eroding effects of globalisation itself are felt by all national societies as their borders are transgressed and worn down by ever-increasing transnational social and cultural traffic” (Ang 2001: 75). The happy ending of Rayment and the Jokićs provides grounds for a hopeful and optimistic reflection on the possibilities of a positive cosmopolitanism that is not necessarily separate from notions of patriotism. Unlike in the previous novels by Ishiguro and Coetzee, both *Slow* and *Orphans* offer surprising forms of hopeful and positive cosmopolitanisms. Ishiguro’s detective-protagonist resolves internal tensions between past and present cultures and finds a home at last with Jennifer, another orphan like himself, whom Banks is able to love because of his own capacity to bridge divisions within himself to create a new and meaningful diasporic identity for himself. In a similar way, Coetzee’s cast of diasporics forge a new family amongst themselves that allows Rayment to move on from a previous state of homelessness to reclaim a new sense of home for himself within Australian society, a happy one that is no longer founded on denial and blind, unreflective conformity. Such productive relationships between diasporics are symbolic of what societies can look like when past and present cultures are negotiated and reconciled with a sense of generosity and critical self-reflection.

Chapter 5: Minority Cosmopolitanism

When We Were Orphans and *Slow Man* ended on notes of hope for the future for their diasporic protagonists, who found themselves in renewed cosmopolitan positions within hegemonic nationalistic discourses. Now the authors' subsequent novels formulate new considerations of the place of surprising minority subjects within implicit conceptions of the globalised world. Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) are the accumulation of all the concerns of their earlier works, tackling global concerns with regard to the ethical quandaries left unconsidered by larger narratives of history and global capitalism, as well as critiquing the possibilities of cosmopolitanism in relation to such concerns. *Never* and *Diary* also offer new and unexpected reconsiderations of surprising minority subjects as legitimate to critical cosmopolitans, when such subjects might have previously been ignored within ever-advancing discourses of globalisation.

In both novels, different senses of the minority subject are presented and situated within the larger context of the global, with implications for how we perceive the contemporary world. In *Diary*, the cosmopolitanism of its protagonist subjects, presented via a tripartite structure by the way the page is clearly divided to manifest their differing perspectives, is, in initial stages, loosely conceived. As already outlined in my first chapter, the term, "cosmopolitan," originated from the Cynic, Diogenes of Sinope, who radically pronounced that he was "a citizen of the world" (Laertius 1925: 65), as opposed to just the local Greek city-state. Etymologically, the word comes from "kosmopolitês," a combination of the Greek words for "world" and "citizen" respectively (Cheah 1998, 22). In Coetzee's novel, its protagonists can be banally or loosely understood as already cosmopolitan in the way their lives and interactions initially play out, although their cosmopolitanism does evolve as the novel progresses and develop in productive and surprising ways, with the character of Anya, in particular, generating a new form of cosmopolitanism that takes unexpected prominence by the novel's end. From Señor C, the aging, South-African intellectual-protagonist presented in the topmost section of each page via his "Strong Opinions" or

academic essays, to the Filipino migrant Anya and her white, Australian investment-banker husband, Alan, these characters contrast dramatically with each other to evoke an immediate sense of multiple states of belonging to a globalised world. Señor C, who is half-based on Coetzee again (the novel reveals that C happens to be the author of *Waiting for the Barbarians*—Coetzee’s earlier work in real-life) in a by-now familiarly self-reflexive way, is the most obvious sense of the cosmopolitan as a published novelist and intellectual. Aspects of Coetzee himself, particularly his strict vegetarianism and anti-American sentiments, now manifest strongly through his *autre*-biographical persona in *Diary* as the public intellectual, who has been tasked to write a selection of essays chastising the globalised world.

When C first asks the neighbour he lusts after, Anya, to be his typist, he tells her that he is writing for a publisher in Germany, for a book called *Strong Opinions*: “The plan is for six contributors from various countries to say their say on any subjects, the more contentious the better . . . on what is wrong with today’s world. It is due to appear in German . . . French rights are already sold” (21). These contentious essays are in fact what makes the bulk of *Diary*, taking up, in a literal way, more than the top half of every page in the novel, taking on such topics as the totalitarian dimensions of Western democracy—with a scathing eye on America as a guilty example, in the way it is forcibly “spreading the rules of democracy” to the Middle East (9)—to the gratuitous slaughter of animals. C is the public intellectual as a specialised form of cosmopolitan, one who is presumably recognised and respected across various countries by having been invited to comment on the world’s problems. But as I will later show, through the exchanges between C and Anya and later, Anya and Alan, Señor C might not necessarily deserve the privilege of being this sort of figure of the cosmopolitan-as-public-intellectual. In the exchanges captured in the middle to lower sections of the novel’s pages, these other characters will show C up to be severely antiquated and misguided, and even not as critically cosmopolitan in his mindset as C might perceive himself to be. As Jeffrey Alexander has pointed out about writers like C: “Public intellectuals are not as free-floating and universalising as they think they are or as we might like to be. The civil sphere is

instantiated in real time and space . . . Their cries for civil repair have not only extended solidarity by humanizing others” but they have “also constituted rhetorics of demonisation, constructing certain groups as unworthy of inclusion into civil society and thus as candidates of annihilation” (25-26). Such public intellectuals cast their opponents as uncivil in order to promote their own agendas as praiseworthy and ethically acceptable, which Señor C does when he attacks the so-called democratic values of other countries, for example. Such intellectuals set up their opponents as rhetorically-conceived straw-men to be set ablaze by pointing out that they are “particularistic, self-interested and dogmatic,” even as they themselves are usually the same way (26). For example, Volker Heins—to use Alexander’s example—has recently accused Habermas and other avowedly cosmopolitan European public intellectuals of “Orientalising America,” or denigrating American foreign policies and government as inferior in moral standards to other civil societies in the world (see Heins 2005; Alexander 26). Señor C is portrayed by Coetzee as being cut from the same mould as such anti-American intellectuals, which could be an implicit but still half-hearted, self-reflexive attack on the real-life author himself. C’s brand of intellectual cosmopolitanism sets itself through the novel as superior in moral spirit to the cosmopolitan affiliations of governments like “democratic Australia” to “the democratic United States” (15) which purport to be democratic and fair-minded but which are, in fact, coercive and serving their own self-interests. But as the other characters in *Diary* will later show, C is the one whose cosmopolitanism is really problematic and provincially insular.

If Señor C is the “famous” cosmopolitan whose worldly views are sought after by an international audience, then Anya and Alan are portrayed, in contrast, as the laypersons. Their “lesser” status or commonplace anonymity is augmented by the fact that what happens in their lives is relegated to thin strips in the narrower middle to bottom sections of the novel. There is even arguably the sense that C’s “Strong Opinions” are literally suppressing their lives down to a level of obscurity by how C’s texts take up so much space on every page of *Diary*. When they occur, the middle sections of the pages feature Señor C’s interactions with

his infatuation, Anya, and it is only in the third section where Anya's perspective is given its own first-person, narratorial space. When transcribing C's recorded voice and scrawled notes, Anya notes to herself: "He dictates great thoughts into his machine . . . plus a sheaf of papers in his half-blind scrawl, with the difficult words written out in care . . . [He] is supposed to be the big writer and I just the little Filipina" (29). By this moment in the novel, as readers, we would have gotten accustomed to understanding that Anya's thoughts fill up the lowest section of the page in approximate temporal relation to what is happening in the section above, occurring close to the time when C's essays have been written and subsequently transcribed by Anya. The contrast of tone between the sections on the page, from C's lengthy, pedantic chastisements to Anya's conversational, unpretentious reflections on her interactions with the other characters, emphasises Anya's "smallness" which she herself acknowledges in the above-quote. C, to her, is "great" whereas she is the "little Filipina." The fact that she constantly calls C the Señor is another sign of her own, almost comical, sense of low self-esteem.

As a second-generation diasporic living in Sydney in the same apartment as C, Anya is further sidelined by not only C's professional/cosmopolitan aura but by a predominantly white, Australian society that implicitly positions her as a minority, diasporic subject. To further diminish her sense of significance in the novel, she is not portrayed as highly bright either, such as when she remarks self-deprecatingly on C's "difficult words" (29). As a feisty but lowly-educated diasporic who is smart and curious enough to flirt with C's desires, but not informed or confident enough to match C's supposed intelligence, Anya can be perceived as a nondescript sort of cosmopolitan who admits to her own insignificance and low-brow personality. She is a cosmopolitan in the most loosely-defined way as the daughter of "an Australian diplomat" and a "divorced wife of a property developer in Manila," a Filipino who has never herself lived in the Philippines but who nonetheless "went to international schools all over the place (Washington, Cairo, Grenoble)" (70). These bits of information about Anya come in the middle section of the page which is framed by C's perspective in his everyday

interactions with her in their apartment building. The Señor is the one who lists the places she has been schooled in and patronisingly notes that Anya “speaks French” but “thinks Kyoto is a misspelling of Tokyo” (71). As C’s lust-object, Anya is portrayed as a street-smart airhead made more exotic by her race in a predominantly white Sydney. This might seem similar to the relationship between Rayment and Marijana in *Slow Man* in which a relationship is formed between two diasporics. But here, C’s own South-African status does not even enter C’s own thoughts during his lustful observations and conversations with Anya, especially not in the way Marijana’s references to Australia’s “zero history” and her Croatian past inspired Rayment to remember his own French-diasporic origins. The portrayal of C in *Diary* is caught up in the writer’s loneliness in his old age and critical stance on the state of the contemporary world, which he is distracted from dwelling upon, and quite willingly so, by Anya’s attractive presence and unpretentious candour.

