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Ewa Luczak, Anna Pochmara, Samir Dayal (Eds.)

NEW COSMOPOLITANISMS, RACE, AND ETHNICITY

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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with an introduction by Samir Dayal

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To family and friends across the world

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Samir Dayal

Introduction: New Cosmopolitanisms: Rethinking Race, Geography, and Belonging

This collection of essays offers reflections on how cosmopolitical thinking can be, and perhaps needs to be, made “new” for our contemporary global ecumene. A key premise of the collection is the recognition that in the contemporary conjuncture, our understanding of cosmopolitanism should be open to new intersections with understandings of how “race” and ethnicity are being deployed. It should consider the connections between cosmopolitanism and cultural phenomena such as multiculturalism, diaspora, migration and varieties of neo-imperialism and (neo-)colonialism. Indeed, it is necessary to think of various *cosmopolitanisms*, rather than a singular cosmopolitanism. The political, particularly the nation form, interrupts, or poses a check to, cosmopolitan initiatives and aspirations, yet this book maintains that ethicopolitical concerns, complicating our understanding of cosmopolitanism, also amplify our understanding of what a reformed cosmopolitanism, or what I will elaborate below as *cosmopolitics*, might look like. In short it is a key contribution of this volume that it seeks to reorient our thinking about cosmopolitanism. It points the way to cosmopolitics (the de-construction and re-construction of cosmopolitanism), particularly by calling our attention to how such thinking in the contemporary globalized conjuncture must engage anew with race and ethnicity.

We live in an age in which we are witnessing ethnically driven civil strife within nation-states: the ongoing strife between Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir; the ethnonationalist Balkanization of the former Yugoslavia; the mutual genocide in Rwanda between the Hutus and the Tutsi; the Kurdish struggle for a homeland in Iraq that saw reprisal in the form of gas attacks targeting women and children; the ethnically motivated Arab Spring protests and the violence wreaked upon civilians in Tahrir Square; the ongoing civil war in Syria; but also—if on a different scale—the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. We are also witnessing, even more crucially, an era of more refugees than ever streaming across borders and living, more or less indefinitely, in non-permanent camps or settlements worldwide. It is thus a newly urgent ethicopolitical imperative that contemporary cosmopolitanisms negotiate issues of race or ethnicity as they emerge as drivers of social change both within the nation-state and, simultaneously, transnationally.

This cosmopolitical project also requires anticipating and responding to interests that resist social change and to the resurgence of nationalism both in its benign democratic forms and in its virulent irruptions. Instances of the former type may be identified in the desire for a nation such as Israel to rebuild itself after political trauma or Haiti in the wake of a major earthquake, although of course these may be contested by rival nationalisms. Examples of the latter type, more worrisome, may be identified not only in reactionary ethnonationalisms produced through the Balkanization

of the former Yugoslavia, but also in the re-emergence of America-first extreme right nationalists in the era of Donald Trump and Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Mihály Orbán (no friend to cosmopolitanism), or in the rise of the ultranationalist *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) party in contemporary Germany, which secured a place in the national parliament for the first time, having won 12.6% of the vote in the 2017 election, alongside Angela Merkel's majority party. The AfD party's success, even if not a complete victory, was a mocking rebuke to Merkel's now-infamous neo-Thatcherite rallying cry that there was "no alternative" to her party's agenda. We cannot dismiss the re-emergence of the AfD and other resurgent ethnonationalisms as merely atavistic and insulated from the global. If anything, this party is remarkably cosmopolitan. Alice Weidel, one of the leaders of the AfD in the 2017 election, is a 38-year-old lesbian and former employee at Goldman Sachs who wrote a PhD thesis on the Chinese pension system, is fluent in Mandarin, and spent six years in China. The AfD party is hardly unique. Many ethnonationalist leaders are similarly exponents of ethnocentric right-wing politics and simultaneously thoroughly attuned to the workings of globalized economy and culture. Ethnonationalism and cosmopolitanism can be strange bedfellows. They are not necessarily strangers. As this volume emphasizes, forms of localism and rootedness can likewise be imbricated with cosmopolitanism; in any case they cannot be simplistically opposed. And it is precisely for such reasons that new perspectives on cosmopolitanism have become more urgent than ever. In both the public sphere and in academic analysis we need to re-imagine cosmopolitical responses to the new world order.

The contributors to this collection are certainly mindful of—and in many cases explicitly refer to—the long history of cosmopolitan thinking. This is after all a rich and deep genealogy, going back from a host of contemporary theorists amply discussed in the essays, to Immanuel Kant and the Stoic philosophers in the West. There is also the fact of transnational, cosmopolitan circulation of ideas, information, images, goods, people and capital along the Silk Road and across the Asian rim and throughout the non-Western world. One can get a sense of the range of contentious contemporary debates about cosmopolitanism from Joshua Cohen's edited collection *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, featuring Martha Nussbaum and many other well-regarded thinkers.¹

¹ See among others Joshua Cohen, ed., *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism* (Beacon P, 2002 [1996]); Tim Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Harvard UP, 1997); Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (U of Minnesota P, 1998); Kimberly Hutchings and Roland Dannreuther, eds., *Cosmopolitan Citizenship* (St. Martin's P, 1999); Roel Meijer, ed., *Cosmopolitanism, Identity, and Authenticity in the Middle East* (Curzon, 1999); Vinay Dharwadkar, ed., *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture* (Routledge, 2000); Dilip P. Gaonkar, ed., *Alternative Modernities* (Duke UP, 2001); George Ritzer, *The Globalization of Nothing 2* (Pine Forge, 2007); and Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitics I&II* (U of Minnesota P, 2010, 2011).

Cosmopolitanist discourse has had such a diverse and diffuse history that it is expedient and even necessary to delimit the scope of this collection. Thus particular attention is given to categories of “race” and ethnicity in contemporary discourse on cosmopolitanism. “Racial” and ethnic divisions are almost defining features of discourse in the public sphere even (or especially) in multicultural polities. Contemporary globalization exacerbates differences among people. It emphasizes the importance of protecting borders as much as it promotes international or cross-border flows of labor, goods, services, information and capital. This contradiction is a critical object of academic study, especially in departments of political science, international studies, economics, women’s studies, English and media studies, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and more generally cultural studies. Many of the contributors to this volume are representative of this nexus of (cross-)disciplinary approaches, even as their particular focus is on race and ethnicity in contemporary national and transnational culture and cultural expression.

It is not only in large and sweeping gestures that the new cosmopolitanism is to be traced. It is also more immediately pertinent to local and “rooted” cultural phenomena and cultural production, at least to the extent that the local is valorized as the obverse of cosmopolitanism and a protection against kinds of cosmopolitanism that threaten the integrity of particular cultures or communities. This doubled perspective informs the essays gathered in this volume. They offer close, minute readings of cultural texts, whether they be poems, novels, artworks, or music, as records of particular cultures. Yet they also offer analyses that employ the lenses of intersectionality and other theoretical approaches such as feminist and postcolonial cultural studies to make larger points at the global scale. As collected here, the essays as an ensemble show that race and ethnicity cannot be understood in either local or cosmopolitan framings as if cordoned off from the categories of nation, class, age and socioeconomic position.

Crucial to this collection is a faith in and foregrounding of the minoritarian—minor literatures, minority cultures, the wisdom of the marginalized. We can thus anticipate and accommodate the customary criticism that devoting intellectual energies to cosmopolitanism tends to underplay its toxic elitism, classism and racism, as though all cosmopolitanisms were indifferent or inimical to the concerns of the marginalized and the subaltern. Nor does this collection presume that only they can claim a cosmopolitan outlook who are able to travel across borders freely, voluntarily, and not under duress. This collection thus rejects the charge that cosmopolitanism is necessarily elitist. For that is no more than a facile prejudice against a research agenda: a premature and narrow refusal to engage seriously with cosmopolitanism. A renewed understanding of cosmopolitanism would ensure a cosmopolitical vision. Cosmopolitics can bring into sharper focus the ethicopolitical implications of contemporary global flows and particularly of the resulting contact among people of different races or ethnicities.

A foregrounding of the minor also relativizes cosmopolitanism by introducing the perspective of scale. Several of the essays emphasize how cosmopolitanism is not expressed only at the macrocosmic level, as if only an internationalist constituency or as if only transnational traffic and translation were of interest. Rather, microcosmic expressions of cosmopolitan sensibilities may speak more satisfyingly of the potential to form cosmopolitical community even at the level of the local. Cosmopolitanism is not just for global elites. It also gives humane testimony to the everyday, even unremarkable, lived experience of people in the hinterlands, even in the most isolated of islands or in the most forgotten graveyards of a minoritized community in a poor city in the developing world. Smallness and ordinariness are not reducible to insignificance and banality. Nor can it be said facetiously that “we” in the West or in the relatively developed global North enjoy the luxury of access to a cosmopolitan outlook “from above,” while those who cannot afford to travel freely across borders are condemned forever only to be “local.” For even in the Global South there are ways of imagining or making the world that might teach us how to live in greater harmony not only with our fellow human beings but also our planetary and indeed cosmic ecology. It may be that different groups construct reality itself in paradigmatically different ways. A paradigm shift might occasionally prove necessary. As the American “analytic” philosopher Donald Davidson puts this idea even more strongly—while suggesting some of the problems of “translatability” it poses—in the lexicon of analytic philosophy: “Reality itself is relative to a scheme: what counts as real in one system may not in another” (5). Indeed there is not yet a singular cosmos to which we all belong, although that may be a goal for a cosmopolitanism perfected, in a future that is not yet. Cosmopolitics highlights the ethicopolitical imperative to allow the reality experienced by minority groups not to be subsumed under a universalized, Western-centered although nominally cosmopolitan, notion of what reality is.

Another related aspect of minoritarianism that emerges from the essays in this collection is the importance, especially to minorities, of the intimate, and of the domestic or private sphere, that is counterposed to the public sphere but also articulated with it. It is no accident that so many of the essays focus on novels, perhaps the medium most hospitable to the narration of intimacy. Politically speaking, intimacy may well be contingent in the political conditions given to and endured by many minoritized and marginalized people. Still, in the absence of adequate institutional infrastructure and state support, intimacy and the private domain constitute an important refuge from the presumptively irresistible power of globalized capitalism, from oppression and domination by repressive regimes, and from coercive force fields of civil strife within and across national borders. The “Syrian crisis” is a contemporary name for that from which intimacy and the private sphere offer a fragile shelter; but we could give it other names, including ISIS, South Africa during Apartheid, Sobibor ... The question is whether the worlding of intimate and microcosmic worlds can open a space for cosmopolitical justice. Arguably, the intimate worlds available to minority groups may be the *most* crucial space for cosmopolitical justice. For if justice, soli-

darity and community mean anything, such meaning emerges only through shared feeling, common aspiration to true equity, a sympathetic connection that is larger than self-interest but one that returns to *inter-esse* (inter-being), without fetishizing “love” or other affective bonds. And it would be hard to think of any medium more suited to the expression of such intimacy than imaginative works, the focus of most of the essays in this collection.

What anchors the figure and category of minority in many imaginative works is the irreducible materiality of embodied human experience. But materiality is also “the Real,” that which lies ultimately beyond the power of symbolization, as Jacques Lacan puts it in a psychoanalytic lexicon. This collection’s emphasis on the minor is fundamentally a way to honor the principle that it is simply being human, in a radically material sense that lies beyond language and law, that guarantees the embodied human individual an inalienable right to dignity. Yet we must of course talk about, and honor, this inalienable right in language, as a matter of law. Importantly, for instance, it is enshrined in the very first clause of the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” As the first Article of the document states, “[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (The United Nations). Was it not on the basis of this principle of dignity of the human being that Kant, perhaps the preeminent thinker of his time on the topic of “cosmopolitan right,” insisted that the migrant who is fleeing mortal threat to her being deserves to be allowed to travel anywhere in the world, at least while the threat persists? In our own time, Jacques Derrida, addressing Kant, argued that there can be no limit to this call to hospitality; but by this very stricture hospitality is rendered “impossible.” Yet it is precisely for this reason that the host is enjoined to honor the dignity of the guest—and joined at least etymologically to the guest (*hospes*: the term refers, “squinting” or bidirectionally, to both the meaning “host” and the meaning “guest”) as a human being, as Hannah Arendt also already observed before Derrida.

Hospitality’s “impossibility” means that there ought to be no calculation—no temporal, interpersonal, emotional, or financial *valuation*—of how long or how far hospitality must extend. To submit hospitality to the calculus, and the limit, implied by *value* is precisely the problem to which Cesare Casarino points, invoking Spinoza as well as Marx:

What is destructive and self-destructive is to produce surplus and to experience being as valuable rather than as common, to produce and to experience one’s own surplus, one’s own share in being, precisely as one’s to own—and hence as always liable to being captured, being dispossessed of itself, and being (dis)owned by others—rather than producing it and experiencing it instead as that which must not be disowned at any cost and indeed cannot be owned by anyone at all. (163)

Human beings and their planetary co-existence (cosmopolitan *communitas*) cannot be reduced to the logic of value. As an alternative (following neo-Marxist thinkers including Jodi Dean as well as Antonio Negri and his collaborator Michael Hardt), Casarino proffers a communicative cosmopolitanism that is neither the traditional *Gemeinschaft* (the human connection among people in a true community) nor *Gesellschaft* (“society,” as a more impersonal set of social relations and institutions)—that escapes the orbit of value:

there is no such a thing as a solitary thought, as an individual language, as a personal affect, or as private knowledge (even though we may experience all of the above as that which is most intimate and most unique about ourselves), and hence to express oneself intellectually, linguistically, affectively is to activate and mobilize exquisitely shared, collective, common capacities. (166)

This collection is inspired by the spirit of such a communicative cosmopolitanism as the form of *potential* solidarity cutting across national, racial, and ethnic and other borderlines, even though several essays focus on a single author’s voice. Such a cosmopolitanism is in no sense complicit with either uncritical celebration of the cultural industries as necessarily emancipatory, or with Euro-Americo-centric, (neo-) Hegelian universalist utopianism. Culture—cultural production, the focus of most of the essays collected here—is communication. It carries the potential for more egalitarian worldings of our one world.

A new communicative cosmopolitanism could have a more critical force if it were to attend to certain key issues. “Who is the subject of citizenship? Is citizenship a necessary common frame to be shared universally? Is the cosmopolitan necessarily about the production of the sort of individual interest, will, and belief that most ideologies of citizenship appear to require?” (Pollock et al. 584). And how are we to theorize new political subjects of a nation-state that are hybrid, “extimate,” that is to say both outside and inside the nation-state, simultaneously external and intimate? Such subjects complicate presumptively normative political subjectivity. They bring into sharp focus the gap between formal criteria for belonging and actual cultural barriers to acceptance of those who may be within the nation-state’s territorial borders yet excluded in practice from meaningful membership in the state. There is also the parallel question of how to define the status of abjected subjectivities, for instance of “undesirable” immigrants who are targeted for deportation or “repatriation” or constructed as aliens who allegedly do not truly belong. As is evident today in Germany, France and elsewhere after the massive rise in the number of refugees, there are political consequences of defining someone as either an immigrant deserving of amnesty and citizenship, or on the other hand as guest worker, asylum seeker, refugee, potential threat or burden on the nation-state.

As emphasized above, an implicit value expressed in the diversity of textually and culturally specific readings collected within these pages is that it is not a totalized, universalizing, and singular cosmopolitanism that we ought to imagine, but cos-

mopolitanisms, in the plural. Resisting the idea of cosmopolitanism conceived of as a totalizing, singular and universalist formation across time and geographical space, the essays in this book bring to light through their readings of cultural texts pluralized framings, sensitive to meaningfully different particular, local and minoritarian worldings of the world, rather than a single “universal” version of the social and political reality. Though of course not all the essays employ precisely these terms, such a sensitivity foregrounds the discussion of gendered, racial and ethnic vectors of minority identity. This premise can be elaborated through reference to what philosopher of science and sociologist Bruno Latour, building on the work of Isabelle Stengers, also conceptualizes as “pluriversity,” which may for the current purposes be understood as a non-universalizable worlding of multiple, even incompatible, worlds or realities. This is part and parcel of the project of cosmopolitics (Latour, *An Inquiry; We Have Never*). Theorizing such *pluriversity* allows first of all a reframing of the contours and operational procedures that might reform and restructure multicultural co-existence at a time when it is imperiled, for example in the contemporary U.S. Witness the racist violence that produced the ethicopolitical response of the Black Lives Matter, Movement a bid to reform the carceral state and the racialized national culture. This movement constitutes an interrogation of the purportedly inclusive multicultural American society, while at the same time being a plea for inclusion.

Pluralism as a value holds in abeyance the coercive potentialities of any given universalism—including in particular “modernity,” which tends to be propagated as a modular, teleological, *Western* modernity. Yet a genuine openness to the plural or pluriversal also destabilizes a false sense of confidence that “we” in the West are (always) already cosmopolitan in anything more than the most banal sense. Pluriversity ideally would resist a hierarchization of cultural world-views and practices (some more advanced pitted against the less developed and therefore inferior) while holding open the promise of transcultural solidarisms and cross-cultural exchange and learning.

Strictly speaking, pluriversity remains speculative, for we have to ask, “within what possible scheme or paradigm, necessarily transcendental or outside our reality and the others’ realities, yet shared among all these realities, could we possibly *recognize* a reality that is not already real in our own reality?” (Davidson 9). Is there only one cosmos imagined differently by us and by other people? Or are there actually radically different worlds? Analytic philosophers such as Donald Davidson, Peter Strawson and their interlocutors have much to say about different worldings of the world. This too is a relativization of normative identity, of what we ordinarily regard unquestioningly as “our reality.”² Advisedly declining to privilege Western modernity

² Donald Davidson’s “On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme” was the Presidential Address delivered before the Seventieth Annual Eastern Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Atlanta, December 28, 1973. Davidson opposes, for example, the formulation of Peter Strawson with

and universalism as a model or ideal for the Global South, many of the contributors to this volume instead analyze non-Western texts with care and modesty, mindful that they may not themselves be from the Global South, and sensitive to the arrogance of a neocolonial gaze directed at “the other.” A cosmopolitical commitment to pluriversality requires vigilance against closure of the process of learning from others, or presuming that “we” are cosmopolitan and “they” are primitive, underdeveloped.

It is in this sense that a true cosmopolitics is always a *proposal* that is future oriented, “to come.” As suggested above, cosmopolitics is distinguished in Stengers’ work as in Latour’s from the homogenizing and teleological tendencies of Kantian cosmopolitanism, which conceives of cosmopolitanism as a single, universal or common world (*cosmos*). Kantian cosmopolitanism posits a monolithic telos calling for all human beings to put aside their divisions and differences (call it *chaos*) and unite in universally shared humanity. Of course, Kant’s racism and sexism fundamentally problematize his grand moral cosmopolitanism as well. The racism of his system of thought can be traced from well before the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1788 at least until the important essay *Toward Perpetual Peace* in 1795, by which time he had curbed his racism.³ Thus, in “The Cosmopolitical Proposal,” Stengers explicitly denies that cosmopolitics has “any relationship with Kant or with the ancient cosmopolitanism” (994). Latour, extending Stengers’ argument, insists that the cosmopolitical includes in its orbit not just the human but also the whole rest of “the cosmos”—the non-human as well as the human. The non-human too must enter any calculation of the cosmopolitical.

The rejection of an always-already universalized framing of the cosmopolitan, which is tantamount to a foreclosure of the cosmopolitical proposal, is a key strategy of Stengers’ argument. She writes that:

[t]he prefix ‘cosmo-’ indicates the impossibility of appropriating or representing ‘what is human in man’ and should not be confused with what we call the universal. The universal is a question within the tradition that has invented it as a requirement and also as a way of disqualifying those who do not refer to it. The cosmos has nothing to do with this universal or with the universe as an object of science. But neither should the ‘cosmo’ of cosmopolitical be confused with a speculative definition of the cosmos, capable of establishing a ‘cosmopolitics.’ The prefix makes present, helps resonate, the unknown affecting our questions that our political tradition is at significant risk of disqualifying. (*Cosmopolitics II* 355)

that of Thomas Kuhn. For Strawson, there are different worlds. But for Kuhn there is one world imagined radically differently by different observers.

³ See Lucy Allais, “Kant’s Racism,” *Philosophical Papers* Vol. 45, 1–2 (March and July 2016):1–36; and Pauline Kleingeld, “Kant’s Second Thoughts on Race,” *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 57, 229 (Oct. 2007): 574–592. His sexism is on clear view especially in Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Trans. and Ed. Robert B. Loudon (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

Here cosmopolitics is the process of unfolding the political, conceptualized as the potential ways in which pluriversal worlds and identities may be unfolded into a conversation that might function as a commons. Stengers thus stresses the reciprocal relation of cosmos and politics. As Latour elaborates the reciprocity, “*cosmos* in *cosmopolitics* resists the tendency of *politics* to mean the give-and-take in an exclusive human club. The presence of *politics* in cosmopolitics resists the tendency of *cosmos* to mean a finite list of entities that must be taken into account.” The important thing is that “[c]osmos protects against the premature closure of politics, and politics against the premature closure of *cosmos*” (“Whose Cosmos” 454).

Section I: Rootedness and the New Cosmopolitanism: Sovereignty, Hosts, Guests and Hospitality

Essays in the first section of this collection touch upon several key problematics associated with cosmopolitanism. Not the least of these is the classic opposition, articulated for instance in the work of Étienne Balibar, of national sovereignty and Immanuel Kant’s cosmopolitan right “of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon his arrival on [foreign] territory”—a right to visit (*droit de séjour*) though not to settle permanently (Kant, *Toward* 82). In an era that has witnessed massive transnational migration and seemingly endless refugee crisis, what should cosmopolitan right mean, and how do we resolve its conflict with the imperatives of sovereignty?⁴ How to reconcile a newly imagined cosmopolitical ideal for all persons regardless of race, creed and color (as the saying goes) with the demands of particularity? What should a nation-state’s policy be for trans-border migrants in extremis or for economic migrants and the very different *sans papiers* (those who do not have travel or identification documents), some educated, some not, some young and fit

4 For Kant cosmopolitan right is the right of all human beings to the territory of the entire globe, simply by virtue of having been born on the earth. Yet this would seem to license “primitive accumulation”—one cannot claim land already possessed by someone else, or by extension the territory held by a sovereign state, except through agreements and contracts. In two key essays, “Perpetual Peace” and “The Metaphysics of Morals,” Kant conceptualizes this importantly as an equal right to land, by virtue of taking possession of land. We are all, irreducibly, citizens of the world. Yet even when land is held by someone else, any human being ought to be allowed to travel into or through it, given what Kant terms “determinate limits.” These limits are in tension therefore with a universal “right of hospitality,” the right of any foreigner whose life is threatened to be received hospitably in any given nation-state. By the same token, however, the sovereign state has an equal right to ask the stranger to exit the territory as long as there is no longer a threat to her life. In this account, the stranger is not exactly a guest but a visitor, although Derrida insists that there is no limit to hospitality in this context, which makes it “impossible.” Cosmopolitan right also extends to the right to unfettered trade, travel or other transactions, including exchanges of communications and flows of capital, information, images etc. (Kant, “Perpetual Peace” 120; “The Metaphysics” 137).

and others not, who voluntarily come to relatively prosperous countries seeking to improve their own prospects without falling under the protection of any emergency clauses of hospitality? And what does sovereignty mean today, when borders and passports function in ways unanticipated at the time of the Treaty of Westphalia or indeed at the time of the institution of Western nation-states in the wake of the French Revolution, which, as John Torpey suggests, was the key turn in the annals of nation-state formation in the Western context (to say nothing of the temporalities of the non-Western world) (2)? At the heart of these questions is a family of contradictions between rootedness and cosmopolitanism.

New cosmopolitanisms attempt to address these contradictions by positing, in the paradoxical formulation offered by Anthony Appiah, variations of *rooted* cosmopolitanism. A rooted cosmopolitanism articulates a sense of being a citizen of the world with an appreciation of the richness of shared culture, the “world of cultural and social variety as a precondition for the self-creation that is at the heart of a meaningful human life” (268). But even Appiah’s suggestive compromise coded as a paradox does not directly take on the question of the difference that racial or ethnic, let alone gender and class, distinctions make. Paul Gilroy is if anything more preoccupied with race and racism in his critique of cosmopolitanism against the backdrop of “postimperial melancholia” (99)—he rejects a racialist, triumphalist, “imperialistic particularism” that cloaks itself in “universal garb” (4). Concepts such as multiculturalism and globalization elide the “bloodstained workings of racism” (4). What is better is a planetary consciousness, “rooted” and local yet without giving up on the cosmopolitical (79).

Taoufik Djebali’s chapter, “Africans in Calais: Migrants, Rights, and French Cosmopolitanism,” frames the question of cosmopolitanism by rooting it within a French context. He presents a particular, situated sociological examination of the presence of migrants in the port city of Calais. He raises issues that are central to this collection’s inquiry. These include the social crisis precipitated in France (as in Germany) by the influx of migrants and also the conflict between “racial” and ethnic groups, the meaning of French identity and the scope of French inclusiveness particularly from the perspective of immigration law. As Djebali points out, to consider cosmopolitanism in this small-scale political context highlights not only the socioeconomic, political and legal questions of the local inhabitants, but also requires us to return to the abstract moral and philosophical underpinnings and rationales of cosmopolitical thinking, dating at least from the Kantian conception if not from before the Enlightenment. Though he maintains that “[n]o other country in Europe embodies the dilemma of cosmopolitanism” quite so starkly, Djebali highlights the value of such a contextualized rethinking of a specific migrant community not only within the immediate contested contexts of French society but within the global community. Such rethinking interrupts or interrogates received notions of cosmopolitanism and points up the need to imagine “new cosmopolitanisms.”

Anna Pochmara's chapter, " 'In the Tangled Lily-bed': Rhizomatic Textuality and Rooted Cosmopolitanism in Pauline Hopkins's *Of One Blood*" assesses the novel's narrativization of a similarly rooted cosmopolitanism that manages to resist a reactionary "nationalism of the oppressed." The latter is untenable anyway because it is merely a "reinscription of ethnic authenticity and racial essentialism." Hopkins' text, in Pochmara's account, transcends the regressive recuperation of a putatively "authentic" past or "pure" origin. It articulates instead a rhizomatic textuality or "minor literature," in the terms proposed by Deleuze and Guattari in their discussion of Franz Kafka's iconically minoritarian fiction. As Pochmara notes, Deleuze and Guattari share the concerns and commitments of postcolonial and cultural studies theorists, particularly their anti-racist agendas. Against the nostalgic "roots" fantasy, Pochmara suggests, and beyond the relatively myopic and essentialist Africanist narratives of Martin Delaney or Marcus Garvey, Hopkins offers a "rhizomatic," heterogeneous and even "aporetically" ambivalent vision, a hybrid and future-oriented cosmopolitanism.

Marta Werbanowska, in her chapter entitled "Envoy to the World: Nomadic Cosmopolitanism in Yusef Komunyakaa's *The Emperor of Water Clocks*," also tracks a rooted cosmopolitanism, this time in Komunyakaa's poetry. The poet draws his reader's attention to asymmetrical global cultural flows and circuits of power, culture, and historical memory to ask whether a new cosmopolitical imagination might form the matrix of community simultaneously transnational *and* rooted, aesthetically nomadic (anticapitalist, non-individualist, non-universal) *and* relational. In the imagined cosmopolitical community, the planetary can be reimagined as a commons, the shared concern for all human society. The capacious vision Werbanowska identifies in Komunyakaa aligns with Stengers' concept of cosmopolitics referenced above as counterposed to a totalizing Kantian embrace of Eurocentric universalism. Introducing *difference* within the space of the admittedly utopian world community, Komunyakaa invites a variety of global voices towards a cosmopolitics in some future, "to come."

Against the canard that cosmopolitanism necessarily indexes elite privilege, Carol Breckenridge et al. suggest that "cosmopolitans today are often victims of modernity, failed by capitalism's upward mobility, and bereft of those comforts and customs of national belonging" (6). Aparajita Nanda's chapter takes this inversion as the starting point for her meditation on Kiran Desai's novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*. Migrants of all kinds, including both exiles wrenched from their homelands and well-heeled diasporics who make their homes and their workplaces wherever they reckon lies their greatest advantage, must be considered in the analytic of a new cosmopolitanism, especially one sensitive to class and gender as well as to race and ethnicity. Of course we have to be careful to resist and undermine an elitist perspective. Nanda attempts to heed this caution. She draws on Homi Bhabha's concept of minoritarian or vernacular cosmopolitanism to thematize the experiences of underprivileged migrants, pointing to a "hybrid pastiche of discrepant narratives." In discussing Desai's novel, she highlights protagonist Harish-Harry's painful hybridity (even this character's

name is hybrid), experienced as failed cosmopolitanism—and, worse, his thwarted or grotesquely distorted bourgeois aspiration to assimilation and social advantage. As an immigrant in neo-colonialist or capitalist culture, Harish-Harry even stoops low enough to exploit fellow immigrants. This behavior may not be a characteristic pathology of the outsider, immigrant or misfit. However, in the novel it emerges as symptomatic of the hybrid experience of unsettled immigrants or diasporics. Desai emphasizes this by contrasting Harish-Harry with Saeed Saeed, starkly highlighting the power of contrasting “rooted” and deracinated cosmopolitanisms. She also foregrounds the powerful distortions introduced by race and ethnicity in postcolonial contexts.

Section II: Minority Bodies

Precisely because a true cosmopolitics is always “to come,” it emerges, as it were latently, within the realm of imagination or invention—what in classical rhetoric was called *inventio*. It is for this reason that several essays gathered here turn to works of imagination, cultural and especially literary works. Most of these are historically situated readings. Some of the other essays in this collection focus on historically and sociologically oriented case studies and are thus useful in providing (necessarily plural, often racially charged) contexts for a study of cosmopolitanism. The essays implicitly or explicitly propose rationales for revisiting received notions of cosmopolitanism. They suggest that context and background are crucial. They also show that a “new cosmopolitanism” cannot afford to neglect the everyday, material reality, particularly as it pertains to race and ethnicity. This is how cosmopolitanism might be recast as cosmopolitical: by taking seriously and critically attending to the constraints of material and embodied particularity, especially in the case of raced bodies. Such a cosmopolitical project aligns with Gilroy’s point about theories of cosmopolitanism revealing a blind spot regarding the issue of race. Creative works of the imagination, especially, ground us in particular embodied experience. When such works prove capable of new worldings of the world, they bring to the fore individual subjectivities that “differ” from one another irreducibly. These subjectivities are situated in specific contexts, particularly those that introduce difference, indeed what deconstructive literary theory has elaborated as *différance*—interminable deferral of meaning, irreducible cultural difference, temporal lag or spatial displacement. These works of the creative imagination are adduced often as interruptions of grand narratives in favor of *petits récits* (microcosmic worldings through minor narratives). They introduce asymmetry and destabilize moral, ethical, and value codings; they interpolate diverse demurrals from dominant discourses of cosmopolitanism; they dramatize deferrals of narrative closure and make imaginable resistance to totalization. Precisely because they dissent from the universalism of some conceptions of cosmopolitanism, minority

bodies (“raced,” gendered, ethnic, handicapped, or otherwise marginalized bodies) are thus the linchpin of the “new cosmopolitanism.”

Yet it must be said that there has been a reluctance outside of literary and cultural theory to foreground the cosmopolitical dimension of minority writing even when its international provenance or transnational themes are prominent. Susan Koshy writes that “despite the embrace of cosmopolitan themes and forms by many writers, including [Jessica] Hagedorn, scholars in the field have been slow to engage the cosmopolitan visions of minority writers.” What is more, the “ambivalence toward cosmopolitan analytics in ethnic studies is paralleled by the marginalization of race, ethnicity, and non-Western cultures in discussions of cosmopolitanism” (593–594). This is in one sense understandable. Resistance to cosmopolitanism is often construed as an ethico-political stance against Eurocentric universalism, and voiced through formulations of “localism” and “glocalism.” Besides, it is also important to acknowledge a need to interrogate universalism along a temporal axis. Some subjects, Inderpal Grewal reminds us, participate in cosmopolitanism “intermittently or in unstable ways” (38). Yet it is precisely such considerations that make compelling a focus on the creative imagination. The asymmetries and asynchronicities of participation in the cosmopolitical imagination are most compellingly voiced in cultural products such as theater, music, visual and performance art, film and especially literary works emerging from minority writers. Along with race and ethnicity, another critical dimension of the new cosmopolitanisms is that they retain an at least implicit gender signature, and through such intersectionality highlight subversions of majoritarian representations of national culture and even queerings of gender norms within the narratives of nation. Thus, in the representation of minority bodies the concerns that animate a cosmopolitical project become powerfully resonant because they illustrate what it means to pluralize the world, to emphasize *différance* and thus reform normative ideas of identity and social life.

Taking as his illustrative example Arundhati Roy’s novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), Samir Dayal argues in favor of a normative materialist cosmopolitanism: a critical reframing that is necessary for any cosmopolitical project. This regenerated cosmopolitanism, as Dayal elaborates, reconfigures received notions of cosmopolitanism. Dayal foregrounds Isabel Stengers’ cosmopolitical project committed to cosmopolitical (and not just cosmopolitan) justice—but he refracts it to emphasize the importance of attending to the materiality of minority subjects, persons of the world’s precariat. Stengers’ vision of cosmopolitical justice is truly cosmic, and does not privilege just human beings—this is a cosmopolitics that does not limit itself to human society, excluding the rest of nature or the universe. That exclusion has defined Western modernity at least since the time of the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, Dayal’s exploration of the cosmopolitical project is strategically constrained within the parameters of human society, without either sequestering human beings from nature or privileging them. Furthermore, the scope of Dayal’s cosmopolitical vision is also *tactically* delimited to foreground the minoritarian, indeed the microcosmic,

against the dominant or majoritarian, which tends to be totalizing and universalizing—macrocosmic. And if microcosmic cosmopolitics is particularly concerned with the minoritarian that also means that it is focused on the experience of the everyday for the marginalized. This everyday life finds its exemplary medium in the novel genre, and certainly in Roy's novel about subjects who are perhaps among the most abject within Indian society. But a theoretical argument for the normative—for how things *ought* to be if cosmopolitical justice is to be realized—is necessary to supplement Roy's fictional exploration. Thus Dayal develops his delimited argument for a *normative* materialist cosmopolitical project through a close reading of Roy's novel, which imagines a single world, to which everyone (including animals to the extent that they are part of the larger orbit of human society), can belong, regardless of gender, race, sex, national origin or socioeconomic status, and in belonging enjoy a presumption and guarantee of finding justice reigning universally. Dayal suggests that Roy's representation of Anjum's brown and transgendered body is intended to recuperate the dematerialized *body* of the marginal and subaltern subject, who tends to "disappear" within the macroscopic narratives of nation. And although the utopia of cosmopolitical justice may seem to recede perpetually to the point of vanishing, it remains aspirational, a future "to come." Justice is not just a disembodied, abstract ideal. Its fullest realization must crystallize in the material, embodied experience of the minority body, in the everyday life of the marginalized.

The minority body is also a key focus of Raphaël Lambert's chapter, "From Édouard Glissant's 'The Open Boat' to the Age of Mass Migration." Lambert highlights the linkages between the Black Atlantic's massive slave traffic and contemporary racial and ethnic divisions. The slaves' descendants live lives that continue to be marked by that traumatic "Middle Passage." Lambert foregrounds Glissant's cosmopolitical categories of "relation" and creolization. The former is a poetics of identity modulated through interpersonal exchange that is perennially fluid and rhizomatic. The latter signals the hybridizing and spatializing effect of such relationality—cultural mixture—as well as the decentering movement that resists the reification and atomization promulgated in liberal political theory. Yet creolization also operates to counter the homogenizations perpetrated on both minority cultures and minority subjects (particularly those of the Global South). Lambert's interest is not just in the travels and travails of transnational migrants. He also highlights possibilities for constructing new, even mongrelized, identities inhabiting newly configured minority positionalities. Advisedly cautious about positing hasty equivalences between the Middle Passage and contemporary lines of migrant flight, Lambert discusses both the migrants' "errantry" across borders and their "tracing" of lineages back to the original "brutal" but also productive dislocation, from the mother continent of Africa. It is then another variation on the theme of rooted cosmopolitanism, this time complicating both a simple attachment to roots and a glib, deracinated cosmopolitanism. Glissant's negotiation through such a complication provides a ground—not mere territory—from or upon which the migrant or refugee *body* can tender a claim to cosmopolitical right.

As part of her project on eugenic thinking, Ewa Luczak focuses in her chapter on interrogating the obstacles to friendship across racial lines by considering *Infants of the Spring*, Wallace Thurman's novel. The novel explores the vectors of interracial and trans-Atlantic friendship, set in the early decades of the 20th century, in a time when eugenic discourse was in the ascendant. Luczak's chapter is a contextualizing contribution, reframing a new cosmopolitanism in terms of the racializing of non-normative bodies. It explores the racial obstacles to cosmopolitan friendship, and suggests the utopian possibility of achieving that friendship precisely through acknowledging race and ethnic divisions as political reality. Luczak invokes an Arendtian category of cosmopolitan friendship. She asks how political and racial divisions, as well as "the discourse of racial absolutism," all of which seem to have an increased saliency in the contemporary moment, "affect the shape of inter-racial and cosmopolitan friendships." For Arendt there are two "shapes" of cosmopolitanism: one constituted by a shared suffering among "the repressed and persecuted, the exploited and humiliated," a communion of pain if you like, which may promote companionable coexistence within a polity but which also excludes the group from meaningful membership in a cosmopolis. Here friendship pays the price of social invisibility. True cosmopolitan life on the contrary enables a worlding of the world through friendship. This second variety of cosmopolitanism is the ethical and cosmopolitical project, a goal for a reimagined cosmopolitanism, Luczak maintains, drawing simultaneously on the models of Jürgen Habermas and David Held's neo-Kantian reconfigurations of cosmopolitanism, and on Rosi Braidotti's pan-humanist "nomadic becoming-world." The goal of articulating the abstract principles of neo-Kantian cosmopolitanism chez Habermas and Held, and in Braidotti's cosmopolitanism "from below," is to take seriously the abstract principles underpinning a new cosmopolitanism: nurturing a planetary human society and attending to the material reality of ordinary people divided by race as well as ideology.

Joanna Ziarkowska's chapter on Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Gardens in the Dunes* considers whether the minoritarian—in this novel, embodied in Indigo, a Native American protagonist—can be subsumed into the category of the cosmopolitan, in other words, whether she can be positioned as an "Indigenous cosmopolitan." This is a term taken from the title of an edited collection by Maximilian Forte published in 2010. Ziarkowska is careful not to merely refract, and thereby diminish, Native American subjectivity and textuality into a presumptively cosmopolitan but effectively EuroAmerican world-view. Rather, drawing on Cheah's formulation that "cosmopolitanism and human rights are the two primary ways of figuring the global as the human," and invoking a range of recent studies of cosmopolitanism in the field of literature, Ziarkowska foregrounds Native approaches to Native American literature, and indeed to everyday Native life, that dissent from dominant EuroAmerican critical framings. Thus her chapter's broader aim is to describe a project of *indigenizing* cosmopolitanism itself in the study of Native American texts by foregrounding key categories such as nation, separatism, and relation. She points up fragmented

sovereignties, including Native sovereignties, that nevertheless might lay claim to cosmopolitanism, or even aspire to a cosmopolitics.

Section III: Minoritarian Mobilities

Essays in this volume foreground categories of race and ethnicity, not just in the national-state frame but also as crucial to understanding new *mobilities*. Diaspora cultures and transnational migration, especially in the case of refugees or forced exiles, constitute a condition of perpetual *migrancy* that at least at first glance appears to be the contrapositive of cosmopolitanism. But the concept of migrancy is also enriched and complicated by the notion of *mobility* (Tölölyan; Vertovec and Cohen). There is a crucial contrast between a cosmopolitan imagination in which goods, services, information, images, capital, and especially bodies, flow or circulate in an often rigidly controlled and sometimes frenetic pace across transnational borders—and the severe constraints placed on the ability of especially people from poorer nations in the Global South to do the same. Yet an equally critical distinction ought to be drawn between the articulations of cosmopolitanism at the level of the public sphere and in the intimate sphere. This is after all why contributors to this volume, adopting a bifocal perspective, emphasize *rooted* cosmopolitanisms.

To emphasize “mobilities” as part of the project of this collection is to highlight the intersection of cosmopolitanism with minoritarian subjectivities. Among the contributors who focus on minoritarian transnational migration is Maria Frias. She emphasizes that between the 1950s and the 1960s Spain was a major “sender” of unskilled migrant workers. Today, Spain has become a “receiver” of migrants from the African continent—in particular from the sub-Saharan countries. Starting in the late 1980s, mostly young, strong men were the first to arrive. Yet Frias’ focus is not on these but on a much more vulnerable demographic—“African women’s bodies in transit from West Africa to Spain.” She explores these subjects through a discussion of Gerardo Olivares’s film, *14 Kilometros* (2007), highlighting an analogy between the Slave Trade and “contemporary human trafficking and migrating subjects,” underscoring that a new cosmopolitan is needed to attend to those whose mobility is not that of elite citizens of the world but of a critical precariat. Migrants are often marooned in the limbo of being “guests” of receiving nations such as Spain. Cosmopolitical justice must not ignore their difficult case, irrespective of national origins, class, or race/ethnicity. And yet the obligation of cosmopolitical hospitality on the host nations has a particular piquancy when race and gender are factored in *intersectionally* into the ethicopolitical demand of cosmopolitan right.

In her chapter entitled “Afro-Asian Critical Cosmopolitanisms in William Demby’s 1950s Reportage from Postwar Japan,” Melanie Masterton Sherazi offers a nuanced close reading of *From a Japanese Notebook*, unpublished reportage by Demby. Demby’s spatial displacement—his “alienation”—as an African American

observer in Japan is in both senses critical. The author's perspective as a minority Western subject observing an Eastern culture in which he inscribes himself is shot through with this multidimensional alienation. His book is "distinct from, even if not entirely outside of, Orientalist ethnographies and Western travel writing about Japan" and more generally pitched against Enlightenment constructions of the other. Furthermore, through its "subtle emphasis on ways of (mis)reading the world, the book refuses claims to mastery, dwelling instead in moments of indeterminacy" but also on passages to shared humanity. This is a form of cosmopolitan *mobility* and *distance* (ironizing the clichés of cosmopolitan sympathy) premised on Demby's own outsidership vis a vis Japan. It is simultaneously a repudiation of his own racist indoctrination about Japan as a World War II enemy of the United States. This is no stereotypical affirmation of Japan's inscrutability to Western eyes. Sherazi stresses that Demby "captures glimpses or 'snapshots' in Japan of what Bhabha has termed 'spectral sovereignty,' whereby the nation-state inheres, even in a 'tattered' form," and via a negative ontology that resists essentialisms imposed from without. Yet even this negative ontology traces a cosmopolitanism rooted in relationality as a spatializing vector. In a further twist, it is also a cosmopolitanism anchored in Demby's very personal and indeed idiosyncratic viewpoint, complicated further by the autobiographical inflection of his writings.

The new cosmopolitanism's affirmation of pluriversal expansiveness and inclusiveness produces its own contradictions or challenges. In different ways and to different degrees, essays in this volume help us to see some of these contradictions or challenges. Some essays highlight the risk of deracination (perpetual homelessness, forced mobility in a restless search for human attachment). Others focalize the problematic positionality of minority bodies within the nation-state or the fragmentation or even occlusion of the minority *body* as such. Still others underscore the profusion of (shallow) belongings if not spectral sovereignties. Hanna Wallinger's chapter on Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* takes as an impetus Ketu Katrak's caveat in "Colonialism, Imperialism, and Imagined Homes," that postcolonial exiles and other migrants may experience a surfeit of "roots" and "locations." The implication is that there is no anchoring, no fixed material embodiment available to them. This can become a profound source of dysphoria. The minority bodies in question are perennially and ubiquitously out of time and out of place. For some minority bodies, cosmopolitanism is experienced negatively, as a double dislocation that renders diasporic subjects into a kind of limbo in which they feel they are within a social context such as a nation-state but never truly accepted as members of the community: "neither just this nor just that" (Dayal). Selasi simultaneously foregrounds rootedness and an ambivalent, problematic cosmopolitanism: the sense of being both inside and outside cultures, not always by choice, at the "intersections of histories and memories." The author "positions herself as an Afropolitan"—a multilocal African of the world, perhaps even "lost in transnation," as she herself phrases it, with some autobiographical wryness. Is this not analogous to the condition diagnosed by Arendt as irretrievable loss?

Selasi's novel presents an account of multiplex displacement, including a dislocation back to, and from, a putative "homeland" where the cosmopolitan or diasporic experiences a double alienation, including her alienation from any *ethnic* belonging. Yet a complacent rootedness would hardly be a better alternative than the proliferation of quasi-belongings and unceasing displacements, none permanent, shuttling across geographies and identities in "transnation."

Focusing on a very different African context, Kudzayi Ngara considers Ivan Vladislavić's *The Exploded View* as a multi-perspectival narration of imbricated spaces to highlight those spaces as not just dead locality but as characterized by irreducible mobility: the "transient social and material spaces of the city in which characters are located and imagined events take place." This consideration focalizes the "construction and spatialization of urban identities in the context of the South African transition to the post-apartheid state." Ngara highlights the traffic among the many people who traverse postcolonial city-space in a truly "new cosmopolitan" condition. What is most important is that the entanglements among those new cosmopolitans remain irreducible to bounded or fixed national identities. Yet, by the same token, the orbit of these entanglements permits only "truncated cosmopolitanisms." A key contribution of Ngara's chapter is its de-essentialization of identity and its inter-imbrication of the culturally rooted and the cosmopolitan. This is best illustrated in Ngara's portrayal of the character Majara's attempt to claim an "Afropolitan" sensibility in his art practice, precisely as an anticipation of the possible charge of cosmopolitan alienation or outsiderhood, and against the possible objection that his "cosmopolitanism" is really an appropriation and commoditization of the culturally "local."

Section IV: Spaces and Vectors: Migration, Hybridity, Creolization

Migration if not mobility has long been a staple category describing the impact of modernity on contemporary life. It is impossible to deny that in the contemporary conjuncture migrancy has become an irreducible and almost irresistible vector of globalization. No major culture today is immune from the effects of transnational migration. This surely is another reason why *new* perspectives on cosmopolitanisms are more urgent today than ever. The linkages among geographical or geopolitical spaces, as well as global flows of capital, labor, information, images, and goods, feature prominently in policy deliberations and theoretical debates. They also figure importantly in creative works exploring life under conditions of contemporary globalization. Andrea O'Reilly Herrera's chapter challenges traditional definitions of the cosmopolitan that tend to neglect the dimension of spatiality, and instead underwrite a paradoxical belonging. This empty cosmopolitanism leaves the citizen-subject suspended simultaneously in an everywhere and in a nowhere ("cultural or ethnic *weightlessness*"). O'Reilly Herrera's chapter explores a "post-1959 Cuban political discourse on both sides of the Florida Straits [that] has tended to be nationalistic and territorial and to

make nativist claims to *authentic* cultural or national identity.” Her discussion is an example of a new cosmopolitan approach that would displace Cuba as a “unified category of analysis,” to *float* the island as it were. This is a reperspectivization and “repetition” of Antonio Benitez-Rojo’s influential conceptualization of a Caribbean island of paradoxes that are always self-deconstructing, repetitions in an ongoing cosmopolitical project forming and reforming itself in unpredictable and unstable massings. As a cultural node in global flows, Cuba has long been “eclectic and cosmopolitan” rather than being tied to any essential Cuban core. O’Reilly Herrera illustrates through a consideration of Cuban artist Leandro Soto’s curatorial project *CAFÉ: The Journeys of Cuban Artists*, “a radically inclusive, itinerant, and evolving art exhibition.” Building on Ella Shohat’s notion of the nation as a relational category, she develops the idea of Cuba and Cuban cultural expression “within a *kaleidoscopic framework* ... as a series of communities (located both inside and outside the island), which are *in relation* to perspective conceptualized as both migratory and rooted.”

Particularity and universalizing cosmopolitanism are too often opposed in theoretical debates. Each category on the (logical but also political) “left” of the equation is pitted against the category on the “right.” A new, *critical* cosmopolitics could interrogate this oversimplification, highlighting the ambivalent articulations of the personal and the public, the local and the global. Situating itself within a burgeoning sub-speciality of Cultural Studies—“mixed race studies”—Malin Pereira’s chapter offers an analysis of the poetry of former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey, biracial daughter of an African American Southern US mother and a white rural Canadian father. She reads Trethewey’s *Beyond Katrina* alongside the “cosmopolitan, ekphrastic” poems in the collection *Thrall* as a pair, to underscore how Trethewey “shifts in *Thrall* to an international array of visual materials and employs what could be argued is a cosmopolitan mode, ekphrasis, to comment upon them.” A main focus for Pereira is Trethewey’s “angry cosmopolitanism.” The anger is reflected, in *Beyond Katrina*, in “meditative scenes of recognition and insight performing an ongoing critique of structural inequities in the U.S.” Still, Pereira suggests that Trethewey’s anger in *Thrall* “is not mulatto rage at or confusion about her mixed race identity.” It is in a critical sense an anger at a geospatial opposition between what mainstream, majoritarian white America means in the United States national imagination and minoritarian spaces metonymically represented by Mississippi’s Gulf Coast, standing in for the Black South generally, analogous to the Global South. The anger Trethewey names is a “slow-to-constitute itself anger” at the unequal treatment of blacks. Borrowing Rob Nixon’s phrase, Pereira identifies this as “the slow violence”⁵ and other multifarious

5 In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* Nixon writes: “By slow violence, I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event of action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular

harms, indignities and discrimination visited on them. It is an anger that also finds a much more personal resonance in this book of poems. Trethewey's anger is directed against her own white father, who neglected and became estranged from his daughter but to whom Trethewey's book is also dedicated. He becomes a figure for the "parent" nation's racist neglect and abandonment of its black family members.

With intersectional acumen, Trethewey frequently references the history of colonialism as it is articulated with the economy of sexual exploitation and the geopolitical trauma of the displacement of black people through the arc of slavery. In one poem in *Thrall* Trethewey tinctures the lingering pain of traumatized blackness with wry but colloquial humor: "How like a dirty joke / it seems: *what do you call / that space between / the dark geographies of sex?* / Call it the *taint*—as in / *T'aint one and t'aint the other*— / illicit and yet naming still / what is between. Between / her parents, the child, / *mulatto-returning backwards ...*" (25). This hints at another major subtext of the essays in this collection—the mobility of even local, rooted, particular bodies is counterposed to the qualitatively different but defining mobility of the "cosmopolitan." It also suggests why a new cosmopolitanism sensitive to race and ethnicity must be *bifocal*, relational.

Relationality emerges frequently as a key theme in the chapters that make up the present collection. Trethewey laminates in her poetry the politics of the national family and her own family. For Joanna Jasińska, in her chapter for this collection, it is again the *family* that figures as the fundamental *social unit* and fulcrum for *cosmopolitan* life. Jasińska cites Ulrich Beck's imperative of constructing a global or cosmopolitan family as a possible hedge against the corrosive impact of modernization. In his book, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, Beck describes that impact as involving, among many other transformations, "changes in lifestyle and forms of love, change in the structures of power and influence, in the forms of political repression and participation ..." (50). In other words, public as well as intimate life are put under enormous pressure by forces of modernity. Could a "world" or "cosmopolitan" family, presenting itself as a model of a transcultural and transnational relationality, be a bulwark against modernity's depredations? Jasińska explores this question not through theoretical arguments (despite her framing discussion of Beck) or works of creative imagination, but through a study of educated and long-married Polish-American couples she conducted between 2012 and 2015, towards her doctoral dissertation.

in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility. We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales" (2). In *Beyond Katrina*, Trethewey unveils the slow violence of environmental predation of her former home, detailing the post-Hurricane Katrina devastation and inequitable rebuilding of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and its impact on her family.

Anna Sosnowska's attention is also on relationality in connection with Polish diasporics—but unlike Jasińska she studies only the diaspora in the United States. She identifies and discusses two types of cultural cosmopolitanism among the Polish Greenpoint immigrant community leaders in the city-space of New York. The first is the “new” and relatively elite, metropolitan, cosmopolitanism of educated boomer-generation Polish community leaders, who thrive on the city's ethno-racial diversity. The second is the quotidian economic, even opportunistic, cosmopolitanism afforded by the working conditions, (with all their racial, ethnic, class and gender dynamics factored in) of immigrant or diasporic laborers and usually small-scale entrepreneurs and others who work in the parallel economy. These laborers and small entrepreneurs tend to live in ethnic enclaves in one of what Saskia Sassen classifies as global cities. While her focus is on a particular ethnic demographic, and contextualized within the exceptional metropolitan space of New York City, Sosnowska's point is that these two types of cosmopolitanism can be identified as a shared pattern for over a century among many immigrants, and therefore of interest to students of new, or contemporary, cosmopolitan contexts, especially the current crisis precipitated by Donald Trump's proposed changes to U.S. immigration policy. Sosnowska counterbalances her general framing of cosmopolitanism with a focus on a particular diasporic enclave through a reading of Czesław Karkowski's novel, *Kamienna drabina* (A Stone Ladder, 2007) as well as through interviews she conducted with diasporic Poles towards her doctoral thesis.

Section V: The Powers And Perils Of Cultural Expression

The new cosmopolitanism seeks to remind of the power of cultural expression to redress or even repair the damage done to both national communities and to the global or planetary ecumene by eruptions of racially motivated violence, by the proliferation of ethnic splinterings, cross-border war between ethnonationalist groups, internecine conflicts within multiethnic nation-states, or simply by the depredations of a global capitalism too often unipolar and tilted in favor of Western economies. Against the ravages of an ever-advancing globalization of culture and economy, the new cosmopolitanism seeks to foster possibilities for global, or transnational, solidarity. It also seeks to nurture space for resistance to both universalist binaries of the global North versus the Global South *and* ethnocentric or parochial normativity—cosmopolitics from below. Several chapters in this volume highlight forms of minoritarian agency in narratives that foreground resistance to mainstream conceptualizations of citizenship and normative modes of citizenship and subjectivity. They also highlight what might be called the creative and “re-creative” potential of new cosmopolitanisms—creative practices including hybrid music and creolized languages—to negotiate new identity positions that refuse circumscription within territorial nation-space borders.

Annarita Taronna focuses on the powers of cultural expression in her chapter “Black English and the New Cosmopolitanism: Karima 2G’s Linguistic Creativity as a Transethnic Performative Practice.” She takes as her primary text the linguistic performance of the African-Italian Anna Maria Gehnyei (“Karima 2G”), a second-generation Liberian immigrant to Italy, whose “new cosmopolitan” rap performance and narration index the “linguistic and cultural history of the color line in Italy.” Karima 2G’s rap refracts a pidgin English to both represent and complicate the racialized marginalization of Black diasporic “geo-localities and linguistic identities” in Italy, and more generally to resist essentialisms of identity that reify categories of “race” and ethnicity. Anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy is as much her subject as her own Liberian background, which becomes the source of yet another expression of the postcolonialist “rooted cosmopolitanism” that is a connecting thread among many chapters in this volume. In her “ethno-socio-linguistic analysis,” Taronna explores, in a pluriversalist idiom, the transnational linkages cutting across national cultural music and “plurilithic Englishes” across the African and European contexts, not to mention an at least imagined routing to the U.S. experience of slavery and its aftermath.

The ethicopolitical obligation of the host within a new framing of cosmopolitan right in the contemporary conjuncture is a ticklish subject, and carries with it certain risks. For one thing, even well-meaning official protocols instituted to assess claims of such rights can pose ethical and other—even pragmatic or procedural—quandaries. Tingting Hui in her chapter proposes “to examine the perils of public policy embedded in the idea of cosmopolitan hospitality from the aspects of language and speech.” Yet it is not so much discourse that interests Hui but rather “accent.” She focuses on “the law that urges the other to speak like the other and to demonstrate an ‘authentic’ accent that testifies to one’s singular mother tongue.” Hui considers language analysis—the “accent test,” used internationally since the 1990s in asylum procedures to verify and determine the countries of origin of applicants.” In evaluating the debate about the accent test as forensic evidence, as “a modern version of the ‘shibboleth test,’” Hui considers Lawrence Abu Hamdan’s audio documentary work *The Freedom of Speech Itself* (2012) as a primary illustration of the way a split is introduced between the “voicing of language and the voicing of body.” The “evidence” of accent may introduce complications into the process of authentication of identity, especially by border agencies dealing with asylum seekers. Hui thus invokes Derrida’s suggestion that “the language of total intimacy is to be found only in profound silence” to elaborate a larger argument about the ethics of listening. By the same token she also highlights the ethics of hearing the accent in the case of ideologically charged contexts such as those an asylum seeker might encounter at the border.

Declaring that he is a “keeper of lists” against infinity, Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez offers an offbeat, audiophile approach to cosmopolitanism: an internationalist “mixtape of my life.” As he describes it in his chapter, “Imagining Something Better: Rolas from my Border Hi-Fi,” his musical avocation functions almost as a passport

for border crossing and musicological flâneurie. Such border crossing, the author claims—invoking the work of José David Saldívar—is subversive cosmopolitanism. For it opens an access to identity from “below” that may on occasion “punk” the category itself, in an anti-elitist (“*rasquachismo*”) gesture simultaneously of refusal and self-affirmation. A minoritarian cosmopolitanism fractures—from the margins—the monumentalism of the hierarchized global structuration of the Global North versus the Global South. This episodic travelogue the author intends (“hears” or wants heard) as a (post-)Chicano’s *cosmopolitical* autobiography that interrogates the meaning of cultural identity and citizenship in the United States rather than seeking assimilation into a mainstreamed cosmopolitanism.

To open her nuanced meditation on albinism and its complication of identity in Barbara Chase-Riboud’s 1979 novel, *Sally Hemings*, Sheena Garrant explores the *via negativa* through which the sculptor and poet approaches the social constructions of the categories of race and ethnicity. She foregrounds the figure of the albino, a special kind of hybrid (here represented by Hemings, the slave who was also mother to Thomas Jefferson’s children). The albino is the “walking negative” who makes race radically undecidable. Chase-Riboud confronts the reader/spectator directly, so that this rendering undecidable is not treated as yet another academic or intellectual conceit. All of the artist/novelist’s work is structured as an intervention in public (political and even cosmopolitical) discourse. Her sculptural mediation in *The Albino* inverts a presumptively normative whiteness, rendering it an effect of lack—most immediately and obviously a deficit of melanin—rather than self-sufficient and autotelic presence. In discussing the novel, Chase-Riboud analogously relativizes the constructs of race and ethnicity. The eponymous “heroine” is at once white (as on the novel’s cover) *and* black, depending on the perspective of the observer (or character in the novel). But ideologically too her work subverts the normativity and iconicity of whiteness as fullness of being. Her epistemological interruption—relativization, hybridization—posits an irreducible ontological *difference*, or through the logic of *différance*, interminable deferral. “The color problem” now is displaced onto the other side of the machinery of “othering,” to foreground the aesthetics and ethics of creolization. Taken together, and speaking to one another, the essays in this book thus add a new and unpredictable set of approaches towards thinking in a more capacious way about a new cosmopolitics to come.

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**I: Rootedness and the New Cosmopolitanism:
Sovereignty, Hosts, Guests and Hospitality**

Taoufik Djebali

Africans in Calais: Migrants, Rights, and French Cosmopolitanism

1 Introduction

When I first came to France in the mid-1980s to join a PhD program at the Sorbonne University, my knowledge of racial and ethnic questions was very limited. The Anglo-American studies I had followed at the University of Tunis at that time offered a limited perspective on those issues. Though the discovery of the ethnic debate in France was intellectually stimulating, the feeling that I belonged to a separate group was unpleasant. It happened that the 1980s were a decisive moment in French ethnic history. The rise of the National Front (a xenophobic party), its intrusion into French politics, the emergence of SOS Racisme (a pro-immigrant organization), and the weakening of communist and socialist cosmopolitanism offered a picture of France I was not familiar with.

France had already integrated the Belgians, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, and many others in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Noiriel). As a result, after World War II, Paris had become one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. However, the family reunification policy, implemented in the early 1970s, began to stir feelings of paranoia and an open fear of the “Arab peril” that was supposedly threatening the very foundations of French society. The liberal policy of the socialist-communist government of the early 1980s alienated some segments of French society. The socialist president, François Mitterand, used the immigration issue to increase the political woes of his conservative rivals, who had to face the inexorable rise of the far right party (National Front), whose ubiquitous slogan was “France for the French,” a slogan reminiscent of the US nativist call of the nineteenth century.

The terrorist acts of the 1990s increased the rejection of immigrants and put the spotlight on radical Islamist groups thriving within the immigrant population (Shapiro and Suzan). Interestingly enough, little attention was given to sub-Saharan Africans, whose numbers were increasing. As a consequence, racism in France targeted Arabs more than blacks. There is no doubt that the historical conflict between the West and East, the traumatic colonial war in Algeria, and the considerable number of North Africans in France triggered a large popular worry and resulted in a widespread rejection of Arabs. Blacks became the forgotten minority, even though there was a perceptible disdain and contempt towards them. When I was teaching in a high school near Paris, I was surprised by a colleague who told me that Arab students were smart but lazy, whereas black students were intellectually “limited.” This disdain had his-

torical roots in France and the West. However, public opinion surveys demonstrated that most people ignored the historical dimension of their attitudes. The number of those who considered themselves racists continued to be negligible, but the rise of the National Front told a different story and sent a different message. This xenophobic party moved from the margins of society in the early 1980s into mainstream French politics by the 1990s.

France was torn between its latent obsession with its image of cosmopolitanism, openness, and commitment to human rights on the one hand, and the rise of the National Front party with its racist and anti-Semitic ideas on the other hand. This became even more interesting to observe at the time the European project was making progress, signaling a growing dichotomy between the European inclusive cosmopolitanism and the growing fear of non-European foreigners. In line with what some intellectuals have suggested, European cosmopolitanism is deeply rooted in the Western European philosophical tradition and the development of liberal democracies (Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society”; Bhambra and Narayan; Habermas, “The Crisis” and “Toward”). However, the rise of racism is necessarily connected to Western colonialism and the rise of the French empire. Therefore, the cosmopolitanism that has emerged in France and elsewhere in Europe refers more to diversity *between* states, not diversity *within* states.

If we consider that, in line with what Adam Elliott-Cooper has demonstrated, multicultural Europe had begun with the expansion of the existing empires, then French multiculturalism cannot be dissociated from the expansion of the French empire in North Africa, which is explicitly visible in Algeria (Elliott-Cooper). But following World War II, workers from the former colonies were encouraged to come to Metropolitan France to help rebuild the country, which was devastated by the war. When the European Economic Community was founded in 1957, Algerians became institutionally a part of it. However, Algerian workers were denied the basic rights (salary, movement, insurance) enjoyed by their French counterparts. Worse, Algerians were under constant surveillance and control, making them second-class citizens, considered potentially dangerous and socially unable to assimilate. Hence, the project which was under construction failed to recognize the former colonies and to integrate the former colonized into European state cosmopolitanism. Thus, from the outset the European project (European Union) was contaminated with colonial and racist logic (Bhambra and Narayan; Hansen and Jonsson, “Bringing Africa”). European cosmopolitanism actually aims at unifying European countries in order to achieve peace after World War II and prosperity, together with the intensification of globalization. Therefore, there is no way to dissociate European cosmopolitanism from the hegemonic neoliberal ideology in Western Europe. The expansion of the European community to embrace new countries, both South and East, is but a new impetus given to neoliberalism and its market-oriented ideology. However, the economic crisis which swept across Europe beginning in 2008 has demonstrated that the model Europe wanted to show and export beyond its borders has failed. The ideological premises that have

constituted the essence of the European model (deregulation, privatization, and the weakening of the nation-state), no longer guarantee the economic prosperity, social stability, and cultural integration it had been created for. This failure exacerbated the conflict, pitting some countries against another (Brexit is one example), and equally amplifying the social problems internal to each nation-state. Though European cosmopolitanism seems to be encountering troubled waters because of its tight connection with profits, markets, and neoliberalism, and its inability to go beyond the confines of its colonial history and racist past to integrate European and non-European others (e.g. European diasporic communities), major challenges still loom ahead. Indeed, the plurality of cultures, arising not only from European ethnic diversity but mostly from its colonial past, will constitute an intractable issue that will likely impact the economic-oriented cosmopolitanism that has prevailed since the end of World War II. The European model, an embodiment of diversity and cosmopolitanism, as heralded by Ulrich Beck, has to be reinvented and redefined, taking into account the growing presence of immigrants. Beck sees cosmopolitanism as an encounter and an addition (Beck, *Cosmopolitan Vision*; Beck and Grande). His work, as Bhabra argues, “takes little account of the diversity within Europe as constituted by its minorities within states” (“Cosmopolitanism” 319). If we consider European diversity as simply connecting the dots through an elaborate constitutional framework, then there is no place for integrating subaltern ethnic groups emanating from European colonial history. The restrictive, if not hostile, immigration policy implemented in many European countries imposes significant limitations on the European cosmopolitanism.

No other country in Europe embodies the dilemma of cosmopolitanism as France does today. Despite its intellectual attachment to human rights and its active pro-European policy, France harbors one of the most influential anti-immigration political parties in Europe.

This chapter explores the dichotomy between this attempt to bring together European countries into a single community, hailing on one hand the universality of human rights and promoting France as a cosmopolitan country, while at the same time displaying a strong hostility towards immigrants. Viewed from this perspective, the chapter will offer a sociological analysis of the case of migrants in Calais. Questions about the dynamics of social change, conflict, identity, and law will be raised. There are certainly some moral and philosophical concerns underpinning those societal questions as well. Indeed, the direction in which French society is moving cannot be dissociated from the constant search for a peaceful and harmonious society. The case of Africans in Calais constitutes a major challenge to this model.

2 From Arabs to Muslims: Reframing the Debate

France is trying hard to be the driving force in Europe and the reference point in terms of defense of human rights and values of equality and justice. Cherished in schools, textbooks, and the media, the Republican model values solidarity, equal citizenry, and a shared culture and ideals. In this narrative, the colonial atrocities inflicted on the colonized populations have been occulted and even denied. The Algerian Independence War is an interesting example, which shows how France has had a hard time recognizing its responsibility for the thousands of casualties. Certainly, such a recognition would have opened the door to a broader debate about colonialism and would have brought to the fore the contradictions between the values France would like to stand for and the reality of colonialism. This is deeply connected to the way politicians have handled the issue of colonialism. It does not say much about how France had welcomed the different waves of immigration, even though the first ones did not have to do with the colonial history of France. The first migrants to France were Europeans (Portuguese, Poles, Belgians, Spaniards, among others) fleeing internal strife or poverty. As the French colonial empire could guarantee economic prosperity and opportunities for all, the assimilation of those first immigrants, most of whom shared the same color, religion, and some cultural patterns with the French, was possible. With the second-generation immigrants, it was assumed at the time that France was heading towards a deminoritization of its immigrants and that the assimilation process was fully working. Partially because of this, when North African workers came in massive numbers to France to participate in the rebuilding of the country after World War II, little attention was initially paid to their presence. The need for these unskilled workers was more compelling than questions related to identity, culture, and social cohesion. However, the independence movements in Africa unleashed the racist discourse that had underpinned and legitimized colonialism. The dehumanizing and alienating French cosmopolitan rhetoric, which had been prevalent prior to that time, was challenged by a new radical ideology emanating from North African and black intellectuals. Their ideology, though in line with the republican idea of liberty, equality, and justice for all, gave way to a new alternative cosmopolitan philosophy, which reflected their strong attachment to self-determination and freedom. In his analysis of the French “colonial cosmopolitanism,” Babacar M’Baye writes:

Rather than being cosmopolitan, the policies that France developed toward Africans during this period were exclusionary and manipulative because they subjugated the peasants and *tirailleurs* and confined them in low and degrading positions in which racism, violence, and prejudice maintained the authority of an imperial system that defined rights as the privileges of the upper-class whites of the métropole (known here as metropolitan France) to the detriment of blacks and other colored people. (2)

The brutal response of the French to the liberation movement in Africa was in itself an indication of the manipulative civilizational rhetoric of cosmopolitanism. Additionally, with the arrival of immigrants in France itself, the demographic trend was reversed. Africa was now being invited to the *Métropole* (parent state). The French cosmopolitanism, with its colonial flavor, was shifting into a unique societal experience that was to confront theory with reality. The French self-representation (republicanism, democracy, and cosmopolitanism) is compared with the ‘triviality’ of well-known urban problems, found in any country hosting different populations with different cultural backgrounds.

After having put Arab immigration into the heart of the debate about the urban crisis and the social ills plaguing French society, opinion-makers have turned to focusing on Islam and Muslims. This political, and even intellectual, shift in the debate from “Arabs” toward “Muslims” is worth examining. If we consider “Arab” as a reference to language, many of the descendants of the first generation of North African immigrants do not speak Arabic. Much of the Arab cultural heritage they have maintained from their parents is related to religion. The reference to religion, rather than language or nationality, makes it possible to target more people in the anti-immigrant rhetoric. By shifting the debate from the danger of Arabism to the danger of Islamism, the opponents of immigrants were able to include most of sub-Saharan Africans and Asians in the debate. Those who feared the weakening of France’s religious or ethnic identity welcomed this discourse. At the time of proliferation of social media, trivial statements take on a national dimension, and a negligible event can become a world affair. Both anti-immigration Europeans and radical Islamists use these media to mobilize their potential supporters. Hence, Islamists resort to an old discourse about the western conspiracy against Islam, while French racists denounce Islamic violence, with its disrespect for women and tolerance for abuse and terror.

Though the question of immigration is still raised by conservative circles in France, the far right went, in its opposition to diversity, so far as to challenge the legitimacy of the European construction and cosmopolitanism. In its simplistic, albeit efficient, analysis of the situation, it argued that because the most recent immigrants have come to France through Italy, Spain, and Germany, the European project has to come to an end. Any acceptance of a multicultural France is beyond consideration. Unsurprisingly, polls have shown that more and more French are concerned about issues of immigration, insecurity, and identity. Hence, ideas which previously could not have had a place in the mainstream political debate have, in the last few years, become unavoidable.

It is in this context that the most recent migrants and refugees joined France. But contrary to the earlier immigrants, who came from the former French colonies for economic reasons, the newly arrived populations are refugees and migrants fleeing civil war and abject poverty in countries not necessarily connected to France via a colonial past.

3 Calais: Passage to England and the New French Cosmopolitanism

In the last few years Calais has become an embodiment of what has gone wrong with immigration and refugees in France. No doubt, Calais brought to the fore the contradiction between the official discourse of inclusion, diversity, and cosmopolitanism that France has been exporting for a long time, and a political, social, and economic model that is unable to assume, ensure, and put into practice the ideals France stands for.

A small port city in the north of France, Calais used to have a progressive political tradition. The communist and socialist parties used to be the two dominant political forces, not only in the city but also in the whole region. To many, however, Calais was just a depressed city with no economic or cultural interest, apart from its proximity to Great Britain. Yet the maritime connection between Calais and the south of England did not give a real impetus to the local economy. However, the situation changed in the 1990s. With the city constituting the closest point to England, it was natural that the Channel tunnel was to link the two shores in Calais. Therefore, since 1994, the regular freight shuttle and the Eurostar have been crossing the 31-mile tunnel on a regular basis.

No doubt, without this tunnel, Calais would have continued to be an anonymous city of approximately 80,000 inhabitants. However, inasmuch as it constituted the linking point with Great Britain, Calais immediately became a Mecca for various migrants who intended to cross the Channel. Apart from symbolically bringing the British Isles into continental Europe, the tunnel brought the world to Calais. The city, which had been negatively impacted by the deindustrialization process, began to attract refugees and migrants from different parts of the world in search of a way to reach Great Britain.

It happened that the Channel tunnel began to operate at the time of a changing international context: the collapse of the communist bloc, the accentuation of political instability even in Europe, and the transformation of political alliances. It was in this context of political confusion and reorganization of the world order that Calais became the center of a national debate about the role and place of immigration, international migration, refugees, and human rights. However, Calais also questioned the very basic values of human dignity, European cosmopolitanism, and a shared social cohesion in France and elsewhere.

With Calais, the question of immigration was presented in a new form. Contrary to traditional postcolonial immigration, when France was the last destination of immigrants coming mostly from the former French colonies, Calais represented something different. France had become not a final destination but a transit place. After entering France, the migrants seeking entry into Great Britain usually move to Calais in the hope of crossing the tunnel illegally on board a boat or a freight shuttle.

With tightened security measures, the numbers of refugees and migrants increased dramatically in the first refugee camp near Calais–Sangatte. In 1999, the French Red Cross opened the center to provide basic necessities to migrants. The government, unable or more likely unwilling to deal with the issue, left the camp to the NGOs. The Red Cross offered shelter and food to the migrants, whose number was estimated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to range between 1700 and 3000. New would-be asylum seekers flocked to Sangatte (approximately one hundred per day). Most of them fled the war in Kosovo, which was at its height, but also the Middle East, still suffering from the consequences of the Gulf War I. On a practical level, when Great Britain refused their admission, they found themselves stuck on the French side of the tunnel. They could not cross to England, and they did not want to stay in France. The Sangatte protocol of 1991 and the Touquet Accord of 2003 authorized customs on French territory and not on the British side of the tunnel.

In addition to the individual complexity of the experience of each asylum-seeker was added the complexity of space management. To the migrants, who by definition transcend political borders and embody the moral form of cosmopolitanism, the Touquet Accord is the perfect example of anti-cosmopolitanism: migrants stuck in a permanent status of asylum-seekers, with no possibility of assimilation. After the traumatic experience of exile, the horrors of displacement, and the violence of the human traffickers, those migrants were saddled with the feeling of failure and incapability.

When the situation became untenable in 2001 and a group of migrants stormed the fences—erected to protect the shuttle and the trucks from any migrant intrusion—the Eurotunnel Company asked the French government to close Sangatte. It was joined in this call by British and French local officials. However, their demand was turned down as many decision-makers, both in France and Great Britain, were convinced that the closure of Sangatte would not terminate the crisis. The British Refugee Council wrote that the center “was the symptom, not the cause of the problem” (“The Situation”). In response, new security measures were put in place, more resistant fences were built, cameras were installed, and more policemen were sent to the area.

Ultimately the center, which came to concentrate all the ills of migration and the mismanagement by both France and Great Britain of the problem of asylum-seekers, closed at the end of 2002. Nicolas Sarkozy, the then Minister of the Interior and in charge of immigration and border security, used this decision for political gain. As diversity, openness, and racial and ethnic mixing had become unpopular, Sarkozy needed to show no sign of laxity, permissiveness, and toleration vis-à-vis the Calaisian migrants. From the perspective of his victory in the presidential elections of 2007, it would seem he made the right decision. Sangatte disappeared out of sight, and the media images about migrants that had haunted the imagination of some French citizens, anxious about their national identity and worried about their security, disappeared, at least for a while. There was no indication, however, that migration had declined. Rather, the question was one of its salience and perception. Actually, many

experts had warned about the deterioration of the migrants’ condition since they no longer benefited from the support of civil society and government agencies.

The heated debate about migrants in Calais, which for a while overshadowed the debate about legal immigration, gave rise to a controversy between those who believed that helping the migrants with shelter, food, medical care, and moral support was necessary to meet the minimum standard of humanism and morality; and those—whose number and influence were growing—who believed that reinforcing the inhumane and inhospitable conditions of living would ultimately deter and dissuade others from coming to France. This latter category of French citizens and politicians believed that a lenient migration policy would encourage potential migrants to join Calais. In the words of Eric Besson, the conservative Minister of immigration, who had just gotten married to a Tunisian immigrant woman, “a new camp would create a powerful invitation to new networks of illegal immigration. It would not be a solution to the humanitarian problem” (“French”). On the other side of the Channel, the British Ministry of Home Affairs defended almost the same idea as recently as 2015, when it argued that “accommodation cannot provide a long-term answer to the problem. Such camps have the potential, like Sangatte, to make a bad situation worse” (Home Affairs).

4 The “Jungle” and the Racialization of Migrants

The situation in Calais has evolved rapidly since 2009, when the UNHCR established a permanent presence to deal with the refugee issue, which had taken on an international dimension. However, in 2012 the UNHCR handed over responsibility of the camp to NGOs, and in particular to France Terre d’Asile, a French NGO whose work in favor of migrants was recognized by most experts. The organization became the embodiment of the generous and hospitable spirit that had been lost in France. But at the same time it immediately became obvious that those NGOs could not be the solution to the problem. Providing a proper multidimensional support to thousands of migrants went beyond their financial and human capacity. As a result, the United Nations agency went back to Calais in 2014.

It was in this context that media reports in France and elsewhere began to refer to the “jungle” as the place where migrants were concentrated. The “jungle” in Calais was a place associated with confusion, misunderstanding, and exclusion. Understanding the word “jungle” in its literal and metaphorical dimension shed lights on the absence of cosmopolitanism and the attempt to racialize those migrants. The term appeared out of a biased representation and misunderstanding, symptomatic of the disconnection and the absence of dialogue between French nationals in Calais and the migrants. It seems that the term “jungle” was first used by Iranian and Kurdish migrants to designate a forest (pronounced “jengaal”). For many years, migrants

had explained to the journalists that they were living in the “forest,” outside the city of Calais. Thinking that migrants were referring to a jungle, a semantic displacement occurred, shifting the word “jengaal” to “jungle,” thus giving a metaphorical meaning to the term, much to the detriment of the migrants. The phonetic proximity between the Persian word “jengaal” and the English word “jungle” created this kind of syntagm. According to philosopher Sophie Djigo: “At the time the Persian word designated a place for refuge and resort, the case of the Garennes forest, located right next to the tunnel ... imposed a metaphor which reactivated the colonial imagination” (Djigo 38).

The “jungle” has become a concept that designates the reign of nature, lawlessness, anarchy, and chaos, in opposition to social order and the rule of law. In the public imagination, the jungle is associated with the absence of rules and the survival of the fittest, in opposition to the laws of civilization. Implicitly, the term ‘jungle’ serves the causes of the racists in France, who oppose racial and ethnic mixing. It opposes France, with its civilization, laws, and republican institutions, to the world of migration, refugees, and disorder. The jungle, popularized in Western culture by writers such as Rudyard Kipling (*The Jungle Book*, 1894) and André Gide (*Voyage au Congo*, 1927) is a habitat for wild predators. When transposed to the situation of migrants in Calais, the metaphorical use of the term ‘jungle’ allows an easy racialization of the migrants, a significant part of whom came from sub-Saharan Africa. The jungle gives those migrants a color, an origin, and associates them with a predominantly antisocial behavior.

The problems of violence, lack of hygiene, and theft, reported within the confines of the jungle, triggered a shock wave that went beyond the spatial limitation of the camp. Constant media reports about clashes between different migrant groups (usually East Africans) conveyed a subliminal message that these migrants were in their natural environment—the jungle, and the duty of civilized society is to protect itself from the proliferation of chaos. The opposition between Calaisians and the migrants from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Sudan had never been so strong, with media playing a major role in accentuating the antagonism between the local citizens and migrants, and by extension the hostility between French nationals and immigrants. In addition, images of boats filled with thousands of Africans crossing the Mediterranean every day, sensational reports about the damage inflicted on the beauty of French forests and cities, investigative reports about human trafficking, and alarming analyses of the migration statistics have further negatively contributed to the debate about refugees and immigrants.

Migrants in Calais also triggered an anxiety in Great Britain, where politicians relied on the French uncompromising immigration policy to protect their own borders from what David Cameron, the former Prime Minister, called: “a swarm of people crossing the Mediterranean.” Certainly, Cameron was condemned for his “dehumanizing description of African migrants,” but his view, which went beyond racializing migrants, was shared by many people on both sides of the Channel (Elgot and Taylor).

The racialization of migrants is deeply rooted in the colonial history of France and Great Britain. However, in relation to the specific case of Calais, three stages can be identified: First, in the late 1990s, Kosovars fled the civil war and ethnic cleansing following the dismantling of former Yugoslavia. A chain of solidarity was put in place to help those refugees and migrants. Second, major waves of migrants included people from Afghanistan and Iraq. In the context of the public debate about radical Islam, migrants began to be seen as potentially dangerous for the cohesion of French society, with Sangatte exacerbating the public tensions. However, the fact that those migrants fled a civil war mitigated the public hostility. The third wave was made up of sub-Saharan Africans, though Afghans, Pakistanis, Iraqis, and Iranians also continued to travel to Calais with the hope of crossing the Channel. The African migrants who filled the news media reports were not associated with civil war. As a result, they were not seen as “deserving” refugees. In reality, 70% of them had fled dictatorship and civil war (“D’ou viennent”), but those wars were not represented in the public debate. After all, France had either none, or only a limited military presence or economic interest in those regions.

The issue of sub-Saharan Africans calls attention to the hidden racism that had been officially banned from the public discourse. Indeed, the Gayssot law of 1990 prohibits racist or anti-Semitic public statements. Obviously, the law cannot erase racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. These attitudes continue to be expressed indirectly in polls, leading to reinforcement of the far right parties, notably the National Front.

5 Politics and the Changing Nature of Migrants

Until very recently, (im)migrants from the Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia were practically unheard of in France. Most of the black Africans we could meet were from West Africa, that is Cameroon, Mali, Ivory Coast, or Congo. The arrival of East-Africans is related to the so-called “Arab Spring” and the weakening of the state apparatuses in Egypt and Tunisia between 2011 and 2014, as well as the continuing civil war in Libya, with its subsequent transition into failed state. Indeed, Libya, which used to harbor hundreds of thousands of African immigrants before 2011, has become a hostile place for sub-Saharan Africans. Today, it is not only a transit country used by human traffickers to smuggle Africans to Europe, but also a modern-day slave market with thousands of blacks caught in a web of violence, extortion, rape, and slave labor (Osborne). After Egypt and Tunisia strengthened their border control, Libya has become the only gateway to Europe. Qadhafi, the “King of all African Kings,” who used to hold Libya together with an iron fist, was toppled by the same Europeans who today are blaming Africans for an unacceptable “invasion,” a term constantly used by French politicians.

The migrants in Calais—in particular those from East Africa, with no Francophone tradition—who managed to leave Libya and reach the shores of Italy and other European places have no intention of staying in Italy or France. After a long and dangerous journey in search of the British paradise, they ended up in Calais with no possibility of either moving forward across the Channel, or returning back. Ironically, Calais thus became the most difficult hurdle facing African migrants.

The legal and linguistic barriers became insurmountable for thousands of migrants. Contrary to the Francophone Africans who, as most of them speak French, share a common colonial history with the French and have developed a network of associations and ethnic organizations, those who came from East Africa or Nigeria could rely on only a limited scope of ethnic, national, or family solidarity. Furthermore, although a considerable number of humanitarian organizations contributed time, money, tents, and food to make the situation in Calais more bearable for the migrants and almost a hundred associations were present at one time (Djigo 195–197); none of them was diasporically connected to East Africa or to the former British colonies. In fact, only one organization can be related to sub-Saharan Africa, and six others to North Africa. It should be noted that notwithstanding this, French religious, secular, and political organizations were very active in bringing support to African migrants, operationalizing the real meaning of cosmopolitanism, one which goes beyond the human encounter in time and place. Those organizations try to understand the needs, the expectations, and the dreams of these migrants. At the same time however, the quasi-absence of African organizations operating in Calais reflects not only the absence of East African organizations in France, where they have no diasporic base; it also reflects the absence of solidarity between the well-established Malian, Senegalese, or Ivorian organizations and the asylum-seekers from Anglophone African countries.

Indeed, the absence of government agencies, the negligible efforts of diasporic organizations, and the inability or unwillingness of those migrants to assimilate left them with no political, economic, or cultural support. Progressive or religious organizations involved in the support of Calaisian migrants were facing mounting police brutality, hostility on the part of the local population, and judicial crackdowns (“Like Living”). The police have lately fired tear gas against migrants and pro-migrant activists and prohibited any distribution of food in the camps. In so doing, local authorities have prevented the building of bridges between migrants and the local civil society.

Deprived of their basic rights outside the camps, identifiable by their color, behavior, and clothes, African migrants are facing the openly antagonistic attitude of the security apparatus and the local population. Journalists and observers have reported cases of racism, for example cafés, restaurants, and stores explicitly prohibited for migrants (“Migrants”); the police chasing them in the streets of Calais and ordering them to “*Allez! Allez! Go jungle!*”; and inhabitants hurling racial slurs at them. In 2015, for example, the use of the municipal swimming pool in Calais became restricted to the inhabitants of the city: a clear exclusion of migrants, whose inability

to speak French deprives them of challenging those racist measures, regulations, and attitudes. There is little doubt that the locals' refusal to serve these migrants in public facilities creates an apartheid-like system and a segregated space that causes these migrants run up against an impenetrable frontier. First unable to reach England, the migrants now are unable to get out of the camp.

6 Political Turmoil and the End of French Cosmopolitanism

Calais was a leftist stronghold until 2008, when the communist Mayor Jacky Henin lost the election to a conservative candidate. Henin may have been defeated because he had opened a center funded by the city to help migrants. Actually, many communist leaders, deeply rooted in local French politics, paid the price, not of their affiliation with a declining ideology, but for their financial and political support to immigrants, refugees, and pro-immigration organizations. The election of Nicolas Sarkozy as president of France in 2007 had already signaled a turning point in the immigration policy in France. However, until 2015, the northern region of France, which encompassed Calais in its jurisdiction, was governed by the socialist and the Green parties who acted to mitigate the local anti-(im)migration policy. They created the Réseau des Élus Hospitaliers (a caucus of friendly elected officials) to offer a coherent pro-immigration policy. This network remained weak and unable to react to the rising popular hostility to migration, until both parties have been practically wiped out from the region in the last local elections, held in 2017.

In 2014, the government decided to create a center for migrants to respond to their growing number and rising demands. The British, part of the issue, agreed to finance a barbed wire fence to keep migrants away from the tunnel, with Mayor, Natacha Bouchart, supporting the measure, arguing that it “would empty the city of 80% of its migrants” (Alaux 4). Indeed, since her election in 2008, she has acted to reinforce the antagonism between migrants and local residents. In the national conservative literature, she became the defender and the champion of the people of Calais. Very often, the latter were represented as the “angry people,” “angry residents,” “victimized residents,” or “exasperated residents.” In general, these representations victimized the local population and criminalized the migrants. Ironically, Bouchart, herself is a daughter of an immigrant family (an Armenian father and a Polish mother), which further illustrates the difference between the European and non-European immigrants in France.

Local politicians began to raise questions about sanitary risks, delinquency, and crime associated with migrants in the camps. Referring to the problems of hygiene, the mayor rhetorically formed an association between dirt, insalubrities, and culture and then indirectly associated those issues with Africans. The deputy mayor report-

edly said: “[migrants] are not necessarily bad people, but we have different standards of cleanliness. And it’s not a question of money. I mean there are trash cans, there is running water, there are restrooms in the camp. No, it’s a different culture” (Guenebeaud 6). A resident of Calais makes it clear that the French share little with migrants: “Unfortunately, in their home countries, they have no trash cans. They have no running water, no sidewalks; they don’t have anything. In our country, we are clean, it’s not the same thing” (6). Therefore, from this perspective, migrants, unable to cope with the cultural standards of France, have become the unassimilable others.

The (im)migration question has pushed the political debate towards the right, with the traditional conservative parties now embracing a hardline discourse about migration. Anti-migration ideas that used to provoke a political uproar in France back in the 1980s are today accepted as mainstream. Conservative politicians, including Sarkozy, have understood the political gains to be made out of their radical identity discourse.

France seems to have abandoned its project of becoming a cosmopolitan country. Therefore, even if diversity and multiculturalism seem to be in the scheme of the demographic evolution of French society, cosmopolitanism is fading. Different studies have shown the rising scope of hostility to immigrants. In a poll commissioned by *Valeurs Actuelles* in 2015, approximately 68% of the respondents expressed their hostility towards migrants, including 43% among those who identified themselves with progressive political parties. In 1999, when most of the migrants were from Kosovo, only 35% of those who were polled expressed the same feeling (“Les Français”). Rejection of migrants took a new turn, as more and more people blamed the government not only for opening the doors of the country to foreigners, but also for implementing a social policy favoring migrants over nationals. Indeed, in 2013, 67% of the French polled thought that the government was doing more to protect (im)migrants than the French; in 2006 they constituted only 40% (Lejeune). Politically, this perception has put pressure on the French political elite, which, in general, shifted its discourse to embrace the right-wing extremist ideas. The French political debate, which has avoided referring to French responsibility in toppling the Libyan leader Qadhafi, and the subsequent dismantling of the country’s institutions, which has allowed more than 90% of sub-Saharan African migrants to cross through this country, is focusing on how to reduce illegal immigration and dissuade potential migrants from coming to France.

On a local level, the inexorable progress of the National Front has been obvious in Calais. In this city, the party got 11.5% of the local vote in 1988. In 2002, the figure went up to 18.5%. However, the latest elections, which took place in May 2017, are even more revealing. They took place just months after the heated debate about the “jungle.” In the presidential runoff election, Marine Le Pen, the far right candidate, got 57% of the votes.

7 Conclusion

The question of migration is still plaguing the political debate in France. After the Calais camps had been finally dismantled in October 2016, more than 6400 mostly Sudanese and Eritrean immigrants had to leave the region and join the 450 “Welcome and Orientation” centers scattered all over the country. The police violently removed the last recalcitrants. The socialist government under pressure followed what Eric Besson had said years before: “On the territory of this nation, the law of the jungle cannot endure” (qtd. in Hughes). Some of those migrants seem to have relinquished the idea of going to Great Britain, but most of them have created street camps in Paris (in theory preparing to successfully moving to Great Britain), which are systematically cleared by the police. Xavier Bertrand, the Head of the Hauts-de-France region, where Calais is located, announced recently that migrants were back to the area, but he insisted that he refused to see this happen again: “I don’t like a return back to the Far West age” (“A Calais”). African migrants, wandering the streets of Paris or other cities with a sea connection with Great Britain such as Calais, Caen, etc., call out our attention, thoughts and concern.

Thirty years after I arrived in France, the question of immigration is still a burning topic. The image of potentially dangerous Muslims has replaced the image of North Africans coming to France to benefit from its social welfare system and job market. The invisible African of the 1980s has given way to a special representation: aggregates of refugees who try to enter the country illegally through Italy and Spain in order to join Calais and make their way to Great Britain, with no respect for the cultural, legal, and social codes of French society.

Like most of the immigrants of the 1980s, when I first came to France, I was immediately introduced into a family network that made my integration in French society relatively easy. The black migrants we come across today in train stations, parks, or in Calais are constantly on the road, but turning around aimlessly and hopelessly. No doubt, borders and regulations are becoming stronger. As a result, they are increasingly psychologically and physically deadly. However, the situation is becoming untenable and indefensible. More than ever, what Teresa Hayter wrote back in 2001 seems topical today: “Sooner or later, immigration controls will be abandoned as unworkable, too expensive in suffering and money, too incompatible with the ideals of freedom and justice, impossible to maintain against pressures of globalization” (150). The fight of the nationalist anti-migrant political parties to preserve national identity in France seems to be a rearguard action. Economic rationality and integration, in addition to political interdependency, will make it hard to seal borders.

France’s embrace of liberty, equality, and brotherhood as guiding principles seems to be shaken by a complex social reality and political experience. The question becomes then how to reconcile the harsh regulations and reactions with those ideals. Indeed, in the name of national unity and republicanism, communitarianism and even multiculturalism were rejected. Surely, the compression of space and time, with

the intensification of globalization, offers a better opportunity for cosmopolitanism. For the moment, France is changing rapidly, and any historical change is associated with major cultural and social upheavals. For the time being “cosmopolitan [France] as it is predominately defined in the existing literature, has very little to offer cultural minorities” (Baban and Rygiel 465). The migration experience in Calais, unique in many instances, may call for a “[restoration] of a sense of utopian possibility,” as Pierre Bourdieu wrote (Grass and Bourdieu 66). This utopian possibility is the essence of cosmopolitanism and should not be dismissed as unattainable.

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Anna Pochmara

“In the Tangled Lily-bed”: Rhizomatic Textuality and Rooted Cosmopolitanism in Pauline Hopkins’s *Of One Blood*

Of One Blood—“one of the earliest known fictional accounts of the [African] continent by a black American writer” (Gruesser 40)—tells the story of the hidden city of Telassar, located in today’s Sudan, awaiting “the coming of [the] king who shall restore to the Ethiopian race its ancient glory” (Hopkins, *Of One Blood* 547). It is sought by a group of Anglo-American explorers, motivated by their desire for “a few dollars and fresh information” (584). Should they be successful, their discovery is expected to “establish the primal existence of the Negro as the most ancient source of all that [people] value in modern life, even antedating Egypt” (520). In the novel, Hopkins recasts the ideology of a glorious African past, a central theme of black nationalism dating back to the antebellum days. At first sight such a narrative can be easily categorized as an expression of the resistant nationalism of the oppressed, widely criticized by postcolonial critics for its reinscription of ethnic authenticity and racial essentialism, with their disturbing discriminatory underpinnings. Nevertheless, I will show here that Hopkins’s popular magazine novel manages to transcend the regressive celebration of an authentic past and of pure origins, and can be read instead as an example of rhizomatic textuality or “minor literature,” which according to Deleuze and Guattari, “produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism” (*Kafka* 17). In its portrayal of an interracial cast of characters and the multicultural hidden Ethiopian city, *Of One Blood* imagines a new community, a literary figuration of Mitchell Cohen’s notion of “rooted cosmopolitanism,” which both recognizes difference and simultaneously conceptualizes multicultural exchange and transnationality. In contrast to both multiculturalist particularism and humanist universalism, it “accepts a multiplicity of roots and branches and ... rests on the legitimacy of plural loyalties, of standing in many circles, but with common ground” (483).⁶ Analogously, as Susan Gillman puts it, Hopkins “constructs a transculturated Africa, ... inclusive of both contemporary United States and the colonial world as well as of a diasporic, Pan-African future, itself contingent on colonial incursions in present-day Africa” (53). Such an enunciation from a black writer was especially significant in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century Jim Crow US, a period referred to as the ‘nadir’ or ‘a second slavery’⁷ since, as Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo argues in her *Black Cosmopolitanism: Racial Consciousness*

6 For a discussion of Hopkins’s engagement with transnationalism, anti-imperialism, and Marxism in her novel *Winona* and journalistic writings, see O’Brien. For a discussion of anti-imperialism in her story, “Talma Gordon,” see Carby, *Reconstructing*.

7 See, for example, Sundquist 228.

and Transnational Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Americas “the ideology of slavery also discouraged, sought to destroy, and was weakened by the cosmopolitanism of slaves and others of African descent” (134). Thus Hopkins—as other influential black writers and activists examined by Nwankwo—strategically puts the discourse of cosmopolitanism to emancipatory uses.

Postcolonial and poststructuralist criticism abounds with warnings against the celebrations of imaginary glorious pasts by the colonized. As Gayatri Spivak argues, “a nostalgia for lost origins can be detrimental to the exploration of social realities within the critique of imperialism” (“Can the Subaltern Speak?” 87). Analogously, Homi Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, poses a challenge to “the originary Past,” which authenticates, homogenizes, and thus helps solidify nationalist identity, and contends that “hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or ‘purity’ of cultures are untenable” (55). As Philip Leonard’s analysis of a new cosmopolitanism in post-structuralist discourse demonstrates, so too Deleuze and Guattari frequently express concerns similar to postcolonial critics and state that “a return to a domesticated topology, to an Oedipalized motherland that is inhabited by virile sons” is a myopic melancholia and “sedentary nostalgia” (66). As they conclude in *A Thousand Plateaus*, “It is certainly not enough to travel to escape phantasy, and it is certainly not by invoking a past, real or mythical, that one avoids racism” (379).

Long before postcolonial criticism warned against fantasies of lost origins, configurations of ancient African glory had interpolated African American culture in multivalent ways, from jazzy Harlem Renaissance primitivism to the Black Arts Movement’s nationalist radicalism. Most notably, they were central for the thought of Marcus Garvey, who argued that “All the original Pharaohs [sic] were Black. ... The Sphinx, in Egypt, which has stood through the millenniums, has black features. There is [sic] good grounds for saying that civilization started in Africa and passed from and through Northern Africa into Southern Europe, from which the Greeks and Romans and the people of Asia Minor made good copies” (13). Both Garvey’s ideas and Hopkins’s *Of One Blood* are indebted to the appropriation of Egyptology and the papers on hieroglyphics by Martin Delany, a mid-nineteenth-century black abolitionist and nationalist thinker.⁸ Written five decades after Delany’s works, Hopkins’s novel clearly enters into a dialogue with the same authors, works, and ideas as Delany’s. Gillman and Mario H. Beatty, in their analyses of both Hopkins’s and Delany’s writings, find that both these African American writers and activists drew on the newly founded science of Egyptology and strategically used its growing popularity in the US. More specifically, both undermined the ideas that dominated the ethnology emergent in the 1840s. According to its champions, George R. Gliddon and Samuel Morton, “[t]he

⁸ As John Guesser argues, Hopkins is more widely “versed in Africa’s past,” and she refers to a number of classical accounts of Africa apart from Delany’s work, including Herodotus and Diodorus (34–35).

valley of the Nile, both in Egypt and in Nubia, was originally peopled by a branch of the Caucasian race” (Morton 65–66). Delany argued against this thesis, pointing out “the proximity of Ethiopia and Egypt in customs” and “their once unity of national interests” (42). As Beatty shows, “Delany critiqued one of the core theses of Gliddon’s work” and for Delany “echoes of the ancestral past were reintegrated into present historical understandings and contexts to provide the necessary foundation for the creativity and ingenuity that would ‘regenerate the African race’ ” (91). In the same vein, Gillman demonstrates that Hopkins’s novel argues for the doctrine of monogeny and thus counters Gliddon’s and Morton’s widely recognized theory of polygeny (54–55). Hopkins’s characters go to Africa to “add to ... ethnological knowledge” (521) and “establish the primal existence of the Negro as the most ancient source of all that [people] value in modern life, even antedating Egypt” (520).⁹

Nevertheless, as Gillman argues in her analysis of the ambivalent significance of “blood” in the novel,¹⁰ “Hopkins’s Ethiopianism is ... not simply an elite black intellectual tradition combining the doctrine of uplift ... with the theme of ancient African cultural retentions and return” (53). Her syncretic and deeply critical vision does not offer clear binaries, easy solutions, or neat closures. Thus, it stands apart from the myopic and regressive mythology of Garvey, and avoids the nostalgia for the authenticating, homogenizing, originary past criticized by Spivak, Bhabha, Deleuze, and Guattari among others. *Of One Blood* constructs a paradoxical vision that celebrates the Ethiopian influence spread “throughout Europe, Asia and Africa” (531) and links it with North America, emphasizing the interconnectedness of different locations, cultures, and communities. Hopkins cites the biblical quote used by Booker T. Washington in his Atlanta speech a few years earlier: “The laws of changeless justice bind / Oppressor with oppressed; / And close as sin and suffering joined / We march to Fate abreast” (607), but she gives a much more radical, ambivalent, and critical edge to it. I will demonstrate how the rhizomatic heterogeneity and aporetic ambivalence of the novel are figured in the multiracial bodies of its protagonists and in the cultural hybridity of the hidden city of Telassar.

1 “Yes, Honey, All of One Blood”: Hopkins’s Multivalent Races

Hopkins opens her novel in “highly-cultured New England” (454) among the select body of Harvard students as well as aristocratic Boston and Southern families, auto-

⁹ For a comparative reading of Hopkins and Delany, see Reid.

¹⁰ For an analysis of “blood” in the novel in the context of the 1896 U.S Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, see Gruesser (36–37).

matically assumed to be white. In such a context, she recasts the triangular melodramatic formula of the hero, his false friend villain, and the woman they both love. The Manichean opposition is introduced at the very opening, when the Harvard medical student Reuel, a “genius in ... scientific studies” (444), is contrasted with his colleague Aubrey, whose features do not “inspire confidence” but “engender doubt” (446–47). This contrastive introduction encourages the reader to read their physical appearance as accordingly polar. Reuel, “blessed ... with superior physical endowments,” athletic, tall, strong with a “vast breadth of shoulder,” is marked with an “abundance of black hair,” “thick and smooth,” “broad nostrils,” “large mouth,” and olive, almost sallow, complexion. For any reader familiar with nineteenth-century mulatto fiction, these bodily markings, together with a lack of relatives and no information regarding his origins, indicate that Reuel’s eponymous “hidden self” is multiracial. The novel explicitly points to his racial ambiguity: “it was rumored at first that he was of Italian birth, then they ‘guessed’ he was a Japanese” (444), whereas his friend addresses him as an “inhospitable Turk” (446). The reader’s suspicions are confirmed at first by implicit comments about his “secret” and then by a more explicit statement regarding his “origins” and “the infernal prejudice” that “closes the door of hope and opportunity” (480, 494). Reuel’s thinly veiled mulatto identity is clearly contrasted with Aubrey’s “beautiful face of a Greek God” (446). Interestingly, Hopkins’s narrative gaze appreciates the bodily appeal of men even more frequently than of women, and the reader gets a closer look at Aubrey: “the beauty of his fair hair and blue eyes was never more marked as he stood there in the gleam of the fire and the soft candle light” (455). Hyperbolically, “he was a sight for gods and men” (504). By juxtaposing Reuel’s “one drop of black blood” and Aubrey’s visibly pure fairness, Hopkins seemingly underlines the melodramatic contrast between the black hero and the white villain.

This binary opposition is embodied in the object of their affections, racially ambivalent Dianthe Lusk with her “golden” “chestnut hair,” “large, bright, and dark” “soft brown eyes” and creamy complexion (445, 453, 461). As member of the Fisk Jubilee singers, she is explicitly introduced as black, although the multiracial character of the group is pointed out by Harvard students: “one or two [are] as white as we”; “they range ... from alabaster to ebony” (451). Her magnetic appeal, emphasized by her name, suggesting a combination of “dusk” and “lust,” makes her ideally fit the mulatto heroine, “distinguished for [her] fascinating beauty” (Brown 46), whose presence in African American fiction dates back to William Wells Brown’s *Clotel; Or, the President’s Daughter* (1853). For men, Dianthe “had the glory of heaven in her voice, and in her face the fatal beauty of man’s terrible sins” (488), and even women “surrendered unconditionally to the charm of the beautiful stranger, drawn by an irresistible bond of sympathy” (489). Moreover, although the melodramatic aesthetics of the novel suggest from the opening pages that the two male protagonists will compete for Dianthe’s love, Hopkins invests the homosocial relationship between Reuel and Aubrey with a deep intimacy, bordering on erotic desire. Reuel feels affection, worship, and dog-like devotion for his friend (447); and the “Greek God” in turn

truly admires him (473) and expresses his affection in gestures such as “a light caressing hand upon the other’s shoulder” (471). When disclosing to Reuel that he knows his secret identity, “his eyes [look] full into his,” and “their hands [meet] in a close clasp” (480). Thus, the novel highlights the intimate bonds among the three protagonists and strange “magnetism” of Reuel and Dianthe.

Despite the presence of this intimate male friendship, the opening chapters construct a seemingly clear-cut triangle of the professional mulatto, the beautiful mulatta, and the white villain, and the reader, even one not well-versed in the erotics of politics typical for fin-de-siècle mulatta melodrama (cf. Pochmara 165–170), expects a mulatto marriage at the novel’s closure. Hopkins’s novel, however, is not simply another example of poetic justice and the black erotics of politics, and its neatly constructed melodramatic oppositions are radically disrupted. Against the Victorian expectations of narrative development and closure (Baym 40–42; DuPlessis 4), Dianthe marries Reuel in the first part of the novel, and they are separated by an expedition to Africa, in which he decides to take part. Reuel leaves her under Aubrey’s protection, declaring that “I intrust her to you as I would intrust her to my brother,” and Aubrey responds that he “will have her with [them] always like a dear sister” (497). The reader, aware of Aubrey’s evil intentions, reads the passage as deeply ridden with tragic irony and a sign of Reuel’s shortsightedness. Towards the end of the text, Reuel is informed that Dianthe has died, while Dianthe is convinced that Reuel is dead, and the villain Aubrey uses his mesmeric powers to convince her to marry him. However, instead of the expected hero’s return and the rescue of the damsel in distress, the reader learns that “Dianthe Lusk is [Reuel’s] own sister, [and] the half-sister of Aubrey Livingston, who is [Reuel’s] half-brother” (593). This revelation reverses the meaning of the previously declared fraternity among Reuel, Dianthe, and Aubrey. Rather than dramatically ironic or myopic, Reuel’s statement becomes visionary. The relationship turns out to be literally true and thus the utterance possibly reveals Reuel’s mystic prophetic powers. Introduced as dramatic opposites, the mulatto hero and the white villain turn out to be multiracial brothers.

The scene of revelation forces a rereading not only of the short conversation before Reuel’s departure, but of the whole romantic narrative. What the reader, in following both the African and North American episodes through the fragmentary poetics of the texts, regards at first as a *bigamous* and *miscegenous* union between Dianthe and Aubrey, turns out to be in fact an *incestuous* relationship, just like her seemingly *legitimate* and *intra-racial* marriage with Reuel.¹¹ All three turn out to be the children of white doctor Livingston and mystic mulatta Mira. On top of that, the information is delivered by a villainous, visibly black servant, who is referred to as their “foster brother” (593). With this scene, Hopkins adds a completely different meaning to her

11 For a detailed discussion of incest, monogenesis, and endogamy in the novel, see Shawn Salvant’s “Pauline Hopkins and the End of Incest” (2008).

title “of one blood”: apart from signifying human unity, it also stands for the horrors of sexual exploitation during slavery. From Reuel’s outraged male perspective, it is “the accumulation of years of foulest wrongs heaped upon the innocent and defenceless women of a race” (594). His view is complemented by the more stoic words of his grandmother: “Dede things jes’ got to happen in slavery” (605). Making the private public and thus politicizing the family triangle is the hallmark of a melodrama’s work. Yet, in *Of One Blood*, the Freudian family romance is not only politicized by its revelation of forced amalgamation and historical oppression of the black community, but it is also twisted and intensified. The dominance of sibling rivalry both challenges the traditional patriarchal priority of the Oedipal triangle and takes the literal form of multiple incestuous relationships and intimacies.

The revelation of the miscegenous and incestuous interconnectedness of the three protagonists is not the only narrative excess the novel has in store for its readers. The identity of the protagonists is complicated by the way the narrative links the North American part and North American past with their African equivalents. It turns out that Mira is not a just another fascinating mulatta; her charm is represented as closely related to mystic magnetism.¹² Her supernatural appearances episodically intersect the text, although she remains in a ghostly, enigmatic, and undetermined realm. Even though the narrative uncovers the lost city and the grandmother of the family, it does not follow Mira’s fate after she is sold down the river and separated from her three children. Despite this absence, she is one of the driving forces as a seer and protector in the narrative. When telling a “ghost story,” Aubrey remembers that his father, who was “deeply interested in the science of medicine” and “the line of mesmeric phenomena,” would throw their maid Mira “into a trance-state,” and in such a state she once predicted the tragic fates of Southern aristocrats after the Civil War (485–487). Two chapters later, a ghostly voice joins Dianthe’s performance of “Go Down, Moses”: “A weird contralto, veiled as it were, rising and falling upon every wave of [Dianthe’s] great soprano” reaches the audience “as from some strange distance” (503). In another mystical and “strange occurrence,” Mira visits Dianthe and underlines the biblical quotation “For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed” (506), which aptly expresses the novel’s melodramatic drive to revelation and foreshadows both hope and horror connected with the text’s hidden secrets. In her next appearance, the “shadowy” but “shining apparition,” “by mesmeric forces,” helps Reuel read with “his spiritual eyes” Aubrey’s letter, which reveals his evil conspiracy (522–523). Mira’s magnetic powers are also mentioned by her mother, who delivers the final words of revelation in the text. She uses the word “shine” to express the magnetic attraction of Mira to Dr. Livingston. Ultimately, Aunt Hannah, who

12 Significantly, forced sexual relations in the novel are related to the power of Western mesmerism as studied and practiced by their white father and inherited by both Reuel and Aubrey. For an analysis of the relationship between rape and mesmerism, see Sanborn.

herself resembles “an African princess” (603), reveals that all Mira’s children belong to the royal line, are marked with “de lotus-lily on each leetle breast,” and are claimed “for de great Osiris” (606). In the light of the revelation regarding the characters’ royal identity, the opinion regarding Dianthe at the beginning of the novel that “Probably the best blood of the country flows in the poor girl’s veins” (490) gains a new meaning. The “best blood” in Dianthe’s veins is overdetermined: it refers simultaneously to white Southern aristocracy¹³ and to Ethiopian royalty. Yet it is neither Dianthe nor the younger son Aubrey that are destined to restore the past glory of Ethiopia. In accordance with tradition, Reuel, as the primordial son, becomes the chosen “son of a fallen dynasty,” and his “lotus lily” is “God’s mark to prove [his] race and descent” (555). Thus, the novel veers from realist expectations by foregrounding supernatural elements and the hidden aristocratic past.

Significantly, the text’s representations of two kinds of rhizomatic plant species—two kinds of lily—suggest the intermingling of two rivers, the Charles and the Nile, and their respective American and African locations. The lily is also a metonymy of the marriage and death that end the novel. It marks the union of Reuel and Candace, two royal descendants with the lotus-lily on their breasts, which takes place in Telassar on an island on the Nile. The poetically just suicide of Aubrey is analogously positioned in “the tangled lily-bed” “floating in the Charles river” (620). Thus, the rhizomatic water plant aptly symbolizes the ultimate interconnectedness of both the particular characters and “all races of men,” made “of one blood” (621).

As the interconnectedness of the American water-lily and African lotus-lily suggests, Hopkins’s text does not celebrate the pure origins of the siblings; on the contrary it explicitly reconciles the idea of the royal matrilineal line with history of migration into “strange lands and amalgamation with other races” (535). Reuel proves that “Truly, he is the King” in an African rite of passage, during which he confronts a lion and makes him withdraw with “his personal magnetism” and “wonderful and powerful eyes” (566). Reuel does admit that he has inherited “his mysticism and his occult powers” from Mira (558), but his talents can be also a hereditary trait from his white father’s side: a continuation of Dr. Livingston’s Western mesmerism. On one hand, the novel leads to Reuel’s enthronement and his restoration of the ancient Ethiopian race; while on the other it repeatedly emphasizes his “Americanness”: Reuel’s “healthy American organization missed the march of progress attested by the sound of hammers on unfinished buildings” (526); “Reuel was devoid of fear” because “[t]he American man is familiar with many things because of the range of his experience (544); and “with an American’s practical common sense, [he] bewailed this waste of [Telassar]” (565). Thus, the novel constructs a paradoxical notion of a chosen race

13 For a different recasting of the “best blood” motif, see also Charles Chesnutt’s “Her Virginia Mammy.”

that is not pure, but deeply creolized, which is mirrored in the novel's representation of the lost city's hybrid culture, which will be analyzed in the last part of this chapter.

In the novel, racial hybridity is paired with intimacy and unity, which is suggested in the title phrase "of one blood." Hopkins imagines a whole spectrum of intimate bonds among the main and minor characters, from the shocking incest to interracial brotherhood. For example, the horror of the incestuous relationships of the protagonists, and the past of slavery it evokes, finds its narrative equivalent in the hopeful union of Reuel and Queen Candace. She reminds him "strongly of his beautiful Dianthe; in face, the resemblance [is] so striking that it [is] painful" (568). The physical similarity between the two women suggests that they are closely related, and it turns out that Candace is Dianthe's antecedent. When Dianthe dies her "royal ancestors—Candace, Semiramis, Dido, Solomon, and David" come to honor her (615). Thus, both of Reuel's unions are consanguineous marriages. As Shawn Salvant puts it, in the novel, "all roads lead to incest" (674). On the other end of the "of one blood" spectrum, there is the interracial, cross-class brotherhood of Reuel's true friend Charles, alias Adonis, and Aubrey's black helper Jim. During the trials of their African expedition, Charles, clasping "Jim's toil-hardened black hand," realizes that "Jim [is] his brother, the nearness of their desolation in this uncanny land [leaves] nothing but a feeling of brotherhood. He [feels] the truth of the words, 'Of one blood have I made all races of men' " (590). This relationship is especially important for the narrative as it introduces class differences and inter-class bonds into the novel's predominantly aristocratic cast of characters. Charles's feelings of fraternity for Jim in distant Meroe are mirrored by his sister's feelings for Dianthe in Boston and their secretly interracial, "intimate friendship" (490). "With the impulsiveness of youth, a wonderful friendship sprang up between the two; they rode, walked and shopped together; in short became inseparable companions" (489). Thus, Hopkins's text both surprises the reader with unexpected discoveries of kinship and represents intimate relationships among people who are not immediate blood relatives.

The novel attempts to reconcile human uniformity and ethnic particularity, a gesture central to the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism, which is visible in the way Hopkins uses multiple turn-of-the-century meanings of "race" and destabilizes its signification. In *Of One Blood*, implicit references to "a race [that] had been delivered" from degradation (454), or "a downtrodden race" of the US South (487) as well as explicitly "the Negro race" (494), "the race of Negroes" (536), and "the white race" (594), the latter three clearly referring to the black and white racial division of the Jim Crow US. This Manichean dichotomy is disrupted by Hopkins's references to the "American race," "a race bold and venturesome, who not fear if [it] can get a few more dollars and fresh information" (584), which as has been shown with reference to Reuel's Americanness refers to both whites and blacks. This ambiguity is commented upon in one of the novel's final intrusive comments: "He [God] has united the white race and the black race in this new continent. ... No man can draw the dividing line between the two races" (607). In analogous evocations of ethnological

and biblical discourse, the novel suggests the unity of all people: “of one blood have I made all races of men” (621), arguing for monogyny and a single human race. In her article “The Dark Races of the Twentieth Century” (1905), Hopkins analogously outlines “the theory of ‘one blood’ ”: “the principle that the human species is one cannot be disputed, and all men that inhabit the earth are but varieties of this one species” (191). Nevertheless, in *Of One Blood*, this human unity is, in turn, counterbalanced by descriptions of ethnic specificity. Again, linking biblical and anthropological discourses, the leader of the expedition delivers a lecture on Ethiopian origins, according to which:

four races were ethnically connected, being all descended from Ham; and the primitive people of Babylon were a subdivision of one of these races. ... Babylon and Egypt—Nimrod and Mizraim—both descendants of Ham—led the way. ... The Ethiopians ... manifested great superiority over all the nations ... and their name became illustrious throughout Europe, Asia and Africa. (531–532)

This outline seems to be parallel to the narrator’s commentary in *Contending Forces*, which postulates that in “the Easter continent” there are many “black races,” including Negro, Egyptian, and East Indian (198). In all these uses, racial and ethnic subdivisions seem to refer to nations. As Gillman has noted, Hopkins’s novel paradoxically promises “both racial distinctiveness, for the ‘Ethiopian race,’ and racial unity, for all ‘races’ ” (49). Thus, veering between human uniformity and ethnic particularity, Hopkins’s racial imaginarium—an example of creoleness as discussed by Leonard—“challeng[es] the fixity that is attributed to these categories in work on race and culture” and “point[s] to the overlapping and interlocking relationships that exist between space, subjectivity, and the social” (Leonard 137).

The complexity of these relationships is most visible when Hopkins adds, to the human, national, and ethnic meanings of race, yet another shade of meaning. In phrases such as “God’s mark” of “race and descent” (555) or “a race of African kings” (558), “race” seems to refer to a family line, which is also compatible with the narrative’s references to the biblical family line of Noah, Ham, and Cush, which is divided into distinctive races. The above-quoted commentary from *Contending Forces* also argues that “races are like families” (198). Hopkins’s diverse uses of the word “race”—from political to familial—complement the erotics of politics of the novel. In nineteenth-century romance and melodrama (Gillman 22), political ideas are allegorically represented by characters and the relationships between them. They harmonize unity and particularity with the intimacy suggested in the metaphor of the multiracial family. Nevertheless, this harmony is not ideal, but broken through the specters of the sexual violence of slavery in the United States and continuing colonial oppression in Africa.

Of One Blood is not the only novel by Hopkins vested with the issues of racial hybridity and new communities. *Hagar’s Daughter* and *Contending Forces* also imagine multiracial bodies. *Hagar’s Daughter* is set in the white upper-class society of Washington, and yet by the end of the narrative all three female protagonists turn out

to be of mixed race. The sentence from *Of One Blood* “who is clear enough in vision to decide who hath black blood and who hath it not? ... No man can draw the dividing line between the two races, for they are of one blood!” (607), aptly sums up the excessive double racial identities in the novel. *Contending Forces* recasts the theme of amalgamation in an even more interesting way. Significantly, the novel opens in Bermuda, which is, according to Stuart Hall, the “true diasporic” and “‘natural’ cosmopolitan” region, as the only indigenous characteristic of the Caribbean “is creolisation, the cultural mix of different elements.” This cultural hybridity in Hopkins’s novel is reimagined as interracial identity:

In many cases African blood had become diluted from amalgamation with the higher race, and many of these “colored” people became rich planters or business men (themselves owning slaves) through the favors heaped upon them by their white parents. This being the case, there might even have been a strain of African blood polluting the fair stream of Montfort’s vitality, or even his wife’s, which fact would not have caused him one instant’s uneasiness. (*Contending Forces* 22–23)

This reflection on the omnipresent multiraciality is the one and only information the reader gets regarding racial identities of the Montforts, the novel’s protagonists. Thus, Hopkins challenges the Manichean race politics of Jim Crow US and, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, constructs a text whose “subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity, of ambivalence or overdetermination” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 6). Following Kate Chopin’s “Desiree’s Baby” (1893) and foreshadowing Toni Morrison’s “Recitatif” (1983) and *Paradise* (1997), *Contending Forces* refuses to reveal the definite racial identities of its characters. Thus, through their melodramatic excess of indeterminate or hidden selves, Hopkins’s novels complicate the idea of Jim Crow racial divisions and construct multivalent multiracial bodies, families, and communities. Telassar, even though geographically distant from Washington and Bermuda and seemingly isolated from the contemporary reality, is an analogous racially hybrid space.

2 “The Enterpret of Trade between the North and South, between the East and West,” or the Impure Ancient Glory of Meroe

In the words of the Ethiopian leader Ai “that Ethiopia should stretch forth her hand unto Eternal Goodness, and that her glory should again dazzle the world” (548), Hopkins recasts the biblical quotation: “Princes shall come out of Egypt, [and] Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands to God” (Ps. 68:31). The use of the passage in African American political discourse dates back at least to Alexander Crummell’s speeches. In 1865, in a sermon about African American missionary activism deliv-

ered in Monrovia, Liberia, he claimed that “The Lord God shall hasten the number of His elect; and the tide of salvation, sweeping along, in one broad, mighty current, shall bear along the mighty masses of thy people to salvation and to glory; and then ‘Ethiopia,’ from the Mediterranean to the Cape, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian, shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God” (429). As though foreshadowing Reuel’s return to Meroe, in Crummell’s vision “[Ethiopia’s] exiled sons, [will] return to the bosom of [their] mother” (421). The African American minister outlines the notion of a chosen black diaspora, which largely parallels the black communities in Hopkins’s novels, “living on the mainland, in the States; or residing as inhabitants of the Antilles; or sojourning in the Republics of the South; or dwelling in the Brazilian Empire.” They are “[a] REMNANT ... widely scattered” and by these “‘remnants,’ ‘the called,’ the ‘chosen,’ the ‘elect;’ that God works the marvels of his providence” (421; emphasis in original). Nevertheless, Crummell’s narrative of uplift is not connected to any restoration of ancient wisdom—African republics are explicitly introduced in opposition to “ancient kingdoms” (425). His vision is rooted in the stark contrast between pagan African and Christian North America, a binary that was strategically used by abolitionist activists to argue for the human equality of all Christians. Crummell appropriates the Western missionary ideology and univocally forms a hierarchical opposition between the enlightened Christian diaspora and the heathen savages of Africa: “By contact with Anglo-Saxon culture and religion, they [the African slaves] have, themselves, been somewhat permeated and vitalized by the civilization and the Christian principles of their superiors” (439–440). Echoing the anxieties of respectability central to the uplift mythology, he warns that the black missionaries have to watch out for “[the natives’] vicious habits, and their corrupting influences” (427). Some fragments from *Of One Blood* clearly echo Crummell’s rhetoric. Telassar’s leader announces that “the prophesies of the Trinity shall in time be fulfilled. ... Ethiopia, too, is stretching forth her hand onto God, and He will fulfill her destiny. The tide of immigration shall set in the early days of the twentieth century, toward Africa’s shores, so long bound in the chains of barbarism and idolatry” (573). Her depictions of present day African cities highlight their “dilapidated abandon, dirt and picturesqueness” (512) or “ruin and decay” (545). Yet Hopkins’s vision, despite such residues of earlier Africanist discourses, is much less conservative, and her text destabilizes the contrast between enlightened African Americans and heathen Africans. The images of decay are not a result of backwardness, paganism, and isolation, but to the contrary they stem from exterior exploitation. When Hopkins introduces the “decayed” Tripoli, she points to the colonial intervention and refers to the region as “the natural road by which Africa has been attacked by many illustrious explorers” (512). The image of continuing imperial aggression also closes the novel, as Reuel is anxious about “the advance of mighty nations penetrating the dark, mysterious forests of his native land” (621). Thus *Of One Blood* is significantly more ambivalent about Western interventions in Africa than Crummell’s sermons.

Hopkins combines the biblical quotation with Egyptologist discourse and makes claims for “a prehistoric existence of magnificence” in Ethiopia (532). The British professor, leader of the expedition looking for “ancient records of Ethiopia’s greatness, accepts “the primal existence of the Negro as the most ancient source of all that you value in modern life, even antedating Egypt” (520) and states that “it is a fact that Egypt drew from Ethiopia all the arts, sciences and knowledge” (521). This Western scientific perspective is later confirmed by Reuel’s discovery of Telassar and its leader’s words: “from Ethiopia came all the arts and cunning inventions that make your modern glory. At our feet the mightiest nations have worshiped, paying homage to our kings, and all nations have sought the honor of alliance with our royal families because of our strength, grandeur, riches and wisdom” (560). Another authentication comes in the form of a “song of the past of Ethiopia” delivered as a “recitative” by a number of different voices of Telassar to celebrate the return of Reuel (556–559). Thus, the second part of the novel is interpolated by heteroglot repetitions of the glory, fall, and hope for the restoration of Ethiopia, among which Western archeology is not dominant but just one of several narratives.

The mythology of “Meroe, the greatest city of them all, pure-blooded Ethiopian” (556), of the “once magnificent race,” and of “the coming of [the] king who shall restore to the Ethiopian race its ancient glory” (547) evokes associations with “the originary Past” and “an Oedipalized motherland” criticized as a key element of a nearsighted nationalist strategy of resistance by postcolonial critics. Neither contemporary nor ancient Meroe, however, represents an unadulterated Ethiopian culture and racial authenticity. One of the first archeological remains that the explorers find are “traces of a highway” (527). The narrative—through both the voices of Western explorers and the Telassarians’ recitatives—repeatedly emphasizes Meroe’s central position as “the *enterpret* of trade between the North and South, between the East and West”: “Meroe must have held vast treasures. African caravans *poured* ivory, frankincense and gold into the city” (520; emphasis added). The novel repetitively uses the fluid metaphor of “pouring” to refer to the thriving exchange that took place in the ancient Meroitic kingdom: “into her lap caravans *poured* their treasures gathered from the North, South, East, and West. All Africa *poured* into this queenly city ivory, frankincense and gold” (556; emphasis added); “Into it *poured* the traffic of the world in gold, frankincense and ivory” (527; emphasis added). Thus, the boundaries of ancient Meroe were fluid and open to foreign goods. Moreover, the word “enterpret” suggests that it was a place of translation, a cosmopolitan location where cultures from all directions intermingled.

The exchange and resultant cultural syncretism is unmistakably visible in the descriptions of Meroe and Telassar, in which Hopkins links signifiers from numerous ancient civilizations of the Middle East, Africa, and the Mediterranean. According to a letter from a Telassar’s Council member, the mines hold an assemblage of treasures from Egypt, Babylon, and Israel: among them are jewels “hidden by the priests of Osiris,” “the crown of the great Semiramis,” and “the black diamond of [Israeli]

Senechus’s crown” (528–529). Reuel eats from “golden dishes that resembled the specimens taken from ruined Pompeii,” but the remaining elements of the décor and his clothing are Oriental rather than Roman: he sleeps on “silken cushions,” “wears silken garments” and “a jeweled dagger literally encrusted with gems” (548–549). Accordingly, Telassarians are robed in “soft white drapery,” “Grecian in effect” (545), but they speak Arabic (546). Reuel is amazed by “the *combination* of Oriental and ancient luxury” of his room:

In the air was the perfume and luster of precious incense, the flash of azure and gold, the *mingling* of deep and delicate hues, the gorgeousness of waving plants in blossom and tall trees—palms, dates, orange, *mingled* with the gleaming statues that shone forth in brilliant contrast to dark foliage. The floor was paved with varied mosaic and *dotted here and there* with the skins of wild animals. (548; emphasis added)

The description again fuses diverse elements: traditionally Arabic incense and dates, Mediterranean oranges, and African “skins of wild animals.” Also, the fragment highlights the harmonious intermingling of these various cultural and natural objects. This syncretism goes beyond the level of commodities. When Ai demonstrates his prophetic and mesmeric powers, he claims that this is “an old secret, known to Ethiopia, Egypt, and Arabia centuries ago” (575), thus suggesting that caravans and highways also brought an exchange of knowledge.

This ancient openness is also upheld in modern Telassar, even though the remnant of ancient Meroitic kingdom is hidden and isolated, and only the select are allowed to enter. Reuel is surprised that the inhabitants of the city “hold communion with the world outside” (551). The leader Ai, apparently up-to-date with Western knowledge, proudly states that “in many things your modern world is yet in its infancy” (551). The hidden Ethiopian city, despite its advantages in some fields, is open to the contemporary Western knowledge. As Ai explains, the people who govern Telassar, “a Council of twenty-five Sages,” ... are educated and speak “two out-world languages” (561). Accordingly, as a king Reuel “spends his days in teaching his people all that he has learned in years of contact with modern culture” (621). As Kwame Anthony Appiah claims, “openness to the achievements of other civilizations” is a marker of rooted cosmopolitanism (33), and thus Telassar continues to be a cosmopolitan space despite its isolation. Hopkins’s emphasis on exchange and accessible knowledge is one of the ways in which the novel counterbalances its elitist focus on US and Ethiopian aristocrats, a residue of the imperial romance. The narrative points out that, in contrast to Egypt, where “A knowledge of [hieroglyphics] was confined to the priests, ... in Ethiopia they were understood by all, showing that even in that remote time and place learning and the arts had reached so high a state as to be diffused among the common people” (536).

Whether as a result of its ancient or modern openness, or both, the society of Telassar is visibly mixed-race. The Council member who joins Reuel’s expedition must be multiracial, as Charles states that in the US, people “would simply label [him] ‘Arab,

Turk, Malay, or Filipino' ” (584). Ai and his companions are “tall, handsome, dark-visaged” (548), but they range “in complexion from a *creamy tint to purest ebony*; the long hair which fell upon their shoulders, varied in texture from soft, waving curls to the crispness of the most pronounced African type” (545; emphasis added). The narrative juxtaposes the racial creolisation of Telassar with the amalgamation in the US South. The description of Telassarians echo earlier-quoted comments of Harvard students on the looks of Jubilee singers, who “range ... from *alabaster to ebony*” and “one or two [are] as white as we” (451; emphasis added). This narrative coupling of two instances of interraciality—one resulting from a cultural openness and exchange and the other from oppression—enables Hopkins to both radically confront the US history of sexual exploitation and hopefully construct a vision of an open multiracial community of the future.

3 Hopkins's Nomadic Textuality

Deleuze and Guattari, when discussing “minor literature,” i.e. texts created by the oppressed using the master's tools, specifically refer to examples of “what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language” (*Kafka* 16). Hopkins's novel fits neatly all the criteria they outline with surprising clarity. Not only does she use the dominant language, but also, as many critics have pointed out, she puts an array of dominant Western discourses—from the Bible, to ethnology, to archeology, to psychology—to her own political uses (Carby; Gillman). Secondly, according to Deleuze and Guattari, minor literature is politicized throughout and “the family triangle [in the text] connects to other [sociopolitical] triangles” (*Kafka* 17). In *Of One Blood*, all erotics are melodramatically politicized: Hopkins's use of race veers between the family and different political ethnic identities, and her characters' particularities represent more general historical phenomena. Finally, minor literature functions as a collective, revolutionary enunciation, which “produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism” and “express[es] another possible community” (17–18); and Hopkins's text imagines a heterogeneous and multiracial community of Ethiopia. Moreover, *Of One Blood* exemplifies what Deleuze and Guattari discuss as rhizomatic writing in their much less lucid *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In rhizomatic textuality:

unity is consistently thwarted and obstructed in the object, while a new type of unity triumphs in the subject; ... the subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity, of ambivalence or overdetermination, in an always supplementary dimension to that of its object; ... the book remains the image of the world: radicle-chaosmos rather than root-cosmos. (6)

Accordingly, Hopkins exposes the rhizomatic relatedness of multiple pasts and multiple geographical locations in her transnational narrative. In her evocations of ambivalent and overdetermined notions of race, Hopkins problematizes the dichot-

omy of human unity and ethnic specificity. Although formally quite remote from the examples of “cut-up” texts of Burroughs, Joyce’s words with “multiple roots,” and Nietzsche’s aphorisms cited by Deleuze and Guattari as models for rhizomatic textuality (5–6), *Of One Blood* is also fragmentary, or as Hazel Carby contends “episodic,” which largely stems from its original form of publication as magazine fiction released in installments (Introduction xxxvii). As Augusta Rohrbach argues, Hopkins’s choice of “serialized fiction” should not be dismissed as an aesthetic failure. To the contrary, it “evidences her belief in the manifold of nature, experience, and culture,” and “[h]er complicated plots—plots sometimes too elaborate to be considered anything other than a series of episodes—duplicate the complexities of identity and experience” (483). Rohrbach contends that Hopkins’s magazine novels engage in “literary ‘sampling’ ” and illustrate the “dynamic, chaotic and multiple” character of human experience, which, she adds, is in accordance with Deleuze and Guattari’s “theory of multiplicity” (483–484). Thus, the formal density and narrative excess of *Of One Blood* makes it an emergent rhizomatic book. This ur-text of African American fiction set in Africa becomes “all the more total for being fragmented” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 6).

Of One Blood’s rhizomatic nature is visible not only in its thematic evocations of cosmopolitan communities or in its structural fragmentation, but also in its symbolic imagery. As has been shown, the creeping rootstalk is a part of the pivotal sign in the novel—the lily. The African lotus-lily and the North American water lily, “the tangled lily-bed” (620), symbolically link both the two distant locales and the dispersed members of Hopkins’s transatlantic diaspora. This rhizomatic sign also is an apt metaphor of the “a multiplicity of roots and branches” central for Cohen’s rooted cosmopolitanism (483). Thus, despite its residues of both Afrocentric nostalgia and bourgeois missionary uplift ideology, *Of One Blood* offers a radical, cosmopolitan vision, which is neither blind to the past and present colonial oppression nor devoid of hope for a new cosmopolitan future.

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Marta Werbanowska

Envoy to the World: Nomadic Cosmopolitanism in Yusef Komunyakaa's *The Emperor of Water Clocks*

A water clock is a contradiction in terms: it evokes the human desire to name, control, and understand, as well as the relentless malleability of the natural world. Another term for water clock, *clepsydra*, stems from the Greek roots *kléptein*, which means “to steal, conceal” and *hydra*, which is a derivative of the word for “water”; therefore, the very origins of the term suggest a somewhat clandestine human intervention in the natural flow of volatile and mercurial matter. The title of Yusef Komunyakaa's latest poetry collection to date, the 2015 *The Emperor of Water Clocks*, announces a poetic subject that turns this surreptitious activity of time measurement into a project of citizenship-formation, as he takes reign over the paradoxical empire of objects whose successful operation depends on the continued flux of their material, yet whose purpose is to provide some human mastery over the intangible. As the poems collected in the volume suggest, at the dawn of the twenty-first century this delicate condition of blurred boundaries and ambiguous belonging is becoming increasingly real for the globalized world we inhabit. Komunyakaa's cosmopolitan poetic consciousness traverses all kinds of boundaries: geographical and national borders, limitations imposed by the linear flow of time, and perimeters of cultural difference. It searches for truths and ethical parameters whose reach would be universal, but remains open to a multitude of a situated subject's positions, life experiences, and interpretations of what is true. Thus, *The Emperor of Water Clocks* participates in what may be termed a nomadic cosmopolitan discourse, driven by a neo-humanist ethics of forging cross-cultural and transnational solidarity through an accommodation, rather than erasure, of differences, and a sense of shared responsibility for the world inhabited by all kinds of “others.” At the same time, in both furthering and complicating this discourse Komunyakaa's poems advocate for a rhizomatic mode of belongingness and a planetary sense of empathy and responsibility, but do so from a specific perspective that echoes the ideals of global Black solidarity proposed by Black (inter)nationalist and Pan-Africanist philosophies.

In Monique-Adelle Callahan's analysis of Komunyakaa's 2011 collection *The Chameleon Couch*, she interprets Komunyakaa's poetic project as one that aims to “illustrate contemporary transformations in our understanding of the relationship between literature, language, and citizenship as both a local and global phenomenon within the context of a growing transnational ethos” (2). Indeed, throughout the four decades of Komunyakaa's poetic *oeuvres*, his poetic subjects have often spoken from a perspective that is firmly situated in the poet's own identity—Black, male, North American, locally Southern, globally Western, modern, human—and imaginatively

open to inhabiting a globalized subjectivity shaped by a myriad of transnational factors, be they political, cultural, or simply informed by personal experience of travel. The “transnational ethos” of Komunyakaa’s poetry lies precisely in its openness to and explorations of the shifting meanings of citizenship and belonging in the modern world, combined with an acute awareness of the historical and ideological foundations of this “new” world order. As a citizen of the world, Komunyakaa’s poetic subject is concerned with the cross-currents of global cultural exchange, the continued prevalence of totalitarian and militarized power structures around the globe, as well as with the role of cultural and historical memory in the forging of a community that is both transnational and rooted. Privileged with the freedom of geographical and intellectual movement, this cosmopolitan subject continuously traverses the boundaries of time and space, yet often “perches” in specific social, historical, and territorial locations to examine how the particular is always immersed in, and in turn affects, the universal. Restless between here and there, now and then, the local and the global, the personal and the universal, this subject is, in Komunyakaa’s own words, always at the crossroads: a “real place between imaginary places—points of departure and arrival ... a junction between the individual and the world” (“Crossroads” 5).

Komunyakaa’s poetic subject at the crossroads is endowed with what the philosopher Rosi Braidotti, following Gilles Deleuze, refers to as the consciousness of a *nomadic* subject. In Braidotti’s take, the nomadic consciousness:

is akin to what Foucault called counter-memory, it is a form of resisting assimilation or homologation into dominant ways of representing the self. ... The nomadic style is about transitions and passages without predetermined destinations or lost homelands. The nomad’s relationship to the earth is one of transitory attachment and cyclical frequentation: the antithesis of the farmer, the nomad gathers, reaps, and exchanges, but does not exploit. (*Nomadic Subjects* 60)

A nomadic subject is, therefore, a political and ethical instance that, on the one hand, holds the dominant (for example, national) narrative-makers accountable for their misrepresentations of both their subjects and their “others,” and that feels at home while being “lost,” or not fixedly aligned with any particular location or teleology, on the other. Moreover, the nomad comes to being through a “subjectivity that is relational and outside-directed”: she can only identify herself in relation to other subjects and the environment she currently finds herself in (Braidotti, “Becoming-world” 16). Rather than making the nomad a highly individualized subject, the lack of a permanently affixed sense of locatedness, or national or group allegiance fosters a continuous project of forging new, contingent and flexible relationships with its others, and thus requires from such subject a sense of ethical accountability for humanity at large, and of belongingness at a cosmic, in addition to individual or local, level. Instead of following capitalist power dynamics of domination and exploitation, which might easily be applied to such contingent forms of citizenship, the nomadic subject assumes an ethical responsibility for all the others she establishes relations

with. Her conscious detachment from the national, ethnic, and other universalizing forms of belonging continuously places such subject in the position of a stranger, which Paul Gilroy identifies as “an invaluable ... opportunity to know the world better and to experience it in more complex and satisfying forms” (70). Indeed, for Braidotti, the nomadic “vision of the subject as a time continuum and a collective assemblage implies a double commitment, on the one hand to processes of change, and on the other to a strong sense of community—of ‘our’ being in *this* together” (“Becoming-world” 19, italics in original). To the nomadic subject, the sense of a common dwelling poses an ethical imperative of solidarity with all other members of this cosmic “household” and requires a practical strategy of adopting an identity that is always in process, flexibly adjusting to the needs and realities of the ever-changing circumstances. At the same time, mindful of her inevitable materiality, the nomadic subject always speaks from an “embedded and embodied perspective”: while her locatedness may not be permanent, the physical environment—human and non-human alike—always shapes the nomad in her current iteration (“Becoming-world” 16).

Given her sense of interconnectedness with the entire world, the nomadic subject is, logically, also a cosmopolitan one, although not in the liberal-individualist meaning of the term. In their introduction to the volume, the editors of *After Cosmopolitanism* lay down a distinction between “the universalistic, rationalist Neo-Kantian transcendental cosmopolitan models ... and the multi-faceted, affective cosmopolitics of embodied subjectivities grounded in diversity and radical relationality” (2). While the former envisions a cosmopolitan ideal as a collectivity of individuals, all guided by the same “universal” moral values and epistemological certainties, the latter perspective understands cosmopolitanism as a lived practice that takes into account and accommodates the cultural, moral, and political differences between its singular participants. This nomadic mode of cosmopolitanism is closer to what Paul Gilroy calls “vital planetary humanism,” or a way of thinking about global conviviality that goes “beyond the issue of tolerance into a more active engagement with the irreducible value of diversity within sameness” (79, 67). A similar ethics is also found in Isabelle Stengers’ idea of *cosmopolitics* as a pragmatic process that “has meaning only in concrete situations where practitioners operate” and, contrary to the effectively totalizing Kantian ideal of Eurocentric universalism, delays the creation of a utopian common world by including all standpoints and inviting all actors of the global stage to take part in a difficult, perhaps never-ending, consultation during which a multitude of perspectives activates “a thinking that belongs to no one, in which no one is right” (994, 1001). Although impossibly idealist given the scale of contemporary international politics, cosmopolitics can be thought of as an ethical stance on the individual level. For the nomadic subject, a cosmopolitical consciousness leads to the practice of *nomadic citizenship*, which Eugene Holland defines as “a sense of belonging and commitment to human community that cosmopolitanism requires,” which is detached “from the bounded territory of the nation-state” (152). As these theories illustrate, the cosmopolitan nomadic subject is full of contradictions: at one and the same time

rooted and migratory; locally situated yet universally-oriented; singular but defined by her relations with a multitude of others; working towards an aim that is continually practiced yet never quite fully realized. Refusal to resolve these contradictions, openness to indeterminacy and difference, and an awareness of the situated yet flexible nature of her own subject position constitute the ethical and political markers of nomadic cosmopolitanism.

In Komunyakaa's poetry, the ethical and political aspects of nomadic cosmopolitanism are implemented in the realm of aesthetics. Echoing Stengers's assertion of polyvocal dissent as a necessary ingredient of cosmopolitical practice, and Braidotti's insistence on the never-finished nature of the nomadic subject, Komunyakaa describes poetry as "a chorus of diversions and chance connections" that "connects us to lyrical tension that has everything to do with discovery and the *act* of becoming" ("How Poetry Helps" 22, italics in original). This open-ended quality of his work has been observed by several critics. Aracelis Girmay has traced the presence of the figure of Legba—the African god of crossroads and an interpreter between the human and the divine—as a guiding impulse in his poetry and a lesson in "how valuable an understanding of plurality (an ability to straddle worlds!) is in the pursuit of freedom" and empathy (56). Michael C. Dowdy has characterized Komunyakaa's poems as at once creative and political acts that envision a transcendence of the "culturally inscribed forces that constitute difference as conflict in American society" and an establishment of "meaningful self/other relationships" in spite of the country's dominant nationalist impulses (813). And Angela M. Salas has argued for the "universal humanism" and the empathetic versatility of Komunyakaa's poetic subjects, who can "function imaginatively from many different positions" (36). The perspective of nomadic cosmopolitanism, however, reveals his poems as participants in a neo-humanist, rather than "universal humanist," discourse that produces "inclusive alternatives—locations and figurations—that enlarge and go beyond humanist individualism" (Braidotti, "Becoming-world" 18). Inspired as much by Africanesque and African diasporic traditions as by the Western literary canon, rooted in the African American tradition of double consciousness, Komunyakaa's work displays skepticism toward the totalizing discourse of Western humanism. At the same time it does not propose to replace that humanism with a nihilistic or anti-humanist stance, but rather with a neo-humanist sensibility that realizes the situatedness of all truths and the inevitability of conflicting opinions yet recognizes instances of pan-human solidarity as little miracles of shared humanity.

Komunyakaa's poetic subject, endowed with overtly cosmopolitan ways of thinking about belonging and relationality, retains elements of Black nationalism by seeing political and cultural Black solidarity as a mode of organization against the dominant Eurocentric narratives (including the Kantian cosmopolitan ideal). As Tommie Shelby observes in *We Who are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*, "black political solidarity has come to be associated with black nationalism" (4)—a correlation which, at first, seems antithetical to the cosmopolitan ideals of unbound plan-

etary belonging and transnational citizenship. Yet the founding principles of Black nationalism have always been transnational and planetary, as the overarching goal of most Black nationalist movements and philosophies is the liberation and empowerment of oppressed and disprivileged peoples globally. From W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey to Franz Fanon and the Black Power organizations of the 1960s and 1970s, the most prominent proponents of Black nationalism have always been suspicious of the possibility of an effective “state-sponsored amelioration” of the problems caused by racism, and instead sought solutions to race-related oppression and dispossession “within global black networks, consciousness, and demands” (West and Martin 27). Moreover, the very category of “Blackness” adopted by many of these thinkers was quite flexible and inclusive, often accommodating of difference rather than imposing an imaginary unity, and expanding beyond racial identification to shared experiences of “non-whiteness” as an absence of certain economic and political privileges. From Du Bois’s assertion that, while he feels “fanatically a Negro,” blackness to him means “a greater, broader sense of humanity and world-fellowship” (16) to Huey Newton’s political philosophy of revolutionary intercommunalism and Malcolm X’s distinction between civil rights, or asking “Uncle Sam to treat you right,” and the God-given human rights that are supposedly “recognized by all nations of this Earth” (35), the history of Black nationalism has largely been at the same time one of internationalism. In the words of Gilroy, since these thinkers and activists understood their position “in planetary terms that confound conventional distinctions between nationalism and cosmopolitanism,” it is in the history of Black political culture that one may begin looking for modes of cosmopolitanism that, instead of offering “one more imperialistic particularism dressed up in seductive universal garb,” advocate for genuinely ethical and egalitarian social relations across the planet (57, 4). Indeed, in its linking of local action and global goals, its focus on embodiment and materiality as crucial elements of one’s social existence, and the “double commitment” to political change and communal belonging advocated by Braidotti, much of Black (inter) nationalist thought precedes the cosmopolitical and nomadic cosmopolitan ideals of transnational solidarity in difference and an ethically inclusive communal praxis. The most obviously political poems in *The Emperor of Water Clocks* clearly echo the “oppression-centered conception of black solidarity” espoused by Black nationalism (Shelby 4). Thus, while the currently circulating theories of nomadic cosmopolitanism merely imply the racial dimension of pan-human social justice, Komunyakaa’s poetry inscribes it in the forefront of its cosmopolitan discourse, highlighting the historical significance of race as an othering device in the processes of nation-building, imperialist and capitalist expansion, and citizenship-formation.

An example of a nomadic encounter that is at once cosmopolitan and Afrocentric can be found in perhaps the most reprinted poem from *The Emperor of Water Clocks*, “The Day I Saw Barack Obama Reading Derek Walcott’s *Collected Poems*.” Like a jazz composition, the poem riffs on a 2009 photograph of Obama with Walcott’s collection in hand, yet changes and adds the setting and details of the original picture at

its improvisatory will. It uses the image's political and poetic symbolism as a starting point for ruminations on the significance of this scene on a national and diasporic scale, as well as on an intimate level for the speaker—who can here be identified with Komunyakaa himself—as an African American man and poet. As the poetic voice follows the US President reading the St. Lucian poet's work “in the official November snow & sleet / falling on the granite pose of Lincoln” (84), he ponders Obama's motivation for this choice of reading:

If he were searching for property lines
drawn in the blood, or for a hint
of resolve crisscrossing a border,
maybe he'd find clues in the taste of breadfruit.
.....
If he wants to finally master himself,
searching for clues to govern seagulls
in salty air, he'll find henchmen busy with locks
& chains in a ghost schooner's nocturnal calm. (84–85)

Throughout the poem, the speaker's speculations about the President's psyche are intertwined with references to individual poems by Walcott as well as to his famously syncretic style, one that signifies the aesthetic of “cosmopolitan modernism by representing how the Caribbean experience has been shaped by the myths and histories of Europe, Africa, and the New World” but also inflects Western poetic forms with Caribbean rhythms and realities (Pollard 198). The questions which Obama supposedly asks of Walcott's poetry are about the assertion of a modern African American, or more broadly diasporic Black, identity: how does a Black subject “master himself” as an active agent in the contemporary US, a space historically marked by the experiences of uprootedness, terror, and oppression? The speaker is at once skeptical of the book as a source of answers (an experience of migrants “crisscrossing a border” may perhaps only be understood by “the taste of breadfruit,” an organic familiarity with their lived realities and cultural background), and confident in Walcott's futuristic vision as a guideline for (African) American politics: since the poet “won't speak / of milk & honey, but of looking ahead / beyond pillars of salt raised in a dream” (85), his presidential reader may, too, realize the dangers of excessive dwelling in the North American and transnational past or idealizing the present as utopia incarnate. This orientation toward the future, however, should not mean an erasure of the continued legacy of America's violent history of “chains in a ghost schooner's nocturnal calm” (*Emperor* 85), but rather a creative reexamination of the “bloodstained workings of racism ... to yield lessons that could be applied more generally, in the demanding contemporary settings of multicultural social relations” (Gilroy 4). Walcott's poetics, at once sharply attuned to the still lingering consequences of the transatlantic slave trade and culturally omnivorous in its claiming of the legacies of Europe, Africa, and Asia, transforms these histories into a specifically New World politics and aesthetics,

thus offering a blueprint for the forging of a cosmopolitan American in general, and a cosmopolitan Black American subject in particular.

The cosmopolitan Black subject in the poem avoids the risk of adopting an elitist, naive way of thinking about the global North American future as an ahistorical, “post-racial” ideal by instead adopting a nomadic perspective which, to quote Braidotti, “accounts for one’s locations in terms both of space (geo-political or ecological dimension) and time (historical and genealogical dimension)” (“Becoming-world” 16). This happens not only at the collective level of coming to terms with the historical lessons of racism and racialism as mentioned by Gilroy, but also at the individual level of viscerally experiencing history, place, and culture with one’s own body. This embodied and embedded nature of cosmopolitanism becomes clear with the poem’s vision of a metamorphosis of Walcott’s *Collected Poems* into a fruit:

Now, he looks as if he wants to eat words,
their sweet, intoxicating flavor. Banana leaf
& animal, being & nonbeing. In fact,
craving wisdom, he bites into memory. (85)

The book-fruit nourishes its reader both metaphorically and literally, offering a reassuring sense of rootedness. Komunyakaa’s invention of “November snow” and the “granite pose of Lincoln”—elements absent from the original photograph—may be his way of signaling the cultural and historical whiteness of the White House (a location never explicitly set, but strongly suggested by the poem’s imagery) and Wall Street, and thus highlighting the status of Obama as an outsider to the predominantly white Anglo-Saxon milieu of US politics and finance. Counteracting this overwhelming whiteness, the diasporic Black signifiers he finds in the book—from tropical fruit and the climate of “St. Lucia’s light” to the reminder that the pyramid image on US currency is, after all, “a sign borrowed from Egypt” (84)—serve as indicators of his belonging to a community much bigger than the US, a pan-humanity of the Black diaspora worldwide. Importantly, just as the poem’s Obama finds comfort in Walcott’s nourishing words, its speaker reads the scene he witnesses for its reassuring significance for himself. If we conflate the poem’s speaker with Komunyakaa, the monumental importance of this scene for its observer becomes clear: for a Black man with Trinidadian roots born in Jim Crow Louisiana, watching as the Black “President of the United States of America / thumbs the pages” (86) of a book of poems by a Black Caribbean Nobel Prize winner is a clear illustration of a vast sociocultural change taking over the world, a change that reinscribes him into the spaces of political power and institutional recognition from which Black people have been historically excluded on a global scale. Thus, for the speaker the sense of Black cosmopolitanism channeled in the poem is not an abstract ideal but a material sensation; the poem’s three personae become embodied sites of the global political and cultural transformations symbolized by Obama’s presidential function and Walcott’s literary status.

The choice of Obama and Walcott as its main figures makes the poem resonate on multiple levels, as it captures the moment of Black achievement that is at once individual, national, and cosmopolitan, and bridges the gap between these seemingly mutually exclusive concepts. Komunyakaa and Walcott, as Daniel Cross Turner aptly observes, can be seen as each other's doubles in the literary world as "two of the most highly decorated and significant contemporary Black Anglophone poets," both recognized for the transnational qualities of their poetry and its hybrid use of Western and Africanesque "mythopoetic traditions" (54). Walcott's success is thus, by analogy, also Komunyakaa's validation as a Black poet. The iconicity of Obama as an embodiment of "a national transformation inaugurated ... by the election of an African American to the most powerful political office in the world" embeds the poem in the mainstream cosmopolitan discourse of "the United States in terms of a *cosmopolitan* democracy—as a teeming diversity of people drawn from various countries who had joined together in a single union" (Selzer 25, 29, italics in original). While Obama's presidential career constituted a milestone in the racially-troubled history of the United States, his personal history and transnational ancestry also highlighted the rhizomatic, cosmopolitan lineage of the nation. The key image of the poem—that of the Black President of the United States reading a book by a Caribbean poet in Washington, DC, while observed by an African American poet from the South—evokes a sense of cosmopolitan cultural exchange, trans-regional and transnational movement, and global Black diasporic solidarity at a transitional moment in history which, as this scene optimistically suggests, promises to foster a model of citizenship that is both locally situated and open to translocal interrelations.

While "The Day I Saw Barack Obama ..." channels a sense of faith in the nation-state as an institution able to embrace cosmopolitan modes of coexisting, other poems in *The Emperor of Water Clocks* are more skeptical about the very possibility of the state's capabilities to act as an agent of positive change. By celebrating the individual achievements of Black subjects in the worlds of US (inter)national politics and institutionalized literature, the above-discussed poem advocates an ideological expansion, rather than eradication or transcendence, of the nation-state: the inscription of Black agency into the structures of political and ideological citizenship-formation is presented as a success by itself, and as a harbinger of a more cosmopolitan nation-state whose porous boundaries can finally admit difference and otherness as valid and successful modes of national belonging. However, in poems such as "Envoy to Palestine" and "Ghazal, after Ferguson," this Afrocentric yet still relatively conservative vision of cosmopolitanism gives way to a more radical understanding of nomadic citizenship as an alternative to the nation-state "and all the exclusions and proclivity to violence that state-citizenship entails" (Holland 152). Echoing the Black (inter)nationalist critique of global Western imperialism and state-sanctioned racism within the United States respectively, these poems reject the possibility of forging "national solutions to black international problems" (West and Martin 25) and instead advocate for a transnational and transcultural solidarity of the oppressed the either bypasses

or transcends the institutionalized workings of the state. Thus, while “The Day I Saw Barack Obama ...” celebrates at least a partial achievement of the cosmopolitan ideal, the two poems discussed in the remaining sections of this chapter conceive of cosmopolitanism as neither an “established fact, nor a historical tendency or telos,” but rather as “an act of social engagement and an ethical commitment ... a possibility” to which the cosmopolitical praxis aspires (Holland 156).

One vision of cosmopolitical solidarity across and despite the boundaries and limitations of nation-states and their capitalist-imperialist modes of global expansion is presented in “Envoy to Palestine.” Tracing a historical continuum of settler colonialism from the European invasion of North America to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the poem opens with an initially unidentified speaker’s visit to the grave of Mahmoud Darwish, hailed as the national Palestinian poet, in the city of Ramallah. The speaker’s mode of arrival appears both mythical and clandestine, as he finds himself “lucky to have the shadow of a coat” as a “borrowed line transport[s] [him] beneath / a Babylonian moon” (92)—it is never clear whether his presence in the Middle East is an embodied act of trespassing the national borders or merely a journey made within his imagination, a mental travel along a “borrowed line” of a poem. While his actual location remains undisclosed throughout the lyric, the speaker’s identity is eventually revealed as he reaches out to his Palestinian addressees in a gesture of trans-ethnic solidarity:

I know a prison of sunlight on the skin.
The land I come from they also dreamt
before they arrived in towering ships
battered by the hard Atlantic winds. (92)

The speaker further identifies himself as a “runagate / redskin, a noble savage, still Lakota” (92). His self-proclaimed status as an envoy is thus paradoxical: he represents a state that does not exist, a nation decimated centuries ago by European settler colonialism and psychologically as well as politically damaged by the history of Anglo-Saxon occupation which has reduced him to a “reprobate whose inheritance / is no more than a swig of firewater” (93). Like his Palestinian hosts, he is a refugee in his own land and a racialized other (a “noble savage” whose complexion is his “prison”). The bond that connects him to the Palestinians is their shared experience of oppression and forced participation in the transhistorical, transcontinental systems of domination.

While Braidotti posits that such “negative bonding of shared vulnerability is not enough to create alternative values” (“Becoming-world” 11), Black (inter)nationalist thought tends to see the shared awareness of exposure to the negative consequences of imperialism and globalization as the first step towards cosmopolitical action. In her discussion of the ideological evolution of Huey Newton’s thought from Black nationalism to intercommunalism, Robyn Spencer traces the Black Panther Party’s gradual expansion of the “internal colonialism thesis, the idea that African Ameri-

cans constituted a 'nation within a nation' or an 'internal colony' within the United States," into an understanding of the world as "divided into oppressed and liberated communities, linked by common causes that united them across national boundaries against a common enemy: the United States empire" (223). This version of Black internationalism, in which the shared experience of political and economic oppression—rather than racial or cultural identification—becomes the dominant factor in the forging of a global solidarity, paves the way for a cosmopolitical understanding of difference and singularity as preconditions of, rather than impediments to, the formation of an allegiance. What the Lakota speaker of Komunyakaa's poem and his Palestinian addressees have in common is not a shared racial or cultural identity, but the lived experience of being oppressed and violently "othered" by the forces of imperialism, be they the European invasion on North America or the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Importantly, the speaker does not attempt to erase or ignore the historical and geographical situatedness of their respective conditions, and is able to, at one and the same time, remain rooted in his specific environment of the "wildflowers, all the grasses / & insects singing to [him]" and empathically situate himself within the "dried-up riverbed / & extinct animals" of the Middle East (*Emperor* 92–3). As a rhizomatically rooted subject, Komunyakaa's envoy is defined not by absence of attachment but by a multitude of relations across various groups and places; he is rooted in "the dust of restless plains" of North America but connects with the inhabitants of the "grassy hill / in Ramallah" through a shared experience of forced uprootedness that stems from warfare, invasion, and territorial occupation (*Emperor* 92). Thus, he establishes between himself and his addressees a sense of belonging to a community that is bound not by its unified identity, but by a shared condition of vulnerability which he sees as the basis for global solidarity and, perhaps, a mobilizing force for joint resistance.

Although the envoy's message is directed specifically to the people of Palestine, the poem as a material, printed artifact—not unlike Walcott's *Collected Poems*—reaches a wider, possibly transnational, public of readers, acting as a call to instill in them a sense of belonging to a shared community that faces the global threats of imperialism, neocolonial violence, and international warfare. The final lines of the poem reveal this faith of speaker-envoy and author-poet, now merged in the poetic enterprise, as an instance of cosmopolitics:

... I hear Chief Standing Bear
saying to Judge Dundy, "I am a man,"
& now I know why I'd rather die a poet
than a warrior, tattoo & tomahawk. (93)

The decision in the 1879 case of *Standing Bear v. Crook*, in which Judge Dundy "concluded that Indians have the same rights under the law as whites," has been referred to as the "first significant civil rights case" in the US (Nagle 456). Komunyakaa's mention of Standing Bear's speech, in which the Ponca Chief advocated for the subordination

of ethnic and racial differences to what he described as a universality of the human condition and thus human rights, serves a twofold, quite paradoxical, purpose: it is a reminder of the power of words to conjure reality, and of their helplessness in the face of brutal power. While Standing Bear's evocation of the human rights' discourse led to a legal recognition of Native Americans as subjects endowed with such rights, history has proven that victory to have been merely formal: the population, virtually powerless from the political and economic standpoints, is still forced to live on the margins of US society, on the invader's terms, which have never been consulted with them. In this somewhat self-referential gesture, the poem ponders its own efficacy as a political tool: its eponymous envoy is too aware of the history of "broken treaties & smallpox, the irony of barbed wire" (93) to believe in the power of language, speech, and debate as ultimate problem-solvers; and yet, despite these brutal lessons of history, the speaker still declares he'd "rather die a poet."

The acutely self-aware irony of these closing verses reveals the contradiction inherent in the cosmopolitical proposal: while its practical purpose is that of debating solutions, its ethical imperative is to keep the power to execute such possible solutions from any individual or group. The speaker's cosmopolitics is thus a consciously *idiotic* project in the Deleuzian understanding of the term. In the words of Stengers, the idiot is a presence that "demands we slow down, that we don't consider ourselves authorized to believe we possess the meaning of what we know" (995). While the project of nomadic cosmopolitics may be idiotic in its idealism and deliberate indeterminacy, it is precisely this idiocy that makes it ethical, as it dissolves the concept of power over others and replaces it with endless relationality instead. In the face of the inevitability of death—the poem opens, after all, with the speaker's visit to another poet's grave—Komunyakaa's idiot-poet-nomad chooses a life of compassion and coexistence over the aggressive, objectifying, and dominating globalizing mode of nation-state cosmopolitanism that had led to the genocides of the Native American and Palestinian populations.

As postulated by Stengers, one aspect "of the cosmopolitical proposal is ... to accentuate our own rather frightening particularity among the people of the world" (999). Transnational consciousness of our entanglement in globally-reaching interrelations is only one element of cosmopolitanism, the other being an awareness of and response to our geographical and temporal situatedness—and the cosmopolitan nomadic subject, like Komunyakaa's shape-changing poet or the divine Legba, lives at the ever-shifting crossroads of these two routes. From this position, the nomadic subject engages in the ambiguous process of what Braidotti refers to as "becoming-world," or understanding one's actual situated location as at once the starting point in the search of broader truths and a particularized experience on its own terms.

Similarly, in "Ghazal, after Ferguson" Komunyakaa addresses the historical and cultural specificity of the African American experience of state-sanctioned violence and dispossession through an aesthetic that situates it within a global context without

de-exceptionalizing it. Along with the title, the opening couplet of the poem establishes the Middle-Eastern poetic form of *ghazal* and the black lexicon of hip-hop as its main stylistic frameworks: “Somebody go & ask Biggie to orate / what’s going down in the streets” (96). The speaker’s impossible plea for the dead rapper’s presence as an urban griot who could narrate the events, and thus help the people make sense of their situation, evokes the sense of confusion, disorganization, and voicelessness most likely experienced by the protesters of Michael Brown’s fatal shooting by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri in the summer of 2014. The poem’s structure both amplifies this sense of fragmentation and uncertainty, chaotic “motion & relativity in the streets” of a city in the midst of an uprising (*Emperor* 97), and—through the poet’s manipulation of the self-imposed limitations of *ghazal*—performs a neo-humanist search for connections and unity among the unrest. As K. C. Kanda explains, the *ghazal* is a disjunctive poetic form in which “[e]ach couplet is a self-sufficient unit, detachable and quotable, generally containing the complete expression of an idea” (qtd. in Caplan 119). However, in Komunyakaa’s poem some of the couplets break this fundamental rule by introducing images that continue throughout the neighboring couplets:

If you’re holding the hand lightning strikes
juice will light you up miles for the streets

where an electric chair surge dims
all the county lights beyond the streets. (96–97)

By juxtaposing an image of the breakdancing move in which the dancers, holding hands, simulate an electric current flowing through their bodies with that of an execution by electrocution, the poem simultaneously evokes the community-building function of Black urban culture and the state’s lethal interventions that disrupt this community. Evoking the Black nationalist trope of understanding the African American population as a “nation within a nation,” these contrasting images of electricity as a both animating and deadly force reflect the ongoing struggle between the state-sanctioned attempts at eliminating Black culture and this culture’s powerful, grassroots resistance that can only be achieved through solidarity—here, literally embodied in the image of the protesters holding hands.

Through this structural play between union and disjunction, between a transnationally “imported” poetic form and the endemically US hip-hop referents, the poem performs two related moves: first, it globalizes the uprising in Ferguson while underscoring the specificity of anti-Black violence in the United States, and second, it searches for a sense of wholeness and order among the brutal chaos of the warlike reality of the riots. Full of paradoxes, the poem at one and the same time expresses the need for the uprising as a venue for expressing collective anguish and disclosing the unethical practices of the law enforcement (“Take back the night. Take killjoy’s / cameras & microphones to the streets” [96]), and recognizes the futility of such efforts:

even though the protesters “hope for a bypass beyond the streets” (96), or for their grievances to be heard and acknowledged by the criminal justice system as well as the wider public, the poem’s structural repetition of the word “streets” at the end of every couplet suggests a never-ending cycle of urban disenfranchisement and protests that do not lead to any substantial change in the ways the law enforcement and the legal system operate. Modern technology, too, is presented as both a means of disseminating news about Ferguson’s local events globally and a failed promise of justice: while the tweets that document the unrest stay “lockstep in the frontal lobe” of Internet users worldwide, the “echo chamber of the streets” locks the voices of the protesters into perpetual self-repetition, exposing the self-enclosed nature of social media activism (96). The poem does not lay claim to any immediate solutions to the ongoing crisis either, and its closing lines offer merely a somewhat cryptic rumination on the role of the poet amidst the unrest: “Yusef, this morning proves a crow / the only truth serum in the street” (97).

From the streets, the speaker—now clearly identified with the poet himself—turns inwards, reminding himself of the poet’s ethical responsibility as the “witness, protester, and contestor” of reality (Callahan 3). With no contextual information to help determine its meaning, the “crow” that is the only promise of “truth in the street” remains radically open to interpretation. It can refer to nearly anything from a grim vision of the carrion-eating bird emerging as the only winner in the aftermath of the bloody man-made conflict to African American pride in one’s cultural heritage that originated from situations of state-sanctioned dispossession (or “crowing” about the successful griots of social dissent, such as The Notorious B.I.G. and Grandmaster Flash, referenced in the poem); or the trickster figure of the crow as one who out-smarts his more powerful opponents. As Trudier Harris observes in her reading of Komunyakaa’s Vietnam poems, in “a poetry that focuses on violence and violation, the transcendent beauty of creation is our most lingering solace” (114)—when no immediate solutions may be offered, the chaos-organizing function of the poetic craft brings at least a degree of consolation.

However, the formal and aesthetic choices made by the poet in “Ghazal, after Ferguson” imply that this somewhat escapist search for artistic beauty instead of situated action may not be the sole function of this poem. The choice of ghazal as the lyrical structure (and, arguably the poem’s referencing of hip-hop’s diasporic roots through its evocation of the Barbados-born and Bronx-raised rapper Grandmaster Flash) points to a kind of discursive cosmopolitanism, or what Malin Pereira refers to as a “cosmopolitan sensibility of movement around the globe, borrowing from whatever cultural materials are necessary to say what you have to say” (57). Unlike an act of cultural appropriation, where a cultural artifact is reified in purely aestheticized terms, this cross-cultural borrowing in Komunyakaa’s poem points to an actual potential for the forging of a transnational, cosmopolitan consciousness as the beginning of an “organic solidarity emerg[ing] from the ground up between communities bearing the brunt of state repression” (Bailey 1019). As Kristian Davis Bailey observes, what he terms the

“Ferguson-Gaza moment”—the summer when the Ferguson uprising coincided with “Israel’s fifty-day war on the Gaza Strip,” causing protesters across the United States to raise the chant of “from Ferguson to Palestine, occupation is a crime”—led to a “resurgence of Black internationalism in the contemporary era” that strongly echoed the Black Panther Party’s insistence on the connections between US imperialist endeavors abroad and anti-Black police brutality at home (1017–1018). In this context, the poet’s use of a traditionally Middle-Eastern form has a broader anti-imperialist resonance, as it makes a connection between various groups of strangers in their own land (from Palestinians in Gaza to the Black population of the US) and offers an alternative mode of citizenship that detaches “social belonging and ethical commitment from the near-monopoly exercised ... by the state” (Holland 153). Denied the state-sponsored forms of legal and physical protection, the people can exchange their respective cultural capitals, share their experiences of exclusion and oppression, and ultimately forge alternative, transnational coalitions. A nomadic ethics of establishing connections and building solidarity across locally situated yet universally vulnerable subjects may offer a way to replace state-imposed order with an organic *cosmos* (from the Greek *kósmos*, meaning “order, form, arrangement”) to the *polis* of Ferguson and its equivalents around the world.

Several of the poems collected in *The Emperor of Water Clocks* both advocate the ethical ideals of nomadic cosmopolitics and debunk the myth of cosmopolitanism as something that already has, or inevitably must eventually be, achieved. “Envoy to Palestine” and “Ghazal, after Ferguson” are separated by two other poems of global social protest, about the 2012 civil war in Mali and the protests against the 2012 imprisonment of the punk rock group Pussy Riot in Kiev. This section of the volume, particularly focused on dispelling the myth of cosmopolitanism as an achieved ideal, exposes and condemns the violence of global imperialism on both transnational and local levels; thus, these poems participate in cosmopolitics as a practice of thinking through the modes and ways in which an ethically cosmopolitan world can be achieved. Guided by a nomadic type of consciousness that, to quote Braidotti, moves “across established categories and levels of experience: blurring boundaries without burning bridges” (*Nomadic Subjects* 26), these poems participate in the neo-humanist project of “strategic universalism” by proposing global solidarity of the disprivileged that neither overlooks the exceptionalism of particular experiences and forms of disenfranchisement nor attempts to impose a single, universalist (say, Western humanist) morality for such prospective cosmopolitan community. A truly egalitarian and inclusive cosmopolitanism is an ethical promise and a political possibility, whose realization depends on collective mobilization of the globally oppressed; echoing this legacy of Black internationalist thought, Komunyakaa’s poems suggest the adoption of a nomadic subjectivity—at once rhizomatically rooted in one’s particular experience and radically open to establishing non-hierarchical relations with all kinds of others—as one way of achieving this ideal.

In *Nomadic Subjects*, Braidotti asserts that one of the objectives of nomadic thought is to find “adequate representations for the sort of subjects we are in the process of becoming to compose significant sites for reconfiguring modes of belonging and political practice” (11). In *The Emperor of Water Clocks*, Komunyakaa offers poetic and philosophical explorations of the ever-changing modes of citizenship, belongingness, identity, and race in the global context of the twenty-first century world, whose inhabitants, for better or worse, are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. The poems collected in his latest volume delve into various, sometimes contradictory, visions and iterations of cosmopolitanism: from its relatively conservative understanding as a multicultural conviviality that is achievable within the boundaries of the nation-state; to the activist vision of transnational solidarity of the oppressed inspired by the Black (inter)nationalist tradition; and from the discursive cosmopolitanism of cultural hybridity to a more embodied and embedded cosmopolitics of ethical responsibility for the Other as a lived practice. All these incarnations of cosmopolitan thought that appear in Komunyakaa’s poems are underscored by a nomadic sense of belonging in the world, producing paradoxical poetic subjects that, culturally or geographically, are at once free-floating and rooted, scattered and firmly situated. This nomadic consciousness is reflected in the open-endedness of the poetic form, which invites dialogue rather than imposes meanings; in the rhizomatic locatedness of the verse, which imbues “the experience of being there with experiences of elsewhere” (Paquet 85); and in the lyrics’ ethical imperative of the neo-humanist search for truths and meanings that does not strive to impose their universality but recognizes the situatedness of all individual experience. While often politically engaged, the poems in *The Emperor of Water Clocks* do not offer instant solutions to the problems they examine, but rather participate in a cosmopolitical ritual that “gives no answer as to the decision to take, offers no ‘prophetic’ revelation” but instead “transforms each protagonist’s relations with his or her knowledge, hopes, fears and memories, and allows the whole to generate what each one would have been unable to produce separately” (Stengers 1002). This idealistic vision of ethical global solidarity as a constant conversation may be seen as counterproductive and subject to the same criticism that was directed against the “fundamental and unresolved dilemma” of the Black (inter)nationalist thought of 1960s and 1970s, whose absolute rejection of state power hindered the possibilities of a feasible actualization of their ideals in practice (West and Martin 31). One must remember, however, that *The Emperor of Water Clocks* is not a political manifesto but a work of poetry, an “idiotic” enterprise that invites the reader to ponder, rather than come to conclusions about, the meanings of race, citizenship, and identity. Like water clocks, Komunyakaa’s nomadic poetic rituals allow their readers to “steal” moments—painful as well as beautiful—from contemporary life around the world and reconsider their own role in the *cosmos* to which they inextricably belong.