Both C and Anya could be interpreted as symbolic figures for different kinds of cosmopolitans grappling to survive in a globalised world. C survives by writing and maintaining his career through repeated publications of his works and opinions. Anya is representative of a more pedestrian conception of the diasporic-cosmopolitan who happens to be a by-product of the ever-advancing processes of globalisation with its “accelerating mass migration of peoples” (Cheah 2006, 1). She survives, in both pragmatic and emotional ways, in a foreign land by relying on her talents; in this case, mostly her personality and physical charms, as when she constantly refers to the seductive qualities of her own “delicious behind, sheathed in tight denim” (25). Her pragmatic, survival instincts as an attractive, diasporic woman manifest whenever she talks about her marriage to Alan, a relationship based mostly on carnal attraction on the part of the husband. The white, orphaned, Australian banker is representative of another familiar component of contemporary globalisation, its transnational “regime of flexible capitalist accumulation” (Cheah 2006, 1). Anya constantly refers to how Alan has the “hots” for her, so much so that he would threaten to “burst” (37), driving home the point that their relationship is founded on lust. The caricature-like, lascivious, white

banker, Alan – repeatedly portrayed like this in the novel – is indicative of a clichéd kind of cutthroat, self-interested, pragmatist-capitalist, one who lives to accumulate financial clout and who is obsessed only with fulfilling base instincts. Such instincts are evinced when he constantly asks Anya if the Señor has tried to give her the “poke” (39), invoking his complete and sexist ownership of Anya as his wife-as-sex-object. His immoral, capitalist sensibilities manifest when he later asks her to find out where C keeps his money, with the hope that he might steal it all upon the writer’s passing. As Alan himself puts it to Anya: “It is not stealing . . . if he is dead” (49), revealing that he is without a discernible conscience. Alan is probably the most one-dimensional character in the novel as shown through his treatment of Anya (or at least, treatment that is viewed purely through Anya’s eyes, as there is no additional section added to the pages’ frequent, tripartite structure for Alan’s focalised perspective) and coldly exploitative intentions towards the Señor. The repeated use of the tripartite feature in most pages of the novel and the cast of three—C, Anya and Alan—all encourage the sense that these protagonists are figurative allusions to the different ways in which cosmopolitans (once again, loosely defined here, particularly in the earlier stages of the novel when the characters are slowly being introduced) navigate within a contemporary, globalised world. But as the novel progresses, C’s self-absorbed, intellectual perspectives start to stand on shaky ground with Anya’s and Alan’s increasing and unexpected intrusions into his life.

In Ishiguro’s latest work, *Never Let Me Go*, which is already in preparation (at least at this moment of my writing) to be made into a Hollywood film starring Oscar-nominated, American actress, Keira Knightley,²¹ there are also three main characters, which is similar to Coetzee’s novel. A three-way drama is presented through a rather predictable and almost maudlin plot about a love-triangle between its protagonists. The fact that it is about to be made into a commercial blockbuster might already give clues to the predictability and sentimental dimensions of a novel about clones in search for an extension from their inevitable deaths in the name of a favourite theme of such popular movies—romantic love.

²¹ Information from *The Internet Movie Database*. 4 Apr. 2010
<<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1334260/>>.

But as I have mentioned in my earlier chapters, what is not spelled out in an Ishiguro novel can speak as loud as—or even louder than—the bare bones of the narrative. Figurative allusions in the actual novel to existing problems within our contemporary reality arise not only from what happens with the main protagonists’ lives, but mostly in the elaborately-described worlds in and out of Hailsham where they are “reared” as clones. A tripartite structure occurs here too but in a different way from in *Diary*, where such a structure evinces a sense of different cosmopolitans grappling with each other and the globalised world. In *Never*, the three-way structure is manifested through the banality of that love-triangle between the novel’s characters. Such banality belies implications for their lack of access to positions of valid citizenry within the novel’s dystopian cosmos, which evocatively mirrors our own. Ishiguro’s narrative is full of unspoken yet connotative and powerfully implicit allusions to future problems in our advancing discourses of science and technology as they intersect with the expansion of global economies and the complacent self-sufficiency of superpower, capitalist nations. At the basic level of plot, *Never* is about Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy, three clones brought up in a boarding school in a dystopian England. The novel begins with Kathy writing about her present-day experiences as a carer before reminiscing about life with Tommy and Ruth at Hailsham. After the recollections of their teenage shenanigans at Hailsham, Kathy recalls how they “graduate” to the Cottages with other older clones and travel around England, including to a place called Norfolk, with surprising autonomy. By the time in the Cottages, Tommy and Ruth have entered an intimate relationship with Kathy finally falling out of the group when she asks to be a carer for other clones who have begun their organ-donations. As a carer, she is eventually reunited with Ruth and Tommy again in the novel. A short time before Ruth “completes” (a euphemism for death by repeated organ-donation in the novel), Ruth confesses to Kathy that she took Tommy as her boyfriend in order to keep Kathy and Tommy apart, and encourages both of them to look for the Madame to defer their donations on the grounds of love. The meeting with Madame, and coincidentally with Miss Emily, the head mistress of Hailsham, makes Tommy and Kathy realise that their art homework at Hailsham used to be taken so that the Madame could use them to show the

world how clones possessed souls just like anyone else. Kathy and Tommy realise that the Madame has no power to defer their future donations and that Hailsham will be closed; the school was an experiment to treat clones with greater civility. The novel concludes after Tommy's "completion" on a note of resignation, as Kathy accepts her own fate as a donor.

The aspects of their teenage dalliances and jealousies aside, the story of Kathy, Tommy and Ruth are told through an overall novelistic convention that could, in a sense, be classified under science-fiction, for its rational imagining of possibilities for an alternative world (Del Rey 5). In the sci-fi backdrop of *Never*, medical technologies have finally caught up with desires to combat terminal illnesses like cancer and extend the average human lifespan. As readers, we are absorbed into the highly subjective, first-person (the common feature of Ishiguro's novels) perspective of Kathy—whose "memory is unreliable," over-idealistic and dreamlike (Gurnham 198)—and her descriptions of interactions with the other two protagonists. The real-life impossibility of ever creating clones like these protagonists already create the sense that these protagonists are doubly-fictional ("doubly" because they are not only created characters but that readers are meant to suspend their disbelief further in imagining that clones can *be* a possibility). This sense of double-fictionalisation augments their minority status even further in the context of the novel, in which clones are already not regarded as regular human beings. Clones are systematically slaughtered like animals so that "actual" human beings can use their organs and lead longer lives. As readers, we are caught in between sympathising with Kathy as a real person (with profound thoughts and feelings) but also left with the lingering sense that Kathy is not considered a "real person" even in the world of *Never*; in Ishiguro's novelistic universe, Kathy is no better than livestock. So if, as readers, we are to sympathise with the characters and their complicated, triangular relationship, we might find ourselves in the engrossingly ironic position of empathising with the internal lives of animals on their way to slaughter. These characters are like living shadows within the dystopian English society, minorities in the way an animal can be considered a minority for not possessing the same freedoms as human beings. The lack of equality here is not addressed in any overt, political or revolutionary way as the characters are

only concerned with simply deferring the dates of their donations in order to remain in a relationship with each other.

Immanuel Kant, the philosopher whose notions of cosmopolitanism have influenced other cosmopolitan-philosophers like Martha Nussbaum, differentiated humanity from animality in terms of the capacity of the former to transcend the limitations of immediate existence and expand the circle of identification and belonging through sociability, attributing to the former the power of cultivating our humanity by instilling “the universal feeling of sympathy, and the ability to engage universally in very intimate communication” (1987; 231). Ishiguro’s novel brings into question that notion of what is considered human in a cosmos in which people have cloned themselves in order to exploit their physical copies. Diogenes’ notion of the “citizen of the world” has new significance here as the novel brings us into a position of questioning about who gets to *be* such a cosmopolitan or citizen-of-the-world, who is presumably—drawing on both Kant’s and Diogenes’ conception of the cosmopolitan—human, for the human’s capacity for sympathy which many like Kant would assume *is* universal.

With worldwide improvements in biotechnology and the possibility of human-clones already in our very own horizons, Ishiguro’s banal love-triangle cleverly (by not dealing with the issues directly) questions what it means to be human and whether a clone—if they are capable of sympathy and, to use Kant’s words, “intimate communication”—can be considered “one of us.” David Gurnham has suggested the *Never* goes beyond the oft-repeated conservative position that other critics have tagged to Ishiguro’s novel, a position that asserts that any society which uses biotechnology to adapt human life for utilitarian aims is one that threatens to stop caring for human life in general (Gurnham 198). Gurnham points out that *Never* can be read as not just asserting this position, but as deconstructing it in disturbing ways to show how “the simplistic binary opposition between human and less than human ways of doing things is not reliable” (198-199). Already, the fact that we can call such clones *human-clones* can be read as a preliminary sign of instability in the way we may

complacently dichotomise between human and its forged double. As I will go on to explain later in this chapter, *Never* mainly achieves this sense of deconstruction by getting its characters to mimic the ideological conditionings and reactions of everyday human beings, both in the societal world (from which the clones are excluded) in the novel, as well as in the real-life context of readers. Such mimicry, particularly within the spacious grounds and echoey halls of Hailsham where the clones learn how to behave like humans—allows for the characterisation of the lives of Kathy and her friends to become figurative indexes for normative human behaviour and cultural norms. Such indexing suggests that human identities are predicated on performativity and are inherently arbitrary and artificial. The “sham” in Hail-sham, with its connotations of falsehood and deception, deliberately or otherwise on the part of the author, even hints at the potential unreliability of any self-satisfied, stable essentialism of human identity. At the start of the novel, when Kathy is caring for one of her clone-patients as a carer at a hospital, the patient begs her to regale him about Hailsham—“our beds, the football [*sic*] . . . its nooks and crannies, the duck pond, the food, the view . . . over the fields on a foggy morning” (5)—until he begins to imagine the place as if *he* had himself been brought up in the same school as Kathy. Already, we are invited to an introductory picture of Hailsham as an illusory vision, a dreamlike place that does not necessarily have to be real for it to be enjoyed as a valid memory. This has consequences later in the novel for everything that is learnt by a clone like Kathy in this English clone-school, things that have significance for their implicit indictment of the illusory core of naturalised human rituals, thoughts and emotions. Readers are also introduced to the breathtaking, natural surroundings that the novel keeps alluding to with regard to the grounds of Hailsham, which serve as a way to indirectly emphasise how self-definitions can become readily or unconsciously internalised and accepted as if such notions were stable. The constant references to nature also suggests that nature might just be the one true constancy whereas any attempt at forging notions of stable selfhoods (for both clone and non-clone alike) is always already doomed to failure.

The very notion of what is a human being—and why one sort of being is human and the other is not—is put instantly to the limits in the opening pages of the novel, where Kathy describes Hailsham with its sprawling scenery and the humdrum dailiness of its seeming human activities, from the description of “beds” to the “football.” All this suggest that the clones, in a sense, are living a mimicry of human life outside of Hailsham. At this moment, I will not yet go into how this mimicry operates to destroy, or forces us to reconsider, what it means to be human through the novel’s constant and evocative references to ideological and ritualistic dimensions of contemporary, urban societies across the world. For now, I want to stress that, in *Never*, minority subjects are introduced that we, the readers, would hesitate to define as straightforwardly human, despite the unwitting way in which we are drawn immediately and empathetically into Kathy’s focalised perspective. We are drawn even further in when Kathy, in her continued trips down memory lane, recalls Tommy and Ruth and banal aspects of their three-way, teenage bond, from Tommy’s childish “rages” to Ruth’s know-it-all personality and Kathy’s nascent protectiveness over Tommy whenever he is teased at Hailsham (7). This is how Ishiguro has chosen to introduce its minority subjects of clones struggling to find themselves, *as if* they were merely ordinary humans living in a world that is, in fact, made up of a majority of non-clones. Just as Coetzee’s *Diary* introduced us to different varieties of cosmopolitans, *Never* presents clones thinking and feeling as if they are ordinary citizens-of-the-world, without references, as yet at the start of the novel, to how truly minority and disenfranchised they are by the very “human” beings they are encouraged to mimic.