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Aparajita Nanda

The Pastiche of Discrepant “Minoritarian” Voices in Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*

The cosmopolitanism of our times does not spring from the capitalized “Virtues” of Rationality, Universality, and Progress; nor is it embodied in the myth of the nation writ large in the figure of the citizen of the world. Cosmopolitans today are often victims of modernity, failed by capitalism’s upward mobility, and bereft of those comforts and customs of national belonging. Refugees, peoples of the diaspora, and migrants and exiles represent the spirit of the cosmopolitical community.

(Breckenridge et al. 6)

Cosmopolitanism may be described as the philosophy of one who is “free from local, provincial, or national ideas, prejudices, or attachments; at home all over the world” (*The Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia*). The conceptual content of the word presumes universality, a free-moving entity without any deterrent ethnic or cultural moorings, happy in an unquestioning sense of belonging to the world, a citizen of a world “ethically synchronous and politically symmetrical” (Pollock et al. 582). The historical realities of the twentieth century, however, have marked our world as one of almost constant movement and migration, both forced and elective. It has become almost completely deterritorialized, where varied definitions of cosmopolitanism are now needed to accommodate “refugees, peoples of the diaspora, and migrants and exiles [who] represent the spirit of the cosmopolitical community” (Pollock et al. 582)¹⁴. Cosmopolitics is proposed as an alternate term to accommodate this historical juncture, characterized by immigration bans, deportations, and refugee crises. Cosmopolitics recognizes cultural reconfigurations based on the contact between different cultures, understands the shared “diaspora experience and its narratives of displacement” (Hall 223), and recognizes the transitoriness of the modern world. This is the need of the day. Pheng Cheah advises, “[W]e ought to turn our critical focus to the mutating global field of political, economic, and cultural forces in which nationalism and cosmopolitanism are invoked as practical discourses. *The cosmopolitical* is an apposite term for this global force field of the politics” (31). Papastergiadis adds that movement and migration naturally bring culturally diverse people into contact with each other, and that migrants engaged in a perpetual process of negotiating culture often become “translated beings” who bring their past experiences to bear on their present. Mainstream definitions of cosmopolitanism clearly ignore these facts, and therefore fail to respond to the reality that as the migrants’ “conceptual boundaries are expanded,”

¹⁴ See also Clifford, Ribeiro, Pollock, Werbner, and Delanty.

their “residual differences [need to be] respected” (Papastergiadis 131). As a possible antidote, Kwame Anthony Appiah suggests the idea of a “rooted cosmopolitanism,” one that speaks of a “common attachment to the constitutional institutions that allow people to center their lives on a variety of non-homogeneous cultures [and] yet enable them to participate in and actualize the political community that provides stability for this diversity” (García-Moreno and Pfeiffer xi). And though this seems an interesting remedial idea, it still remains a liberal revision of cosmopolitanism. Appiah’s idea is contested by Homi Bhabha. Bhabha’s scrutiny of “the underbelly of the new cosmopolitanism” reveals that it is comprised of dislocated masses from all over the world (García-Moreno and Pfeiffer xi). Bhabha calls this “minoritarian cosmopolitanism” or “vernacular cosmopolitanism,” one created by the struggles of everyday lived reality where the specificity of experience rewrites the all-embracing universal notion of cosmopolitanism. This chapter examines Kiran Desai’s Man Booker Prize-winning novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*, through the lens of Bhabha’s “minoritarian cosmopolitanism,” and builds on Bhabha’s concept by looking at the status of underprivileged migrants who are bound by the same (or nearly the same) history, space, and culture, that births a hybrid pastiche of discrepant narratives written by their individual personalities.¹⁵

The Inheritance of Loss ponders questions of identity through characters marked by a deep sense of deprivation and loss left behind by colonization. The novel chronicles the lives of an Anglophile Indian judge whose educational sojourn in Britain has permanently branded him as an alien both in his homeland and abroad; of his orphaned sixteen-year-old granddaughter, Sai, and her tutor/lover, Gyan; and of his unnamed cook who pushes his son, Biju, to go seek his fortune in the US. Their stories, and those of so many others in the novel, illustrate the various ways that inherited loss persists and percolates through generations. The cook and Biju—the father and son—suffer from a colonial hangover. It is fascinating to watch how this colonial residuum plays out in them both. And though the cook never leaves India, while Biju goes abroad to the United States, they are both caught in a permanent syndrome of experiencing the marginalizing effects of being a person of color in a white man’s world. However, this frame of mind plays out differently in the father and son duo. While the cook desperately craves the stamp of Westernization even in his employment, the son apparently spurns the West (as he never really connects to Western values) and blames his father for encouraging him to go to the United States, where he ends up being flagged as an illegal alien. As the novel proceeds, intriguing variations of these responses to Western values are also exemplified in Saeed Saeed, a Zanzibarian who befriends Biju, and Harish-Harry, one of Biju’s employers, both of whom Biju meets in the United States of America.

¹⁵ I use the term “hybrid” to underscore the heterogeneity of the elements comprising *these particular* pastiches, rather than to suggest the inevitable end product of assimilationist ideologies.

In his sojourn in the United States, Biju deals with racialized bias and stereotyping—offshoots of inherited colonial resentment towards racialized others—and he struggles with a deep sense of confusion that sometimes even makes him buy into the attitude; in this hybrid form, a new minoritarian cosmopolitanism is born. The internalized colonial “habit of hate” that Biju carries with him is rekindled as he remembers his father telling him to beware of Pakistanis; it makes Biju rant, “Pigs pigs sons of pigs, soor ka bacha” (Desai 25). The last few words, in his native Hindi, seem to bring his past (the post-independence hatred between Indians and Pakistanis)¹⁶ into the present of New York. As Biju relives the familiar stereotyping, he unknowingly buys into the neocolonial American frame of mind, “where every nationality confirmed its stereotype” (Desai 25). As a member of the underground community of undocumented immigrants in the United States, Biju interacts with people of other races and ethnicities that previously he had only ever encountered through hearsay. “Minoritarian cosmopolitanism” takes a new turn as Biju rejects his discriminatory attitude towards black people, people of other religions, and even other minorities. Biju is initially confounded by his reactions to Saeed Saeed, a black Muslim from Zanzibar, for “Saeed Saeed wasn’t drowning, he was bobbing in the tides. ... Saeed was kind and he was not Paki. Therefore he was OK? ... Therefore he liked Saeed, but hated the general lot of Muslims? ... Therefore he hated all black people but liked Saeed?” (Desai 85–86). Saeed becomes one of Biju’s closest friends, and the latter alters his perception of race and religion, prompting the turbulent internal monologue quoted above. Later, Saeed playfully dismantles another stereotype for Biju: “I am Saeed Saeed from Africa,” he says, “But don’t worry, man, we don’t eat white people anymore” (Desai 87). Biju’s strong racial prejudices resurface when, at the United States consulate, he recalls having heard other Indians discussing how to frame the purpose of their visit to the United States: “We’ll say a *hubshi*¹⁷ broke into the shop and killed our sister-in-law and now we have to go to the funeral” (Desai 202). And yet, at one point, Biju shuns racial stereotyping when, during his conversation with Mr. Iype, the Indian deliveryman for *India Today*, the latter comments on the political turmoil in Darjeeling at the time: “They should kick the bastards back to Nepal ... Bangladeshis to Bangladesh, Afghans to Afghanistan, all Muslims to Pakistan ... why are they sitting in our country?” Biju quips back, “Why are we sitting here?” (Desai 250–51). Biju’s rejoinder reminds Iype of his precarious position in the United States, and in the process makes the latter’s comment highly ironic; it also sug-

16 The British ruled India for almost 250 years. When they granted independence to India on August 15, 1947, they split the country into two contending nations, India and Pakistan. India they claimed was for Hindus, while Pakistan was for Muslims. This momentous decision led to unprecedented violence, rioting, and loss of lives as families desperately tried to cross over the newly instituted borders—the Hindus fleeing to India and Muslims to Pakistan. In its aftermath, it left behind one of the most horrifying losses that India (or humanity for that matter) has suffered.

17 The word is a racial slur derived from the Arabic word *Ḥabashi* (“Abyssinian”).

gests a radical modification in Biju's own response to racialized others, a fascinating trait of this emerging minoritarian discourse.

Despite Biju's ameliorated attitude, stereotyping and discrimination do take their toll on him. He inhabits what Clifford calls an "observer-participant position," typical of displaced individuals; a part of Biju partakes of Saeed's brutal treatment of a mouse while another part of him acts as an outsider, observing what is going on (98). When Saeed catches the mouse that supposedly was eating the bread in the restaurant, he "kick[s] it up with his shoe, dribble[s] it, trie[s] to exchange it with Biju ... tosse[s] it up till it comes down dead" (Desai 103). Saeed seems to have internalized the harsh ill treatment meted out to him on his arrival in the US, and now transfers it onto the rodent, obviously deriving sadistic pleasure from the despicable act. The pleasure he derives from it acts as an outlet for the accumulated rage and frustration of immigrant life. The harshness of survival seems to have made pathological brutes of both Saeed and Biju (though the latter refuses to participate, he is more than an interested onlooker), whose only way to deal with lived experience is to transfer it onto a harmless rodent. Again, in one of his jobs, when Biju is a delivery boy for a Chinese food outlet, he partakes of the observer-participant position almost as a form of revenge, to virtually compensate for the rejection he faces. This time, Biju reverses the panoptic gaze of power (be it white colonial/Anglo-American or that of his employers) that pins him down in his workplace as the racialized inferior. He reverts back to his native culture as he fortifies himself against the newly-minted, Westernized desires of Indian female students who want "not an Indian boy" but "the Marlboro man with a Ph.D." (Desai 56). Biju's "vernacular cosmopolitanism" is made up of "a mixture of emotions: hunger, respect, loathing" (Desai 57). He mocks the Anglicized transformation of the Indian students as "he put[s] two fingers to his lips and whistle[s] into the window at the girls," then sings to them a Hindi film song whose title translates as "this girl is crazy for me" (Desai 57). Later on in the narrative, he condescendingly sneers at Indians who eat beef at Brigitte's in New York by attributing to them animal-like noises—"chomp, chomp"—as he gloats in his presumed knowledge—"They knew. He knew."—that they were giving up their "religion, principles of one's parents and their parents before them" (Desai 151). Whether to do penance for their sins or to sanitize himself, Biju quits his job at Brigitte's in a frenzy and leaves "a new person, a man full to the brim with a wish to live within a narrow purity" (Desai 152).

Apart from a discriminatory attitude and the resultant stereotyping, several variations of the white frame of mind are introduced in the minoritarian discourses of Biju, Harish-Harry, and Saeed Saeed. Harish-Harry's whitening works on two counts. For one, Harish-Harry buys into the capitalist system of the US in the name of success. His behavior illustrates, as Adriana Stiocan points out, "[Harish's] adherence to the global capitalist credo. ... For example, he allows [the workers] to sleep in the basement of the café with rats, but only pays them a quarter of the minimum wage" (91). In one instance, Biju slips while working in the kitchen, and instead of

the boss taking any responsibility, he threatens Biju with immediate dismissal and the ease of replacing him:

“If you are not happy, then go right now. Go find someone to sponsor you. Know how easily I can replace you? *Know how lucky you are!!!* You think there aren’t thousands of people in this city looking for a job? I can replace you like this,” he snapped his fingers, “I’ll snap my fingers and in one second hundreds of people will appear. *Get out of my face!*” (Desai 206)

Harish-Harry’s ruthless capitalist attitude, his consistent economic exploitation of other immigrants, is further portrayed by his refusal to help Biju, or, for that matter, any of his other employees, get a green card. In fact, Harish-Harry’s attitude seems to be reinforced because of his status of legality that Biju can never¹⁸ claim. His shabby treatment and humiliation make Biju evade the shameful truth when he recounts to his father by phone that “everything [is] alright” (Desai 254). Through his daily encounters, Biju comes to understand that the world views Indians as inferior and racialized beings; and yet, he remains defined by the “habit of hate [that] had accompanied [him], and he f[inds] that he possessed an awe of white people, who arguably had done India great harm, and a lack of generosity regarding almost everyone else, who had never done a single harmful thing to India” (Desai 86). The inherited hatred for others, along with the inferiority complex that it engenders, makes Biju a victim to racial hierarchy as he passively succumbs to exploitation and discrimination.

The sense of white, colonial, or neocolonial hierarchy is further deepened in Harish-Harry by his garish display of wealth. He is defined by the capitalist ideology of the US: “He hoped for a big house, then he hoped for a bigger house even if he had to leave it unfurnished for a while, like his nemesis Mr. Shah who owned seven rooms, all empty except for TV, couch, and carpeting in white. Even the TV was a white TV for white symbolized success out of India for the community” (Desai 166). The insatiable hunger for material goods, all in white, clearly establishes a neocolonial context as Harish-Harry obsesses over his “American dream.” But interestingly, the capitalist commitment of Harish-Harry has to deal with a disconcerting minoritarian problem. And despite his constant privileging of capitalist values, he cannot reconcile himself to his daughter’s assimilating to US culture and wearing “combat boots and clothes in camouflage prints” (Desai 165). Harish recalls that his wife had said to “give her two tight slaps,” but that did not help; he had tried to Americanize himself and rise to the occasion: “ ‘You GO, gurlll!!!’ ”¹⁹ But all he got back was a caustic answer:

18 Anyone like Biju who enters the United States with a legal visa but outstays his permitted time of residence becomes an illegal immigrant, one who can never apply for permanent residency (that is, a green card) or citizenship. Thus, Biju could never lay claim to legality as Harish-Harry could, as the latter would never undergo Biju’s fate.

19 This exclamation is ambiguous, and perhaps that is the point of its use in the novel: In African American culture, it is used as an encouragement, but here it seems that Harish is using it to try to tell

“ ‘I didn’t ask to be born,’ she [had] said. ‘You had me for your own selfish reasons, wanted a servant, didn’t you? But in this country, Dad, nobody’s going to wipe your ass for free’ ” (Desai 165). Harish-Harry, as his name indicates, remains a misfit hybrid despite his attempts at acculturation. Biju’s reflections on Harish-Harry reveal the latter’s inability to reconcile the two disparate cultures. The resultant disharmony makes Biju realize that all Harish-Harry had achieved was “a fake version of himself,” a version that would remain in a quandary forever (Desai 293).

Internalization of the white attitude plays out quite differently in Saeed Saeed. His shrewd appraisal of success in the US makes him ignore other illegal immigrants from Zanzibar. Determined to succeed on an individual level, Saeed understands that hiding from his compatriots is his strategy for survival (Spielman 81). Saeed works at Banana Republic, “a shop whose name was synonymous with colonial exploitation and the rapacious ruin of the third world” (Desai 112). He admits that the US is a country of opportunities, offering limitless choices; but he could “spectacularly sabotage the system ... he would pledge emotional allegiance to the flag with tears in his eyes and conviction in his voice. The country recognized something in Saeed, he in it, and it was a mutual love affair” (88–89). Thus, the spectacular sabotage is not a sinister negative in an otherwise string of positives attributed to Saeed, but a nod at the fact that he knows how to play the system. For the destitute and homeless masses, who seek to stay in the United States, they need to not only know how to survive, but also be aware of their priorities and loyalties. Thus, as Saeed’s so-called assimilation is undermined by his spectacular sabotage, his acknowledgment of his various allegiances makes a clear statement of his intentions via the use of italics, capitalization, and grammar (a play on the auxiliary verb in the present tense “am” and in the future tense “will BE”): “*First I am Muslim, then Zanzibari, then I will BE American*” (Desai 152). As Spielman suggests, Saeed ranks the US at the bottom of his loyalties (80). In fact, Saeed comes across as a man of few allegiances or loyalties; rather, he is a man who easily appropriates fake personas (Saeed’s fraudulent passport has him registered as Rasheed Zulfickar) and marries for a green card, intending to wait the four years and then divorce and marry for real (Desai 88). And, at one point, Biju’s devotion to Saeed brings about a change in him, too; he foregoes his role of community facilitator—a “sort of role that was common in India [as o]ne’s involvement in other people’s lives gave one numerous small opportunities for importance”—only to transition into an individualistic, selfish messenger boy for Saeed, who refuses to help fellow illegal immigrants (Desai 106). Biju’s metamorphosis denotes an interesting point of departure in the hybrid discourse of minoritarian cosmopolitanism. It suggests more productive approaches that keep alive “the variegated elements of

his daughter to leave. He may not see the irony of inadvertently using a phrase of encouragement as he attempts to discipline his daughter.

hybridity [that] should serve as a point of departure for renewed scrutiny of the conditions and bases of hybridity” (Kraidy 46).²⁰

Despite Biju’s momentary conversion, mainstream discriminatory attitudes confine him to an inferior status that permanently denies him manhood. As Gnanasekaran points out, not only about Biju but also his father, “[t]heir thinking has been conditioned by their being subservient to somebody else in society. This stunted growth of their individual consciousness has resulted in certain preconceptions, rather misconceptions about themselves” (13–14). This misconception manifests itself in reiterated images of denied adulthood: When Biju’s co-workers “visit a Dominican woman in Washington Heights—only thirty-five dollars,” he covers “his timidity with manufactured disgust” (Desai 18). In reality, Biju understands that “[t]hey were men; he was a baby. He was nineteen, he looked and felt several years younger” (Desai 18). Again, when Saeed Saeed boasts of his marriage to the white woman Toys, daughter of Vermont hippies, Biju is stunned. Encouraged by Saeed’s good luck, Biju makes a pathetic bid to impress white women (and maybe qualify for a green card, too, through marriage): He greets them with a smile on his face only to be rudely ignored. The elusive green card becomes a signifier of manhood in the immigrant’s discourse; the untold narrative is that only a citizen qualifies as a man. The terror that every call to the immigration office could reveal his illegal status leaves Biju “so restless sometimes, he could barely stand to stay in his skin” (Desai 91). It leads to deep frustration as he feels a “flash of anger at his father” for virtually exiling him to a foreign land; ironically enough, Biju himself is trapped in it, too, for “he knew he wouldn’t have forgiven his father for not trying to send him either” (Desai 91). Both father and son stand defined by “solid knowledge ... and they defend its solidity by means of suppression, deliberately pushing a thought out of their consciousness” (Spielman 76). In other words, they merely operate within the parameters of knowledge that they know or have been raised in. The colonial ideology of the Civilizing Mission and the concurrent idea of a savage not granted the status of a man play out in Biju’s words as he quips, “I’m civilized, sir, ready for the United States, I’m civilized, mam” (Desai 201). Trapped in a typical minoritarian discourse, Biju dreams of the “After The Green Card Return Home” (Desai 108). He vicariously lives the life of the “legalized foreigners” whose “expandable third-world suitcase[s]” he envies as he desperately begs for virtual adulthood, complete citizenship, even if it means marrying “a disabled or mentally retarded green card holder” (Desai 109). Yet his stunted growth into adulthood is further underlined by one of the last images we have of him: Back in India, Biju stands stripped of all his clothing and luggage with only an effeminate nightgown “with large, faded pink flowers and yellow, puffy sleeves, ruffles at the neck and hem” (Desai 349).

²⁰ See also Papastergiadis (170).

The meaning and implications of names create their own space in this complex pastiche of minoritarian discourse. Ironically, the names of some of the characters cater to both mainstream and minority cultures; the characters remain partially maimed in the confusion of both, until they should find a means to stand up on their own. For example, Biju's name can be considered a phonic play on the French "bijou" (jewel). Clearly, he is a jewel only for his father, who sustains himself with the letters his son sends home: "Biju's letters traced a string of jobs, they said more or less the same thing each time except for the name of the establishment he was working for. His repetition provided coziness, and the cook's repetition of his son's repetition double-knit the coziness" (Desai 19). The repetitive quality of the letters with just a change of the name of the establishment not only portrays the monotony of a banal job but also opens up a space of fabricated reality that leads to the father's delusional boasts of his son's success abroad. In an intriguing turn of the discourse, Harish-Harry seems to be a product of this so-called cosmopolitan "contact zone" with mainstream culture, what Oana Sabo argues is Kiran Desai's "site of contamination, negotiation and conflict" (378). Harish-Harry's name plays on an ambiguity that makes a mockery of both Indian and US values as it refuses to let go of the Sanskrit Harish (which means "king of gods [or of Vishnu/Krishna]") and yet tacks on the Harry by way of a hyphen to create a new Americanized persona. A similar process applies to the restaurant he owns: The Gandhi Café, which claims to play Gandhi's favorite music, serves no beef, and professes to be "an all-Hindu establishment" is clearly a façade (Desai 155). Like his establishment, Harish-Harry is a fake. Even as his dedication to capitalist values proves his loyalty to the US, it hides an animosity almost on the cusp of hatred. He admits to a deep desire to wring the neck of his customers and finally end the fake smiles and greetings: "I can't, but maybe my son will, and that is my great hope. One day Jayant-Jay will smile and get his hands about their sons' necks and he will choke them dead" (Desai 165). Harish-Harry's ultimate revenge will happen only when he or his brother, named Gaurish-Gary (the name Gaurish in Sanskrit means "Lord Shiva," again with the hyphenated appendage of Gary), is replaced by Jayant-Jay, which in conjunction in Sanskrit means "the ultimate victory." The minoritarian discourse, at this point, makes a final statement: The hyphen in the name becomes a mere embellishment, as the name Jayant-Jay draws on Sanskrit words on both counts.

As the hybridity of names transgresses cultural and linguistic boundaries, it challenges all notions of purity and, in the process, often conceals the asymmetry of a name's components. Jan Nederveen Pieterse discusses the intermingling of languages in North America as a "deeply creative process ... [the] ramifications [of which] over time are not predictable because it doesn't fit an existing matrix or established paradigm but itself facility in English with US Americans around him. He frequently reverts to using words from his native language. This creolization of English (the master's tongue) provides provocative insights into Biju's mind. Time and again, Biju uses the native tongue to signify a "translational process of culture's in-betweenness," which Bhabha designates as a significant trait of "vernacular cos-

mopolitanism” (582). When Biju stereotypes the Pakistanis—“Pigs pigs, sons of pigs, sooar ka baccha”—he goes beyond simple creolization of language; he translates from Hindi to English (the literal translation of “sooar ka baccha” is “sons of pigs”) and interpolates a new phrase into the English language (Desai 25). The “in-betweenness” of a culturally hybrid Biju provides him with an opportunity to not only appropriate the English language, but to coin new phrases to accommodate his vernacular lingo. Again, when the female Indian students thank Biju for the food he brings them, and somewhat condescendingly advise him to buy “topi²¹-muffler-gloves to be ready for winter,” he is overcome by a strange feeling; his momentary admiration for their poise and smartness is replaced by a sense of repulsion at how they had tarnished the traditional image of an ideal Indian woman known for her generosity (Desai 56). Biju gets his sweet revenge as he wolf-whistles at them to settle his score. As he pedals away, he sings a song from a Bollywood movie: “O, yeh ladki zara si deewani lagti hai,” which can be translated as “this girl is crazy for me—is in love with me” (Desai 57). By reverting to a Bollywood song in Hindi, Biju buys himself a ticket to the land of fantasy where he makes the last call—it is his act of rejection and not theirs. Often in the bitter cold winters of New York, Biju fortifies himself with “a padding of newspapers down his shirt. Sometimes he inserted pancakes into the padding—his food for survival” (Desai 57).

Interestingly, despite the hardships Biju has undergone, his tactics for survival are not what he has learned in the United States but are the product of the “translational process,” a process that brings back tender memories of a familiar place—“the memory of an uncle who used to go out to the fields in winter with his lunch time *parathas*²² down his vest” (Desai 57). But the process seems to freeze halfway, as the text records: “But even this did not seem to help, and once on his bicycle, he began to weep from the cold and the weeping unpicked a deeper vein of grief—such a terrible groan issued from between the whimpers that he was shocked his sadness was so profound” (Desai 57). As personal memories fade, new collective ones take prominence that not only acknowledge shared culture but create connections between people from diverse cultures and races. Cultural liberalism often recognizes this pluralist existence but fails to acknowledge the inherent critique of modernity that forms the core of these minoritarian discourses. This time, the food culture and the Hindi language create a unique minoritarian space that brings together Saeed Saeed from Zanzibar, Kavafya from Kazakhstan, Omar from Malaysia, and Biju from India. They share Indian food, “samosa and chapatis, jalebis, pilau” (Desai 181). Songs from two films from two very different eras are enjoyed by the group. And interestingly, the lyrics to the songs “Mera Joota Hai Japani” (“My Shoes Are from Japan”) and “Bombay Se Aaya Mera Dost Friend” (“My Has Come from Bombay”) bring the world, or rather,

21 The Hindi word “topi” means “cap.”

22 Parathas are wheat bread.

the international diasporic figure (as the first song goes, different bits of clothing from different parts of the world are worn by the character) to Bombay in India before transporting this heterogeneous figure to alien shores, “deftly yoking together the local with the global” (Rajan and Sharma 151).

From the creolization of language that creates even as it subverts the master’s narrative/tongue, we need finally to recognize the exilic condition in which the immigrant survives. Biju’s reality is a horrifying experience shared by the shadow class of illegal immigrants, who are discriminated against, exploited, and perpetually on the run: “nomads condemned to movement,” a mockery of the cosmopolitan traveler, a victim of “a journey [that] once begun has no end” (Desai 112, 122). They form what James Clifford calls a “disconcertingly hybrid ‘native’ ... strangely familiar, and different precisely in that unprocessed familiarity” (97). Trapped in the basement kitchens of the Baby Bistro, Le Colonial, or the Stars and Stripes Diner, Biju remains a victim of fake colonial structures that boast organized façades of colonial aura and cuisine, built on exploited labor almost exclusively imported from former colonies: “On top, rich colonial, and down below, poor native. Colombian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, Gambian. ... All American flag on top, all Guatemalan flag below. Plus one Indian flag when Biju arrived” (Desai 23). He feels “abandoned among foreigners” and the condition of insecurity combined with the compelled movement that dictates his life makes Biju understand that it is impossible to cultivate a close human relationship: “[H]e had learned by now. You lived intensely with others, only to have them disappear overnight, since the shadow class was condemned to movement. The men left for other jobs ... got deported, returned home, changed names. ... The emptiness Biju felt returned to him over and over, until eventually he made sure not to let friendships sink deep anymore” (Desai 108, 112). This dehumanizing effect leaves him bitter and an alien to the US. On a broader scale, illegal immigrants, like Biju (considering the sheer number of applicants if nothing else), have little hope of acquiring a green card and applying for US citizenship. Thus: “Saeed applied for immigration lottery each year, but Indians were not allowed to apply. ... There were just too many jostling to get out, to pull everyone else down, to climb on one another’s backs and run. The line would be stopped up for years, the quota was full, overfull, spilling over” (Desai 90).

A deep sense of non-belonging haunts Biju. And even when he is on his way back to India he ruefully admits, “here he was ... without name or knowledge of the American president, without the name of the river on whose bank he had lingered, without even hearing about any tourist sights—no Statue of Liberty, Macy’s, Little Italy” (Desai 314). Despite his never connecting intrinsically to US culture, Biju at one point does buy into materialistic culture by purchasing “[a] TV and VCR, a camera, sunglasses, baseball caps that said ‘NYC’ and ‘Yankees’ and ‘I Like My Beer Cold and My Women Hot’ ” (Desai 295). However, “the pleasures of cultural plenitude and richness promised by global capitalism ... prove elusive, as his experience of a globalized world only brings bewilderment” (Poon 553). When Biju returns to India, his cultural displacement and subsequent isolation are clearly evident. He is decked in his US

garb when he is robbed by the separatist Nepali insurgent group, who steal everything from him, leaving him wearing nothing but his underwear. Biju stands alone: “Without his luggage, without his savings, worst of all, without his pride. Back from the US with far less than he’d ever had” (Desai 349). He is symbolically stripped of all ties—North American and Indian—exiled from both cultures. The only bond Biju possesses is his relationship with his father in India. This, too, has deteriorated, as “they were no longer relevant to each other’s lives except for the hope that they *would* be relevant” (Desai 255). While Biju and his father love each other, the distance between them has caused a withering of their connection.

The various characters of *The Inheritance of Loss*—Biju, Saeed Saeed, Harish-Harry—portray different aspects of the “vocabulary of victimage” (Pollock et al. 582). The characters have to deal with different forms of discrimination, both external and internal, from brutal stereotyping to a nuanced manifestation of the white frame of mind. The process sometimes leaves Biju in an observer-participant position, triggering reluctant or retaliatory responses according to the situation. Victim to a flawed sense of manhood, Biju also remains an exile throughout the narrative. The politics of naming and linguistic hybridization play seminal roles in the complex pastiche of minoritarian discourse. Together they debunk any celebratory notions of multiculturalism and pluralist existence. They provide “a bricolage of context-dependent insights” that deal with historical continuities and disruptions, as they seek to make a statement through the composite voice of all the characters (Steady 4).

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II: Minority Bodies

Samir Dayal

Normative Materialist Cosmopolitanism

[Two young filmmakers] were making a documentary film about Protest and Resistance, they explained, and one of the recurring themes of the film was to have protesters say “Another World Is Possible” in whatever language they spoke. For example, if their mother tongue was Hindi or Urdu, they could say, “Doosri duniya mumkin hai. ...” They set up their camera while they were talking and asked Anjum to look straight into the lens when she spoke. They had no idea what “Duniya” meant in Anjum’s lexicon. Anjum, ... completely uncomprehending, stared into the camera. “Hum doosri Duniya se aye hain,” she explained helpfully, which meant: We’ve come from there. ... From the other world.

(Arundhati Roy, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*)

How do we square the ideal of cosmopolitanism—founded on the pivotal concept of the “abstract universal citizen”—with the material reality of those who are effectively denied membership in the cosmopolis? In extreme cases they are rendered perpetually homeless, deprived of everything but their bare humanity, deprived of basic rights even in modern multicultural society under the new globalized world order, which is so often assumed to be normative that only rare voices such as that of political scientist Finbarr Livesey register dissent against the view that “continuing globalization (or hyper-globalization for some) is the only show in town” or indeed that there is no alternative to this new world order (2). What kind of one world, what single planetary community, is possible, given the actually existing world, divided into countries, fragmented into communities, ethnic groups, sects, religious cults, and other bordered zones? In this chapter I will argue for a *normative materialist cosmopolitanism*. This is an “embodied” spatio-temporal notion, normative in the sense that it expresses the idea of how something ought to be, as Pheng Cheah puts it. This notion apostrophizes cosmopolitanism as the normative ideal of human rights for all, precisely because every person is recognized as a human body, a fellow human being, as well as belonging equally in the world—*cosmos*. Normativity’s force, as Cheah emphasizes, derives from its claim to universality. By the same token, the “normative force of world literature refers to its power or efficacy to change the world according to a normative ethico-political horizon,” what I am here calling simply “justice.” From the perspective of normative materialist cosmopolitanism, all human beings, regardless of political membership in any sovereign state, ought to be considered (normatively) as *kosmopolites*, as belonging to a single world community; but their material, corporeal or embodied difference must simultaneously be registered. There is both a philosophical-ontological and a socioeconomic-political rationale for why this correction is desirable, *without jettisoning normativity*. Such a doubled or nuanced approach is notable in Marx who, as Cheah notes, criticizes “the ethical and moral ideals of bourgeois philosophy such as civil and human rights” as “ideological abstractions generated by

the autonomization of reason from concrete material life.” Notwithstanding this qualification, a “normative” horizon persists in Marx’s materialist account of the world, namely “the universal fulfilment of concrete human needs by the cooperative social regulation of productive forces” (Cheah 6–7).

The normative materialist cosmopolitanism I argue for is a cosmopolitanism that is *not yet but always to come*, a utopia that political activism and even cultural theory project or imagine: “Another World Is Possible,” as the filmmakers’ slogan has it in the passage excerpted above as an epigraph from Arundhati Roy’s novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The novel presents a vision of what I will describe below as a microcosmic cosmopolitanism. This is notably a single world, to which everyone can belong, regardless of gender, race, sex, national origin, or socioeconomic status, and in belonging enjoy a presumption and guarantee of finding justice reigning universally: an admittedly utopian project, but one that is not, therefore, to be deprecated. Günter Grass and Pierre Bourdieu, though they were thinking primarily of a Western European context, can thus call for a “restoration of utopian possibility” (66). Of course, this utopian telos of what Isabelle Stengers would call *cosmopolitical* justice recedes to the point of vanishing: This “other world” remains only an “ought” (normative) world. Stengers writes that in the term *cosmopolitical*:

‘cosmo-’ indicates the impossibility of appropriating or representing ‘what is human in man’ and should not be confused with what we call the universal. The universal is a question within the tradition that has invented it as a requirement and also as a way of disqualifying those who do not refer to it. The cosmos has nothing to do with this universal or with the universe as an object of science. But neither should the ‘cosmo’ of cosmopolitical be confused with a speculative definition of the cosmos, capable of establishing a ‘cosmopolitics.’ (355)

Yet the *cosmopolitical project* produces a vector for thought and action, for radical change from within. It highlights how structures of belonging need to be reconceptualized for existing members of and new entrants into those structures, rather than simply reinscribing and reinforcing what Peter Sloterdijk describes as the structural principles of capitalist globalization that presumes a Euro-American Inside, “a hot-house”—an “artificially climatized inner space”(8–9)—that keeps the rest of the world on the Outside, through an invisible but impermeable membrane. This politicization of space is rife with ironies that often traffic in a phony discourse of *economic* “globalization” and *cultural* “cosmopolitanism.” Pankaj Mishra is rightly skeptical then when he writes, following a line of thought that was perhaps most compellingly shaped by the writings of postcolonial theorists and the subaltern studies historians, that the “Western path to modernity” is no longer to be taken as modular or normative but *provincialized*: The notion that “Western-style liberal democracy and capitalism would be generalized around the world” has been “devastated” as a “facile optimism, plunging a broad swathe of political and media elites in the West into intellectual confusion and bewilderment”(Mishra). As Slavoj Žižek writes in response to both Sloterdijk and Mishra, the irony of the contemporary conjuncture is that even though the

“lesson of post-9/11 is the end of the Fukuyama dream of global liberal democracy”—a kind of neoliberal fantasy version of cosmopolitanism, we might say—the evidence is that “at the level of economy, [global] capitalism has triumphed” everywhere. And this irony manifests itself in deceptive guises. For instance,

[the] mask of cultural diversity is sustained by the actual universalism of global capital. ... Global capitalism has no problem in accommodating itself to a plurality of local religions, cultures, traditions. So the cruel irony of anti-eurocentrism is that, on behalf of anti-colonialism, one criticizes the West at the very historical moment when global capitalism no longer needs Western cultural values (egalitarianism, fundamental rights, the welfare state) in order to function smoothly, and is doing quite well with authoritarian ‘alternative modernity.’ In short, one tends to denounce Western cultural values at the very moment that, critically reinterpreted, many of them can serve as a weapon against capitalist globalization. (Žižek, *The Courage* 16)

So we might ask, is global capitalism more realistic or more utopian than democratic cosmopolitanism, with its slogans of diversity and racial and ethnic diversity?

In Mishra’s words, what is needed is “rather less of ambitious but provincial ideologies and boosterish McKinsey projections and more of the great critical and cosmopolitan traditions—embodied by figures as diverse as Kierkegaard and the Buddha—that upheld paradox, contingency and open-endedness over symmetry and closure.” At the nation-state level this might take the form of “Ottoman-style confederal institutions that devolve power and guarantee minority rights”—in other words, microcosmic cosmopolitical justice. A true cosmopolitics must be open to non-Western worldings, “other ways of conceiving of the state, society, economy, and the good life. They all have their own specific difficulties and challenges. Nevertheless, it will be possible to understand them only through an open and sustained engagement with non-Western societies, and their political and intellectual traditions.” This cosmopolitical framing, “formidable in itself, would also go against every instinct of the self-regarding universalism” of the West (Mishra). But it is what underpins the kind of microcosmic cosmopolitanism I am proposing.

Anjum, the transgendered protagonist of the first part of Roy’s segmented novel (which I discuss at some length in this chapter), may be “completely uncomprehending” of the utopian slogan that “another world is possible,” which the filmmakers are asking her to catechize and perform. But Anjum’s *realism* guides her action in a vector corresponding to that slogan. Her instinctual demurral makes her hesitate to recite the filmmakers’ mantra mindlessly: it is the voice of the minoritarian ethicopolitical, of the microcosmic that resists being co-opted by the macropolitical. Had the filmmakers taken the trouble to see, Anjum actually does behave as though a better, united world were indeed possible. As a central character in the multi-part novel, Anjum embodies the hope of living for cosmopolitical or at least local justice even if it remains a distant utopia. Anjum also functions as a mouthpiece for Roy’s emphasis on the importance of engaging with the reality of *present* material conditions. Her minoritarian positionality embodies a material *différance* (demurral, hesitation, resistance,

subversion) that makes a radical difference—the difference of those who are othered, abjected. These, subalterns or people like herself, are in any case actually marginalized or effectively excluded from society and its infrastructural institutions. Thus, one sense in which hers is a “microcosmic cosmopolitanism” is that it is a cosmopolitanism from below—akin to what Koshy terms a “minority cosmopolitanism” that could be a pivot from which it would be possible to contest the conflation of “the subnational and the cosmopolitan with the global,” which “misconceives the complexity of both.” As Koshy puts it, such conflation also “denies worldliness to the former and particularity to the latter. It misses their imbrication, past and present”(592–593). If, as Koshy observes, the “positioning of the new cosmopolitanisms at a remove from, if not in opposition to, the identity politics associated with ethnic studies has discouraged generative linkages across” the subdisciplines associated with studies of ethnicity and “race” (Koshy 594), Roy’s novel foregrounds the continuities between the analytics of cosmopolitanism and constructions of the “raced” or ethnicized subject in an ethnic literature that is increasingly internationalized.

Even in a utopian cosmopolis, the material specificity of all, and not only the minority or abjected, would need to be ontologically registered in its full embodied particularity, its unknowability and contingency, for true cosmopolitical justice to reign. Simultaneously, the citizen’s belonging is also contingent on a planetary, existential scale, and the recognition of this contingency can promote a more capacious hospitality towards the non-citizen—the *xenos* or *hospitis*, the foreigner, the guest, the other. It is the paradoxical imbrication of the global/cosmopolitan *with* the microcosmic/local material specificity that Anjum inadvertently captures in her blurted, hesitating, and perhaps even unwitting demurral about the utopian slogan: “We’ve come from there ... from the other world” (Roy, *The Ministry* 114). This is possibly the most important theme of the novel as a whole.

In modern liberal societies, cosmopolitanism is irreducibly produced through a constitutive contradiction. In the first instance, as Seyla Benhabib notes, modern liberal democracy is heir to a contradiction between two principles: the ideal of self-governance on the one side and, on the other, the ideal of the territorially delimited nation-state. Under the first ideal of self-governance, freedom is guaranteed by the rule of law as applied to equal subjects within the community (the nation-state) who concede so to rule and be ruled. Benhabib explains that “this ideal emerges in 5th-century Athens and is revived throughout history in episodes such as the experience of self-governing city-states in the Renaissance, the Paris commune of 1871, the anarchist and socialist communes of the Russian Revolution, and the Spanish Civil War.” On the other hand, she remarks, “the ideal of the territorially circumscribed nation-state ... conceives of the citizen first and foremost as the subject of state-administration, or more positively, as the subject of rights and entitlements” (Benhabib 673).

Now cosmopolitanism is premised on the claim of universal human rights as the basic guarantee afforded to all human beings, irrespective of geographical location, religion, ethnicity, or any other secondary characteristic—and solely by virtue of

being human. For Kant, this constitutes a basic, fundamental, and universal right to be afforded to all human beings qua human: A minimal condition is that any human being under duress and in fear of losing life and liberty must be able to traverse all borders, travel anywhere on the planet, into foreign territory. More colloquially, it is the capacity to be at home in any and every part of the world and the ability to feel culturally adept at negotiating a way of living and belonging wherever one finds oneself. Yet if we accept such a conception of cosmopolitan right, we immediately encounter an aporetic consequence, a further fundamental contradiction, as articulated by Étienne Balibar. Equality and liberty ought to be regarded, Balibar maintains, as coextensive and complicated or rather co-implicated (because all human beings are born free and must by that token always be afforded equality with all other human beings). The challenge is to factor this equation into the same universal framing of what would effectively be a singular cosmopolis, a singularity. Citizenship is founded on the notion of human rights, rather than the other way round. If this is correct, then it is the universality of human rights as attached to all human beings that is the minimum condition for a subject to be considered a citizen; yet no nation-state can extend the notion of citizenship in this radically cosmopolitan sense, because such an extension would violate the second ideal identified by Benhabib, namely the territorially circumscribed nation-state. The ideal of cosmopolitanism cannot negate the principle of territorial sovereignty and its exclusionary entailments (Balibar 4, 74).

Perhaps more strongly than Benhabib, Hannah Arendt, who is certainly an important influence on Benhabib's thinking, had long before identified a paradox or contradiction within the declaration of inalienable human rights, namely that "it reckoned with an 'abstract' human being who seemed to exist nowhere, for even savages lived in some kind of a social order." In this connection, Arendt identifies two great upheavals, between the two World Wars. The first of these was the abolition of the right of asylum, precipitated by "the arrival of hundreds of thousands of stateless people, the only right that had ever figured as a symbol of The Rights of Man in the sphere of international relationships," and it stood as "the only modern remnant of the medieval principle of *quid est in territorio est de territorio*," though Arendt also recognizes that it is "felt to be an anachronism in conflict with the international rights of the state" (296). The second great upheaval was the shock of a massive influx of refugees, the result of which, as Jacques Derrida underscores in discussing Arendt's argument, was to make "the classic recourse to repatriation or naturalisation" inoperative. As Derrida puts it, the question we are left with is "How can the right to asylum be redefined and developed without repatriation and without naturalisation?" (*On Cosmopolitanism* 7). These were, Arendt noted, the two proposed solutions to the problem, but both failed: Repatriation measures failed "when there was no country" to which refugees without a country to call their own (*Heimatlöse*) could be deported; neither the source country nor any host country would accept a stateless person when they were already "swamped with refugees." Arendt was writing about totalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s, a period during which she had also witnessed how the

naturalization process “broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships—except that they were still human” (Arendt 284–285). It is the condition upon which Balibar rests his principle of equaliberty as the ethicopolitical basis of citizenship. And this minimal condition is the contingency of material, existential embodiment.

As Derrida remarks, Arendt could not have known about the developments of the immediately following decades. France, since the Revolution, has flattered itself for having maintained a relatively liberal attitude to political refugees, compared to other European countries. Yet, Derrida points out,

the motives behind such a policy of opening up to the foreigner have ... never been ‘ethical’ *stricto sensu*—in the sense of the moral law or the law of the land (*séjour*)-(ethos), or, indeed, the law of hospitality. The comparative drop in the birth rate in France since the middle of the eighteenth century has generally permitted her to be more liberal in matters of immigration for obvious economic reasons: when the economy is doing well, and workers are needed, one tends not to be overly particular when trying to sort out political and economic motivations. (*On Cosmopolitanism* 11)

In the 1960s the economy boomed, and immigrant workers were welcomed. Yet the right to asylum “has only recently become a specifically juridical concept (*définitive*) and a positive juridical concept, despite the fact that its spirit was already present in the French Constitution” of 1946. The Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 ushered in a new human rights regime that recognized the right of people to transit freely across (though not settle within) national boundaries. Yet, and as Derrida notes, even though France subscribed to the Geneva Convention in 1951, it was only in 1954 that France “was forced to broaden its definition of a political refugee to encompass all persons forced into exile”; besides, he observes, even the Geneva Convention was “very limited in the manner in which it could be applied, and even at that we are still a long way from the idea of cosmopolitanism as defined in Kant’s famous text on the right to (*droit de*) universal hospitality.” Even the Geneva Convention “could only direct itself to ‘events in Europe prior to 1951’ ” (11). Today the question of cosmopolitan hospitality has become even more vexing. While Kant’s cosmopolitan right sought as a matter of principle to guarantee a universal right to visit a foreign country and not to be turned away if the stranger’s life was in danger, even this minimal cosmopolitan right runs into a wall in practice. Indeed the lexicon of “building walls”—metonyms for racialized politics in many countries including Germany and the United States—has come to represent a contemporary counterdiscourse against cosmopolitanism.

The category of the “abstract universal citizen” does not account for the difference that political or material difference makes, whether in reference to the political foreigner (alien) or the minoritized citizen-subject. One of the most problematic vectors of minoritization, in addition to race and ethnicity, is the status of being a political *xenos*, an outsider, the ubiquitous alien stripped of state belonging—what Arendt

refers to as the class of “*apatrides*” (289). Being without a “*patrie*,” such stateless minorities are denied the rights of citizens. Yet they cannot in principle be deprived of the “rights of man” even within those denying states, though in practice the denial of citizenship makes these others vulnerable to exclusion from political recognition. They are barred from representation—either in the political sense through proxy (*Vertretung*) or as images of citizen-subjects in the public’s consciousness (*Darstellung*). Most crucially, the actual consequence of this barring is that the very materiality of the minoritized body—signaled by categories ranging from “everyday experience” and the “abjected body” to “color,” or “race”—may be occluded (“disappeared”?) with impunity, though it is the irreducible substrate of subjectivization and citizenship, even setting aside the more simplistic assertions of the “discursive construction” of personal and political identity. This invisibilization of the marginalized and abjected is something that a new cosmopolitanism might seek to redress, particularly by engaging seriously with the material reality, even the everyday conditions and challenges, of ordinary people and marginalized groups who, unlike privileged elites, tend to get left out of the cosmopolitical calculus (Braidotti et al.).

As Balibar points out, Arendt recognized that it was the naked condition of the material, embodied human being that tested the notion of human rights: The notion of human rights as the ground for the merely *abstract* universal citizen disintegrates before the material presence of the abjected “Muselmann”—to invoke Agamben’s discussion of the *homo sacer*—who has been stripped of all other qualities and stands before us, marking the limit condition of the human reduced to “bare life” (Agamben, *Remnants* 45; Arendt 297). This is a fundamental contradiction for modern liberal states: how to acknowledge the right to have rights without at the same time making borders meaningless. Similarly, it is precisely when the subject is deprived of her “abstract” political status as citizen that she ceases to be human, and not the other way round.

The way I read this counter-intuitive insight is that it turns on the question of *materialism*, but a materialism that is itself premised on political, and therefore *discursive*, recognition. If it is important to avoid a simplistic “discursive construction” of identity, then it is equally imperative to resist a naïve notion of a preexistent materiality on the basis of which a citizen subject is subsequently produced. This is different, therefore, from the “speculative” realism of Quentin Meillasoux and others, who argue for a real that preexists human knowers, and cannot be known except through mathematical ontology; Meillasoux’s position is importantly distinct from the approach taken by Anglo-American philosophers such as Wilfrid Sellars, who accord logical priority to the “space of reasons” (Badiou 4; Meillasoux; Sellars).²³ The materialism I am proposing is also to be distinguished from varieties of materialist

²³ Important responses to Sellars, especially by Donald Davidson and John McDowell, have made contributions to this line of reasoning.

and ideological fundamentalisms. One might here invoke Slavoj Žižek's provocative argument against human rights because it undoes both ideological and essentialist fundamentalisms:

Contemporary appeals to human rights within our liberal-capitalist societies generally rest upon three assumptions. First, that such appeals function in opposition to modes of fundamentalism that would naturalize or essentialize contingent, historically conditioned traits. Second, that the two most basic rights are freedom of choice, and the right to dedicate one's life to the pursuit of pleasure (rather than to sacrifice it for some higher ideological cause). And third, that an appeal to human rights may form the basis for a defence against the 'excess of power.' ("Against" 117)

The abstract universalism undergirding "human rights" is to be seen as a Western and especially white male construction. Highlighting the inter-implication of the *materiality* of race and the abstraction of universality as such, Žižek characterizes universal human rights as "effectively the right of white, male property-owners to exchange freely on the market, exploit workers and women, and exert political domination." Yet he goes further to note that this "identification of the particular content that hegemonizes the universal form is ... only half the story. Its crucial other half consists in asking a more difficult, supplementary question: that of the emergence of the form of universality itself" (117).

Under conditions of globalized capital, we are returned to the *form* of commodity fetishism described by Marx: materialism as a universalized form. Žižek writes that Marx's analysis of "commodity fetishism" describes a state in which commodity exchange is the general condition for all interaction. A prime site of fetishization is the idea of private life. Žižek points out that "it is fashionable to complain that private life is threatened or even disappearing, in face of the media's ability to expose one's most intimate personal details to the public. True, on condition that we turn things around: what is effectively disappearing here is public life itself" (117-118). Analogously, I argue that we need to theorize simultaneously the materiality of individual bodies, as the substrate of the "private," *and* the question of the citizen subject as a rights-bearing abstraction standing in for the collective.

I have been arguing that the *abstract* principle of citizenship, related to Balibar's "equaliberty," is inseparably articulated with the practical matter of recognizing and respecting *materiality* as ground of subjectivation. Yet materiality cannot be expressed only in a naïve or simplistic "correspondence" theory where all discursive signs constituting the subject are simply indexed to a pre-given subject who is subsequently "abstracted" within the notion of the citizen subject. Of course, the material body is undeniably the substrate of subjectivity, as contrasted with the normative and therefore presumptively unmarked and transparent abstract universal citizen. This sense of normativity I will term S1. The particular urgency of marking the materiality of the marginalized or those most deprived of "equaliberty" is that they tend to "disappear" from the public sphere, from the public's consciousness, especially in times of political crisis. If Žižek cautions that what is disappearing is less the individual

with all her subjective idiosyncrasies and more the public sphere itself, this fact is a special problem in the case of those most in need of “equaliberty,” because it is in the public sphere that key issues can be negotiated, whether it be a matter of rights claims for refugees, protection against xenophobia, or more generally the apparent impasse between national citizenship and cosmopolitanism.

The contradictions I have been elaborating are not just theoretical calisthenics. Their relevance is made salient by reflection on whether and how a critical cosmopolitanism might offer a meaningful response to Arendt’s problematization of the “right to have rights,” especially in the contemporary conjuncture, with the massive increase in refugees worldwide. The global population of forcibly displaced people increased from 33.9 million in 1997 to 65.6 million in 2016 according to the UNHCR—the Human Rights Agency. Mindful of the broader contemporary conjuncture of draconian immigration restrictions (such as President Trump’s promise to ban immigration from several Muslim countries), threats of deportation, and massive inflows into many countries (and not only those in Western Europe) of economic migrants but also of refugees from war and ethnic conflicts, my chapter contributes a valuable perspective on cosmopolitanism, race, and ethnicity, with its special emphasis on a theory of materiality.

Derrida’s argument in *On Cosmopolitanism* is that there is an irreducible paradox constitutive of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism almost by definition foregrounds the city (“polis”); but in this text, Derrida’s privileging of the city as a key site for cosmopolitics had a particular significance. Derrida’s argument was occasional: He had been invited to speak to the International Parliament of Workers (IPW) in 1996. The IPW, sensitive to the argument that neither the international legal system nor the apparatus of the state could guarantee human rights—and thus disaffected with a *cosmopolitan* vision—placed its trust in the power of the *polis*, the city, and Derrida rehearses this gesture, privileging the city as a potential space for refuge. In a sense, Derrida here is returning to an original emphasis on the *polis*—already central in the non-cosmopolitan (though not *anti-cosmopolitan*) philosophic systems of Plato and Aristotle, for whom the citizen’s primary allegiance in peace as well as war was to the city to which the subject belonged and to whose fortunes his own fate was tied. Socrates as represented by Plato did not physically travel much but was embraced by the cosmopolitan world community later. He was in any case the inspiration for the fourth-century BCE Cynic Diogenes, reputed to be the first truly cosmopolitan thinker. Diogenes was self-consciously cosmopolitan, and explicitly declared himself a *kosmopolites*. Marcus Aurelius was an inheritor of this cosmopolitan lineage; as he wrote in concluding his *Meditations*, there is a kinship between an individual and all of humanity, and as a human being one lives in a great city, a cosmopolis, no matter how small one’s experience: “You’ve lived as a citizen in a great city. Five years or a hundred—what’s the difference?” (170)

Derrida is not alone among philosophers who discuss cosmopolitanism along these lines. This privileging of the city as cosmopolitical nexus is also evident in the

work of Giorgio Agamben, who argues in *Means Without End* that Jerusalem ought to be made the capital of both the Jewish state and of Palestine simultaneously and without territorial division, making everyone experience the status of being a citizen and an exile (*Means*). Similarly, Saskia Sassen has emphasized that (global) cities can be a “nexus for new politico-cultural alignments,” with a particular capacity for enabling collaborative and individual agency, for opening up possibilities not available in other zones of inhabitation. Her own analysis produces yet another expression of contradiction, when she argues that the “centrality of place in a context of global processes makes possible a transnational economic and political opening for the formation of new claims and hence for the constitution of entitlements, notably rights to place”; and at “the limit, this could be an opening for new forms of ‘citizenship’ ” (Sassen 38). Derrida’s and Sassen’s conceptualizations of new forms of citizenship might be cosmopolitanisms or they might more precisely be versions of “politanism” (if I may be permitted a tentative neologism), deconstructions of the category of cosmopolitanism without abandoning or jettisoning it.

Yet what Derrida highlights perhaps more forcefully than many other thinkers is the contradiction *constitutive* of the concept of cosmopolitanism; few others have so powerfully counterposed two imperatives: on the one hand, the unconditional hospitality that underlies the affordance of the right of refuge to all immigrants and newcomers from anywhere (*cosmos*) to the city (*polis*) and on the other hand, the conditionality of hospitality—there has to be some limitation on rights of residence. All the political difficulty—and potential—of cosmopolitanism as an ethics of hospitality consists in negotiating between these two imperatives: Derrida’s identification of a contradictory logic at the heart of cosmopolitanism is not staged in order to paralyze political action, but to enable it.

The paradoxical or contradictory cosmopolitical logic of *hospitality* is a key premise of my own argument here, which is concerned with the expression of the contradictions in cultural texts, particularly by or about racially/ethnically or otherwise marginalized subjects, whose formal inclusion yet practical exclusion from the polis is a major problematic. With Cheah, I would acknowledge here that while since Plato or at least Kant there has been a prejudice against cultural examples to theorize cosmopolitanism, these cultural examples are in fact indispensable and vital because it is in cultural texts that we see most compellingly how “[c]osmopolitanism is about viewing oneself as part of a world, a circle of political belonging that transcends the limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of deterritorialized humanity” (Cheah 7). Yet precisely because of the alienation entailed by deterritorialization, it is important to recognize the need—or imperative—to belong to a nation-state or ethnopolitical community.

As Derrida explains, Kant “seems at first to extend the cosmopolitan law to encompass universal hospitality without limit. Such is the condition of perpetual peace between all men. He expressly determines it as a natural law (*droit*). Being of natural or original derivation, this law would be, therefore, both imprescriptible

and inalienable” (*Of Hospitality* 32). This right is based on what Kant called “our common right of possession on the surface of the earth on which, as it is a globe, we cannot be infinitely scattered, and must in the end reconcile ourselves to existence side by side: at the same time, originally no one individual had more right than another to live in any one particular spot.” Yet at the same time, Kant “excluded hospitality as a *right of residence* (*Gastrecht*); he limits it to the *right of visitation* (*Besuchsrecht*.” The right of residence requires a particular treaty between states (Kant 137–138). Derrida comments that it is this limitation that, “amongst other things, is what remains for us debatable.” Moreover, “in defining hospitality in all its rigour as a law ... Kant assigns to it conditions which make it dependent on state sovereignty, especially when it is a question of the *right of residence*. Hospitality signifies here the *public nature* (*publicité*) of public space ... hospitality, whether public or private, is dependent on and controlled by the law and the state police” (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism* 22).

If we are to imagine these new forms of citizenship, solidarity, and justice, we need a new orientation of the state, a new way for the city to belong to the state. And at the heart of these new forms of solidarity and justice is a new relation to the generalized form of “the foreigner.” Derrida casts the foreigner as the very form of the other, who potentially is able to turn the state upside down, as he suggests, invoking Socrates in his book *Of Hospitality* (33). Foreignness is within us, not just external to us. The foreigner is “extimate.” The extimacy of the other, the abject, must enter our consciousness so that her very strangeness should not license the modalities of exclusion. Yet hospitality is impossible given the need on the part of the host for “filtering, choosing, and thus ... excluding and doing violence” (55).

It is this imperative to acknowledge and act on the recognition of the extimacy of the other—even as impossible hospitality—that is captured in Roy’s novel. Even if hospitality is impossible for a deconstructive philosopher, that theoretical impossibility cannot be permitted to paralyze the generosity that is hospitality’s drive. It is this imperative that moves Anjum to create compassionate community no matter where she finds herself living or how constrained her circumstances, offering her own homegrown and imperfect brand of cosmopolitan hospitality to society’s outcast(e)s, subalterns, peripheralized subjects, and foreigners within the nation-state. They are extimate others, whom Anjum herself “represents” as a trans subject, in the knowledge that this representation can no more be perfect or even adequate than hospitality can be. It is precisely because the right to *confer* membership in (or belonging to) a given nation-state tends to be arrogated at the higher levels of public space by state apparatuses or by city authorities (including the police) that the marginalized must fashion their own *microcosmic* cosmopolitanism. This modest cosmopolitanism may not presume to take as its scope “the whole world,” but inhabits a space on a much smaller scale than the world-system, below the level of the nation-state, and lower than the city, or even the family, and seeks to remain open to cosmopolitan traffic. Such small-scale networks open up zones of mutual care, exchange, and interaction.

These informal networks evade or even subvert the authoritarianism and the macro-institutional logic that tend to diminish the concerns of the subaltern or the poor and the marginal. In counterposition to Eurocentric constructions of cosmopolitanism, they constitute *alternative communitarianisms*, *alternative cosmopolitanisms*. This is what lends postcolonial urgency to Roy's novel.

Addressing the debate between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism in international normative theory, Rahul Rao “expresses several dissatisfactions” with the debate’s “inattention to politics and history, its Eurocentrism, and the simplistic imageries of threat on which attitudes towards boundaries in the debate are premised.” The key issue Rao identifies, along with several other literary or cultural theorists such as Asian Americanist scholar Kandice Chuh, is the issue of agency. Rao “recasts the figure of the subaltern” not as “a passive recipient of Western largesse” but as “an active agent struggling for emancipation,” contrasting “the potentials of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism to function as vocabularies in which such struggles might be articulated” (“Postcolonial” 165). Rao points out that “[i]nternational normative theory has been the site of a vigorous debate on the scope of justice. Those who regard this as universal—‘cosmopolitans’—weigh equally the claims of all individuals who would be affected by policies or institutional arrangements, out of a belief in the equal worth of humanity in all persons.” Their critics, he also points out, “are diverse, but one influential subset—‘communitarians’—argue that norms of justice can only arise from within bounded communities” (166). This implies that justice and meaningful agency, indeed subjectivity itself, are situational, contextual. In this Rao seems aligned with Chuh’s argument that Asian American literary and cultural analysis ought to aspire to be a “subjectless discourse,” one in which subjectivity is not an essence but a situational construction. My own position is that this argument goes only so far. It is also imperative to register the materiality of the construction.

For communitarians, Rao notes, the nation is politically the most “salient form” of community as context for subject-constitution. Yet communitarianism tends to be exclusivist—distinguishing between insiders and outsiders. Cosmopolitanism is a corrective because at least in its purer forms it ascribes political equality to all. Balibar’s thesis of “equaliberty” would seem to be such a relatively pure form of cosmopolitanism. Rao points out that a key issue in this debate between communitarians and cosmopolitans is the question of “*what obligations we owe to which others*” (166; emphases in original).

As Rao writes elsewhere, his central complaint is that “liberal cosmopolitan discourses in political theory and philosophy have tended to theorize global justice without being particularly attentive to global thought produced outside the West,” as though cosmopolitanism was really just Western (“The Elusiveness”). According to Rao’s critique of this Eurocentrism, liberal cosmopolitans stake three claims: first, that individuals are the ultimate units of moral deliberation (individualism); second, that the status of being the ultimate unit of concern attaches to every human (universalism); and third, that the criterion holds equally for everyone and everywhere

(generality). It is this last (John Rawlsian) claim of generality that for Rao “renders liberal cosmopolitanism’s self-understanding untenable. This is theorization on behalf of the globe without the participation of the globe” (“The Elusiveness”).

Rawls’s influential notion of justice is that it is produced with a community of putatively unbiased decision-makers in an “original position” through a deliberative process conducted behind a “veil of ignorance”—as if nationality, gender, or ethnicity were irrelevant in determining what was normal or just, and as if a subaltern or destitute person could be expected to obey the same principles of rights and responsibilities as a rich cosmopolitan who could afford to entertain such moral speculation. Such a normative conception of justice is patently insufficient, in its disregard for cultural difference, even though supposedly the universal norms of justice are abstracted from particular experience. As Amartya Sen points out in *The Idea of Justice*, Rawls himself “makes some concessions to the recognition that ‘citizens will of course differ as to which conceptions of political justice they think most reasonable’ ” (11). The consequence is that Eurocentric international normative theory is controversially presumed to apply to all, including non-Euro-American subjects and cultures—an example being the attitudes to nationalism itself. As Rao writes,

cosmopolitan literature’s antipathy towards nationalism is indelibly marked by the Western experience of nationalism, in which a discourse that begins as a struggle to democratize absolutist states becomes yoked to those states in projects of imperialism and fascism. There is little cognizance in this literature of the postcolonial attachment to nationalism, which, despite the subsequent depredations of postcolonial states, continues to see nationalism as the vehicle that delivered the very condition of Latin American, African and Asian postcoloniality. (“Postcolonial” 167)

Yet I maintain that there are two senses of the “normative,” and not just the one that Rao discusses. In the first sense of normativity, which above I named S1, normative theory prescribes a standard, a directive norm to which all theory must aspire. But there is a second sense, what I will call S2, already indicated above: A theory may be normative not as a *prescriptive* standard but as *descriptive* “ought.” This description of how things ought to be posits the requisites for cosmopolitical justice. I also argue in this connection that the question of *scale* is critical, for cosmopolitical justice is not only a macroscopic, universalist ideal from the top down, but also a view *from* the bottom up and *for* those at the bottom. Cosmopolitanism, as the very word seems to suggest, is too often conceived as the view from the top down of the “whole world,” or cosmos, as if seen from on high. That is deemed the correct perspective or scale, and in this view the particular or the small is often beneath notice. I argue that the microcosmic, the small, the local, and the particular can correct a certain top-heaviness of the critical category of cosmopolitanism. It may also redress the unipolar, Western-orientedness of the term and, not least, the implication that the non-West is perpetually unready for cosmopolitanism. Such Eurocentric universalism, of Enlightenment provenance, carries the stain of colonialism.

David Harvey identifies three sources of the cosmopolitan attitude. The first is an abstract mode of philosophical reflection. A second is an appreciation that certain basic universal human needs must be met and practical conditions satisfied if any individual or group is to survive and flourish. A third source is political activism (94). I would argue that we must add a fourth rationale for adopting a cosmopolitan perspective: that a double epistemological perspective yields a more complete understanding of why a true cosmopolitanism is conducive to hospitality, to cosmopolitical justice. This doubled epistemology stresses attention simultaneously to the materiality of the citizen-subject that is not contingent on national identity, gender, race/ethnicity, or class, *and* to a deconstructive engagement with the discursive and strategic construction of such citizen-subjects in a given sociopolitical context. In other words, cosmopolitanism ought to foreground the importance of materiality independent of national identity and, simultaneously, acknowledge the irreducibly discursive—anti-essentialist—constructedness of identity. This is not a self-canceling paradox.

Ethnicity or race, like gender, *materially* inflects cosmopolitical experience: migrants of color in mainstream European societies have a distinctly different experience from Caucasian or white migrants, everything else being equal. And within a country like India, lower-caste and “subaltern” migrants into cities, as Roy’s novel is at pains to show, have a very particular experience of marginalization or estrangement from inclusion. Cosmopolitan theory must be cognizant of how this estrangement is registered *materially, in the minoritized body*. Thus Sara Ahmed writes in a book appositely titled *On Being Included*, “to account for racism is to offer a different account of the world” (3). This is why we need a normative *materialist* analytic. We could do worse than to “think from the experience of becoming a stranger. A stranger experience can teach us about how bodies come to feel at home through the work of inhabitation, how bodies can extend themselves into spaces creating contours of inhabitable space, as well as how spaces can be extensions of bodies” (3). Yet the cosmopolitical project is also profoundly deconstructive: It foregrounds the constructedness of identities, destabilizing the presumptive naturalness and essentialisms of nation and cultural identity; it calls out the discursive contingencies of the national “Thing”—*das Ding*—that is the anxious *agalma* or secret of the ultranationalists, and the fictions of primordialist ethnonationalism and racial division. The burden of the artwork, the novel in this instance, is to open up this aporetic space between the two kinds of “normativity,” S1 and S2, the prescriptive norm and the utopic goal of a true *cosmopolis*, a true “worlding” of the world, to adapt Cheah’s phrase, borrowed in turn from Gayatri Spivak, who borrowed it from Martin Heidegger (Cheah 11).

Focused on marginal subalterns and on the politically dissident subjects who experience actual exclusion, Roy’s novel prompts reflection on the prospects for equaliberty and the matter of the right to have rights, articulated with a thematization of embodied materiality. In her postcolonialist worlding, the imperative is to world a cosmopolis that includes those whom capitalist globalization constitutionally excludes or exploits, evacuating their smaller-scale worlds of meaning and sig-

nificance, if not making them superfluous. As Cheah writes, capitalist globalization “incorporates peoples outside the European world-system [primarily] by violently destroying their worlds” (23). Unlike teleologies of world history, the unity at stake here is not that of the “whole of humanity.” It is more modest and fragile: the gathering- and holding-together of those who are excluded even within the national family, a holding-together that maintains a place of habitation in the face of the violence of national as well as global technologies of temporal calculation. The survival of these different microcosmic “worldings of worlds” is necessary to the constitution of a larger world of humanity that is truly pluriversal, forming different “modes of existence,” in Bruno Latour’s phrasing (*An Inquiry; We Have Never*). This is, then, a notion of microcosmic cosmopolitanism organized around the core principles—norms—of inclusion and justice. Above all it is sensitive to the material specificities of those smaller, imperiled worlds, and it is just such a literary worlding that Roy’s fiction seeks to unfold.

Roy’s novel does not attempt to imagine what it might mean for India to move towards an “alternative modernity.” If the novel’s narrative moves, it moves in both senses: moving toward a utopian cosmopolitanism-to-come, and moving the reader emotionally by calling attention to the plight of abjected others, foreigners, transgendered persons, outcasts, mistreated animals, orphans, oppressed freedom fighters, “rapevictims,” and so on. By the same token, Roy’s cosmopolitical vision (which shares much with Stengers’s “cosmopolitical project” discussed above) is somehow, and ironically, less sanguine, more skeptical, than that of the IPW, members of which, as also noted above, place their faith in the city to provide harbor for those who are marginalized by society. The novel signals this skepticism ungrammatically but unambiguously in its very dedication: “To, The Unconsoled.” The “unconsoled” might as well be a synonym for the subaltern or those excluded by nationalist and traditionally “cosmopolitan” conceptualizations of society. And indeed Roy’s vision proceeds from a realistic appreciation of the bleaker prospect for minorities—the recognition that neither the nation-state nor the city nor even the family promises protection for people like Roy’s protagonist Anjum in the first part of the novel and those she is moved to adopt and protect.

Anjum is a transsexual, born as a hermaphrodite and called Aftab by her parents who wanted a boy—especially her father. After a sex change operation, and when she grows old enough to do so, Anjum finally, at age fourteen, becomes in her own mind a “she,” and moves out into the world. She finds her only home and haven in the Khwabgah. This is a tiny microcosm, not quite a family, nor even a household, but rather a kind of shelter for the dispossessed and exiles from communities such as nation, city, and family. And so at the Khwabgah, Anjum establishes her presence, gains respect for being outspoken, and on that strength establishes a semblance of community, a family that is not a family. She even acquires a child, whom she adopts and names Zainab.

It is telling that Anjum's defining instinct is to organize—repeatedly—a community of care around herself for people who are disadvantaged, notably a community on a scale smaller than the state and even the city. The state, the city, and other institutions, such as the family and educational establishments, are of no help to people such as Anjum, the nation-state's internal others or "foreigners." It is not just trans people or *hijras* like Anjum who are rendered vulnerable and denied belonging, but also intellectuals, thinkers, and writers. Importantly for my argument, it is not their material bodies that shape their positionality but the other way round. Their very materiality is an effect of their emplacement: A trans person is a third sex only because society has historically permitted only two sexes to be normative.

And there are also collateral victims of anti-cosmopolitan forces; their embodied materiality, their "meat," is produced by politics, so it can be killed. Innocent people are butchered in Gujarat's ethnic riots of 2002 because they are constructed as embodiments of otherness. Untouchables are persecuted and murdered because they are ideologically or "scripturally" abjected through custom; civilians are bludgeoned to death in Kashmir's civil strife, stuffed into cesspools. A wife and her daughter are shot dead by her husband. The Union Carbide gas explosion in Bhopal is mentioned, with its ensuing cruelly unjust, possibly racist, reparations decision: Indian bodies are assessed, constructed, as bodies of less worth than bodies of civilians or workers in the West. Indira Gandhi's "Emergency" and then her assassination by her own Sikh bodyguards are evidence of ethnocentric, profoundly anti-cosmopolitan violence. Also referenced are India's never-ending conflict with Pakistan, especially in Kashmir; genetic modification of food; exploitation of the poor; the exclusion of untouchables; and "the war of the rich and the poor." Readers too are left unconsolated by the swirling bromides the masses must live by: "Life went on. Death went on. The war went on" (*The Ministry* 330). All of this violence puts the body center stage, as if to say the political trauma can only be understood and politically cognized via the material experience of the suffering body. As Anjum's friend (another trans person or *hijra*) says, "[t]he riot is inside us. The war is inside us. Indo-Pak is inside us. It will never settle down. It can't" (23). What I want to highlight is the many names we can give that which is inside us, but one of those names is materiality, something the text itself does not always focus on, because it is fiction rather than philosophy. In foregrounding materiality, my purpose is to insist that the cosmopolitical project is in the first instance a recognition of the materiality that makes us human. That is the foundation of cosmopolitan right.

Roy's approach is from the other end of the telescope. To bring anti-cosmopolitan forces into the public consciousness has been Roy's self-imposed burden not only as a political activist and social commentator (as in *Power Politics*), but also as a novelist. Roy's enormously successful first novel, *The God of Small Things*, was deeply political in its sympathetic and moving presentation of the love between an upper-middle class woman (Ammu) and an Untouchable (Velutha): Their embrace, which brings together an upper-caste body and an Untouchable body, encapsulates

the whole tragedy of the anti-cosmopolitan social situation that Roy dramatizes in that novel. In the twenty years since, Roy has been active in political causes on behalf of the disenfranchised and wrote about some of these issues in *Power Politics*: against nuclear proliferation, and most famously against the Narmada dam project, which displaced many poor villagers whose lands were flooded or seized by the government through eminent domain. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* too, Roy is bemoaning the multifarious forms of othering, of making alien, of denying a common humanity instead of affirming *cosmopolitical inclusion* and justice even on the smallest scale.

Roy's activist sensibilities are on view from the outset in this new novel. The reader encounters this passage early in the prologue, laced with political outrage against chemical pollution and ecological irresponsibility: “[W]hite-backed vultures, custodians of the dead for more than a hundred million years ... have been wiped out. The vultures died of diclofenac poisoning. Diclofenac, cow aspirin, given to cattle as a muscle relaxant, to ease pain and increase production of milk, works—worked—like nerve gas on white-backed vultures” (*The Ministry* 5). If the prologue is meant to prepare the reader for what is to come, Anjum's transsexuality indexes the author's political commitments to a minoritarian, even a radically anti-capitalist, cosmopolitical politics. The Khwabgah, or Dream House, headed by a transgendered elder (Ustad Kulsoom Bi), gathers together a motley community of *hijras*—transsexuals, transvestites, and transgendered and intersex persons constituting a “third gender” recognized by the Indian Supreme Court and long accepted as a sacred but abject group who mark the boundary of Indian tradition but who nonetheless face discrimination. They are often feared but honored, uninvited guests who show up at weddings to clap their distinctive clap and sing their raucous songs. They are given food and/or alms to ward off bad luck on this most auspicious occasion—to deny them would be inviting a curse on the newlyweds and their families and friends. It is no surprise that Roy invests something of her own political sensibilities in Anjum's impassioned protest early in the novel, and later in the character Tilo, who, as I elaborate below, embodies all the right cosmopolitical instincts while also espousing all the correct political positions, from Roy's point of view. Roy embodies in Anjum and the “beloved community” of the marginalized she gathers around herself the paradox that Balibar underscores, between the abstract universal citizen and the embodied subject whose human rights are stripped from her through exclusion from democratic equality. In Tilo she invests activist cosmopolitical consciousness.

Almost all Roy's major characters in the novel are in some sense marginal but endowed with cosmopolitical instincts, all contrasting with parochial or provincially nation- or tradition-defined attitudes. They tend to be slightly bohemian in their cosmopolitical instincts and progressive in their political reflexes. David Quartermaine, the beautiful, blond, blue-eyed theater director from Leeds, is homosexual, and has “proletarian” tastes in his youthful lovers (“dusky adolescent boys”). Naga, the actor, is properly charismatic, devastatingly attractive, and coolly intellectual, but

redeemed by being even more properly Leftist, and in that sense turned in the right direction towards *cosmopolitical* sensibilities, at least early on, rather than being what Roy avowedly hates—elegant in the way elite upper-class people are elegant, *cosmopolitan* in the bad sense. Admittedly, Naga loses his credibility as he compromises his progressive values, trading them for a comfortable career as a journalist, until he renounces his career and redeems himself. His is a compromised cosmopolitics, but a cosmopolitics nonetheless. Naga is really a foil to the two central figures of the second part of the novel. The first is Musa, an idealist freedom fighter who joins the resistance against the Indian armed forces in Indian-administered (“Indian-occupied”?) Kashmir. The second is Musa’s lover, named Tilottama (Tilo), or black sesame seed, because she is dark (and therefore naturally identified with the denigrated “darker” castes or people of so-called “Dravidian” descent). Musa, being a leftist militant or freedom fighter for Kashmir against the nationalist or anti-cosmopolitan Indian “occupiers” of the Jammu and Kashmir region, is however presented with the requisite—and predictable—adulation. Unlike Naga, Musa never collaborates with Amrik Singh, the self-described “cock” or butcher of the occupying Indian military forces. Musa is presented as courageous, heroically on the right side of the cosmopolitical struggles in Kashmir: He has all the right credentials, the right politics. It is always absolutely clear where Roy’s own political sympathies lie.

All of these characters are created from the same impulse at the heart of Roy’s work: to present the marginal, the microcosmic, the minor favorably. Tilo is smart, quirky, independent, and above all a leftist activist with a primary interest in the political struggles of the Muslim minorities in Kashmir: She is truly cosmopolitical. The author’s almost fawning description of her makes it difficult not to think it is Roy’s wishful or flattering self-portrait, thinly disguised: “She had a small, fine-boned face and a straight nose, with pert, flared nostrils. Her long, thick hair was neither straight nor curly, but tangled and uncared for” (*The Ministry* 157). Most flattering of all, however, is not the portrayal of Tilo’s physical appearance but that of her cosmopolitical convictions and her social eccentricity, her urbane *Weltschmerz*:

The complete absence of a desire to please, or to put anyone at their ease, could, in a less vulnerable person, have been construed as arrogance. ... She gave the impression that she had somehow slipped off her leash. As though she was taking herself for a walk while the rest of us were being walked—like pets. As though she was watching considerately, somewhat absent-mindedly, from a distance, while we minced along, grateful to our owners, happy to perpetuate our bondage. (158)

Such unblushingly positive characterization of someone who, in Roy’s mind, has the politically correct instincts, is a regular pattern of the author’s sometimes over-the-top and politically predictable writing. To make even such a mild criticism is to invite calumny from those for whom the politically progressive tenor of Roy’s writing excuses all her faults. Yet I do not mean to detract from the extraordinarily rich portrayal of the contest between a progressive and cosmopolitical vision and its oppo-

sites: reactionary ethnonationalism, racist xenophobia, bourgeois and neoliberal social arrangements, predatory globalization imposed on developing countries, and so on.

No matter how small the scale of their everyday existence, Roy's microcosmic cosmopolitanism demands attention to the specific materiality, the embodied experience of the marginalized, as human beings of a single human *cosmopolis*. Though it is in familiar Roy fashion idealistic, hyperbolic, and overwritten, the novel does present a cosmopolitical vision that privileges the microcosmic, and even celebrates the small and the local over the grand and the global. Besides, the novel is determinedly optimistic and future-oriented: There are distinctly celebratory moments in this otherwise politically pessimistic novel, and they often involve children. Anjum's beloved community takes great joy in the rude health of the second Miss Jebeen. Abandoned by her (Marxist) rebel fighter mother who could not care for the child, she is adopted by and brings joy to Anjum's ever-expanding cosmopolitical family that is not her family. She replaces the first Miss Jebeen (daughter of the other leftist rebel fighter Musa), who had been killed in a bombing. Indeed, it is this parade of innocents with the right subaltern or minoritarian pedigree that Roy uses to string together this loosely structured novel. The various rescued animals and stray human outsiders, Anjum herself, then the first abandoned child Anjum adopts, then the two Miss Jebeens (the first murdered, and the second also abandoned like Zainab), are collectively the center of gravity in Roy's cosmopolitical vision. Everyone on the right is flawed. Everyone on the left is redeemed. Yet the novel also enacts a humanism, a small-c cosmopolitanism, undergirding Roy's simplistic (albeit grandiloquent) and programmatic narrative framing. What is admirable, though, is Roy's impassioned apologia for engaging the *materiality* of the citizen subject, counterpoint to the abstract universal citizen, in the conviction that all human beings have the right to pursue happiness, to have rights; all are as capable as the second Miss Jebeen of enjoyment and of producing joy in community.

But community is fragile. When Anjum is temporarily away from home on a visit to Delhi, she discovers that even the marginal shelter of the Khwabgah is vulnerable. She is forced to move into even smaller-scale habitation. The precipitating event is the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque by Hindu mobs who were whipped up into a fury after being told that the mosque, or masjid, had been constructed on a site holy to Hindus: the birthplace of their god Rama. (Roy essentially recounts here the actual violent clashes in Gujarat in 2002, under the tacit or explicit blessing of Narendra Modi, who would later go on to become India's Prime Minister). Muslims retaliated but were then met by an overwhelming counteroffensive by Hindu right-wing groups. Trapped in that counter-violence, Anjum and many of her associates suffer grievously, some even losing their lives. The Hindu mobs discover Anjum as she hides, but they do not harm her, fearing it would bring bad luck on their heads to assault a *hijra*. They let her go, but not before she and other Muslims have to endure taunts and extreme trauma. As they wreak havoc on the Muslims, the Hindu mobs chant the slogan that

the latter have no home in India, that there is only one choice open to them: “*Kabristan ya Pakistan*”—the graveyard, or Pakistan (Roy, *The Ministry* 66).

The radical inhospitality and anti-cosmopolitanism betokened by the phrase “*kabristan ya Pakistan*” underscores how difficult it is to achieve even a microcosmic cosmopolitan community—that the House of Dreams, the Khwabgah, is just a dream of a cosmopolis, though it is the only place where the ideal of cosmopolitical belonging—the cosmopolitical project described by Stengers and Latour—has any chance of being realized against what Rob Nixon has called the “slow violence” that is the lot of the planetary poor (5). Though it offers no permanent solution to the contradictions of cosmopolitanism, Roy’s novel does open a space for a reflection on what it might mean to inaugurate a new order of cosmopolitical justice for our time, beginning “at home,” on the microcosmic scale. This is a reason for Roy’s insistence on the small scale, microcosmic disposition of cosmopolitanism. It is a scale that generates new, local forms of solidarity, unregulated and expanded forms of hospitality, and new axes for intervention in hardened contexts of sociality and for resistance to Eurocentric and capitalist globalization.

Following her traumatizing experience at the hands of the Hindu mobs, Anjum, “like a fugitive absconding from herself,” finds it impossible to re-inhabit her former life (Roy, *The Ministry* 123). She leaves her refuge of the Khwabgah and moves to an even more socially marginal microcosmic space, a graveyard—ironically foreshadowed in the mobs’ taunt—literally a “*kabristan*.” At the graveyard, Anjum moves about initially in a state of shellshock, reverting to living as a man, with unkempt, undyed hair, unwashed clothes, and a loose tooth. Gradually, however, Anjum begins to return to her old trans self. She builds another microcosmic cosmopolis precisely in this “*kabristan*.” In this final and most minimally hospitable space, subtly subverting or deconstructing the inhospitable meaning of the slogan “*kabristan ya Pakistan*,” she rebuilds her sense of herself and gradually emerges from her physical/material and psychological trauma. It becomes something like what Michel Foucault designated as heterotopia (dissensual, “other” space) but with a difference: This heterotopia is also an *actualized space for community*, albeit temporary, not just imaginary invaginations of real social arrangements (Foucault 22–27).

Anjum receives some assistance building a very basic shelter from an old client, now acquaintance (she had earned her living as a sex worker, a not uncommon occupation for the less-well-off transgenders). She makes new friends (including a blind imam who, because he is not prejudiced by sight, “sees” her differently, not as a freak but as a person with human desires and problems like every human being). Anjum’s little block dwelling in the graveyard grows more capacious, adding rooms and becoming an always temporary home for people who have no other home, something like a paradisiacal cosmopolis. In this “ministry,” Anjum ministers to all the marginal and subaltern detritus of society who receive no welcome from state or city or family, or who simply want to enter it. This is then an exemplary microcosmic cosmopolitanism that embraces the whole world: The smallest space of communion between the

past and the present is the smallest and most destitute imaginable space for a human being in society, the graveyard, but in this space the living lie down almost literally among the dead. Indeed, she explicitly calls her repurposed “*kabristan*” a haven/heaven (“*Jannat*”). The blue-tiled swimming pool in the graveyard *Jannat*, always awaiting clean water, is for the poor almost a metaphor for what Anjum is perpetually preparing for, without ever being truly pre-*pared* or “ready” (*paratus*): to be host (to adapt Derrida’s formulation) and minister of the various ministries she organizes—and her perpetual preparation to minister is what is indicated by the “ministry” of the book’s title, analogous perhaps to what Derrida in *Acts of Religion* called a “welcoming apparatus” (361). Yet it is ironically in the graveyard, *Jannat*, that Anjum—and Tilo—find themselves at *home*: “Instinct told [Tilo] that she may finally have found a home for the Rest of Her Life [sic]” (Roy, *The Ministry* 310).

If this *Jannat* is a haven of hospitality, it is also selective in its hospitality. It provides funeral services solely for those who are turned away from all other funeral service providers. Each room in the graveyard ministry is furnished with a bed but also with a grave—everyone finds a room and a tomb. A heaven as well as a kind of preparation for whatever comes after death, *Jannat* provides services for the lowly dead with love—love that the dead may never have encountered in life—under the enterprising eye of one of the permanent residents. This permanent resident is a *chamar*—an “Untouchable” from an outcaste group traditionally involved in scavenging dead cattle and preparing their hides for leather goods as well as performing the lowest-grade public services, such as cleaning the latrines (cattle being sacred, leatherwork is forbidden among Hindus; cleaning latrines being seen as dirty, the upper castes would not perform such work). But he is a *chamar* who has grandiosely given himself the name of Saddam Hussein. Saddam, too, ministers, like his hero Anjum, to the detritus of Delhi society. The pet dog of *Jannat* is a subaltern, a survivor of medical trials, an epileptic animal, with tubes sticking out of him, and eventually he is joined by a menagerie of rescued animals abandoned or damaged. Another central figure of the narrative is the mysterious “quiet baby” who was abandoned by a mother who could not look after it, and whom Anjum proposes to adopt, just as she had adopted Zainab in her Khwabgah days. Anjum’s motive, once more, is cosmopolitical in two senses. She wants to adopt the child first because the crowd gathered round the abandoned child proposes it be given to the police. But her second reason is that the baby is an embodiment of the minority, indeed almost a new iteration of her own marginality: So the baby becomes Anjum’s second intimate cosmopolitical project, her second Miss Jebeen.