In both *Diary* and *Never*, these cosmopolitan, or would-be-cosmopolitan (in reference to the clones who are positioned in a deliberately ambiguous space in *Never*) characters are located within a larger context of contemporary globality which contemporary readers would find familiar. *Diary* and *Never* are, in spite of their fictionality, situated in global contexts that resonate with contemporary readers living within the period from the last decade of the twentieth century till towards the close of the first decade in the twenty-first. Señor C’s essays

deal with transnational concerns that are so current and immediate to Coetzee's date of publication for the novel that they can become quickly irrelevant if too much time has passed; one could assume that by the end of the twenty-first century, many of the topics that C criticises (from terrorism to the activities of torture at Guantanamo Bay, as some examples) would no longer be considered current headline news. Reading *Diary* in this early part of our present century, at least, readers are still familiar with these concerns. The novel itself is akin, in most parts, to "looking like a highbrow alternative to split-screen TV."²² The act of reading the book can be compared to watching the news on television with its various ticker-tape headlines scrawling across the bottom of the screen; except that, in the novel's case, these "headlines" are really sub-plots about the characters' private to internal activities and interactions. Just as how we watch the news to find out what is happening (or more specifically, what is wrong) in the world today, the novel provides similar information coupled with commentaries, but included below them are sub-narratives that turn readers into voyeurs peering through blinds (demarcated almost literally by margins on the page) into the characters' lives. The tripartite structuring gives the sense that readers are not only television-watchers but peeping-toms looking into the floors of an apartment building, peering into the goings-on inside through figurative windows.

Kathryn Harrison, in her review of Coetzee's book, has written that aside from the sense that one is watching a split-screen television, the pages' tripartite structure also resonates with Sigmund Freud's three-way division between the superego, ego and id: "On one side of the divide is reason, moral and sober, charged with the responsible stewardship of human society. On the other lie the passions, especially lust, that undermine and sometimes trump intellect."²³ I can see how such an interpretation can be possible. Señor C's essays may appear to serve to facilitate a philosophical and moral "stewardship" of humanity with their formal attacks on the immoralities of the world today, whereas C's interactions with Anya,

²² Harrison, Kathryn. "Strong Opinions." *The New York Times*. 30 Dec. 2007. 13 Mar 2010
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/30/books/review/Harrison-t.html>>.

²³ Ibid.

and Anya's interactions with Alan, in the lower portions of the pages, highlight the more carnal side of human nature that rule and distract us from more admirable gestures of intellectual thought. However, such an interpretation, although useful in dramatically highlighting the figurative dimensions of human nature in tension with each other in the novel, is limiting as it marginalises the characters whose voices are only heard in the "lower" sections of the novel. Anya's and Alan's thoughts and conversational contributions, in Harrison's interpretation, become relegated to a lesser dimension of irrationality or unsuppressed excess in a hierarchy that equates the essays with moral intellectualism and the idealism of the super-ego. This is terribly unfair to Anya, in particular, as I will later show, the novel slowly allows the strength of her perspective to combat on equal footing C's discursive exhortations, even changing and enriching the latter.

What is most useful about Harrison's interpretation is, however, the assumed hierarchical aspect of the different parts of the tripartite structure. As readers we are clearly meant to put the greatest emphasis on perusing through C's extensively "great" opinions. Anya and Alan are not given the same spatially-delineated importance. Anya does not help matters along by portraying herself as only the "little Filipina" while her husband is the corporate monster. We *are* meant, at one level, to see C's "Strong Opinions" as superior in intellectual and moral weight and importance to Anya's and Alan's contributions to the novel because this is also probably how the Señor himself perceives the hierarchy. He is, after all, the globally-recognised writer who has been asked to expound on "great" thoughts by a foreign publisher. At the same time, as readers flipping the pages of *Diary*, we cannot help but find ourselves doubting the hierarchy implicit in this split-screen effect. We cannot help but begin to doubt his sense of importance especially when we find him asking Anya to type all the very same essays for him, even though she is far from qualified to do so. For all her seductive ass-wiggling before the Señor, she mistypes lines such that they read as "papers and papery" instead of "Papists and Popery," as was originally intended by the high-brow intellectual (25). Señor, however, is more than willing to forgive such errors in order that he

can study her lust-inducing behind in his apartment. In any case, lust hardly trumps intellect here as the fact that Señor has carnal desires for Anya has little bearing on the fact that his essays stay at the top of an implicit hierarchy in the novel, not only by the sheer space devoted to them on each page, but by the way the essays help to locate all the characters within a post-2000 globalised world. The topics and concerns in Señor C's essays are so immediately relevant to a post-2000 generation of readers that they would become irrelevant once more than half of our present century has passed. Yet the novel's overriding emphasis is on situating the characters in the novel as well as forcing a specific generation of readers to deal with a particular global context. When one is reading the essays, one half-acknowledges that these essays might be Señor's thoughts but they have also been transcribed by his sexy amanuensis, Anya. Anya, as she is forced to read, understand and type out C's essays, becomes, in turn, a figure for not only C's potential readers (once the opinions are published) but also for Coetzee's readers who, while reading *Diary*, are impelled to confront issue after issue that dominate the news headlines in the opening decade of our new century. Readers are made to be immersed in an immediate sense of globality and encouraged by the predominance given to the essays to contend with Señor's (and maybe, in an indirect way, Coetzee's) opinions about a range of contemporary global concerns.

One example of how *Diary* is so instantly clued into the period of its writing and publication is its expositions on terrorism. In the chapter, "On Al Qaida," Señor C agrees with the main claims of a B.B.C. documentary "that 'Islamic terrorism' is not a centrally controlled and directed conspiracy; and that the US administration is, perhaps deliberately, exaggerating the dangers faced by the public" as a fear-mongering tactic to consolidate its global influence (31). At the bottom of the same page with the aforementioned quote, C laments the loss of "motor control" in his hands while Anya discusses how she picked up her alluring, butt-shaking quiver from observing ducks (31). Such a juxtaposition of information means that the reader could be reading serious journalese or academic writing, on one hand, whilst reading, simultaneously, private diary entries which are not unlike pages of a revealing

tabloid. In a figurative sense, such a juxtaposition suggests that the novel is laying out a wide range of worldly, micro- to macro-scopic concerns that generate an affect of universality. C's formal and trenchant discussion of Al Qaida helps set the time frame and also the prevailing ethos in *Diary's* contemporary world. The predominant relevance of the Al Qaida at the start of the new century is, of course, due to the September 11 attacks in 2001. As terrorists behind the Twin Towers disaster in the States, this organisation is as much a product of globalisation today as a growing sense of interconnectedness or the rise of transnational immigration. Such terrorism is ultimately an act of resistance and "rage against an American-led expansion of the world market, whose financial and military might is symbolised by the World Trade Centre" (Leiwei Li 275). Globalisation, with all its accompanying illusions of a shrinking global village, belies (something the Señor would agree with) the spread of American influence facilitated by its political to economic and military might. The prominent way in which the essay on Al Qaida is presented above the almost banal goings-on in the private lives of the Señor and Anya in *Diary* further emphasise how much "terrorism" as a concern has formed a part of everyone's minds since the 9-11 attacks, when such a concern has been enforced upon us repeatedly via the mass media (controlled, no doubt, by mostly western countries, mainly the United States).

Mass media itself is far from free from its own agendas and political inclinations, and as the Señor would probably argue, America stands as an imperialistic bully that manipulates everything to its favour, including overtly villainising the Al Qaida. But as *Diary* reveals through its layered (quite literally, in this case) storytelling, even Señor C himself is not thinking about the Al Qaida as "a devilish organisation . . . bent on demoralising Western populations and demoralising Western civilisation" (31). This is not to say that such concerns are irrelevant or unimportant, but *Diary* evinces the sense that their importance might be slightly overstated when such news often only form part of the white noise of globalised media, which may nonetheless affect our thinking in conscious to unconscious ways. What is not overstated and still relevant, however, are our never-ending confrontations with notions of

mortality and carnal desires, which are represented respectively by C's confession about his lack of motor control and Anya's flippant reflections about her physical allure. The overstatedness of issues like the activities of the Al Qaida can also be evident in how quickly such concerns might become obsolete with the passing of time.

This is particularly clear with such issues as the torture of political prisoners in Guantanamo Bay, or the refusal of the Australian government to apologise to its aboriginal population for their disenfranchisement. With regard to the former issue, the Señor writes satirically about how someone should put together a ballet in which “corps of prisoners, their ankles shackled together . . . muffs over their ears, black hoods over their heads, do the dances of the persecuted and desperate” (37). With regard to the aboriginal issue, C asks “whether white Australians ought to apologise to Aboriginal Australians for the conquest and takeover of their land” and whether such an apology would ultimately be futile or mere “nonsense” (107). Beneath the imposing breadth and almost supercilious formality of such essays, the interactions between the characters continue to unfold with their sense of routine and banality; Anya talks about how Alan still “has the hots” for her after three years of being together, for example, while Anya takes offence after being told by C that she “can’t type,” due to errors in her transcription (37). Señor’s sarcastic indictment of the cruel and hypocritical way in which political prisoners are treated by the American government in a Cuban prison-facility seems out of date now, particularly when President Obama has only recently declared that the prison should be closed down and its activities of torture banned.²⁴ Such a closure seems to suggest that American politicians have not—in the ahistorical, unanimous sense implied by the Señor in his satirical notion of a Guantanamo ballet—always been in agreement with how prisoners should have been treated in Guantanamo. Governments are not monolithic and attitudes can change over time. Also, such pompous and self-righteous, essayistic reflections on a topic like torture at the famous prison become quickly

²⁴ “Obama Orders CIA Prisons, Guantanamo Shut.” *MSNBC*. 22 Jan. 2009. 13 Apr. 2010
<<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28788175/>>.

irrelevant when the American system that Señor C seems determined to excoriate is constantly in flux and modifying its stance on ethical issues.

This is particularly the case when the essay appears in what is ostensibly a work of fiction, which is presumably written to stand the test of time, unlike a piece of journalistic writing on recent, global events (of which format Señor's essay seems to partly imitate). The aboriginal issue too, in recent years, has been significantly addressed in 2008 when the Australian government under prime minister, Kevin Rudd, has publicly apologised to the country's "stolen generation" of aborigines for past laws and policies that "inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss."²⁵ All this begs the question of whether *Diary* will become an anachronistic work in more years to come when more issues tackled by Señor become lessened in importance or become obsolete altogether. The lack of relevance of such issues in the future has a bearing on the cramply-situated, sub-narratives about Señor, Anya and Alan (at the bottom of the page) which are more likely to remain relevant for any new reader of *Diary*. If the point of giving such a predominance to Señor's essays was to show how anachronistic his character's perspectives can be, such a point could have been easily made without resorting to devoting so much page-space to them; space that readers would have to—at worst—disregard (since the issues dealt with in the essays might have been already out-of-date) whilst quickly skimming through the pages to find out what happens in the private lives of the protagonists below the essays. In any case, what stays relevant is that the characters are very clearly located within a particular period at the start of the twenty-first century, in which such concerns still resonate. Anya, in a surprising turn, even confronts C by accusing him of not having met any terrorists when her own uncle's property in Mindanao had once been ravaged by fundamentalists who "don't believe in talking, in reasoning" and "prefer to be stupid" (75). What comes across in C's and Anya's parallel expositions on an immediately relevant (for now) subject like terrorism is that there are multiple perspectives on the same topic that do not necessarily gain wide publicity through official channels like the

²⁵ "Australia Apology to Aborigines." *BBC News*. 13 Feb. 2008 (Accessed on 13 Apr. 2010): <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7241965.stm>.

mass media or—to use Señor’s medium of choice—academic journals. *Diary* offers a voyeuristic glimpse into perspectives—like Anya’s—which would not necessarily get the same level of attention in public forums because of their emotional and personalised nature, and which are hence sidelined or ignored, as connoted by how Señor’s essays continue to press Anya’s subjective responses to the bottom of the page.

All the protagonists in Ishiguro’s novel, *Never*, are sidelined, marginalised characters in a society that could very well be our own in the very near future. The familiarity of the societal surroundings in the novel points suggestively to how such disenfranchisement can easily occur in any globalised society in our contemporary time, that is, if our cloning capabilities could rapidly improve to such a degree as portrayed by Ishiguro. Although the novel is published in 2005, Ishiguro’s novel starts by telling us that it is set in England in the late 1990s, and unfolds into a warning for readers in a particular period of time (reaching into the start of our present century). In real life, the 1990s was a time in which we were only beginning to learn the possibilities of cloning and the potential of biotechnology; we must remember, for example, that it was only in 1996 that Dolly the ewe was successfully cloned from an adult somatic cell by scientists at the Roslin Institute in Scotland.²⁶

The novel paints a picture of what the world *can* look like if we are not careful or sufficiently reflective and critical about cloning. Although it is easy to argue that *Never* is science fictional for its rational imagining of an alternative universe (Del Rey 5), it defies the conventions of the science-fiction genre. As Sim Wai-Chew puts it: “Given the nature of sci-fi, we expect to get detailed information about cloning,” but “the inferential load [is] left on the shoulders of readers” (258). The science is left off-stage. As Sim points out, we do not get anything like the opening pages of Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, with its sprawling descriptions of embryo stores, conveyor belts and fertilising rooms. Whatever details we get of a future, dehumanised techno-civilisation is “smothered in the loam of the banal,” the

²⁶ “Dolly the Sheep: 1996-2003.” *Science Museum*. 13 Apr. 2010
<<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/antenna/dolly/>>.

mundane but highly personal confessions of Kathy about life at Hailsham and her friendships (Wood 36). In a different way from how Coetzee's novel immerses us through its three-tiered structure in a sense of post-2000 globality, *Never* casts us in a what-if scenario of what our contemporary reality can look like (now or in the not-so-distant future), but without resorting to the sci-fi embellishments of explicit descriptions and elaborations of technological advancements. Even as Kathy tells us about her humdrum life as a carer regaling patients in the opening pages of her time at Hailsham, readers are urged by the banality of the narrative to simultaneously contemplate whether clones would have been considered with the same regard as human beings if they existed today. Would we think that clones too had souls? *Never* provides a moral tale relevant to our present century. Not only has a sheep been cloned, but in 2003, the Shanghai Second Medical University announced that rabbit-human embryos had been created by fusing human cells with rabbit eggs stripped of their chromosomes. The latter was an achievement that the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics has condemned as going too far, since it brought into question the notion of what it means to be human, and whether the resultant chimera that was produced would be given the same human rights as the rest of us.²⁷

All these current ethical questions about cloning are pressed upon the reader's mind precisely because the narrative tries its best *not* to engage directly with such issues, in the way Señor might have elaborately treated as one of the choice topics of his scathingly "Strong Opinions." This sense of avoidance is, for example, very particularly and suggestively evident when Kathy is sitting with Ruth in the novel's present-day; Ruth has become her patient when Kathy is a carer:

We were having this conversation on a fine summer evening, sitting out on the little balcony of her recovery room. It was a few months after her first donation . . . You could see lots of aerals and satellite dishes, and sometimes . . . a glistening line that

²⁷ Information taken from *World Science*. 13 Apr. 2010 <http://www.world-science.net/othernews/060808_chimera.htm>.

was the sea . . . [Recovery] rooms are small, but they're well-designed and comfortable. Everything . . . has been done in gleaming white tiles . . . [You] don't exactly see yourself reflected back loads of times, but . . . you can feel this pale, shadowy movement all around you in the tiles. (17-18)

Kathy's description could be the description of any number of nurses sitting with a patient and spending some time together, even bonding, as the patient gets well under the carer's watch. But both the nurse and the patient are clones, yet the novel avoids focusing on this fact, particularly not at this point. Here, Kathy and Ruth stare out dully at a postcard view of satellite dishes and the almost calming glimpse of the ocean. Kathy sounds almost like a television travel-guide in the ingratiating way that she praises the recovery rooms for being well-designed with gleaming tiles.

The way in which Kathy is intimately caught up in the too-ordinary details of the moment is reminiscent of the way in which Ishiguro's previous novels immerse readers into the minutiae of everyday details which belie an unspeakable proof. Ishiguro's characters, aside from being unreliable and intensely subjective narrators, are constantly caught up in prosaic dimensions of their everyday existence although a larger issue remains always beyond their immediate comprehension. This produces a sustained sense of dramatic irony in the novels that implicates readers by haunting and persuading them to reflect on these unspoken issues, just as protagonists are too caught up in the mundane aspects of their immediate lives. Bruce Robbins described the "very busy" aspect in *The Unconsoled*, for example, with its "basis in the late twentieth-century integration of capitalism on a global scale" ("Very Busy Right Now" 429), as elevating "harriedness into a sort of ontological principle, a description of Being itself" ("Very Busy Right Now" 430). Just as a novel like *Unconsoled* might force readers into thinking about the possible futility of the cosmopolitan artist's career—while readers observe Ryder struggle painstakingly to reach the town's central auditorium to perform—within the context of a culturally homogenised world, Kathy's submersion in the routine-ness of her life as a carer, and the casualness with which she spends time with Ruth,

generates a similar sense of dramatic irony through which readers can become disturbed and exasperated by the injustices implicit in her predicament. *Never* too evokes this sense of busyness as a symptomatic part of the “late twentieth-century integration of capitalism” (*Never* is set in the 1990s) which elides and ignores—because, repeatedly, capitalism is connoted, in the context of Ishiguro’s novels, as being *too* obsessed with its own advancements to care—ethical issues that might arise amidst the inexorable march of progress in the interconnected fields of economics, science and technology.

Kathy’s activities in the above-quoted passage might sound everyday, yet Ishiguro’s descriptive prose seldom merely reflects the plainness of the situation without dropping sufficient hints for the reader to note that something is not quite right with the novelistic picture. The view of satellite dishes interrupting the even farther sight of the sea is arguably evocative enough to reference, in a figurative way, an urbanised world that is technologically advanced but which will always encounter limits to its ever-growing self-knowledge of the world (symbolised by the infinite expanse of the sea in the distance). The glistening line of the ocean also denotes a kind of limitation for clones like Kathy who seem incapable of imagining a world beyond the constricted one they are in—the limited world that insists upon their existence merely as organ-yielding clones with callously shortened life-spans. The sea becomes, in this sense, like a cipher; a trope for the great unknown that these clones are never encouraged, and do not know how to, enter in order to step *beyond* the potentially claustrophobic and imprisoning daily-ness of their clone-ish existence. The casual ordinariness of the scene, with the aerials and the faraway hint of the horizon, with its intersections of urbanity and unconstrained nature, generate the sense that what Kathy is seeing could exist anywhere in the world. Even though the novel is set in England, such a moment between Kathy and Ruth could be taking place in any urbanised society across the globe—it could be *that* commonplace. Already the line that divides fiction from reality can be argued to be blurring slightly. Facilitated by the prosaic description of Kathy’s view outside a hospital window, as readers, we can be encouraged to imagine that Kathy’s world *is* our own,

after all. If cloning were possible today, such scenes between carers and their fellow clone-patients could occur right now, under our own noses, in our neighbourhood hospitals, and all with that unspectacular sense of everyday-ness—as if nothing in the world might be wrong with such scenes within our present-day context. This is, without any doubt, a discomfiting thought—that the naturalised banality of Kathy’s busy life as a carer should be allowed to be remain this normative and matter-of-fact, regardless of Kathy’s general air of calm (albeit tainted with slight melancholy) with which she busies herself with making Ruth comfortable in this moment. Yet Ishiguro does nothing to dispel our sense of discomfort. Instead, the prose heightens it in subtle ways through Kathy’s description of tiles on the wall in the overwhelmingly “comfortable” recovery rooms.

The tiles are not only white, they gleam with an antiseptic sense of spotlessness that belies the ethical implications gathering like undercurrents of polluted water under the scene’s monotonous veneer. Then as if unable to resist the temptation, the author tends towards over-literariness and rubs his readers’ noses ever-so-slightly in the already sustained sense of discomfort generated by this scene. He does this by ensuring that Kathy not only comments on the gleaming whiteness of the walls, but that she recalls and describes, in a subconsciously self-reflexive fashion, the repeated moments in which she would try and catch her reflection in the tiles: “[You] don’t exactly see yourself reflected back loads of times, but you almost think you do. When you lift an arm, or when someone sits up in bed, you can feel this pale, shadowy movement all around you in the tiles” (18). The lack of a clear or complete reflection suggests, perhaps in a too-obvious way, that Kathy is like a ghost of a human being—she is a clone after all, and in the world that she has been created or born into, she is regarded as anything *but* human. At the same time, however, Kathy is not a ghost in any case—she still manages to cast a shadow. Kathy does not only cast a shadow, she is utterly aware that she is casting a shadow; more than that, she is secretly hoping, in these moments, to catch a clearer reflection of herself in the polished walls.