The police in India, Roy seems to want to insist, illustrate Arendt’s observation that in conditions of national crisis, the state grows increasingly “incapable of providing a law for those who had lost the protection of a national government,” and maintaining accustomed order. So in circumstances such as those that obtained in Western Europe at the time she was writing, the state, as Arendt puts it, transferred “the whole matter to the police. This was the first time the police in Western Europe

had received authority to act on its own, to rule directly over people; in one sphere of public life it was no longer an instrument to carry out and enforce the law, but had become a ruling authority independent of government and ministries” (287). At the moment when the baby is abandoned and there is a question as to whether, as one of the *hijras* suggests, it should be handed over to the police, Anjum volunteers to take the baby, scoffing at the idea that the police could be trusted with so momentous a task as caring for a child, given their reputation for endangering life. She is aware of the role of the police in protecting power and persecuting ordinary people during and after Indira Gandhi’s 21-month “Emergency” of 1975–1977. As a Muslim minority transgendered person, Anjum has particular reason to fear the police just as much as the Hindu right-wing mobs.

Anjum’s skepticism about state apparatuses including the police would have resonated with Arendt’s observation that the police could not even be depended on to protect the right parties and intervene on the right side of justice, as when the Nazis “met with so disgracefully little resistance from the police in the countries they occupied, and ... were able to organise terror as much as they did with the assistance of ... local police forces, ... due at least in part to the powerful position which the police had achieved over the years in their unrestricted and arbitrary domination of stateless and refugees” (289). Arendt’s remarks seem chillingly relevant as I write this in the United States, where frequent clashes have been documented between the police and black people, and where neo-Nazi and neo-fascist groups such as the Alt-Right have been resurgent, and where the police have been accused in some cases of protecting them when confrontations happen, as in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017.

Through Anjum’s offices of rough care, ministering to the marginal elements of Delhi society proves an exemplary kind of rooted cosmopolitics, a solidarism with the poor, downtrodden, or abjected that is both local and universal. What is paramount as a moral compass for Anjum is her everyday, microcosmic, embodied experience of discovering herself as, and living day to day as, a woman in a man’s body and ministering to all the others disenfranchised like her, precisely because nobody else will. Living in this embodied but divided self, Anjum seeks belonging to a collective, on the basis of her right to have rights *as well as* on the basis of her divided gender identity.

Roy foregrounds Anjum’s transgendered body to *critique* the dematerialization, the “disappearing,” of the marginal and subaltern body within the “normative” in the first sense, S1: To return materiality to representation is part of the cosmopolitical project. What Anjum’s embodied, materialist presence in the liminal and microcosmic “cosmopolis” of the graveyard in Delhi accomplishes, then, is a thinking back to a normative cosmopolitanism in the second sense, what I earlier categorized as S2, of a cosmopolitanism that is imagined from the margins, from “below,” premised on a “new charter” for cosmopolitanism that is still uncharted, or is in the process of being charted. Anjum’s struggle to belong, as a transgendered subject, is representative in Spivak’s sense of *Vertretung*, political representation. She “represents,” as an embodied material subjectivity, other minorities who are marginalized within the nation-

state, and appeals for recognition both as an instantiation of the abstract universal citizen and as an embodied, material subject.

With this novel Roy often walks a thin line between utopianism and dystopianism; it is admittedly too predictable, rambling, its prose at once too experimental and unable to justify its experimentalism. It has too many characters, and the reader is made to work unnecessarily hard to keep track of them. It is needlessly long. Yet her characters, no matter how marginal, have lives worthy of attention, and demand to be addressed *as material bodies in the world*, where cosmopolitical justice can only be thought of from a universalist perspective. The themes that obsessively animate this sprawling work pose acute ethical as well as aesthetic challenges. And so, despite being overwrought and overwritten, the novel presents a vibrant study of a peculiar cosmopolitanism that is also unexceptionable. All human beings, Roy's novel seems to say, whatever their national origin and social status, or however marginal, have equal right to pursue happiness, to have rights, because they are all human, capable of enjoyment and of producing enjoyment in others. This constitutes the abstract universal citizen's irreducible materiality. To adapt the framing language of the novel, the question is, how to tell a shattered story? And the answer the novel offers is eminently *cosmopolitical*: by becoming everything, by becoming everyone.

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From Édouard Glissant's "The Open Boat" to the Age of Mass Migration

At once poetic prose fiction, historical account, and allegory of the transatlantic slave trade, Édouard Glissant's "The Open Boat" serves as a preamble to *Poetics of Relation* (1990)—a philosophical essay in which Glissant redefines identity outside its traditional boundaries by positing a fluid, changing network of exchanges and contacts with others. In Glissant's view, identity is neither static nor self-contained but shifting and rhizomatic: It is relational, multiple, and unpredictable; it eludes all cultural certainties, opposes all forms of rootedness, and challenges the stability of communities (from ethnic groups to nation-states) that define themselves primarily in opposition to outsiders. Glissant calls this new way of apprehending the world *Relation*, and the process whereby Relation comes into being *creolization*. Creolization is not a mere concept: It is happening in the wake of globalization and the exponential growth of intellectual, artistic, and cultural interactions it generates. Paradoxically, creolization also works as a bulwark against globalization understood as the neoliberal economic system that leads to an unequal distribution of wealth and is responsible, in no small measure, for the current mass migration into Europe. This chapter, however, intends neither to assess the pros and cons of globalization nor to probe the hows and whys of the migrant crisis. Rather, it endeavors to understand the challenges migration entails both for the displaced populations and the societies into which they integrate willy-nilly. Starting from "The Open Boat," and relying on such Glissantian concepts as *trace* and *errantry*, this chapter identifies the connection, however tenuous, that exists between "the Africans who lived through the experience of deportation to the Americas" ("Open Boat" 5) and the migrants of today. Immigration is further discussed not as a clash between cosmopolitan and narrow-minded sensibilities but as an ipso facto state of negotiation between host nations and newcomers. In an effort to de-dramatize a situation the consequences of which are yet to be known, this chapter ultimately tries to imagine what kind of new identities will spring from circumstances that are not new but nevertheless unprecedented in magnitude.

1 Slave Trade, World Trade, Migration

"The French Caribbean," Glissant writes in *Caribbean Discourse* (1981), "is the site of a history characterized by ruptures and that began with a brutal dislocation, the slave trade" (61). A decade later in "The Open Boat," Glissant exhorts his reader to imagine what this dislocation was like for the captives in the hold of the slave ship. Glissant describes the "deported" Africans as "[w]orn down, in a debasement more eternal

than apocalypse” (6). But, Glissant warns, “that is nothing yet” (6), for the Middle Passage has repercussions beyond the event itself and long after the victims’ lifetime. After describing the harrowing experience of the Middle Passage, Glissant endeavors to make intelligible the psychological state of captives confronted with what he calls the unknown, a term which designates three different instances. First, the unknown is the hold of the slave ship—a place where human beings are uprooted, dissocialized, and depersonalized. Second, it is the marine abyss in which so many captives, dead or alive, were casually jettisoned. Finally, the unknown is the New World, a place where the everyday has become unreal, and the ancestral land a vanishing memory. “The Open Boat” is part of a small group of fictional works, from Fred D’Aguiar’s *Feeding the Ghosts* (1997) to Manu Herbstein’s *Ama, A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (2001) and Daniel Black’s *The Coming* (2015), which tell the story of the Middle Passage from the vantage point of the victims.²⁴ However, “The Open Boat” stands out not only because it does not fully meet the criteria of fiction writing²⁵ but because, quite unexpectedly, it turns one of the most dreadful events of world history into a positive experience with a universal scope. Indeed, Glissant compares the Middle Passage to a birth, and while he is not the only author to use this simile, he makes his whole theory of Relation hinge on it.²⁶

While describing the first dread of the hold as “a fall in the belly of the boat” (6), Glissant re-interprets the hold as a womb wherefrom a new people came. Thus, in spite of all those who have been sacrificed, Glissant sees the experience of the hold as

24 This list is by no means exhaustive. Other noteworthy novels that do not exclusively focus on, but devote significant segments to, the Middle Passage and its victims are, in chronological order, Martin R. Delany’s *Blake; or the Huts of America* (1859–1861); Alex Haley’s *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976); Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987); Barry Unsworth’s *Sacred Hunger* (1992); Lawrence Hill’s *The Book of Negroes* (2007); and Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* (2016). Bernardine Evaristo’s *Blonde Roots* (2009) should be added to this list even though *Blonde Roots* depicts a world in reverse in which slaves are white and masters black.

25 “The Open Boat” is not a novel. It is a short piece comprising fourteen paragraphs running over five pages. What really differentiates it from such works as *Feeding the Ghosts*, *Ama, A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, and *The Coming*, however, is its unconventional use of fiction writing rules. “The Open Boat” tells a story (the Middle Passage as birth) with a plot (the psychological experience of the captives), characters (the captives, the descendants, and the readers), and a dénouement (transcending the trauma of the Middle Passage), but all these elements of fiction writing are used as introductory material for philosophical theories later developed in *Poetics of Relation*.

26 The idea of the Middle Passage as birth already pervades Robert Hayden’s “Middle Passage” (1962) of a few decades earlier: “Middle Passage: / Voyage through death / to life upon these shores” (48). And it anticipates Caryl Phillips’s description, in *The Atlantic Sound* (2001), of Sullivan Island, the place where many slave ships would unload their cargo for the auction block of nearby Charleston, South Carolina: “An arrival in America. Having crossed the Atlantic in the belly of a ship. An arrival. ... Step ashore, out of sight of Charleston. To be fed, watered, scrubbed, prepared. To be sold. ... An arrival. Low, low land. Water. The mainland lying low in the hazy distance. Charleston. Farewell Africa. Welcome America” (257).

a beginning, the emergence of a new humanity, a nothingness that has finally become knowledge, "[n]ot just a specific knowledge, appetite, suffering, and delight of one particular people" (8), he explains, "but knowledge of the Whole, greater from having been at the abyss and freeing knowledge of Relation within the Whole" (8). The word Glissant uses for knowledge in the original, *connaissance*, is more revealing as its Latin etymology (*co-gnoscere*) means to know with or together. Knowledge is built in relation with others; it is in the making and always renewed rather than ossified and imposed from outside. It is not a knowledge already framed in cultural certainties, and not a knowledge reduced to Glissant's own Creole community. It is an all-encompassing knowledge conducive to what Glissant defines as Relation, which "is not made up of things that are foreign but of shared knowledge" (8). Relation, which started in the "nonworld"—that is, in the darkness and anonymous promiscuity of the hold—has grown into something new: the total world. The world as a totality, Glissant argues in *Traité du Tout-Monde* (1997), is already a reality that has changed the way human communities see themselves and their land: "The physical borders of nations have been made permeable to intellectual and cultural exchange, to the blending of opinions" (193; my translation). As a result, Glissant goes on, "the nation state is no longer able to protect from within the connection each individual has to the land" (193; my translation). Glissant is critical of attachment to soil, culture, race, or religion because it thwarts diversity and facilitates uniformization and homogeneity. Glissant calls such a mindset "continental thinking," and using his own Caribbean background as a paradigm, contrasts it with "archipelago thinking," which is another term for total world and Relation. As Glissant notes, "[t]he whole world is becoming an archipelago and becoming creolized" ("Unforeseeable" 290). This is particularly true of Europe, which "offers such a mosaic of languages and does not seek cultural standardization" (qtd. in Joignot; my translation). Glissant does not provide a political strategy toward the achievement of Relation, but he champions the cross-fertilization of ideas across cultures and continents, and more significantly, he believes in the power of imagination to have a positive impact in the world. As he states in *Poetics of Relation*: "No imagination helps avert destitution in reality, none can oppose oppressions or sustain those who 'withstand' in body or spirit. But imagination changes mentalities, however slowly it may go about this" (183). Unlike hard science, whose role is to find, observe, and establish facts, imagination can look into the future and suggest new ways of transforming the world. Glissant chose the word poetics to define his work because poetics encompasses both an aesthetic and innovative dimension. Indeed, the Greek etymology of poetics, *poiesis*, denotes creation, production, and composition. Modernity, according to Glissant, is violent and anticultural, "which means it tries hard to guarantee the open energy of the shock between cultures" (*Poetics* 197). In order to derail this movement of "deculturation," Glissant advocates resorting to the "imaginary," i.e., poetics: "Let us not stop with this commonplace: that a poetics cannot guarantee us a concrete means of action. But a poetics, perhaps, does allow us to understand better our action in the world" (199). The imaginary is

not an instrument of concrete change, but it makes us aware of “the prophylactic violence of forms of deculturation” (199). The imaginary, Glissant further argues, “works in a spiral: from one circularity to the next, it encounters new spaces and does not transform them into either depths or conquests” (199). Finally, it “becomes complete on the margins of every new linear projection. It creates a network and constitutes volume” (199). The imaginary, one could argue, is a *sine qua non* toward the advent of Relation, and it is with this principle in mind that Glissant concludes “The Open Boat”: “Our boats are open, we sail them for every one” (21).

2 Captives and Refugees

In 1990, when “The Open Boat” came out, Glissant’s hopeful vision of a generous humanity sailing together to the four corners of the world was rivaled by images of a despairing humanity—that of the so-called boat people, Haitian refugees in the Caribbean and Vietnamese refugees in Southeast Asia, all fleeing persecution aboard rickety, overcrowded vessels that may either fail to reach safer shores or be turned away when they did. The tragedy of the boat people was still making headlines in the mid-1990s, and it bears a striking resemblance to the current tragedy of migrants and refugees trying to cross into Europe through the Mediterranean Sea. The locale and the victims have changed, but the situation is very similar. Of these exiles yearning for freedom, justice, and economic security, some die and some survive. Some find asylum in host countries, and some don’t. Some become legal aliens, and some remain undocumented.

Comparing these displaced victims to the victims of the Middle Passage appears misguided since the latter were brought to the New World bound hand and foot to work as slaves on plantations while the former have been leaving war-torn zones, moribund economies, and oppressive regimes of their own volition (even when circumstances leave them little choice). Furthermore, the Africans were deported for a life of forced labor guaranteeing the economic prosperity of their masters. Conversely, migrants and refugees face either labor deprivation or “self-deportation,”²⁷ when they are not compelled, *manu militari*, to turn back. Whatever the scenario, the purpose of anti-immigration policies is to perpetuate the economic prosperity of nations that once enslaved Africans for ... economic prosperity. From this perspective, it can be

²⁷ Self-deportation is a legal strategy whereby a host country encourages illegal aliens to go back to their home countries of their own volition. Rather than enforcing deportation laws, the host country seeks to make the life of illegal aliens unbearable either by denying them access to basic welfare or threatening to go after employers who hire them. The term is associated with a series of policies enacted in the United States in the 1990s.

argued that the scourge of those shackled in the hold of slave ships and those huddled under the tarp of makeshift boats is the same: greed.

In "Creolization in the Making of the Americas" (1995), the original version for the first part of *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (1996),²⁸ Glissant distinguishes three types of migrants to the New World. The first type is that of the "founding" or "armed migrant"—the *Mayflower* settler and his descendants who built "the economic power of the Northern Americas" (87); the second type is that of the "household migrant" who arrived "with his kitchen ranges, ... family pictures, [and] perhaps a business ability" (87); that migrant "provided the labour in the North, but ... remained dependent on the economic power of the [armed migrant]" (87); and the third type of migrant is the "naked migrant," whom Glissant describes as "the African deported by the Middle Passage, arriving with only *traces* of his original country and his languages, and with the difficult and progressively vanished memory of his gods" (87; emphasis added).

While the fate of the deported Africans of the slave trade era is not a yardstick by which the fate of the displaced migrants of today should be measured, Glissant's notion of *the trace* can help bridge the gap between both experiences. Glissant notes that the cultures that emerged from the plantation economy of the Americas did not proceed "from preserved folklores (as did the Irish or Italian people in the North), but from ... traces" (87)—traces that they would combine with "countless other elements, from China or India or the Middle East, and so on, with so many conflicts to resolve" (87). But Glissant, rather than point out the alienating effects of such an ordeal, prefers to emphasize its virtuous outcome: "Imagining and recreating from traces of memory removes a person far away from systems, far away not only from ideological thinking but even more from the thought of any imperative system" (87). "Trace-thinking," Glissant argues in *Introduction à une poétique du divers*, exposes "the false universality of system thinking" (17),²⁹ which designates the logocentric tradition of the Western world that spawned the plantation system, neoliberalism, and the territorial instinct of modern nation-states. Interpreting Glissant's definition of the trace, Jarrod

28 The quotes in this paragraph come from a 2008 version of "Creolization in the Making of the Americas," which appeared in *Caribbean Quarterly*. The original version of this text was published in Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford's 1995 *Race and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, a collection of essays arising from a symposium held at the Smithsonian Institution in 1991. *Introduction à une poétique du divers* was also published in 1995 by Presses de l'Université de Montréal. The better-known French version was published the following year, in 1996, by Gallimard, and its first part, which corresponds to "Creolization in the Making of the Americas," is titled "Créolization dans la Caraïbe et les Amériques" (11–32).

29 The original sentence reads: "La pensée de la trace est celle qui s'oppose aujourd'hui le plus valablement à la fausse universalité des pensées de système." I borrow "trace-thinking" for "pensée de la trace" and "system-thinking" for "pensées de système" from Jarrod Hayes, but the translation varies from one author to the next. For example, Jean-Luc Tamby translates the former as "trace thought" and the latter as "systematic thoughts," while Chris Bongie prefers "thinking of the trace" and "systematic thinking," respectively.

Hayes argues that Glissant contrasts the trace “with an essentialist understanding of identity and uses the trace to define a kind of identity-in-movement” (142). The trace, Hayes goes on to say, is like the rhizome: It is “one particular manifestation of ‘poetics of relation’ that defines identity *in relation* to others, to the Other—and values the relation with other cultures and peoples over an internal essence” (142). What Glissant’s “trace-thinking” helps us understand, however, is that the “naked migrants” did not re-invent themselves *ex nihilo*: Old identities were lost, but traces remained and became an integral part of the new identities they forged through exchange with others. The same applies to modern-day migrants: Traces of their lost cultures have traveled with them and will influence their host cultures in unpredictable ways. Moreover, these migrants may arrive empty-handed, but they come with a claim—a claim to basic human dignity and protection, which is guaranteed, at least to those recognized as refugees, by international laws.³⁰

The issue of the slaves taken across the Atlantic to work on the plantations of the New World remained conspicuously absent from political, let alone moral, debates until the end of the 18th century. The Enlightened notions of human rights had not yet started to influence international law, and those who condemned the immorality of the slave trade were few and diffident. Yet “The Open Boat” touches on this notion of claim on two occasions. First, when the narrator tells the captives that the “womb abyss,” i.e., the hold, “generates the *clamor* of your protest” (6; emphasis added), and second, when the narrator, now embodying the voice of the captives, tells the “vieil Océan” that the shore of the New World is where “we hook our tar-streaked wounds, our reddened mouths and stifled *outcries*” (7; emphasis added).³¹ In the first instance, Glissant asks us to imagine the survivors as a loud crowd dominated by confusion, indignation, and passion, and expressing dissent or protest. Etymologically, a “clamor” is also a call or an appeal—in other words, a claim. As early as the 14th century, a claim was “a demand of a right [and] right of claiming,” implying a sense of entitlement with moral and legal prerogatives. As a verb, the legal dimension of claim was accentuated: “to ask or demand by virtue of right or authority.” It is

30 Article 1 of the *United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951), states that “the term ‘refugee’ shall apply to any person who ... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (UNHCR).

31 Both the terms “clamor” in the third paragraph and “outcries” in the eighth paragraph are translations of the term “clameur” in the original. Also, note that the eighth paragraph of “The Open Boat” begins with a line from Lautréamont’s *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1868): “Je te salue, vieil Océan!” (7). Betsy Wing, the translator, must have chosen to leave the line in French to make the Lautréamont reference explicit.

this "right of claiming" that is stifled in the second instance: Plantation slaves knew better than to complain, and they had no legal rights whatsoever. Thus, for Glissant to evoke the notion of claim in relation to the survivors of the Middle Passage is neither anachronistic (since the use of the term predates the early stages of European slave trading in Africa) nor unfounded (since Middle Passage survivors are entitled, if only in a moral sense, to claim their rights). And the legal claims of today's migrants, in virtue of international refugee law, are based on the same moral principle with which Glissant endows those who survived the experience of the hold. The outcry/clamor/claim of the migrants has reached the shores of affluent nations, and these nations can no longer turn a deaf ear to them.

3 Migrants and Nation-States

The recourse to Glissant's "trace-thinking" to establish a parallel between the deported Africans of the past and the migrants of today is not a new idea. A typical example is Alexandre Alaric's essay on the figure of the "naked migrant" (2005). Alaric first revisits the Glissantian trope of birth, comparing the experience of today's migrants to "a second 'coming to the world,' a second hoped-for birth" (188), and later to a "proto-genesis of self and the world" (193). Further on, Alaric calls "trace-thinking" a "social strategy of resistance" (193) implemented by both the victims of the slave trade and modern-day migrants. Alaric argues that the latter, in their quest to be granted a legal status in Europe or North America, challenge the notions of conventional citizenship and national borders. Indeed, nation-states are being shaped and defined anew by the global phenomenon of migrancy. Whether the slaves of yesterday and the migrants of today resist or embrace the new culture they end up in, they alter it with their own values, beliefs, and practices, even when all is done to minimize, or even uproot, these cultural legacies. The ineluctable consequence of this global phenomenon, regardless of laws, borders, politics, and ideologies, is the accelerated creolization of nation-states, which, fearing for their stability, try to protect themselves by fostering social uniformization.

The stability of a nation-state is based on a social contract that is rather impervious, if not hostile to outsiders. And it is not just a social contract; it is also a social construct. Benedict Anderson's well-known concept of the nation as an "imagined" community "always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (8) could not be more accurate in that it is, indeed, "imagined." Fraternity and equality among nationals rarely stands the test of reality. Furthermore, the notion that a community is "imagined" points to a discourse of self-authentication—in other words, a fantasy akin to a nationalist rhetoric that Glissant describes as rootedness—rootedness that has been clashing with the uprootedness of recent mass migration. The current wave of forced diaspora has created favorable conditions for what Glissant calls *errantry*, a notion

whose genealogy harkens back to the Deleuzian notion of the rhizome. Errantry, like the rhizome, “is at variance with territorial intolerance, or the predatory effects of the unique root” (20). It is akin to an endless creolization that goes against the idea of the nation-state as a monolithic organization characterized by fixed, univocal rules and rejection of outside influences: “[T]his thinking of errantry, this errant thought,” Glissant argues, “silently emerges from the destructuring of compact national entities that yesterday were still triumphant and, at the same time, from difficult, uncertain births of new forms of identity that call to us” (18). Relation, rather than opposition, defines these new forms of identity, which are fluid and independent. As Glissant explains: “The thought of errantry is not apolitical nor is it inconsistent with the will to identity, which is, after all, nothing other than the search for a freedom within particular surroundings” (20). If errantry denotes a geographical displacement, it is also a psychological move, a rational decision to shift one’s perspective on the world and redefine one’s identity in the process. Our fragmented, chaotic age seems a propitious time to prompt our latent disposition to the thought of errantry, but this does not mean that populations currently undergoing the migration crisis are motivated by the same thought. It is no wild speculation to argue that some migrants, whatever their origins, affinities, and destinations, will seek to re-establish themselves as a homogeneous community wherever they land, and will vie for power either against other minorities or their host country. Their destiny is not a matter of ethical choices. It is contingent on a series of conditions over which they hold little or no sway. Upon arrival, the migrants are faced with what Marinus Ossewaarde calls “elements of sociality,” which include “customs, habits, manners, mores, values, folkways, meanings, beliefs, ideas, sentiments, taste, symbols, language and local patriotism” (381). The success of the negotiation between the migrants and their host nation will depend on how they apprehend each other’s culture.

The world is now thrust into a cycle of incessant migration, pitting a state-centric against an extra-statist perspective. Undeniably, national authorities view the mobility of migrants as a threat because it eludes state control and laws. However, comparing nation-states to monsters of selfishness and migrants to prophets of creolization is an over-simplification. A host country is built around rules, values, and traditions holding people together, but so is the nation that the migrant fled, and the shock of displacement does not eradicate the culture of origin to the extent the transatlantic slave trade did. Slave traders and masters carried out the erasure of African identities knowingly and intentionally. It was part of a process of absolute subjugation. There is no such endeavor today: Immigration is a negotiation between a will to adopt on the part of the host, and a will to adapt on the part of the newcomer. Whatever the level of good faith on either side of the equation, identities are being transformed. As Nevzat Soguk puts it, “Lives are being recast partly in migrant trajectories, partly in territorial imperatives and partly in national imaginations” (419). The migrants’ primary purpose is survival, and “in their wanderings,” Soguk notes, they are “creative, resourceful, and resistant, demonstrating the possibilities of establishing new

homes, neighborhoods, and communities" (437). While doing so, however, they challenge "modern territorial statecraft" (437). Large-scale immigration shakes the economic, demographic, social, cultural, and political foundations of nationhood.

On March 11, 1882, on the occasion of a conference at the Sorbonne, Ernest Renan famously described a nation as a "daily plebiscite." A nation, according to Renan, is "a soul, a spiritual principle" defined by a past, i.e., "the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories," and a present, which requires "consent and the desire to live together, the desire to continue to invest in the heritage that we have jointly received." Speaking directly to his audience that day, Renan declares: "Messieurs, man does not improvise. The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long past of efforts, sacrifices, and devotions." And he concludes, "One loves [the nation] in proportion to the sacrifices that one has committed and the troubles that one has suffered." Renan's understanding of the nation as a "spiritual principle" has the virtue of overriding such criteria as race, religion, language, and geography, thus suggesting that anyone willing to be part of the nation can do so in exchange for a steadfast commitment to national values and customs. The alleged continuum between past and present, however, brings newcomers to an impasse, for even if they are willing to embrace the ethos of the national community, they cannot possibly claim a past connection to that community. For a newly arrived migrant, the past is yet to come—as it were. Renan must have been aware of this paradox as he notes that national solidarity is the fruit not only of past sacrifices but also sacrifices one is ready to make in the present. Hence Renan also insists on "consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life." One final issue must be raised about Renan's argument: It presupposes unqualified allegiance to the nation on the part of the newcomer, but it overlooks the tractability, goodwill, and responsibility that lie with the host nation. It is understood that the contact of cultures, whether in the form of confluence or clash, generates changes, but the extent to which a host nation should accept or reject the cultural baggage newcomers bring with them remains a moot point.

Cosmopolitanism, both as a moral stance and a national policy, is often invoked as a panacea to such crises as the recent wave of immigration into the European Union. The idea of a cosmopolitan world is not new, and yet no nation has ever abolished its borders in order to welcome all refugees and asylum seekers. Etienne Balibar observes that the notion of "cosmopolitical utopias" (293) is countered by "the conviction that ... there is no citizen without a *membership* in a 'community of citizens' built through a common history, which therefore has to be geographically and culturally bordered" (294). In *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective* (1784), Immanuel Kant imagines a "federation of peoples" in which "every state ... could expect its security and its rights" to emanate "from a united power and from the decision based on laws of the united will" (10). But Kant does not explain how such supranational institutions would be organized, and a decade later, in *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), he shifts his attention to what Balibar describes as:

a universal system of juridical norms, which include certain *basic* or *fundamental rights*: particularly the right of “hospitality,” which make it possible for private individuals to move across borders and settle on “foreign land.” The main question becomes that of the *moral transformation* that states must undergo, i.e., impose upon themselves, if they are to ... respect and legalize the “cosmopolitan right” of individuals. (295–296)

Balibar notes that the purpose of this “cosmopolitan right” is for states “to emancipate individuals” (295–296), and that it should not be confused with “a variety of *international law*, whose subjects remain the individual ‘sovereign nations’ ” (295–296). But Jacques Derrida brushes aside this difference and conflates individual rights and international law when he takes on Kant’s notion of hospitality. In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant defines the “conditions of universal hospitality” as:

the right of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon his arrival on the other’s territory. If it can be done without causing his death, the stranger can be turned away, yet as long as the stranger behaves peacefully where he happens to be, his host may not treat him with hostility. It is not the *right of a guest* that the stranger has a claim to ... but rather a right to visit, to which all human beings have a claim, to present oneself to society by virtue of the right of common possession of the earth. (82)

Kant’s notion of a “right to visit” falls short of the need in which current refugees and asylum seekers find themselves: They are not requesting a right to visit but a right to stay for the simple reason that they have nowhere else to go. Similarly, the proviso that “the stranger can be turned away” so long as the life of the stranger is not in peril seems inappropriate for the current situation. International laws have been established to prevent nations from refusing migrants in a dire situation, and most nations endeavor to be hospitable. Yet, some do shirk their responsibilities, and even when they don’t, hospitality is always subject to conditions. It is this conditionality that Derrida challenges in *Of Hospitality* (1997). “Absolute hospitality,” Derrida argues:

requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. (25)

But hospitality, according to Derrida, can never be unconditional as it is mediated by power. This power starts at the level of the individual: “I want to be master at home. ... Anyone who encroaches on my ‘at home,’ ... on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy” (53, 55). Sovereignty, Derrida continues, “can only be exercised by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence” (55). Pointing out, after Émile Benveniste, that *hostis*, the Latin root of hospitality, means both guest and enemy (45), Derrida contends that hospitality is constituted by “a certain injustice, and even a certain perjury” (55). Derrida’s shift from injustice to perjury marks a shift

from both moral to legal issues and individual to national issues. Indeed, Derrida's reflection on hospitality is a response to the rather harsh treatment of undocumented laborers in Paris back in the mid-1990s.³²

Derrida speaks of collusion between hospitality and power, which starts with "the necessity, for the host ... of choosing, electing, filtering, selecting their invitees, visitors, or guests, those to whom they decide to grant asylum, the right of visiting, or hospitality" (55). Derrida shows that hospitality, initially understood as a moral imperative, has become a matter of legal rights, contending that "[the] collusion between the violence of power or the force of law ... on one side, and hospitality on the other, seems to depend, in an absolutely radical way, on hospitality being inscribed in the form of a right" (55). The issue that Derrida raises, Gerasimos Kakoliris argues, is that "this asymmetry between conditional and unconditional hospitality maintains an endless demand, since each event of welcoming the other can only fall short of the requirements of the unconditional law of unlimited hospitality" (149). Thus, Derrida admits that there is an unresolved tension between moral and political responsibility since the obligation to welcome the other is thwarted by issues of national security; yet, Derrida faults nations for restricting entry and residency into their territory. As Kakoliris points out, even though Derrida demonstrates that conditional and unconditional hospitality are "inseparable" (150), he opposes them and thus creates a binary opposition, which is exactly what deconstruction offers to undo. "It is quite paradoxical," Kakoliris continues, "to find [Derrida] talking of 'pure' hospitality, 'real hospitality,' 'true hospitality,' when he is the philosopher par excellence who has put the concepts of 'purity' and 'truth' under question" (151). In *Limited Inc*, Derrida himself argues that, "there is no idealization that keeps itself pure, safe from all contamination" (119), which means that there cannot be an absolute, pure opposition between two terms because one term always contaminates the other. Hence Kakoliris concedes that there is a certain hostility in every act of hospitality, but he rejects Derrida's theory of "a 'pure,' 'real' or 'true' hospitality" (151). Kakoliris finally challenges Derrida's theory for implying that one is never hospitable enough, which puts everyone in a state of permanent guilt. Responsibility to others cannot be a com-

32 In 1996, in the wake of the "sans-papiers" movement in Paris, Derrida lambasted the French government for its treatment of undocumented African workers: "I remember a bad day last year: It just about took my breath away, it sickened me when I heard the expression for the first time, barely understanding it, the expression crime of hospitality [*délit d'hospitalité*]. In fact, I am not sure that I heard it, because I wonder how anyone could ever have pronounced it ... no, I did not hear it, and I can barely repeat it; I read it voicelessly in an official text. It concerned a law permitting the prosecution, and even the imprisonment, of those who take in and help foreigners whose status is held to be illegal. This 'crime of hospitality' (I still wonder who dared to put these words together) is punishable by imprisonment. What becomes of a country, one must wonder, what becomes of a culture, what becomes of a language when it admits of a 'crime of hospitality,' when hospitality can become, in the eyes of the law and its representatives, a criminal offense?" (Qtd. in Kakoliris 144–145).

plete surrendering of one's decisional power. As David Wood argues, "our exposure to the other is not some huge, excessive obligation, but rather a complex openness to requests, demands, pleas, which call not just for an acknowledgement of my obligations, but for scrutiny, for negotiation, for interpretation, and ultimately for recognizing both opportunities and limitations" (qtd. in Kakoliris 152–153). Wood's assessment also applies to the impact of newcomers on a host country, and it could be argued that responsibility, despite the newcomers' indigence, goes both ways. In fact, responsibility, understood as reliability and trustworthiness, may well be the first quality most migrants wish to display.

This encounter between the guest and the host is not a set trajectory. For the migrant, it is an adventure (from the Latin *ad-venire*, to reach, to arrive at) shared with the host in the sense that an adventure is a perilous undertaking in which both sides are bound to lose a part of themselves. An adventure implies danger, risk, and unpredictability. It is uncharted territory, a form of improvisation that may well be the very essence of the nation-to-be, for newcomers and their progeny, willingly or not, will modify the national identity. The only way to imagine the consequences of the current mass migration is to imagine the kind of citizens these immigrants, and more importantly, their progeny, will become.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the rhizome is the cornerstone of Glissant's theory of Relation: "Rhizomatic thought," Glissant writes in *Poetics of Relation*, "is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other" (11). While the rhizome is an apt metaphor to describe Relation, it is rather unfitting to describe the actual cultural and personal transformation the migrant undergoes once settled in the host nation. In fact, the Glissantian notion of rhizome-identity, with its network of infinite, unpredictable encounters, as well as its horizontal and constantly broken trajectories, may not be an adequate model of identity for people who have lost their roots and everything that was familiar. Glissant's argument, in *Poetics of Relation*, that invaders of the distant past were ruled by an irrepressible desire to settle down is also valid for the current victims of forced migration, except that the latter are not driven by a desire but by an imperative: survival. In their quest for stability, displaced populations aspire to sedentariness, knowing full well that their and their progeny's identities will be modified in the process. Displacement implies not only adaptability and negotiation, but also emergence of new identities. In order to provide an alternative to Deleuze and Guattari's botanical metaphor, one could invoke marcottage, a form of plant propagation that differs from propagation by cuttings. Marcottage, sometimes called air layering, consists in burying part of a stem or branch in the soil until new roots develop.³³ Marcottage does not change the genetic identity of the new

33 In this process called rhizogenesis, the part of the stem or branch buried in the soil is not separated from the parent plant. From a genetic point of view, however, marcottage remains akin to propaga-

plant, but it remains a potent metaphor for migrants in that the development of the plant will depend on the nature of the soil (lighting, shade, humidity, dryness, acidity, etc.) where it is rooted.³⁴ Furthermore, the descendants of these plants may generate hybrids by crossbreeding with plants that have been around since long before they were. Beyond the obvious parallel with the offspring of migrants who will take root in the host soil and develop identities reflecting a more or less ideal, acknowledged, and accepted compromise between various cultures, marcottage brings back the reviled notion of rootedness to the fore, neither to laud nor loathe it, but to convey its new meaning in this age of mass migration. The future young shoots may be enrooted and attached to their new soil, but their enrooting is likely to be creolized, diverse, and immune to the "totalitarian root" to whose eradication Glissant has devoted so much energy.

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tion by cuttings in that it is a mode of asexual multiplication that generates new individuals with the same genome. Put simply, these new individuals are clones. By contrast, sexual reproduction (e.g., flower pollination) produces new individuals with a new genome, which is a mixture of both parents.

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Ewa Barbara Luczak

Men in Eugenic Times: Wallace Thurman's *Infants of the Spring* and the (Im)possibility of Cosmopolitan Friendship

In 1959, after being awarded the Lessing Prize of the Free City of Hamburg, in her acceptance speech Hannah Arendt dwelt with compelling force on the subject of friendship. She drew attention to the cosmopolitan dimension of the occasion and took the opportunity to elaborate on the strange trajectory of cosmopolitanism and transatlantic friendship; after all, the German city granted the award to a Jewish-German intellectual, who was then living permanently in the United States due to her escape from Nazi Germany twenty-six years earlier. For Arendt, friendship “seems pertinent to the question of humanness” (31) and is inextricably intertwined with the problem of worldliness, i.e. of people’s relation to the material world. Friendship is a fundamental notion that builds human identity, as well as shapes the community and the world we live in. Arendt’s musings provide the background to the problem that is addressed in this chapter: that of cosmopolitan friendship at times which are intrinsically inimical to it. I am interested in investigating how political and racial divisions, as well as the discourse of racial absolutism, which are prominent in certain epochs, affect the shape of interracial and cosmopolitan friendships. What is the relationship between oppressive and divisive politics and human interracial and cross-geographical intimate bonding?

While talking about friendship, Arendt makes a distinction between friendship that is realized through a commonality of suffering and that which is fulfilled through its participation in the world. The former is “a privilege of pariah peoples” (21) and constitutes “humanity in the form of fraternity” (20) among “the repressed and persecuted, the exploited and humiliated” (21). Fundamental as it is during times of persecution, and as rich and warm as it is, it comes at a dear price—erasure from the world. Thus those that bond in pariahdom pay with their “invisibility,” which always means “a loss to the world” (21). An alternative friendship is one “in the world” and “of the world,” even though it may be more difficult, or even impossible, to realize during times of persecution. To Arendt, this “worldly” cosmopolitan friendship across borders and ethnic and racial divisions, by engaging with difference allows people to truly participate in the world as “world citizens.” It is also this type of friendship that can leave an indelible mark on the shape of the political world at large, change the world, and bring “a bit of humanness” to it (31).

Arendt’s speculations are compatible with contemporary cosmopolitan theory. In its post-World War II and post-1960s reformulation, cosmopolitanism is perceived as a moral and political project “of productive global interdependence” aimed at furthering the ideal of “belonging to a harmonious global community of cosmopolitan

citizens” (Braidotti 1). Cosmopolitanism, regardless of its conceptualization, be it the universalistic neo-Kantianism promoted by Jürgen Habermas and David Held, or that of a “nomadic ‘becoming-world’ or “cosmopolitanization from below” as advocated by Braidotti and Hall respectively (Braidotti 2; Werbner 346), is aimed at furthering people’s status as “world citizens,” which would bring them into a free interaction with the world in order to construct it together. The cosmopolitan project concerns the whole of humanity and thus is “pan-human” (Braidotti 3), and engages both those that are free to experience the world due to their racial, ethnic, national or economic privilege, and in an equal degree those that are reduced to the status of political pariahs: individuals suffering ethnic, racial, sexual or religious persecution, economic and illegal immigrants, and political refugees. Focusing on human interactions and “attentive to the material reality of our social and political situation” (Braidotti 3), the new cosmopolitanism is interested in both global friendship as well as its place in the material world, and so explores what Arendt labels as people’s worldliness and humanness. Arendt’s speculations may enrich our understanding of the conditions necessary for cosmopolitan friendship to exist in the world, and thus to be “of the world.” Her distinction between the friendship in oppression (which Arendt identifies with “brotherhood”), realized through an escape from a hostile world; and friendship realized “in the world” and claiming the right to engage with it, enables a nuanced approach to the discussion of friendship in different and difficult political contexts. It may shed additional light on the question of the possibility of cosmopolitan “worldly” friendship in a world that objects to it on principle, and thus forces people to withdraw into the *fraternité* of pariahdom. Moreover, it may facilitate an understanding of the trajectory of friendship at a time that privileges human bonding in “biology” and contests bonding in “culture,” as was the case during Arendt’s forced escape from Germany in 1940. Arendt’s philosophy provides us with an interesting perspective to the following tormenting questions: Can cosmopolitan friendship grow and offer a challenge to the political division of individuals into world citizens and world pariahs? Can it flourish during times of oppressive politics and mendacity, the dubious ethics of which was captured by Arendt in the term “false politics”? Or, to put it simply, is cosmopolitan friendship possible in what Arendt labeled as “Dark Times”?

As Arendt demonstrates, nowhere was the question of the relationship between cosmopolitan friendship and “false politics” more pertinent than at the times of the triumph of eugenics in the Western world on the eve of World War II. The eugenic discourse of nativism and racial absolutism (Gilroy, *Against Race* 285), which valorized family and racial purity, had little patience with friendships forged above familial relationships (Michaels 40–52). Bonding across racial lines was an anathema to the eugenic language of biological typology, which stressed the role of heredity in civilization. It is interesting to observe how the United States, which traditionally has prided itself on the uniqueness of its civic state democracy and its myth of US exceptionalism, has responded to the eugenically-induced debates around two different models of culture: one based on tribal affiliations, and the other on friendship. Being the

pulse of the time, US literature before World War II dutifully mirrored the two dominant strands in the then-contemporary thinking. It either endorsed the discourse of nativism and family and neglected that of friendship—thus leading to the emergence of “nativist modernism” (Michaels 6–17)—or it challenged the primacy of the family and developed a fascination with the figure of a nomadic orphan—“extraterritorial” and in search of friends—and as Edward Said argues, one of the major tropes of modernism (138). Among the novels that addressed the question of cosmopolitan friendship in times dominated by a eugenic discourse, *Infants of the Spring* (1931), by African American writer Wallace Thurman, stands out. The book offers a vivid and disturbing portrayal of the rise and fall of interracial and transatlantic friendship in the 1920s Harlem in New York—probably one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the decade. The daring cosmopolitan friendship described in the book refuted the eugenic advocacy of racial purity and challenged the rhetoric of racial segregation disseminated in accord with the theory of social Darwinism and legally enacted in the US South, but over time it met with a sad end. The termination of an intimate relationship between two “strangers” invites one to look into the reasons for the failure and thus raises the question of the conditions necessary for a cosmopolitan friendship to exist during times dominated by “false politics.”

The discussions of Wallace Thurman's *Infants of the Spring* are generally overshadowed by critical analysis of *The Blacker the Berry*—the first novel authored by Wallace during a promising writing career that ended with his untimely death at the young age of 32. If *The Blacker the Berry* is praised for its masterful depiction of the problem of colorism and racism in the life of a young black woman in the 1920s (Rotenberg), and for thus enacting Thurman's belief “that fiction writers were obliged to reach beyond the boundaries of their own personal lives” (Ganter 88), *Infants of the Spring* confuses readers and critics with its language of Mencken-inspired individualism, which assumes a radical “terminal” shape that “stands in stark opposition to group membership” (Singh 11) as well as breeds “corrosive contempt” (Posnock 82). Most likely discouraged by the novel's harsh critique of the Harlem Renaissance, which was identified with the discourse of racial uplift, the critics frequently bypass the novel's much larger political and social contexts and consequently, its radical refutation of the discourse of racial absolutism and its concomitant cosmopolitanism. When interpreting the novel, they tend to look at the intimate and the personal and focus on the novel's treatment of sexuality and queerness—which is also a logical direction to take given the novel's desire to shatter up the bourgeois code of respectability of the 1920s and Thurman's experimentation with his own sexuality (Ganter; Knadler; Pochmara 125–135, 141–177). I argue, however, that placing the novel against the social and scientific disputes of the time, and especially within the framework of eugenics, allows the reader to see the novel's sometimes confusing political and artistic choices in a new light. Juxtaposing the novel against the science of eugenics, perceived in the 1920s to be one of most vibrant and visionary sciences, facilitates a

grasp of what I perceive to be one of the novel's central preoccupations: the question of interracial, inter-cultural and transatlantic cosmopolitan friendship.

Both the figure of friendship and the discourse of eugenics are introduced into the novel right at the beginning, thus setting the tone for the whole work. When welcoming Steven, a new student at Columbia, to his studio in Harlem in the company of Samuel, Raymond, the black painter, engages in a monologue that is a display of wit, brilliance and irony:

“Sam doesn't like my studio, though he thinks it's decadent. ... Namely, the red and black draperies, the red and black bed cover, the crimson wicker chairs the riotous hook rugs, and Paul's erotic drawings, You see, Steve, Sam thinks it's all rather flamboyant and vulgar. He can't forget that he's a Nordic and that I'm a Negro, and according to all the sociology books, my taste is naturally crass and vulgar. I must not go in for loud colors. It's a confession of my inferior race heritage. Am I right, Sam?”

“It's all Greek to me anyhow,” Stephen murmured. (3)

Raymond's opening monologue, interspersed with remarks by Samuel and Steven, prepares the reader for what is about to come. The three young men, while eager to pursue their friendship, are divided by different attitudes towards the discourse of degeneracy, widespread in the United States in the 1920s. If Steven has no insight into the content of the conversation, both Raymond and Samuel exhibit an excellent command of the topic. Samuel, a white social reformer who has dedicated his life to the cause of racial equality, worries that the studio's bright colors and its parading of erotic paintings may testify to Raymond's “inferior race heritage” and debunk “the ideal of bourgeois acceptability endemic to programs of ‘racial uplift’ ” (Pinkerton 539). On the other hand Raymond, a black artist seeking inspiration and artistic energy in Harlem, chooses to ridicule the language of racial decadence. Thus, while Samuel's world is overshadowed by a fear of the black man sliding into degeneration and never “develop[ing] the strength to climb” (Roosevelt 9) the social and evolutionary ladder—an anxiety shared by such politicians as President Theodore Roosevelt—Raymond dismisses those fears as totally ungrounded. Even though both of them, as Americans and friends, are divided on the issue of degeneracy, they display a similarly thorough knowledge of the language of eugenics that mixed an older language of degeneracy with the agenda of social Darwinism. Whereas earlier theories of degeneracy tended to focus on the manifestation of decadence across classes—by warning against degeneration in art (Nordau) or developing the theory of the “criminal man” (Lombroso)—the language of evolution and social Darwinism gave those speculations a racial bias well-suited to the North American climate of racialism and racism.³⁵ Samuel and Raymond seem familiar with the conceptual rhetoric of racial

35 On the discussion of degeneracy in US literature in the first two decades of the twentieth century and especially in the fiction of Jack London, see Luczak (67–97).

degeneracy popularized by top US eugenicists of the time—David Star Jordan, Albert Ross, Madison Grant, and Lothrop Stoddard—a rhetoric that was both contested and partially incorporated by such progressive intellectuals as Clarence Darrow and H.L. Mencken respectively, who had little patience with “the eugenics cult.”³⁶ Samuel and Raymond’s awareness of the rhetoric of racial degeneracy is not unique, but rather a token of the times. The list of US intellectuals and writers impacted by the science of eugenics includes Jack London, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Willa Cather, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis and, in the context of the Harlem Renaissance so much closer to Thurman’s home, George Schuyler and Nella Larsen (Currell and Codgell; Childs; English; Luczak; Nies; Schalk). For the two friends from Thurman’s novel, raised and educated in the United States, the language of eugenics not only provides the background for their discussions but is also responsible for shaping truth claims about their environment. It is what they fall back upon when they refer to the world. Their world, or what Arendt would call the worldliness—relationship forged with people in the world and with the world itself—cannot exist without eugenic assumptions about the evolutionary nature of human races. Consequently, the friendship between Samuel and Raymond is always enacted in the space charted by eugenics.

The case of Steven and his relationship to Samuel and Raymond is radically different. When the young New Yorkers disagree about the decadent nature of Raymond’s studio, Steven pronounces somewhat naively and self-righteously, most likely to avoid being drawn into the discussion, that “it’s all Greek to me” (3). Steven is a foreigner, a new student at Columbia University who has just arrived from Toronto to the cosmopolitan New York, throbbing with Jazz music and the spirit of Freudianism. His status as an outsider is further emphasized by the fact that he is originally from Denmark, with his father being Norwegian and his family still living on the old continent. Naturally, his otherness places him at a disadvantage in the new environment due to his inability to interpret US cultural codes, one of them being the discourse of eugenics. Eugenics, known as the science of heredity, was by no means a US invention: as a matter of fact it originated in and was spread from the UK and soon became a cutting-edge science of the entire Western world, including Denmark and Canada (Turda; Turda and Weindling; Weiss-Wendt and Yeomans). Yet the popularity it reached in scientific circles and its status as a popular discourse in the UK, Germany

36 “In the last ten years the reading public has been bombarded by books and articles on eugenics. In the main these articles set forth a single thesis: that doom hangs over the human race. Of course, we have all known for a long time that each individual of the human race is doomed. Though we seldom speak of it and try not to think of it, every man inevitably comes to the realization that in time his own life must pass. The eugenicists’ concern, however, is not over the fact that we die one by one. What alarms them is that the race is apparently bent upon committing a wholesale biological *hari-kari*” (Darrow 129). Mencken both criticized eugenics and endorsed it with respect to poor white trash in the US South in *Asepsis* and “Sahara of the Bozart” respectively.

and the United States were unprecedented (Cuddy; Kline; Kuhl; Luczak; Stern) and may account for Steven's avoidance of the topic. Thus Steven follows neither Raymond's inquisitions on Nordicism nor Samuel's tirades on racial responsibility. His lack of cultural awareness, however, places him in favor with Raymond, who seizes the opportunity to establish a rapport free of racial bias. Raymond notes with satisfaction how Steven "[s]urprisingly enough ... [is] foreign, foreign to everything familiar either to Samuel and myself" (5) and plunges into a friendship with the young Dane.

Unencumbered and uncorrupted by mutual resentments, prejudices and theories of racial supremacy, the friendship between the two men develops at a fast pace. Its rapid flowering and "virginal" (Van Notten 272) quality invoke relationships developed by innocent children in their reception of each other and the world. Already on the first day of their meeting Raymond enthusiastically exclaims, "Steve, I feel as if I had known you all my life" (5), and after a week invites the man to share his apartment. In turn, when Steven is confronted with criticism from Samuel for his involvement in the black community of Harlem, he cheekily proclaims to Raymond: "You're the only friend I give a damn about" (4). The friendship of the young men seems to be unconditional and oblivious to the restrictions of the outside world:

Stephen had been in New York for a month now, and most of that month had been spent in the company with Raymond. Their friendship had become something precious, inviolate and genuine. They had become as intimate in that short period as if they had known on each other since childhood. In fact, there was something delightfully naïve and childlike about their frankly acknowledged affection for one another. Like children, they seemed to be totally unconscious of their racial difference. (17)

The physical and emotional proximity between the two men when they spend "most of [the] month in each other's company," is further sealed by their sharing of friends, be they female or male, and by their, even though only hinted at, mutual sexual attraction. It is assumed that the description of the intensity of the novel's friendship owes much to Thurman's personal experience of an intimate friendship with Harald Jan Stefansson—a Danish-Canadian introduced to Thurman by his friend Leland Petit (Van Notten 262). Described by Van Notten as Thurman's "most enduring love affair" (237) despite Stefansson's alleged heterosexuality (Van Notten 262), Thurman's relationship with the Danish-Canadian seems to have had a serious impact on the young African American writer at the time of his stay in Harlem.

Interestingly, Steve and Ray's desire for an ideal friendship based on radical proximity and blurring of borders between the selves is evocative of Giorgio Agamben's formula of friendship. According to Agamben, friendship is characterized by a radical proximity, whereby one's selfhood is re-inscribed and re-defined. Thus to him, the friend is "another self, a *hetros autos*," however he/she "is not another I, but an otherness immanent in self-ness, a becoming other of the self" (6). Raymond and Steve's relationship of a childlike opening to the other seems to lead them to become *hetros autos* to each other. Generous in their welcome, "unmolested by the world and their

demands" (Arendt 33) they invite the other to partake of their subjectivity and thus to shape their own self. Like in Agamben's musings, to them "friendship is ... de-subjectivization at the very heart of the most intimate perception of the self" (7).

What is interesting is that rather than being based on an intuitive understanding, the friendship between Steven and Raymond is rooted in conversations and grows through constant dialogues. And even though one can view the privileging of the intellectual bonding between the two men as a possible smoke screen for their passion,³⁷ the stress the novel puts on their verbal exchanges deserves attention. The novel's omniscient narrator, who at times assumes the voice of the men's dual consciousness, notes how "[t]heir greatest joy came when they could be alone and talk, ... talk about any and everything" (17). Furthermore, he/she asserts that "[t]hey seemed to have so much to say to one another, so much that remained unsaid all of their respective lives because they had never met anyone else with whom they could converse unreservedly" (17). The linguistic nature of the rapport between Steven and Raymond allows them to discuss and ameliorate their differences and to grow in their conceptual world in a process not unlike that of a hermeneutic cycle. Engaging in long discussions in Raymond's studio in Harlem, Steven and Raymond resemble ancient philosophers from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* "living together, conversing and sharing (*koinonein*) their talk and thoughts" (Agamben 7). And just like in Ancient Greece, their friendship grounded in language is not a project that terminates upon reaching the solution to a philosophical problem, but a dialogue that opens new interpretations and horizons in the process of a conversation.

The parallel and comparison of Steven and Raymond's friendship and growth as intellectuals/philosophers with that of early philosophers is not as far-fetched as it seems. After all, as Agamben reminds us the beginnings of philosophy are linked to the notion of friendship and "the intimacy of friendship and philosophy is so deep that philosophy includes the *philos*, the friend, in its very name" (2). To Steven and Raymond, friendship nurtures their life philosophy and this philosophy helps them grow in friendship. The relationship between the two is circular, and one is not given priority over the other. Friendship and philosophy coexist on the same plane and need each other to sustain and prolong their existence.

The philosophy which the two men seem to construct together in the process of their unending conversations is a mixture of Nietzschean individualism and what initially looks like anti-foundationalism. Nietzscheanism is probably most conspicuous in the novel and testifies to Thurman's fascination with the thought of H. L. Mencken. In the 1910s and 1920s Mencken was a major US propagator of Nietzsche's philosophy, through *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1908, 1913) and through his invention of a critical iconoclastic idiom that bespoke a strong, independent artis-

37 Van Notten notes how "suggestion of a sexual attraction between the two men is quickly dispelled" (272).

tic will—*de riguer* with US intellectuals (Pochmara 139–140; Rampersad; Scruggs; Van Notten 108). Mencken’s name is mentioned in Thurman’s novel only once; after their break up, Ray teases Steve to sell the story about his experience to Mencken since “[h]e’s so damned interested in Aframerican recently” (133). Yet, even if Mencken’s name is not introduced in other contexts, and when referred to alludes only to his interest in and impact on African American intellectual life (Scruggs), his thought is present in the novel. This is in keeping with Thurman’s own admiration for Mencken, the reading of whom, according to the writer, “generated the essential sparks needed to set my own mind and spirit on fire” (qtd. in Van Notten 109). In the novel, Mencken’s spirit is etched onto Raymond’s artistic pose of self-aggrandizement and “warfare against genteel Negro culture” (Scruggs 133), and frames his tirades against US society and the language of social duty and moral responsibility (Pochmara 139–140). When confronted with Sam’s disapproval of his refusal to participate in the protests set up by the Brotherhood of Sleeping Porters, Ray retorts: “I’ll be damned if I’ll join in any crusade to save the Negro masses. I’m only interested in individuals” (42), thus invoking Mencken’s ethos of extreme political individualism in conflict with the parochial Christian society. In a similar manner, when Raymond muses that despite “his superiority complex he was different from most people he knew, precociously different” and expresses his desire “to pervert rather than to train and cultivate this difference,” he echoes Mencken’s Nietzsche-inspired celebration of one’s intellectual loneliness and the superiority of the Artist-Iconoclast. Likewise, Mencken’s individualism is adopted by Steven, who staunchly defends his right to nonconformist choices, even if they fly in the face of social expectations and norms. When Samuel reprimands him for seeking assimilation with black people, and bitterly remarks: “You’re quoting Ray now,” Steven simply retorts: “I couldn’t quote a more sane person” (4) and thus voices his allegiance to Raymond’s philosophical choices.

The endorsement of Mencken’s interpretation of Nietzscheanism—reinforced by what sounds like a diluted Guurdjieff’s rhetoric, to which Thurman was introduced by Toomer (Singh 10)—leads both men to the radical rejection of the notion of race, a curious maneuver given Nietzsche’s own racialized language. To the protagonists of Thurman’s fiction, the philosophy of extreme elitist individualism with its rhetoric of artistic and intellectual superiority over a society burdened with its system of classification, rendered the language of races and racial typology obsolete. Thus, both men voice their dissatisfaction with racialism, grounded in what Naomi Poppo calls “pigmentocracy,” i.e. attribution of and valorization of certain attributes to people on the basis of the color of their skin. Raymond straightforwardly proclaims: “We want to lose our racial identity as such and be acclaimed for our achievements, if any” (124), whereas Steve thunders: “I like Ray, I like his friends, I like Aline ... and none of my likes are based on color. I know nothing about your damn American prejudices, except what I’ve read in books and been told. A person is a person to me” (28). I agree with Amritjit Singh when he points out that such a radical questioning of the validity of race to describe personhood and inter-personal relations is a sign of the book’s

perspicacity. It presages W.E.B. Du Bois's, Langston Hughes's and Richard Wright's exhaustion with racial essentialism, as well as anticipates the Critical Race Theory and the now commonly-shared belief that "race" is a social and legal construction (Singh 12).

Even though Steve's rejection of race invokes the Enlightenment imperative of *fraternité*, or of the much more current at the time Socialist language of equality, with which Thurman was familiar due to his work at *The Messenger* (Van Notten 105–108), both men are wary of any foundational philosophy that seeks essences and solid premises to explain the world. Steve's avid reaction to Sam's use of the slogans "All humans are equal" is a case in point. Sam is a man of big words, the purpose of which is to order the world and assure him of the inherent rightness of his actions. Used to "justify actions beliefs and lives," his words invoke Richard Rorty's "final vocabulary" which has the power to construct one's world and beyond which "there is only hopeless passivity or a resort to force" (Rorty 73). Dissatisfied with the final vocabulary, the core of a foundational philosophy intent on laying down philosophical foundations and exploring life's essences, Raymond and Steven seem eager to adopt a position that is close to Rorty's ironist. In Rorty's pragmatic philosophy of the 1980s, at odds with "final vocabularies" and meta-narratives, the ironist is an intellectual perfectly suited for the post-World War II world of scientific and religious uncertainty and contested claims of truth. The ironist is skeptical about world's discourses and has "radical doubts about the final vocabulary he currently uses, because he has been impressed by other vocabularies" (73). Such seems to be the case with Steven and Raymond in Thurman's novel. Flippant about themselves and others, cynical in their relationship with the world, and relying on irony and sarcasm in their dealings with people, the friends at first appear to adopt Rorty's style of an ironist. They are on guard against big credos and their skepticism targets the major social discourses of the time: that of social Darwinism, Marxism and eugenics. Their contestation of final vocabularies suggests their affinity with political pragmatism, attuned to "specificity rather than generality" (Braidotti, *After Cosmopolitanism* 3)—the backbone of contemporary cosmopolitan theory. They promise to form the philosophical basis for an effective opposition to the meta-narratives of the time, and thus provide the groundwork for a long-lasting cosmopolitan friendship.

However, there are two cracks in their adopted position of an ironist. Steve and Raymond desire to reject the world and turn their rejection of the world in the name of individualism and art into another foundational principle not unlike the dogmas they contest. Both their withdrawal from the world and their arrogant belief in the supremacy of their inner truths are in fact antithetical to Rorty's pragmatism, which is grounded in the world and celebrates those who "[do] not think [their] vocabulary is closer to reality than others" (73). Thus, both men act as limited ironists, who stop half way on their way to constructing a life philosophy and friendship that would pose an alternative to the essentialist language of racial eugenics and racial segregation.

The same obstacles on the way toward reaching the pragmatic position of an ironist are responsible for the eventual failure of Steve and Raymond's friendship. As it turns out, when constructed on their withdrawal from the world and a belief in their impermeability to meta-narratives, their relationship does not withstand the test of time. When the men celebrate their inner world as an alternative to the strictures of society, the outside world intervenes and challenges their life philosophy and friendship. The belief in the possibility of creating a niche that would shelter one from the world may be appealing, but it is burdened with utopian impracticability. As the novel demonstrates, the world always strikes back, either through actions or through its language.

In this context, the house where both men share the apartment, which is modeled on the house Thurman lived in Harlem in the years 1926–1928, (Van Notten 169–211), takes on an interesting metaphorical meaning. Flippantly described as “Niggerati manor,” a provocation thrown at both black bourgeois, genteel culture, and white supremacists alike, the house serves as an arena for much of the novel's action and is a symbol of the men's isolation from the world. And even though initially free of racialism and social censorship, the house turns out to be not immune to the codes and strictures of society. The first sign of the men's unwitting response to the social world is their compulsive search for heterosexual relations, as if to quench their anxiety over the possibly erotic nature of their intimacy and thus to meet heterosexual normativity (Pochmara 161–170). The ambiguity with respect to the women in the house may be a sign of the men's giving in to the demands of society, yet not in full accordance with their desires. The women they bond with do not live in the house but just come to visit, and thus remain outsiders. Whenever they come, they bring with them not only excitation but also, more significantly, a sense of destruction which suggests that their presence, associated with heterosexual normativity, forms a fissure in the ideal image of Steve and Ray's friendship.

Another way the outside world manifests its presence in the house is through its power to racialize human relations. Having internalized the US logic of white supremacy, two black women, Aline and Janet, compete for Steven, attracted to his “Nordic” looks. Their obsessive craving ends not only their friendship (when Steven chooses one of them), but also casts a shadow on the house's supposed a-racialism, since the woman chosen by Steven is of a light skin color. Moreover, when one of the house's black inhabitants, Pelham, gets arrested for rape, the white system of law interferes and violates the house's equanimity. Pelham ends up in jail, where his skin color puts him at a disadvantage and brings his friends face to face with legal racism. Additionally, police officers throw the community off balance by their brutal arrest of Pelham and aggressive interrogation of Steven and his girl-friend. Having been found in a house in Harlem inhabited by black people, Steven is treated with contempt for becoming “white trash” and Aline, suspected of passing for a white, is treated with the hatred accorded to those that challenge “the color line.” Therefore, even though promising an escape from the brutal and racist environment and an asylum for inter-

racial relations, the house, over time, becomes a signifier of Raymond's and Steven's growing disillusionment with their philosophical aspirations. It stands for the failure of their project of escape from the world, an escape that was grounded on the fallacy of the men's moral, artistic and apolitical strength. The change in the house's atmosphere attests to the tenuous nature of the hopes clustered around it. From a place vibrant with ideas and aspiring to be a hub of the Harlem Renaissance creativity, it turns into a speakeasy that breeds alcoholic lethargy. Its utopian nature is captured by a farewell drawing of Paul Arbian, drawn shortly before his suicide: it depicts the Niggerati Manor "on which were focused an array of blindingly white beams of flight" suspended in the air since "[t]he foundation of this building was composed of crumbling stone" (174). The picture's symbolic dimension is more than obvious: the idea of a world-free shelter endorsed by Raymond, Steven, and their friends is not grounded in material reality, and thus is bound to crumble any minute.

It turns out that Steve and Ray's trust in the possibility of shutting oneself from the world and forming a community of artists-philosophers immune to the material world is essentially flawed. In its utopianism it invokes romantic longings for places untouched by civilization and modernity, as manifested in Rousseau's philosophical project and evocative of US tradition of forming isolated communities such as the Brook Farm (1841–1847) or Fruitlands (1843–1844). In Thurman's novel, there is no escape from the outside world. Not only does the eugenic world react with violent actions, but both friends themselves bring the world they contest into their lives. Their "contamination" with the world and the impossibility of isolating oneself from it is also manifested in their language. The physical withdrawal from the world does not guarantee the disappearance of the sway the world holds over their language, and consequently over their minds and bodies. The world continues to control their language, and through it polices their bodies and shapes the ways they think about them.

And so, although devoid of explicit references to eugenics, Raymond's idiom is replete with phrasings and metaphors adopted from eugenic discourses, and these are not just instances of his jocular reference to the rhetoric of degeneracy. Eugenic phraseology, for example, is used when Raymond thinks, not without Nietzschean scorn, of how "the average Negro intellectual and artist had no goal, no standards, no elasticity, no pregnant *germ plasm*" (89–90; emphasis added) thus invoking the term used by eugenicists to describe the substance transmitting racial characteristics. Furthermore, eugenic rhetoric, widespread in the 1920s, of the threat posed by immigrants from Central and Southern Europe to the North American fabric, shapes Raymond's anxiety when visiting Pelham in jail. Having been placed in a waiting room "between the Irish mother of an incriminate policeman, and the Jewish sweetheart of an Italian gangster" Raymond cannot but be scared of the "strange accents and unfamiliar snatches of foreign dialects" and thus "want[s] to flee immediately" (126).

However, it is when Raymond muses on Steven's looks that his appropriation of the discourse of eugenics is most explicit. When seeing the new immigrant from Canada for the first time and comparing him to Samuel, Raymond relies on the lan-

guage of Nordicism—a darling term in the science of heredity and the language of hip white intellectuals of the time (Luczak 164–169)—a fact recorded by Du Bois when he warns against “the cult of the Nordic totem” (“Americanization” 154):

Raymond once more went into the alcove to refill the empty glasses, his mind busy contrasting the two Nordics who were his guests, Stephen was tall and fashioned like a Viking. His hair, eyes and complexion all testified to his Norse ancestry. Samuel was small, pale, anemic, His hair was blond and his eyes were blue, but neither the blondness nor the blueness was as clearly defined or as positive as Stephen’s. Samuel’s ancestors had been dipped in the American melting pot, and as a result, the last of the line bore only a faint resemblance to his original progenitor. (Thurman 7)

When referring to the two white men as ‘Nordics’ and comparing Stephen to a Viking, Raymond relies on the racial typology of the time—a glaring inconsistency in light of his avowed rejection of racialism. Moreover, the juxtaposition of Samuel’s short size and what is described as his “anemic looks” with Steven’s imposing physique invokes the discourse of hybridity and smacks of the fear of miscegenation incited by eugenic leaders such as Charles Davenport and eugenic populists such as Lothrop Stoddard and Albert Wiggam. Wiggam was especially vocal about his belief in pernicious results of race mixing. His commitment to racial purity led him to celebrate the beauty of Lincoln—the President considered by Wiggam to be of pure Anglo-Saxon blood (Wiggam 277–8). Similarly, in Thurman’s description of Steven, the purity of his Scandinavian ancestry translates into male virility and a proportionate body. By the way of contrast, Samuel’s body is nothing but average—the effect of racial mixing of European immigrants in the US “melting pot.”

Similarly, Steven echoes racial classifications of the time when he thinks of Raymond—a surprising fact in light of Steve’s self-declared ignorance of US raciology. However, if to Raymond the racial mixing visible in Samuel’s looks is a sign of racial decadence, to Steven the hybridity etched onto Ray’s body promises a higher development and a new potential:

Stephen’s keen, blue eyes more regarded the small slender Negro who sat opposite him, noting the smooth dark skin to which the amber colored bulbs imparted red overtones, and becoming particularly interested in racial features. They were, Stephen thought, neither Nordic nor Negroid, but rather a happy combination of the two, retaining slender outlines of the first, and the ‘warm vigor’ of the second, thus escaping both Nordic rigidity, and African coarseness. (6)

The inconsistency in the appraisal of the results of racial mixing in the two quotes signifies the whole range of attitudes among white and African Americans. On one hand, there were those who endorsed the racial segregation endemic to racial essentialism and entered such radically different political organizations as Marcus Garvey’s UNIA or the white supremacist KKK. On the other hand were those who not only lashed racist’s purists—like Du Bois in his essay provocatively titled “Miscegenation”—but even celebrated racial mixing, with George Schuyler’s attempts to turn his mixed-race

daughter into a perfect hybrid woman probably being the most notorious example (Talalay). The novel's confusion with respect to racial mixing appears to reflect the uncertainty of the writer himself, who does not know which attitude to take. Despite his tirades against race both in the novel, in other literary works, and in his private life (Van Notten 90), Thurman cannot free himself of the specter of race and the language of racial eugenics. Steven's blatant question to Raymond "aren't you hindered by some racial complex?" (33), and Raymond's brooding that his "struggle to free himself from race consciousness had been hailed before actually accomplished" (147) may provide a fitting commentary on Thurman's own position.

The writer's ambivalence with respect to the rhetoric of racial eugenics, however, may be understood when one bears in mind his experience as a pre-medical student at the University of Utah from January to June 1920 (Van Notten 85, Singh xvii). Eugenics, defined as a science of human improvement and better reproductive choices, significantly shaped the medical discourse of the time. The manuals in biology, anthropology and psychology—the syllabi for pre-medical students—had compulsory sections on races and the science of heredity. This was nothing unusual, given that even the manual in biology that challenged the ban on the teaching of the theory of evolution in Tennessee in 1925 included sections on eugenics and discussed eugenic "methods of improving the human race" (Hunter 373). The metaphors medical students lived by were to a large extent indebted to eugenics, and most likely assimilated by Thurman.

At this point one also has to keep in mind that eugenics had the ability to disguise itself as progressive discourse in the pre-World War II period, especially when it emphasized its positive aspect: a desire to promote the breeding of future race leaders. As such it appealed to socially-minded intellectuals focusing on racial uplift. The ranks of those who voiced interest in eugenics included W.E.B. Du Bois and Nella Larsen (English 117–140; Luczak 190–193; Schalk 148–150). English's book on eugenics and modernity and my own discussion of the involvement, even if limited, of black intellectuals in the early discourse of positive eugenics brings to mind the peculiar marriage between eugenic ideas and black reform. Not only did eugenics have the ability to structure the ways of thinking about racial uplift, but also to overshadow important artistic debates. The well-known exchange of essays between George Schuyler and Langston Hughes in the black press of the 1920s is a case in point. Whereas Schuyler hurriedly and arrogantly reduced the phenomenon of the New Negro Renaissance to the reiteration of the ideas of racial segregation in culture (the mantra of eugenicists such as Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard), Hughes staunchly defended the distinct nature of the African American race and culture, thus unwittingly echoing the widespread language of racialism.

If the omnipresence of eugenic discourse rendered liberation from it virtually impossible, then Thurman as well as his fictional characters construct their life philosophy on false premises. They trust the myth of the inner world, envisioned as a buffer and antidote to the oppressive reality and its language. However, their escape from the world is not only unfeasible, but also forces them into positions where they

cannot cultivate their cosmopolitan friendships. Just like in Arendt's philosophy, the only friendship that can develop in the conditions of escape from the world is the friendship among pariahs, based on the commonality of oppression and suffering. Naturally, friendship in pariahdom excludes Steven, whose skin color and ancestry tie him up with the world of white supremacy and white privilege. And thus the friendship between the black and the white man comes to an end and its ending is as radical as its inception.

After a violent and wild party full of liquor and loud music, the party that is the last accord in "Niggerati Manor's" fall, Steven suddenly leaves the house, not without prior striking two women competing for his amorous attention. The farewell letter he sends to Raymond describes his eugenically-framed anxieties and confirms the impossibility of an effective escape from the racist and eugenically-shaped outside world:

I'm fed up with Harlem and Negroes. You say there is nothing in this race business. In the past I have agreed. Now I wonder. Dubiety surges through me and tantalizes my mind. I have no prejudice, you know; yet recently my being has been permeated with a vague disquiet. ... I shudder—and this will astound you—if I have to shake hands with a Negro. I have lived recently in a suddenly precipitated fear that I had become unclean because of my association. So complex and far-reaching has this fear become that I rushed in a panic to a doctor recently to be examined. I feared, unreasonably, and with no definite evidence, that Aline and Janet were unclean and that I had become contaminated. (119)

The letter is so full of eugenic phrasing that one can hardly believe that it is penned by the same man who a couple of months earlier proudly announced his indifference to "American prejudice" of racialism and racism. We thus have figures of contamination and the fear of becoming unclean as a result of Steven's maintaining sexual relations with Aline—anxieties endemic to the discourse of racial purity and degeneration so forcefully rejected at the novel's beginning. Steven's reliance on a doctor in order to assuage his racial panic also bears the imprint of eugenics. One of the reasons for the popularity of eugenics with the medical profession was its cult of the expert and of the scientist. By providing the grounds to treat a physician as the final authority in one's life, the science of heredity assured an even higher position of physicians in US society. Thus, by falling back on eugenic authorities and eugenic treatises at the time, Steven turns into a model Nordic, orienting the world according to the compass of racial essentialism and white supremacy. Not only did his experience of mingling with African Americans not provide a buffer to the encroachment of the hegemonic white Anglo-Saxon world, but it served to construct Steven's world in keeping with eugenic theories. When Steven leaves for 'the world', he does so as a white cultural segregationist, who declares his affinity with "one of Gertrude Stein's lost generation ... or rather post-generation" and decides to become a "Humanist just because they are interested in establishing boundary lines" (136). Raymond is no longer Steven's friend, someone who welcomed Steven's power to be his philosophical mentor and

"heteros autos" challenging his selfhood within him. He is now Steven's opponent, separated from him biologically and culturally by the color line.

The book's sense of failure grounded in the thwarted friendship and, by proxy, in a failed project of establishing a new life philosophy that would pose a viable alternative to the eugenic jargon of racial absolutism, spilled onto both the book's ending and Thurman's life. The novel ends on a catastrophic note with the suicide of Paul Arbian—a bisexual friend of Steven and Raymond—after he moved out of "Niggerati Manor." His staged death "in crimson mandarin robe" (174) speaks in equal measure of the obsessive fear of the failure of the artistic promise of the Harlem Renaissance, concomitant with "the promise of [Thurman's] own leading role in it" (Van Notten 170–211, 246), as well as suggests tragic consequences to the insoluble racial and sexual dilemmas of the inhabitants of "Niggerati Manor." This sense of doom also accompanied Thurman after the publication of his book. In his correspondence with friends, the writer himself voiced disappointment with the novel, calling it "the most disappointing novel" and "sheer chaos" (Van Notten 249). Ellen Van Notten even speculates that it is possible that Thurman delayed publication of the novel by two years, so unsure was he of its quality. Even in the eyes of its author, the novel that was to pose a radical challenge to the eugenic discourse of degeneration, racial absolutism and racial unknowability and toyed with the idea of cosmopolitan friendship, failed to meet its goal. The conclusion seems to be dreary: in the eugenic times of false politics, interracial cosmopolitan friendships cannot develop and, even if initiated, are doomed to a dismal end. One's good will and trust in the power of philosophical individualism are too weak to override the political and material forces which divide people across races and promote tribal affiliations along "blood lines."

Thurman's pessimism, nevertheless, may be countered by those who subscribe to belief in an interracial cosmopolitan friendship of a different brand—one that does not escape the world, but throws itself into it, combating it on the world's own terms. Such is the case with Arendt who, despite her personal experience of suffering persecution after the Nazi ascension to power in 1933 and her flight from her mother country, still refused to doubt friendship and its power to "make the world a little bit human" (31). Commenting on the possibility of friendship between a German and a Jew in Nazi Germany, Arendt asserted:

Thus in the case of friendship between a German and a Jew under the condition of the Third Reich it would scarcely have been a sign of humanness for the friends to have said: Are we not both human beings? It would have been mere evasion of reality and of the world common to both at that time; they would not have been resisting the world as it was. A law that prohibited the intercourse of Jews and Germans could be evaded but could not be defied by the people who denied the reality of this distinction. In keeping with a humanness that had not lost the solid ground of reality, a humanness in the midst of the reality of persecution, they would have had to say to each other: A German and a Jew, and friends. But wherever such a friendship succeeded at that time ... and was maintained in purity, that is to say without false guilt complexes on one side

and false complexes of superiority on the other, a bit of humanness in a world become inhuman had been achieved. (31)

The premises on which Arendt builds cosmopolitan friendship seem initially very much like those of Thurman. Just like him, she challenges the Enlightenment ideal of fraternity and universal humanism, thus anticipating contemporary cosmopolitan critiques. She lays bare the naiveté of the universal language of brotherhood in times of oppression, and its tacit complicity in the system of injustice. However, unlike Thurman, who stops half way in his project to erase the Enlightenment sentiment, Arendt moves further. If Thurman speculates whether friendship is possible under the condition of withdrawal from the world along with an erasure of the presence of the material world and its markers of differences, Arendt has no doubt as to its doomed character and suggests an alternative. To her, friendship in Dark Times of false politics is possible not when one erases the differences imposed by the world, but paradoxically faces them head on. By bringing them to the surface, one does not accept their validity or succumb to their power, but recognizes the role they play in the material world. Thus friendship above divisions is imagined only when one acknowledges the political reality of the same divisions. And then, when forged, it forms the basis for a common “humanness in the midst of persecution” (Arendt 31). Steve and Ray could have said: A Negro and a Nordic, and friends. Cosmopolitan friendship is imaginable even in Dark Times.

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Joanna Ziarkowska

Across the Atlantic and Beyond: Tracing Cosmopolitan Agendas in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*

In Leslie Marmon Silko's 1999 novel *Gardens in the Dunes*, young Indigo of the Sand Lizard tribe is separated from her family and taken in by a Euro-American couple, Hattie and Edward, who take her on a trip through Europe. Indigo visits foreign places, contemplates unfamiliar landscapes, collects seeds from unknown plants, and talks to people representing diverse cultures. Despite the sense of separation from home which accompanies her throughout her journey, the Indian girl manages to establish emotional and spiritual connections which facilitate communication in spite of cultural differences. The young girl does miss her home, but at the same time she manages to trace a connection with her Native home in the strangest parts of the world. One may ask: Can the easiness with which Indigo inhabits foreign spaces and her empathic approach to people and creatures that she encounters endow her transatlantic travel with a cosmopolitan character? Is Indigo an Indigenous cosmopolitan?

Indeed, as the editors and contributors in this volume have observed, cosmopolitanism has recently reemerged as a valuable critical discourse, suitable for responding to the fast-paced and rapidly changing realities of the modern world, with a special emphasis placed on issues related to identity, culture, and society in the context of increased transnational mobility, technological advancement, and globalization. As has been noted by numerous scholars, the body of work which engages cosmopolitanism is very broad in scope and interdisciplinary, thus making the task of defining the term extremely challenging, if not impossible. In the most common and colloquial understanding of the term, cosmopolitanism is seen as standing in opposition to nationalism and is characterized by a detachment from national and local bonds, replaced by an embracement of humanistic sensibilities and the rich diversity of human practices. In the words of Pheng Cheah, one of the most renowned scholars in the field, "Cosmopolitanism is about viewing oneself as part of a world, a circle of political belonging that transcends the limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of deterritorialized humanity" (3). Such an understanding of the concept dates back to the philosophy of the Cynics of the fourth century BC and later the Greek Stoics, who believed that individuals may exist as citizens of the world, balancing new and old loyalties in the name of an abstract commitment to other people of the world. In Immanuel Kant's reworking of the concept, cosmopolitanism is combined with democratic forms of governance and is seen as a rational method of linking nations together to act against any violations of political rights (Fine ix). Post-millennial applications, or new cosmopolitanisms, revolve around the original meaning of the concept, as in Martha Nussbaum's work, and simultaneously address

the realities of post-9/11, highly digitalized, increasingly mobile realities of the twenty-first century. In its most recent use, cosmopolitanism concerns itself with non-elite citizens, thus becoming divorced from an assumption that mobility must be tied to economic privilege and that being cosmopolitan indirectly denotes Euro-American origins. At the same time, an increased emphasis on the forced mobility of displaced persons – brought about by either political, military, economic or ecological crises—situates cosmopolitanism vis-à-vis globalization and the harsh dictates of transnational capitalism. Thus, following Cheah’s persuasive argument, “cosmopolitanism and human rights are the two primary ways of figuring the global as the human. Both phenomena are generally viewed as placing actual and normative limits on the efficacy of national culture and the sovereignty of the nation-state, which is seen as particularistic, oppressive, and even totalitarian” (3). Viewed in such a framework, that is in relation to critical theories centered on race and ethnicity, it will be shown that cosmopolitanism emerges as a form of consciousness, “that erodes national parochialism and facilitates the arduous process of establishing a platform for transnational political regulation” (Cheah 4).

Interestingly, literary theory has also turned its attention to cosmopolitanism, as a useful concept to expand and elaborate the fields of postcolonial studies, border studies, and, perhaps most provocatively, Native American and Indigenous Studies. Writers as diverse as James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, Kazuo Ishiguro, Gertrude Stein, Jamaica Kincaid, J.M. Coetzee, Zadie Smith, and Teju Cole have been explored as pursuers of cosmopolitan themes and agendas in Jessica Berman’s *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community* (2001), Katherine Stanton’s *Cosmopolitan Fictions* (2006), Rebecca Walkowitz’s *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (2006), Berthold Schoene’s *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (2010), Robert Spencer’s *Cosmopolitan Criticism and Postcolonial Literature* (2011), and most recently Kristian Shaw’s *Cosmopolitanism in Twenty-First Century Fiction* (2017). While in some of the works analyzed in these publications the engagement of cosmopolitanism appears to be a logical and much needed approach (consider, for example, the inspiring discussions of transnational and cosmopolitan communities in Zadie Smith’s *NW* and Teju Cole’s *Open Cities*), the application of the concept in the field of Native American studies, whose preoccupation with the local and its histories is one of the most defining characteristics, brings about a number of striking conclusions.

The publication of N. Scott Momaday’s (Kiowa) *House Made of Dawn* in 1968 and the subsequent Pulitzer Prize for its author spurred an unprecedented interest in and proliferation of Native American literature, a phenomenon termed by Kenneth Lincoln as a “Native American Renaissance” (8). Together with numerous publications by Native writers, attempts soon followed to theorize an emerging body of literary works, produced predominantly by scholars of Anglo-American origins. These first critiques of Indian literary works did not address the question of an exclusively Native methodology (or the lack thereof), the assumption being that the Western critical tradition offers ample ways of interpreting literary texts authored by indigenous writers, with

Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of polyvocality being most widely applied to Native texts. Meanwhile, indigenous critics and writers began to voice their concerns about the troubling domination of Euro-American approaches in the study of Native American literatures and cultures, viewing many of the practices in the field as yet another form of colonialism. One of the first ground-breaking texts in the emerging Native American studies was Robert Warrior's (Osage) *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Traditions* (1995). In his insightful analysis of the works of Vine Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux), and John Joseph Mathews (Osage), Warrior postulates that the explosion of Native American writings after 1969 made it possible to create a critical methodology, an "intellectual sovereignty" in which both Native and non-Native critics engage with the more-than-two-century long tradition of Indian cultural productions. In other words, Warrior calls for interpretations of Native texts that proceed primarily from Native sources rather than Euro-American critical theory, thus drawing attention to the fact that, contrary to common beliefs, there exists an indigenous tradition from which provides theoretical tools to both critics and writers alike. Attempts to apply Warrior's ideas soon followed: Jace Weaver's (Cherokee) *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (1997); Craig Womack's (Creek/Cherokee) *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999); Weaver, Womack, and Warrior's *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (2006); Lisa Brook's (Abenaki) *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (2008); and an extremely influential collection of essays edited by Womack, Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), and Christopher B. Teuton (Cherokee), *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (2008). What these publications have in common—indeed insist on—is a focus on the Native theory that emerges from the impressive body of Native writings and engages tribal communities at the cultural, historical, and political levels. The criticism born out of these considerations is never divorced from indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices; it is committed to social realism, and thus may be seen as a form of activism.

Even a brief glance at the titles of these publications reveals a preoccupation with concepts such as *nationalism* and *separatism*, strongly insisting on Native sovereignty, self-governance, and the unique character of both the histories and the contemporary realities of respective tribes. In this context, one might ask whether there exists a critical space that invites cosmopolitan agendas into these strongly nationalist positions?

A direct response to such a question can be found in Arnold Krupat's *Red Matters*, which wholeheartedly embraces cosmopolitan theories in Native contexts. In fact, along with cosmopolitanism and indigenism, Krupat sees nationalism/separatism as one of the three dominant contemporary critical perspectives in Native American studies, which instead of contradicting one another, "are all overlapping and [are] interlinked so that each can only achieve its full coherence and effectiveness in

relation to the others” (1).³⁸ Nationalism and separatism in Krupat’s framework are concepts which rest solely on Native sovereignty, as derived from the treaty-making practices of the United States government; and despite differences in cultural and historical contexts, are “also marked by post-World War II anticolonial nationalism” (4). In practice, Native American nationalist criticism attempts to “extend the political meanings of sovereignty to the realm of culture” (4) and to apply them in analyses of Native American literature. An indigenist perspective, on the other hand, shifts the emphasis from the political to the epistemological. “Indigenists,” explains Krupat, “look to a particular relation to the earth as underlying a worldview that can be called traditional or tribal. It is this worldview that determines one’s perspectives on literature as on all else, often regardless of national allegiances or statuses (e.g. whether one is or is not a ‘citizen’ of a particular Native nation or one of the people; whether one’s community has greater or lesser amounts of sovereignty)” (10). The indigenist perspective, with its preoccupation with the earth and the ecological, offers a smooth transition to Native cosmopolitanism, which in Krupat’s view reads Native literatures “in relation to other minority or subaltern literatures elsewhere in the late-colonial or postcolonial world” (19). Thus, in this approach Native cosmopolitanism “must always in some degree be comparative” (19) and inevitably finds affinities with postcolonial perspectives.³⁹ While similarities in the agendas concerning Native American studies and postcolonial studies are strikingly visible, the automatic assumption of the compatibility of the two discourses remains problematic, a fact which Krupat seems to ignore. The three perspectives that he describes are seen as available paradigms to choose from when approaching Native American texts, often functioning in a relation of interdependence. “I need to repeat,” writes Krupat, “that nationalist positions also need other positions, those of indigenists (as persons with different bodies of systematic knowledge) and cosmopolitans (as persons who can translate between different bodies of knowledge), for their anticolonial projects to succeed (for them not to replicate colonialism under another name or to become ‘neurotic’ entities)” (7). In this framework, cosmopolitanism in Native criticism is based on a natural reaction of affinity with other colonized and oppressed groups of the world.