The narrative is already introducing us to potential problems within any straightforward clone-human dichotomy implicitly entrenched within the norms of Kathy's world. In a semi-conscious way, one possible reading of this scene would be that Kathy is expressing a hidden desire to be more than a shadow of a human being. Ironically, such a desire at a sub-level of self-consciousness easily nudges her into the same category as a human. Kathy exists in a society that represses her true "reflection" as a full-fledged human being; society has figuratively reduced her identity to nothing more than a shadow, one that is not even clearly seen in spite of the gleaming white of the tiles. The fact that she can "almost" see herself reflected "loads of times" is suggestive of how Kathy is not alone in having these pent-up or unacknowledged desires to be human. Every clone contains the same secret longing to be regarded as human, especially when they long to remember Hailsham (whether or not they have already been there), where clones are taught like human children in classrooms and formed intimate bonds with each other. When Kathy refers to sitting up in bed, a poignant sense of vulnerability and helplessness is conveyed as she is undoubtedly talking about the hospital bed, and how clones will eventually wake up in hospitals after being forced to submit their organs in inescapable "donations." The shadow of the clone in the hospital bed, moving all around her or him, becomes a terrifying (because not directly acknowledged) reflection of initially suppressed despair and hopelessness that surfaces, at last, in the painful post-surgery hours before death.

The subtly multiplicitous way in which the shadow occurs to Kathy also suggests that "society," in this case, is no longer just in reference to an urbanised city in England here, but to any urbanised, technologically-advanced society in the world that practises cloning as a norm. The assumption is that if this English city, as a famous metropolis, is capable of condoning this practice of cloning, other metropolises in the world are likely to condone this practice too. In Ishiguro's novelistic cosmos, there are probably clones everywhere in the globalised world, experiencing the same half-suppressed, conflicted emotions as Kathy. The shadow-aspect is indicative of how cloning is really an unresolved ethical and social problem

that continues to haunt the complacent moral fabric of all societies in Ishiguro's novelistic universe. The near-infinite way in which the shadow seems to multiply across the tiles also suggests that the problem is not going away. In fact, the problem is likely to grow as more clones in the future confront their helplessness and potentially translate these emotions into tangible actions against the society that has disenfranchised them—in an impending revolutionary bid to be recognised as validly human. But for now, this disquieting ripple of self-awareness remains, in these pages of *Never*, a ripple, and confined safely within Kathy's thoughts, as she quickly moves on from this somewhat morbid reflection on tiles and shadows back to taking care of Ruth, keeping her company until the latter submits to her last donation.

There is the overriding sense in both *Never* and *Diary* that the characters are manoeuvring within ideological gridlocks of globalised societies, struggling, or not struggling productively, to break free. The banality of the aforementioned scene in *Never* already shows how secretly torn a clone like Kathy can be on the inside about her predicament within Ishiguro's dystopian English society, in which she is clearly imprisoned, conditioned to submit to her obligations *as* a clone. She is not able to rise above her circumstances to acknowledge, or even confront, her position of inequality. In Coetzee's novel, although the Señor's opinionated essays might seem to occupy a symbolically majority-status in the novel by the sheer amount of space they take up on each page, Señor C is, in fact, writing (as the novel soon demonstrates) in a sort of vacuum. Although he might be writing for publication, the publication is, at best, obscure (or presumably for an elitist group of intellectuals and without a wide general readership). At the same time, none of the other characters in the novel seem to care either. This is the case when even his own chosen secretary expresses—albeit irrationally—her disdain for what C has to say: “All he writes about is politics . . . It's a big disappointment. It makes me yawn. I try to tell him to give it up, people have had it up to here with politics. There is no shortage of other things to write about. He could write about cricket, for example . . . I know he watches cricket. When we come in late at night . . . there is he, slumped in front of the television, you can see him from the street, he never closes the

blinds” (26). In a sense, the author has set Anya’s character up to be a bimbotic figure more concerned with her own physical charms than with philosophising about a global state of affairs. But one could interpret her presence in the novel as possessing that figurative dimension of alluding to a more “common man” perspective, which can serve to undermine whatever Señor C is saying, quite literally, over her head. Anya’s seemingly unspecific reference to “people” having it up to here with politics might not, after all, be an invalid point—readers who find it easy to dismiss her point of view here might be themselves speaking from unreflective positions of prejudice about Anya’s status as a seemingly flippant, migrant female (as compared to Señor, the world-famous male, white writer). I would argue that Anya might have a point, and that a huge majority “people” in many contemporary societies are, indeed, *not* at all concerned with whether democracy is totalitarian or whether Al Qaida is misunderstood. This is surely not a stretch of the imagination and also not an unprovable point of contention. Anya herself hints at the barrage of information about topics like terrorism and politics encouraged by the media and governments (who might or might not control the media) that can easily cause a general populace to be desensitised or made indifferent to such supposedly “urgent” global concerns. The adage that someone like Anya would probably agree to is—there must be more to life, at least more than how terrorism is affecting our lives or whether we live in politically problematic times. One thing that is more pleasurable to think about is sports—think the World Cup, as a prime example, or cricket, which is Anya’s example here. Who decides whether one subject is more important than another (sports vs. terrorism, for example), or whether the Señor or Anya is more “right” in her/his perspective, becomes a matter of ideological debate.

When placed against Anya’s dismissal of C’s writing, Señor appears suddenly to be a minority subject whose views are not generally accepted or taken seriously, especially when Anya paints a sight of him sitting slumped forlornly before the television, a figure glimpsed through the narrow blinds of a window. The way the novel is structured already suggests that readers are peeking voyeuristically—as if through blinds—into the windows of these

characters' lives. The fact that Señor never shuts the blinds also suggest a figure who has given up caring about what the world thinks of him. This observation of Señor from someone other than himself provides a more objective perspective of this self-important author whose opinions are supposedly (because slated for publication in respectable places) more "valid" than the more colloquial confessions of Anya. The novel's self-reflexive irony is apparent here as C could very well be a spoof of Coetzee himself, and a self-deprecating attempt by the author to undermine and critically assess his own potential arrogance as an intellectual/writer. Reduced to a pitiable figure of a slumped old man spied upon through a slivered line of vision (between blinds), C becomes not so different from Anya; like her, he is simply another person struggling to be heard, but whose opinions are ineffectively expressed. Señor's unexpected marginalisation in the novel is further compounded when Alan, who reads what Anya has typed out for C, accuses the Señor for being an anachronistic thinker and "a hundred years out of date" (107). Anya and the white investment banker echo each other's opinions and seem to chime like an almost unified, "common man" chorus, undermining the hefty opinions laid out "above" them by C. Señor C appears then to be gridlocked in a societal context that would mostly care less about anything he has to say that might disrupt the status quo.

Yet Señor's trenchant and formalised views continue to march on above the heads of Anya and Alan across the pages of *Diary*. Such instances in which a conveyed sense of Señor as a marginalised figure and thinker might then serve to promote a sense of heroism: Señor, at least, has a unique point of view and he is not afraid to express himself through whatever means necessary. In this way, *Diary* could be argued to be righting a wrong; the "wrong" here is that someone like Señor (whose personality and views might or might not bear an uncanny resemblance to Coetzee's, although the novel never truly or exhaustively confirms the correlation) can be ignored for criticising the status quo. In righting this wrong, and elevating Señor's thoughts as "above" Anya's and Alan's inelegant outbursts, the latter two protagonists become the ones who become marginalised again through the repetitive layout of the novel's pages. Part of the novel's process of righting this wrong is also by rendering Anya

and Alan as leading suggestively hollow lives: “Her days are empty because she is doing nothing to find employment . . . Mr A, it would seem to be enough that he wake up in the mornings with . . . the same girl . . . at the door to welcome him home in the evenings with a drink in her hand” (67). This is told through Señor’s perspective, but it is also gleaned from what Anya has herself revealed to him. This is how *Diary* deliberately portrays the “common folk” represented by Anya and Alan, as stereotypically unreflective, humdrum characters leading empty lives. The same starting letter and number of letters in their names (one could also comically call them Mr. and Mrs. A—like a satirised example of the “perfect couple”) suggest a kind of monotony and predictability that further emphasises, in a mocking and perhaps too patronising way, how they are, as compared to Señor in the novel, un-extraordinary people. Such condescension emphasises that people like Anya and Alan are part and parcel of what is wrong with the world today (other than the various concerns outlined in the essays above the cramply tiered narratives of their “lesser” lives). This is because the likes of Anya and Alan are too content with merely surviving. And since they are not part of the solution—a solution of which Señor can be said to be a part because *he* dares to vocalise “Strong Opinions”—they must surely be part of the problem.

As unfair as such a perspective on Anya and Alan sounds, the novel slowly reveals later that Anya might be, to some degree, aware; she might long to rise beyond the monotonous gridlock of her existence: “Señor C has opinions . . . which I dutifully type out (clickety clack) and somewhere down the line the Germans buy his book and pore over it (*ja ja*) . . . Alan sits all day hunched over his computer and . . . tells me his opinions about interest rates and Macquarie Bank’s latest moves, to which I dutifully listen. But what about me? Who listens to my opinions?” (101). Although her tone is teasing and joking, there is a hint of scorn with which Anya seems to dismiss the Señor’s professional activities as a public intellectual. This comes through as she reduces his work (and the response to his work) to mere sounds, from a “clickety clack” to the implicitly racist image of Germans nodding comically and uttering, *ja ja*, over C’s opinions. In the same breath, she also subtly mocks her

own husband, the banker who talks of nothing but interest rates and financial strategies. There is a fair amount of resentment going on with Anya, as she talks about being the over-submissive wife who “dutifully” listens to her husband’s tracts about making money. Then revealingly, Anya poses the rhetorical question to herself, “Who listens to my opinions?” It is a cry for help from someone who is trapped in her status—amplified by the placing of such a question right at the bottom of the page—as a migrant-cum-trophy wife who is not taken seriously. At the same time, the novel shows us that Anya has to bear some of the blame for her disenfranchised position. Her previous obsessiveness over her own physical allure and her constant giving in to Alan all form part of the process that led to her predicament. Externally the novel also sets up a male-dominated context in which the doubly marginalized Anya (as both a Filipina and a woman) exhibits signs of ambivalence about her situation. On the one hand, she submits to Alan’s will as the attentive wife and reaffirms a sense of low self-esteem by restating that C is greater in intelligence than her. On the other, she wants to be more than what she has let herself become. As the male intellectual and the male businessman, C and Alan dominate as novelistic representations of a male-dominated, contemporary society in which women (in particular, diasporic women) have to work that much harder to be recognised on their own terms.

One way in which Anya does attempt to assert herself is by leaving the secretary post that the Señor had assigned her, after the latter has mocked her typing skills (117). But after the Señor apologises, she (perhaps too readily) agrees to transcribe for him again, even though she knows that he hired her based solely on her beauty. In this way, Anya neither really transcends nor rejects her sense of entrapment. In contrast to her, and also C, Alan seems to thrive within the circumstances that are painted—by someone like C, at least—as deplorable. As a symbolic figure for an aspect of “capitalist accumulation” (Cheah, 2006: 1) that is central to the general successes of globalisation, Alan is a savvy business who happens to be well-read with what is going on with the world. As Anya admiringly puts it, Alan “reads the *Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist* . . . and *Quadrant*” and is teased by colleagues for

being “too much of an intellectual” (84). At one point in his essays, the Señor criticises the globalised world for “its suspicion of philosophical idealism . . . its dog-eat-dog individualism, its narrow conception of self-advancement” (117) but on the floor below him, Alan exists as the very thing that C essentially despises—an anti-cosmopolitan form of intellectual who is, at the core, a bullying, self-interested capitalist. Alan might be well-versed in global affairs, but he bears no genuine empathy for others; his acquiring of knowledge and seemingly cosmopolitan awareness are purely in the service of self-preservation. Yet Alan too is, to a degree, a victim, as the novel reveals (in an eager bid to humanise the character) that he was born an orphan raised in “a boys’ home in Queensland” (179). In any case, Alan has chosen to compensate for his orphaned childhood by becoming successful in the field of business, at the expense of qualities of compassion and empathy. In this dog-eat-dog capitalist, and sexist, societal context portrayed by the novel, Alan is the only character who wants nothing to change, and has no desire to transcend his circumstances. In fact, he thrives within such a context, whereas Anya inches further into a state of ambivalence and longing to break free. And above them both, Señor—within his limited sphere of influence as a public intellectual—lambasts the evils of the capitalist and globalised world that all three protagonists are ultimately locked in.

The clones in *Never*—these excluded beings or *non-citizens-of-the-world*—might be relegated to being pale shadows of their human counterparts, yet they too are locked into an ideological gridlock that is astonishingly human. They are compelled to buy into and idealise social norms and practices that conventional people undergo, even as they do not ultimately share the same rights and freedoms. In this case, compared to regular humans, they are doubly gridlocked. This is because they are not only restricted by the sheer fact of their status as clones (in not being allowed to lead full lives), but they are also indoctrinated by the same value-systems that frame and delimit the thoughts and aspirations of conventional humans. One of the initial ways in which these clones are ideologically imprisoned is through an irrational sense of terror of the outside world. Back in Hailsham (one can readily assume that

this example applies to other clone-schools in Ishiguro's narrative cosmos), clones are told "horrible stories about the woods" outside the school grounds, such as how the body of a male clone who escaped "had been found two days later, up in those woods, tied to a tree with the hands and feet chopped off" (50). The Guardians are quick to state ostensibly that such stories are "nonsense" (50) but these stories are not discouraged amongst the teenage clones; already an abject fear of what can happen when one moves outside of certain ideological parameters is already instilled from an early age. This is how a place like Hailsham can be left unguarded with the fences easily breached—the students are rendered too terrified to leave. Then no matter how old the clones become, the fear perpetually exists as a subconscious part of their psychology.

Nature can thus become representative of what it means to exist outside of an established social system—a wildly imagined external realm full of vague threats of violence and terrible isolation that causes the clones to accept their fate as clones and to stay within the "safe" halls of Hailsham. Fear becomes a strategy used to distract the clones from the possibility of life outside of the one assigned to a clone. Another distraction are norms and practices that we have come to acknowledge as common dimensions of any modern-day society in our own globalised cosmos—shopping. Kofi Annan describes this by-now ordinary phenomenon as a central component of globalisation that "can seem to be forcing us all into the same shallow, consumerist culture—giving us all the same appetites but leaving us more unequal than ever before in our ability to satisfy them" (75). This obsession with buying and the growing obsession within societies to balance out the inequality (so that everyone can buy what they do not, essentially, need) becomes part of a larger distraction from having to deal with existential issues such as the potential meaningfulness of a life. This is especially the case in *Never* when the clones are encouraged to take part in Sales and Spring Exchanges. At such highly anticipated events, Kathy recalls how every student in Hailsham becomes obsessed with "building up a collection of personal possessions . . . to decorate the walls around your bed, or wanted something to carry around in your bag and place on your desk

from room to room” (16). Such events are held in the school’s Dining Hall which turns into a recognisable microcosm of a bustling shopping mall, “crowded and noisy” and replete with “the pushing and shouting [that] all [form] part of the fun” (42). Aside from building bonds between the clones, such fun only serves to draw them away from potential, existential concerns that the clones are circuitously discouraged from confronting; namely, what it would be like to *not* have to submit to organ-donations as a given. The desire to shop as a distraction from having to confront the possibility that there are alternative, even more productive, ways of making one’s life meaningful. Shopping as a brain-numbing distraction has become a key component of any discussion of the meaning of globalisation. As James Carrier points out about the link between shopping and globalisation: “the objects we buy often are not really what we want” (124), particularly when shopping only fills a void that exists because we are trying to connect with an imagined but illusory consumerist community. In this way, shopping malls, symbolised by the rooms where these rituals in the novel take place, often operate as the “ritual centres of our communities,” where we go “to define ourselves by buying into a certain ‘affinity group’ that signals itself through what it wears or owns” (Betsky 93). This is why Carrier suggests that as a shopaholic, one may become never truly satisfied with what one purchases.

In *Never*, the Sales are always predictable, even though the clones look forward to it every time it comes. As Kathy points out, the Sales were almost always “a big disappointment” yet they could never shake off “the old feelings of hope and excitement” when the event was around the corner (41). In my earlier chapters, I have shown that it is typical of Ishiguro’s protagonists to know and not know that her/his life is meaningless and remain psychologically disabled from transcending ambivalence. Kathy clearly possesses a sense of ambivalence but she also realises that all the clones felt the same way too—but all of them had become so conditioned to enjoy the experience of shopping that there was never sufficient impetus to interrogate these suppressed issues. The clones’ encounter with the shopping-experience is analogous of the potential sense of emptiness unacknowledged by any

globalised, contemporary society that uses shopping as a form of escapism. In a sense, the Sales in *Never* can arguably serve to satirise shopping as an everyday human practice. If the clones use shopping to avoid thinking about how—as well as how early—they will die (through their organ-donations), shopping for conventional humans can also be argued to be a distraction from our own mortality, a way of delaying our fears with regard to the terrifying eventuality of our deaths. At the same time, the correlation between clones and humans also suggest that they are not so different after all, since both possess escapist tendencies as well as desire to form communal bonds—imagined or otherwise—amongst themselves. The novel thus forces us implicitly to ask, “What right has anyone to treat clones any differently from ordinary human beings?” It is a question made even more unsettling because it is unanswered by the novel and left dangling at the back of the minds of its readers.

Imprisoned by a shared need for a sense of belonging and the repeated distractions of events like the Sales, the clones in Hailsham are “told and not told” (82) about their eventual donations by their Guardians. Subliminally, bits of information are fed to them as they are growing up, but before they can fully comprehend what they have been told, distractions like the Sales and the physical anxieties accompanying the approach of adulthood all serve to divert them from dealing with the donations in a critical and fully-conscious way. In this way, the clones are no different from the rest of us who are shaped by society into accepting expectations that have been foisted subtly upon us (they can include conforming to society’s laws, growing up heterosexual, starting families, supplementing the country’s economy etc.). There is a catch, however. Unlike us, the clones may be shaped and indoctrinated into behaving like regular humans, but they are quickly dissuaded from being too carried away—they are ultimately reminded that they are *not* human. During their “Culture Briefings,” the clones are made to play-act as “waiters in cafés, policemen, and so on” (110) and later in the Cottages—the transition point between Hailsham and their eventual roles as Carers and, finally, donors—they are not discouraged from imitating mannerisms from actors on television as cues on how socialised humans behave (120). Identity becomes a performance

that the clones gladly enter, half-believing that, one day, they might be able to perform these identities like their human counterparts in the external world. The clones are even encouraged to create artworks for possible monumentalisation at the Gallery, an external location curated by a woman called “Madame.” Later in the novel when Tommy and Kathy seek out the Madame for possible deferrals of their donations in the name of their romantic love, the latter reveals that the gallery was part of a failed ethical strategy to prove to the larger world that clones too had “*souls*” (260). This possibly pokes satirical fun at any contemporary art scene today, where the creation of art becomes not so much about revealing the soulfulness of the artist but about the building of one’s professional reputation or the commercialisation of art as “good economic investment” (Salmon 53). The satire is a deliberately unfunny one as activists like Madame really use the artwork to show that the clones are *not* inhuman—they should not simply be treated like animals in an abattoir.

But just as the clones get carried away with their potential to behave like waiters, policemen, actors or creative artists, a guardian like Miss Lucy puts a stop to it by insisting: “None of you will . . . be film stars . . . working in supermarkets . . . Your lives are set out for you. You’ll become adults, then before you’re old . . . you’ll start to donate your vital organs . . . You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided” (81). Faced with this outright destruction of their tentative dreams, the clones, who have been so used to following orders from the Guardians, acknowledge Miss Lucy’s statement without any sense of outrage; they are merely saddened, disappointed, even resigned. No one takes it upon her- or himself to stage a protest against their fates as clones. This is perhaps the greatest sense of tragedy that is conveyed through the lives of the clones—that they accept and never ultimately question their status as controlled and imprisoned minority subjects. Since a young age, an institution like Hailsham has eased their susceptible minds into compliance with the obligations foisted upon them. There has never been a chance for resentment or disappointment to accumulate to the point that clones might even stage a mass revolts against the Guardians, for example. Any sense of disgruntlement or anxiety

quickly dissipates under the weight of that desire to keep on existing within the parameters of certainty demarcated by Hailsham. To use Louis Althusser's terms, a place like Hailsham could be called an educational Ideological State Apparatus, part of a larger series of Apparatuses (for example, Church, Trade Union, Family etc.). Such Apparatuses "present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialised institutions" (Althusser 142) and operate by ideology. Their operation is indirect, as opposed to the violence of the Repressive State Apparatus (Government, Army, Police, Courts et al), to control and reproduce the social subject, framing and delimiting how she or he thinks and acts within society. Ideology also works because of its "naturalising effect" (Bastow and Martin 16). This is exemplified by how the students at Hailsham are steadily but subtly "told and not told" (82) about how they should feel or think about their lives.