Krupat’s framing of Native American studies in the wider context of postcolonial studies is enthusiastically embraced by Elvira Pulitano in her widely debated and controversial *Toward a Native American Critical Theory*. However, instead of reconciling nationalist and postcolonial positions as Krupat does, Pulitano rejects point blank nationalist, separatist—or in Womack’s terms—‘tribally-centered discourses’ as

³⁸ In an essay published in 2013, “Nationalism, Transnationalism, Trans-Indigenism, Cosmopolitanism: Four Perspectives on Native American Literatures,” Krupat revises his position and talks about four dominant perspectives: nationalism, transnationalism, trans-indigenism, and cosmopolitanism.

³⁹ This kind of criticism is successfully practiced by Chadwick Allen. See Allen’s *Blood Narratives and Trans-Indigenous*.

insufficient to account for the level of hybridization that inevitably, after centuries of cross-cultural contact, characterizes Native literature. Consequently, in Pulitano's view, their approach becomes a yet another oppressive and one-dimensional framework, which privileges indigenous elements and silences and refuses to acknowledge the significance of non-Native influences. In a conclusion to her chapter on Warrior and Womack, Pulitano emphatically argues that: "Embracing literary separatism, and refusing to acknowledge their implications in the dominant discourse, Warrior and Womack end up ... perpetuating the discursive paradigms of Eurocentric thinking, thus further marginalizing Native American literature and theory, consigning it to the role of the Other of the Euroamerican consciousness" (100). Thus, in her evaluation of contemporary Native American writers Pulitano clearly favors and appreciates those who willingly and openly embrace the concept of hybridity and discourses of postcolonial studies, with Gerald Vizenor serving as a model of what Native American literature should become.⁴⁰

Indeed, looking at Weaver's, Womack's, and Warrior's respective works and their shared response to Pulitano's book complicates the claim that Native American nationalism operates solely on a local level, hermetically sealed off from both mainstream US as well as global issues. The emphasis on tribal contexts and an insistence on their significance for Native literature are voiced forcefully and frequently, but it seems their function is, first of all, to defend against intellectual colonialism, practiced in the form of applying Western high theory to Native realities. While such a preoccupation with the indigenous issues may indeed downplay the usefulness of Western methodologies, it does not necessarily separate Native writing from the outside world and non-Native critics. As Weaver emphasizes in the first chapter of *American Indian Literary Nationalism*: "American Indian Literary Nationalism is separatist, but it is a pluralist separatism. We are splitting the earth, not dividing up the turf" (74). More importantly for any discussion of cosmopolitanism in indigenous contexts, Womack in his chapter convincingly refutes the vision of Native literature as separated from allusions to and influences of non-Native sources:

Just as tribes are related to the outside world of local municipalities, state governments, federal Indian law, and international relations (American Indian presence on U.N. task forces on indigenous peoples being a key example), literary nationalism can do local work with global implications, thus demonstrating a more profound cosmopolitanism than has been argued for to date, one with strong roots at its base. (168–169)

⁴⁰ It is important to note, however, that Vizenor does not uncritically embrace postcolonial discourses and their implications for indigenous peoples in the United States. He consistently emphasizes the fact that in the case of indigenous populations, colonialism, be it cultural or economic, is not a matter of the past. Therefore, he proposes the term "paracolonial." See Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*.

While for Pulitano this appears to be a paradoxical connection, the pairing of the local and the cosmopolitan is interestingly approached in Tol Foster's "Of One Blood: An Argument for Relations and Regionality in Native American Literary Studies," published in *Reasoning Together*. Foster acknowledges Krupat's input into the debate, but his own contribution seems to offer a more complex and nuanced form of Native cosmopolitanism. While appreciating and supporting tribally specific approaches to literature, Foster advocates "relational regionalism" which focuses on how tribes, rather than functioning in isolation as separate cultural and geographical enclaves, in fact participate in a number of interactions with their close and further-away neighbors. What occurs during such cultural transactions is a redefinition of geographical space, from the unfamiliar to the familiar, and, more importantly, an interaction on an epistemological level which expands the boundaries of the "tribal archive" to neighboring cultures and beyond: "Thus, Native cosmopolitan ... is the practice of noticing and interacting with the multiple communities of any given place" (296). Will Rogers (Cherokee) serves as Foster's example of a Native cosmopolitan who manages to extend his special and cultural relations in any direction. Born into a wealthy family in 1879 in Indian Territory, Rogers left for South America, and later Africa, to regain the land holdings that his family had lost after 1906 with the dissolution of Indian Territory and the creation of Oklahoma in 1907. Unable to support himself, he entered show business as a traveling trick roper dubbed "The Cherokee Kid" and was soon engaged by Ziegfeld's Follies in New York City, becoming a professionally and financially successful US actor. In his encounters with different cultures and traditions,

Rogers extended his notion of community outwards to the United States itself. Rogers engaged in a rhetoric, and I would argue a pedagogy, of relation by imagining himself in relation to his colonizers, and imagining a relation between his colonizers and the colonized of the world. He pursued his critique not through an argument of particularized experience (though that is where he learned it) but through the notion of a common relation. (288)

In other words, Foster draws attention to the power of Native literature to reach outside itself to other communities and cultures and establish powerful, long-lasting connections, which in turn influence all the participants of such interactions.

This turning away from a strict emphasis on nationalist issues in Native American studies, emphasizing instead the field's transnational and cosmopolitan dimension, has become more and more pronounced in Native American studies. In *Mapping the Americas*, Shari Huhndorf announces a shift away from nationalist orientations to transnational ones, whose presence she detects in early texts like Simon Ortiz's essay "Towards a Native American Nationalism," which ironically Warrior, Weaver, and Womack identify as a foundation for Native American nationalism. "Transnationalism," writes Huhndorf, "refers to alliances among tribes and the social structures and practices that transcend their boundaries, as well as processes on a global scale such as colonialism and capitalism" (2). In examining the ways in which colonialism has reshaped Native cultures and posing questions about how indigeneity chal-

lenges global capitalism, such a viewpoint directly addresses many issues present in cosmopolitan thinking. Huhndorf acknowledges that in the twenty-first century reality tribes cannot remain preoccupied solely with the local and are being drawn into global relationships, which in consequence lead to the creation of global identities. While *Mapping the Americas* does not openly identify with cosmopolitan thinking, the chapter devoted to an analysis of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* (1990) is clearly influenced by such an approach.

Similarly, in recent publications Jace Weaver and Chris LaLonde approach cosmopolitanism as a paradigm whose application in Native American studies does not need justification and is simply taken for granted. LaLonde examines cosmopolitan positions vis-à-vis mixed blood identities, which are so abundant in Native American fiction. Examining the works of Gerald Vizenor, Louis Owens (Choctaw/Cherokee), and Linda Hogan (Chickasaw), LaLonde demonstrates how negotiating a mixed blood identity, or in Vizenor's language, "the state of being a 'crossblood,' " necessitates engagement with local tribal contexts as well as outside (including global) contexts. Furthermore Weaver, drawing inspiration from Paul Gilroy, in his impressive *The Red Atlantic* demonstrates how Native Americans, rather than being marginal figures, fully participated in the transfer and circulation of people, goods, ideas, and technologies: "Native resources, ideas, and peoples themselves traveled the Atlantic with regularity and became among the most basic defining components of Atlantic cultural exchange" (17). More importantly, Weaver discusses Native individuals crossing the Atlantic not solely as passive victims of colonialism and imperialism, but as agents of these numerous cultural and economic transactions, with obvious benefits for all the participants. Weaver observes:

The Atlantic formed a multilane, two-way bridge across which traveled ideas and things that changed *both* Europeans and American indigenes. Some scholars see in the *cosmopolitanism* and hybridity of Indians and their cultures a loss of indigenous authenticity, a diminution of Indianness. Such a position fails to account for the fact that Natives and their cultures had always been highly adaptive, appropriating and absorbing anything that seemed useful or powerful. (30; emphasis added)

In Weaver's and LaLonde's texts, Native cosmopolitanism is not a concept whose application needs validating and justifying, but should be simply taken for granted as a position that serves as a starting point for further considerations rather than an anomaly in critical tendencies.

The final example which works in tandem with Huhndorf's, LaLonde's, and Weaver's works is the 2010 collection *Indigenous Cosmopolitanisms*, edited by Maximilian Forte. In his Introduction to the volume, Forte, echoing Weaver's observations in *The Red Atlantic*, first of all dismisses a concept of indigeneity that is inextricably restrained to the local, rooted in one separate place and yet simultaneously suffering from the actions of the outside world and being seriously influenced by its political schemes. Instead, indigeneity in the twenty-first century is transnational, transcultural,

tural, and cosmopolitan, and this particular reincarnation of cosmopolitanism does not trace its origins in Greece, but in “the emergence of the Atlantic commercial circuit in the sixteenth century that linked the Spanish Crown with the capitalist entrepreneurs from Genoa, with Christian missionaries, with Amerindian elites, and with African slaves” (qtd. in Forte 4). “Indigenous cosmopolitanisms” are understood as “vernacular cosmopolitanisms” that “can be rooted and routed, nonelite yet nonparochial, provincial without being isolated, internationalized without being de-localized” (6). In other words, ‘Indigenous cosmopolitanism’ is, in its different manifestations, a rational and strategic reaction to the spread of neoliberal capitalism and its consequences, a reaction that sees the necessity of creating transnational and transcultural alliances without forsaking one’s sense of place and identity. What Forte’s paradigm and the Native American cosmopolitan orientation have in common can be well illustrated by Kwame Anthony Appiah’s widely debated concept of a “cosmopolitan patriot.” In a 1997 essay, Appiah writes: “the cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one’s own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people” (qtd. in Forte 8).

As LaLonde has observed, cosmopolitan orientations in Native American literature manifest themselves in a number of themes and approaches to Indianness and its engagement with the surrounding US and global contexts. There are writers, such as Vizenor, Owens, and Hogan, whose *oeuvres* are not readily identified as part of cosmopolitanism, and yet their thematic choices and discursive strategies easily lend themselves to such a reading. Similarly, Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes*, while critically analyzed in numerous publications (Barilla; Fitz; Gercken; Tillett), has not been interpreted as a novel with a cosmopolitan agenda. What follows is an attempt to read *Gardens* as a text which skillfully combines Native, tribal, and local issues with more diversified contexts of the modern world, thus supporting, albeit indirectly, the cosmopolitan leanings of Native texts. Moreover, since the novel is set in the nineteenth century, it demonstrates a wider spectrum of Native American cosmopolitanism, going beyond the customary allusions to post-millennial political and transcultural contexts.

Gardens in the Dunes returns to themes that Silko has explored in her previous novels: indigenous opposition to cultural and geographical colonization, different scenarios of revolutionary acts against Western power, and the transitional character of Native cultures, which constitutes their most distinctive and powerful feature. As Terre Ryan observes, it is, however, above all “a subtly crafted history of nineteenth-century European and North American imperialism” as “it encompasses the conquest of the Americas, botanical piracy, genocide, forced Christianization, and acts of violence against women, indigenous peoples, and the earth” (115). As stated at the beginning, the novel revolves around and is often focalized through the figure of Indigo, of the Sand Lizard People, a fictional tribe inspired by many Colorado River tribes,

and one which has been destroyed at the time of the events in the story (Arnold 172). Indigo is separated from her mother and older Sister Salt and placed in the Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, from which she escapes and is taken in by Edward and Hattie Palmer. The transatlantic and transcultural narrative develops because Edward is a scientist and hobbyist botanist who attempts to make a profit on botanical commerce. It is Edward's and Indigo's distinct methods of interaction with the diverse cultures that they encounter during their travels that enriches the novel with a cosmopolitan angle.

However, if Edward Palmer is chosen as a character to introduce the cosmopolitan perspective, it quickly becomes clear that such a reading leads to a dead end. At first sight, with his extensive knowledge of the world and its flora, and frequent travels and contacts with foreign cultures, Edward does appear to be a "citizen of the world," comfortable at home and elsewhere. He easily impresses Hattie with his relaxed attitude to the experience of international travel, casting himself as a traveler curious about and at ease with new experiences: "He traveled a great deal to the most distant and fascinating destinations, and he had a wonderful gift for recounting his adventures, in which he portrayed himself humorously, as the innocent tourist hell-bent on disaster" (79). But in fact he is neither innocent nor cosmopolitan in his encounters with the foreign lands and cultures; rather, as will be shown, he epitomizes an exploitative form of transnational travel.

As Silko unfolds the story of Edward's expeditions, it becomes clear that his interest in plants is purely commercial. Samples of *Brassavola nodosa*, a small orchid with a gardenia-like smell, were the first cuttings he obtained with the intention of reselling at a profit. Despite his knowledge of the flower's sacred status for the local cultures, Edward's approach is purely commercial: "They'd be just the orchid to win over the public. Sun priests of the Maya reputedly held the orchid sacred because it invariably bloomed on the autumnal equinox. Flowers of the gods! He could imagine the ads in magazines now" (371). Sadly, the sacredness of the plant is important to Edward only in the context of boosting prospective sales to orchid collectors. Since he shows no respect for indigenous cultures and religions, the sacred status of the flower remains irrelevant to his schemes. This same logic is repeated during his Pará River expedition. As a business partner of Lowe & Company, he meticulously searches the jungle for the rarest species of wild orchids in an attempt to improve his financial situation, undisturbed by the violent history of imperialism and slavery in which the beautiful flowers are implicated: "Now, the Indians knew the value of wild orchids, but frequently white brokers came upriver and demanded their entire stock of a species to corner a market. Indians who did not cooperate were flogged or tortured, much as they were at the Brazilian and Colombian rubber stations" (133). As Ryan observes, "The jungle scenes portray acts of gross violence in which the indigenous peoples and the land are murderously exploited in the name of commercial imperialism. The pilfered cuttings, we know, will be propagated and planted by the subjugated peoples of Britain's Far Eastern colonies" (128). By emphasizing his role

as a hobbyist, seemingly uninvolved in the colonialist enterprise, Edward attempts to escape responsibility for the exploitation of the land and of the indigenous people. But the very fact of his participation in stealing and transplanting indigenous plants for profit, a morally dubious project, renders him an agent of commercial imperialism rather than an innocent observer.

The instrumentality with which Edward approaches local plants is extended to the way he treats indigenous people. His contacts with the locals repeat the imperialist logic of the superiority of the white race: the Indians of the Pará River are only useful for carrying heavy luggage and bulky camera equipment and when they help locate rare species of flowers; the mestizo brothers acquire human characteristics only when they save Edward's life by attending to his broken leg and transporting him safely to the boat. Similarly, Indigo is never a lost child in need of help, but is either useful as Hattie's maid or, in a different scenario, the last living representative of some Indian tribe whom he could photograph and study, which in turn would possibly make him famous in the academic world. Edward's interactions with non-white people are guided by disrespect for and fear of the physical and cultural other. When Edward visits a public market in Tampico, he spots meteorite stones on one of the stalls. Excited by his discovery, he pursues an old black woman who appears to be the owner of the stones. Surprisingly, the woman refuses to sell the stones and instead threatens Edward about the price he will pay in the future. Paralyzed with fear, Edward's perception concentrates on the woman's features as distinctly different from his own—all he sees is her dark complexion and "the woman's Maya features: sharp high cheekbones and an aquiline nose" (87). He cannot understand the source of contempt in her voice and her apparent lack of respect leaves him terrified: "She leaned her blue face and breasts closer, he felt the heat of her breath and instantly a terrible dread swept over him as if he was in imminent danger" (88). What these encounters succinctly demonstrate is that mentally Edward does not move beyond the imperialist and colonialist projects of the Western world which he represents, and therefore he utterly fails to epitomize the cosmopolitan spirit.

If, as Forte forcefully emphasizes, Indigenous cosmopolitans explore new routes in the world while simultaneously remaining loyal to their locales, then Indigo is a truly cosmopolitan traveler *par excellence*. The importance of the local, indigenous place and the epistemological systems tied to it is announced in the very title of the novel and is immediately emphasized in the opening pages. The first paragraph describes Indigo and Sister Salt dancing naked in the rain in the gardens in the dunes:

The rain smelled heavenly. All over the sand dunes, *Datura* blossoms round and white as moons breathed their fragrance of magic. Indigo came up from the pit house into the heat; the ground under her bare feet was still warm, but the rain in the breeze felt so cool—so cool—and refreshing on her face. ... She tilted back her head and opened her mouth wide the way Sister Salt did. The rain she swallowed tasted like the wind. She ran, leaped in the air, and rolled on the warm sand over and over, it was so wonderful. She took handfuls of sand and poured them over her legs and over her stomach and shoulders—the raindrops were cold now and the warmth of the sand

felt delicious. Over and over down-down-down-down effortlessly, the ease of the motion and the sensation of the warm sand and the cool rain were intoxicating. (13)

This lengthy passage succinctly demonstrates how Indigo is inextricably connected with her indigenous environment, or as Becca Gercken observes: “[W]ith the opening paragraph, Silko establishes that Indigo is not just on the land, she is of the land, as is her sister who enjoys the rain with her” (180). It is important to note here that Edward lacks this kind of connection with his locality. When Hattie arrives in her new home, the first thing she notices is an abandoned garden, weeded and uncared for (75).

Living in the gardens in the dunes entails following the harsh rules of the desert climate and mastering the art of living off of and in tandem with the land. It is Grandma Fleet, the girls’ grandmother, who teaches them the rules for living in harmony with the environment, cherishing every plant and seed as a gift that needs to be returned:

Sand Lizard warned her children to share: Don’t be greedy. The first ripe fruit of each harvest belongs to the spirits of our ancestors, who come to us as rain; the second ripe fruit should go to the birds and wild animals, in gratitude for their restraint in sparing the seeds and sprouts earlier in the season. Give the third ripe fruit to the bees, ants, mantises, and others who cared for the plants. A few choice pumpkins, squash, and bean plants were simply left on the sand beneath the mother plants to shrivel dry and return to the earth. ... Old Sand Lizard insisted her gardens be reseeded in that way because human beings are undependable. (15)

The gardens are thus an example of subsistence agriculture, which relies on plants indigenous to the area and successfully reuses all the resources. Gardens in the dunes, as farmed by Grandma Fleet and later Sister Salt and Indigo, are powerfully contrasted with the Euro-American gardens planted by the white characters. The most striking and grotesque example is Susan Palmer’s Long Island garden in which all indigenous plants have been violently removed and instead trees and bushes from England have been replanted to create an association with the European elite and high culture.⁴¹ This juxtaposition serves to illustrate the very different approach to horticultural practices and the use of the land itself. From an indigenous perspective, the land is fundamental for the sustenance and survival of Indian tribes, literally as well as culturally.

While the Sand Lizard people emphasize their connection with the land, their interest in the outside world and respect for mobility are features that frame their uniqueness. Living in the gardens often entails a shortage of food, but Grandma Fleet would never agree to abandon her home and be hoarded into a reservation:

Reservation Indians sat in one place and did not move; they ate white food—white bread and white sugar and white lard. ... Reservation Indians had no mesquite flower for the winter because they could not leave the reservation to gather mesquite beans in August. ... Poor people! If they

41 For an interesting discussion of gardens and horticulture in *Gardens in the Dunes*, see Tillet.

couldn't travel around, here and there, they wouldn't be able to find enough to eat; if people stayed in one place too long, they soon ate up everything. (17)

Mobility and movement are thus not only features of resistance to the policies of cultural annihilation applied by the United States government towards Native Americans, but more importantly preconditions of sustenance and survival. Similarly, this openness to movement and encounters with the cultural other is expressed in the tribe's attitude to mixed blood children. Silko emphasizes this importance of mixing (of seeds as well as races) in the subplot concerning Sister Salt, who gives birth to a baby boy fathered by Big Candy, an African American: "Sand Lizard mothers gave birth to Sand Lizard babies no matter which man they lay with. ... The old-time Sand Lizard people believed sex with strangers was advantageous because it created a happy atmosphere to benefit commerce and exchange with strangers" (202, 218). Later in the novel, Sister Salt establishes a woman-centered community with her son, and the Chemahuevi twins, also displaced characters in the novel, are her closest friends. It is therefore equally the importance of the locality as well as flexibility (geographical as well as cultural), so often underlined in cosmopolitan theories, that are the founding stones of the Sand Lizard people's system of knowledge.

During her transatlantic and transnational adventures, Indigo cherishes the philosophies of her tribe, incorporated into Grandma Fleet's teachings, and at the same time remains perceptive about and receptive toward the new geographical and cultural environment around her. In stark contrast to Edward, Indigo approaches both the human and non-human creatures she encounters on her way with interest and empathy. Linneaus, a monkey brought from one of the expeditions (103–104), and the green parrot kept by Susan for decorative purposes (187) are set free from their cages and become the child's companions. Indigo also establishes a meaningful relationship with an Indian woman from the Oyster Bay area, who takes care of her for a brief time (169). Aunt Bronwyn, despite committing the sin of lumping all Indian people together, engages Indigo in an exploration of her ancient gardens and illuminates the similarities between Sand Lizard and ancient European mythologies (239, 244). These interactions are always marked by a process of mediation between what Indigo sees and her knowledge about the Sand Lizard culture, which can be applied in any circumstances. As Gercken points out, Indigo "does more than inhabit the space [which she visits], she indigenizes it" (181). Thus, the girl achieves the condition of being "at home" (with both people and places) despite a geographical separation from the gardens in the dunes.

Like Edward, following Grandma Fleet's lessons Indigo collects the seeds of the plants that she encounters. However, her actions are motivated by different aims than those of the botanist: "Grandma Fleet always advised the girls to collect as many new seeds as they could carry home. The more strange and unknown the plant, the more interested Grandma Fleet was; she loved to *collect and trade seeds*. Others did not grow a plant unless it was food or medicine, but Sand Lizards planted seeds to see what would come" (83–84; emphasis added). The movement of people and goods

(seeds) improves the subsistence farming and promotes intercultural connections, instead of conceptualizing plants and seeds solely as goods in a commercial context, as was the case with Edward. According to James Barilla, since Edward “attempts to claim the original material, to name a new species after himself instead of acknowledging the plant’s origins elsewhere and respecting its biological sovereignty, his collecting becomes piracy, the theft of natural and cultural capital, and the transfer of indigenous knowledge and material into a monetary system of exchange at unfair rates” (168).

As Indigo travels the world, she manages to draw parallels between the situation of her tribe and those of other peoples facing a similar predicament of land theft, economic exploitation, and cultural annihilation. When she returns home with Linnaeus, the green parrot, and a huge collection of seeds, she reconnects with her sister and they return to the area of the Sand Lizard people’s gardens:

When the girls first returned to the old gardens the winter before, Grandma Fleet’s dugout house was in good condition but terrible things had been done at the spring. ... Strangers had come to the old gardens; at the spring, and for no reason they slaughtered the big old rattlesnake who lived there; they chopped down the small apricot trees above Grandma Fleet’s grave. ... Today Indigo and Linnaeus ran ahead of the others with the parrot flying ahead of her. At the top of the sandy slope she stopped and knelt in the sand by the stumps of the apricot trees, and growing out of the base of one stump were green leafy shoots. Who knew such a thing was possible last winter when they cried their eyes sore over the trees? (476)

The sprouts that appear in this unexpected place are from the “foreign,” hybrid gladiolas whose seeds Indigo brought from her transatlantic travel with Hattie and Edward. Surprisingly, not only do the flowers grow in the dry terrain but also prove to be a valuable source of food. What seems to be significant in this last passage is not so much the miracle of the blooming hybridized flowers in the desert, but Indigo’s simultaneous participation in the rebirth of the Sand Lizard garden and the formation of transcultural alliances, without forsaking her commitment to her land. Indigo’s engagement with Indians from the Oyster Bay, locals in Corsica, Hattie’s upper-class family, brilliantly illustrates Foster’s idea of the “relational regionalism,” of tribal people reaching out to other communities, as well as Weaver’s cultural circulations on the Red Atlantic. What began for Indigo as a transatlantic voyage is transformed into a genuinely cosmopolitan experience.

In June 2017, during the 38th American Indian Workshop organized at King’s Collage, London, LeAnne Howe (Choctaw) delivered a presentation that included an insightful comment on the discussion of Native American cosmopolitanism. In 1847, an unusual cooperation took place: despite living in poverty themselves, the Choctaw people collected \$170 (about \$4,400 today) to send food to Ireland when they heard about the famine in Europe. At that time, the Choctaws were suffering from the consequences of their forced removal from their Native lands, and yet “inspired by their tradition of giving ‘without seeking things in return’ ” (Smith), they demonstrated

an immense sense of generosity, or perhaps a cosmopolitan orientation towards other non-elite and oppressed people of the world. The contacts then established continue today.

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III: Minoritarian Mobilities

María Frías

Migrant Women's Bodies in Transit: From Sub-Saharan Africa to Spain in Real Life and Film

1 Introduction

The story of a journey that starts long before it makes the headlines.

(Gerardo Olivares)

Given its geo-strategic position, Spain has become the gateway to the EU for thousands of African migrants. Contrary to other European countries such as the United Kingdom or France, the social phenomenon dubbed the “massive African emigration” has been relatively recent *vis-à-vis* Spain, as it did not start until the 1980s. Although hesitantly at first, it was at this time that the traditional fishing boats from West Africa (called “*pateras*” and “*cayucos*”) began to arrive packed with migrants; first to the Canary Islands (Fuerteventura in particular), and later to the coastal towns of Andalusia in the South of the peninsula. From then on, Spain has played a major role in the transportation and reception of “human cargo.”

Interestingly enough, we should bear in mind that due to socio-political circumstances, and its dictatorial regime, from the 1950s to the 1960s Spain became a “sender,” mostly of unskilled migrant workers (to the factories of Switzerland, Germany, or England), but also of artists and intellectuals (to the universities and cultural institutions in France, the UK, Argentina, or Mexico (to name a few of the major countries). Today, Spain has become a “receiver” of migrants from the African continent—in particular from the sub-Saharan countries. Thus, starting in the late 1980s, due to the dangers of a long and uncertain journey mostly young, robust, athletic, and strong men were the first to arrive. As was the case with the slave trade and the Middle Passage of the “peculiar institution” of slavery, only the strongest and the fittest would survive such a dehumanizing experience. African women would arrive later, braving the treacherous routes, the extremely long distance, the unbearable and extreme weather conditions, plus having to deal with the threat of smugglers and mafias, as well as their sexual vulnerability. While they cover the same routes and risk their lives exactly as male migrants, the experience of African women on their way to Europe differs significantly from that of their male counterparts.

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on African women's bodies in transit from West Africa to Spain, in view of Gerardo Olivares's⁴² pioneer film on the topic, *14 Kilometros* (2007). Although the protagonist Violet's journey does not speak for all African migrant women's passage to Spain, it is my intention to highlight and analyze certain experiences that female migrant subjects share—even before the actual journey starts—as well as to address specific gender-oriented issues, such as prostitution or sex trafficking, that assault them throughout the duration of their excruciatingly painful voluntary or forced self-exile. In this sense, I would maintain that for the African women in transit, whether real or fictional, the journey of migration to Spain is written on their bodies. Finally, throughout the chapter I comment on and establish a parallel between the transatlantic slave trade and contemporary human trafficking and migration subjects.

To achieve this goal, I have organized this chapter into two separate sections. In the first, I provide a brief overview of the reality of migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Spain, which might help to better understand the route Olivares chose for the protagonists of his film, as well as to highlight the life-or-death risks they must overcome in order to survive. In the second section I focus on the film itself, and once we get to know Violet's human, social, and geographic landscape, we travel hand in hand with her from her homeland in Mali to the South of Spain. Although Violet's motivations are certainly her own and her painful experience of migration cannot possibly reflect that of all African female migrants, in my reading and viewing of Olivares's film her journey—both physical and psychological—serves as a metaphor for other stories of African women's search for “ideal elsewhere.” As Helga Ramsey-Kurz and Geetha Ganapathy-Doré claim in *Projections of Paradise: Ideal Elsewheres in Postcolonial Migrant Literature*, “migration and exile produce strangers” who “have to ... constantly redefine their presence in different places and their state of unbelonging both to themselves and to others” (24). The film's migrant protagonists, whether real or fictional, all experience these contradictory rites of passage and unsettling states of mind. In this chapter, I focus on selected scenes of significance from Olivares's film *14 Kilometers* which, in my opinion, accurately mirror the odysseys of African women's passage from the rural villages or urban cities they leave behind to the “land of milk and honey”—the North, Europe—a place they are eager to reach.⁴³ Moreover,

⁴² Gerardo Olivares (b. Córdoba, 1964) has produced hundreds of documentaries. Since 2006, Olivares shifted to producing feature films. Nature-oriented and open minded about different cultures, Olivares has produced *La gran final* [The Great Match] (2006), *14 Kilometros* (2007), *Entre lobos* [Among Wolves] (2010), *Hermanos del viento* [Brothers of the Wind] (2015), and *El faro de las orcas* (2016). Fourteen kilometers is the shortest distance between North Africa and the South of Spain. All translations from Spanish to English are mine.

⁴³ A metaphor used in the Old Testament to refer to the Promised Land, Israel, where the Israelis would be free. It was frequently used by African Americans in slave narratives and spirituals linked to the abolition of slavery and their journey to the abolitionist states in the North (Exodus 3:8; Num-

I try to show that more often than not, in contrast to male migrants, these African women in transit systematically suffer from traumatic sexual abuse and exploitation and their apparently invisible wounds are extremely difficult or impossible to heal.

2 The Early African Routes to Spain: Colonization in Reverse⁴⁴

2.1 The Ocean Route: “The Easy One”

Generally speaking, from the mid-1990s on there have existed two major routes that lead from the African continent to Spain—the so-called ‘door to Europe.’ The first one is the Atlantic Ocean route (shorter and relatively less dangerous), currently known as “the easy route” by West African migrants. This route was “inaugurated” in August 1994, when two Sahrawis became the first to arrive by boat to Fuerteventura (Canary Islands). The news soon made the headlines, and desperate Africans also heard by word of mouth; so that by 2006 the numbers had increased so sharply that the Canary government faced serious problems in dealing with the humanitarian chaos (“Spain’s Handling of the Cayuco Crisis”). Thus, after arrival some migrants were flown to the African mainland. Starting in maritime countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, or Mauritania, highly experienced local fishermen can cover the respective distances from the country of origin to the point of destination in the Canary Islands (Fuerteventura, in particular), in about a week or ten days. The duration of the “crossing” depends on, *inter alia*, the skipper’s experience, the state of the means of transportation used (*cayuco*), the load the boat bears, and the weather and sea conditions.⁴⁵

Contrary to common belief, to date hundreds of young Africans have drowned in the Atlantic Ocean. For instance, in March 2006 Yayi Bayam Diouf’s only son Alioun Mar, aged 26, lost his life, together with eighty-one other Senegalese young men from his village, off the coast of the Canary Islands. In conversation with Tidiane Sy for the

bers 14:8). Nowadays massive migration to Europe parallels the exodus in the Bible and the search for a better life.

⁴⁴ For thousands of Africans, whether refugees or economic migrants from the East and Central areas, the Italian tiny tourist island of Lampedusa has also become a new door to Europe, thus paving a new but still more dangerous route. See Horsti.

⁴⁵ I serve as a volunteer for an NGO at my University. These statements are based on personal testimonies of African migrants and the prison inmates I work with at the Local Penitentiary, the latter of whom had covered the distance between Dakar and the Canary Islands twice a month beginning in 2006 and until they were caught and flown to Almería or Málaga.

BBC News, Ms. Diouf blames poverty and the poor fishing equipment (“too old motors and boats”) for the unprecedented exodus: “So when the “*passseurs*” [traffickers who organize the trips] came here to offer the opportunity to travel, the young people who knew the sea were tempted and they all signed up.” But, despite the tragedy, the boats have kept coming and going. According to Christopher Châtelot, Ms. Yayi Bayam Diouf still feels guilty for having encouraged her son “to go, work in Europe and send money back home,” and she has become the founder of the “*Collectif des femmes pour la lutte contre l’émigration clandestine*” (“The Association of Women Fighting Against Clandestine Immigration,” previously named “The Association of Mothers and Widows of Cayucos”). She has also obtained permission to fish, and, most importantly, she walks up and down her fishing village, Thiaroye-sur-mer, located on the outskirts of Dakar, telling the truth about a deadly journey—especially to young and restless fishermen—and keeps fighting clandestine migration. Not surprisingly, the women’s association motto is “*Ne partez pas*” (Don’t Leave). Furthermore, in “*La voix des femmes: Yayi Bayam Diouf*,” her moving and illuminating speech for TEDx, Diouf highlights how women who have lost their sons and/or husbands have proved they “can change their patriarchal communities” by learning skills, becoming financially independent, and adopting orphan children whose parents have been victims of clandestine migration, sending them to school and taking care of them. She concludes that “[her] sadness and the trauma of losing [her] son has given [her] the strength to go on.” Knowing that in Mali the number of women who migrate has drastically increased, she fights against the feminization of migration by spreading the word, sharing her association’s strategies, and helping Malian women to stay in Mali.

2.2 The Continental Route: The End of the Road

The second route is called the “continental” route (much longer in terms of both time and distance). It crosses the Sahara Desert and is, by comparison, more dangerous since it is plagued with all sorts of perilous hazards. Starting in countries as different and distant as Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana (in the South), or Mali (or any other country in the West), this route literally forces the migrants to cross central Africa through the Teneré and the Sahara Deserts on their way to the North. Over the years, and only a few dangerous but successful expeditions later, the dirty and lucrative business of migration has changed the face of Agadez (Niger), the meeting point at an arbitrary and dusty crossroad from where African migrants are basically left on their own and, sadly, have to depend on the avarice of smugglers and/or the charity of strangers, as Olivares’s film demonstrates. The greedy strangers include locals who act as guides, security men, or middle men and skilled drivers who are experienced in navigating the desert—a mesmerizing ocean of sand dunes. One way or another, all of these intermediaries benefit from the transactions with the clandestine smugglers and mafias who quietly yet effectively operate in the area, taking advantage of

migrants' ignorance, and profit from the outrageous numbers of desperate people who are in search of a better life in Europe. Once again, as in slavery times and the triangular slave trade, and as their own ancestors before them, Africans themselves participate in and are complicit with these smuggling networks, and obtain huge economic benefits from the mafias who market in human trafficking, which, according to former President Barack Obama "must be called by its true name—modern slavery" (qtd. in "Human Trafficking").⁴⁶

Once the proud and ancient capital of the Tuaregs—the people of the desert—and the home of Agadez's famous Mosque (1515), the desert town profited from a booming tourism economy until the 1990s and the 2007 Tuaregs's revolts made the sandy, dusty, lively, and magic market town unsafe. Since 2010, the Tuaregs have been at peace, and Agadez is now the proud owner of an international airport and has gained the prestigious cultural title of being a Unesco World Heritage Site. However, among multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual Africans—even among the illiterate ones—Agadez's reputation stems not from her uranium depositories (which contribute to the enrichment of politicians, government officials, foreign investors and corrupt civil servants and individuals),⁴⁷ but from its crucial role in the abusive business of trafficking in migrants, as well as from its open but secretive support of smugglers, mafias, and, in general, a variety of illegal activities related to the transportation of African migrants, as if they were cattle, across the Teneré and the Sahara Desert. Given the relevant role this sandy city plays in human trafficking, it is no coincidence that the trio of protagonists in Olivares's film cross paths for the first time in Agadez. Nor is it any wonder that the two brothers, Mukela and Buba, stop at the hotel appropriately called "Le fin du chemin" (The End of the Road). Like Agadez itself, this hotel marks a beginning and an end for thousands of, for the most part, young, healthy, and strong willed African migrants—whether male or female—who are captivated by the lure of Europe.

Turning back to the notion of the Black Atlantic and the "peculiar institution" of the transatlantic slave trade, today's Agadez might act as a mirror of the "door of no return" that we find in the colonial castles and fortresses that have historically peppered the Gold Coast or Slave Coast, such as Elmina and the Cape Coast Castle (in today's Ghana), or La Maison des Esclaves on Gorée Island (Senegal). As was the case in slavery times, the narrow door of no return forced the terrified and tortured slave to look at the vastness of the blue but wild ocean in front of her/him—maybe for the first

⁴⁶ "Human Trafficking by the Numbers" pays special attention to women, minors included, from all over the world who, like Violet, suffer from sex trafficking.

⁴⁷ Referring to some of the "conditions" that contribute to corruption in Africa, in *Institutions and Reform in Africa: The Public Choice Perspective*, John Mukum Mbaku denounces "the pervasive corruption in the civil services of many African countries," and adds that those "who are supposed to enforce laws against theft ... or fraud, either function poorly or do not function at all" (125).

time—but nobody had prepared this unfortunate and much abused human being for the horrors that lay ahead once they were locked in the belly of the slave ship.

Along the same lines of thought, for the desperate, scared and disoriented migrant, Agadez (a desert village itself) represents a similar door of no return. By the time African migrants reach Agadez (regardless of their country of origin), although they had been excited by the promise of a long-awaited dream and were finally allowed to leave their dwellings, they have already been squeezed onto a bus and many of them have already suffered from theft, have had their passports stolen, or have already lost friends or kin. Thus, for the sub-Saharan migrants navigating the dunes of the desert becomes as terrifying as the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean was for their ancestors. From then on, there is only the vastness of the desert—no marked roads, no signs, no lighthouse, no trees, no water and, most important, no laws and no compassion. It is just the survival of the fittest. “Le fin du chemin” (“the end of the road”) can be read as and associated with the entrance into a dehumanized world, devoid of ethical principles and/or cultural and religious beliefs.

3 The Female Migrant African Body and Prostitution

In an interview with journalist Mara Torres, Olivares explains that the idea to write the script of *14 Kilometers* came to him while he was producing his documentary *Caravan* (2005). He spent forty days in the Teneré Desert with the Tuaregs, who trade with salt, and to his shock he came across trucks crammed with sub-Saharan Africans and their belongings. The Tuaregs commented that they had found up to two hundred African corpses that were abandoned by the drivers or in trucks that had had mechanical problems. The passengers died of hunger, thirst, and consumption. Thus, the director had the chance to gather first-hand information about the migrants’ lethal journeys, and thought about making a film about them. Oliver explains that in order to better understand their plight, while he was working on the script he did the migrants’ route himself and lived in Niger and Morocco. When Torres asks, “What is the scene that lives with you after that journey?” Olivares does not hesitate about his answer: “Seeing that very young women were forced to prostitute themselves, starting in Agadez and throughout the whole journey across Africa until they reached Europe.” It is a journey, he highlights, that might take years because they are often robbed or deported to their countries of origin, yet have the stamina to start it all over again. Thus, whenever Olivares hears people saying that “it is madness for African women to travel pregnant!” he cannot help but think of the unspeakable things unspoken about the trafficked women. Given the impact this image had on Olivares, it is no wonder that migrant women’s misinformation and prostitution are a relevant issue in his film.

Consequently, in Olivares's *14 Kilometers* the protagonist Violet—a strong-willed, self-sufficient, brave, and decent young woman—hears from her best friend about a pension in Agadez where women like her would always find plenty of work. When a still innocent and inexperienced Violet enquires what kind of jobs specifically—in case she might not qualified—her friend responds, “I don't know. As a waitress or cleaning rooms.” For Violet, the truth is a bitter pill to swallow when she finds out that the only job available for women of all ages and complexions is prostitution. Trapped against their will, threatened by middle men or smugglers and robbed of their passports and money, they have no other option than to pay with their sexuality for the ticket that will help them escape.

For African women in transit like Violet, the time they spend trapped and engaged in unwanted sexual activities varies. The strenuous working conditions, long hours, and the clients' preferences for sexual intercourse without condoms or other forms of protection only lower these women's—even pubescent girls'—self-esteem, together with their physical, psychological, and sexual well-being. Intentionally, Olivares fixes the camera's gaze on a huge official poster placed outside the central bus station that tells “la vérité” (the truth) about the dangers of “Clandestine Immigration to Europe through the Sahara and the Mediterranean,” which include “faim” (hunger); “soif” (thirst); or even “mort” (death), and enumerates gender-specific attacks such as “banditisme” (banditry) and “agression” (aggression). Among the dangers listed on the poster, there are also two related to prostitution and sexual violence: “viol” (rape) and “SIDA” (AIDS). However, this frighteningly long list does not deter these young women or make them stop in their tracks or return home. As we will see later Violet, like thousands of African female migrants before her, is forced into prostitution. Moreover, it is in Agadez where she will have to learn her first lessons. Echoing Taiye Selasi's acclaimed short story “The Sex Lives of African Girls” (2011) on African girls' abrupt and violent awakening to sexuality, “the sex life” of Violet starts with child abuse, apparently tolerated by her family, and it continues in her teens with prostitution once she reaches Agadez.⁴⁸

4 Agadez and Human Trafficking

Today, ten years after Olivares shot *14 Kilometers* (2007) and after “many thousands gone” in their attempt to cross the desert and reach the coasts of the EU, things have not changed much in Agadez.⁴⁹ In his article entitled “El cementerio de arena” (The

⁴⁸ Selasi's acclaimed short story, like Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), shows that child abuse “begins with Uncle,” that is, at home, and the victimizer is no stranger, as is the case with Violet (236).

⁴⁹ Here, I draw a parallel between the Spiritual/American Folk Song “Many Thousands Gone”—which refers to the human cost incurred by the horrors of slavery—and the thousands of today's Afri-

Sand Cemetery), Nacho Carretero uses the metaphor of a cemetery to refer to thousands of people (men, women, and children) who have lost their lives in the Sahara Desert while traveling by bus from Agadez to Sabha in Libya—a three- or four-day journey across the Sahara Desert. So the journalist’s description of Agadez in 2017 does not differ much from the way Olivares’s cinematography captures the atmosphere of a desert town and its ghostly soul. Echoing Olivares’s long shot of Agadez, Carretero writes, “the streets and every nook and cranny of this city made of mud brick, red earth and dust are crowded with people from different countries who are waiting to ‘jump to Europe.’”⁵⁰ The journalist also describes the unhealthy living conditions of the migrants, who have to wait until the vehicle—either a van or a bus—is full to capacity. Located in the outskirts of the city, the smugglers provide ramshackle shacks where women are exploited and forced into prostitution. “The gateway to a better life has the shape of a nightmare,” concludes Carretero.

Revisiting the comparison between the transatlantic slave trade and contemporary African migration, one has to note that in both cases Africans are (mis)treated as human chattel. For example, today’s migrants are also piled up in filthy conditions until it is guaranteed that the journey from the countries of origin or countries of transit is profitable enough for the modern “slavers,” “middle men,” and “merchants.” In a similar vein, in the Agadezes of the world the overcrowded bus stations, the dilapidated shanties, coupled with the overcrowded buses, bring to mind the image of the slave ship *Brooks* and African slaves packed like sardines. According to Carsten Junker, the first drawings of the plans of the slave ship *Brooks* were published in Bristol in 1789. It shows a capacity for 294 figures (men, women and children), “tightly packed and arranged in orderly fashion” (20). Until 1804, it made ten voyages. The main purpose of the publication, sponsored by British abolitionists, was to enable people to visualize the horrors of the slave trade, touch people’s consciences, and put an end to slavery. Junker claims that the publication of the plans of the *Brooks* “provok[ed] an emotional response on the part of a larger free public by evoking the violence and terror of the trade” since they were forced to visualize “the miseries and enormity of the slave trade” (16). In my reading of Olivares’s film, the image of the *Brooks* is the visual metaphor that helps us see the enormities of today’s human trafficking in the images of overloaded buses in the Sahara Desert or inflatable boats in the Mediterranean Sea.

In contrast, although the means of transportation (vans, pick-ups, and buses—albeit dilapidated, old and in need of repair)—have not changed for the better from

cans who have fled their homelands to die, nameless, in the Sahara desert, the Atlantic Ocean or the Mediterranean Sea. From all the powerful lyrics, I would choose the following poignant lines: “No more action block for me / No more, no more / No more children stole from me / No more, no more.”

50 Among migrants, “dar el salto” literally means “to jump” from Africa to Spain. In contrast, for African slaves in the Americas, the myth of the “Flying African” mirrors their desire to go back home.

the time Olivares shot his film, nowadays some drivers from Agadez, like Kawal, drive in style with the help of a GPS and a compass. However, as Kawal asserts, the desert is anything but friendly: for the migrants, there are neither tourist adventure packs, nor moonlight Berber drum circles, which tourist agencies currently advertise to market the magic of the Sahara desert. As he admits to Carretero, even for a driver as experienced and skilled as himself, the desert can become a lethal trap: "There is no marked path, not even a track. There are stretches [in the way] where the only thing your eyes can reach is the sand. [The desert] is like the sea, like an ocean. Everything is the same. It is impossible to get oriented." Thus even drivers with lengthy experience and skills in crossing the desert face an uncertain journey every time they are at the wheel. To make matters worse, for the passengers the most insignificant mechanical problem can make the difference between life and death. Kawal, who has been witness to these heartbreaking dramas, graphically but stoically describes them: "On every journey, I come across vans which are left stuck [in the desert]. Some of them are surrounded by corpses. In others, you find people desperately screaming for help. But I cannot stop. What can you do? I have my van loaded to the full."

The rationale behind Kawal's terrifying words lies in the fact that, as the statistics show, human trafficking in Agadez seems unstoppable despite never-ending regulations to control the sandy borders. Thus, human rights associations like ARCI report that between February and April 2016 more than 60 000 African migrants passed through the city of Agadez.⁵¹ For the majority (45 000 people), Agadez is the transit country to the "new route" to Europe via Libya.⁵² For the fifteen thousand migrants who remained, where women abound due to the commonplace belief that the continental route through Algeria and Morocco is to some extent safer, the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta or Melilla become their final "transit countries." Once they reach one or the other they are convinced that their "long deferred dream" will not "dry up like a raisin in the sun"⁵³ since Spain is *only* fourteen kilometers away.

51 ARCI offers a reliable and critical study of regulations between African countries and the EU (with an emphasis on their effects on the Central Mediterranean as well as on the African countries of departure) that have done little—if anything—to contribute to putting an end to human trafficking and/or "[to improve] the conditions of the border control system" (12).

52 For a detailed and matter-of-fact description of this third route from Agadez to Libya, see Kingsley.

53 I am borrowing here from the African American poet Langston Hughes and his often quoted poem "A Dream Deferred."

5 Spanish Enclaves in Africa: Ceuta and Melilla or “the Gateway” to Europe

For African “economic migrants”—as they are called in order to distinguish them from the asylum seekers who seek to escape from brutal dictatorial regimes, armed conflicts, and/or political persecution—Ceuta and Melilla also epitomize the door to Europe. However, this is not the final stop. Both Spanish enclaves are separated from Morocco by their respective twenty-foot-high, barbed-wired double fences that run for about eight kilometers. But for those who have spent months—even years—trying to reach the North—that is, Europe—a razor wired-topped border fence is not enough to stop them. Although countless migrants have been seriously injured or even died while trying to break through the fences, whether in Ceuta or in Melilla, they keep trying and more will come. As Dan Bilefsky writes for *The New York Times*, reporting on a recent “migrants fence storming” in Ceuta, being “the only two land borders between the European Union and Africa, [Ceuta and Melilla] have become a magnet for sub-Saharan migrants willing to cross deserts, brave razor wire and endure perilous conditions in search of a better life.”

Lizzie Dearden, writing for *The Independent*, refers to the same massive break-in, but the journalist employs an ethics of care and pauses to pay attention to those who were injured: “Many needed medical treatment after scaling the barbed wire fence separating Ceuta from Morocco, with several bleeding from their hands and legs while others were injured falling to the ground.” Just three years earlier, the BBC News opened with a similar headline, but only the location has changed: “African Migrants Storm into Spanish Enclave of Melilla.” This piece of news stresses their determination to overcome just one more obstacle preventing them from making their dream come true: “Melilla’s formidable border barrier does not deter migrants desperate to get into Europe.” As with Dearden, the BBC reported not only that the migrants “suffered cuts scaling the fence,” but also that they tried to protect themselves [from Moroccan, and Spanish police brutality] by [throwing] “stones, sticks and bottles at police.” As can be inferred, the majority of those who made it (on February 17, 2014) were not only in good shape and strong—they were obstinate too.

6 Mireille, Astan Traoré, and Tatiana Kanga: Pioneer African Women in Transit to Spain

Surprisingly, despite the nearly insurmountable wire fence, there was a young woman among those who overcame it. For teenager Mireille (from Cameroon), this was not her first attempt. She had tried on four occasions, but this time, despite some bone fractures, she made it and became the first African woman to scale the triple twenty-foot

barbed-wire fence between Melilla (Spain) and Morocco. As Mireille herself recounted to the press, in her previous failed attempt she was subjected to a merciless beating by the Moroccan police, and she fell onto the ground with a broken tibia and she was sent to the Nador Hospital Morocco. Mireille was still on crutches the day before she decided to scale the fence. After doing so, she lied to the authorities and she said she was fifteen to facilitate the process of being granted asylum or citizenship in Spain. Thus, she was first sent to an institution for minors, but was later moved to the CETI (Center for the Temporary Residence of Immigrants) once the tests proved she might be between sixteen and eighteen years old (Blasco de Avellaneda).

In an interview for Spanish TV Channel 3, Mireille summarizes her year-long journey from Cameroon in the company of her younger brother. She was fortunate as, according to her statement, she had neither been harassed by smugglers nor been sexually abused: "I never paid a cent." Discussing the push factors behind her decision to migrate, Mireille explains that the traditional African family is too large, and that she felt she was a burden for hers, and that back home there is not enough food for everybody. Besides, she adds in her well-articulated French, young girls (and boys) like her who have diplomas cannot find jobs: "Even if we go to school and get a diploma there is nothing for us to do." She braved all the hardships faced by African migrants on their way to Europe. Her position was additionally vulnerable due to her gender, and the objectification and sexualization of her body. Given the inherent threats to emigrant women's bodies in transit from Africa to Spain, one more question remains: How has Mireille been able to keep both her mental sanity and her amazingly good physical shape? "Playing football," she says, has been both her hobby and her remedy. Shy but self-confident, Mireille does not smile much.

The second African woman to scale the double wired fence and successfully accomplish the harsh objective was twenty-year-old Astan Traoré (Cameroon). In contrast to Mireille's multiple attempts, in the case of Traoré, she was successful in her first attempt. Moreover, by the time Traoré jumped the fence in Melilla she was about twelve-weeks pregnant. Like Mireille, Traoré's determination speaks volumes about these African women's physical strength, psychological determination, and stamina. As for her plans for the future, Traoré has very clear ideas: "I just want to go to Europe. I want to get a job. I want to be free." Traoré reports that she has left some fifteen women behind in the bushes who, like her, dream of a better life on the other side of the fence. Traoré will soon be sent to mainland Spain since her pregnancy makes her "vulnerable," and, thus she will receive special medical treatment and will have access to health social services (Ramos).

Traoré's case is not an exception, as more and more African women are following the path of African male migrants, leaving their lives behind and travelling lightly. However, due to the duration of the journey (the continental route, in particular), which might vary from months to years, by the time these women are ready to get on board and attempt to cross the Strait of Gibraltar or scale the deadly fences in the enclaves of Ceuta or Melilla, frequently they are already pregnant. Pregnancies might

be wanted—as seems to be Traoré’s case—or unwanted, because the women have been raped, or forced into prostitution out of necessity, or exploited by the smugglers to pay for the ticket to Spain. Francisco Cansino, the director of the Spanish Commission for Refugee Help in Malaga, reflects on the growing numbers of pregnant women, sometimes travelling with little children: “Maybe it’s hard for white, Western Europeans to understand why a pregnant woman, with her toddler in her arms, would risk her life in a rubber raft. But, the concept of “life” isn’t the same in Spain and Africa. It’s not the same for someone who has absolutely nothing—or who’s escaping conflict and war” (Frayer). Cansino refers to unnamed and invisible women and their babies, who died trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea, as well as to those who miraculously have survived, as is the case with Kanga.

Also from Cameroon, like Mireille, Tatiana Kanga’s story differs because she left her homeland and headed for Spain through the continental route and attempted crossing the Mediterranean Sea on board an inflatable boat. Like Mireille, she was pregnant. In Kanga’s case, though, she was nine months pregnant with Antoni (now three years old), and was travelling with her toddler daughter Chantel (then about two years old). As journalist Lauren Frayer reports, what makes her story unique is the fact that she has survived this ordeal, and that the family has been living in Malaga since they landed in September 2014. As usually happens with African migrant women who have experienced the nightmare of crossing the Sahara Desert and being smuggled into Morocco, Kanga does not provide much information about either the reasons for leaving while pregnant and with a toddler in tow, or about the details of the route. However, she does share some relevant facts about her crossing. Talking about the means of transportation and the load, Kanga says that “it was an inflatable boat, with 17 people.” It is interesting that in this particular case not only women and children abounded, but specifically pregnant women. According to Kanga, “seven of them were women, three children—and six of the women were pregnant, including [her].” Like Violet in Olivares’s film, Kanga reached Spain by crossing the 9 miles (which equals 14 kilometers and explains the significance of the film’s title)—the shortest distance between the continents of Africa and Europe—after surviving the continental route and the Sahara Desert.

Like thousands before her, she was smuggled in by a Moroccan man she does not dare to identify. She complains that she had to pay the trafficker an exorbitant price for the tickets even though they were squeezed in a rubber dinghy where they all risked their lives: “He charged me 1,200 Euros (about USD 1,290)—1,000 for me and 200 for my daughter. ... She cost only 200, because she takes up less space.” Despite the short distance, the crossing was not an easy one. “We set off at 4 o’clock in the morning from Morocco,” Kanga remembers. “We could see Spain, but we had so many problems. By 8 a.m., the motor broke. I thought we were going to die. It was so hot. I brought some cookies and orange juice, but we didn’t have enough drinking water for 17 people.” “Miraculously,” Kanga continues, “they reached a Spanish beach after only a fourteen-hour journey ... just as [their] raft began deflating.” Like

Mireille or Traoré before her in Melilla, Kanga is happy in Malaga, where she is staying at a migrant detention center, but her future in Spain is as uncertain as that of Mireille or Traoré. However, she is happy that she has got this far. Lauren Frayer emphasizes that Kanga “beams” when she utters the words “It’s Europe!”; she sees it as her “ideal elsewhere”—a place of arrival similar to Paradise, a recurrent dream for migrants and, at times, just an illusion (Ramsey-Kurz). Similar to Mireille’s determination and will power to dare to scale the barbed-wire fence, Kanga adds: “I did not know what would happen that morning when I got in the boat, but I was determined to live without fear” (Frayer).

Frayer’s article contains a touching family picture of Tatiana Kanga on April 22, 2015, walking the streets of Malaga with both Chantel and Antoni, now aged 3 years and 7 months, respectively, all impeccably dressed and in good health. The mother wears the latest fashionable outfit: a tight tiger printed top, tight jeans, a long-sleeved white jacket, and white moccasin shoes to match; she is smiling and proudly looking at Antoni. The two children, Chantel and Antoni, are looking at the camera. Despite the picture perfect family group, their future remains uncertain and the single mother with her two children might be repatriated back to Cameroon, her country of origin. And this is not fiction or an open-ended film—this uncertain and excruciatingly long liminal state, coupled with the sense of dislocation and unbelonging, awaits the thousands of migrants who have successfully reached Europe but whose legal status is not yet secure. Only then would Kanga be able to remain in Spain or head for any other country of destination in the EU. The legal process, though, is long and tedious, since most undocumented migrants travel with fake passports, get rid of them, or are robbed before crossing the border. To put it briefly, if Tatiana Kanga is allowed to stay for five years in Spain, she can apply for a residency permit. If she stays for more than ten years, she can start the process of becoming a Spanish citizen. However, one way or another, she will be required to obtain a work permit and to submit documents that take a long time to obtain from Cameroon (or any other African country), such as a Birth Certificate, a valid criminal record certificate issued by the authorities in Cameroon, and a document that certifies her marital status (issued by her home authorities too), as well as to show documentation that proves her long-term legal residence in Spain, (just to name a few). Given the insurmountable bureaucracy, the expensive process, and the possibility of entering the job market by the back door, some African migrant women do find domestic jobs (but they are usually exploited, work longer hours, and are paid below the minimal legal wage), get an education or, in the worst case scenarios, are caught by mafias and force to work as prostitutes.

7 14 Kilometers: Gerardo Olivares's Fictionalized Documentary

“The Sea is History,” writes Afro-Caribbean poet Derek Walcott with reference to the centuries-long tradition of the transatlantic slave trade and the transactions of human cargo across the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean, in which Africa was the continent of origin and the Americas and Europe were the continents of transit and destination, respectively. “The sea is slavery,” echoes Afro-British writer Fred D’Aguiar in his fictionalized historical novel about the slave ship the *Zong* and the 132 sick and dead bodies of African slaves who were thrown overboard to profit from the insurance company in 1781. Similarly, in Edwidge Danticat’s “The Children of the Sea,” her unnamed Haitian activist and teenage protagonist, who is about to drown in the Caribbean Sea on his way to Florida and freedom of speech, writes in his journal his last letter to his girl friend, and accepts his fate “to live life eternal, among the children of the deep blue sea, those who have escaped the chains of slavery” (27). More recently, Marie H el ene Cauvin created a powerful and unsettling oil painting *Vers un destin insolite sur les flots bleus de la Mer des Antilles* of an African woman who seems to be desperately swimming (or is it walking?) away from a sailboat in the distance, without noticing that she is stepping on the corpse of a drowned woman put to rest on a ladder of shackles. Struck by this image, Tanya L. Shields invokes Walcott, D’Aguiar, and Danticat and maintains that Cauvin “tells the story of desperation, allowing us to read gender in terms of freedom and labor” (27), and at the same time highlights “the violence endured by the [female] flesh” (26). Though separated in time and geography, the trafficking in human cargo that has been going on for the past three decades between the African continent and the South of Europe is to some extent analogous to the transatlantic slave trade, only now it is the Mediterranean that records Black history. As with African slaves, those who have lost their lives in their attempt to cross the fourteen kilometers which separate Africa and Europe lie at the bottom of the sea in a vast, unmarked cemetery made of sand and salt water, with no graveyards or burial stones; nameless, invisible, forgotten, and unrecorded. Only the ones who are fortunate enough to reach the coastal towns of Spain make the headlines and become visible in the European public discourse because, as Olivares complains, “on TV, the piece of news takes twenty-five seconds, the delivery is cold, and there is a news-fatigue element because people change TV channels” (Torres). Thus, the images of the newly arrived are soon forgotten by most people; they become unnamed faces, like those who lay at the bottom of the sea. At the same time though, it is true that in the media one finds countless powerful images of dangerous rescue actions by the coast guard boats—whether in the middle of the Mediterranean or on nearby tourist beaches. There is the presence of humanitarian associations like, among others, the Red Cross; and there are eager volunteers of all ages and stages of life who show their professional training as well as their human side; hundreds of African faces with des-

perate eyes crying for help are shown in the newspapers or on TV screens; where one can see long lines of exhausted rescued migrants wrapped in red blankets or aluminum foil, holding plastic bottles of water and biscuits in their shaky hands, looking absently into the horizon or just lying on their backs, both exhausted and fully asleep. Furthermore, the media is not shy about showing the dead bodies of African migrants floating on the sea, washed up on the beaches, or wrapped in dark plastic bags carried by the rescuers; waiting in line to be, hopefully, identified. But these, Olivares insists, will soon be forgotten too. He argues that the faces and bodies of these nameless African migrants, whether dead or alive, are only the tip of the iceberg of a dehumanizing and traumatic journey through the heart of Africa, which still remains unknown.

These sample media images speak volumes about the ever-increasing waves of mass African migration to Spain. They also reflect the horror of the enterprise as well as its transnational socio-political and financial implications. These heartbreaking images are both re-making and questioning the recent history of the [Black] Mediterranean Sea. They make the headlines world-wide, but in the context of today's media culture, packed with drama and bombarding the public with ever-new stimulating images, people cease to react to the unspeakable suffering of the African migrants. This is why comparisons between today's African migrations and the transatlantic slave trade—reinforced by artistic images such as Cauvin's painting—may prove more effective in communicating the new Black history written on the Mediterranean Sea than typical media images. In other words, as with the slave narratives told or written by the slaves themselves and used by British and North American abolitionists as ideological weapons to put an end to slavery in the nineteenth-century, Olivares's script and his characters' dramatic journeys to the North attempt to shake people's consciences as well as to question legislators' and politicians' socio-economic strategies.

Analogously, Olivares's film evokes more affect from the viewer than the public media discourse or traditional documentaries. Olivares has chosen to produce a road movie, his *opera prima*, instead of a documentary, although he has produced countless documentaries and for decades has crisscrossed the African continent. Thus, he is familiar with the human and geographic landscape of Africa and is well-informed about the variety and complexity of its internal and international conflicts. Olivares is highly concerned about the lack of visibility, misinformation, and the lack of reliable reporting about the extremely long and deadly journeys of Africans along the continental route to Europe. Thus, Olivares's main goal is to focus on and deal with the silenced and untold tragedy of African migrants who either choose to or are forced to leave their countries of origin and travel to Spain—a stepping stone to Europe.

In an interview with Javier Estrada, the director confesses that he produced *14 Kilometers* with a clear pedagogical goal in mind: to fight against the ignorance about African migration; to show what the media ignores; and to address a target audience: Spanish young people. Contrary to the widespread idea that the toughest and most perilous part of such a long journey is the crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar, Olivares insists that “people cannot possibly imagine what [African migrants]

have gone through before they actually arrive on board the pateras” in the south of Spain. To correct this misapprehension, Olivares's film focuses on the experience of the journey and the continental route, and devotes special attention to the harshness of the crossing of the Teneré Desert (Niger). Moreover, as his three protagonists' individual and painful journeys fully show, the director reminds us that his ultimate goal is to spread the idea that “behind each one of those [African] faces there is a drama that starts in Mali or farther away” (Estrada).

National and international critics agree with the director's philosophy. Thus, Jonathan Holland suggests that Olivares's film is an “ambitious” and “honest portrayal” of the “physical and psychological stress” suffered by the trio of protagonists. Similarly, Felipe Gómez Isa emphasizes “the film's commitment” to “illustrate the human suffering involved in the hard and extenuating migration process,” while at the same time praising the director for presenting “a perspective that has not received much attention so far” (1061). Olivares's cinematography has gained a virtually unanimous favorable critical reception, but some critics object to the discrepancy between the film's stunning beauty of the desert and the traumas experienced by the protagonists. Writing for *Variety*, Holland claims that “the pic ... only intermittently explores or communicates the tragedy beneath its suspiciously good looks.” In a similar vein, Ray Bennett observes that the cinematography “clashes” with the screenplay, since “the three protagonists' desperate plight is often at odds with and not informed by the gorgeous desert scenery.” In Spain, Jordi Costa's review for *El País* offers a similar comment, as the critic asserts that Olivares “sublimates some extremely harsh realities into beautifully poetic images.” However, there is little critical reference to the characters' specific trials, except for Bennett's and Holland's texts. While the former maintains that Aminata Kanta's [Violet's] is an “appealing story” of “a young woman desperate to flee an unwanted marriage,” he objects that “the script doesn't get under [her] skin.” Holland praises Olivares for his “refusal to craft a well-rounded plot from real-life horrors” such as African women's prostitution.

In line with Bennett's and Holland's statements, I would argue that though there is no need to eroticize Violet's body or show sexually explicit scenes, the fact remains that she is a victim of sexual trafficking and bears sexual abuse and unwanted sexual aggressions that become written on her sexuality, and I would further argue that Violet's scars remain almost invisible. Additionally, the director touches only in passing on Violet's shame and horror at being forced to work as a prostitute, even as he confesses that the image that stands out from his *solo* journey from Niger to Morocco is that of young African women who were forced to sell sex in places such as Agadez. It is true, though, that in the process Olivares projects the image of a strong, proud, and dignified Violet who, despite the circumstances, keeps her ethic principles and dignity intact throughout the extenuating long and traumatic journey from Mali to Tarifa, during which her body is sexualized and objectified.

Thus, *14 kilometers*, invites the audience to experience the horrors and the shame of the physical and psychological journey across central Africa through the three

main characters, who embody three representative types of migrants.⁵⁴ Firstly, an adult, Mukela (Illiassou Mhamadou Alzouma), typifies those who have tried once, have been deported to their countries of origin—Niger in his case—but are convinced there are good reasons to try once more. Olivares chooses to omit the shame of Mukela, a “been-to,” as they call them in Ghana, meaning a migrant who has been to Europe but comes back to Africa with empty hands and real or symbolic debts and unpaid loans from his family and friends. The film starts in *media res* and there is no hint about Mukela’s adjusting to his apparent failure. However, Mukela will not quit, and—as is the case of thousands of migrants in real life—he is already thinking of giving it a second try.

Secondly, there is his teenager brother, Buba (Adoum Moussa). Mukela firmly believes in his brother’s dexterity as a football player and is convinced that he could possibly make it in one of the leading European clubs. Mukela’s insistence, as well as the encouraging words of Buba’s coach—“No international scout comes here [Naomey, Niger]. [If I were you] I’d try my luck in Europe. I should head for Europe”—move Buba to start the journey. In so doing, Buba attempts to fulfill his dream of being a football player. Thus, in the case of Buba, Olivares introduces the topic of the European dream—personified by a young, hard-working, skilled, and exploited car mechanic who manages to do his job while engaging in constant and serious practice and training for a sport—despite the odds. For example, Buba is one of the few players in his team that wears branded sports shoes and the Real Madrid official t-shirt—a clear and sad reminder of, and a souvenir from, his brother Mukela’s previous attempt to travel to Europe.

Finally, and most importantly, the increasing number of African migrant women in transit are represented by Violet (Aminata Kanta), a young girl from Mali who runs away from home and travels alone, but who happens to meet the two brothers, Muleka and Buba, on her way to the North. The story of this trio is one of friendship, resilience, sacrifice, stubbornness, disappointment, death, exploitation, generosity, anger, frustration, broken dreams, and, perhaps, a hopeful future.

As mentioned above—and as I did with respect to real migrants such as Mireille, Traoré, and Kanga—in my analysis of Olivares’s film I place the spotlight on Violet (Mali). Even though she is a fictional character, Violet’s own nightmarish experience of emigration mirrors that of hundreds of African women who have come after her; both then and now, and both in real life and in fiction. Generally speaking, as human rights associations and volunteers insist, and as statistics show, African women migrants are most vulnerable in terms of their sexuality. After being examined and

⁵⁴ The three protagonists, as well as most of the cast, are non-professional actors. Some were hired as the producers changed locations. In different interviews, Olivares stresses his preference for a non-professional casting, and for shooting outdoors and in contact with nature—the desert is a character in itself in this film.

interviewed, a large number of African women report having suffered from some (or all) of the following: a) rape and/or gang rape; b) [unwanted] pregnancies as a result of forced sexual intercourse; c) [unsafe] induced abortions, whether women wanted to end their pregnancies or not, due to the hazardous journey; d) prostitution and all kinds of sexual exploitation. As we will show later, both the real migrants (Mireille, Traoré, and Kanga) and the fictional Violet are rather shy and reserved and refrain from talking about sexual issues.

8 Violet's Journey from Mali to Tarifa (Spain): Migrating Women's Sexual Vulnerability

In Olivares's film, a teenaged Violet runs away from home in the region of Mopti, a riverside village in Mali, to avoid an unwanted arranged marriage to a well-positioned old man who has sexually abused her since she was a child. Using a shoulder camera, the film employs a right to left slow panning that shows the everyday routine in a rural community. Children play and sing or help their mothers with errands, women get ready to cook or leave to sell in the market, and some middle-aged men sit on the floor and repair their fishing nets. All of them occupy a traditional compound. Animals like goats or sheep are scattered around. The mud brick houses all look alike. We hear a conversation that is going on nearby while the camera approaches Violet's dwelling. Once inside the room, we find three people: the woman and the suitor are sitting on a large rug that partially covers the earthen floor; and a younger man is sitting on a low wooden stool—a symbol of power. There is no sign of Violet. The old man is wearing a dark blue kaftan, a variety of silver pieces, and a conical hat typical for the Dogon country. Violet's mother is wearing a black and white boubou and a flowered dark blue headwrap, and Violet's brother is wearing a brownish kaftan from African waxprint, probably tailored for the occasion. The camera catches them in the middle of the arranged marriage transaction which, following tradition, includes a lengthy bargaining session between Violet's mother and her husband-to-be. Interestingly enough, all three characters remain unnamed throughout the conversation, a clear metaphor for the universality of the practice that is still common, albeit silenced, in African countries, even though different NGOs consider arranged marriages to be a "violation of human rights" ("Child Marriage"). In this case, the starting bride price for Violet is twenty cows:⁵⁵

55 Though set in the fifties in Lagos (Nigeria)—one of the African countries with the highest rate of child marriages—Buchi Emecheta's novel *The Bride Price* (1976) fiercely denounces this traditional custom as well as the high price her protagonist Aku-nna has to pay.

Man: How many cows do you want?

Mother: At least 20 cows.

Man: That is outrageous! I can offer you half that.

Mother: That's not enough.

Brother: She is a good girl. She will look after you. You'll see.

Mother: If you're offering me ten cows, then you will have to include 100 kilos of salt and some money. And you pay for the party!

Man: Alright!

Mother: Your future wife is waiting. Go see her.

[Man enters a small and ill-illuminated room where Violet is sitting on the bed, and looking miserable. She is holding her left hand under her chin and she does not show any sign of interest when he sits by her side. She is wearing a cotton long sleeve top, a long skirt, and a headwrap, all in matching white, red and green African print.]

Man: Aren't you happy? At last you'll be my wife. Ja! Ja! I told you you'd end being mine!

While arranged marriages have been part and parcel of African cultures for centuries, some African countries show alarming numbers. According to the UNICEF "Girl Summit," "more than one out of three young women in sub-Saharan Africa are married by their eighteenth birthday."⁵⁶ Thus, by addressing the issue of Violet's arranged marriage, Olivares introduces a relevant social and cultural problem that seriously affects the lives of thousands of young girls like the young protagonist.

It's worth noting that, as customary, the partner is chosen by the parents or family elders—in this case, Violet's mother. Apparently, it is the mother who has matched Violet with the old man whom her daughter (most probably a minor) not only detests but by whom she has also been traumatized through repeated sexual abuse that has been going on since she was a child, as we learn in the next scene. It is clear from Violet's defensive body language—she pushes her suitor off her when he tries to embrace her—that she is not in the least receptive to the idea of becoming the spouse of a man who is at least thrice her age and, more importantly, has molested her since she was a child.

Curiously enough, Violet's unnamed mother seems quite comfortable with the role she plays, since that is one of her duties. As an African woman, she knows that a woman alone is stigmatized. If unmarried and without children, Violet will be considered a social pariah, thus the mother's firm resolution to seal this business with the suitor she thinks would "protect" and provide for her daughter's future, as well as for her extended family. Being a widow, the husband is absent from this transaction, and we later learn it is the bride-to-be's mother who is in charge of the negotiations of the bride price. For example, when the man lowers to half the number of cows, offering ten instead of twenty, Violet's mother becomes actively engaged in the negotiations,

⁵⁶ See also "Countries with the highest rates of child marriage." According to UNICEF statistics, the West sub-Saharan countries with the highest rates of child marriage (before women are eighteen) are Niger (75%), and Mali (55%), which is where Violet comes from.

requesting the payment of salt and money and, on top of that, the expenses generated by the wedding celebration—which, following the tradition, add up to large sums of money, given the variety and duration of the rituals as well as the usual large number of guests. Equally noticeable is the fact that, although there is a male figure present during the negotiations, Violet's unnamed brother remains silent and let's Violet's mother negotiate. Interestingly, when he does speak it is only to emphasize Violet's good character (i.e., subservient and docile), as well as her domestic skills (she will cook for him and will take good care of the husband-to-be's sexual needs), which will prove Violet's excellent training within the parameters of a patriarchal and traditional society.

Coming back to my assertion that the *peculiar institution* of slavery and the slave trade can be compared to the contemporary human trafficking and migration, here too the arranged marriages share common traits with the auction block whereby men, women, and children are sold to the highest bidder. Likewise, in Olivares's scene about Violet's bride price and her arranged marriage, the old man bids, buys, and gets the woman. Moreover, similar to the tradition of runaway slaves such as Harriet Jacobs (1813–1897) who was sexually harassed by the owner and doubly punished for taking the liberty of choosing her lover and the father of her two children, Violet also knows that her life is at risk as well as the reputation and safety of her whole family, and like Jacobs, who declines an adulterous relationship with her master—“her great curse” (27), Violet rejects a forced sexual relationship and an arranged marriage and goes into hiding, to later flee from her homeland.

Violet's reasons to leave are clear, but she would not have gone far if she had not found sanctuary in her friend's comfortable house, similarly as Jacobs hid for seven years in her grandmother's tiny attic, “[her] loophole of retreat” (117). In the film, the viewers learn about Violet's abuse through their conversations. Additionally, we are informed that, as currently happens today, the blame is put on the victim of sexual abuse. Thus, Violet confesses that had she told her mother, she would not have believed her despite the conspicuous marks on her little body, and Violet's sister heard her cries, she would have never come to her rescue or told her mother. It can be inferred, therefore, that both in Violet's arranged marriage as well as in the recurrent episodes of childhood sexual abuse, women are often complicit in perpetuating the use and abuse of other African women by conforming to the norms of a strict patriarchal culture and tradition.

In contrast, Violet's friend both listens to and empathizes with her dilemma. When Violet reaches her house, she has no idea where to hide. In response to her friend's query, a still traumatized Violet responds: “I don't know. I think I will go to Europe. If he finds me, he will kill me. I have to go as far away as possible where nobody might find me.” Out of fear and ignorance, Violet cannot even place “Europe” on the map, nor does she know the thousands of kilometers that separate her from a life or death situation. On her part, Violet's friend's positive complicity leads her to lend Violet money for the journey to Europe, even though it means that her own

dream of leaving for the North will have to be put aside, at least temporarily. However, apart from Violet's friend's efforts to comfort and help her, this scene is most relevant because it reveals the extent of African women's lack of information about the dangers that lie ahead of them once they take the decision to migrate and cross half the continent to reach Europe.

In a similar vein, in her acclaimed novel *Three Strong Women* the French writer Mari Ndiaye tackles the topic of African women's migration and their sexual exploitation without apology. In contrast, Olivares deals with the same issue albeit in a more subtle way. For Mari Ndiaye's Khady—one of the protagonists who is sent against her will to France to provide for her in-laws once her husband dies and she is left childless—Europe is just an idea. In the case of Khady, Europe is a mantra that keeps her alert and on her feet, and like Violet, she is not familiar with the social and geographic reality of migration: “What had to be continually in mind was this: the journey could take months, even years, as it had for a neighbour ... who had only reached Europe (what “Europe” was exactly, where it was situated, she put off until later to find out) five whole years after leaving home” (253). Both Khady, before leaving Senegal, and Violet, before leaving Mali, have no idea either about the length of the journey or about the hardships ahead.

Likewise, though Violet's friend is generous enough to lend her own savings, she is unfortunately similarly not well informed. As happens in both fiction and in real life—even today—Violet's ignorance about the route will have unspeakable consequences for Violet's mental, physical and sexual integrity:

Violet: I can't take the money!

Friend: You're going to take it. Mine is a dream, and yours is a question of life or death. When you go to Agadez, look for a hotel, The End of the Road (Le fin du chemin). I am told you can always find work there.

Violet: What kind of work?

Friend: I don't know [pause] ... As a waitress, I imagine, or cleaning rooms.

I have previously highlighted the existence of the many myths and lies about the “door of no return.” While most migrants—Violet's friend included—have heard about The End of the Road Hotel (Le fin du chemin), few women know, are willing to tell, or have lived to confess that there are no decent jobs available such as waitressing or cleaning rooms. Instead what is in high demand in Agadez and elsewhere along the route to the North is prostitution.

In another scene, later on in the film, Buba and his brother Mukela briefly stop at a pension to just have a drink. The “been-to” Mukela remarks, “The only thing that has changed in two years are the girls. The rest is exactly the same.” Both look around and see the sorrowful faces and sad eyes of African women of all ages and complexions, which speak volumes about their sexual slavery. It is Buba who first spots Violet, still wearing her friend's gift (a wood and silver pendant around her neck), sitting by the slot machine, (a powerful visual metaphor for her commodified body), and

showing the most desolate look in her eyes. Obviously she is not working as a waitress or a cleaning woman, as her friend suggested, and she naively believed. She wears the uniform and trademarks of her profession—bright make-up and a tight strappy brown tank top, à la mode European. Violet's immobility and loneliness matches that of most of the African women in the bar. They look too tired, or too high, or too drunk to even keep up a conversation. Violet looks shocked—like she has finally opened her eyes to the horrors of her unplanned and unprepared journey. But, as Amma Darko writes about her Ghanaian protagonist Mara, who is forced into prostitution by her own husband in German night clubs, Violet is still “too green” for the job (88).

Interestingly enough, though Olivares is quite conscious of the existing problem, in *14 Kilometers* we do not find any graphic descriptions of the world of forced prostitution, the smugglers' sexual abuse, the sex traffickers' strategies, or the many ways women have to pay with their sexuality for a ticket that might take them one hundred miles further ahead. It could be argued that although this is the first time we find Violet transformed into the kind of person she probably never dreamt of becoming, she does have to provide sexual services to her clients. Captured in a medium shot, the camera depicts Violet's horror and shame through her stasis. Echoing Paul Gilroy's oft quoted concept in *Against Race*, Violet's unmapped and urgent “route” to her imaginary Europe has her migrant body “rooted” in unwanted prostitution—an otherwise recurrent fantasy and imagined cliché about the African woman migrant (155).

As a diasporic subject, Violet continues *en route*. She manages to leave The End of the Road (Le fin du chemin) behind and exchanges her stasis for action. In this sense, Olivares presents a heroine who strives to re-build her shattered ego from scratch, as well as her sexually abused body. Thus, even though Buba and Mukela have offered her their protection and company and have shared with her the unpaved roads of the desert for miles on end, not to mention food and water, Violet drastically puts an end to her friendly relationship with Buba the night he tries to caress her breasts. When Violet asks him to stop it, Buba playfully reminds her of her job at the pension in Agadez. Furious, Violet responds by slapping him on his face and shouting: “Don't you ever touch me!”

Once again, the scene at the check point provides further evidence of the sexual vulnerability of the migrant woman in transit. To start with, the setting seems surreal: A dilapidated desert camp tent in the middle of nowhere. A white pickup parked nearby. Half a dozen men wearing military uniforms, heavy boots, sun glasses, and desert turbans wrapped around their heads appear sitting down and leisurely talking to each other. The check point is marked by a thin piece of cotton fabric about two meters long. It is held on both ends by stones placed on two old jerry cans, one at each end. There is a long establishing shot that highlights the absurdity of the invented frontier. The passengers in the bus include men, women, and children. A menacing and athletic soldier orders the driver to open the doors and gets on the bus. He checks carefully right and left, and asks some passengers at random to show him their passports. So ordered, a frightened Buba shows him his fake Malian passport (purchased

for 50 Euros) and passes inspection. The soldier stops now in front of Violet, who is sitting a couple of rows behind, and asks her for hers. The soldier opens the passport and looks at Violet. He then turns back, gets off the bus, and heads towards a man sitting on a plastic chair—obviously in charge. We do not hear the conversation between the soldier and his superior because Olivares focuses the camera on Buba and Violet, alternately, to show their concern and anxiety. When the soldier comes back to the bus, passport in hand, he orders Violet to follow him, accusing her of having a fake passport: “Don’t tell me lies!” he shouts at her, and he adds: “Come with me!” When she refuses, the soldier tries to grab her by her arm, and Violet screams: “Leave me alone!,” Buba begs, “Let her go!”

Violet is the type of woman who will not give up without a fight. It takes two soldiers to handle the situation. Violet keeps screaming, fighting, and kicking both soldiers until she is finally taken by force and pushed in front of the officer in charge. Buba throws Violet’s backpack through the window, and the bus is allowed to pass the check point. This time, contrary to her job in the brothel of Agadez, Violet does not have the protection of other women like herself. She is left alone in the company of several men who are hungry for sex. Once again, though she has committed no crime—her passport is legal—she is arrested and taken by force just because she is young and attractive, a recurrent risk for African women who travel alone on the way to the North. And once again, as in the scenes in the Agadez pension, Olivares does not dwell on the serious and dangerous implications of Violet’s situation. In his cinematic discourse, Olivares leaves it to the viewers to come up with their own conclusions. He insists that the use of sexually explicit scenes would have been “the easiest thing to do.” However discreet and evasive the director’s decision might be, the fact remains that Violet once again suffers from sexual abuse, and this time it is not forced prostitution but gang rape.

There is still one more sequence in which Olivares deals in an oblique manner with Violet’s forced prostitution and unwanted sexual advances. After she has been kidnapped, Violet and Buba remain ignorant for months of each other’s painful yet parallel journeys. While Buba suffers from cold, hunger, and death threats from the Moroccan border police, as well as the theft of his Real Madrid ball by an Algerian low rank border official, Violet literally remains out of the picture. It is only by chance, after Buba pays the Moroccan smuggler to get him a seat on the crowded patera that will finally make it possible for Buba to land on the shores of Spain, that he hears about Violet’s whereabouts. While waiting for the patera to materialize, dozens of men are kept locked up and treated as if they were chattel in a small room without ventilation. Buba notices that a new passenger enters the room, but does not pay much attention to him until he notes that he is wearing Violet’s pendant. When Buba asks, the man responds, “It is from a whore who refused to fuck with me.” After her rather long absence, the viewer is informed that Violet has been working as a prostitute at Hotel Tropical, in Asilah, Morocco. Buba manages to cheat the guardians, leaves the shelter, and rushes to find Violet to offer her to cross with him that night. It is evident that

Hotel Tropical is a brothel. A general shot, though late at night, highlights the illuminated sign. Using long and medium indoor shots, the camera shows Buba's search. He knocks on different doors before opening them and checking, one by one. There are neat individual rooms; in two of them there are African women, fully and nicely dressed à la European, leisurely lying on the bed or reading a magazine. Surprisingly, they apparently seem quite relaxed and at ease. When Buba opens Violet's door and begs her to go along with him and leave, a still furious Violet responds: "We? Go with you? Where? Listen! If you came to fuck me, there are two girls in there, okay?" Cold and dignified, Violet rushes from the room and locks herself out, while Buba frantically calls her name, apologizes "for the misunderstanding"—that is trying to take advantage of her in the past—and begs her to hurry so that they can get on the patera.

If, as I maintain elsewhere, for African women's bodies in transit "the dress is a text," in this scene Violet's progressive transformation proves it ("The Dress" 171). As a young, unmarried, and rural girl, from Mopi, she wears colorful African cotton wrappers tied under her bare arms, or dresses more formally—for the arranged marriage negotiations—adding a head wrap to her long sleeves and long skirt with a beautiful white, green and red design. The migrant that crosses the Teneré Desert has exchanged her cotton, bright, and light clothes for jeans, heavy woolen jerseys, and a dark blue woolen hat. She is wearing green socks and green plastic sandals. Her backpack gets lighter and lighter as the journey proceeds. The first drastic change in clothes occurs when the camera offers a slow panning from left to right, and a middle shot of Violet in the Agadez pension, a prostitute. Her nudity shows through her brown tank top, still adorned by her friend's pendant. The scene in the bus at the checkpoint shows that Violet has grown more experienced, against her will, but she is also able to fight back and defend herself. Contrary to the other female passengers, she is not only unveiled, but she is also wearing her European outfit: jeans, a tank top, and a blouse. Finally, despite her job as a prostitute at the Hotel Tropical in Asilah, she does not look as sophisticated as the other women the camera shows. In contrast with the westernization of the other sex workers, Violet still wears African clothes, as at the beginning of her journey, but in the Moroccan version of the attire, i.e. a bright and shining long-sleeved dress in dark reddish color combined with silver threads. Except for the soft background sounds of love making, there is little more to identify Violet with prostitution or with being stuck in a brothel. Moreover, although she does not seem happy to meet Buba, neither her mind nor her body show the scars of sexual exploitation.