I would argue that the novel encourages its readers to remember that man might *not* after all be—as the existentialist philosopher, Jean-Paul Satre, would have us believe—"nothing else but what he makes of himself" (345). We are all, to a large extent, always and already shaped and subjugated by ideology. In many ways too, and just like the clones, we have been brought up to imitate and fulfil social roles and identities; we have all largely been shaped by ideological systems and conditioned to become members of our society. In an analogous way, *Never* suggests that perhaps we too are the clones, individuals who are raised and conditioned to fit in with the social fabric; most social roles that we would take as our own (teacher, policeman etc.) have been forged long before we were born. Just like the clones, it is not impossible to see how we are actually copies of others who have come before us. Being copies helps us to integrate into society. Like the clones, subscribing to these pre-made identities allows us to keep sane. It also prevents us from threatening the stability of the predominant ideological environment. What I asked rhetorically before can be reasserted here again at this point of my essay, and with a further corollary question: "What makes us so different from the clones—and what right do we have to disenfranchise them?" What we know to be a "human" identity becomes shaky and even dismissed, when much of what or

who we are can be argued to be mimicry and superficially performative. As such, there might be little difference between clones and non-clones. Yet, unlike the clones, *we* are given the opportunities to express our freedom, lead long lives, and fall in love. Clones, on the other hand, are forced to die for *our* expense. The rearing of clones is a mere means to an end—their organs. The dichotomy in the novel between clones and non-humans continues to exist because the non-clone majority has decided to victimise their minority-doubles in order to “not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease” (263).

As these victimised clones, Tommy and Kathy are told that they cannot hold off their donations on the basis of love. The Madame, whom they sought out on the advice of Ruth before she finally died, has disappointed them; there can be no deferrals. Their days of teenage pettiness and immaturity have now given birth to an adult relationship founded on frail hope about their future—hope that is finally crushed. They can only squeeze in as many moments of intimacy as possible before Tommy dies from his donations while under Kathy’s care. The novel’s basic story of clones growing up, finding love, and running out of time, is straightforward, predictable, and finishes without hope. The clones are imprisoned by the society they are in and forced to make do—a fate they accept (much to this reader’s frustration) with mere melancholy and final resignation.

Although not to the same degree of hopelessness as in *Never*, a sense of helpless inevitability is also evinced in *Diary*. Regardless of how articulate and long-winded Señor gets about his dissatisfactions with the fundamentally “fallen, vicious, predatory” nature of contemporary human society (81), his complaints seem to achieve nothing beyond merely allowing him to vent in public. Just as he rails melodramatically that human beings are worse than animals—according to him, unlike people, “the wolf is not predatory upon other wolves” (81); C perhaps does not watch enough of the National Geographic channel—Alan (in the same page) asserts that individuals are powerless to change society. This is in response to Anya who has just defended Señor after Alan called him a fraud for thinking that his opinions can change the world. Anya asks: “Don’t we all have opinions that we try to extend into the

real world?” (80). Anya, and Señor through his writings, are trying to demonstrate that larger ideological systems can be altered because they were themselves first founded on a collection of individual desires. This is reminiscent of what Foucault too has pointed out that systems of power *can* be changed from within. Foucault was speaking of the potential and rewarding engendering of unstable states of power by “the moving substrate of force relations” and that since exercises of power always and already involve intentional aims and individual objectives, their relations are reversible. This is precisely because their effects cannot be fully predicted in advance, and this instability means that resistance is always immanent to power (1980; 93-94).

In a patronising way to his Filipina wife, Alan responds by stating confidently that the world might be made up of both the individual dimension and the economic dimension (the supposed result of a collection of individual desires). In the end, however, “the economic not only sums up the individual, it also transcends it” (*Diary* 81). So no matter what the Señor or even Anya may think about the individual power to change things, they will always be dwarfed and forced to submit to larger social forces animated by the accumulation of personal wealth and overall financial stability. This is precisely what Señor hates about the globalised world. Alan can be said to represent the majority of members of capitalist societies whose self-serving values perpetuate the status quo. Anya only relents to Alan’s point of view, as she always does, being the submissive wife, whilst above their heads, the Señor rails uselessly on and on. In the way that Alan’s statement comes like a dramatic riposte, the final word that comes right after the end of C’s essay on the same page, the novel manifests the overriding sense that the Alans of the world are right. Just as Anya is forced to keep her individual dissent to herself, the Señor’s idiosyncratic opinions continue to unfold on paper but to no avail, falling on mostly deaf ears. The only one who seems to agree with him is Anya—yet she too seems helpless or, at most, ambivalent about wanting to oppose her husband or make a difference in the world.

It is then arguably a strategy of wishful thinking that the novel undermines Alan's opinions by inserting a plot twist in which Anya discovers that Alan has set up spyware in Señor C's computer. Alan admits to having done so by using a disk that she had used to store the essays while transcribing for C (133). Alan's aim is to use his knowledge of computer technology to steal C's money after he passes away. Such a plot twist serves to underscore that Alan is the straightforward villain in this novel. As a possible corollary, we can safely assume, as readers, that we need not take his serious sounding philosophies about the individual and economic dimensions to heart. We can assume that everything Alan says can be dismissed as a mere means to an end—to gain from the weaknesses of others—and that he will eventually be punished. Simultaneously, above the sub-plot of Alan's confession and Anya's outrage, Señor C's essays suddenly change in tone and content, as if to signal that Anya has influenced C after all—the novel enters a "Second Diary" of what Anya would later call "Soft Opinions" (157). These parallel surprises in the novel operate to diminish Alan's significance in the readers' eyes: the essays become suddenly more quietly reflective, personable and accessible, whilst Anya stands up to Alan by threatening to leave. Alan loses his confidence with "a quiver in his voice" (150), as he begs her not to leave him and promises to discontinue his scheme. During the unfolding of the first of the "Soft Opinions," "A dream," the middle section of the tripartite structure of the pages is significantly empty, suggesting that, in a sense, Anya and the Señor have perhaps fused in spirit to form the essays above. In "A dream," Señor C writes poignantly about his fear of growing old and wonders if "we lose all power to elect our companions" upon entering the afterlife, and if the "afterworld is a sad and subdued place" (159). The South-African writer has taken the "little" Filipina's advice to write about topics that are closer to his heart. Emboldened by Anya, C has discovered a deep courage to become more sincere and heartfelt in expressing "softer" opinions.

Yet I am not convinced that Alan does not still come across as the more believable voice of a normative form of cosmopolitanism, one that the novel has ironically portrayed, so

far, as a highly convincing representation of that potentially central aspect of a predominantly-capitalist world fuelled by the values of amoral pragmatism and selfish desires. Alan is still, in a sense, the worst kind of cosmopolitan—one who keeps up to date on international affairs, manipulates global investments for his own gain, and runs on the self-centred principle that “life really is a struggle . . . of all against all” (195). Alan remains a highly persuasive and convincing symbol of this kind of cosmopolitanism even though he gets embarrassingly drunk when all three characters meet in C’s apartment (C had invited Anya and Alan to drinks to celebrate the completion of his book). At this gathering, Alan seals the end of his relationship with Anya by embarrassing her before the Señor, ranting that “the world of hard heads and common sense” will not care about the opinions of a man “whose sole achievement lies in the sphere of the fanciful” (195). After this inebriated outburst, Anya finally has the courage and is outraged enough to end her ties with Alan. Alan would then seem to have received his dramatic comeuppance by this point in the novel. However, Alan’s denigration of Señor still resonates with a pessimistic sense that the world will not improve simply because an idealistic writer like Señor (or even Coetzee himself) wishes it to change. Alan might have been “defeated” in the novel’s plot and edged out as a “loser” (having lost Anya, who ends up being closer as a friend to C), but this becomes merely a vicarious way by which the author might be taking a sort of vengeance on a world that refuses, in the end, to abide by his idealism.

Even though Alan’s opinions retain their power to resonate with almost overwhelming credibility, this does, however, help to augment the poignancy of the newfound relationship between Anya and Señor C. Even though they might, in the end, come across as unexpected minority subjects whose idealism seems futile against the mostly dark, self-serving, capitalist, global landscape symbolised and reiterated by Alan, there might be comfort in knowing that characters like Anya and C are not alone in struggling to keep to their values. Señor might have started out being the angry, idealistic, worldly-intellectual figure ranting against the deplorable state of global affairs, but with Anya’s influence, he has

become a more confessional, reflective and even happier cosmopolitan voice in the novel. Also, as the Señor is partly a symbolic avatar of Coetzee and an aspect of his consciousness, it would even be safe to suggest that the author himself has changed as well. This is because *Diary* could be said to be a polyphonic novel in the Bakhtinian sense. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Mikhail Bakhtin explained how Dostoevsky created the polyphonic novel by repositioning the idea of the novel within multiple perspectives rather than a dominant, singular consciousness, and by repositioning the author of the novel alongside the characters as one of these consciousnesses (Morson and Emerson 231-68). According to Bakhtin, the authorial position becomes “a fully realised and thoroughly consistent dialogic position,” in which the author speaks with, and not about, a character as someone who is actually present in the text (63-64). Characters participate in this ongoing dialogue as “free people, capable of standing alongside,” agreeing or disagreeing with their creator and together, the author and his characters become “a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices” (6-7). In a similar way, Coetzee’s novel demonstrates, through its polyphonic structure, a self-reflexive and newly critical mode of cosmopolitanism in which the author allows his own thoughts (via Señor C) about the state of the world to be altered by his characters—particularly by Anya. Such a renewed critical mode involves becoming more open and sensitive to the perspectives of others, and it is mainly through Anya that Señor/Coetzee is able to become a better cosmopolitan.

Anya turns out to be a surprising cosmopolitan figure too. When before she was subservient to Alan and cared nothing about having thoughts about politics or other global concerns, she finally admits to Señor: “You opened my eyes somewhat, I will say that. You showed me there was another way of living, having ideas and expressing them clearly and so forth” (204). She even offers a privately fantasised idea that one day both Señor and she might live together, such that she might even be his secretary and guardian till C passes away. “We were pretty honest with each other,” Anya tells C at the end of the novel (219), unlike between Anya and Alan. This emphasises that even between minority subjects, the rewards of

friendship, integrity, mutual influence and candour can offer comfort and hope in a world dominated by the likes of Alan. Señor C and Anya had first approached each other as the unknown Other; Anya as the exotic but alluring Other to C; C as the self-absorbed but intellectual-sophisticate in Anya's previously provincial eyes. But over time, and with a growing sense of openness and curiosity about each other, the novel illustrates how multiple perspectives, arising from differing contexts of culture to gender, can rub off each other in meaningful ways. As newfound friends, this disparate pair of minority subjects (with Alan as always representative of that generally indifferent, Hobbesian majority) have turned each other into more critically conscious, as well as happier, cosmopolitan figures. With this renewed take on the minority subject, Coetzee's novel has now presented us with minority perspectives that are also promising forms of cosmopolitanism, suggesting that in spite of overwhelming odds, the marginalised few have the potential to make a positive difference (even if only to a limited degree) in the world.