In fact, as mentioned earlier, she has had the audacity to reject a client and dares not to submit to a client's desire. This seems a privilege and an unthinkable reaction for most sex-trafficked African women who are forced to work as prostitutes. Contrary to Olivares's rather subtle portrayal of Violet's sexual profession and the existing demand of the erotic market on the route to the North, in Ndiaye's novel, the omniscient narrator describes Khady's forced sexual encounters in a graphic and

highly explicit way that is absent from Olivares's non-existing cinematic discourse on prostitution:

The man would then lower his trousers with almost anxious haste ... he would lie down on Khady. He would then enter her, often groaning in surprise, because a recent attack of pruritus which made Khady's vagina dry and inflamed also caused his penis some discomfort. She summoned all her mental strength to counter the multiple shooting pains in her back, her lower abdomen and her calf, and think "There's a time when it stops" until the man finished laboriously and, in a murmur of pain and disappointment, had withdrawn promptly. (265)

Though both Olivares's film and Ndiaye's novel make use of the "prostitute metaphor" (Stratton 53), where more often than not "the woman/whore is abandoned alone (a fact that reflects the brutal act of possession and penetration of Africa by Europeans" (Frías, "Women" 8), it is interesting to note that contrary to African male writers, who either kill or punish the female protagonist with the so-called act of "redemption through repatriation to the village"—where she will re-conduct her life, get married, have children, and perform her wifely duties to perfection, no matter how unhappy her married life turns out to be—Olivares tends to follow African female writers such as Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta, who do not see the need to punish women's prostitution. They, in turn, understand sex-trafficked women—whether by force or election—as *a means to an end*. Far from getting "rooted" as a sex-trafficked young woman in the brothels of the continental African "route" to the North—and a better life in Europe—Violet, like Amma Darko's Mara—"keeps reclaiming and reconstructing her own private space." Whether in the Agadez pension, in the desert camp with the check point soldiers, or in the more sophisticated hotel in Asilah, she seeks "her own freedom"—whereby she runs away as soon as she sees the opportunity—"and her own financial independence" (Frías, "Women" 8), and when she finally gathers the exact amount of money needed for her to jump onto the next bus leaving the station, overcrowded and over expensive as it might be, she takes it.

9 Jumping Ship

Despite the excruciatingly long, painful, and humiliating journey through three countries (Niger, Algeria, and Morocco), and the additional suffering experienced by African women's bodies in transit, who are "clandestinely demanded, consumed and disposed of" to satisfy the needs of the erotic market in view of their sexual vulnerability and their urgency to reach their final destination (Barberán Reinas 149), Olivares's Violet reflects the statistics that show the anomaly of an African woman's attempt to follow the continental route, to later jump on a dilapidated boat and attempt a sea crossing of the fourteen kilometers that separate Africa and Europe. Violet does not hesitate to trust Buba once again, venture out, get on the boat, and treat Buba as her protector and guide. What is interesting about this scene is that, on the one hand, Olivares provides exact information as to how smugglers and mafias

work on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar. The human cargo is kept in a hidden and untidy room with no ventilation until the vessel is full and the crossing is financially profitable for the head smuggler, regardless of whether or not the boat is in condition to load this number of passengers or if the strong winds and the stormy weather make the crossing a deadly enterprise. The camera follows the human cargo from the moment they are piled up in the suffocating room to the time they are urged to get on a van or lorry, where, once again, they fill the stifling space available. The camera follows them walking one after another, holding on to each other's back and holding their breath. We see Buba and Violet jump into the boat and they accommodate themselves as best they can. Their faces show the tension, the fear, and the scars of the journey by land. Olivares chooses an infrared detection system, a type of light filter that duplicates the one used by the police and the rescue patrols, whether by air or by sea. This greenish type of light does not allow the spectator to see in detail, but it replicates the images that the immigration officers and police departments or rescue patrols offer and are shown on the news. Thus, the audience is familiarized with the blurred and almost anonymous, threatening, and dehumanized portrayal of African human trafficking.⁵⁷ Olivares defamiliarizes these dehumanized representations by populating them with protagonists that the viewer has already identified with.

Comparatively speaking, while Olivares's film pays special attention to the continental journey that includes the crossing of the Teneré Desert and several African countries, from Mali and Niger to Morocco via Algeria, the director devotes very few scenes to the perilous and oft-times deadly enterprise of crossing the Strait of Gibraltar. Soon after the engine starts and the first, not yet menacing, waves hit the little boat loaded with clandestine passengers, Olivares cuts to an idyllic long establishing shot of the Tarifa Beach in Spain, to later show Violet and Buba, safe and sound, running wild and with no direction trying to escape from the Guardia Civil by hiding in the bushes. "Violet, it is all over!" Buba stutters when he thinks they are about to get caught by one of the officials. Instead, Olivares chooses an open ending, maybe too good to be true for some critics as well as for a number of humanitarian associations, as shown by the media, which keep counting the dead, whether drowned or missing, after their boats sink or capsize in the Mediterranean Sea. It is true that Violet is "saved"—albeit temporarily—but since Olivares's intention is to present uncomfortable facts and pose unsettling questions, the audience might wonder "[what about] the majority of other women who will stay trapped in the brothels and those who will continue to be enslaved by ruthless traffickers unless the circumstances that permit their exploitation begin to change?" (Barberán Reinares 155).

⁵⁷ According to González del Pozo, the scene of the arrival in the patera is "extremely short" by comparison (55). It is in this scene, he claims, that the viewer might come to identify with Buba's and Violet's individual struggles. Instead, they simply become part of the unwelcome and unwanted mass of African migration (57).

10 Conclusion: African Migration and the Mediterranean

They will keep coming and they will keep dying because history has shown that no wall can hold back people's dreams.

(Rosa Montero)

African migration to the EU through the back door of Spain started some thirty years ago. In the first stages, primarily due to the harshness of the journey, this was a male phenomenon. Images of the arrival of overcrowded pateras and cayucos to the Canary Islands or the south of Spain instantly made the headlines. The press tends to show pictures of the exhausted bodies of those who have finally made it to Europe. However, the horrors of their journeys across the Sahara Desert remain largely invisible to the European public, a lacunae which is partially filled by Olivares's film. Another significant element that he focuses on is the gender-specific fate of female migrants, and thus he manages to portray the relatively new trend of African women's migration to Spain. Gerardo Olivares's movie puts the spotlight on the continental journey and his migrant trio includes a young girl in her teens, i.e. Violet, thus providing visibility and giving voice to the specificities of gender in the African culture; their particular reasons to go North; and the commodification of migrant women. Personally shocked by the numbers of young African girls who are forced into prostitution to pay for their ticket to Europe, Olivares tackles the issue of the increasing feminization of African migration and female migrants' prostitution. At the same time, he denounces these women's sexual vulnerability, as well as the existence of a ruthless and lucrative industry of human and sexual trafficking along the route. While it is true that Violet's body has been sexually exploited from an early age, her migrant body in transit is commodified and objectified even more drastically and her body will be systematically used and abused from the beginning of the journey, in Agadez, to the end of the road, in Asilah, Morocco. However, what is innovative about Olivares's cinematographic discourse on migrant women's bodies in transit is that apart from both dealing with and denouncing women's prostitution as a common practice for survival—Violet's diasporic body is not an exception—the director refuses to offer explicit sex scenes, which would further eroticize her body and show the pornography of rape and unwanted sex. As a matter of fact, there are neither sex nor nudity scenes in the film, even though prostitution is part and parcel of Violet's ticket to the North. Moreover, I contend that Olivares takes pains to get rid of negative stereotypes that present African women as sexually insatiable, available, and objectified, and, instead, he portrays Violet as an exemplary migrant teenager, who dares to slap her travel companion when he tries to touch her; who furiously resists the lascivious border policemen's attempt to kidnap her by kicking and shouting; and who, finally, dares to refuse a client. On the whole,

by presenting this dignified, proud, and scrupulous Violet as a prostitute, Olivares spares the audience the horrors suffered by sexually trafficked African women, but at the same time his subtle and discreet approach to prostitution blurs the reality of some of the most excruciating pains African women's bodies in transit are forced to experience on their way to Spain.

Finally, in this chapter I have traced a parallel between the lucrative business of the transatlantic slave trade and the human trafficking industry of the twenty-first century. Like slave traders in the past, criminal gangs of smugglers and traffickers exploit the misery of desperate people who, in today's case, are in search of a better life or are running from persecution and armed conflicts. Once again, only the ablest and the fittest make it, thus draining the African continent of some of its best people. In the same vein, unscrupulous traders and human traffickers are profiting from migrants' urgency to leave. Like the Atlantic Ocean before, the [Black] Mediterranean Sea is nowadays dyed with the red blood of thousands of migrants who have lost their lives just off the shores of the coastal towns of Spain. Thousands of men, women, and children rest at the bottom of the sea. They are buried unnamed, their bones and bodies invisible to those who swim in the Mediterranean Sea, "the Mare Nostrum." Overall, Olivares's film shows that whether the sexual abuses are reported or silenced, as in the case of Violet, in order to reach an entry point to the EU, African women in transit will keep embarking on these deadly journeys even if they have to pay for part of the ticket with their bodies.

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Melanie Masterton Sherazi

From a Japanese Notebook: Afro-Asian Critical Cosmopolitanisms in William Demby's 1950s Reportage from Postwar Japan

In early November of 1953, the African American author William Demby sent a postcard to Rome from Calcutta to his new bride, Italian writer Lucia Drudi. The postcard bears a black and white photograph captioned, "Lake, Calcutta," which is superimposed with a blue ink stamp reading, "Pan American World Airways Inc." On the back is a brief note: "Tomorrow we arrive at Hong Kong."⁵⁸ Demby would spend a total of three months in Japan with a film crew. In a letter typed on blue parchment and sent from Tokyo a week later, Demby confides to his wife that he is disappointed with the film project. He mentions a lackluster press conference, before affirming his goal to work on a book project about Japan, particularly now that his typewriter has arrived. Sounding his critical distance from the United States and aversion to the projection of Americanism abroad through military occupation and cultural exports, he concludes: "[Tokio] [sic] is repulsive, it being so expensive and vulgar and filled with American soldiers and Japanese imitating Americans."

At the time of this trip to Asia, Demby had been living in Rome for six years, since 1947, following his service in Italy during World War II. Though Demby also traveled on journalistic assignments to postcolonial Ethiopia, much of Europe, and the United States South in the 1950s, this chapter focuses on his 1953 trip to Japan to position Demby as a critical cosmopolitan thinker and practitioner, whose transnational, multimedia work in fiction, journalism, and cinema marks an under-considered contribution to the projects of decolonization and social liberation. Demby's genre-bending writings are in keeping with David Hollinger's claim that "cosmopolitanism urges each individual and collective unit to absorb as much varied experience as it can, while retaining its capacity to advance its aims effectively" (84). Demby's critical cosmopolitanism is one marked by overlapping and competing socio-political forces, writing as he was in the 1950s and 1960s from post-fascist Italy in the aftermath of the Holocaust and World War II, in which he participated in a segregated army, and amid decolonization.

Demby's experiences in Japan resulted in a slim, self-reflexive book, which he submitted to his New York agent, Martha Winston, not long after his trip but which never found a publisher. The book, alternately titled in Demby's papers as *Geisha*

58 This correspondence is quoted from the William Demby Papers, housed at the Villa Podernovo, in Tuscany, Italy, with the permission of Demby's son and literary executor, James Demby. All subsequent references to this private collection, which I inventoried in 2014, will be cited as the William Demby Papers.

and *From a Japanese Notebook*, is a collection of some fifteen profile pieces describing Japanese cultural and religious practices, including the Noh theater; Kabuki; the children's parade of Shichi-Go-San; Buddhism; and the art of bonsai. Demby inserts himself into each vignette, often using the first-person to make his observations and sometimes self-reflexively calling himself a "foreigner" ("Geisha Girls" 41). More often than not, his profiles describe moments of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. For instance, in "Nakiri," a profile of Japanese women pearl divers, he follows the foiled attempts of the film crew with whom he is traveling to find a beautiful diver among the women to "star" in the movie. The woman they choose from a neighboring village turns out to be pregnant and gets sick out on the boat. Demby's book, with its insistent distance from and attention to mediated forms of interaction, is distinct from, even if not entirely outside of, Orientalist ethnographies and Western travel writing about Japan;⁵⁹ with its subtle emphasis on ways of (mis)reading the world, the book refuses claims to mastery, dwelling instead in moments of indeterminacy.

Demby captures glimpses or "snapshots" in Japan of what Bhabha has termed "spectral sovereignty," whereby the nation-state inheres, even in a "tattered" form (142)—in the case of Japan, in defeat and under United States occupation—an indeterminate site from which a negative politics of ontology might emerge to enact "political practices and ethical choices" that exceed ethno-racial categorizations or fixed "identities" (146). Compellingly, alongside Japanese cultural profiles, Demby's book accounts for Japanese traditions being adopted and adapted from Chinese culture; the presence of international expatriates in Japan; international religious students; the presence of translators and guides; and so on, thereby showcasing cosmopolitanism as a set of acts, which may be communal, and as a mode of tacit and explicit knowledges being exchanged, interpreted, or contemplated. Demby's critical project in *From a Japanese Notebook* is in keeping with Hollinger's characterization that "cosmopolitanism is more wary of traditional enclosures and favors voluntary affiliations. Cosmopolitanism promotes multiple identities, emphasizes the dynamic and changing character of many groups, and is responsive to the potential for creating new cultural combinations" (3).

Demby's book remained in manuscript form at the time of the author's death, tucked away in an armoire among his papers from his decades spent working as a writer in Rome. Though the project was never released in book form, several excerpts were published in periodicals in the 1950s, including *Harper's*, *Epoca*, an Italian-language magazine, and the multi-lingual literary journal *Botteghe Oscure*, published in Rome with niche global distribution. Such publication histories and these articles'

59 In *Orientalism*, Edward Said surveys a vast body of writing in the period of so-called high modernism that figures the East as the object of the West's consuming gaze. Traise Yamamoto points out the gendering function of this gaze, which feminized the East and constructed Japan, in particular, "in terms of absolute alterity" (13).

critical insights register the circulation of Demby's cosmopolitan reportage in Cold War print culture. In the contexts of twenty-first-century scholarship on the plurality of cosmopolitanisms and on the depth of Afro-Asian solidarities as resistance to colonial and imperial systems of oppression, Demby's 1950s writings on Japan and their Cold War circulation merit our critical attention for their complex negotiation of competing and often contradictory allegiances, as well as their political and psychic sites of issuance.

"The Traveller," the opening, unpublished chapter of Demby's *From a Japanese Notebook*, self-reflexively presents the idea of "Japan" as a Western, Orientalist construct. Demby presents a critical engagement with this "Japan" formed in his childhood and adolescence, spent primarily in a white immigrant neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Notably, the book opens in a first-person register, immediately dispensing with objectivity, and then calls the reader's attention to the circulation of anti-Japanese World War II propaganda. Demby recalls, for instance, being asked as a high school sophomore to paste "political cartoons in [his] scrap book out of the editorial pages of newspapers and magazines—caricatures of Japanese war lords grinning deceitfully like diabolic monkeys" (1–2). Layering autobiographical meditation and mediation into his own reportage signals his use of New Journalism strategies of the 1960s and 1970s *avant la lettre* and, at the same time, ushers into the text the presence of cultural biases and indoctrinating wartime discourses of "us" versus "them"—so crucial to the shoring up of national identity and belonging. The limits of this formulation of an "American us," of course, is laid bare in the state-sanctioned segregation of the United States population and its armed forces.

"The Traveller" significantly defamiliarizes the tropes of membership and belonging aligned with nationalism and presents African American experience as heterogeneous as Demby traces his family's move from urban North to rural South in the context of his own coming of age. After Demby's family moves from Pittsburgh to Clarksburg, West Virginia, he makes the conscious choice to enroll at West Virginia State College, a historically black college, amid the outbreak of world war, marking his first immersion in a broader African American community. He recalls listening "shyly, though secretly thrilled," "in the barbershop, in the shower-room, and on the steps of the campus church," as black students from Mississippi and Alabama "talked passionately about the 'Japs' and how they were going to teach white folks a lesson they would never forget" (2). Demby sets off "Japs," a pervasive racial epithet of the period, in quotation marks, estranging its use by African Americans who look to Japan in a manner that contrasts with the majority of white US citizens (the latter emblemized by his high school scrapbook assignment): as a legitimate rival to North American and European powers. After leaving college to train for the war, Demby was deployed to Italy, where his segregated troop worked as supply truck drivers—experiences Demby draws on in his final novel, *King Comus* (2017), which I discuss later in this chapter.

In “The Traveller,” Demby recalls being in Italy during the war, where his troop was:

camped in a fragrant wheat field in the Po Valley north of Bologna when one morning the news came that an atom bomb had been dropped. Almost for the first time since those days back in college I began to think of Japan as a land where real people lived; and I took my breakfast to the far side of the camp and sat on the running board of a truck, the strange word ‘Hiroshima’ running through my head. (3)

Such recollections operate as the book’s opening frame and commingle with Demby’s postwar writings from Japan, signaling his awareness of the (de)construction of otherness. Demby maps a journey across time and space: from his immersion in racist wartime rhetoric in Pittsburgh; to his exposure in Clarksburg to a critique of white supremacy and the prospect of transracial solidarity with Japan; to his attempts to process in the Italian countryside the meaning and effects of the ultimate act of war waged against Japan, “a land where real people lived.” In “Traveller,” Demby self-consciously narrates his emerging understandings of an interconnected world brought about by global warfare and writ large against a backdrop of violence, turmoil, and the Holocaust.

Demby’s creative cohort in Rome illustrates the complexity of cosmopolitan perspectives forming in the wake of Italo-fascism and World War II. In Rome, Demby lived in an artists’ commune in the late 1940s and early 1950s among Italian Communist artists and filmmakers who were admirers of Antonio Gramsci’s writings, including Renzo Vespi gnani and Marcello Muccini (Demby, “An American” II-1). Among this cohort were US expatriates, including journalist Bill Pepper and writer Alex Randolph, who had served in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Army intelligence during the war. These strange bedfellows, nevertheless, contributed to the immediacy of an anti-fascist response to Italy’s wartime zealotry and violence, including state collusion with the Nazis and the expulsion of Italian Jews to death camps. Demby recalls of the postwar years in Rome: “There was a cult of the left that everyone wanted to embrace; you wouldn’t see anyone trying to be a fascist, or coming around and dressing in a black shirt” (Micconi 127). These complex socio-political forces drive Demby’s postwar writings across media, and must be thought of alongside and in relation to the competing agendas of Cold War geopolitics marked by US hegemony and the era’s social liberation movements.

Demby’s exilic perspectives from Rome are woven into his writings for transnational culture industries, namely periodicals and the Italian cinema. In Rome’s revolutionary postwar milieu, he completed his first novel, *Beetlecreek* (1950), which traces fascist thinking and ensuing racial violence in a small town in the United States South during the Depression era. The novel was well-received and released

simultaneously in English by Rinehart and in Italian by Mondadori.⁶⁰ Mondadori sent Demby on assignment to Ethiopia in 1950 to interview Emperor Haile Selassie for their new glossy magazine, *Epoca*. Demby's multi-article reportage describes the nation's vibrancy as well as its rebuilding in the wake of Italian colonization. Alongside his work as a journalist, Demby became known in the 1950s as a fast and effective translator of Italian-language scripts into idiomatic English, forging friendships and creative alliances with several leftist filmmakers, including Roberto Rossellini and Federico Fellini. In turn, Demby's critical cosmopolitanism is the product of multiple socio-cultural and political forces: his having moved from the United States North to the South, from a predominantly white neighborhood into a segregated African American community; his service in a segregated troop; his living in war-torn Italy and marriage to an Italian writer; his postwar travels and work in the culture industries, which sent him on assignment to a range of countries; and his exilic distance from the United States.

Among Demby's papers from the 1950s is a letter from Hungarian photographer Francis Haar, who presents another model of cosmopolitanism in practice. Demby met Haar in Japan—he is likely “H.” in Demby's *From a Japanese Notebook*. Haar came of age in Budapest, among an experimental group of leftist artists, the “Munka Kor,” or the “Work Circle”; he first visited Japan in 1939 and went on to open a studio in Tokyo in the early 1940s, which he ran until the mid-1950s before settling in Hawaii (Haar 4). In February of 1954, upon Demby's return to Rome from Japan, Haar wrote to him on Film Tokyo Corporation stationary, describing the possibility of their doing a film together, with Haar directing and Demby writing a scenario: “perhaps based on Noh stories, or the story of the Fisher man with the Angel ‘Hagoromo,’ ” or the “other fisher boy who visits the land of the Sea King and marry [sic] his daughter.” Haar describes his appreciation for Demby's “open mind for new experiences and not limited by short-sighted, fix [sic] ideas as most of the foreigners visiting Japan.” He wonders, “How far did you get with your book about Japan? It will certainly become a very interesting and successful book.” Haar's appreciation for his new friend revolves around notions of cosmopolitanism, which Haar defines in opposition to the “short-sighted, fix[ed] ideas” that “most of the foreigners visiting Japan” hold. Demby—living in Cold War Italy, a defeated nation rebuilding itself from the intellectual and physical ruins of fascism, and traveling through Japan, itself a former Axis and imperial power grappling with defeat—was poised to articulate a complex global landscape in his reportage, one undoubtedly influenced by projections of Americanism abroad, in cultural and militaristic forms.

Operating as critical cosmopolitanism in practice, Demby's postwar writings weave together elements of narrative journalism, life writing, and documentary

⁶⁰ In 1961, *Beetlecreek* was published in Japanese by the Charles Tuttle Company in Tokyo, translated by Soichi Minakawa.

realism. Demby, like fellow black diasporic writers, including Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, and Maya Angelou, brought cosmopolitan viewpoints to his nonfiction writing, often by wedding observations of a world in flux to lived experience and traveling to and residing in diverse locales; like his contemporaries, Demby weaves elements of life writing into his reportage, situating himself within the text and rejecting the Enlightenment posture of the objective onlooker. This work gives voice to an embodied subject position that moves through the world with a heightened awareness of the social forces that collectively produce social identity, often with oppressive effects.

1 Demby's Critical Cosmopolitan Writings About Japan in Cold War Print Culture

Following his journalistic pieces on postcolonial Ethiopia, Demby continued publishing Italian-language articles in *Epoca* through the 1950s on topics ranging from the “Gypsies of Abruzzo” to an account of “John Steinbeck in Rome.”⁶¹ In *Epoca*'s June 1954 issue, Demby published his first piece from his Japan project, “The Priesthood of Illusion,” about the training, customs, and practices of the geishas, listed among the magazine's articles about “The World Today” and with photographs credited to Demby. In *Epoca*'s August 1954 issue, as the sole article listed under “The Theater,” Demby published “They Laugh and Cry Under the Mask,” about the Noh theater. In October 1954, under “The World Today,” *Epoca* published Demby's “The Signs of Mr. Mikimoto,” which details the routines and skill of Japanese women pearl divers, with photographs credited to Demby.

It was not until December 1954, nearly a year after his trip to Japan, that Demby placed his English-language article, “The Geisha Girls of Ponto-cho,” in *Harper's*. Signaling the magazine's mainstream readership, “The Geisha Girls of Ponto-cho” was published in an issue that included such eclectic pieces as “Do I Have to Give Up Smoking?” (25–30), and “What a Secretary of State Really Does,” penned by former Secretary of State to Truman, Dean Acheson (48). Demby's article profiles the geisha women of the Ponto-cho district of Kyoto. The article rests its attention on the communal life of the geishas and their ability, in Demby's estimation, to render powerful men silly and childlike in the course of their ritualistic performances. The article ends on a cautionary note: “I think to myself: Yes, you are a monster. But I know that she is also a goddess, in whose company it is inspiring to bask—for a short time. But

61 Steinbeck's Italian interests were represented by a literary agency in Rome run by Demby's wife, Lucia Drudi Demby, and her sister, Gabriela Drudi.

woe to the man who considers her an ordinary mortal woman and lingers too long at her side” (“Geisha Girls” 47). The piece ascribes power and control to the geishas, who are said to indulge the male gaze, only to thwart its will to mastery, exposing it as an illusion. Reminiscent of what James Clifford terms a “cosmopolitanism from below” (qtd. in Robbins and Horta 9)—that is, of Japanese women, many from rural areas, being trained to entertain successful Japanese and international clients—the piece ascribes power to these women by virtue of their ability to read a room and respond accordingly.

In spite of his having published several articles from the book project, in January of 1955, Demby received word from his agent, Martha Winston, that Rinehart was passing on his collection. They offered this feedback: “We admit that there is interest on the Orient, but feel that this book is so personal and so much a group of little vignettes, that we think it would be hard to find a market for it.” This rejection on the grounds of the text being too “personal” speaks to the avant-garde daring of Demby’s nonfiction: that is, his reportage’s blending of narrative and autobiographical techniques with his expository prose—features, again, that would become commonplace in the New Journalism. Winston, ever a champion of Demby’s work, sent his manuscript on to other publishers, which did not, however, bear any fruit.⁶² Here, the text lay in wait for several years, but, in the end, it never found a publisher.

A considerable excerpt, titled “From a Japanese Notebook,” was published some three years later in 1959 in the transnational literary journal *Botteghe Oscure*. The publication is notable, given the journal’s commitment to publishing a world literature in the aftermath of World War II. *Botteghe Oscure* was founded in Rome in 1948 by US expatriate Marguerite Caetani, a New Englander who, upon marrying Roffredo Caetani, an Italian duke, became Princess Caetani. *Botteghe Oscure* was Caetani’s second major literary journal—the first being *Commerce*, a literary review founded in Paris and published in French, which ran from 1924–32.⁶³ Published from Rome, *Botteghe Oscure* ran for twenty-five volumes, before closing its pages in 1960. Envisioning itself as a global publication, it “appeared in Italian, French, German, Spanish, English, and American,” and its niche distribution reached locales including “Tokyo,

⁶² Winston sent the book to Bill Raney at Dutton and, in June of 1956, a year and a half after Rinehart’s rejection, she wrote that she could not “clinch anything with Secker and Warburg [a British press]” unless Demby could give her “some idea of what the added chapters will cover.” The following month, on July 25, 1956, Winston wrote from New York, “Scribner found impressive quality in GEISHA. They thought the pieces perceptive and graceful but as a book, shapeless. They want to go on record as interested in your work.” She advised Demby to complete a revision with new material so that Scribner could have a second look, along with Secker and Warburg.

⁶³ Signaling the international direction that *Botteghe Oscure* would take, *Commerce* published sections of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily,” poems from T. S. Eliot, including “The Hollow Men,” as well as work by Virginia Woolf, André Breton, Emilio Cecchi, Cheng-Tscheng, André Gide, André Malreaux, Edith Sitwell, and Rainer Maria Rilke.

Amsterdam, Wiesbaden, London, Paris, Melbourne, Johannesburg, and Middletown, Connecticut"; a 1960 indexing of the journal calculated that its writers "numbered more than 650 of thirty-odd nationalities" (MacLeish ix). Against the Pax Americana's solidification of power, writers from some "thirty-odd nationalities" were given a voice with global circulation.

In 1960, writer Archibald MacLeish observes in an essay about *Botteghe Oscure* that, although the circulation of the periodical never surpassed "much over five thousand," its writers included such visionaries as: "Brecht and Camus and Auden and Char and Moravia and Silone and Agee and Robert Penn Warren and Dylan Thomas, ... most of them too young to be widely known" (ix). Of the journal's achievement, he observes that "at any period in the world's history, a magazine dedicated so visibly to the proposition that literature exists in a wider and more integral world than politics would have attracted attention" (ix). This cosmopolitan plea for a view made possible by literature of "a wider and more integral world," nevertheless, collides with the Cold War-period's geopolitics and modernist culture's peculiar cooptation by the United States nation-state (Saunders 1). To that end, MacLeish laments, "In a time as frantically nationalistic as ours, such a magazine becomes a prodigy and an anachronism" (ix-x), owing to "an era in which political pressures continued to be applied even in the United States to make patriotism and art coterminous if not identical" (x). The characterization of *Botteghe Oscure* as a "prodigy and an anachronism" is a testament to a cosmopolitan vision predicated on heterogeneity and compilation, rather than synthesis.

MacLeish lauds Marguerite Caetani's achievement: "In an ignorant, nationalistic, and fanatical time, paralyzed by public hatreds, she kept a small flow of international literature alive and gave hundreds of young writers, in the loneliness of their defeated work, the hope that they too might become a generation—perhaps the first of all the literary generations to inherit the wholeness of the world" (MacLeish xii). MacLeish's cosmopolitan assessment, again, penned at the apex of the Cold War, rebukes nationalism as partner to ignorance and fanaticism and privileges the global as the writer's true creative inheritance. Critiques of cosmopolitanism have aptly pointed out that open access to travel and border-crossing are available to a select few, while, in many cases, migration is forced upon those seeking refuge and asylum, thus pointing to an inherent elitism and asymmetry built into the notion of cosmopolitanism (Bhabha 144; Horta 153). MacLeish, though, makes a particular space here for cosmopolitan writers who seek expressive communion with the world; artists, in other words, are an exceptional cosmopolitan group who engage in figurative and literal wandering and ever-expanding experiences of being.

William Demby was a writer who aimed to embrace the world beyond the nation in his writings and it is fitting, in many ways, that it was in *Botteghe Oscure* that the most extended excerpt of his writings on Japan appeared. The English-language excerpt "From a Japanese Notebook" was published in a typically eclectic issue, including poems in Italian from Bernardo Bertolucci, for instance, and in English

from Robert Penn Warren. Demby's "From a Japanese Notebook" includes four sections from his book: "Nakiri," about the Japanese women pearl divers; "Shichi-Go-San," which details a children's parade and celebratory feast at the Meiji Shrine; "The Buddha From Chicago," about a US citizen studying Buddhism, with plans to serve as a missionary back home in Chicago but whose heart lies with a Japanese woman whose father will not countenance their interracial love; and "Bonsai," a profile of the cultural practice, which ends with Demby's failed attempt to tend a bonsai tree back home in Rome. "Nakiri" and "Bonsai," in particular, demonstrate the slippage between preconceived expectations and actual cross-cultural encounters, highlighting the problematics of both consuming and producing culture.

"Bonsai," the final section published in *Botteghe Oscure*, metaphorizes Demby's practice of critical cosmopolitanisms. He offers an overview of bonsai as an ancient art form from China but transformed over time in Japan. Demby claims these trees are to be found in every Japanese home, irrespective of class, and are representative of the "Japanese soul" ("From a Japanese Notebook" 264). In explaining the concept of *sabi*, he describes the care taken to cultivate the tree's branches: not "striving toward the sky with insatiable ambition," but instead they "should evidence a kind of philosophic humility" (264). He admires those Japanese gardeners who have mastered this "forbidding and all-consuming art, one that requires patience, genius, and, above all, compassion" (266). Demby's tone of veneration implicitly opposes a Western capitalistic ethos of efficiency against the virtues of a prolonged, meditative ritual that forms horizontal affiliations across class lines in Japan.

Demby casts himself as a consumer of culture and indicates the impossibility of an outsider fully comprehending the nuances of this cultural practice by the chapter's (and book's) end. Visiting a bonsai market in Tokyo, Demby and his friend take in the particular beauty of the trees for over an hour before selecting one to take home. Demby spots "a plum tree with twin trunks and sensuous knotted branches that seemed to reach out and embrace itself like the old man and his wife in the legend who meet again after death"; as soon as he spots it, he is "filled with a fever of possession" ("From a Japanese Notebook" 267). The tree is sixty years old and has been cared for by its sixty-five-year-old gardener since he was a child. Demby convinces his companion to buy it, as the price is out of his reach, but to let him host it in his hotel room during his final days in Tokyo (267). Demby, however, becomes increasingly attached to the tree and decides he cannot leave it behind; he takes it with him aboard several planes en route to Italy:

I made a nuisance of myself with the airplane hostess by insisting that the tree occupy the seat next to mine; I stared down suspicious custom officials in five countries; I accepted the admiring smiles of homesick Japanese nationals in Siam with fatherly condescension; and in the hellish tropical heat of Bankok [sic], when the tree seemed to wilt, I covered it with a dampened towel. (267)

In Italy, the tree at first seems to thrive in the mild Roman spring, but then larvae appear, “spreading a malignant web over the branches, selecting the most tender undefended buds to feed on” (267). Demby has a “premonition of the end and recognize[s his] guilt” (267), recalling the advice he had heard from friends in Tokyo: “Such a tree cannot endure away from the loving care of its creator” (268). The last sentence of the “Bonsai” is a lament: “What was once the embrace of ghostly lovers has become the clutching of skeletons, macabre in their grappling with death” (268).

“Bonsai” presents an encounter with and an homage to aesthetic beauty across cultural and national boundaries. Demby takes care, however, to delineate an unbreachable gap as he reflexively ponders his own impossible desire for “possession.” As Paulo Lemos Horta posits, “Cosmopolitanism in its most vigorous form should entail a willingness to be transformed by an experience of the foreign” (153). Demby’s personal desire is, at the same time, a public one. The fever of possession conjures a colonial, imperial impulse to take hold of and claim the other as one’s own—so often couched in the language of benevolence and paternalism. Demby’s months in Japan come to a close in the bitter chill of winter, and one cannot ignore the presence of Cold War geopolitics and nuclear anxiety. In this way, “Bonsai,” the last vignette in Demby’s book project, remains open to an allegorical interpretation of conquest and devastation wrought by warring powers—one in decline and another in ascent. The two skeletons entwined at the close of the piece, ghostly lovers who “meet again after death” (267), connote an image of nuclear holocaust, made real in the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Notably, the 1959 publication of this excerpt from *From a Japanese Notebook* in Cold War print culture coincides with Demby’s active attempts to innovate his novelistic practice, by gathering newspaper clippings and beginning a thought experiment that would culminate in his most well-known novel, *The Catacombs* (1965). His novel juxtaposes textual collages from the daily news of 1962–64, alongside filmic dialogues that are imbedded in a novel within the novel. Ewa Luczak notes in her treatment of *The Catacombs* that Demby is working from a global perspective that resonates with Léopold Senghor’s theorization of *négritude* at the Second World Congress of Negro Writers, held in Rome in 1959, calling for a new political, cultural, and ideological order (114–15; 118). Having worked consistently as a journalist and in the Italian cinema through the 1950s and into the 1960s, Demby’s second novel bears the imprint of transnational media forms. Critical cosmopolitanisms, in these manifestations, are a response to time and place as multiple and dynamic and to artistic forms as open to hybridization and transmediality.

2 Afro-Asian Solidarities: Retrospective Historiography in *King Comus* (2017)

Two years after Demby's transformative sojourn to Japan, the historic Afro-Asian Bandung Conference was held in Java in 1955. In 1956, Demby stopped off in Paris on his way back home to Rome from the United States, where he had traveled through the South on assignment for *Reporter* magazine, profiling the Montgomery bus boycott. In Paris, he visited with Richard Wright in the author's apartment. The two discussed the Bandung Conference and Wright's *The Color Curtain*, which he wrote in response to the experience and would publish that fall. In its opening section, Wright describes learning of the conference in a newspaper announcement that described a meeting to discuss "racialism and colonialism" involving twenty-nine nations. Wright's account, delivered in the mode of life writing, enumerates the explosion of ideas that this announcement precipitated: He calculates, for example, the populations of the countries involved—amounting to over "a billion colored people"—and ponders the fact that many of these nations were now led by men who had been political prisoners, or lived in exile. "In short," he declares, "the underdogs of the human race were meeting" to discuss forces "beyond left and right," that is, race and religion (12). The critical cosmopolitan energies that converged at the Bandung Conference marked a decisive move toward a global liberationist politics predicated upon the world's majority population of color organizing against sustained systems of oppression and adopting decolonizing strategies, both material and psychic.

Scholars Nahum Chandler, Bill Mullen, Gerald Horne, and Yuichiro Onishi, among others, have observed that for many African American writers and intellectuals—including, perhaps most prominently, W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson—Japan was long a site of inspiration and fascination in relation to the black freedom struggle, as it demonstrated that modernity and modernization were not particular to European societies. For Du Bois, writing in 1900, "Japan [was] 'the one bright spot' in all of Asia, as an ongoing challenge to the European and American promulgation of a 'color line' " (qtd. in Chandler 292). Gerald Horne's critical study *Facing the Rising Sun: African Americans, Japan, and the Rise of Afro-Asian Solidarity* (2018) opens with an anecdote in which Malcolm X, then Malcolm Little, tells an army psychiatrist that he is "frantic to join" the Japanese forces. Horne notes that "his dissembling had to be taken seriously," as "in preceding years Japan had made aggressive overtures to win over the much beleaguered" African American community; "in short, pro-Tokyo sentiment was perceived as widespread among United States Negroes" (1). Executive Order 9066, signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt just months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, resulted in the mass internment of more than 120,000 persons of Japanese descent living on the West Coast, two-thirds of them US-born citizens. In the midst of virulent anti-Japanese propaganda, a 1944 *Negro Digest* poll showed that when

asked, “‘Should negroes discriminate against Japanese?’ 66 percent in the North and 53 percent in the South answered ‘No’ ” (qtd. in Lye 1735).

This transnational confluence of the idea of ethno-racial solidarity between Japan, Japanese Americans, and African Americans resurfaces in Demby’s final novel *King Comus* (2017). Demby worked on the novel for some twenty years, yet it remained in manuscript form at the time of his death in 2013, though he finished the text in 2007. The novel weaves together multiple, interrelated plotlines that span the course of centuries and continents—from the turn of the nineteenth-century, at the height of colonialism and chattel slavery, to the turn of the neo-imperial, neoliberal twenty-first century. One of its narrative settings takes place during World War II and follows the experiences of two African American soldiers: a semi-autobiographical character named “D.” and Tillman, a descendent of the eponymous King Comus, an escaped slave and virtuoso musician. D. is a college-educated Northerner, while Tillman hails from Oklahoma, not far from their training camp.

As a companion piece of sorts to Horne’s anecdote of Malcolm X’s meeting with an army psychiatrist, early in *King Comus*, a white army psychiatrist attempts to recruit D. as his assistant on the basis of D.’s college coursework in psychology (23). In paternalistic language, the psychiatrist tells D.:

Those few of you who have achieved a university degree whatever its quality seem strangely uninterested in pursuing careers in the mental health sciences even though—both here and in Europe and eventually in both the Far East and the Near East—the mental health sciences will be the secret weapon so to speak in the what now appears inevitable restructuring of human society! (23)

The psychiatrist insists, “[Y]ou and I would be pioneers exploring the effects of this strangely racial war on your people who, in the opinion of many, and not only left-wing and right-wing radicals, would have every right to side with the enemy” (*King Comus* 23). In an attempt to elicit D.’s true sympathies, the psychiatrist cites leftist publications written by D. as a high school student, summarizing: “You insinuate that the war we are engaged in is less a war against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy than a race war aimed at the ultimate subjugation of the colored peoples of the world” (24). He presses D., “What do you really think about all this? All this ideological confusion? For example, it’s my understanding many of your people are secretly sympathetic to the Japanese Fascist cause”; in response, D. blurts out, “Only because the Japanese aren’t white,” to which the psychiatrist retorts, “Then I suppose you are one of those who consider this a war for white supremacy” (24). D. clarifies, “Not really. I personally believe this is a just war, that it’s being fought to save the world for democracy—I was referring to colored people all over the world who consider themselves unjustly oppressed, the colored masses who have been held down so long they consider the war a—” (25). The mention of the word “masses” elicits a triumphant response from the psychiatrist, who believes he has drawn out D.’s true allegiances (25). Much to the psychiatrist’s chagrin and dismay, D. refuses the post he is offered—again, to surveil

the effects of the war on African American troops—an offer that is predicated upon the Army’s having surveilled D.’s juvenilia—in spite of the fact that it would afford him safety and relative privilege. Against this opportunity, D. consciously chooses to serve alongside his new friend, Tillman.

Inasmuch as the scene is a domestic one attuned to the secondary status of African Americans in the United States armed forces, it is, at the same time, a global scene, calling attention to the scope of global warfare and the destinies of the world’s peoples being intertwined, as Wright surmises of the Afro-Asian Bandung Conference. With this direct commentary on the racist logics of United States state-sanctioned segregation and the implicit hypocrisy of the United States fighting oppression abroad, while enforcing subjugation at home, the novel narrates the experience of African Americans serving in World War II—a chapter that is largely missing from literary accounts of the period. Calling attention to wartime discourses regarding people of color around the world, Demby’s novel makes subtle ties to the global liberation movements to come in the postwar years, a sentiment that would find collective political purchase at the Bandung Conference.

3 Conclusion

Among Carl Van Vechten’s papers is a leaflet for the April 12, 1955 art opening of painter Umberto Maria Casotti’s *Dipinti Inspirati Al Jazz*, or *Paintings Inspired by Jazz*, at Rome’s Galleria delle Carrozze. The leaflet, which Demby shared with Van Vechten, features images of two cubistic paintings by Casotti of black jazz musicians, as well as a short essay by Demby. Demby’s essay is published side-by-side in the leaflet in Italian and English and is dated November 1953, Tokyo. In the short piece, Demby describes retreating into a Tokyo bar on a cold November night where, inside, a group of Japanese youth are listening with rapt attention to a Louis Armstrong record. As he walks home that night, he hears traditional samisen music blaring in the street. Demby posits, “Perhaps in jazz music and its cult around the world we have found a universal folk music which hints at the existence of a universal soul.” This concept leads to his assessment of Casotti’s jazz paintings:

A Negro did not paint these studies of jazz musicians: Casotti is no Negro. Yet had a Negro painted them one can easily imagine the lavish chauvinistic praise they would receive. But the artist deserves this praise anyway, for he has had the courage and sensitive understanding to burrow deep below the long-hardened crusts of national and racial culture to shed light on a strange world at once primitive, modern and disconcertingly prophetic.

This cosmopolitan analysis articulates a transnational human solidarity found in the arts and across media. Far from eliding difference, Demby’s analysis prompts the viewer, listener, and reader to “burrow deep below the long-hardened crusts of

national and racial culture.” The following year, Demby received a letter from his friend, writer and librarian Arna Bontemps, informing him that two Casotti paintings were hopefully to remain at Fisk University. Carl Van Vechten, Bontemps, and Demby all shared ties with Fisk—these transnational affiliations led to Italian visual culture, possibly Casotti’s works inspired by jazz, traveling to Nashville, Tennessee, on display at an historically black university, a compelling instance of cosmopolitan material culture.

Demby’s decades of sustained work across genres and national borders in the Cold War period warrants our critical consideration. His having lived abroad for decades, perhaps, has led to his peripheral status in the African American literary canon. On the other hand, this very situatedness prompts us to read his writings from a global perspective—one attentive to the specificity of time, place, and lived experience, but cognizant of Demby’s active efforts to find vocabularies to cut across traditional categorizations in search of horizontal, relational affiliations. It would seem that it was in this spirit that Demby wrote to his wife, Lucia Drudi, from Tokyo in November of 1953, “I suppose the real meaning of this trip for me was to complete an understanding of how people around the world are tied so closely together in their arts and views of life. I feel a strange sense of freedom, as if I am no longer bound by imagined laws and ways of thinking” (William Demby Papers). Demby’s critical cosmopolitan writings orient us toward transnational and transcultural solidarities, even as they often dwell in language’s gaps and misfires, demonstrating the differential, incomplete quality of experience in what Kwame Anthony Appiah aptly calls a world of “strangers” (xxi). In his discussion of Demby’s *The Catacombs*, Werner Sollors “wonders whether perceptions like Demby’s would have emerged in an American setting” (50). Likely, he implies, and I would affirm, they would not have, or at least not in the same fashion. With his writings’ attention to global affinities and creative and political networks, Demby chronicled and gave voice to critical cosmopolitanisms and evolving histories of struggle against racism, sexism, and imperialism that continue to resonate with urgency in our present.

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Hanna Wallinger

Lost in Transnation: Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*

"We were immigrants. Immigrants leave" (Selasi, *Ghana* 316). Fola Sai, the main female character in Taiye Selasi's recent novel *Ghana Must Go*, uses these words to justify the frequent relocations of her family. In an imagined conversation with Kweku, her recently deceased ex-husband, Fola explains Kweku's abandonment of the family some sixteen years earlier by pointing to their shared past as immigrants. The novel traces the Sai family's geographical relocations between Nigeria, Ghana, the United States, and back to Ghana. They live up to what Paul White calls the essence of migration as being "about dislocation and the potential alienation of the individual from both old norms and new contexts" (6). The old norms and new contexts of home, family, nation, original culture, and language have to be re-negotiated. Regardless of whether their movements are voluntary acts of immigration, involuntary acts of forced exile, or other kinds of abandonment, all of them affect this successful African immigrant family and their four US-born children: Olu, the eldest, the twins Taiwo and Kehinde, and their younger sister Sadie.

The plot revolves around movement, both between nations in terms of geography and between families in terms of losing, leaving, searching for, and finding homes. I agree with Ketu Katrak's argument in "Colonialism, Imperialism, and Imagined Homes," when she writes that the "journeyings as exiles and expatriates" of postcolonial peoples lead to the phenomenon of "having too many roots, too many locations" (649). In *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, Iain Chambers writes about the arrangements migrants have to make: "To come from elsewhere, from 'there' and 'here,' and hence to be simultaneously 'inside' and 'outside' the situation at hand, is to live at the intersections of histories and memories, experiencing both their preliminary dispersal and their subsequent translation into new, more extensive, arrangements along emerging routes" (6). *Ghana Must Go* is about these arrangements caused by migration. This thematic focus raises questions and challenges notions of biography and plot. First of all, the novel was written by a writer who positions herself as an Afropolitan, who includes a number of autobiographical elements in the plot, and who provides some guidelines about how to read the novel by mixing story and discourse. And second, as I will show, *Ghana Must Go* is an existentialist examination of a family's attempt to become and remain a family and to build up and live in a home of their own. Roots and routes merge in a search for home that, once it is found as a physical place or established as the center of a family, does not hold or provide a cheering sense of identity. This search for home concerns Fola, the displaced person who never overcomes the traumatic events of her past; Kweku, who receives education, acquires wealth, and builds up a family against all odds only to lose them again along with his dignity; Olu, the eldest son, who cannot establish emotional ties after the family is abandoned by

the father; Taiwo and Kehinde, the brilliant and gifted twins, who are traumatized by a lack of safety and abusive treatment; and Sadie, the youngest daughter, who grows up in a disrupted family and experiences the trip back to Africa as healing.

In 2013, *Ghana Must Go* was published as “one of the most eagerly anticipated debut novels of the year” (Cohen). Selasi sees herself as an Afropolitan, a member of a group of highly-educated and successful people with origins in Africa who are “not citizens, but Africans, of the world” (“Bye-Bye” 528) and who re-define home as the shifting place where “[t]heir parents are from; where they went to school; where they see old friends; where they live (or live this year)” (528). Selasi sees this generation of Africans as “lost in transnation” because they have to negotiate their identities along national, racial, and cultural tensions (530). In “Bye-Bye Barbar,” Selasi promotes an Afropolitan upper-class lifestyle that is shaped by her own background as a twin and as the daughter of a successful pediatrician mother who was born in Nigeria and left London to raise her twin daughters in Boston, where they attended good schools and achieved high grades. Her mother and US stepfather divorced when the twins were eight, and Taiye met her real Ghanaian father when she was twelve. At that time, her father, a surgeon, lived in Saudi Arabia, and was married to a Portuguese woman, who later remarried and lived in India. When she met her biological father at Heathrow, Selasi tells the interviewer of the *London Evening Standard*, she remembers scanning every African-looking man in the crowd for a possible likeness. She was disappointed when they finally met and did not feel any closeness. Selasi then talks about the visit to Accra for her father’s 70th birthday and about how she found a way to reconcile with him (“Family Matters”). When she joins a family reunion with her father, his ex-wife, and her five London-born nieces and nephews, and the ex-wife’s new husband in Delhi, India, Selasi remembers that they became a family despite the sense of “strange-ness” between them. “We had space in our hearts to love each other, space left vacant by previous departures, some inborn sense of how to build a family from ‘found’ love” (“Family Matters”). This meeting of an “extended-blended-broken-mended family” inspired her to write the first one hundred pages of the novel.

This interview and a similar one in which she talks about growing up with an over-achieving mother, whom she calls a “panther mom” (Cohen), provide the autobiographical context for the core thematic elements of the novel: the lives of the twins, the divorces, the fathers leaving their families, the successful children of immigrant African families, the family-reunion, the migrations between Africa, Europe, and the United States. As a highly educated woman, Selasi is aware of the potential of her family background to make a larger argument about migration. She positions herself as a glamorous Afropolitan on talk shows and in the highly artistic photographic representations on her website.

Yogita Gogol contextualizes the concept of Afropolitanism by naming the large group of recent writers emerging out of Africa (with a focus on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s novel *Americanah*). Gogol sees Selasi’s Afropolitanism “as a rootless, mobile identity, both linked to Africa and able to detach from stereotypical notions of the

continent as a possible locus of critique” (xv). Gogol utters the worry that Afropolitanism “proffers elite identity as a kind of cultural capital, style without substance, commodifying a newly exotic cosmopolitan identity as a claim of difference that cannot be sustained” (xv). Selasi, who currently lives in Rome, definitely styles herself as a glamorous and articulate spokesperson of a decidedly modern Africa. Her characters possess some of the same attributes: high achievement in education (all of the characters in *Ghana Must Go*), an artist’s international fame (Kehinde), and conspicuous professions (Olu, for example, is a surgeon). Selasi and her protagonists possess a high amount of cultural capital, but it comes at a high cost, as my reading of the novel will show, and Gogol is right in pointing out that this kind of cosmopolitan identity sometimes leads to “style without substance.”

In terms that we are familiar with from structuralist linguistics, there is story and discourse. As Madan Sarup reminds us: “The story is the content, or the chain of events. The story is the ‘what’ in a narrative, the discourse is the ‘how.’ The discourse is rather like a plot, how the reader becomes aware of what happened, the order of the appearance of the events” (17). Selasi’s discourse about migration comes in text passages in the novel where the narrative voice moves from mirroring the perspective of one of the family members into that of a more general voice writing and theorizing about migration. Selasi not only tells a story but also uses terms and concepts from the wide field of immigration/migration studies.⁶⁴ The twins Taiwo and Kehinde share a cab on their drive from the airport to their mother’s house in Accra where they gather to attend their father’s funeral. When the cab driver shouts at some beggars holding up the car for money, Kehinde is embarrassed and gives them money, more than they even take. The cab driver calls the beggars thieves and concludes that Taiwo and Kehinde are tourists. When Kehinde defends himself, indignantly saying that they are not tourists, the driver only laughs at them. In most immigrant fiction where the migrant or his/her children return back to where the family originally came from, there is a similar scene of ridicule, of not belonging, of disappointment. The driver turns away when Kehinde and Taiwo cannot even tell him where their father’s home was in Ghana. Of course, this scene is necessary to show character development and foreshadow later tensions. The rhetoric of using the concept of tourists, emigrants, and exiles points to a meta-level of analysis that highlights the hybridity inherent in the genre of immigrant fiction. *Ghana Must Go* is both a very personal and partly auto-

⁶⁴ See Heike Paul on the differences and similarities between the concepts of strangers, pilgrims, tourists, nomads, and migrants (*Mapping Migration*, 1–33); Ruth Mayer on the concepts of postcolonialism, transculturation, and transnationalism; Rosi Braidotti for nomadic theory; Madan Sarup for concepts of identity, postmodernism, home, journey, and border; Elleke Boehmer for migrant metaphors; and the volume edited by Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt for postcolonial theory, race, and ethnicity. See also Cowart’s *Trailing Clouds* for a discussion of immigrant fiction in contemporary America.

biographical novel about a family's migration, and it is also a partly didactic lesson about what this migration means in historical and contemporary contexts.

Selasi names Toni Morrison and Salman Rushdie as her literary models. A reader who is familiar with these writers will easily trace ideas and phrases that they share. Katrak characterizes Rushdie's novels as "transnational" because they "carry modernist and postmodernist echoes, playing with levels of fantasy and reality, fragmenting history, dis-placing so-called significant events in history by presenting various contesting versions" (660). All of this applies to *Ghana Must Go* as well. Rushdie, Katrak writes, explores the "threads of identities—what happens to human beings when they are transported, transplanted, by choice or otherwise, into alien environments" (660). While this is an adequate description of the main thematic focus of Selasi's novel, it is also the link to Toni Morrison, a writer who is equally interested in fragments, echoes, transplantations, and threads of identities. When Fola, for example, thinks about the death of her father, she muses in a fashion reminiscent of Rushdie: "If one could die identityless, estranged from all context, then one could live estranged from all context as well" (107). Kweku, to cite an intertextual reference to Morrison's *Beloved*, thinks about the many things gone wrong in his life and, when he realizes he is having a heart attack, slides into "reverie, remembrance and re-other things (regret, remorse, resentment, reassessment)" (21).

In the climactic scene on the beach when Taiwo finally reconciles with her father, there is a description of a dilapidated house, a former "colonial" structure (272) that reminds Taiwo of the family's Brookline house "conceived by the same pink-faced British who would have erected this thing on this beach, hulking, rock, a declaration" (273). She imagines her father as a boy looking at this house on the beach and wanting one himself but never quite succeeding: "He conquered new land and he founded a house, but his shame was too great and his conquest was sold" (273). Taiwo understands now that her father felt shame when he left the family after he had been dismissed from the hospital where he worked as a surgeon. Again, this scene makes sense in terms of plot development, but the language is reminiscent of discussions of postcolonialism and leads to a break between what can legitimately be seen as the perspective of the character and the more knowledgeable voice behind it. The following discussion with a focus on the concept of home will show that this intermingling of fictive narrative with a meta-level of analysis is a defining characteristic of the novel.

A nearly obsessive quest for home dominates *Ghana Must Go*. Rosemary George defines this yearning for an authentic home as one of the characteristics of literature about migration (175). In "Colonialism, Imperialism, and Imagined Homes," Katrak generalizes about postcolonial narratives, where the concept of home "assumes a deromanticized and demystified harshness; these are societies deeply under stress where economic crises make daily survival a painful reality" (651). Thematically, the novel presents a portrait of a family devastated by separations and forced to search for their real home. At one point, Kweku sees himself and Fola as "[o]rphans, escap-

ees, at large in world history, both hailing from countries last great in the eighteenth century—but prideful (braver, hopeful) and brimful and broke—so very desperately seeking home and adventure, finding both” (91). In addition, this novel is about death and rebirth in the sense that Kweku’s dying becomes the central point that leads the narration into the past of each member of the Sai family and into the present level of narration with the family reunion in Accra, Ghana. Each family member becomes isolated in a hostile and indifferent world, forced to choose his or her destiny. Home is the opposite of the sense of homelessness that is both the state of being without a place to stay and without a country to belong to. In postmodern fashion, the novel is not linear or chronological. It is divided into three sections called “Gone,” “Going,” and “Go.” The perspective shifts between the six members of the Sai family. There are many clues and hints about why characters in the novel act and react in a certain way, and the reader has to unfold the possible meanings layer by layer.

Fola is the prototypical exiled and displaced person. She suffers the traumatic murder of her father in the Nigerian war in 1966 and is sent to Accra, Ghana, by her father’s partner at the law firm. There she finishes Ghana International School—“seldom speaking, barely eating” (201). For years she clings to the few trinkets she could bring, and Nigeria becomes in her mind “nowhere she knew of, not home, not a place she could see, so not real” (201). “Different types of silence-imposing forces, self- and state-imposed,” similar to the ones Katrak sees in the work of Rushdie (661), are at work here. The habit of seldom speaking leads to a silence and speechlessness that define her life. At one point in the novel, she lies next to her husband, “alive in the present and dead to the past” (197). She never tells him where she came from, he never talks about his own parents, and together they try to “uphold their shared right to stay silent” (197). It is precisely this act of not sharing, not talking, not telling about one’s shame or loss or fear that is the cost of forced migration and a typical feature in immigrant novels. Fola, who is a mixture of her Yoruba father and white Scottish grandmother, is the refugee, one lucky enough to escape persecution but also one who is traumatized by the bloodshed and unrest in her country of origin. Nigeria is the nightmare of her past and at the same time the place where she spent a happy childhood. She can never be that carefree child again, and her growing up in another country and family makes it hard for her to understand what home really is. It is not the act of leaving itself but the loss of a sense of home and belonging, the many questions left unanswered and unexplained, that lead to devastating and long-lasting effects. Rosemary George writes about the migrant’s “recognition of the inauthenticity or the created aura of all homes” (175). Fola’s authentic home is not simply a geographical place; it is the place of the past that she cannot revisit; it is the father and the feeling of being protected that she has lost; it is her having to grow up in a hostile surrounding that counts.

Fola then leaves Accra, Ghana, but her second leaving is different. She goes for educational purposes; she does not have to leave home again because she has already been made homeless, *heimatlos* to use the German word. She becomes an immigrant

to the United States. Fola attends Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, where Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first prime minister and president, also received his education. She stays in the United States for the next thirty years or so before she inherits a house in Accra and returns to live there. As Selasi points out in an interview, there is a lot of movement in the novel, but mostly, it is an initial movement for education followed by a prolonged period of staying in that country (Furlonge 535).

Kweku was born in a hut in Kokrobité, Ghana, and grows up without a father, who left his family. His beloved younger sister Ekuia dies at the age of 11 of treatable tuberculosis at a time when the loss of an African child was considered to be "irrelevant" (27). Kweku refuses to think about this later: "He had no *need* for remembering, as if the details were remarkable, as if anyone would forget it all happened if he did. It would happen to someone else, a million and one someone else: the same senseless loss, the same tearless hurts. This was one perk of growing up poor in the tropics" (28). In this passage, Kweku illustrates Judith Butler's question in *Precarious Life* about who counts as human and what "makes for a grievable life" (20). Kweku is presented as typical rather than exceptional, a participant in a larger and global experience in which no one cares that poor children die in great numbers. Much later, his son Kehinde explains to his youngest sister their parents' feelings of loss and estrangement and their never taking them to visit Africa: "They were hurt. ... Their countries hurt them" (240). Kweku is saved, so to speak, because he receives a scholarship to Lincoln University due to his great intelligence. There is only one visit home when his mother is dying. Despite his feeling of being estranged from his country of origin, he returns to Accra, perhaps as a kind of self-punishment, when Fola refuses to take him back in after his abandonment.

The moment when Kweku dies is described at great length and in detail. Kweku's dominant thought before his death is his realization that his life might be "all wrapped in meaninglessness" (20) and "that he's gotten it *wrong*" (20). He is the gifted student who was given a chance to get his education in the United States; he marries, fathers four children, and becomes a successful surgeon. The family lives in a poor house first and then in their colonial house in Boston, where he works at Beth Israel Hospital. His wife, Fola, sacrifices her career for his success and gives up her dreams of law school because "[o]ne dream's enough for the both of us" (73). They are the model immigrant family: Kweku provides the family income, Fola becomes the admired homemaker, and their children receive outstanding grades at school. When everything goes wrong, Kweku has little to fall back on. He is charged with ill treatment of a member of one of Boston's prominent families and is discharged following a medical lawsuit. "Then the machine turned against him, charged, swallowed him whole, mashed him up, and spat him out of some spout in the back" (69). He is even dragged out of the hospital with his son Kehinde watching the disgraceful incident. He has not told Fola about this problem although there is nearly a year between the operation and his dismissal. After this incident, he leaves the family suddenly and without warning. The year is 1993; Olu is about 18, Taiwo and Kehinde 14, and Sadie about 4 years old.

Kweku becomes the tragic victim of a system that looks for a scapegoat when something goes wrong. He had protested against the operation on the seventy-seven-year-old chain smoker with a ruptured appendix and a blood infection, but the hospital had promised to have the operation done by its best surgeon. When Kweku hears the hypocritical “I am afraid we have to let you go” (72) in the plush uppermost hospital room, his world falls apart. At this decisive moment in his life he thinks of the family, that he failed them, and that he has nowhere to go (76). He is exhausted due to his relentless striving for excellence and the burdens of being responsible for a family. In the terms of Greek tragedy, his downfall is caused by a character weakness, a combination of false pride and cowardice. It is Arthur Miller’s tragedy of the common man: “The flaw, or crack in the character, is really nothing—and need be nothing, but his inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what he conceives to be a challenge to his dignity, his image of his rightful status. Only the passive, only those who accept their lot without active retaliation, are ‘flawless’” (Miller). In a novel that is so full of allusions to literature, this particular idea of tragedy makes a lot of sense. We need to pity, the message goes, a man who has tried so hard and fails in such a tragic way. Kweku maintains his dignity by fighting against the wrongful dismissal. He does not give in but he is given up on, loses any chance of appeal, and drives away without letting anyone know about his reasons.

One can understand why Kweku becomes a victim of the system, but it is infinitely more difficult to account for his leaving a wife and four young children. There is a postcolonial message in the novel that explains the migrants’ loss of home (nation and culture) because of the political effects of the African states after colonial rule. There are repeated references to their joyless colonial house in Brookline and detailed descriptions of his house built in Accra, a compound around a courtyard in a classically Ghanaian structure rather than a modern colonial mansion (23–24). Kweku is described as attempting and failing to cross the “bridge” “between worlds” (52). Shortly before he dies, Kweku remembers seeing the young Taiwo as “a modern thing entirely and a product of *there*, North America, snow, cow products, thoughts of the future,” while he associates his mother with “an ancient thing, a product of *here*, hut, heat, raffia, West Africa, the perpetual past” (52). In particular, these passages where the discursive voice dominates over the narrative voice are not entirely convincing because the Sai family’s disintegration after Kweku’s leaving is not only a result of the immigrant status of the parents but a result of the shame that Taiwo recognizes later when she says shortly after his death: “That one never feels home who feels shame, never will” (273). The outward look of a house, the details of interior decoration, and the descriptions of rooms can only hint at but not fully explain the feelings of loss and shame.

A different explanation comes from Olu’s future father-in-law, a Chinese American mathematician at MIT, who voices the common notion of Africans being a model minority because they are especially ambitious for themselves and their children to do well in higher education. At the same time, Dr. Wei expresses an old prejudice

about people of African origin: “No respect for the family. The fathers don’t honor their children or wives” (120). This hurts most because it is not only the utterance of a stereotypical notion of the African man, but because it is partly true. Kweku did leave his family; there is no excuse or denying the devastating results. But he left because he respected his family and because he did not want them to witness his failure. Olu understands this and answers back: “I’m just like my father. I’m *proud* to be like him” (120).

After failing to establish contact with his family some weeks after his abrupt leaving, Kweku and Fola divorce, Kweku returns to Accra, works as a surgeon, remarries, and builds a house. This return can be interpreted more as a self-punishment than as the homecoming of the successful emigrant. The awareness that he is about to die of a heart attack at the age of 58 leads him to remember and regret the past. His death calls the family together in a ceremony of hope and forgiveness. Both Kweku’s failure in the United States and his subsequent return to Africa should be placed, as Gogol suggests about a different set of novels, into the “larger tradition of postcolonial writing” (xii). One characteristic is the reversal of “the heart of darkness narrative, where rather than Europeans or North Americans going to Africa to find themselves, an African character travels to the heart of the West, only to find darkness there” (xii). Similar to Adichie’s novel *Americanah*, which Gogol uses as her main reference, *Ghana Must Go* also “challenges the conventions of the typical immigrant novel, where no alternative to life in America is entertained” (xii). Although the terrible traumas that Fola and Kweku of the first generation and Taiwo and Kehinde of the second generation carry with them originate in Africa, the novel still—similar to Adichie’s *Americanah*—challenges “the association of Africa as trauma” (xiv) because its most climactic scene of healing and reunion is set in Accra.

When Olu hears about the death of his father in Ghana, he starts to cry and thinks about the distance between him and his father: “[H]e’ll be miles and oceans and time zones away (and other kinds of distances that are harder to cover, like heartbreak and anger and calcified grief and those questions left too long unasked or unanswered and generations of father-son silences and shame)” (6). The weight of this sentence is carried between parentheses: The distance between father and son is geographical, no doubt, but the greater distance is that of grief and anger about the lack of communication between this particular father and his children that transcends borders and boundaries. As I said earlier, geography is the starting point, emigration and immigration are part of the problem, but the real distance is personal.

Olu is the brain of the younger generation; following in his father’s footsteps, he becomes a successful doctor. He is the only one of the siblings who visits his father in Accra. On the day of his Yale graduation, he flies to Africa to find him. All along he had toured his friends’ homes “aching with longing, for *lineage*, for a sense of having descended from faces in frames” (251). In the United States, looking for his father, he had always tried to spot him in a crowd: “He could always pick out Kweku in an instant by the color” (247) because no other father he knew had the same skin color.

When Olu arrives in Accra, he is more than puzzled: “they were *all* the same color, more or less, all the fathers, his own blended in, indiscrete, of a piece” (247). When he meets his father, he is—somewhat naively—disappointed about his poor housing and the look of defeat on Kweku’s face. Olu notices an air of homelessness around Kweku and pities him for being “cut off from the family” (253) and for his living in “a prison of his own making, in exile” (253). He is shocked that his father is “defeated, and willing to accept the defeat, not resisting, not objecting, as if somewhere inside him lived someone who felt quite at home in this place” (253). When Kweku tells him that this is what he comes from (253), Olu cannot understand that he is talking about his poor beginnings. Olu can only interpret and understand his father’s defeat as a result of his leaving the family and the family’s home in the United States. For him Accra is “exile,” the place where the father is forced to return and where he is to start again from scratch. Olu is only able to move on after he has seen the hut where Kweku was born and realizes that his own fate is different. He comes to understand that this was the best his father could do and that he himself could do better. He tells his wife Ling about the visit: “He was that man. He was that stereotype. The African dad who walks out on his kids. The way that I’d always hoped no one would see us” (305). Only by talking to his wife does Olu finally understand the extent of Kweku’s striving and failure: “The man came from nothing; he struggled, I *know*. I *want* to be proud of him. Of all he accomplished. I know he accomplished so much. But I can’t. I hate him for living in that dirty apartment. I hate him for being that African man. I hate him for hurting my mother, for leaving, for dying, I hate him for dying alone” (306). Olu, who has no children with Ling and lives in a rather sterile apartment, needs the family reunion after his father’s death so that he can move on and build a home of his own.

The twins Taiwo and Kehinde fare worst after Kweku’s leaving. Jane Bryce names the use of twins a defining characteristic of and predominant trope in the narratives of the recent generation of female writers who come out of Africa (Akachi Ezeigbo, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sefi Atta, Unoma Azuah, Helen Oyeyemi, Diana Evans). The motif of the twins, doppelgangers, *abiku* (the child who appears and disappears) and *ibeji* (the Yoruba twin statues whereby a dead twin is placated), Bryce argues, is “complicated further by the motifs of migration, displacement, and metissage” (63). The intertextual references in Selasi’s novel are multiple, and one of them is her naming one of the twins Kehinde, which is the name of the main female protagonist in Buchi Emecheta’s novel *Kehinde*. Fola sends Taiwo and Kehinde to live with her half-brother in Lagos because she is afraid that she cannot take care of them and provide them with the education they deserve. This is the most difficult part of the novel to understand. Fola must have known how much her half-brother hated her. It is hard to understand why she sends the adolescents, who had just been confronted with the absence of their beloved father, to live a full continent away without her protection. The twins live through traumatic experiences that they do not fully understand and that will fundamentally destroy their innocence and self-esteem. Uncle Femi, Fola’s half-brother, has always hated Fola because she was the light-colored

princess daughter of his father's first half-white wife, while he was only the black son. After staying there for some time, the twins are sexually abused and forced to commit sexual acts upon each other. They are made to pay for the sins of their fathers and mothers, and they learn that their identities are not personal and individual but collective. They are eventually saved and sent home by Fola's friend who recognizes them: "Just saw them there huddled up, children among adults, and knew who they were and that something was wrong; they were both wearing makeup and spoke as if drugged" (237). They return "too skinny, not speaking" (238) and when Fola questions them about their experience, they refuse to speak about it.

Uncle Femi associates Taiwo with the "pale, hateful beauty" of his father's first wife. Taiwo recognizes that the face of her grandmother in the picture on the wall of Uncle Femi's living room is her own. She now knows that her beauty, her skin color, and her body are the inheritance of that grandmother, but she cannot be happy about this because this likeness has led to her abuse. After this traumatic event, Taiwo blames Fola for sending her away and her father for leaving her alone. She later begins an affair with the dean of her university where she is a successful law student, and when this is made public, she has to leave in disgrace and needs psychotherapy for years. Her life is insomnia, emptiness, sorrow, and grief.

Kehinde has always been able to speak with Taiwo without using words. He can hear her voice in his head and knows what she is trying to say even without her actually saying it. After their stay in Lagos, Kehinde cannot stop thinking that their abuse was his fault because he was not strong enough to protect her (208). He becomes a famous artist but stops speaking to Taiwo after she has told him about the affair with the dean. He embraces her too tightly (177–178) and Taiwo, remembering what happened in Lagos, feels left alone and unprotected and cannot speak to him for the next few years, even when she learns that he attempted suicide. Kehinde paints Taiwo's face with an obsession that is reminiscent of their earlier closeness, but he cannot build up a relationship of his own with another woman.

The youngest daughter Sadie learns about her father's death at her twentieth-birthday party. When he left the family, she was too young to remember him properly and, therefore, grew up very close to her mother. In *Trailing Clouds*, David Cowart mentions eating disorders and the missing parent as generic constituents of immigrant fiction (7–8). Sadie suffers from bulimia because she has always felt left out in her family. Taiwo hardly ever talks to her, Kehinde is in London, and Olu is too old for her to establish a relationship. She thinks of her family as "weightless," "a family without gravity," "completely unbound," with no roots and "no living grandparents, no history" (146–147). She is also interested in her female roommate and does not quite know how to cope with her intense liking for another girl. Sadie is an extremely gifted person with a photographic memory, but she does not yet know who she is. For Sadie the trip to Accra for her father's burial is essential. She is recognized by Kweku's half-sister as a re-incarnation of her Aunt Ekuia, the one who died as a child. Sadie hears the African drums and starts to dance "as if she'd been born doing tra-

ditional Ga dance” (268). Something in her falls into place, “the stranger inside her that knows what to do” (269). She realizes that she felt left out and lonely because she missed this family background. Now that she knows where she comes from, she is confident about her future.

When the four siblings arrive in Accra, Fola welcomes them to their new home. They take care of funeral arrangements and seek reconciliation with their estranged siblings and forgiveness for their parents. Taiwo finally tells her mother what happened back then, Olu makes his peace with his father and thinks about a family of his own, Kehinde reconciles with Taiwo, and Sadie finds her place in the world. It is significant that they meet in the father’s country of origin and that only this journey back makes it possible for them to move forward. When Fola imagines the conversation with Kweku in which she said they were immigrants and that immigrants left, she realizes that while they had learned how to cope with the leaving, the next generation will have to learn to stay (317). At dinner on Christmas Eve, they are reunited in peace.

“Novels of postcolonial expatriates and exiles,” Katrak writes, “represent the conflictual realities of geography, location, and language, the myth and reality of a return ‘home,’ the search for intellectual spaces with their ‘chosen’ exile and/or expatriate ‘homes’ ” (654). In migration, Paul White adds, “the levels of ambivalence, of plurality, of shifting identities and interpretations are perhaps greater than in many other aspects of life” (15). In *Ghana Must Go*, these levels are heightened to an alarming degree because the protagonists undergo and suffer from migration and adolescence at the same time: Fola and Kweku leave their home countries at an early age, and their children are made to suffer from the abandonment of the father and subsequent relocations because the father does not withstand the pressure of success in the new surroundings and because the mother cannot explain to them their origin. Growing up and migrating are interlinked experiences in which Selasi herself, the self-conscious author, is engaged: She offers a discourse and tells a story at the same time. In an interview, Selasi describes her voice as “wondering” and “wandering”: “It’s wondering what is true and it’s wandering through sound and form as one might wade through a river to get there, to find that truth” (Furlonge 533). She writes about the break-up and reunion of a family and explains the individual family members’ trials and triumphs to the reader with the ulterior motive of making one family’s story stand in for many others, or, to use the perspective of Kweku: “To have somehow unhooked his little story from the larger ones, the stories of Country and of Poverty and of War that had swallowed up the stories of the people around him and spat them up faceless, nameless Villages, cogs” (*Ghana* 91).

Selasi sees herself as “lost in transnation” (“Bye-Bye” 530) and balances her own background with a discourse and a narrative on nation, migration, and home. In her recent James Walston Memorial Lecture in Rome on April 22, 2016, a stunning and eloquent Selasi wonders why people introduce her as a writer “from Ghana and Nigeria” or from “England and the United States” For her the singular country is a fiction because, she says, “I am a local, I am multilocal.” Instead of asking her, “Where are

you from?" people should ask instead, "Where are you a local?" In terms of rituals, relationships, and restrictions, the three "R's" that she finds essential, you are local, she explains, where you perform your rituals and maintain your relationships. The restrictions you are subjected to make it possible for you to live at a certain place or in a certain country and often prevent you from living in the locality where you had your rituals as a child. As a successful writer and mature person, she now prefers being introduced as "a human being like everybody here," not as "a citizen of the world, but a citizen of worlds," and as a "local of New York, Rome, and Accra" ("Migration").

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Kudzayi Ngara

Truncated Cosmopolitanisms: Post-apartheid Literary Identities in Ivan Vladislavić's *The Exploded View*

1 Introduction

South African writer Ivan Vladislavić's *The Exploded View* tells the stories of four seemingly unconnected individuals who inhabit the shared imaginative space of Johannesburg.⁶⁵ It is through their maneuvers of belonging and self-affirmation that Vladislavić further instantiates the ideas of writing the postcolonial metropolis, and in doing so, shows again what I contend his *oeuvre* to be almost entirely constitutive of—the paradox of the urban condition in a specific South African city. While one can potentially deconstruct any text, *The Exploded View* lends itself particularly to deconstructive readings, as evidenced (to begin with) in the structure of the text, which, from a cursory reading, appears to be comprised of four totally disparate narratives, but on closer examination is revealed to be a narration of closely connected spaces, rendered through multiple perspectives. These perspectives offer glimpses into the transient social and material spaces of the city in which characters are located and imagined events take place. In this way, Vladislavić draws clear links between the actions of individuals and the material realities that inform and affect their actions and decisions.

With respect to the last two strands of the quadruple-pronged narrative of *The Exploded View*, this chapter is focused on making similar connections in order to better contextualise the writer's consideration of the characters' (multiple) identities within specific and shifting historical milieu. The first part of this chapter is theoretically framed by what Shane Graham has described as Vladislavić's use of the "metaphor of the exploded view as a representational strategy." By, in effect, doubling this metaphor on itself, I will use it as a tool of analysis to examine the attempts of Simeon Majara (the central character in "Curiouser") at re-signification and re-presentation of the Rwandan holocaust, on one hand, and common curio pieces, on the other. Veronique Tadjo reminds us in *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda* of the difficulties of finding the appropriate idiom, as well as the role of language and memory in representing trauma on the personal scale and at the level of genocide.

⁶⁵ Unless stated otherwise, all parenthetical citations invoking Vladislavić refer to *The Exploded View*.

The second half of the chapter, focusing on “Memory and the ‘Architecture of Hysteria’ ” will, through a critical reading of “Crocodile Lodge,” discuss the nervous energy and backward glances that accompany Gordon Duffy’s forays into an emergent discursive terrain and urban space that paradoxically engenders hope and despair in equal measure.

This chapter is therefore entitled “Truncated Cosmopolitanisms” in reference to these shadow identities that appear on and fleet across the stage of a cityscape that is itself undergoing constant change in its physical infrastructure, as well as its socio-political dynamics. Taken together as a composite whole, the characters give the impression of being the embodiment of a post-apartheid identity that typifies the philosophical and social integration at the heart of the Rainbow Nation.⁶⁶ The narratives and lives of the characters are linked in subtle, implicit, and not too easily discernible ways, an aspect that is reflective of the often-unintended interactions, anonymous path-crossings, and accidental entanglements that characterize the post-colonial city.

2 Locating Majara as an “Aesthetic Bohemian”

Simeon Majara, the main character of “Curiouser,” is an established black multimedia artist who resides in suburban Johannesburg. He represents something of a departure from the more familiar Vladislavić characters, who are, generally-speaking, white males battling to assert agency in an alienating and disillusioning city. Majara or “S. Majara,” as he often somewhat egotistically refers to himself, instantiates a different kind of postcolonial city subjectivity and identity. Along with Boniface Khumalo in the short story “Propaganda by Monuments,” he is one of only two major black characters in the now extensive *oeuvre* of Vladislavić. Majara represents an enigmatic cosmopolitan outlook in ways that his predecessor, Khumalo, does not. The latter is conceived and portrayed in the manner of a man who is conscious of a particular material upbringing (mainly because of his race) and continues to engage with the post-apartheid city largely from that perspective. Khumalo is not racist, nor does he continue to fight a racial struggle, but rather, he utilizes the cultural capital and tools at his disposal, mainly as result of his race and upbringing, to fashion new sets of identities for himself in the emerging metropolis. His entrepreneurial activity is linked

⁶⁶ The term is first attributed to the retired Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town and prominent anti-apartheid activist, Desmond Tutu, and was also used by Nelson Mandela in his 1994 Inauguration Speech—“Glory and Hope.”

to and steeped in the broader struggles for social and political justice in South Africa, and he maintains a consciousness that is grounded in his township background.⁶⁷

3 Illusory Authenticity

For his part, Majara does not overtly represent himself as black, that is to say, he does not display any supposedly black traits or signs of blackness. He appears not to be culturally embedded, in ways not dissimilar to the ones that Graham critically describes as being typical of a depoliticized “aesthetic bohemian” (Graham 49; Nuttall 741). In the appellation “S. Majara”—mentally evoked with the requisite flourish—the name comes to define individual identity more than is the case with any of Vladislavić’s other fictional characters. Often, he introduces himself as “S. Majara,” as if he is signing off his latest artistic masterpiece, rather than engaging in a mundane conversation. It is an instance of the self-indulgent branding that has become increasingly visible with the global growth of celebrity culture, an extreme example of which is how the name of a person replaces any artistic or other merit that they may have. This also shows how the postcolonial city is linked to global networks and trends.

The main question to be considered, in this light, is whether indeed and to what extent Majara represents a new postcolonial, cosmopolitan subjectivity, more so when one reflects on the fact that most of his acquaintances, girlfriends included, are white. These new subjectivities and ways of being are shown not only in the way that Majara, in the guise of the avant-garde artist, is represented, but also in the strategies that he adopts in constructing and positioning his own identity. His celebrity and reputation are built more on his ability to shock, as opposed to the aesthetic value of his work. It is important to interrogate what Majara’s art suggests, broadly, about representation⁶⁸ and how this self-reflexively sheds light on him as a figure occupying a specific locus in the continuum of the emergent postcolonial city.

To celebrate his latest show⁶⁹—*Curiouser*—which has just come down at the Pollak Gallery, Majara holds what is known in the parlance of the day as “a closing” —

⁶⁷ This is not to suggest that Khumalo is inward-looking in a developmentally fatal way but that he acts locally, while attempting to think globally. His marketing of his township tavern as the V. I. Lenin Grill and Bar shows just such global “awareness.” For instance, Khumalo’s letter to the authorities in Russia is couched in Marxist terms that identify it with both the Soviet communist party and the struggling masses of South Africa.

⁶⁸ Leon de Kock has suggested that in *The Exploded View* Vladislavić “exposes the artifice of artmaking” (14–15).

⁶⁹ The staple of the show are animal figures or curios that are taken apart and then put together again in new ways, sometimes with parts of one animal incorporated into a biologically different one, or even parts of the same animal re-assembled in new configurations and patterns. It is literal deconstruction.

as opposed to an opening. *Curiouser*, his exhibition of everyday tourist curios that have been disassembled or otherwise disfigured, reinterpreted, and reconstructed as serious art, has received critical success and blatantly “exploited the art world’s avid pursuit of novelty” (Marais 30). The title of the display—an overt play on curios/curious/curio-user—shows how quickly and easily, with the aid of often very subtle adjustments, the signification of signs and artefacts can be changed. A case in point is that when he is making the mask-lanterns by drilling holes in the temples of each mask, through which to tie the string that holds them together, Simeon notices how the mere act of wielding the drill changes the peculiar meanings evoked by one of the masks: “As he pressed the bit against the forehead, he studied the expression. You could imagine that it was gritting its teeth—but that was just the effect of the drill. If you took the bit out of the picture, the grimace turned to a grin” (Vladislavić 102).

In the quote above, the expression on the masks can be read as a grimace or grin depending on whether the artist is holding the drill bit or not, and illustrating yet again the fluidity of signification. The physical expression on each respective mask remains the same; what changes is what each signifies changes depending on the context in which it is viewed. For the Bra Zama Eatery project, he had acquired six crates of masks from a Malawian vendor who imported curios, and hence had more than he needed. The artistic value of the masks is diminished by the fact of their mass production,⁷⁰ and Majara seeks to restore some of the elements of unique creativity (that define the difference between original art and reproduced crafts) by putting them together in new and unexpected and unpredictable ways.

The opportunity to be involved with the themed design of the interior decor of the eatery comes through a third party, a white woman who was an acquaintance of Simeon and occasionally framed his printed artwork. She had, however, decided to share the commission with him because she thought that “he knew more about authentic African style than she did—he was black, after all, never mind the private-school accent” (Vladislavić 105). This statement, patronising as it is, puts into question several key aspects of Simeon’s identity. The first is the definition or evaluation of Africanness, especially where its supposed qualities are defined as being somehow an inherent part of the make-up of the individual. There is a suggestion that blackness or being African is more a biological and less a socio-cultural fact since his friend assumes that because he is black or African, he is therefore naturally attuned to what is “authentically” African. Resorting to stereotype, she quickly dismisses any impact socialization (through attending private school) might have on his sensibilities. The terms African and black(ness) are not unproblematic because they are not universal signifiers that are equally applicable to all individuals who are racially defined as

70 An ironic process of commodifying art which, though intended to ensure economic survival for the artist, often has the opposite effect of cheapening the artefacts to the extent of wiping out any financial benefit.

such. I mentioned a little earlier the perceptions of Majara as being acontextual in his demeanor, at least in the sense that his artistic and cultural inspiration is not limited to any recognizable font that is part of his personal and national histories. The other consideration that flows from this construction of him as the disembodied subject is that of authenticity as defined by his unnamed friend. The latter starts from the assumption that the design of what is an “authentic African style” flows naturally from the fact of Majara being black.

4 Representing the Unspeakable

The second⁷¹ in a series of exhibitions on the theme of genocide, Majara's show on the Bosnian massacre at Ahmici creates interest because “people were intrigued that a black artist should be dealing with Bosnia” (Vladislavić 104). Again, the question is the extent to which a black artist can authentically represent a historical event that occurred somewhere in the Balkans, a place from which it is assumed the artist is culturally removed. Post-exhibition reviews of the display highlight how the origin of the artist had no effect on the impact of the artwork as “no one who saw it remained unmoved” as “[i]t made you painfully aware that you were corporal and mortal” (104). This is an illustration of the power of all forms of artistic expression to at times transcend the normative strictures of culture and history. The follow-up project, which Majara christens Genocide III, focuses on the scene of the Nyanza massacre, one of the many heinous incidents of mass slaughter that occurred during the time of the 1994 genocide. With respect to the two previous exhibitions, there is no mention that he actually travelled to the sites of the genocide, but for the Nyanza Shrouds—as it comes to be known among critics and admirers—Simeon Majara does travel to Nyanza as part of a motley tour group which includes journalists, a cultural researcher, a socio-religious activist involved in a church program to assist orphans, and even some actual tourists. As a theme, transnational travel is quite unusual in Vladislavić's writing as his characters generally tend to perambulate within the same urban locale. In this respect, Simeon Majara represents something of a departure from type. Among the traveling group is Henk from Groningen (Netherlands), a self-styled “cross-cultural adventurer” for whom genocide held a special appeal: “He had done the major concentration camps in his own backyard (Auschwitz, he said, was still the must see), the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, and a five-day drive along the Trail of Tears. This was his first African visit, but South Africa was next on the list” (Vladislavić 105). Henk's involvement in the group and his revelation

71 The first in the series was on the holocaust of World War II and used ashes and soot as its primary medium, thus evoking the gas chambers.

that genocide sites are effectively a personal obsession raises questions as to what constitutes the authentically ‘tourist’ experience and whether visits to such sites can be considered edifying when viewed from such a perspective.⁷²

The principles involved in Henk’s visits are similar to those used in the artist’s consideration of which subject (matter) to represent and how to do so in a manner that is original yet authentic, thus emphasising the question of representation. By styling himself as an adventurer who visits all the sites of the major genocides of modern history, Henk comes across as little more than a callous and sadistic voyeur who seeks to retrospectively witness scenes of extreme mass trauma. In contrast, Majara could not reveal to his fellow traveller his true vocation as an artist: “Simeon could not bring himself to say he was an artist. The idea made him queasy. It suggested an intolerable common purpose with his fellow traveller, whose bony knee was rubbing against his own. He said he was a journalist and patted his bag” (105). What makes him “queasy” is fear of being perceived as a practitioner of art for art’s sake, of being a purveyor of artistic shock that has little or no value beyond the defined universe of the specific artwork itself. This is not to suggest that his audience is not also involved or invested in this “universe,” but rather, he wishes his art to be perceived as being more profound than its mere shock value. Hence he resorts to what he imagines to be a more acceptable explanation of his presence in Nyanza—as a journalist.

Discussing the writing of *Travels in the Shadow of Imana* with Stephen Gray, Veronique Tadjó asserts that it was based on the premise that it was an attempt to write about the Rwandan genocide purely from the standpoint of a writer, as opposed to journalist or historian (Gray 146). There are always questions regarding the effects of stylistic mode on the authenticity and realism of representation, hence Majara’s “resorting” to the guise of a journalist while Tadjó and her colleagues are “instructed” to write as writers. In a way, both Majara’s fake journalism and Tadjó’s writing as a writer are different examples of attempts to represent “reality”—a state in which the act of representation is beyond aesthetic and symbolic reproach. However, the purity of the gaze implied above is not ultimately possible because reality will always, as suggested by Derrida, be mediated through language (DeFazio 57).

In a destroyed clinic in Nyanza, Majara discovers old plaster bandages that had remained untouched since before the time of the massacre, while taking still pictures and videos of the vacant rooms. The plaster on the bandages has dried into fine dust and becomes the motif for *Genocide III* (his Holocaust exhibition was themed on ash and soot, and the Bosnian one on bone). He furtively deposits the 20 rolls of bandage in his camera bag and returns to Johannesburg with his “contraband” to be used later. Part of the exhibition has twenty billowing shrouds, into each of which one of the bandages had been woven. They are hung behind a giant screen (showing video footage

72 There is a broader field of the study of the politics of traversal, which is epitomized, for instance, in John Urry’s *The Tourist Gaze* (1990).

shot in Nyanza) as the *pièce de résistance*. Imprinted onto the shrouds are images modelled on the artist's own body, such as "a crying mouth, a twisted arm, a hand raised to ward off a blow" (Vladislavić 112). This last aspect naturally draws protestations about his vanity, criticisms which he fends off by rationalizing that his actions were actually "a mark of humility" in that he took himself "as the template" and "immerse[d] himself in the image of the other like an armature in a sculpture" (115).

By putting his likeness into the images that are supposedly commemorating lives that were so brutally lost, Majara raises issues and contestations around the question of whether he is merely indulging his ego and sense of self, and whether indeed the exhibition is less a memorial to the genocide than a celebration of the artist, the individual. Seen this way, his art is about individuating and stylizing himself as S. Majara, rather than about the Nyanza massacre. Such a position, on his part, is contrary to the ethos of Ubuntu;⁷³ it is against the spirit of an African humanism that tends to foreground communal and social good ahead of individual attainment. Majara displays, in this instance, some characteristics that illustrate how he possesses more than just a private-school accent; rather, he has internalized more fundamentally Eurocentric or Western conceptions of the self. He is, effectively, a fore-runner to the now pervasive pseudo-celebrity and self-writing culture that has emerged with the growth of the internet and social media. In this respect, he has the appearance of the "coconut,"⁷⁴ a much-ridiculed figure of the post-apartheid era. The very thing that he discerns and abhors in Henk—the idea of an adventurer seeking out sites of genocide as a source of thrills—is what Majara becomes with his utilization of the exhibit as a means of self-affirmation or validation.

By seeming to self-promote at the expense of the victims, Majara also initiates another tangential consideration of the role of art and other representational strategies. Writing on the tenth anniversary commemoration of the genocide by Rwandan President Paul Kagame's government—held under the thematic banner of "Never Again," echoing a post-World War II mantra—Nicholas Mirzoeff is of the view that the remembrance of the genocide in Rwanda has in this way "resist[ed] representation and retreated into invisibility" (57). The first part of the excerpt above speaks to the difficulty of representation. It is my contention that, even taking into account the differences in scale between the commemoration by the Rwandan nation and Majara's gallery showpiece, which uses his own body as proxy,⁷⁵ the artist in similar ways

73 A basic tenet of Ubuntu is "umuntu umuntu ngabantu," which can be loosely translated as "a person is a person because of other people." This philosophy privileges the primacy of the group over individual considerations.

74 "Coconut" refers to someone who is said to be black on the outside and white on the inside. The image evokes some of the social and cultural contradictions that emerge in the postcolonial city.

75 In the pamphlets for the show, Majara does not intimate the source of the bandages that are sewn into the shrouds and also edits footage out of the video that shows the moment of their discovery, thus protecting and enhancing his own reputation as a creative genius.

erases the memory of the genocide. Mirzoeff's analysis is relevant here because when Kagame frames the 1994 killings in the same rhetoric as the Holocaust of World War II, the Rwandese events are not defined in their own terms, which accounts for the resistance to representation and its (the Rwanda genocide) sliding into indistinctness. It is for this reason that Simeon Majara's show becomes just that, a show about the artist and less about the ethnic cleansing.

The multiple textures of the exhibition allude to the multiple voices through which any story can be told and thus recalls the metaphor of the exploded view. Majara finds that neither the bandages, nor the still pictures, nor the shrouds can encapsulate and represent the specific meanings that he seeks to disseminate about the genocide. This notion of a multiplicity of perspectives—accidentally also present in the writing of Tadjó about the genocide—arises from the many voices that seek to tell, and make sense of, the story of ethnic cleansing in Rwanda, not least that of the artist and the writer. It is at the heart of the difficulty of and resistance to representation. Tadjó's journey through Rwanda begins even before she arrives in the country when, in Durban, she has a chance encounter with a Rwandan refugee who is now eking out a living by guarding parked cars. He is described as having "fled to the very edge of the sea" (Tadjó 5), and this meeting is marked by a quite instructive irony of circumstance. On the one hand, there is the survivor-victim of the genocide who seems to only have been stopped by the sea in his desperate flight from his homeland; had there been no sea, it is implied, he would still be running. Yet, on the other hand the author is headed in the opposite direction and hoping to make sense out of the events in Rwanda. The challenge for Tadjó as a writer is to verbalize this man's peculiar trauma in a manner that is both accurate and not demeaning of his dignity. But as she accedes, "The truth is revealed in people's eyes. Words have so little value. ... See what is inside" (5). The guide for Majara's party in Nyanza is also a survivor of that slaughter; he survived only by lying among the corpses and pretending to be dead. In fact, he had "become" death as the trauma of hiding himself amongst the dead and dying had meant that "[d]eath had rubbed off on him, it was there in his skin" (Vladislavić 110). As with Tadjó's car-guarding refugee who has witnessed horrors that have induced in his eyes an opaque and lifeless quality, the trauma of a living death is something not quite definable or tangible. It remains just beyond comprehension and depiction. The connection between the Rwandan genocide and living in the postcolonial city is implicit in the acts of one individual, Majara, who utilizes the repertoires of representing the genocide to also articulate his own sense of self and agency. He marks himself as different from all the other residents of Johannesburg, artistic or otherwise, through his art.

5 Postcolonial Identity: A Paradox

Beyond the art gallery, “Curiouser” as a narrative thread continues to instantiate questions on identity and how it shifts through and with discourse. This is a reiteration, in slightly different paradigms, of the unsettling doubts that assail most of Vladislavić’s (mainly white) characters in terms of whether or not they have any sense of belonging to and identify with the social, physical, and psychic space of the postcolonial city. In the course of the evening gathering to celebrate *Curiouser* (the art show), debate turns to the source of the masks among those assembled (all arty types and predominantly white with an insignificant sprinkling of black faces like Bheki). This innocuous enquiry soon ushers in a broader discussion on the meaning of being black and African. Simeon Majara narrates how he came upon the cheap masks through Roger, a Malawian curio vendor at Bruma in Johannesburg. But this raises accusations of Majara’s complicity in the disposal of stolen goods:⁷⁶

“You are dealing in stolen property, you shit.”

“I’m hardly dealing. Mind you, it’s quite a nice twist. If you consider how much African art has been swiped by the real dealers, the wheeler-dealers.”

“I’m sorry, you’ll have to explain. How is this different?”

“I’m an African for one thing.”

“You mean you’re black.”

“That’s not what I said.”

“This Roger,” James butted in, “the seller, the fence—he was African too.”⁷⁷ (Vladislavić 131)

This is the only time in the narrative that Majara overtly claims African identity. At all other times in the story, he is happy to individuate himself as S. Majara—the

⁷⁶ A related point is raised later in the evening by Amy, concerning the fact that Simeon makes more money with the reconstructed masks and curios than the original artists. He replies that, “the curio is in one system and the art work in another. If you move an object from one system into another, by the sweat of your brow, you change its purpose and therefore its value” (Vladislavić 146). Still, Amy gets the last word, asking him to imagine how “the people who made these masks must live” and compare that “with the way you live here” (146). For her “[i]t’s just a question of awareness, of being conscious and *staying* conscious of how things are, even if you can’t change them. Especially then” (147). Amy’s position, even if suspiciously liberal in outlook, shows a greater mindfulness of the social and historical complexities involved in the production of Simeon Majara’s art.

⁷⁷ After they have the food, Simeon reveals that he has been invited to show some of his work in Sweden, whereupon Leon, with whom there are suggestions in the text that he seems to be waging a low-intensity civil war of attrition, cynically suggests that the invitation had been extended “because you’re an African” and not, as Simeon had attempted to pre-emptively say: “She invited me because I’m black?” Majara’s response here is markedly different from his earlier self-definition as “African.” The main question is whether he is using the terms “African” and “black” interchangeably now, where before he had been so assertive in stating that he is African as opposed to being just black. This again illustrates the notion of identity as a fluid terrain and how, in the context of the postcolonial city, the sense of self constantly faces disruption and change.

artist—but in the excerpt above he identifies with the collective concept of an African identity. His reasons have less to do with any sudden realization that he is indeed African—before everything else he might claim to be—but, rather, they are a means of deflecting criticism that he has an exploitative relationship with the makers of the curios that he deconstructs into new art-works, and in that respect is no different from the figure of the colonial European. In the exchange quoted above there is an intriguing distinction that Majara makes between being black and being African, a distinction that also illustrates the difference in perspective that different characters have in their perceptions of identity. In the incident involving Henk in Nyanza, Rwanda, the construction of such an identity is much more implied (in the disavowal of the “intolerable common purpose” with Henk, who is the archetypal European “adventurer”) than it is directly asserted. On the other hand, in the context of South African racial discourse, being black often carries with it the connoted baggage of victimhood and entitlement. By displacing the signifier “black,” Majara can therefore pre-empt some of the potentially patronizing criticism that would be directed against him because of the perception that he behaves the way he does because of his blackness.

It is significant that Majara positions himself in the discourse by privileging the aspect of his Africanness over that of his race as a black man. There seems to be no debate amongst the participants in the conversation as to what differentiates the two as diverse expressions of identity, and it is implied that all understand the distinction. There are two possible explanations for the paradox that is Majara, who seemingly is simultaneously able to occupy space outside and within his own history. The first is that he is a purveyor of the new African cosmopolitanism that was espoused by South Africa’s second post-apartheid president, Thabo Mbeki, in his “I am an African” speech to parliament on May 8, 1996. In this speech, made when he was still the deputy president and acclaimed by some as one of the greatest speeches ever made by an African, Mbeki (1996) speaks of an African identity that is not purely atavistic and the subject of a demeaning anthropological discourse but, rather, an African humanity that is forged in the furnace of the diverse histories of all the peoples who have called, chosen to call, or been forced to call Africa home.

The second possibility is that Majara resorts to an African identity as a defensive strategy in the face of accusations that he is plundering African art in a manner not dissimilar to the colonial and latter-day European “wheeler-dealers.” By inference, if he is African, he cannot then be said to be engaging in such exploitative exchanges because, being African, he is incapable of the same. In asserting this Pan-African identity, which can also be termed an Afropolitan sensibility, Majara attempts to signal that, as a consequence, he can therefore not be deemed to be an exploiter of African art and artists. In this consideration, the African identity then becomes a convenient cloak that is worn and discarded as the situation requires. Even more importantly, this shows how some characters in the postcolonial city that is the subject of Vladislavić’s writing are able to assume particular identities as they appropriate space. Identity can therefore not be seen as fixed or complete because individuals can

assume particular identities, depending on the socio-economic space in which they find themselves or to which they aspire.

The short time that elapses between his moment of assertive certainty about Roger's identity and the rising doubts about whether in fact the vendor was Malawian clearly illustrates the fluidity in the perceptions and constructions of identity: "What did a Malawian look like? There had been a Malawian kid at school with him, a couple of classes below, the son of a diplomat—'from a diplomatic family,' his mother said. Was Freddy Chavula typical? He could hardly remember now what he looked like. The only other Malawian he could picture was Hastings Banda" (Vladislavić 133).⁷⁸ Here Majara seems to have retreated from the cosmopolitan Pan-Africanist posture because he is trying to differentiate between people on the basis of the flimsy category of nationality, as portrayed in the question: What did a Malawian look like? Expressed in his thoughts is the idea of identity being an abstract concept, as he battles to define anything that is tangibly Malawian about Roger or Freddy his schoolmate, or even the late former Malawian dictator—Hastings Banda.

In reading the "Curiouser" segment of *The Exploded View*, my intention has been to show how in the act of self-styling, or otherwise defining notions of the self in the postcolonial cityscape of Johannesburg, Simeon Majara lays bare some of the socio-historical pitfalls attendant on the exercise. These have to do with the premises on which such constructions of identity are dependent and also the fact that individuals in interaction with others have their identities construed and constructed by the people with whom they are in contact. Individuals shape each other's identities in reciprocal fashion.

In the course of stylizing himself through his art, other people are also able to construct their own notions of his identity through their responses to his art. I have used the difficulty of finding a universally resonant idiom that adequately reflects, for instance, the Rwandan genocide—by looking at Majara's art and glancing comparatively at the difficulties enunciated by Tadjo in her efforts to render in written words the trauma of the genocide—to show the difficulty of selecting, in general terms, a metaphor of representation. Through the parallel discussions of the almost imperceptible dichotomies between being African and being black, I illustrated how the terms are not mutually exclusive, as highlighted in the instance in which Majara is seemingly confused in referring to himself as black whereas before he had been forthright in declaring that he is African.

⁷⁸ Hastings Banda led Malawi to independence from British colonial rule on July 4, 1964, before declaring himself life-president in 1971.

6 Memory and the “Architecture of Hysteria”⁷⁹

In “Crocodile Lodge” Gordon Duffy is, in sharp contrast to the three other main characters of the narrative quartet that forms *The Exploded View*, a rather introverted, unassuming, and dour figure quietly going about the daily business of surviving the emerging post-apartheid city. It is almost as if he wishes to remain invisible, not by hiding in the crowd but by keeping away from the streets altogether. Middle-aged Gordon owns a small company that erects billboards, especially at the construction sites of new housing developments. Duffy’s experience of the city is largely through his car, as he traverses the veld around the city in executing his work. His experience of the city is contrarian to Benjamin’s notion of flâneurism as reflected in the modalities of postcolonial mobilities, movements, and car-driving in Johannesburg (Jones 389). This kind of mobility introduces sensations that are different from the street-level enunciations that are the hallmarks of the flâneur. His story is told to the accompaniment of the radio traffic news report that becomes something of a refrain or chorus that maps not only the congested nodes of the city’s major arteries, but also assists individuals like Duffy in negotiating their way around the city, in the physical and metaphorical senses as discussed more fully in Susan van Zyl’s “Skyhooks and Diagrams: The Signing of Ivan Vladislavić’s *The Exploded View*” (75–84).

“The exploded view” of the title of the novel literally manifests itself in this section of the text (Vladislavić 189) and figuratively as a strategy of viewing and gaining insight into various objects by breaking them down into their constituent parts—a strategy that he adapts from the magazine *Popular Mechanics* during his childhood: “He closed his eyes and began to detach the components of the house one by one as if easing apart a delicate puzzle, finding the sketchy Braille of the plans on the tips of his fingers, reading the bones concealed beneath the coloured skin. He separated board from board, stone from stone” (189). There are echoes of Budlender engaging in a similar process of disassembling the security gate at Villa Toscana, but Duffy’s method is much more sustained and exhaustive. At the heart of Duffy’s process is the fact that he is struck by the way things perfectly fit together in *Popular Mechanics*. As a consequence, the US comes to stand, in his imagination, for a perfect entity. In this yearned-for world, everything has a place into which it seamlessly slots and life is thus safely predictable. This is in contrast to the jagged existence that is postcolonial Johannesburg, an existence that Duffy ultimately finds to be more threatening than colorful.

⁷⁹ Originally used by Achille Mbembe (2004) and further enunciated as well as utilized in reference to Vladislavić’s writing by Shane Graham (2006).

7 Correcting the Imperfect Past

Having established that the strategy of disassembling things is a mechanism for coping with the pressures of the present by invoking a past of perfection and order, it is within this general rubric of depicting the postcolonial metropolis that the twin themes of remembering and the now are examined. Individual characters avail themselves differently of the processes and technologies of memory and remembering in order to articulate their particular understanding of the historical moment of the present, as well as to appropriate certain social and physical space in the emergent postcolonial city. In this connection, Duffy's enunciations of the latter evoke a poignancy that is not so pronounced in any of the other three principal characters in this text. This is because he makes no claim to any form of superior wisdom or talent in the manner displayed by the others, or even a character like Aubrey Tearle from Vladislavić's 2001 novel, *The Restless Supermarket*. In spite of his keen childhood interest in the field of mechanical engineering (as seen in his love for *Popular Mechanics*), he does not grow up to become an engineer but more of a semi-skilled handyman drifting from one job to the next, until (in his 30s) he decides to start his own businesses. For the most part, these ventures follow his own early, non-descript patterns in that they show a lack of focus and specialization in a particular skill—that is, until he starts erecting billboards. In his uncertainty with the now, he constantly looks back into his past in search of meanings. The postcolonial now is, for Duffy, a new discursive terrain, but the survival skills of the past, which he may not have even fully mastered, prove hopelessly inadequate for the present contingencies. The world of *Popular Mechanics*, with everything neatly assigned its place, can be read as a metaphor for the order of the apartheid city in which everyone knew their place, whereas post-apartheid Johannesburg is much more volatile and unpredictable than Duffy has the social and mental resources to successfully navigate.

Michael Titlestad and Mike Kissack, writing on the poetics of invention in *The Exploded View*, have rightly pointed to the “two structures of memory” that are discernible in the “Crocodile Lodge” narrative (17). These are, namely, “a recurrent boxing dream in which Duffy compensates for his childhood humiliation at the hands of Wilkie Pieterse by beating him senseless” and “the world of *Popular Mechanics*” (17). Titlestad and Kissack are generally correct in their conclusions as to how Duffy's memory is structured and operates. However, they make a potentially fatal misreading of the text of “Crocodile Lodge” in their assertion that Duffy is always beating his adversary in the recurrent dreams. This is because the plot alludes to the fact that in the dreams, it is Wilkie Pieterse who usually beats Duffy (as was the situation in “real” life when they met in a boxing match in their boyhood) and not the other way around. It is only in the last version of the dream that the latter emerges victorious. I would suggest that Titlestad and Kissack's following of the plot in this instance is flawed to the extent that they suggest that Duffy's dream “victories” are part of a strategy to compensate for his real-life humiliation. At issue is the interpretative dif-

ference between dreams in which he emerges as winner and the dreams in which he is beaten, save for the one time. If, on the other hand, all the dreams had ended in a Gordon Duffy triumph, only then would it be justifiable for Titlestad and Kissack to see this as a compensatory gesture.

While the dreams are important to the structuring of memory, Titlestad and Kissack's analysis suffers from placing too much emphasis on the outcome, an outcome which—in my opinion—they have misread. The point of emphasis should rather be on the recurrence of the dream as a measure of how Duffy is preoccupied with a past he is now powerless to change. This fact is buttressed by the revelation by the character that “[t]his was his first victory” and “[i]t left him feeling strangely dissatisfied” (Vladislavić 168). Dreams in which he would have constantly conquered would have been the more appropriate gesture of compensation and his disgruntlement (as opposed to elation) with the single “victory” when it finally comes illustrates how, in my estimation, Duffy is not merely seeking to rid himself of a past humiliation. Rather, the recurrence of the dream points to a level of dissatisfaction with the present, the now of post-apartheid Johannesburg in which the humiliations of the past seemingly continue to manifest themselves and are replicated.

8 Uncomfortable Truths, Unwanted Pasts

In the “Aesthetics of Superfluity,”⁸⁰ Achille Mbembe defines Johannesburg as “an African form of metropolitan modernity” (373), and further states that:

In the South African context, surfaces such as Montecasino and, to a lesser extent, Melrose Arch represent new genres of writing time. But this new inscription of time is paradoxical. For it to be possible at all, the built form has to be construed as an empty placeholder for meanings that have been eroded by time rather than remembered by it. That is why they are largely the manifestation of the failure of the racial city to assimilate the passage of time. While bearing witness to a demand that the past be forgotten, this architecture asks the spectator to forget that it is itself a sign of forgetting. But in so doing, it reiterates the pathological structure and hysteria inherited from the racial city. This is an architecture of *hysteria*. (402)

For Mbembe, places like Montecasino and Melrose Arch instantiate, in their reiteration of otherworldly architecture, the notion of wanting to forget the separations of the past. The paradox lies in the fact that while these forms of architecture are meant or designed to show that people can move on from the things which divided them in the past, the structures become self-evidently contradictory in the sense that in

⁸⁰ First published in a special issue of *Public Culture* (Mbembe) and later as part of an expanded monograph, *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* (Nuttall and Mbembe), which is concerned with the difficulty of representing the city. Mbembe co-edits both of these volumes with Sarah Nuttall.

their apartness from other areas of the city, they show that little or nothing has been learned from the history of the apartheid city. Put simply, the new edge cities represent a new form of economic apartheid as they are designed to be enclaves for an affluent class that figuratively exists in a different world from the poor majority.

With respect to Duffy and following on Mbembe's argument above, the recurrent dream represents the failure, at the personal level, "to assimilate the passage of time." The consequence of this failure is a form of hysteresis that manifests and is performed at the personal level by Duffy. The dream represents an inability to constructively mark and integrate the passage of time. This is true, even if Mbembe's article is, to a greater extent, concerned with the physical architecture of the post-apartheid city, such as Montecasino and Melrose Arch, which, in their evocations of places "other" than or elsewhere to the specific African context in which they are located, represent "new ways of writing time." They speak to a cosmopolitan, postcolonial time but are held back by the material contradictions of the past. In the broader context of Vladislavić's writing, Mbembe's analysis is also applicable to "Villa Toscana" in its rendering of a "Little Tuscany" on the veld of Johannesburg. Duffy's hysteria, as marked by his dream, takes the form of constant and nervous backward glances into the past in search of comfort and meanings that remain unattainable. To a large extent, Duffy is unable to fully inscribe himself into the present because his sojourns into the past (a past which in any event appears to some degree to have been possibly disenchanting) do not yield him the appropriate tools for doing so, that is, to assimilate himself fully into the present.

9 Death of a Tomason

The second "structure of memory" identified by Titlestad and Kissack is that of *Popular Mechanics*, a magazine popular with do-it-yourself boffins. The basic premise of the magazine is to instruct its readers about gadgets and technologies by offering pictorial perspectives in which these objects are broken down, or figuratively blown up, into their constituent parts—down to the last nut, bolt, and screw—and hence, the exploded view. This world which the young Duffy gets access to through his father's magazines is described by Titlestad and Kissack as a "nostalgic ideal" (17). Gerald Gaylard similarly defines Duffy as "a utopian functionalist who has to face his own fears in a forbidding new context" (67). The import of both descriptions is that Duffy, as an individual, retrospectively occupies this utopian world in which everything is in its place, and "[a]ll it needed was a touch, a prod with the tip of a finger, to shift everything closer together, and a perfect whole would be realized, superficially complete and indivisible" (Vladislavić 171). Duffy's problems partially lie in the fact that the order of this world, one in which "surfaces [are] airbrushed to perfection" and are "gleaming with old-fashioned optimism" (171), cannot be used to rationalize the

“new disorders” of the (postmodern) post-apartheid city because the paradigms of the new reality are based on totally different premises from the old, for example, that of hybridity, whereas the older framework was one of rationalized separation. Tellingly, he is frustrated by the realization that the “surgical ability to see how things fitted together” (190)—a skill he had developed through reading *Popular Mechanics*—is an increasingly redundant talent in the contemporary world of the postcolonial metropolis: “But, in truth, this skill seemed to him increasingly outmoded in the world he lived in. It was no longer clear even to the most insightful observer how things were made or how they worked. The simplest devices were full of components no one could see, processes no one could fathom” (190). The new world lacks the predictability which he is used to, and thus he is unable to make sense of it. His missing cell phone, for instance, represents a whole that is less than the sum of its parts, as he considers all the possible fates that could have befallen it. This is so because it has functionality through unseen circuits, networks, and infrastructures that lie outside those represented by the interconnections in its physical parts. In the imagination, it connects him to all kinds of people and places that are beyond his normal, ordered trajectories. Duffy speculates about “his telephone voice, disembodied and business-like, speaking out of some thief’s pocket” or his “phone lying on a makeshift table in a shack, among four beer bottles and ashtrays” (180). The radio traffic reports that function like a refrain to constantly retrieve him from his reveries and the past, offer panoramic views of the city but also, in the almost perpetual gridlock that they relate, show how the city does not function in the orderly flows suggested by the *Popular Mechanics* diagrams.

Like a Tomason, Duffy is a puzzling relic from the past, and his failure to adapt to the new order instantiates how “the structures of apartheid persist because their well-established mentalities do” (Beilharz and Supski 11). In the end, four black men disembark from a minibus and approach with obvious menace as one of them is holding a length of piping. The four men he had imagined drinking in a shack around his stolen phone transform from dream to reality. Their calm approach to rob him transfixes him, and he is literally like a hare caught in the headlights of a car as he stands in the light cast by his own truck. I read this hare-in-the-headlights moment as a poignant metaphor for the imaginative paralysis that seems to afflict the majority of the white characters in the text. The beating, when it comes, restages the childhood humiliation at the hands of Wilkie Pieterse in Duffy’s inability to defend himself or otherwise take any kind of evasive action. There is no chorus like that of the traffic report to forewarn him of the imminent danger, and the irony is that “with every blow he felt like himself” (Vladislavić 201). The paradox of this violence lies in the fact that it is only through this medium that Duffy gets a strange sense of affirmation in, and affinity to, the present, and he thus welcomes it. In a strange way, the beating becomes a catalyst for his recuperation.

10 Conclusion

Vladislavić's *The Exploded View* explores the construction and spatialization of urban identities in the context of the South African transition to the post-apartheid state. By focusing on the last two sections of the novel, "Curiouser" and "Crocodile Lodge," I considered how the author utilizes the metaphor of the exploded view as a representational strategy in the process of problematizing the characters' and Johannesburg's idiosyncratic state of flux. This fluid state has at its core notions of hybridity and intersecting identities. Firstly, by doubling the metaphor of the "exploded view" on itself, this study examines how the self-defined cosmopolitan and avant-garde black artist Simeon Majara (in "Curiouser") re-presents, for instance, the Rwandan holocaust or re-shapes original pieces of art and curios to create new meanings. In his acts of re-signification, Majara uncovers as much truth, if not more, about himself as a subject as about his art, about his city as a contradictory cosmopolitan space, as well as his and its place in the unevenly globalizing world. The second half of the chapter has brought into sharp focus the psycho-social trauma that accompanies the transition to a post-apartheid democratic polity for one white character, Gordon Duffy, in "Crocodile Lodge." Duffy, as representative of type, displays nervous energy as he simultaneously glances backwards at apartheid (and its privileges for him as a white subject) and makes forays into a contradictory emergent social imaginary that is at once alive with old dangers and new possibilities. Taken together, both narrative strands have been used to highlight how transient identities evolve and dissolve on an urban landscape that is itself undergoing constant change in its physical infrastructure, as well as its socio-political and cultural dynamics.

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**IV: Spaces and Vectors:
Migration, Hybridity, Creolization**

Andrea O'Reilly Herrera

The Trope of Displacement, the Disruption of Space: Cuba, a Moveable Nation⁸¹

How many doors do you have to knock on before you find your own?

(Rabindranath Tagore)

Where is the middle of the world? Here and elsewhere.

(Old Irish Proverb)

Migration, Søren Frank observes, is the defining characteristic of modern life (*Salman*). Focusing primarily on the work of Salman Rushdie, Frank examines the mutually dependent phenomena of migration, globalization, and cosmopolitanism. In “Step Across This Line,” he points out, Rushdie describes the migrant as a person “without frontiers,” an “archetypal figure of our age,” who somehow defies the laws of gravity. The migrant “perform[s] the act of which all men anciently dream,” Rushdie claims, “the thing for which they envy the birds; that is to say, we have flown” (qtd. in Frank, “Globalization” 111).

Undergirding Frank’s exploration is a particular idea of *weightlessness*, first developed by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht in his seminal essay “A Negative Anthropology of Globalization.” In “Globalization, Migration Literature, and the New Europe” Frank observes that Gumbrecht “initially distills two key characteristics: the increasing amount of information available to practically all human beings”—a result of the electronic age and ever increasing access to social media—and the idea that “this information (and its circulation)” becomes increasingly “detached from particular physical spaces” (107). Inspired by Gumbrecht’s characterization of globalization as a *growing spacelessness*—with its attendant *elimination of the dimension of space*—Frank posits what he terms the “double movement of elimination and recuperation of space,” which points toward an idea of cosmopolitanism distinguished by a “growing independence of particular spaces,” which are simultaneously characterized by “reactions of inertia [that] make them reconnect with dimensions of space” (“Globalization” 110).

Although traditional definitions of the cosmopolitan hint at the possibility of suspending the dimension of spatiality and allowing the paradoxical concept that one can simultaneously belong everywhere and nowhere—a kind of cultural or ethnic *weightlessness*, so to speak—post-1959 Cuban political discourse on both sides of

⁸¹ Portions of this essay are taken from my monograph *Cuban Artists Across the Diaspora: Setting the Tent Against the House* (2011) and are reprinted with the exclusive permission of the U of Texas P.

the Florida Straits has tended to be nationalistic and territorial and to make nativist claims to *authentic* cultural or national identity. Dating back to the nineteenth century, dominant Cuban diasporic discourse frequently frames the condition of exile in absence—that absence is the island. Certain strains of this discourse share with other diasporic articulations the impulse to idealize the past and express an idealized, nostalgic vision of home and homeland as a fixed and unchanging physical place of origin. Adhering to the teleology of origin and return, another common feature they share is the tendency to describe the experience of displacement according to the binary of being un-homed/constructing a temporary “home away from home” (Clifford; Saffran).

The conjoined ideas of physical displacement and movement are implicit in the diasporic condition; however, in the particular case of Cuba, they bespeak a pattern of in-migration and out-migration that traces back over centuries and is framed primarily by the island’s colonial history.⁸² Given its strategic geographical location, Cuba has always been, preeminently, a point of confluence; a site of convergences; a place of migratory interactions; and a circuit and receptacle for all manner of exchanges, some of which pre-date the first Spanish colonial interventions.⁸³ Not unlike other Caribbean islands, it has been in motion for centuries, both physically and culturally. As a result, Cuban culture is stratified and striated by multiple and varied influences; and the watery, porous borders that circumscribe the island suggest perennial fluidity, constant motion, and cross-pollination. In this respect, Cuban culture is eclectic and cosmopolitan.

Just as generations of Cubans have absorbed and been transformed by the diverse *presences* that inhabited the island at various junctures, Cuba can be best understood as a moveable nation—rather than a static or fixed entity—a traveling, prismatic site of rupture and continuity resulting from continuous out-migrations and scatterings. Rooted in both the Indigenous and colonial pasts, the realities of migration and exile⁸⁴ continue to inform contemporary Cuban history and are the underlying condi-

82 Though I generally consciously avoid the notion that the Cuban case is exceptional, in part because any discussion of exceptionalism becomes enmeshed inevitably in the larger context of US race and class politics, the post-1959 scattering tends to draw attention as a result of some of the factors that distinguish it from other diasporic experiences: 1) its volume and longevity; 2) the idea that a majority of Cubans left the island—either voluntarily or forcibly—under varying degrees of duress and, therefore, cannot or will not return; 3) and the fact that the largest sector of the exile population resides in South Florida in close geographical proximity to the homeland.

83 Pre-colonial Cuba was frequently the destination point, for example, for Caribs canoeing to the island from present-day Venezuela and Colombia. Indigenous groups, such as the Arawaks, migrated among the islands in the Caribbean.

84 Following the conclusion of the Ten Years War (1868–1878), a cohort of separatists, as well as thousands who sought work outside of Cuba because of the economic depression that occurred in the aftermath of the war, left the island. Exiled separatists established themselves in various parts of the United States, Latin America, and Europe. The most prominent figure in this struggle was the re-

tions that inflect the Cuban experience writ large. In consequence, as art critic and poet Ricardo Pau-Llosa observes, “exile—indeed displacement—has been a constant in the development of the Cuban [cultural] imagination for ... centuries” (41).

Any profound understanding of the themes of displacement and cultural transference or transformation in respect to the island and its various diasporas must, therefore, move away from the idea perpetuated in dominant political and diasporic discourse of Cuba as a unified category of analysis. The realities of modern-day globalization, as Frank and others remind us—with its increasing technological exchanges and the forcible and voluntary circulation of people, culture, and all things popular—prevent us from maintaining stationary or exclusivist paradigms when analyzing transnational, *cosmopolitical* diasporic formations (to borrow Cheah and Robbins’ term). Instead, as Ella Shohat suggests, we must begin with the premise that all nations “exist not as hermetically sealed entities but, rather, as part of a permeable interwoven relationality” (2). The challenge then is to speak of Cuba and Cuban cultural expression (which includes the work of diasporic artists) within a *kaleidoscopic framework* (to borrow Ella Shohat’s terminology) as a series of communities (located both inside and outside the island), which are “in relation to one another yet whose positions are not identical” (3).

Both my creative and scholarly work on the Cuban diaspora aim to envision a more nuanced, malleable paradigm regarding cosmopolitical diasporic identity formation, which moves away from essentialist, territorially- and linguistically-based concepts of racial, ethnic, national, or cultural identification. Works such as *ReMembering Cuba: Legacy of a Diaspora*, *Cuba: Idea of a Nation Displaced*, *The Pearl of the Antilles*, and *Cuban Artists Across the Diaspora: Setting the Tent Against the House* (which approaches diasporic identity through the lens of visual culture) explore the dual themes of migration identity and cultural exchange within a global, transnational framework and posit a more creatively unstable theoretical approach, which simultaneously takes account of the fluid and shifting aspects of situated or contextual subjectivity, yet remains rooted in the local and the historical. Unlike Salman Rushdie’s *bodiless* migrant, whom the author depicts as detached from space and defying *the roots of belonging*, my critical writing postulates a cosmopolitical poetics of movement and indeterminacy, which is simultaneously and paradoxically rooted and migratory.⁸⁵ Although it acknowledges the significance of the situational and

nowned poet, journalist, and philosopher José Martí, the leader of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano y Puertorriqueño (Cuban and Puerto Rican Revolutionary Party).

⁸⁵ In his discussion of Salman Rushdie, Søren Frank points out that the former deems belonging and rootedness as “a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places” (*Shame* 86). Rushdie’s concept is liberating, Frank observes, for “what follows is the freedom to flee and to fly, and a liberation from everything that ties us down and restricts our movement.” Many contemporary characters in migrant literature, he continues, embody *the practice of weightlessness*, and consequently present a new image of what it means to be human. “At first glance then,” Frank concludes, “the migrant is

contextual—of place and locality—the approach to diasporic identity formation posulated in this work ultimately positions itself against the impulse to locate Cuba solely according to geographical coordinates, thereby bypassing the correspondent essentialist discourses, which Shohat alludes to, that propose a closed or static definition of nationhood or national and cultural affiliation.

The art exhibition *CAFÉ: The Journeys of Cuban Artists*—curated primarily by Cuban artist Leandro Soto—provides an ideal metaphor through which to explore the paradoxes of *migratory stability* and *stable mobility*⁸⁶ inherent in the Cuban diasporic condition.⁸⁷ Unconventional in every respect, *CAFÉ* is a radically inclusive, itinerant, and evolving art exhibition, which features alternating, multi-generational groups of Cuban diasporic artists conceived or born on or off the island. The participating artists work with a wide range of art media and techniques; recent manifestations of the exhibition have included poetry and fiction readings, lectures and roundtable discussions, dance and performance art, theatrical presentations, and traditional and original music composed by both Cuban and North American artists.

CAFÉ testifies to a long tradition of Cuban art that continues to flourish outside the island, as well as the idea that Cuba's cultural continuity has always depended on a process of translation, absorption, and transformation that has occurred in this context of rupture and movement. All of the participating artists in *CAFÉ* are, to varying degrees, visibly influenced by the new physical environments and cultural contexts in which they are working. However, their work simultaneously conserves a series of identifiable Cuban cultural elements—something that Cuban theorist and writer Antonio Benítez-Rojo referred to as the *ancient dynamics* of the island's variegated cultural roots and turbulent history—which are re-inscribed and transformed in new contexts (Benítez-Rojo). This historical reality, which provides the contextual framework for their art, has engendered a particular form of cosmopolitanism that not only “accommodates historical juncture,” as Aparita Nanda describes (see her

the very incarnation of *homo globalicus*, that is, a gravity conquering bird unmoored from the Earth. If the migrant is a weightless and bodiless person detached from any local physical space, then he or she seems to fit well into what Gumbrecht refers to as yet another significant phenomenon of globalization that affects human lives, namely “the emergence and steady growth of a specific space—a ‘network of channels’ would be a good metaphor—that is immune to all local specifications and flavors” (Frank, *Salman* 234).

86 I am intentionally borrowing Eric Gary Anderson's terminology. For more information see E. G. Anderson (19).

87 *CAFÉ*—an acronym for Cuban American Foremost Exhibitions—is curated by Leandro Soto and directed by his wife Grisel Pujalá. *CAFÉ* disrupts traditional Western modes of curating art exhibits. Rather than having a fixed set of showings in predetermined institutional locations, the exhibit is *itinerant* and ongoing; its location is unplanned in advance and may be presented in a wide range of venues. In other words, the curator, Cuban artist Leandro Soto, does not know where the next showing will be located, and he does not have a fixed idea regarding whom he will include in future exhibits. See O'Reilly Herrera, *Cuban Artists* (ch. 2), for a more detailed discussion.

chapter in this collection), by implicitly acknowledging rupture and displacement, but also simultaneously admits the possibility of rootedness in new physical and cultural contexts, as well as fortuitous cultural exchange.

CAFÉ artists such as José Bedia and Leandro Soto—both of whom were in the seminal group *Volumen Uno*—embody this cosmopolitan-cosmopolitical tendency to absorb *newness* into their work, yet simultaneously maintain a connection with their cultural roots.⁸⁸ Their art becomes what Homi K. Bhabha characterizes throughout *The Location of Culture* as an *unhomely space of intervention*, which renders asymmetrical past, present, and future, and disrupts the paradigm of center, boundary, and frontier. Fundamental to their artmaking is this process of absorption, translation, and transformation described above, which fundamentally bespeak Bhabha's concepts of *contemporaneity* and *trans- or multi-locality*. Disrupting the temporal, situational, linear, and ultimately allegorical nature of nationalist discourse, Bhabha's conceptualization of diasporic cultural expression proposes the possibility of cross-temporality, which seeks to displace “the historicism that has dominated the nation as a cultural force,” and expose what he describes as “the profound limitations of a consensual and collusive enunciation of cultural community” (140, 200–204). When approaching the diasporic experiences and all of their various articulations from this perspective, Bhabha observes that political borderlines, boundaries, and borderlands are not “that at which something stops,” but rather, that from which something begins its “presencing” (1, 7).⁸⁹

Visually embodying Bhabha's concepts of cross-temporality and multi-locality, José Bedia's art incorporates a conceptual, anthropological approach, which puts into relief cultural resonances as opposed to differences. Representing what Cuban art critic Gerardo Mosquera terms “another form of decentering,” the artist draws from the content of African- and Indigenous-based worldviews of religious belief systems “not by recreating forms, rites, or myths,” but rather by “creating Western culture from non-Western bases, transforming it and thereby diversifying global contemporary culture” (Mosquera).

Dating back to his childhood, Bedia recalls during our 2005 interview, he was interested in Cuban Indigenous art and exposed to images that frequently appeared in popular Cuban renderings of the Native peoples who inhabited the island, as well as Africans and Creoles (Bedia). Following his introduction to Palo Monte, Bedia began to integrate a wide range of Indigenous and African elements into his work. “I have always been interested in the past,” he continues, as well as “the recurrence of elements in various cultures,” as seen, for example, in Navajo sand painting or Yaqui masks. “The Yaqui included elements from nearly every group that crossed their path,”

⁸⁸ For information on *Volumen Uno* see: www.cubanartnews.org/news/volume_i_or_the_big_bang_of_contemporary_cuban_art-996/892. See also Weiss.

⁸⁹ In formulating this concept, Bhabha drew inspiration from Martin Heidegger; see Bhabha (1, 7).

Bedia adds. What has been for the artist an instinctive impulse to incorporate and transform signifies a way of comprehending and interpreting reality, and recognizing and acknowledging what Bedia characterizes as “vital” and “functional” (Bedia).

Although Bedia dismisses any essentialist or universalist notion of culture or human nature, his art strives to put into relief what he terms “certain fundamental truths” or “realities,” which continue to be “alive” and “useful.” Rather than focusing on contrast, disparity, or distinctions, Bedia seeks verisimilitude, synchronicity and parallelism. His art is cosmopolitan in the truest sense of the word in that it emerges not exclusively from a single root or place of origin, but rather draws inspiration from the many places he has traveled and the cultures and groups he has encountered. “I am searching for archetypal elements,” Bedia muses, “which I want to explicate and make my own” (Bedia).

Not unlike his contemporary José Bedia, Leandro Soto addresses fundamental issues regarding displacement, *cubanidad*, and transculturation through an exploration of Afro-Cuban and Indigenous cultural forms and practices. Soto—who has resided for significant periods of time in various parts of the world, including various locations in Mexico and India, Buffalo (New York), Amherst (Massachusetts), Phoenix (Arizona), and more recently in Barbados and Miami (Florida)—freely aligns African and Afro-Cuban religious symbols with a score of newly acquired elements, which reflect the various cultures and artistic traditions to which he has been exposed in exile. Although he does not actually practice Santería (or Abakuá), the artist’s thematically unified series of installations and paintings titled *A Glance Over the Garden* (1997), for example, was inspired by several conversations with a newly arrived Cuban couple “against the snowy [Buffalo, NY] winter background that covered every garden.” Both husband and wife were initiated *santeros* (practitioners of the Afro-Cuban religion *Santería*). “For me as an artist,” Soto explains:

it was extremely important to observe how their practices and beliefs were challenged, adapted and transformed by their new environment. New places offer new opportunities, new places to rename, but at the same time they suppress a part of our cultural selves. Elevating the presence of my African ancestors in this collection, as well as the experience of my friends in Buffalo, restores them within the Anglo context of this experience. In effect, I plant “a garden,” a garden that functions as a metaphor of living together, of order, and of the appropriation and integration of this new land. (“Cubans” 247)

Leandro Soto’s exploration into the relationship between his own cultural roots and Indigenous cultures expanded during his sojourn in Phoenix. In 2005, for example, he created a character called *Ireme* with the assistance of Cuban artist Nelson García Miranda.⁹⁰ During a performance at the New Contemporary Mesa Center for the Arts in Northern Arizona, Soto created an installation in collaboration with a second

90 Nelson García Miranda actually designed and painted Leandro Soto’s *Ireme* costume.

Cuban artist, Dora Hernández. A group of diasporic Cuban drummers, all of whom were living in Arizona at the time, danced and sang in the background as Soto/Ireme danced before a crowd paying homage to the spirits of the dead. The dance took place in front of a palm tree located near the installation. Several members of the audience, who happened to be either Mexican American or Native American, mistook Ireme for a Kachina or Hopi god. Following the performance, they quizzed Soto, assuming that he had confused or crossed what they believed were antithetical cultural elements. To their surprise, Soto revealed that Ireme was actually a Nigerian Abakuá spirit, not a Kachina, and that this spirit was representative of his own ethnic heritage.

Prior to that point, Leandro Soto had been largely unfamiliar with Hopi culture. Despite the distinctly different cultural contexts from which they arose, the similarities between these two divinities were something more than striking. As a result, Soto renamed his performance *Kach-Ireme*. Commenting on the experience during a personal interview which I conducted in 2005 in Phoenix, he observes, “Cuba is geographically opposite to what we have here in Arizona—it is surrounded by water and green. Being on the island is the opposite of being in the desert. Yet suddenly I was absolutely connected here in Arizona.” This fortuitous discovery led the artist into an exploration of the links among United States Native, Afro-Cuban, Chontales, and Choles cultures (the latter of which he encountered during his five-year tenure in Tabasco, Mexico).

Rather than focusing on difference, Soto—like his contemporary, Bedia—stresses the connective tissues among the Indigenous cultures he has encountered during the course of his journeys. Commenting upon this very subject, he suggests that his work is based on the theory of implosion. In other words, things that are apparently separate are actually interconnected, or interwoven like a tapestry. Deeply influenced by his experience among various Indigenous communities in southern Mexico, such as the Maya-Chol, Soto adopted a cosmopolitan worldview that conceives of reality as an intricate tapestry of transpersonal or infinite energies woven together by some divine force or spirit. He sees the trajectory of his travels as a *cumulative process* in which he is continually *editing* and *re-editing* his earlier experiences. “They are all connected,” he assures me. Commenting on his own work, Soto explains:

I work with the complexity of being Caribbean, a culture heritage that is composed of diverse cultural presences. In order to nourish these expressions, I have done a lot of anthropological research in the countries and cultures where I lived. I have used the term “cultural translation” to talk about this process. I insist that I should become part of the communities in which I reside at a particular moment of my life. In order to become a “channel” (artist-shaman), for this community, I have to work with a trans-personal thematic and trans-personal issues. ... In my view, that which is apparently dispersed or diffuse is also linked to the magical, that is, I hold a vision of the world where reality is conceived as a tapestry of transpersonal energies. (Soto, “De Palo pa’ Rumba” 168–169)

Resonant with Bedia's practice, Soto emphasizes a concept he refers to as *religare*. Drawn from a Latin tradition, this term signifies *reunion*, *re-connection*, *re-integration*, and *communion*—something that the artist characterizes as a non-Western, cosmopolitan approach to reality and creative expression (Personal interview; “De Palo pa’ Rumba” 170). The works featured in Soto’s installation project *A Glance Over the Garden* or paintings referencing the *orishas* or deities, such as *Oggun’s Chair*, are visible manifestations of the heterogeneous and chameleonic aspects of Cuban culture given its long history of cultural intermixing and collision.⁹¹ In a discussion of these aspects of Cuban culture, with specific reference to the *orisha* Eleguá⁹² (one of his later installations inspired by the exhibition in Buffalo), Soto discussed the verisimilitude of visual elements:

A good example of this cultural integration is the installation I devote to [the *orisha*] Eleguá—the god of new paths and avenues. I used maps of the routes I followed to go from Miami (my point of entrance in this country) to the Northeast of the United States (where I resided for a number of years). I displayed an image of Mickey Mouse—red and black, Eleguá’s colors—as part of this installation because a mouse is Eleguá’s favorite animal! Thus, Mickey Mouse—who is black and red and a mouse to boot—is the perfect cultural object to explain and visually translate Eleguá Laroye. Also, I displaced a small version of the Statue of Liberty from its original location in New York City to the Miami area since, for many exiled Cubans, Miami is the most important city in the United States. I also used envelopes—black and red—from the United States mail overnight service in order to provide color and content for this installation. (“De Palo pa’ Rumba” 173–174)

Soto’s installations reconstitute and invoke a pantheon of *orishas* through familiar, iconic objects and images drawn primarily from United States popular culture. In liberally pairing the sacred with the profane, Soto suggests the integral and synergistic relationship between these two realms. In this sense, his installations blur the lines traditionally drawn between the supernatural and the natural. According to the artist’s view, art is *de palo pa’ rumba*—a popular Cuban expression that refers to a sudden change in topic or theme during a conversation. Taken in more literal terms, it refers to a shift in conversation from the subject of Palo Monte⁹³ (the sacred) to *rumba* (the secular or profane). Put another way, this expression suggests the co-existence of, and hidden links among, seemingly antithetical elements.⁹⁴

Soto’s thoughtful juxtaposing and counterbalancing of apparently contrasting objects endows them, as Cuban art critic Tony Morales observes, with “the quality of expressing some universal principles emanating from a local perspective”; these

⁹¹ For more information on the *orisha* Oggun, see: santeriachurch.org/the-orishas/ogun/.

⁹² For more information on Eleguá, see: santeriachurch.org/the-orishas/elegua/.

⁹³ Palo—also known as Las Reglas de Conga—is an Afro-Cuban religion that developed among slaves from the Congo Basin. Monte, Mayombe, Briyumba and Kimbisa are all autonomous branches of Palo.

⁹⁴ For more on this subject, see Soto (“De Palo pa’ Rumba” 169).

principles ultimately bespeak the cosmopolitan aspects of his art.⁹⁵ They suggest, moreover, the integrative and mediatory role the artist plays in congregating these elements. Soto's creations—like Bedia's—invoke the most fundamental tenets of the various religious traditions that he draws from and allude to what the artist characterizes as “the all-embracing nature” of Cuban culture itself, for they simultaneously capture or make visible the “integral relationships” among seemingly antithetical objects and recapture some essential essence, which the *vanguardia* or modernist artists first recognized as being fundamentally Cuban.

My interpretation of the work of diasporic artists such as José Bedia and Leandro Soto puts into relief the links that exist among the social and political, the spatial and temporal, and the historical and cultural. In turn, this approach highlights the idea that just as Bedia and Soto visually reconstitute the self in diaspora, they *produce or construct* alternative cartographies in the process of recreating and reimagining space.⁹⁶ An overarching challenge in approaching the work of the *CAFÉ* artists lay in addressing the paradoxical notion that historical and cultural continuity coexist in their art alongside movement, variation, and change. In this respect their art testifies to the idea Stuart Hall first proposed that “difference always resides alongside continuity.”⁹⁷ The discourses of diaspora, James Clifford and Hall insist, must be modified and adapted when speaking about the experiences of the displaced, the “unhomed,” or *desterrados*. “What is at stake,” Clifford points out, “is a comparative cultural studies approach to specific histories, tactics, everyday practices of dwelling and traveling: traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling” (qtd. in E. G. Anderson 187).

An attendant difficulty in interpreting the work of artists such as Bedia and Soto lay in the need to smith vocabulary elastic enough to capture these seemingly antithetical and protean aspects of their art without losing meaning altogether. As I suggest at the outset of this chapter, the Cuban diasporic experience has been structured rhetorically according to a bi-cameral and binary demarcation of home

95 For more information, see Tony Morales's “A Glance Over the Garden,” which is featured in the pamphlet distributed by Bit Orbit Gallery for the exhibition (September 20–October 25, 1997).

96 The French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre was one of the first theorists to explore what he termed the *production of space*. In *The Production of Space* (Blackwell, 1991), Lefebvre questioned the *binary logic* of how we understand spatiality, and proposed a concept of *spatial variability* that examined the relationship among historicity, sociality, and spatiality. Among other things, Lefebvre considered the *multiple meanings of space* and *the interplay between the social and the spatial*. Lefebvre's concepts were expanded upon by theorists such as Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, and Jean Baudrillard, as well as more contemporary scholars such as Dorothy Hayden, Doreen Massey, Monika Kaup, and Mary Pat Brady. Other prominent figures engaged in *re-envisioning* traditional concepts of spatiality include Edward W. Soja, Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Trinh Minh-ha.

97 Paul Gilroy uses this phrase throughout *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. I am adapting Stuart Hall's claim that “Difference ... persists—in and alongside continuity” (Hall 228).

and nation.⁹⁸ In the process, the misleading dichotomy of island and diaspora, of the here/*aquí* and the there/*allí*, has been established. The emphasis in much Cuban diasporic discourse and cultural expression, therefore, has been on territorial claims to both nationhood and culture. On the contrary, I apply a relational, multi-axis analysis in order to capture the movement of cultures across borders. “A relational analysis,” Ella Shohat observes, “address[es] the operative terms and axis of stratification typical of specific contexts, along with the ways these terms and stratifications are translated and reinvented as they ‘travel’ from one context to another” (11). The particular theoretical approach to diasporic identity formation and cosmopolitical cultural exchange intentionally moves away from definitions or theoretical paradigms that regard mobility and stability as mutually exclusive terms, or privilege stasis over mobility. “The person who finds his homeland sweet,” Hugh of St. Victor tells us, “is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign place. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong person has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his” (qtd. in Said, *Culture* 335).⁹⁹ In emphasizing the positive aspects of movement and trans-locality, Hugh of St. Victor defies a host of conventional Western assumptions regarding territoriality and nationhood. Rather than stressing loss or displacement and casting them in a negative light, he celebrates the fundamentally cosmopolitan ideal of the individual who belongs—at once—everywhere and nowhere as powerful and free.

For *CAFÉ* artists such as Bedia and Soto, movement functions as a mode of cultural survival as well as a potent form of resistance. It signifies, moreover, accumulated knowledge, and oftentimes serves as a source of creative potential, or *grace under pressure*, as Soto often suggests (riffing on Ernest Hemingway). Inspired by Hugh of St. Victor, my critical and creative work examines the strategic advantages of multi- or trans-local cosmopolitanism without diminishing the devastating and oftentimes violent aspects of rupture and displacement, or ignoring what Edward Said characterizes as “disorienting loss” or “the crippling sorrow of estrangement” (“Reflections”). It proposes an alternative or altered concept of nomadism, which suggests a kind of *weightlessness* or detachment from physical space (to borrow Frank and Gumbrecht’s concepts once again), and at the same time posits what Nicolas Bourriaud characterizes as a *radicant* approach to identity—i.e., the idea of being rooted in multiple places.¹⁰⁰

98 Brent Hayes Edwards makes the same point in his entry “Diaspora” in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*.

99 Hugh of St. Victor was a medieval philosopher, theologian, and mystical writer born in Saxony, France in 1096. A colleague pointed out his quotation after learning about my project.

100 In *The Radicant* Bourriaud discusses at length the manner in which a radicant aesthetic is unlike Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of the rhizome (first developed in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, U of Minnesota P, 1987). Noting the rhizome’s non-hierarchical and

Though nomadism is generally understood as “dispens[ing] altogether with the idea of a fixed home or center,” it is traditionally defined as a state of being “without the hope or dream of a homeland” (Durham). The aesthetic formula of nomadism that I propose recasts this definition. It is liberating, on the one hand, in its emphasis on movement and detachment—much like Hugh of St. Victor’s concept and akin to the Taoist notion of *impermanence* or *indifference to the world*.

Despite its insistence on itinerancy and transience, this particular approach to nomadism is also grounded in a concept of *doubleness* that involves rooting and re-rooting, continuity, and as Frank puts it, the simultaneous elimination and recuperation of space. It permits, moreover, a form of *rooted cosmopolitanism* (to use Kwame Anthony Appiah’s notion) that enables diasporic subjects to also *transport their roots* and thereby remain connected to their homeland. In other words, the migratory diasporic figures live what Said termed a *contrapuntal life*, in which the *condition of spacelessness* is simultaneously and paradoxically rooted to, and detached from, particular spaces-places (Appiah).

Cuban culture and all of its expressions is, and always has been, simultaneously *portable* and *solidly grounded*.¹⁰¹ Reflecting this aspect of the Cuban condition, the phrase *setting the tent against the house* (the subtitle of the study) thus envisions the

fluid structure, as well as its interconnected significations, Bourriaud nevertheless distinguishes this image from the radican by pointing out that “unlike the rhizome, which is defined as a multiplicity that brackets out the question of the subject from the beginning, the radican takes the form of a trajectory or path; the advance of a singular object. ... The radican implies a subject, but one that is not reducible to a stable, closed, and self-contained identity. It exists exclusively in the dynamic form of its wandering and the contours of the circuit it describes, which are two modes of visibility. In other words, it is movement that ultimately permits the formulation of an identity ... [it] views the self as constructed out of borrowings, citations, and proximities ... [and] differs from the rhizome in its emphasis on the itinerary, the path, as a dialogical or inter-subjective narrative that unfolds between the subject and the surfaces it transverses, to which it attaches its roots to produce what might be termed an installation: one ‘installs oneself’ in a place or situation in a makeshift or precarious way, and the subject’s identity is nothing but the temporary result of this encampment, during which acts of translation are performed. Translation of a path into a local language, translation of oneself into a milieu—translation in both directions. Thus, a radican subject appears as a construction or montage, in other words, as a work born of endless negotiation” (Bourriaud 55–56).

101 As Eric Gary Anderson points out in a discussion of American Indian space, temporality, and movement, “migrations are, paradoxically, constants” in many cultures, though all native groups are deeply tied to the earth. The idea that movement is a mode of survival—that movement is knowledge and power—is an ancient concept that defies conventional Western concepts regarding property or ownership, and is widely embraced by many Native-American groups. While discussing this topic, a colleague pointed out that a critical difference between the Native experience and that of diasporic Cubans is the idea that many Cubans cannot return to their native land, whereas nomadic Native American groups generally followed seasonal migration patterns in order to locate food sources. As a result, they often returned to the same locations. Nevertheless, when read in the context of relocation, one can imagine the parallels that can be drawn among these groups (E. G. Anderson 17).

island and its culture as a moveable tent, as opposed to the stationary concept of a house or home. In this way, it strives to *extinguish* the urge to locate one's understanding of culture and nation in *one spot in the world*.¹⁰²

Finally, general principles expressed in quantum physics offered me new ways to think about the *weightless* aspects of *cosmopolitical* diasporic identifications and expressions, for certain threads of its particular discourse admit the possibility that multiple “realities” or states of being can co-exist.¹⁰³ This theory relies on a concept of *non-locality* that is less concerned with determining the exact physical location or state of a particle or an object at any given moment, but rather focuses upon the probability of where it might or can be located in both physical and temporal terms.

As previously suggested, the diasporic condition operates on the quantum principles of trans-locality and positionality. Loosely akin to the concept of *non-locality*, the identifications that artists such as Bedia and Soto assume and the conceptual spaces they inhabit are multiple. At the same time, as I have suggested early on, their understanding of self is always measured inadvertently against the absent-presence that is the island. In this sense their art simultaneously signifies and collapses the geographical distances that represent the *here* and the *there*, and thereby presents an uncanny *repetition* of the island, to borrow Benítez-Rojo's concept (Benítez-Rojo), which defies traditional cartographical conventions regarding spatiality.

Recent trends in quantum thought also posit the notion that “something that happens now is affected by something that happens in the future” (Jeff Tollaksen, qtd. in Begley). This possibility bespeaks the sense of contemporaneity or cross-temporality implicit in individual diasporic artists' work and the various presentations of *CAFÉ*, for each heralds the future at the same time that it invokes both the present and the cultural and historical past. These collective aspects of quantum thought—of an infinitely malleable idea of interstitial spatiality, contemporaneous existence and momentum, and the possibility that the present and the future not only interface but overlap—have allowed me to rethink and problematize what one critic terms Euro-Americans' “imaginary constructions of space, land, time, and history” (E. G. Anderson 38).

The rich and diverse cultural expressions of diasporic artists such as José Bedia and Leandro Soto are at the juncture of seemingly antithetical social locations and perspectives, thereby playing simultaneously on difference and similarity. In this sense,

102 I am consciously appropriating Richard Kearney's term, which appears in the title of his critical work *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy*. In the same vein, I am borrowing Harry Berger, Jr.'s phrase *set the house against the tent*, which is quoted in and drawn from a discussion of the Mosaic and Davidic covenants in Boyarin and Boyarin (105).

103 The quantum version of the double- or two-slit experiment, in which a single photon is seen as passing through two slits in a screen simultaneously, provides a good example, as does the paradoxical *thought experiment* Schrödinger's Cat.

they put into relief the complex nature of all cultural expressions and productions (Hall 228–229). When applied as a theoretical framework, an open-ended and fluid approach to diasporic art allows for a more malleable and improvisational discourse, which re-inscribes at the same time that it transforms, and thereby circumvents any notion of a homogeneous or uniform *imagined community* (B. Anderson), or a fixed “idea” of nation or culture. It is post-nationalist and cosmopolitan in that it extends beyond what Homi Bhabha refers to as the “paradigmatic colonial and postcolonial condition of being unhomed,” for “home” in the context of diaspora is always, simultaneously, *here and elsewhere* (B. Anderson 13). The way to locate Cuba, therefore, is not simply by fixing one’s gaze on the island, but as Tagore suggests, by *knocking on others’ doors*.

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Malin Pereira

An Angry, Mixed Race Cosmopolitanism: Race, Privilege, Poetic Identity, and Community in Natasha Trethewey's *Beyond Katrina and Thrall*

Pulitzer-Prize winner and former United States Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey's fourth and fifth books, *Beyond Katrina* (2010) and *Thrall* (2012), depart from her first three books of poetry in several ways, most notably in the choice of genre and cultural materials. In *Domestic Work* (2000), *Bellocq's Ophelia* (2002), and *Native Guard* (2006), Trethewey's finely-wrought formalist poems explored materials from her African American maternal lineage in the South alongside historical and American frames shaping race, memory, and identity. Following these, as the poet Carolyn Hembree writes in her review, "*Beyond Katrina* marks Trethewey's departure from writing poetry exclusively to integrating various texts and styles in one book" (55), a mixed genre Trethewey terms a "meditation." Hembree finds this book "unfinished," citing the key example of Trethewey's mixed race, which she states "is not dealt with again" in the text after the poem "Kin" (56). Asking a number of questions about unresolved issues in the text, she concludes: "At the end of *Beyond Katrina*, the prodigal again returns from her ancestral home ... but what has she learned about herself?" (56). Trethewey's next book, *Thrall*, returns to the "deftly shaped" poetry for which she is known, but with a significant change in materials: She takes, as another review puts it, "her familiar powers to non-United States turf, considering ... paintings from Spain and Mexico" (*Publisher's Weekly*). These textual shifts, and reviewers' reactions to them, are related: The unfinished business of mixed race, identity, and community that surfaces through the genre of "meditation" in *Beyond Katrina* is returned to for working through in the cosmopolitan, ekphrastic poems of *Thrall*. Reading these two books as a pair explains why Trethewey shifts in *Thrall* to an international array of visual materials and employs what could be argued is a cosmopolitan mode, ekphrasis, to comment upon them; it also provides context for Trethewey's remark in an interview that the poet Ellen Voight felt there were more expressions of anger in her recent poetry after *Native Guard*, the roots of which become evident in *Beyond Katrina*. Together, these texts articulate a recognition and reversal narrative for Trethewey's mixed race poetic identity, one that presages a significant shift in her *oeuvre*.

1 Mixed Race and Poetic Identity

Trethewey, the daughter of an African American Southern United States mother and a white rural Canadian father, has frequently probed her biraciality. Elsewhere, I have shown how a mixed race identity project forms an ongoing narrative through Trethewey's first three books of poetry, a narrative that complicates and readjusts previous scholarly readings of her work (Pereira, "Re-reading Trethewey through Mixed Race Studies"). This project continues in her fourth book. In *Beyond Katrina*, Trethewey strategically uses her personal stories of mixed race crossing as conduits into a systemic analysis of race and class in the United States. In a recent interview, she explains that "crossings and cross hatchings exist within my own blood. I think about Langston Hughes's poem 'Cross' concerning mixed race experience. And here I have lived and grown up in a place and a time where I could feel as if whatever story I had to tell could link what seemed to some people very disparate stories. That I myself embodied that sense of crossing" (Turner 6). She extends this idea to assert, "The story of America has always been a story of miscegenation, of border crossings, of integration of cultures, and again, I embody this in my person" (10). Trethewey's mixed race poetic identity thus acts as a constructed vehicle in the text through which she can identify and traverse race and class boundaries. In *Beyond Katrina*, Trethewey crosses between her comfortable New South lifestyle in Atlanta and her maternal African American family's hardships during and following Hurricane Katrina as it affected the Mississippi Gulf Coast; juxtaposing these two realities reveals and critiques boundaries of race and class reinforcing economic and social inequities in the United States. Importantly, Trethewey does not shy away from implicating herself in this interrogation; the self-critique that emerges in *Beyond Katrina* undergirds the angry cosmopolitanism that follows in *Thrall*.

Mixed race studies is a relatively new scholarly field in the United States, emerging in the 1990s with work by Paul Spikard, Maria Root, Naomi Zack, Werner Sollors, Linda Alcoff, and Jayne Ifekwunigwe, among others, as a response to perceptions of increasing numbers of biracial and multiracial people in the United States. One recent contribution to the field, Michele Elam's *The Souls of Mixed Folk: Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium* (2011), presents a significant and compelling challenge to early scholarship on mixed race. Looking specifically at black-white racial mixing, Elam critiques several key tenets of the mixed race movement in the United States, two of which are relevant here: the first, mixed race as "new" and an ideal, which she argues overlooks historical data on mixed race and glorifies the mixed race person as a savior who will repair our past and current racial problems; and the second, an emphasis on the individual, which she argues ignores history, power structures and social forces. Elam's analysis of a wide range of literature, comic strips and graphic novels demonstrates how the biracial works she studies are not invested

in “imagining or narratively thematizing a vision of a better world or even necessarily a better way.” Instead, Elam argues:

Their aesthetic style more frequently enacts the limitations on forms of expression or political sensibilities that might inhibit the imaginative realization of an alternative world, performing a formal meta-commentary on the problem of representing hard-to-solve and sometimes hard-to-see social and racial inequities. This species of text, even when deploying humor, is not especially joyful nor uplifting. The works do not offer ... exemplary characters who model “the answer.” (xvii)

One key contribution of Elam's work is the uncovering of class issues behind mixed race. As she reminds us, quoting Eva Saks, the anxieties surrounding miscegenation in the Southern United States were “more specifically an anxiety about establishing patriarchal lines of property, about the transmission of material goods within the white community, and the corresponding disinheritance of the black mother and any children born of an interracial union” (18). Today, Elam writes, “race and class continue to be indexed in close statistical relation; people of color who marry white or light tend to move upward in socioeconomic opportunity; mixed race children with one white parent tend then also to have a higher socioeconomic status, attend better schools, and live in better neighborhoods” (18).

The role that Trethewey's now-deceased father, a well-published poet and professor of English at Hollins University, played in her life evidences Elam's point that mixed race children with one white parent rise in socioeconomic opportunity. Mr. Trethewey served as a “literacy sponsor” (Deborah Brandt's term) for Ms. Trethewey's professional writerly identity. Interviews with Ms. Trethewey often invoke scenes of literary instruction by her father. He was one of her first creative writing teachers, as was his second wife, Katherine Soniat, a white US poet. Natasha Trethewey attended the university where they taught and, once she was a published poet, often gave poetry readings together with her father. Eric and Natasha Trethewey's master-apprentice relationship provided structural access for the younger Trethewey into the workings of academia and the publishing world. Her many successes—the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, an endowed chair at Emory, two terms as United States Poet Laureate—can in some part be attributed to her access to and instruction in the power structure and systems governing poetry and academia. Her high degree of formal poetic literacy, and the success that comes with it, places her in a privileged position.

That privilege carries with it economic rewards, as this somewhat over-excited description of Trethewey's condominium in the suburb of Decatur, Georgia (just outside of Atlanta), by W. T. Pfefferle reveals: “Natasha buzzes me up, and I meet her and her husband. We stand in their glittering kitchen—not just spectacularly clean, but ringed with stainless steel appliances—and then Natasha and I go and sit on two overstuffed couches in the living room. ... She feels totally at ease in this pretty New South suburb” (163).

From this position of “ease,” Trethewey could in *Beyond Katrina* perform a narrative suggesting her success as a mixed race person illustrates how the United States has overcome racial and class biases and offering herself as a savior after Hurricane Katrina. Instead, Trethewey exposes her mixed race privilege in *Beyond Katrina*—the privilege to cross boundaries of race and class, the freedom to overlook hardships, the access to a degree of power and authority in the legal system, the privileging of “published poet” literacy over alternate genres and less credentialed literacies. Thus, as Elam demonstrates with other texts involving mixed race, Trethewey’s *Beyond Katrina* performs “a formal meta-commentary on the problem of representing hard-to-solve and sometimes hard-to-see social and racial inequities.” Trethewey presents in *Beyond Katrina* a persona whose mixed race privilege enables a series of meditative scenes of recognition and insight performing an ongoing critique of structural inequities in the United States.

2 Race and Class Privilege—and (Not) Belonging—in *Beyond Katrina*

One way that Trethewey identifies power and privilege at work is with the theme of competing narratives, as she describes in the first prose chapter, “Pilgrim”: “This too is a story about a story. ... I wonder at the competing narratives: What will be remembered, what forgotten? What dominant narrative is now emerging?” (11). Returning home to Gulfport, Mississippi, to write about the disaster of Katrina for the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the figure Trethewey presents in the text as her self understands well the politics behind a writing project intended to tell the “story” of what happened to the Mississippi Gulf Coast because of Katrina. Citing public wrangling over differing versions of historical events—“the story that is to be told”—she identifies such contests as “rooted in power and money” to determine “how the past will be remembered, what narrative will be inscribed” (56). Evidencing the “doubled consciousness” of mixed race that Elam identifies, yet working to destabilize a narrative of the privileged as the “story,” Trethewey moves the text across time, space, place, class, race, and gender. This fracturing of perspectives and stories functions as what Brent Hayes Edwards calls racial *décalage*, as “a time lag, gap or interval of time and space which articulates a difference across time and perspective” (13).

To access the competing narratives, Trethewey’s persona interviews a range of figures crossing race, gender, age and class. Each narrative they share is carefully positioned in a perspective by Trethewey. The narrative moves the persona in and out of the perspectives of the people she interviews. Her doubled consciousness as mixed race facilitates this movement. For example, walking through the lobby of the hotel she is staying at, she is “struck by the incongruousness of the high-end jewelry and clothing stores ... juxtaposed with what I know is just beyond the great entryway with

its soaring great glass doors, giant flower arrangements, and extravagant perfume” (17–18). The financially comfortable Trethewey persona is able to stay in a high-end hotel while visiting Gulfport, yet she also claims—“what I know is just beyond the great entryway”—namely, other, less privileged perspectives, those of the working poor she has interviewed as well as those of her African American relatives, her brother, his girlfriend, and her maternal grandmother, whose experiences following Katrina demonstrate the structural inequities of race and class in the United States

The Trethewey figure presented in the text—importantly—is not a heroic figure who gives voice to or champions the perspective of those on the other side of the boundaries of race and class. In *Beyond Katrina*, the Trethewey persona’s perspective never remains simplistically aligned with that of her relatives, as the poem “Kin” in the Part Two section titled “Congregation” demonstrates:

For Roy Lee Jefferson
 When he sees me
 opening the gate, walking up smiling,
 he reads me first as white woman, then—
 he says—half-breed. It’s my hair, he tells me:
 No black woman got hair like that,
 and my car, a sedan he insists the cops don’t let black people drive,
 not here, not without pulling them over
 again and again. (77)

In these opening lines, Trethewey conveys the racial and class differences between her persona and the relatives she interviews. Even her kin read her appearance for racial markers, some of which are intertwined with markers of class status. She refuses to naively collapse such differences, maintaining the complexity of perspectives in a text in which all narratives are competing. Her privilege of mixed race is expressed not only in the fact that she can afford to drive a nice car, but also by the implication that, unlike her black kinfolk, she is not getting pulled over by the cops when she drives it there because she does not at first appear to be black. Seeing her through Roy Lee Jefferson’s eyes, we achieve insight about the racial and class inequities of daily life in Gulfport, inequities that distance the Trethewey figure from her kin. That they experience inequity “again and again” and she does not underline that these are not individual acts of racism, but endemic to the deep structures of the society. These inequities make her an outsider, even at home. Near the end of the poem, in a not very kin-like move, the relative calls her “White girl” and taunts her about coming out to his place in the country to see the baby he had with her cousin’s sister—the reason they are “kin.”

Trethewey highlights the persona’s kin-at-a-remove status in order to refuse a naïve collapsing of race and class differences. Following “Kin,” the poem “Prodigal” reflects further upon her insider-outsider status and delivers a moment of insight into her positionality. She writes: “I wanted to say I have come home / to bear witness. ...

I wanted to say I see, / not I watch” (81). Trethewey as author had hoped she would not be an outsider to her family’s and her hometown community’s hardships, wanting to avoid touristic looking and see through the eyes of her people. She wanted her “seeing to be a sanctuary,” but instead, she realizes one must “[f]ace the things that confront you” (81).

What confronts Trethewey in her text is realizing the privilege of her mixed race self. The final lines of the poem show her watching a service at her grandmother’s neighborhood church from outside, her face pressed against the glass, until, she writes, “someone turned, looked back, saw me” (81). This moment of being seen—outside—springboards the text into its next section, beginning to turn the narrative toward her brother Joe’s perspective, which dominates the final sections of the book. In telling his story and then letting him tell it through his letters to her from prison, Trethewey not only acknowledges the structural inequities in the United States undergirding her mixed race privilege, but also seeks to demonstrate and undo her own partial blindness to it. As she says in an interview with Christian Teresi, “I must understand my own complicity with acts of erasure” (50).

The contrast of Joe’s circumstances and outcomes with her own that emerges in these sections brings the Trethewey persona to a self-recognition of the privilege and blindness stemming from being the daughter of a white poet father. Joe’s story of his paternal and maternal inheritances, natural disaster, economic ruin, desperate choice, and prison run in contrasting parallel to his sister’s. While Trethewey has inherited both race and class privilege from her white father, Joe’s paternal inheritance is that his black father (Trethewey’s stepfather) abused and then murdered their mother. While the natural disaster of Katrina affects them both, Trethewey is able to remain at a degree of remove, living in a suburb of Atlanta and teaching at Emory University, even relocating their grandmother there to care for her, whereas Joe has to grapple with the physical results of the hurricane as well as the impact of the disaster on his livelihood of managing properties he had inherited from the maternal side of the family. They had to be torn down, and he was held financially responsible for the expense of removal and also the tax bills for the land (a public policy that of course affects the economically vulnerable inequitably). He had no resources or employment options due to the impact of Katrina on the economy. So, at the same time that Trethewey wins the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 2007, her brother Joe is arrested for transporting cocaine for \$4,000, money he intended to use to pay the tax bills to keep the family land.

The competing narrative that emerges most strongly in *Beyond Katrina* is this story, Joe’s story, acknowledged at the end by Trethewey as “the story all along” (127). In those 18 pages, Joe becomes the artist, the creator of the narrative. He even becomes the poet, writing the poem “Cycle” (included in the text) in which he rejects inheriting the identity of domestic abuser from his father. The reviewer Hembree critiques this element of the narrative, saying “his story should not eclipse hers” (56). But this precisely is where Trethewey addresses the mixed race privilege that begins to be

revealed in “Kin.” Joe’s story, as Trethewey positions it in the narrative to re-see that of her persona, expresses his disadvantages due to race and class and also unflinchingly reveals his sister’s contrasting affluence, heightened credibility and power, and even writerly arrogance. The Trethewey figure in the last sections becomes a supportive yet nevertheless privileged and even complicit actor in her brother’s difficult story. She serves as a character witness in court, testifying about her brother’s disadvantages with heightened credibility (Joe’s lawyer had told him she was needed to testify to keep him from going to prison for a very long time). She provides financial resources, agreeing to pay the tax bills on the land, and helping his girlfriend and their daughter. While these acts are what family do, that she is able to do them and has the power to be effective in her assistance marks her relative privilege. While Joe is jailed awaiting sentencing, Trethewey shows her persona beginning to understand her privilege and her complicity in maintaining elements of it. Trethewey writes about her phone calls to Joe, during which she was concerned about jailhouse safety for him:

I try to keep my voice steady when we talk, to hide that I am afraid. I keep thinking that this is best for his state of mind, but I know better. I am keeping a silence to protect myself from knowing. So often this is what silences—in families as well as in the public discourse of difficult events—are all about: if something isn’t fully spoken, it isn’t fully known, and we can absolve ourselves of the responsibility that knowing entails. (102)

Trethewey turns from revealing her individual silence to maintain the privilege of being unaware to naming larger societal silences that enable entire groups of people to remain unaware, in order to connect such individual acts to the continuing production of inequities often tied to race and class.

Staging her reading of his letters from prison as a series of insights, Trethewey brings her persona in the narrative to the realization of a key oversight: The author never wrote her brother a letter the entire time he was in prison. She talked with him frequently on the phone, she wired him spending money, she sent him care packages. But she never considered him a reader of her writing; she never considered writing for and to him. “It never occurred to me—and so I did not send—the one thing I know now he must have wanted more than anything: some words from me to hold on to longer than the ten minutes we were allowed to speak on the phone” (108). From this point on, the section is solely in Joe’s voice, from his letters and the aforementioned poem he wrote while in prison. In so doing, Trethewey grants her brother the authorial privilege of controlling for a time the narrative she had assumed obtained only to herself.

Trethewey closes *Beyond Katrina* as Elam would have predicted, with a not-uplifting final scene that critiques institutions and public policies that perpetuate differential access and privilege. In the final prose section following Joe’s letters and poem, titled “Redux,” Trethewey resumes narrative control to relate the day of her brother’s sentencing. She writes that she recalls little else besides a teenage boy in

a car asking her for directions to the public library while she was leaving the courthouse. She writes:

He was riding with a woman who must have been his mother, and when she smiled at us, I could see that she was missing several of her front teeth. I remember too that the car had a Florida license plate—Escambia County—and that it was weighed down, the bumper nearly dragging the pavement. The back seat was loaded with what seemed to be all their possessions: I could see garbage bags spilling clothes, a couple of pillows and a comforter, the legs of an upended chair. ... I could imagine many reasons, beyond books, that they might need to reach the library: Internet access, an air-conditioned respite, a public restroom in a clean, comfortable building. (122)

Leaving the courthouse, having just watched her brother sentenced to prison, and asked directions to the public library, Trethewey draws a solid line connecting these two powerful public institutions and their failure to equitably meet the needs of all their citizens. Trethewey's persona is shown as able to see—and is positioned to help the reader empathetically see—this family's circumstances, which evoke those of her brother. Displaced by Katrina, and economically vulnerable even before that, the family's search for a public library complicates the library's role as providing access to books for fostering a literate citizenry. Beyond books—beyond Katrina—this family needs basic facilities to enable survival.

Raising her hand to point the way, the Trethewey figure stops when she realizes the library, destroyed by Katrina, hadn't been rebuilt (and, the author interjects, still has not been at the time of her writing). Her initial feeling of relief that she could provide help stalls. There is no answer. This scene of redux, this looking back in the narrative to the day of Joe's sentencing, thus looks back in order to name a lack of equal access to tools of bare survival, as well as to power and privilege. Symbolized here in the icon of the public library that has not yet been rebuilt, while the courthouse and high-end hotel are up and running (a failure of public policy to meet the needs of its most disadvantaged citizens), Trethewey recognizes and names larger structural inequities undergirding her and her brother's differing opportunities and outcomes. Trethewey's *Beyond Katrina* thus exposes "hard-to-see social and racial inequities"—even those that have been hard for her to see.

3 Un-homed, Anger, Community, the Personal

Trethewey depicts in *Beyond Katrina* her own distancing from her black maternal lineage and homeplace—a refuge created by black women for affirming one's humanity despite racism, as described by bell hooks in "Homeplace" (42)—key wellsprings of her poetic subject matter for her first three books of poetry. Her displacement from the role of insider within her black maternal community of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, as the narrator of the story, and even as poet, by her brother, Joe, is expressed in the

work as a difficult journey that ultimately leaves her “un-homed” as a mixed race poet, paving the way toward a cosmopolitan stance. Susan Koshy notes, “[t]he feeling of not being at home is a marker of diasporic [cosmopolitan] citizenship” (601). The enormity of Trethewey’s loss is clarified when one considers Elam’s justification for excluding her in *The Souls of Mixed Folk* from her canon of mixed race artists. She writes: “I would not include Natasha Trethewey’s collection of poetry, often dealing with miscegenation, *Native Guard* ... , in part because she situates her exploration so firmly within African American and American politics and traditions” (221). Trethewey’s sense of being “firmly” situated ends with *Native Guard*. What follows in *Beyond Katrina* is what Christine C. Iijima Hall identifies as “the power differential of being White while also being a minority”; Iijima Hall further elaborates: “Guilt, sadness, confusion and anger may result from this power. For example, a [mixed race] White [and]-minority woman may be able to interact and move in networks that a monorace minority person cannot. She may feel a type of ‘survivor guilt.’ She may also have anger toward the racism that has brought about this dilemma” (242). This aptly describes how Trethewey depicts her self by the end of *Beyond Katrina*. Possessing more power and resources than her black half-brother, not able to speak from the position of or be seen by others as an insider in her former homeplace, feeling guilty about failing to write to her brother in prison, and—most especially—angry at both the institutional racism that perpetuates racial and economic disparities and her own privileges in relation to those disparities, the mixed race persona Trethewey presents at the end of her work is ripe for the kind of “killing rage” described by bell hooks which, when linked to a “passion for freedom and justice, ... illuminates, heals, and makes redemptive struggle possible” (*Killing Rage* 20).¹⁰⁴ Anger is a new poetic stance for Trethewey, who is typically lauded for her poetic formal restraint. She commented on this shift in an interview with Alan Fox, revealing that the poet Ellen Voight said to her that she could hear anger emerging in her more recent poetry. *Thrall* thus can be seen as enacting Trethewey’s angry post-*Beyond Katrina* critique of the racial discourse and privilege she inherited from her white paternal lineage.

This is not, I must emphasize, a tragic mulatta narrative. As Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo’s supple reading of Victor Séjour’s short story “Le mulâtre” (1837) in *Black Cosmopolitanism: Racial Consciousness and Transnational Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Americas* shows, rather than reading the story as “the self-hating/white-hating/confused/angry mulatto murders the white man who is the personification of his struggle with identity” (208), a “more nuanced reading” instead could emphasize factors of inequitable and oppressive treatment, violence, denial of one’s humanity, and limited, forced choice. As she explains:

¹⁰⁴ Shanna Greene Benjamin’s treatment of anger and Wanda Coleman in her *Hecate* essay, and our exchange about it as she wrote the essay, helped crystalize my thinking about anger.

[R]eading [texts] through the search for equality enables us to grasp the unstated relationship to other people of African descent within a particular text. ... [It also] allows us to acknowledge and engage differences between people of African descent while also speaking of and from the histories that connect them. It facilitates the recognition of variance and serves as an alternative to subsuming all people of African descent into the category “Black” in order to index the common horrific history that they share. ... The implicit and explicit responses to dehumanization within a text becomes the focus. (208)

Viewed through this lens, Trethewey’s anger in *Thrall* is not mulatto rage at or confusion about her mixed race identity. It is anger at the unequal treatment of blacks, the “slow violence” enacted upon them (Rob Nixon),¹⁰⁵ the denial of their humanity and suffering, and the limited, forced choices provided them. In sum, as Nwankwo puts it, it is “the dehumanization fed by [a] racist and racist framework that prompts violent action” (208). From this perspective, Trethewey in *Thrall* takes violent aim at the racist and racist cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, reclaiming and elevating a black maternal legacy. She names and critiques the dehumanizing construction of mixed race internationally, articulating a shared history and constructing a community of shared mixed race experience.

The objectivity and large scale of this articulation might appear to leave out the personal story of the poet-persona. Yet Trethewey does not leave the personal story out at all. Many of the poems in *Thrall* rely upon identification of personal elements, such as “my father,” and “I.” This occurs in her earlier poetry as well, drawing as it does upon family members such as her aunt, grandmother, mother, and father. One of the difficulties for scholars of Trethewey is interpreting her work without falling into what the New Critics termed the “biographical fallacy.” Scholar Pearl Amelia McHaney strongly warns against what she feels are biographical readings of Trethewey’s work, asserting instead the importance of her larger national and cultural interrogations of “empire and white supremacy” (155). While that interrogation is a critical aspect of Trethewey’s work, attending to Trethewey’s use of personal material is also vitally important to understanding her approach to critique.¹⁰⁶ Like Mary Prince in *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* (1831), Trethewey in *Thrall* produces what Nwankwo terms a “community autoethnography”—a text created by the “othered”—“both to tell the

105 Nixon writes, “By slow violence, I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event of action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility. We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales” (2). In *Beyond Katrina*, Trethewey unveils the slow violence of environmental predation of her former home, detailing the post-Hurricane Katrina devastation and inequitable rebuilding of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and its impact on her family.