Compared to *Diary*, however, *Never* offers no happy ending for its minority subjects of clones. While telling Tommy and Kathy that they cannot defer their donations on the basis of love, Miss Emily, Hailsham's ex-headmistress, tells them that the reason for the permitted existence and use of clones was because "there wasn't time to take stock, to ask the sensible questions" (262). The world was, to use Bruce Robbins' words again, "too busy just now" to care about ethical issues; globalisation ensured that advancements in biotechnology and the perpetuation of the human race trumped any sustained, ethical consideration for unforeseen minority subjects like the clones. As if to represent the globalised world as a heap of moral debris, Ishiguro positions Kathy at the end of the novel in a moment when she is observing a random field in the middle of nowhere in Norfolk: "I was standing before acres of ploughed earth . . . All along the fence . . . all sorts of rubbish had caught and tangled . . . like the debris you get on a sea-shore . . . [and] in the branches of the trees, too, I could see, flapping about, torn plastic sheeting and bits of old carrier bags" (287). Kathy has just arrived in Norfolk after Tommy's death, a place where the clones at Hailsham once believed (as part of a shared

childhood fantasy) that lost things could be found. Hailsham, Kathy has just heard, is gone and might be replaced by “a hotel” (286). But what have really been lost are unresolved moral considerations that have been suppressed and discarded by globalised societies eager to thrive economically and technologically. Hailsham, an experiment in which activists like Miss Emily had tried to show that clones were *not* inhuman after all, has been replaced by a more commercial venture. As the Madame had told Kathy earlier, a new world was coming rapidly: “More scientific, efficient, yes” (272). The scene with rubbish in the fences and trees gathering around Kathy is a connotative call to political and moral action against growing global inaction with regard to unceasing developments in the domains of biotechnology and a general obsession with self-preservation, with an ethical consideration for potentially new minority subjects to be accepted as full-fledged “citizens-of-the-world.”

The novel uses its story of heartbroken clones to persuade us that a clone is the new Other, one who is not different from the rest of us. The novel is asking that we do not lose our sense of compassion, compelling us to think *beyond* our fear of disease and dying to recognise that we have the potential to be unnecessarily cruel and selfish—that is, if we merely let ourselves be carried away by our successes as a human race. At the same time, the title of the novel, taken after Kathy’s favourite song “Never Let Me Go” sung by the fictitious Judy Bridgewater, points to a lingering sense of pessimism—“nothing might change, after all” could be the novel’s final message, since we may never be able to let go of that primary human priority of self-preservation. We will abide by this priority even if it means making serious ethical compromises. Ishiguro hints at this sense of pessimistic inevitability by inserting Oxfams in the societal backdrop of the novel (131), as well as punctuating the scenery surrounding the Cottages with “a lovely old church” (192). Even with international charity organisations like Oxfam and ancient religious institutions like the church forming part of the globalised landscape of the narrative, there is no charity or compassion afforded to the clones. The banality of evil prevails by the end of *Never* as Hailsham is closed down and clones continue to be killed off in the novel’s future, presumably with greater efficiency. The

world advances forward, but as the scene of Kathy standing amidst debris signify, ethical quandaries only gather like forgotten rubbish around the edges of the novel's society.

The polluted natural landscape that Kathy observes may also suggest to some readers that there is something *unnatural* about the cruel utilisation of clones to perpetuate ourselves, although the logic of such a metaphorical connotation might be skewed, since nature itself is arguably neither kind nor unkind. The trope of debris here also echoes the scene in *When We Were Orphans* when Shanghai was portrayed as reduced to rubble during a major war. In my earlier chapter, I linked the site of debris with Walter Benjamin's notion in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" about history as a march of progress founded on oppression and barbarism (4). The victims of oppression and barbarism here in *Never* are the clones. Framed by the discarded rubbish dangling from the trees, Kathy's predicament of disenfranchisement is amplified by the novelistic scenery around her, reminding readers that as members of ever-advancing, contemporary societies across the world, we must not forget to clean up the ethical messes left in the wake of our ostensible successes as a collective human race. In a way, the message of *Never* is as harsh and unambiguous as any of C's "Strong Opinions." Ishiguro's novel is impelling us to expand our critical understanding of what a "cosmopolitan," or a legitimate citizen-of-the-world, *may* look like; to reconsider potential new formations of the Other in the unforeseeable future, which for all we know, may already be here.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Globalisation can sometimes be a vague or even over-determined concept. But as I have tried to show in my treatment of Coetzee's and Ishiguro's novels, these authors are writing works that are urgent responses to how we are indeed living in an ever-shrinking, globalised world. Their later works are engaged with a conception of the globe characterised by "the intensification of international trade, fiscal and technology transfer, and labour migration," which collectively help to bring about an increasingly interdependent world (Cheah 2006, 20). I have tried to show that Coetzee's and Ishiguro's later publications are cosmopolitan novels for their central interest in encouraging a heightened and critical consciousness of states of multiple belonging within the context of globalisation.

They also operate as new forms of novels that move on from earlier definitions of this kind of literature which operate within the contexts of capitalism and globalised culture, as formulated by theorists such as Georg Lukács and later Lucien Goldmann. For Lukács, the novel shifted in a negative way from the harmoniously integrated world as depicted (according to him) by epic poetry in the past, to enter a tense world of alienation in the bourgeois novel of the post-twentieth century. The central protagonist of such a novel would act with "transcendental hopelessness" with regard to the modern world and strive to articulate a longing for a higher, more authentic mode of existence without God. Goldmann followed from Lukács' point to define the novel as providing a homology between literature and society as mediated by the writer, evincing the maximum possible consciousness of a social class or group, "the transindividual subject—from which the author comes...[and whose] mental structures...the author shares and elaborates" (Cohen 155). For these theorists, the novel was an explicit to implicit mimesis of society and a stylised demonstration of discontent, filled with hope for qualitative values in "a degraded society" where capitalism was necessarily entering a state of "crisis" (Cohen 191). Coetzee's and Ishiguro's novels move on from this notion of mimesis to trouble further the assumption that one can ever truly represent the late-capitalist landscape in any straightforward or stable way. The surrealism

and detachment of the novels in the way they present and confront reality, from Ishiguro's sense of going nowhere at the levels of plot and narrative form to Coetzee's fantastic segues in plot and surprisingly detached evocations of scenes, all point to a self-reflexive awareness in the novels that to think about the world is to engage with notions of hopelessness and failure. It is a failure that informs the novels' overall sense of critical cosmopolitanism, such that the novels also work to show how, through a recognition of failure, one may humbly keep from giving up in moving on from naïve to complacent ideological positions to confronting, in renewed ways, the complex demands of one's globalised environment.

In summary then, *The Remains of the Day* and *Youth* made a case against professionalism and the creation of naively idealised cosmopolitan identities; *The Unconsoled* and *Elizabeth Costello* exposed the potential for uncertainty within the artist's cosmopolitan project of cultural homogenisation; *When We Were Orphans* and *Slow Man* offered positive visions for what it could mean for diasporic individuals to live productively with enforced cosmopolitan identities; and finally, *Never Let Me Go* and *Diary of a Bad Year* encouraged a surprising consideration for marginalised minority subjects and how their cosmopolitan condition could become more meaningful. In 2009, both Ishiguro and Coetzee published *Nocturnes* and *Summertime* respectively. The former is a suite of five stories that are similar to parts of *The Unconsoled*, in featuring musicians who are either eager to be famous or who find no existential or professional fulfilment from music. *Summertime* is the final instalment in Coetzee's trilogy after *Boyhood* and *Youth*. *Summertime* takes the self-reflexive form of a fictitious biographer's interviews with colleagues of the "late" John Coetzee who have mostly nothing positive to say about the author. Coetzee comes across as a banal, old fool or a lousy lover. To a character like his cousin, Margot Jonker, for example, Coetzee (this half-autobiographical-half-fictional version of Coetzee) is boring and misguided; and to one expert in African literature, Coetzee the novelist is an artistic failure for providing no original insight into the human condition.

Unlike *Summertime*, which gets caught up in its cleverness as a novel pretending to be a *future* autobiography of the late author, and becomes a self-deprecatory reflection on the potential pointlessness of writing as a profession, *Nocturnes* is cosmopolitan in spirit for subtly critiquing the desires of artists striving to be recognised all over the world. Like in *Unconsoled*, where the young Stephen Hoffman is determined to please his family and become an international pianist, a story like “Malvern Hills” features a university drop-out who is trying to write songs, whilst grappling with his bitterness at having failed to achieve anything in the eyes of those who know him. The artist as the ideal cosmopolitan figure, which many of the characters in *Nocturnes* aim to become, is an ideal founded on delusion. This is because fame, in this case, is just a means of escape from having to deal with genuine feelings and/or already fragile relationships. The artist’s global aspirations lead eventually to heartache when Ishiguro’s characters neglect to take care of precious local affiliations to family or loved ones.

The “Coetzee” portrayed reflexively in *Summertime* is shown to be similar to the intellectual-grouch that is C in *Diary of a Bad Year*. One of the characters in Coetzee’s 2009 novel even sums up the author as “a cold and supercilious intellectual, an image he did nothing to dispel” (235). Fiction and reality seem to come together with greater—although with still some measure of tentativeness—honesty here in *Summertime*, in which the author is no longer afraid to show that like the Señor as portrayed in *Diary*, Coetzee is uncertain about his overall impact as a cosmopolitan writer. The author is revealing to his readers that his eagerness to express trenchant views in the hope of improving the world might have all been for nothing. Such futility has also not been ameliorated by the author’s irritable persona as portrayed in public forums (a fact honestly alluded to in *Summertime*).

But I would argue, finally, that this self-conscious recognition of failure in the formation of any cosmopolitan enterprise—Coetzee through his semi-autobiographical self-criticism of his position as a novelist-intellectual and Ishiguro’s continued portrayal of characters who are constantly unsure of their influence on the world—is testament to the

continued vigilance of these authors. Their recent works suggest that both Coetzee and Ishiguro will only continue to forge cosmopolitan perspectives that are conscious of their potential contradictions and propensity for self-delusion, even as their writings remain uncompromising and critical about ethical issues or exploitative connections left unconsidered by larger narratives of globalisation, now and in the future.

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