106 A couple of wonderful conversations about McHaney’s essay during the summer of 2016 with my student Thomas Simonson gave me food for thought as I processed why I disagree with her position.

story of the community and to talk back to the dominant discourse on the group.” A key feature of this text is that the story is told “both as an objective outsider providing information to an uninformed public and as an invested insider experiencing the treatment described” (167). The insider experience requires the personal story. Trethewey’s entire *oeuvre* could in fact be described as community autoethnography, thereby justifying that we always include the personal story in our interpretations.

4 Cosmopolitanism, Race, Poetic Identity, and Trethewey

There are any number of definitions of cosmopolitanism I could draw upon here, such as Homi Bhabha’s “vernacular cosmopolitanism” or Kwame Anthony Appiah’s “rooted cosmopolitanism.” The two most useful, to me, in articulating a cosmopolitanism inclusive of racial identity are the “minority cosmopolitanism” of Susan Koshy, and the “Black cosmopolitanism” of Nwankwo. Koshy’s definition details the “how” of cosmopolitan expression in literature quite deftly, so I will turn to that second, before several close readings of poems in *Thrall*. Nwankwo’s version details the “why,” which of course must come first, offering an important frame to name the relationships among cosmopolitanism, race, and poetic identity (or, as she terms it, the Black subject). As she points out,

Cosmopolitanism, the definition of oneself through the world beyond one’s own origins, was a crucial element of modernity (and the Enlightenment). Imperialism and Orientalism were in fact forms of European cosmopolitanism. ... It should come as no surprise, then, that responses and resistance to these totalizing and hegemonic cosmopolitanisms also often employ cosmopolitanism as a conceptual frame. (9)

Nwankwo’s understanding of how black subjects responded to cosmopolitanism, and the options they had/have for responding, is useful for understanding the relationship between Trethewey’s earlier works and her fifth book, *Thrall*. Nwankwo writes:

People of African descent’s approaches to public self-representation were born, in significant part, of the Atlantic power structure’s attempts to deny them access to cosmopolitan subjectivity. ... This denial ... coexisted with a denial of access for that same population to both national subjectivity and human subjectivity, and perhaps most significantly, with an emphasis (from above) on their race, effectively determining the possible parameters of identity for people of African descent. ... Race, nation, and humanity were the three major referents through which individuals defined themselves and others ... but only one of the three referents were allowed people of African descent—race. Consequently, this population essentially had to prioritize, and choose which of the parameters denied them they most wished to challenge, and by extension which referent they most wished to have the right to claim. (10)

Trethewey's earlier works (as Elam noted), focus on claiming human and national (United States) identities for black and mixed race subjects, in the course of which the nation and humanity are reconceptualized through the eyes of black and mixed identities and thus re-imagined. With *Thrall*, Trethewey looks beyond the United States, accessing cosmopolitanism both to claim it and to critique it. She inhabits cosmopolitanism not as an enduring positionality, but more along the lines of Inderpal Grewal's notion that some subjects participate in cosmopolitanism "intermittently or in unstable ways" (38). To Nwankwo, cosmopolitanism is, borrowing from Audre Lorde, one of "the master's tools (Blackness being another) that people of African descent tested for its possible usefulness to at least get into the master's house, if not to destroy it" (11). So, from this perspective, Trethewey accesses cosmopolitanism as a tool to expose and critique the Enlightenment and its racist/racist discourse.¹⁰⁷

It is important to add here that Nwankwo does not posit a binary between blackness and cosmopolitanism. Instead, she argues, "Black cosmopolitanism is born of the interstices and intersections between two mutually constitutive cosmopolitanisms—a hegemonic cosmopolitanism, exemplified by the material and psychological violence of imperialism and slavery (including dehumanization), and a cosmopolitanism that is rooted in a common knowledge and memory of that violence" (13). This helps us see, again, why the personal matters in Trethewey's texts: In *Thrall*, Trethewey engages with two cosmopolitanisms, the one intertwined with Enlightenment "knowledge" that mixed race is a "stain" and a "lesser" humanity, justifying oppression and disenfranchisement (which she critiques), and the other, speaking the truth of mixed race experience and how it felt/feels, across cultures and peoples touched by European imperialism (with whom she connects as a found community).

Koshy's 2011 essay in *PMLA*, "Minority Cosmopolitanism," offers a theoretical frame and vocabulary to articulate how a text enacts these mutually constituted cosmopolitanisms. Like Nwankwo, Koshy refuses to see the minority as non-worldly, static, and uniform: "The frequent conflation of the minority with the subnational and the cosmopolitan with the global misconceives the complexity of both. It denies worldliness to the former and particularity to the latter. It misses their imbrications, past and present. It is inattentive to their production in networks and circuits that are irreducible to scale" (592). Koshy's project, which conjoins the "historically divergent projects of ethnic studies and studies of cosmopolitanism" (592), coins the term "minority cosmopolitanism" to refer to "[t]ranslocal affiliations that are grounded in the experience of minority subjects and are marked by a critical awareness of the constraints of primary attachments such as family, religion, race, and nation and by an ethical or imaginative receptivity, orientation, or aspiration to an interconnected or shared world" (594). Koshy's formulation helps us see, again, how the personal

107 I make much the same point in my analysis of Wanda Coleman's "Retro Rogue Anthology" in *Mercurochrome*.

elements of the story connect with a cosmopolitanism of shared experience. Minority cosmopolitanism breaks down traditional oppositions such as local/ethnic versus global/transnational by highlighting, according to Koshy, a “comparative cultural perspective”; this comparative cultural perspective, importantly, is enacted through both “centripetal and centrifugal energies—[a] centripetal capacity to intensify affiliations of race, ethnicity, and culture and [a] centrifugal capacity to extend these affiliations outward” (594). This expression of affiliations through energies works particularly well in close readings of poetry, as I will demonstrate shortly. It allows a kinetic cosmopolitanism, essential to the mutability of mixed race. While Nwankwo identifies a stance of critique toward cosmopolitanism, Koshy stresses how the subject experiences “a paradoxical relation to cross-cultural contact, registering the disruptions and asymmetries of intercultural encounter while sustaining an openness to its transformative possibilities” (594).

Through these frames, we can see how in *Thrall* Trethewey deploys a mixed race cosmopolitanism in which the poems move centripetally into personal, interracial family material and centrifugally into ekphrastic poems on art depicting interracial families and mixed race figures/artists. The poems show both critique of those depictions and the Enlightenment ideas behind them and expression of the feelings such experiences engendered in mixed race subjects, thereby creating a mixed race cosmopolitan community to supplement the Mississippi Gulf Coast community Trethewey can no longer truly go “home” to.

5 Mixed Race Cosmopolitanism, Ekphrasis, Community, and the Black Mother in *Thrall*

Trethewey’s “killing rage” hooks has three intertwined targets in *Thrall*: one, anger at the discourse of racial mixing from the Enlightenment, expressed through a series of ekphrastic poems on paintings from Europe and the Americas depicting interracial families and mixed race persons, which reveal a hierarchical valuing of whiteness over blackness; two, anger at the white father (and, by extension, Thomas Jefferson, a founding father of the United States) as a purveyor of Enlightenment racial thought in his roles as father, husband/lover, and teacher/mentor; and three, anger at herself, for being in thrall to the white father and to his Enlightenment views, for being so much, as she writes, “her father’s daughter,” becoming a poet and eventually discovering how she has become un-homed from her black maternal lineage. Drawing upon this anger as a resource, Trethewey works as a poet in *Thrall* to metaphorically kill off the white father and Enlightenment “knowledge” about race and racial mixing, to re-situate the black mother as a beautiful, central, and even divine muse figure for the mixed race artist, and to connect a tangled and contradictory mixed race artistic identity to a mixed race cosmopolitan artistic discourse depicted in paintings, draw-

ings and photographs by Spanish, Mexican, German, and US artists, thereby attaining a diasporic citizenship within a mixed race “home.” Linked, as hooks suggests, to a passion for freedom and justice, the rage propelling the volume ultimately both illuminates and heals, albeit inconclusively.

The collection is structured centripetally and centrifugally, oscillating between material associated with local/personal mixed race experiences and international art depicting the same. Racial affiliation, a key feature of Koshy’s framing of minority cosmopolitanism, is, however, highly conflicted: In poems drawing upon either personal or international material, or both, Trethewey depicts love and intimacy with whiteness and the father while also repeatedly rejecting, critiquing, and distancing from whiteness and the paternal; the collection also contains several poems that present speakers seeking, connecting with, and deifying the black maternal. That contradictory and complicated racial affiliation/rejection stages the imposed family drama of both the mixed race poet and, by extension, that of all peoples of mixed race experience under imperialism, which dehumanizes them and forces binaristic choices.

Thrall opens with an elegy for a father, written in a first-person voice typically associated with the poet, and beginning with an epigraph, “for my father.” Such features invite us to connect the father to Trethewey’s own father, Eric Trethewey, who, at the time of the collection’s publication in 2012, was still living, thus suggesting this poem’s role as a metaphoric killing of the father. The poet announces the complicated intimacy between the speaker and the father in the poem, both as father-daughter and as poets, through the metaphor of fishing. She writes of the father figure on a fishing trip with the speaker as child: “You kept casting / your line, and when it did not come back / empty, it was tangled with mine” (5). That the dedication of the collection is “To my Father,” a shift from the “for my father” dedication of the poem itself and of Trethewey’s first poetry collection, *Domestic Work*, signals that in *Thrall*, it is now the daughter-poet’s turn to cast the lines, to be the “ruthless” one who writes the father’s death elegy, symbolically ending his power.

Establishing that centripetal energy of love and affiliation yet rejection of the white father with the opening poem, the collection then moves centrifugally to connect to an international series of visual works depicting interracial families, whiteness and blackness, and mixed race people in relation to purported “knowledge” about them. In these ekphrastic, culturally comparative poems, Trethewey traces an Enlightenment-associated discourse of race in which: paternal whiteness is associated with power and knowledge; blackness in the mother, females, or children is depicted as dull and static, associated with inanimate objects, and devalued; and mixed race persons’ value is calculated through proportion of white blood, expressed in a taxonomy of terms. Trethewey turns to paintings, drawings, and photographs because, as several scholars of mixed race studies have noted, racial categorization relies upon the visual to “see” supposed racial markers in order to read mixed race (Elam).

One key example, “Kitchen Maid with Supper at Emmaus, Or, the Mulata,” illustrates how the volume *Thrall* moves mixed race affiliation centrifugally outward.

Trethewey's sonnet reads the painting referenced, "Kitchen Maid with Supper at Emmaus," by Diego Velázquez (c. 1619) as a definition of the mixed race subject in Western racial ideology, repeating the subject/verb combination "she is" or "she's" five times. Solely associated with the objects of her work—all vessels waiting to be filled and used—the mulatta is described as a "stain," an "echo," a being who "listens," and who "leans." The poem highlights that she is not even the subject of the painting that depicts her: Instead, the focus is on Jesus, "framed in the scene behind her." In the final two lines, typically the epigrammatic turn in the sonnet, the imagery of white and light connect this definition of mixed race to the Enlightenment. Jesus is associated with whiteness and light, purity and insight; while the mulatta's white cap links her to him and these ideals, the link is only partial, as she is mixed race. Light falls on only *half* of her face, as *half* of the final sentence reads. The poem reveals how the painting constructs mixed race, suggesting that her partial blackness limits her range of knowledge to her place, the kitchen, and its objects.

Trethewey's poem critiques the Enlightenment's construction of Western racial ideology by viewing this 17th century Spanish painting through her lens of mixed race affiliation: The poet adds the subtitle, "Or, the Mulata," to the title of the painting, thus shifting the emphasis and focus away from "Supper at Emmaus" and Jesus. This illustrates how minority cosmopolitan poets stand in what Koshy terms "paradoxical relation to cross-cultural contact, registering the disruptions and asymmetries of intercultural encounter while sustaining an openness to its transformative possibilities." The mixed race poet-speaker of this poem can only see the painting as asymmetrical to her worldview, limiting as it does the intellectual capacity of the mulatta kitchen maid. Therefore, the poet positions the reader to re-see the subject matter of the artwork through racially-affiliated eyes; such a re-positioning extends that affiliation centrifugally outward, creating transformative possibilities for the reader and the nation.

Trethewey links the works of visual art directly back to personal material in the final poem of the first section of *Thrall*, titled "Knowledge." Near the end, the poem turns from its third-person commentary on a chalk drawing of a group of white men depicted as seeking knowledge through dissection of a female body to a first-person speaker who connects the white men with Trethewey's father's dissection of her racially. Trethewey quotes from a poem by her father, titled "The Swing," in which he writes: "I study my crossbreed child" (30). She has spoken in multiple interviews about her concern with this line in his poem, which in her poem functions metaphorically as a "pen / poised above me, aimed straight for my heart." In the poem "Knowledge," Trethewey re-casts Eric Trethewey's line within the context of a larger cross-cultural discourse of race critiqued in her ekphrastic poems, thus bringing centripetally back to her local affiliation a minority cosmopolitan knowledge that provides correction and illumination of a false taxonomy of mixed race.

The trio of themes—love, knowledge, and forgiveness—suggested in the collection's two epigraphs, "What is love? One name for it is knowledge" by Robert Penn

Warren and “After such knowledge, what forgiveness?” by T. S. Eliot, provide the narrative frame for the collection’s grappling with mixed race: The complicated father-daughter love and rejection we saw expressed in the opening poem, “Elegy,” is followed in the first section by both the purported “knowledge” about race in Enlightenment and its descendent in modern discourse as represented in the line from Eric Trethewey’s poem, as well as the poet-speaker’s knowledge of that “knowledge,” its international context, and its falseness. The second section of *Thrall* then moves to work toward a partial forgiveness of the white father, a process in which the figure of the black mother becomes central. This section opens with a trio of poems titled “The Americans,” on US historical depictions of blacks as inferior backdrops; the third poem in the series enacts a similar turn as in the first section from third-person to a first-person speaker and apparently personal childhood material. The poem, “Help, 1968,” references a photograph by Robert Frank of a white infant in the arms of a black maid. Turning to first-person, Trethewey writes, “when my mother took me for walks, / she was mistaken again and again / for my maid” (35), thereby connecting the racist discourse of US culture centripetally to family and racial affiliation as well as centrifugally to the Enlightenment discourse on racial mixing exposed in the preceding section.

In the poems following, the speakers and occasions move repeatedly between personal and international material, fluidly drawing cross-cultural comparisons between the two and creating a mixed race community based on the experience. For example, the first-person poem “Mano Prieta,” on the occasion of a family photograph in which the black mother’s hand presses on the mixed race daughter’s arm, leaving “the imprint / on my body of her lovely dark hand” is followed by “De Español y Negra; Mulata,” on a painting by Miguel Cabrera in 1763, also depicting a family scene with a white father, black mother, and biracial daughter. In both ekphrastic poems, the white father is associated with power: In the first poem, he sits on a “throne”; in the second, his touch carries “dominion” and “possession.” However, the position of the black mother shifts: Unlike the first poem, in which the mother is “perched on the edge” of the chair, in the second poem, the black mother literally moves to “the foreground,” her blackness “advancing” and “spreading.” In the final line, she has become “a great pendulum eclipsing the light” (40). In this transitional scene, the black mother moves to the forefront of the narrative, blocking out the Enlightenment discourse that positions her as inferior background.

Following this empowering affiliation with the black maternal figure, the remaining poems of section two reconsider the affiliation with/rejection of the white father. In two poetic sequences, “Mythology” and “Geography,” the first-person speaker engages childhood scenes in which detachment from a now-diminished father and the past is featured. In “Mythology,” the speaker refers to the past as “metaphor,” a passage as “blocked,” and “nostalgia” as “treachery”; ultimately, the speaker must, like Odysseus’s “crew” upon encountering the Sirens, shut out “the sound of my father’s voice” (41–43). The thrall of the father is difficult to resist. The following

poem, "Geography," creates more distance between them, despite presenting three different connectors—road, river, and rails. In each case, the means that connect the speaker to the father and thus reflect love and intimacy are also the means of separation and distance: On the road the mother and child travel to meet the father, he feigns "hitchhiking" as if "a stranger / passing through to somewhere else" (45); on the river where they are enjoying a summer day, the father's sad songs propel the speaker to wade to the other side, where she looks back at him, "as if across the years: he's smaller, his voice / lost in the distance between us" (46); on the rails they walk along tracing memories, the father searches "for the railroad switch" that creates a separate path for the train (47). Speaking from a similarly detached affiliation, the speaker of the next poem, the ekphrastic "Torna Atrás," seeks simply "to understand / my father," asking how it is that "a man could love—and so diminish what he loves" (49). In the final poems of this section, the speaker seems to forgive the father, seeing him as "fouled" and tangled in his own "chain[s]" (54) and also asks his forgiveness for her own shortcomings in the relationship (50–51). In the final poem of the section, "Rotation," the father figure is "turning to go, waning / like the moon" (55), no longer powerful or even present.

A key poem amidst the father figure poems in the second section, "Bird in the House," provides a counterpoint to the section's working through and letting go of the white father by connecting to Rita Dove who, as I have argued elsewhere, stands in for the black maternal in Trethewey's mixed race poetic genealogy (Pereira, *Rita*). "Bird in the House" alludes to Dove's poem, "In the Old Neighborhood," a poem about homecoming, identity, and cosmopolitanism. Prefacing this poem in the Introduction to her *Selected Poems*, Dove writes:

The mystery of destiny boils down to the ultimate—and ultimately unanswerable—questions: How does where I come from determine where I've ended up? Why am I what I am and not what I thought I would be? What did I think I would be? Where do I reside most completely? From time to time in my poetry I have tried to sidle up to the answers, to eavesdrop on the gods. My attempts often reach back to childhood, with its volatile pleasures and profound trepidations. (xxi)

Dove's poem about the old neighborhood, situated as a return to the speaker's childhood home in preparation for a sister's wedding, culminates in the accidental death of a bird in the attic fan of the house. As a figure for Dove herself—a poet who has several times punned on her last name in her poems—the bird expresses "what might have been" the fate of the poet, had she remained trapped in the attic, in the old neighborhood, "a bird with no song" (xxv), never able to connect with the cosmopolitan cities referenced in the newspaper the speaker is "snared" by as she reads, names like "Santiago, Paris, and Dakar" (xxiii).

In Trethewey's "Bird in the House," the dead bird becomes a figure for the speaker's deceased mother, for whom she still grieves. "Black as omen," the bird is "like a single crow / meaning sorrow" (50). Like Dove's poem, a wedding is involved—in Trethewey's poem, the father figure has remarried. To him, therefore, the cat has

brought in a “gift,” just one of several omens of joy that portend a happy future. To the speaker, however, the bird evokes unresolved grief over the loss of the black mother. The speaker awakens nightly from a dream, “my heart battering my rib cage— / a trapped, wild bird” (51). Trethewey’s and Dove’s poems both allude to Paul Laurence Dunbar’s poem, “Sympathy,” seen by many as an expression of the fate of the black poet. In Trethewey’s poem, while the father figure deals with the dead bird, and thus the death of the speaker’s black mother, by burying it in the backyard, “erasing it into the dirt,” the speaker, instead, seeks to free her trapped heart, to excavate her love for the black mother, to resurrect her in some form as present, in order to be healed. That this poem is positioned amidst the father forgiveness poems in the second section suggests that such expression of love and affiliation with the black mother is central to her ability to forgive the white father.

Trethewey’s bird figure and its connection to Rita Dove as a black poetic mother develops further in the first poem of the third section, the title poem “Thrall,” the final ekphrastic poem in the collection, thus moving the local insights of the personal material in the previous section centrifugally to connect with global racial discourse on mixed race and family. This poem follows the career of a 17th-century Spanish mixed race slave who became an apprentice and then became a painter, Juan de Pareja, and comments on two paintings: first, one in which he was the subject for his master, Diego Velázquez, who was not his father but, as the speaker states, “he might have been”; and, second, another in which he painted himself into the scene. The parallel to Trethewey’s apprenticeship to her father as a poet and one of her principal teachers is apparent. In the poem, the speaker Pareja moves from a slave who grinds the master’s colors and hides his own artistic talent to a freed man yet still apprentice, who is repeatedly “fix[ed]” in his master’s eye and painting. The apprentice comes to see himself through the eyes of the master: “For years I looked to it [the painting] as one looks into a mirror” (63). A year after Velázquez’s death, Pareja, however, paints himself as “a freeman in the House of Customs” (63). In his hand, Trethewey writes, is “an answer a slip of paper / my signature on it / Juan de Pareja 1661” (63). In this scene, the speaker positions himself as, finally, a freed artist, able to represent himself as he wishes. While he has been trained by the white father figure, it is the black maternal that serves as his muse and inspiration. The poem closes with this reflection by Pareja:

Now
 At the bright end
 of sleep mother
 She comes back to me
 as sound
 her voice
 in the echo of birdcall
 a single syllable
 again

and again my name
 Juan Juan Juan
 or a bit of song that
 waking
 I cannot grasp

In these lines, Trethewey recaptures the "birdcall" of the black maternal as a key emotional component for the mixed race artist, the root of the song, or artistic expression. In the poem following, titled "Calling," Trethewey presents the black maternal as deified. In a baptismal scene, the speaker is immersed in the pool, the mother's body "between me and the high sun, a corona of light / around her face" (67). The speaker demands, "Why not call it / a vision? What I know is this: / I was drowning and saw a dark Madonna; / someone pulled me through / the water's bright ceiling / and I rose, initiate, / from one life into another" (67). The poem's light imagery and title, "Calling," suggest that the mixed race poet is enlightened by the black mother and thereby called to their life's work through her. This elevation of the black maternal provides a counter-narrative to the oppressive, dehumanizing construction of race in Enlightenment discourse and to hegemonic cosmopolitanism, presenting an alternative enlightenment.

Despite this momentary enlightenment, *Thrall* as a collection of poems concludes inconclusively, with a series of six poems following the title poem, "Thrall," meditating on the futility of circling back to these cultural foundations and to the past, and ending with the failure of either words or blackness to vanquish the whiteness "hover[ing] beneath / silent, incendiary / waiting" (78). Trethewey operates under no illusion that her text has heroically overthrown hegemonic cosmopolitanism. It has, however, critiqued representations of mixed race within that racialist/racist discourse. It has articulated the lived and felt experience of mixed race peoples across various cultures and times, creating a sense of home and community. Furthermore, it has inscribed the importance and core humanity of the need for the black maternal in Trethewey's poetic lineage. Perhaps with these illuminations comes some healing for us all.

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Joanna Jasińska

The Cosmopolitan Reality of Polish American Families

In the globalizing world of the twenty-first-century, the number of “world families” is increasing (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim); it is a sign of the times. “World families” do not have one home country. They frequently reject cultural, political, and territorial divisions. “Cosmopolitan” is the name they give to their new hybrid identity, which is enriched by a close relationship to cultures other than just their own.

In his book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1999), Ulrich Beck writes about the necessity of building a cosmopolitan society globally. In his other books, *Power in the Global Age* (2005) and *Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006), he postulates the thesis that in the global age, national categories will be rejected in favor of transnational ones. For Beck, cosmopolitanism does not mean *no*-nationality, but a coexistence of separate national identities. Beck’s project of the cosmopolitan order entails an acceptance of equality and diversity, based on tolerance and responsibility towards the whole world. “World families” are reflections of these changes, and as Beck states, they constitute an intersection of different worlds (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 19).¹⁰⁸

Referring to his theory of cosmopolitanism, I shall present selected conclusions from the research on Polish American couples I conducted in the years 2012–2015 (Jasińska). The trajectories of 23 well-educated, white, binational married couples, city dwellers, aged between 30 and 60 years old, who have been married for at least five years, will serve as an illustration of Beck’s “cosmopolitan project,” in which communities are connected globally, i.e. globally and locally. This “new patriotism” transcends local and national boundaries, but – as Taoufik Djebali rightly notices in his article in this book – Beck’s concept of cosmopolitanism rooted in Western European tradition and liberal democracies, based on shared race, religion and cultural patterns, does not take into account recent racialization of migrants coming to Europe. Thus, the sample of the interviewed racially homogeneous couples living in big cities matches the cosmopolitanism of metropolises as defined by Anna Sosnowska in the article following this one rather than the more radical, minoritarian cosmopolitanisms discussed by other authors. As a result, situated in the context of this book, my research aptly illustrates the difference between the way that the idea of race and the much less politicized notion of ethnicity function in the transatlantic world.

The aim of the research, conducted using qualitative methods (in-depth interviews and case studies), was to determine whether cultural diversity in a Polish

108 For a critique of Beck’s thought from a racial minority perspective, see Djebali’s chapter in this volume.

American relationship was an obstacle in everyday life or a special quality enriching the relationship. I analyzed how the respondents negotiated and adjusted to cultural differences. Studying the roots and cultural identity of Polish American couples, their values, and the traditions and customs they cultivated allowed me to establish which differences they perceived as important and how they changed and are still changing in contact with another culture.

The relational trajectories of the respondents demonstrate the fluidity of their cultural identity, which is a processual construction. They illustrate Anzelm Strauss's theory, which constituted a theoretical framework for the research, that personal identity is a symbolic and cultural process, an outcome of relationships with other people. It is constructed as a result of an interaction with other human beings when we take on their perspectives, adjust our actions, create meaningful gestures, and adapt symbols coming from a different culture in everyday life (Strauss).

In the present article, I shall describe the characteristics of binational families, and on the basis of several diversified examples, I shall trace the process of their cultural transformation. Analyzing their cultural identity after years together in a binational relationship, the traditions and customs they cultivate, how they share duties, and the contacts they maintain with others, I shall present several Polish American "world families."

1 Binational Marriages and Their Characteristics

Marriages entered into with foreigners are an indicator of a society's openness towards other countries (Szukalski). Nevertheless, marriages of Polish women and men to foreigners are not very frequent. They constitute 1.5–2.1% of all marriages registered in Poland (Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa [Government Population Council] (78–79). Data concerning intermarriage between US citizens and Poles outside of Poland could not be found. Among binational marriages that took place in Poland in the years 1996–2011, marriages of Polish women to British men (23.1% in total) and to German men (14%) living abroad dominate. Marriages of Polish men to foreigners show different geographical preferences. Here marriages to Ukrainian (35.4%), Russian (15.4%), and Belarusian (8.6%) women dominate. Legalized relationships between Poles and US citizens are not numerous. They make up 1.5% of all marriages between Poles and foreigners and 4.4% of marriages between Polish women and foreigners that took place in the years 1996–2011. As can be seen, Polish women are more willing to marry US men than Polish men are to marry US women. This has been confirmed by my research as well. The sources of these discrepancies are frequently different expectations of Polish partners as to gender roles and the individualized needs of US women (Jasińska).

Functioning in a binational family requires exceptional communication skills to reconcile frequently different value systems and the customs and expectations of each individual's culture (Falicov; Crohn). Through an everyday interaction in a "world family," the partners and their children undergo a process of acculturation, i.e., they acquire the patterns of behavior characteristic of the individual's cultural surroundings (Berry). Cultural identities evolve and enrich themselves by distinct cultural baggage, thereby creating a new hybrid and cosmopolitan identity of the individual, couple, and family.

Although research shows that individuals in culturally homogeneous marriages have a better chance of staying together than those who differ in terms of nation, religion, and race, upbringing in the same culture does not ensure the permanence of marriage (Walczak 22). Walczak's research results also show that the permanence of binational marriages depends on the ability to make cultural compromises, which would entail mutual adjustment of differences, overcoming of personal prejudices and stereotypes, and development of a system which would combine different cultures (Walczak 23). Such factors as the knowledge of foreign languages, interest in the culture of another person, and social approval or disapproval exert a significant influence on the advantage of one culture over another in the everyday life of binational partners.

The place of residence plays an extremely important role in the functioning of binational families:

The consequences are different in the case where a couple chooses as the place of their residence the country of origin of one of the parents, in which case the dominant culture becomes the family culture, than when they choose a neutral country, i.e. a country which is not the country of origin of either of the parents. This offers an opportunity for openness towards cultural differences and orientation towards multiculturalism as a value. (Miluska 381)

The problems which appear in binational families concern the following:

the ways of expressing love, closeness, character and degree of commitment to a relationship, attitude towards marriage and parenting, and the perception of the roles of men and women. Common are communication problems resulting from an inappropriate interpretation of non-verbal signals, such as tone of voice, quantity and quality of eye contact or gesture interpreted by a partner contrary to the intention of the speaker. (Sowa-Behtane 29)

Individuals raised in multiple cultural contexts develop, like their parents in binational marriages, hybrid cultural identities, composed of a multitude of influences. In this new individualized cultural identity, the boundaries are blurred, and the range of values and cultural symbols is expanded. Consequently, these individuals are maladjusted, cannot identify with the culture of either parent, and feel the need to move to a third country to search for self-identity.

What are the positive and negative effects of being raised in a binational family? The positive effects Ewa Sowa-Behtane mentions are the following: openness towards

others, a tolerant attitude, curiosity about the world, increased cultural awareness, multicultural identity, and multilingualism. Among the negative effects, she lists identity problems connected to cultural or national identification, the feeling of loss, an intolerant attitude toward the environment, and limited contact with the family of one of the parents.

As can be seen, the shaping of a cosmopolitan identity in a binational family is a process which requires certain strategies for coping with cultural differences. In the following sections, I shall present the accounts of selected respondents concerning their cultural identity, traditions, and the customs they cultivate in everyday life.

2 Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Identity of Polish American Couples

All respondents were born and raised either in the United States or in Poland. Currently, they live in Poland (in Warsaw or its vicinity, Kraków, and Lublin), or in the United States (in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, or in their vicinities). One couple lives in Freiberg, Germany. The four selected couples differ with respect to their nationality, country of origin, current place of residence, and number of children: Kasia and Ben: a Polish woman and US man living in the US; Maciej and Sandra: a Polish man and US woman living in the US, but currently moving to Denmark; Anna and Ed: a Polish woman and US man living in Germany; Beata and Chris: a Polish woman and US man living in Poland. The following examples will pertain to the origin of the respondents and their attitude toward the country of origin. They will also constitute an attempt at determining their current cultural identity.

2.1 Couple 1: Kasia and Ben

Kasia, aged 49, comes from Warsaw and is a pianist. When she was 26, she left for the United States to study music. There she met Ben, who is the same age as Kasia, and likewise a pianist. They have been married for 18 years and live in San Francisco, where they run a music school. To develop their professional passions, they decided not to have any children but are the owners of two cats: Francis and Antonio. This is what they say about their origins and family:

Kasia: I come from Warsaw and so did my parents. My father was an engineer. He travelled a lot. He was a soldier of the Home Army. I inherited his strength. My mother was a housewife and did not work professionally. She always told me: "Do not end up like me, do not repeat my mistakes, rely on yourself, not on a man."

Ben: I come from the Midwestern United States, from Nebraska. I am the first person in my family who has left our hometown to achieve something. My parents were not educated. They were not interested in the world outside their town. Even when we went on holidays, this was in the vicinity of our home. We never went to the ocean or mountains, not to mention a holiday abroad.

Kasia and Ben stress that nationality does not matter much to them. Kasia feels Polish, but she has a lot of typically US American characteristics as well:

Kasia: I am assertive, independent and self-reliant, and these are American characteristics. For me, Polish identity manifests itself in culture and music. In my music school, I get my students acquainted with Chopin's *oeuvre*, which is the very essence of Polishness. And yet I do not keep contact with the Polish community in San Francisco. These are very distrustful, unfriendly and envious.

Ben maintains that he does not feel like a typical guy from the Midwest of the United States:

Ben: I have neither a cowboy hat nor a gun. I am not very patriotic. I am interested in the world outside Nebraska. I easily adjust to new conditions as when I lived in Canada while doing my Ph.D.

2.2 Couple 2: Maciej and Sandra

Maciej, aged 39, comes from Kraków. Having finished his studies, he left Poland to join his family. They had received green cards and were living in the USA. In Madison, Wisconsin, he met Sandra while doing his Ph.D. Sandra, aged 35, grew up on the East Coast of the United States in a very homogeneous environment: white, Protestant, among agricultural lower-middle class workers. Her grandparents came to the United States from Italy. Sandra and Maciej have been married for seven years. Sarah is a sociology professor, and Maciej is a multimedia producer. They have two daughters, aged five and two. Since Sandra has recently signed a one-year contract to work at the University of Copenhagen, they are moving to Denmark.

Maciej did not plan to leave Poland. He was fascinated by the Eastern Borderlands. He felt truly Polish. This is what he says about the transformation of his cultural identity:

Maciej: Now, after the years spent in the USA, I think I have a flexible identity. I assume the one that suits me at the moment. I am between cultures. I know that I will never be an "American" for my US friends, but this does not disturb me at all. I am proud of it. I got stuck somewhere in the middle. I have been living in the States for 15 years and this has changed my identity. After 24 years of living in Poland, being wrapped in cotton wool, I have learned many lessons at the school of hard knocks. I had to cope on my own, float or drown. I did very well, indeed. This taught me self-discipline, setting goals and consistently achieving them, following my dreams.

During her studies, Sandra travelled a lot around Europe and Asia. But it was her stay in South Korea, where she lived for three years, that entirely changed her perception of her culture:

Sandra: On my return to the States I felt I no longer fit in with my friends. I was out of the game. I did not know what was going on in pop culture. I did not see the much-discussed TV series “Friends.” I did not hear about the shootings there, or elsewhere. It was as if I had lost my US identity and stopped sharing a common culture. For a while I even thought of coming back to South Korea, where I had felt really good. I had to come to terms with the fact that I was not a typical American.

According to Sandra, a “typical American” does not spend much time outside his or her country. Americans from the US do not see the world through other people’s eyes. They are immersed in mass culture: talk shows, national news, the newest series, etc.

Sandra: I would say that a typical American is a patriot, a nationalist admiring the power of his own country, having an optimistic, materialistic and anti-intellectual attitude to life. I am not a nationalist, but nevertheless I feel American.

Despite the feeling of maladjustment, Sandra maintains that she could not leave the States forever. She believes that categorizing people with regard to their nationality is not altogether precise, but quite useful. It is growing up and living in a certain place, or country, that shapes us.

2.3 Couple 3: Anna and Ed

Anna, aged 39, comes from Wrocław. She was born into an artistic family. As a teenager, she attended music courses in Germany, where she later took up music studies in violin. There, at the university, she met Ed. Anna currently works as a violinist in an orchestra and teaches the instrument at a music school. Ed, aged 39, is also a musician. He plays the saxophone in a quartet, giving concerts all over the world. He comes from Columbus, Georgia, from a musical family of American Jews. Anna and Ed live in Germany. They have a seven-year-old daughter, who is learning to play the saxophone and sometimes gives concerts with Ed.

Anna: My grandparents came from Lviv. My mother is a pianist, my father an actor. I was born in Wrocław, but we quickly moved to Warsaw, where I lived until my departure for Germany.

Ed: My grandparents arrived in the United States from Minsk. My mother was born there. My father has Dutch roots. My parents are assimilated Jews. Like me, they are musicians: My mother is a cello player, my father plays the clarinet.

As for her cultural identity, Anna says she feels Polish, because she speaks Polish, cooks Polish dishes, and celebrates holidays in Polish, but she could no longer live in Poland:

Anna: We, the Poles, are a sad nation, full of fear. Here, in Germany, I got rid of this fear. I do not complain any longer. I am not a grumbler.

Ed: My wife says that I am not a typical American because I have my own opinion and I do not need the media to know what to think. Living in the States means that one has to work constantly. Americans are proud that they do not have holidays. But I like my everyday life, bits and pieces of different cultures in our life. I feel rather European.

2.4 Couple 4: Beata and Chris

Beata, aged 49, comes from Warsaw. She is a lawyer, but she has never practiced her profession. Instead, she writes books and teaches German. She met Chris on a bus while taking part in an academic exchange program in Germany. They have been married for 21 years. Chris studied humanities. Currently, he works as a manager abroad and returns home on the weekends. The couple has four children, aged 19, 17, 13 and 5. They live near Warsaw. This is what they say about their roots and cultural identity:

Beata: My parents lived in the country. Like many other Varsoviaans, they moved to Warsaw, where I was born, from one of the nearby villages. My father worked in a shipping company. My mother worked as an economist.

Chris: I was born in the States, near the Mexican border. Those who lived there had very mixed roots. Mine are Norwegian, German, Swiss and Irish. My great-grandmother, whom I remember quite well, spoke Norwegian. My parents were educated. My father was a physician, whereas my mother was a teacher.

Beata: I feel European even more than Polish. When I was in the States, I felt that everything was so far away. I also understood that Poland and Europe are extremely diverse. I grew to appreciate Poland and I do not agree with this constant complaining about our country.

Chris: I got Europeanized and Polonized in exile. It would be difficult for me to come back to live in the States. I do not know who I am any longer. In the States, I do not feel at home. I am a citizen of the world. I constantly travel between Germany, Poland, England, and the States. Wherever I am, I feel good. But I like Poland very much, and I speak good Polish.

The majority of my respondents stress the emotional bond with their countries of origin, claiming at the same time that nationality is not of great importance for them. They emphasize that they do not feel like typical Poles or Americans from the US. They were always interested in otherness and exoticism. That was why they travelled a lot and studied abroad. My respondents changed their attitude to their countries of

origin as time passed. The longer the immigration was, the lesser the levels of homesickness and the need to maintain national tradition and speak the mother tongue. The ongoing acculturation process transformed their cultural identity, enriching it by new elements. They adopted more and more customs, traditions, and patterns of behavior from their partners and their countries of origin, gaining simultaneously deeper self-awareness and increasing their openness towards otherness.

3 Cosmopolitanism and Friendships of Binational Families

The majority of my respondents attach great importance to close contacts with their family and friends, and they appreciate them very much. In most cases, these are international connections. My respondents stress that friendships in Poland look much different from those in the States. They are much deeper, and people make every effort to meet. In the States, people often say: “We have to meet,” but it is not binding and does not lead to an actual meeting. People work a lot, and the distances between the houses are immense. The Poles living in the States miss close relationships with their friends such as those they had in their homeland. Yet they complain about the Poles living abroad and they do not seek contact with them. It is most common that the closest friends come from countries other than Poland and the States.

Chris: Apart from my family, friends are really important. But I have to confess that friendships with the Swedes, Poles, Danes, and Japanese seem to be deeper, truer than with Americans. In the States, people do not have time for their friends. When we arrive in Poland only for four days, our friends organize their duties in such a way that we could meet.

Beata: Where do we find our friends? We have four children. It is widely known that everyone can visit us, and so people from all over the world drop in as they wish. Nowadays there are increasingly more children at school who have mixed backgrounds; their parents are different and they lived in many different countries. These are really children of a third culture.

Anna: Our friends make up an international environment. We hardly have any Polish friends except for two acquaintances of my parents from whom I rented a flat as a student. We completely lost touch with Poles. The Poles living abroad are extremely greedy and envious. They do not hang out together. We have a lot of German friends. Ed’s friend from Trinidad, who lives here, is a conductor. We also have friends who come from France and Australia.

Sandra recalls the period when they lived in Philadelphia and Detroit as follows:

Sandra: I appreciate the time we spent in Philadelphia and Detroit, because our neighborhood was multicultural and diverse, mainly African American. Among our neighbors we were a white minority, and by making friends we were crossing the barriers which still exist in the States. We are still in touch, although we have not been living there for 10 years.

4 Cosmopolitanism and the Cultural Identity of the Respondents' Children

My respondents' children are bicultural. They speak two or even three languages fluently. Due to their parents' attitudes, they are more open and tolerant towards otherness. They often are unable to decide about their cultural identity, but it is frequently shaped with reference to the place where they spent their childhood and early school years:

Beata: Four of my children speak two languages fluently, although to a varying degree. They always talk with their father in English. Iza, who spent three years at school in the States, writes and speaks fluently. Kinga writes poorly in English, and one can see that she did not attend an American school. Max is the funniest case: He was neither brought up there nor attended the school, and yet he is bilingual because he listens to the language all the time.

Ed: My daughter is seven years old. She was born in Germany and raised there. Although she is brought up tri-culturally, she is more German than Polish or American. What does a tri-cultural upbringing give her? I think she is much more open and tolerant, has broader horizons and looks at the world from a broader perspective. She is not too hasty in judging people and does not think "he is different, i.e. worse." She treats otherness in a normal way.

Maciej: Both our daughters were born in the States. They attend American schools. I see to it that they talk with me in Polish and use Polish when talking to each other. I read Polish fairy tales to them every day. The older one, Ola, starts reading herself and she reads out loud Brzechwa's poems to her younger sister. What kind of cultural identity will they have? It depends if we leave the States, because then they will absorb the culture of a given country. I think they will feel rather American enriched by Polish culture.

My respondents perceive their multicultural experience as having immense value in their lives. That is why they want their children to become citizens of the world. They wish them to speak a few languages and be open towards otherness:

Chris: My wife and I want our children to maintain contact with the global world, for the world is a global village. We wish them to speak a few languages and have contact with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds so that they would not think that the world is one-dimensional.

Among the 23 Polish American couples I studied, nine currently live abroad: Eight in the United States and one in Germany. Six of them have one to four children, between the ages of 1 and 15. Most of my respondents' children living in the States attend a Polish Saturday School in which they learn reading, writing, and speaking in that language. The children living in Poland attend, in most cases, international schools with English as the language of instruction. All respondents emphasize that the advantages of an upbringing in a binational family are unquestionable: A bicultural child sees the world in a multidimensional way, in a broader perspective, and hence is more tolerant.

5 Cosmopolitanism and the Respondents' Cultural Traditions

Culture is a matrix which fashions the individual. In the process of socialization, the individual internalizes the patterns of culture present in the traditions, language, and history of a given nation to subsequently replicate them. Cultural identity binds people to the culture of their place of upbringing and to the group of people who share the same values and cultural heritage. “Cultural identity is a “product,” a group artifact, the system of associative community ties which places an individual within a network of positions and gender roles, birth order, age, race, and familial, tribal, ethnic, national and civilizational identities” (Paleczny 71). Tomasz Paleczny emphasizes that the individual’s personality is shaped first and foremost in a small, local, familial, and neighborly community. It is the familial environment that forms our worldview, allowing for an internalization of norms and symbols before an individual can identify with a larger cultural group, which is racial, ethnic, or national. Homogeneous cultures, to which Poland belongs, where there are practically no religious or national minorities, are characterized by the rigidity of norms and values, which means that the modification of one’s identity is possible only to a lesser degree. In heterogeneous societies, to which the United States as a multicultural society belongs—“the melting pot” of nations and religions—the range of identity transformations in constant confrontation with constituent groups is much greater (17).

5.1 Couple 1: Kasia and Ben

Kasia brought a love of Chopin’s music, which she promotes in her school, as well as Polish proverbs, which she constantly quotes, from Polish culture. Kasia and Ben are not religious. They do not go to church, and they do not associate feasts with religion and the church calendar. Among the Polish feasts, they celebrate Christmas Eve with a traditional dinner, which is not typical in the States, where the main Christmas meal is most frequently eaten on Christmas Day (the 25th of December):

Kasia: Once a year I turn into a Polish woman. With my own hands, I prepare Polish dishes: dumplings, sauerkraut-and-meat stew, and beetroot soup. But I do not enter the kitchen on Christmas Day. Ben does everything.

For 10 years, they have celebrated Christmas Eve with Ben’s parents. They always visit them in San Francisco. On Boxing Day, they go for a week to Mexico, while their cats are taken care of. They do not celebrate Easter. Kasia bakes a yeast cake and prepares herring, buying bloaters in a Polish shop. They also have their own rituals besides Polish and US traditions. They solemnly celebrate their wedding anniversary and the day they adopted their cats. Every year Kasia and Ben spend their holidays in Poland.

In Warsaw, they stay at a hotel, not at Kasia's brothers', because she does not keep in touch with them. They meet Kasia's college friends. They sometimes give a concert in one of the Warsaw clubs.

5.2 Couple 2: Maciej and Sandra

Sandra and Maciej, although they grew up Catholic, are not engaged with matters of faith. They do not celebrate all religious feasts. At Easter they go to church with an Easter basket and on Easter Monday they throw water. In the spring, they drown an effigy of Marzanna with other Poles in Ann Arbor. They celebrate neither St. Valentine's Day nor Polish or American Independence Day. They celebrate Christmas, but not the traditional Polish Christmas Eve with 12 dishes. On Christmas Day, they have a festive breakfast following Sandra's home tradition. They also celebrate a somewhat unusual Thanksgiving Day with North American, Polish, and Chinese food, and of course, birthdays.

Sandra: At home we eat Polish and American dishes. I do not cook *in Polish*, but Polish food is constantly present on our table. We travel to a Polish shop at Hamtramck twice a month, where we buy sausage, fresh rolls, Polish candies, and dumplings. Maciej sometimes makes Polish vegetable salad, and his father stuffed cabbage when he visits us. So I think we have a lot of Polish as well as American food at home. I love sauerkraut-and-meat stew.

For Maciej, traditions are not particularly important. He does not care about US ones, but he does care about Polish ones:

Maciej: We usually spend Christmas at my mother's in Delaware. She prepares 12 dishes. At Easter we stay here, in Ann Arbor. Sandra and my daughters paint Easter eggs which we have later blessed in the church. There I meet mainly Poles and some Italians. At Christmas we break the wafer, decorate the Christmas tree, but we do not sing carols. We do not celebrate Christmas Eve like other Poles in the States, but Christmas Day straight away.

To maintain contact with Poland, they visit Kraków, Maciej's hometown, once a year. There his daughters attend a Polish kindergarten for a month. In the States, they attend a Polish Saturday School. The family maintains close relations with the Polish community in Ann Arbor. Maciej organizes an annual Polish film festival.

5.3 Couple 3: Anna and Ed

Anna and Ed combine four traditions on an everyday basis: Polish, North American, German, and Jewish. They incorporate German tradition because they live in Germany and Jewish tradition because Ed is a Jew. They are not religious but rather ecumenical, as they say.

Anna: Our cuisine is international: German, Polish, Italian, Thai, very much open, every day something different. I make pork cutlets and sauerkraut-and-meat stew. Ed prepares hamburgers. Our daughter loves pork knuckle. We also eat pig ears. I have recently cooked a liver and noodle soup and tripe—the dishes an ordinary American would not touch, but we eat them with pleasure. And potato pancakes with applesauce, as this is the way it is eaten in Germany and our daughter got used to it.

Ed: As to American feasts, we celebrate Thanksgiving, but we do not prepare a turkey, because nobody wanted to eat it. It is too thin and the oven is too small. Instead, we make chicken, because everybody likes it. We also celebrate Halloween. We go to the Europa-Park. Everybody is dressed up. We have holidays, and so we take a rest there. We will soon celebrate Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights.

Since their daughter started kindergarten, Anna and Ed have incorporated German feasts in their calendar. They do not want their daughter to feel isolated from German tradition. That is why, on November 11, they celebrate St. Martin's Day, baking a goose. From the beginning of December until Christmas, they wait for the dwarves to bring presents. Yet they celebrate a Polish Christmas Eve, preparing beetroot soup with small dumplings, *kutia*—a sweet grain pudding—mushroom dumplings, and carp.

Anna: On November 1, which is All Saints' Day, Poles visit the graves of their family and friends. I do not go to the cemetery because I do not have anyone here, but I talk about death at that time. I also cultivate old Polish traditions, such as putting out food for ghosts. It is some kind of return to the beginnings. We try not to celebrate Easter Monday because our daughter often caught a cold. We are definitely not bored by celebrating. We have to celebrate all year round to know when we should celebrate.

5.4 Couple 4: Beata and Chris

Beata and Chris are practicing Christians. Chris is Protestant and Beata is Catholic. As they lived on three continents in numerous countries, moving many times, their cultural traditions are extremely rich:

Beata: We celebrate all feasts in a row, doubly: American and Polish, or even triply. When we lived in San Francisco, our friends were Chinese. Since then we have celebrated Chinese New Year as well. At Christmas and Easter we have dishes from both cultural traditions.

Chris: This year, on Thanksgiving, we baked two turkeys because there were so many people. As usual, we served creamed corn, cranberries, cooked sweet potatoes, green beans with almonds and bacon, four types of turkey stuffing and pumpkin soup. On Thanksgiving Day people gather together to say what they are thankful for, and you may hear some emotional speeches. We do it as well, and I think it is cool. There is no tension, disguise, presents, or high-gloss polishing.

Beata: We celebrate Halloween as well as All Saints' Day. We organize Halloween a little bit earlier so that there would be no dissonance between these two traditions. I think that our tradition is less cool because it does not have this neighborly dimension. In the States, people go to visit one another, i.e., one house visits another, children and adults, all dressed up. And this

is the best. Here children go after sweets; teenagers go as well and this may turn into a minor vandalism. We also make dreadful dishes. My specialty is cut-off fingers made of sausages with nails made of almonds and ketchup sprinkled gently on top.

Chris: I come from a place near the United States-Mexico border, where we celebrated Mexican All Souls' Day with our neighbors. They have a different attitude towards death: It is not the end of which one should be afraid. Children dance with skeletons, and death is de-demonized. Mexicans do not have a problem with that. Pictures of dead people can be placed on the table at a wedding. They are in constant touch with ghosts. What a wonderful tradition!

Beata and Chris emphasize that their house is open to everyone. Neighbors and friends of their four children know that they can always come to visit them.

As my research shows, the variety of traditions the partners decide to maintain depends much more on the female partner than on the male one. More Polish dishes are eaten and feasts celebrated in the families in which the female partner is Polish. They also adopt US traditions and the traditions of a third country as in the case of the couple living in Germany. There are frequently no Polish dishes in the families in which the female partner is from the US, as Polish male partners rarely cook and attach less importance to customs, especially when they are not religious. After the years spent together, Polish American couples adopt the traditions of the country in which both partners live, or the ones that they care about. The ones of lesser importance disappear.

6 Cosmopolitanism and the Sharing of Duties

Cosmopolitanism assumes the equality of cultures and ascribes equal value to all people regardless of sex or nationality. If an individual's identity can be fluid, the social roles of men and women can evolve as well (Spisak 90). The way a couple shares their household chores reveals whether the relationship is traditional or based on partnership. In many Polish families, even though both partners work the same hours, a vast majority of duties related to housekeeping and the upbringing of children still, in the twenty-first century, lie with women. In the United States, in well-educated Caucasian families in which spouses are between 30 and 60 years old, like those of my respondents, both partners often work, trying to share duties in a just way, even though women are observed to be more overloaded.

6.1 Couple 1: Kasia and Ben

In Kasia and Ben's relationship, the responsibilities are shared fairly, without a pre-established plan, depending on the availability of either partner. There are no mis-

understandings. Knowing that Ben arranges clothes in drawers more carefully, Kasia does not insist on doing it:

Ben: We do not make a list, or anything of the sort. When I am in the kitchen and see something dirty, I wash it up. Kasia does the same. When something needs to be done, it is done.

Kasia: We share all our duties. We have similar salaries. We work the same hours. When I do not have enough students, my mother's voice says: "You have to be independent." I prefer earning more money than Ben rather than less.

6.2 Couple 2: Maciej and Sandra

Maciej and Sandra's relationship is a real partnership. They share their duties related to housekeeping and the upbringing of their two little daughters fairly. This is indispensable so that both of them can develop their careers: Sandra is an academic, whereas Maciej is a film producer. With small children and without the help of grandmothers and nannies, this would be impossible were it not for the fair sharing of their responsibilities. Sandra's work not only involves hours spent at the university with her students, but also frequent conferences and research. She recently went to China for five weeks to do research for a book about the Chinese precariate.

When I was in Ann Arbor, interviewing Maciej, Sandra was in China, and Maciej took care of their daughters alone for five weeks. Soon after her return, Maciej was to leave for Brazil for a longer period of time to work on a new documentary. I could observe his professionalism and engagement in the care of the girls. While answering my questions, he prepared their dinner, made sure that they finished the meal and put away the plates, corrected their language mistakes, supervised their play (Ola read a book in Polish to Teresa), and helped his younger daughter in the bathroom. In the morning, before driving the children to the kindergarten, he gathered raspberries for them in the home garden so that the food in their lunch boxes would be healthy.

This is what Sandra says about her family life on weekdays:

Sandra: In the mornings before leaving for work, we share our duties equally. We prepare lunch boxes for ourselves and the children. In the afternoons, we make dinner and help the girls do their homework or prepare things for the next day. Maciej spends more time with them in the fresh air, while I clean the house, although we have only recently had a cleaning lady who comes to help us. On weekdays the girls start school early in the morning. I pick them up in the afternoon.

On Saturday mornings, Maciej drives the children to the Polish school and Sandra has the morning for her to work. On their return, they go to dinner at their friends', or somebody drops in. There are also meetings with Poles in Ann Arbor. On Sundays, they go swimming or skiing. Sandra usually works in the mornings on weekends, and the afternoons they spend together.

6.3 Couple 3: Anna and Ed

Anna and Ed's relationship, like that of Maciej and Sandra, is, again, a fair partnership. Nowadays, they justly share the duties related to housekeeping and raising their daughter, but it was not always like that:

Anna: The beginning was terrible. My husband could not do anything. Nothing at all. In his family house, the parents always hired household help because they were either giving concerts or rehearsing. Today Ed is the most organized man in the world. He can do everything, but, you know, he was willing to learn. Even if he had not been, he had to. But it is always like that: One has to be consistent and find motivation. It is the same with a child or a dog, only it lasts longer.

Anna claims that the most effective strategy was the use of the iPhone app *Habitica*, which she now recommends to all married couples. Users create a list, and they are rewarded for each completed activity.

Ed: At home we either do everything together or interchangeably depending on who is present and has time. I have been cooking since we bought the *Thermomix*, equipment for preparing meals. Today, when Anna returned home after the rehearsal, we had carrot rissoles with potato purée. It cannot happen that anyone says: "Is there no dinner? Did no one vacuum?" Today I have had more time, so I have cleaned the house, loaded and unloaded the dishwasher and walked the dog. When I am not here, Anna does everything. We simply swap.

6.4 Couple 4: Beata and Chris

When their other children were born, and Beata and Chris often moved house, it was only Chris who worked in the beginning. Beata looked after the house and took care of their four children. On weekends when Chris was at home, he helped with the children. Generally, this model has remained because Chris works all over Europe, travels a lot, and is not always at home on weekends.

Beata: On weekdays I am a mother as well as a father. I do everything: cook, clean the house, drive my son Max to classes, or take part in parents' evenings. Apart from that, I am writing another book and teaching German online. We solve behavioral problems on the phone. My husband returns home on weekends and devotes time to children. Since everyone is a different age and has varied needs, he takes them separately to the swimming pool, for a walk, or shopping.

All my respondents are curious about the world, open towards new challenges, and looking for changes in life. Their willingness to live in a distant foreign country and be in a relationship with a foreigner demonstrates that they are not afraid of leaving their sphere of comfort. The following components constitute their cosmopolitan identity: slight attachment to the country of origin and place of residence, mobility (frequent travels and international friendships), and the consciousness of a citizen of the world.

The married couples I studied are happy in their relationships. They successfully pursue their careers despite the obstacles as in the case of Beata whose husband Chris works far away from home. They feel supported by their partners. Their relationships are based on egalitarian partnership, which is characterized by lack of gender specification. They are successful partly because the partners are freelancers and share the same values, searching for a proper work-life balance. Although my respondents grew up in religious households, they are not very religious themselves. The women are strong, resourceful, independent, and optimistic. They have their own careers. According to the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), a measure to account for an individual's gender, they would be categorized as androgynous, i.e., as assuming the complementarity of masculine and feminine traits (masculine women) (Bem 134). Men do not follow the model of hegemonic masculinity, based on male dominance (Connell), but are conciliatory. In Krzysztof Arcimowicz's typology, they embrace the model of a gentle man, i.e. a child carer (329), and in accordance with Bem's Inventory, they would be considered androgynous (feminine men) (Bem 117).

7 Cosmopolitan Identity and Cultural Transformation of the Country of Origin

The basis for developing a cosmopolitan identity is openness to change and the need and ability to transcend the normative identity boundaries imposed by a nation state (Hill; Spisak; Waldron). By transforming a "tribal identity" full of social rules and categories into a cosmopolitan one, people become unique and gain transnational awareness (Beck and Beck-Bernsheim 30–32). They do not, however, reject anything that shaped them locally, but distance themselves critically from their culture, using its potential to further develop their identity regardless of former norms and practices.

The national identity, norms, and categories which people internalize in the process of socialization do not define them permanently. Cosmopolitan identity entails remembrance of the past, because it has shaped us, and simultaneous oblivion to be able to evolve and create alternative ways of development. The US philosopher Jason D. Hill questions the notion of a national character, arguing that attributing permanent and normative characteristics to nationalities does not have any scientific basis (18). For Hill, the most paramount form is humanity and the identity of a citizen of the world who does not ascribe the horror of the Holocaust or the institution of slavery to one particular nation. A cosmopolitan has to remember the injustices of the world and remain vigilant against crimes committed in human not national terms. Then, gaining self-awareness, s/he will be able to fashion not only his/her cosmopolitan identity but also influence the culture of his/her country of origin by enriching and transforming it.

My respondents practice cosmopolitanism in pursuing their careers, working for their local and national communities, and drawing on their international experiences. Kasia and Ben run an international music school in the United States, where they teach Chopin's music; Sandra wrote a book on China; Maciej organizes an annual Polish film festival in Ann Arbor; and Beata has just published a book about her experiences in a binational relationship. Raised in several cultures, their children are citizens of the world.

By developing one's identity and raising self-awareness, one can gain subjectivity and deepen the understanding of one's own culture. Working towards the shaping of one's identity and refashioning constitutes the most significant value of cosmopolitanism (Spisak 90). Not only does cosmopolitanism contribute to the development of individuals, standing not in the way of patriotism and "small homelands," but it is in the best interest of mankind. The knowledge of cultural differences in today's world full of previously unknown dangers is indispensable. This is confirmed by Beck in *Cosmopolitan Vision*, who states that nowadays the former division between the inside and outside, national and international, us and them, has lost its weight. To survive one needs a new cosmopolitan realism (14). Hence the international experiences of "world families," who build on otherness and whose members live between cultures, are worth getting to know, for, as Beck states: "In the cosmopolitan outlook, ... there resides the latent potential to break out of the self-centered narcissism of the national outlook and the dull incomprehension with which it infects thought and action, and thereby enlighten human beings concerning the real, internal cosmopolitanization of their lifeworlds and institutions" (*The Cosmopolitan 2*).

Translated by Agnieszka Gotchold

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Anna Sosnowska

Global Metropolis and the City of Neighborhoods: Polish Immigrants and New York City's Two Cosmopolitanisms

1 Introduction

A growing body of social science literature analyzes various aspects of cosmopolitanism. Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbis, the authors of *Cosmopolitanism: The Uses of the Idea*, point out four dimensions of cosmopolitanism as it is implemented by people and approached by researchers. The cultural dimension of cosmopolitanism is seen as a “disposition of openness to the world around them” (2). Therefore, the populations and individuals studied include international migrants and members of the host societies, as well as individuals and groups that form ethno-racially diverse societies or associations. The second, political dimension of cosmopolitanism distinguished by Woodward and Skrbis includes support for international political organizations, including the United Nations. The third, and nowadays the most sensitive aspect of cosmopolitanism is marked not only by openness, but empathy and solidarity that goes beyond the boundaries of one’s ethnic group, nation-state, religion, and culture. Finally, they identify a methodological cosmopolitanism that directs social researchers to study international and transnational flows of people, ideas, and commodities rather than those within nation-states.

In this chapter, I focus on two types of cultural cosmopolitanism that I observed among the Polish Greenpoint immigrant community leaders in New York City during my research in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The first is the cosmopolitanism characteristic for the Polish community leaders of the baby boomer generation and with a college education. It involves an aesthetic fascination with New York’s ethno-racial diversity and the city’s status as a global cultural metropolis. This is a cosmopolitanism understood as “the citizen-of-the-world philosophy” held by those “who have the resources necessary to travel, learn other languages, and absorb other cultures” (Vertovec and Cohen 4). I call it a “cosmopolitanism of metropolises” and argue that this type of cosmopolitanism is characteristic for New York’s global elite members. They typically work as professionals in institutions of international significance, appeal, and outlook, but their professional and residential experience in the city takes place in relatively homogenous environment of white and native-born US citizens.

The second type of cosmopolitanism that I identified among the Polish immigrants in the city involved actively coping with and taking advantage of the fact



of working and living in conditions of ethno-racial diversity. I found this attitude popular among Polish community members who interacted with members of other ethnic groups, as laborers or business owners, on the city's labor market. I argue that this type of cosmopolitanism is typically experienced by immigrants and New Yorkers of low- to middle-class background, whose professional lives involve encounters with people of various ethno-racial origins, but who typically chose to live in their ethnic neighborhoods. I call it a "cosmopolitanism of neighborhoods," referring to the tradition of depicting New York as a city of ethnic neighborhoods with distinct identities.

I argue that these two types of openness towards people of other cultural, linguistic, religious, and lifestyle backgrounds have been characteristic of New York for over a century, and not just in the beginning of the twenty-first century and certainly not only among Polish immigrants. Both reflect the dual character of the city's past and present. Since the 1920s, the city has developed as a global metropolis, a place where institutions of global reputation are concentrated, including the headquarters of transnational corporations and banks, political institutions (the United Nations), world famous cultural institutions, including museums (MoMA, Metropolitan Museum of Art) and concert halls (Metropolitan Opera and Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall), and where well-travelled members belonging to the global economic and cultural elite have established their places of residence. Simultaneously, the city, famous for its ethno-racial diversity and religious and lifestyle tolerance, has long been a city of immigrants, with immigrant enclaves and ethnic neighborhoods, and with new immigrant and ethnic groups replacing the previously dominant ones. Today, immigrants make up about 35% of the city's population (of more than eight million), and together with their US-born children comprise more than half of its inhabitants. At the same time, the city's two million black population makes New York the largest black city in the US. The city is also the main center of Puerto Rican and Caribbean culture in the United States and host to the most populous Chinatown outside China (Foner 1–34).

I base my claims on the results of sociological research that I conducted in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Greenpoint—the city's Little Poland, in the first decade of the twenty-first century.¹⁰⁹ The methodology of my empirical research consisted of the thirteen-month long field research in 2005–2006 and 2010, which included individual interviews; 50 biographical and expert interviews with the community's leaders, and 23 biographic interviews with female cleaners. The biographical part comprised both the immigrants' professional histories and an oral history of the Greenpoint neighborhood. The expert interviews included questions about typical characteristics of the Polish immigrant community in New York and Greenpoint: its social and geographic origins; employment and lifestyle; the existing data from the period 1980–2014;

109 My research was sponsored by a Postdoctoral Scholarship *Kolumb* funded by the Foundation for Polish Science in 2005–2006 and The Foundation's Supporting Grant for the scholarship's returnees in 2007–2010.

releases by the New York press; official data, including data of the United States Census Bureau and the City Department of Population and City Planning; and Polish ethnic parishes in the neighborhood.¹¹⁰ Additionally, to supplement the evidence of the cosmopolitanism of metropolis, I include an analysis of the representation of the city's diversity in the novel *Kamienna drabina* [A Stone Ladder] (2008) by Czesław Karkowski, a Polish immigrant writer and a former editor-in-chief of *Nowy Dziennik*, the largest Polish language newspaper in New York. I also examine policies related to ethno-racial diversity as espoused by MoMA and Carnegie Hall, the two leading New York cultural institutions, both of which have attained global fame and an international reputation. My arguments also refer to the existing data and social science literature on the ethno-racial composition of the city's population, including immigrants, the native-born population, global elites, as well as the city's patterns of residence.

2 New York as a Dual City

According to the well-established academic tradition, New York is one of global cities and centers from which world capitalism is coordinated. Its labor market attracts, on one hand, the best educated and those capable of participating in the most profitable chains of global economic exchange, and on the other hand the impoverished, often of immigrant origin, who are ready to fulfill the former's ever increasing demands for personal services. This results in a polarized social structure, with a negligible middle class.

Sociologists critical of capitalism typically associate this set of phenomena with the late phase of postindustrial capitalism initiated at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s (N. Smith; Zukin). Saskia Sassen, the author of the term "global city," which became popularized in social science in the 1990s, and David Harvey, author of classic critical urban studies, both point out that the 1980s business-driven revitalization started a new chapter in the city's social polarization (Harvey 29–30; Sassen 12). New York became on the one hand the place of work and inhabitation for the global, typically white, elite. On the other hand, the 1980s marked the beginning of a great new influx of foreigners that made New York a city of immigrants once again. This wave included immigrants from the entire world and not just from Europe, as was the case during the previous wave at the beginning of the twentieth century. More often than in the industrial era, the new wave of immigrants play the role of service workers and perform simple personal services for the rich—in restaurants, beauty salons, and in providing housekeeping and personal care services (Kallick 64–89). As David Dyssegaard Kal-

110 The detailed results of this research are discussed in a book-length study: see Sosnowska, *Polski Greenpoint*.

lick's research demonstrates, the immigrants less often than in industrial times work in manufacturing, but now as then are often employed in transportation, packing, and assembling operations.

Yet, the duality—i.e. the spatial proximity of the global and US economic elites and the poor (predominantly European) immigrants and descendants of the African slaves from the United States South and the Caribbean—has characterized New York's economy, social structure, and culture in both contemporary times as well as in the industrial era. The old elites were, in the course of history, replaced by new ones, and new immigrants have been arriving from the areas newly affected by the migration frenzy. Researchers of the successive historical eras have observed this dual character of the city. Joshua Freeman gives a picturesque description of the city in the post-World War II period:

In a city where the largest, most advanced warships and passenger liners in the world regularly docked, fish still got delivered to the Fulton Fish Market in sail-powered boats. Horse-drawn wagons remained a common sight, delivering or selling coal, laundry, milk, vegetables, and fruit. In a city where sophisticated defense electronics got designed and built, St. Patrick's Cathedral and Bellevue Hospital still operated on DC current. One police precinct had gas lights. In a city where the preliminary work for atomic fission had been done, potbellied stoves were being sold for home heating, and ice blocks were delivered for home refrigeration. (7)

John Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells argued that New York of the 1980s should have also been seen as two socially and economically separate cities living in the same geographic space: “The one city, based upon producing and moving goods and upon industrial headquarters, has been in decline for decades. The other city, based upon producer services marketed worldwide, has been mostly on the rise over the same decades” (40). All these images seem more typical than paradoxical when considered in the light of the Fernand Braudel's *Civilization and Capitalism*, a study of great cities of the modern era. Braudel investigated the economy of the early modern period (the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries), and at the same time provided the analytical framework for the entire capitalist era and its global cities. In Braudel's three-level interpretive model, capitalism occupied the top, (the third in his schematic representation) level. “The base, consisting of ‘material life’—many-sided, self-sufficient, and routine-bound; at the next level, ‘economic life,’ ... tending to merge with the competitive market economy; and lastly, at the third level, the activities of capitalism” (455). At the top of the structure was the elite level of capitalism: economic activity (commercial or productive) with “its unlimited flexibility, its capacity for change and *adaptation*,” which was greater than on the other two levels (433).

This three-tier division of economic activity in Braudel's model corresponded to a three-way division of space. At its center was a dominant city that determined the direction and rhythm of trade and imposed its conditions on the rest of the “world-economy.” Within the division of labor in the European “world-economy” from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, a small central city occupied the best and most

profitable position: “News, merchandise, capital, credit, people, instructions, correspondence all flow into and out of the city. Its powerful merchants lay down the law, sometimes becoming extraordinarily wealthy” (27). Therefore, in each epoch the most profitable transactions were located within the chain of a few world metropolises. Starting with the late Middle Ages, this chain’s crucial links have changed and the center of the capitalist world economy subsequently moved from Venice to Amsterdam, to London and finally—in the mid-twentieth century—to New York. All these central cities were cosmopolitan in a dual sense—they were very well connected with the world through trade routes and business contacts, and multi-ethnic, as their economic opportunities attracted migrants from remote parts of the world-economy. Although typically the central cities have been religiously and culturally tolerant, they have been marked by enormous economic contrasts.

3 Karkowski's *Stone Ladder* and Cosmopolitanism of Metropolises

The cosmopolitanism of metropolises, understood as the “citizen-of-the-world” worldview akin to Kantian paradigm, can be seen in the works of Czesław Karkowski. Born in Wrocław in the 1940s, Karkowski migrated through West Berlin to New York in the 1980s. He worked as a journalist, editor-in-chief of *Nowy Dziennik*, the largest Polish language daily on the United States Eastern Coast, and as a philosophy lecturer. Karkowski published: two books on the history of the arts—*Drugi w sztuce* [The second in the arts] and *Moje Metropolitan* [My Metropolitan Museum], a volume of commentaries to *Iliad*, as well as two books on Polish immigrants and on his own experience of being an immigrant in New York: *Kamienna drabina* (2008) and *Na emigracji* [On emigration] (2016). Although, as he declared, he initially avoided living among Polish immigrants, he settled down over a decade ago in Ridgewood, which since then has become a new Little Poland in New York; he writes in Polish for the Polish public, and has spent most of his professional career as a journalist in immigrant media.

Henryk, the main protagonist of *Kamienna drabina*, experiences embarrassment when confronted with the type of compatriots that he associates with Greenpoint—ignorant, xenophobic, of rural origins, and “uninterested [in how to get to Manhattan], and not taking advantage in the least of the opportunities that the city offers, of the horizons that it opens” (146).¹¹¹ Contrary to them, Henryk frequently visits cultural institutions and cares about the number of Poles that he can meet in New York’s “museums and galleries, opera and philharmonic, in concerts and in movie theaters.

111 All page references are to the Polish version; all translations by Anna Sosnowska.

Their presence there satisfie[s] him personally, as he thought these places elevated him and the entire group in the eyes of the native society” (39).

Unlike the Polish immigrants that he met in Greenpoint, Henryk is fascinated with the city’s ethno-racial diversity and enjoys observing people in public spaces with the greatest diversity—subway and streets. While travelling by train from Manhattan to the Bronx, where he lives, Henryk “was *looking at* a row of passengers on the seats that he faced. An extremely thin, young, black woman with a crazily colorful turban on her head, two Latinos in baseball caps celebrating the Yankees worn on the their black thick hair, and still next to them another young woman of undetermined race and origins, deep in reading” (14; emphasis added). When visiting Brooklyn by car, he drove along the Eastern Parkway and “headed over to the sides of this beautiful avenue” (38). The avenue cuts across the borough’s central part consisting of Crown Heights, Flatbush, and Bedford-Stuyvesant, neighborhoods famous for their adjacent but culturally distant communities: Lubavitcher Hasidic Jews, West Indian immigrants, and African Americans. Henryk, accompanied this time by his wife, a Polish immigrant like himself, again enjoys “*looking at* Blacks and Latinos who inhabited this neighborhood and at the orthodox Jews, always heading somewhere, never allowing themselves a walk, relaxation, or mere wandering. The proximity of these different temperaments, cultures, lifestyles was surprising. ... They were driving, *looking around*” (38; emphasis added). As Henryk perceives it, the city’s diversity seems to have an aesthetic rather than a relational, practical, or political character. People originating from various parts of the world, whose skin color and hair texture as well as clothing styles differ markedly from one another represent beautiful and silent pictures to Henryk—they are not candidates for potential relationships or even superficial exchanges, but objects to be observed in their colorful variety.

Like Karkowski himself, Henryk decides not to live in the Polish neighborhood, but he regularly visits Greenpoint, and all his close friends and romantic partners are Polish. He develops a close attachment to the streets, architecture, means of transportation, and especially the cultural institutions of New York, but his important conversations and psychological points of reference are immigrant and Polish. Non-Polish New Yorkers are, in *Kamienna drabina*, a part of an urban landscape consisting of artifacts to contemplate and gain inspiration from esthetically, rather than part of a human realm, where interaction and empathy need to be developed. Henryk knows that at the top of the stone ladder, i.e. New York’s social hierarchy which he tries to climb, this colorful crowd is absent, as are Greenpoint’s Polish immigrants.

New York’s global elite is predominantly white and male, like Henryk, but unlike him—native born. According to *Business Insider*’s estimation in 2015, the top managers of the leading financial institutions represented in Wall Street were overwhelmingly white. “More than 80% of executives at Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo, JPMorgan, Bank of America, Citigroup, and Morgan Stanley are white” (Crow and Kiersz). The Upper East Side, the richest neighborhood in the city and the traditional place of residence of global elite members, is similarly white and native born. The interactive online Statis-

tical Atlas demonstrates that about 80% of the entire neighborhood's inhabitants are white, while whites make about 90% of the inhabitants in the most prestigious and expensive areas located next to Park Avenue and Central Park. Foreign-born inhabitants made up about 22% of the total in the entire East Side neighborhood and only slightly over 15% in the Park Avenue area ("Race and Ethnicity"). The other neighborhoods of the global elite, including Soho, West Village, and Greenwich Village—famous for their cosmopolitanism and artistic appeal—are populated by native-born whites to a similar degree, according to The Statistical Atlas ("National Origins").

The cultural and artistic institutions of global fame located in New York present themselves as cosmopolitan, sympathetic to immigrants and artists of all racial, ethnic, or religious origins. For my research into the cosmopolitan orientation of artistic institutions I selected MoMA, which is not burdened with the obligation to collect the classic works of Western artistic masters and is most open to novelties and young artists, and Carnegie Hall, founded by Andrew Carnegie, himself an immigrant. As expected, both institutions can be characterized by cosmopolitanism understood as an attitude of affirmation of diversity and internationalism.

In early 2017 MoMA expressed sympathy for and solidarity with the Muslim immigrants and tourists that Donald Trump's immigration policy intended to exclude from among its visitors (Farago). The museum's spectacular action, included the replacement of works by Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse with ones by Syrian painters, an action which was widely commented on in the United States and Europe (Elephteriu-Smith). It was one of several actions undertaken by MoMA to sympathize with immigrants and oppose their persecution by the current administration. In addition, in its education section artists in general and modern artists in particular are positioned as cultural hybrids—migrants with an experience of living in variety of cultures and "shifting and fusing their identities, cultural traditions, and artistic techniques" (MoMA Learning). The text commenting on the works of migrant artists celebrates international migration as a source of artistic creativity.

Carnegie Hall celebrated the 2017 July 4th national holiday with a tribute to nearly 50 naturalized citizens of various professions, and emphasized the immigrant origin of its founder, Andrew Carnegie. Its website on this occasion claimed that "America remains a nation of immigrants" and announced the slogan: "Great immigrants—great Americans." In the article covering the celebration, immigrants are presented as a source of the United States' and New York's strength and development (Ford). Yet, the currently ongoing 2017/2018 season in Carnegie Hall's website is advertised with pictures of white artists, white orchestra directors, and a white public only. In 2014, black composers and musicians complained to a reporter of the *New York Times* about their invisibility both in Carnegie Hall and in classical music concert halls in general (Robin). The Carnegie Hall's unquestioned dedication to cosmopolitanism may therefore be seen more as declaration of good will rather than an actual social practice.

4 Polish Greenpoint Immigrants and the Cosmopolitanism of Neighborhoods

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the immigrants from Poland occupied the position of a working-class aristocracy in the New York labor market. They owed this position mostly to men, whose employment profile was fundamentally different from that of other male immigrants in the city, both in 2000 and in 2011 (*Newest New Yorkers*). Much less frequently than any other group were they employed in trade, services, transport, and production—the main immigrant sectors, while decidedly more often than others they worked in construction. I explain this overrepresentation of Poles in the highly-paid sector of construction with the existence of well-developed ethnic social networks, as well as their succession to places occupied by other European working ethnic groups, especially the Irish and the Italians. In 2000 and 2011, the relatively high wages of men and the low rate of households relying on public assistance gave Polish families a relatively stable position among the city's immigrants. Their median household income was still lower than that of the Asian and post-Soviet immigrant groups, whose members were concentrated in professional and entrepreneurial jobs, or the most rooted immigrants from Europe, but higher than that of the non-Hispanic Caribbean immigrants with a similar level of education and higher level of English proficiency, and much higher than that of immigrants from Latin America. The employment structure of Polish female immigrants in 2000 and 2010 was similar to the general one of female immigrant New Yorkers. The Polish Greenpoint community leaders tended to uniformly indicate cleaning as the most common occupation among Polish women.

In order to illustrate the Polish immigrants' everyday, pragmatic, microcosmic cosmopolitanism, I thus present the representatives of the two dominant and gendered employment sectors: construction and cleaning. As a small business owner and operator and a female worker, Jarosław and Cecylia also represent the variety of the Polish immigrants' employment experience. These two immigrants also differed a lot in their represented extremes of legal status, length of stay in the US, living conditions, and their position in the local community. Cecylia was an undocumented immigrant with less than a decade of immigrant experience. At the time I interviewed her, she lived in a modest apartment that she shared with a couple of other women working as cleaners. Her husband and three children, including her youngest daughter in her late teens, lived in Poland. As an undocumented immigrant, she could not travel, so the only occasion she had to see her family members throughout the decade was when they managed to get a United States tourist visa and could afford to spend some time in Greenpoint. Jarosław arrived in the United States in the early 1990s and soon after legalized his stay as a relative of a United States permanent resident. His wife soon joined him in New York and the couple has two children. Jarosław's business was successful enough to make it possible for the family to move from Green-

point to a comfortable single family home in the suburbs. Jarosław is a recognized community leader, active in the ethnic organizations. He travels a lot and visits Poland regularly.

However, I selected them not only because of the differences between them. The two were similar to each other insofar as they were immigrants who in their work experience encountered linguistic and communication difficulties as well as problems with intercultural relationships, but managed to successfully (i.e. to their advantage) adapt to them. Both also stood out as self-aware respondents, conscious of the city's ethno-racial hierarchy and their own social status in the city's secondary economic sectors relegated to immigrants. However, in contrast to some of my other respondents, this knowledge was not a source of frustration for either Cecylia or Jarosław, but rather an inspiration for them to benefit from working in an environment characterized by an ethno-racial hierarchy.

In discussing his employment history Jarosław, now the owner of a restoration company and in his fifties, recalled that his first employers in the 1990s were of various white ethnic origins: “the first company was Greek, the other one was Italian, then the concrete company was also Italian. ... Later, it was XXX, a Polish-Italian company.” In 2010, when I interviewed him, Jarosław was an employer of 80 workers. When recruiting laborers, he also looked for employees among non-Polish immigrants:

Jaroslaw: I have lots of employees from Peru, Ecuador, a couple of workers from Mexico. They are good at pointing [the final touch in brickwork], very good. Well, scaffolding, brickwork. ... They are very good workers, very good ones.

AS: Do you employ through recommendations [by those who already work for you]?

J: Sometimes it is just someone calling. We check this man—show what you can do, what a mason you are. A foreman checks [an applicant] and the latter stays if he's good.

AS: Are all your foremen Polish?

J: No, two of them are not—I have a Mexican foreman and an Ecuadorian foreman.

AS: They work with Spanish-speaking workers, don't they.

J: Yes, usually.

One of the discoveries during my research into Polish female immigrant cleaners, both those with and without working experience for Hasidic families in Williamsburg (a neighborhood adjacent to Greenpoint) was that they typically interpreted work there as characterized by more despotism than in New York's middle-class homes. It remains an open question to what extent the Hasidic ways bothered Polish cleaners because they created hardships in the workplace, and to what extent this perception resulted from pre-employment anti-Semitic attitudes (Sosnowska, “The Polish”).

One of the most frequently mentioned practices—religiously and culturally obvious from the Hasidic point of view—that were perceived by Polish cleaners as despotic was the ban on the consumption of non-kosher food or water by a cleaner while working. Yet, even this initially hostile perception could evolve under the influence of a long-lasting interaction between a Polish immigrant and her Hasidic employers.

Cecylia, an undocumented immigrant since the late 1990s, learnt only after a couple of years of misunderstandings and disappointments that a necessary condition of working in Hasidic homes was relying on the food and drinks available, but rarely offered, by the employers:

Cecylia: I had such an employer once, you know, that I carried my own water in my purse. I used to work there for six, seven hours, it was always Wednesday, and I had to have some drinking water as she would never offer me a drink. And finally, I left her. She didn't even ask whether I was thirsty. Yeah, it happens. Strange things happen.

AS: So, you carried you own water, right?

C: Yes, and I drank secretly.

AS: Secretly?!

C: Secretly, so that she didn't see it, as it was non-kosher. They do not allow outside food at their homes, so that even a bread crumb doesn't drop there.

After several years of working for another Hasidic family, Cecylia had a chance to talk to her employer about this practice and learned that Hasidic employers—mothers of large families—often simply forget about their cleaners' needs. They hire help to ease their housework and not to add an additional task of caring about the hired laborers.

Cecylia—even though she was an undocumented immigrant who spoke no English and decided to work in Williamsburg, where the pay was lower, because she was afraid of subway trips to Manhattan—developed a sense of balance in her relationship with her Hasidic employer. Her employer at the time of the interview (May 2010) was a woman of Cecylia's age, a working mother of a large family with multiple children, and the wife of a rabbi in the local Hasidic community.

C: And I speak as much as I can, although I hardly speak ... but they somehow get to understand what I mean. Sometimes, I laugh, and she laughs, and she knows [what I mean]. When I'm angry, she knows that I'm angry. That I'm nervous ... that I dislike something, don't I? She's angry and I'm angry, that's it.

Cecylia and Jarosław are a part of the last wave of mass immigration that once again transformed the city at the turn of the twenty-first century into the most diverse foreigners' haven, even if no longer the most popular destination (Foner and Waldinger 347). In their comparative study of young adult New Yorkers of both immigrant and native parenthood, *Inheriting the City*, Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway point out that for children of immigrants, their first job in the city is typically the occasion for them to leave their neighborhoods for a longer time and for the first time to experience encounters with whites other than teachers and police officers, and also often with members of ethno-racial groups other than their own (173–204). It is the job market that both pulls the immigrants and their children away from the confinement of their ethnic neighborhoods and confronts them with the ethno-racial hierarchy of the city.

Jarosław's and Cecylia's stories therefore represent typical experiences of New York immigrants who work for or with members of ethno-racial groups other than their own. They succeed in crossing the linguistic and cultural difference and establishing an understanding of the tasks they are assigned or services they are expected to deliver. Working in a city with such an enormous ethno-racial diversity makes the experience of crossing the boundaries of one's own culture and engaging in understanding, exchanges, and cooperation with members of other cultures a part of the city immigrants' everyday occupational practice.

Jarosław and Cecylia are also typical immigrant New Yorkers in their attachment to their ethnic communities and neighborhoods. As Arun Peter Lobo and Joseph J. Salvo demonstrate, immigrants tend to cluster spatially. Although several immigrant enclaves, often situated in mixed neighborhoods rather than a single and isolated immigrant enclave, are characteristic for immigrant groups, they typically live their everyday after-hours lives in areas with a high concentration of their own ethnic businesses, ethnic organizations and churches, and informal ethnic networks of relatives and friends (*Newest New Yorkers 2013* 35–63). The relatively small group of about 60,000 Polish immigrants in New York in 2011 formed distinct enclaves in Greenpoint and in south Brooklyn, as well as enclaves in the neighborhoods adjacent to Greenpoint: Ridgewood, Maspeth, Glendale, and Middle Village in Queens (55–56).

Unlike Henryk of *Kamienna drabina*, Jarosław and Cecylia not only had co-ethnic friends or spouses, but also wanted to either live among them in Greenpoint or to remain connected to ethnic organizations and businesses located in the neighborhood, which make their experience an example of K. Anthony Appiah's rooted cosmopolitanism. Cecylia could not imagine living anywhere other than Greenpoint, where she could shop in Polish shops for the ingredients for her Polish-style meals. Jarosław, although he moved to a larger house in an adjacent neighborhood, regularly attended meetings of the local ethnic business club, sent his children to the Saturday Polish School there, sponsored and frequented ethnic cultural events, and took care to accept renovation jobs that benefitted the local community's public space, such as churches and bridges.

5 Conclusion

My research has shown that, firstly, cosmopolitanism as a worldview might and does function in New York, like in the historical central cities of the world-economy, without everyday experiences of work and life in an international environment. In New York of the early twenty-first century it has acquired the form of an aesthetic fascination with ethno-racial diversity that is a component of city's vibrancy and vitality. Its most typical form is enchantment with the picture of a diverse crowd. What is new, in comparison to the historically recognized cosmopolitanism of central cities,

is the elite's expressions of sympathy—and not just acceptance—for immigrants and religious and ethno-racial minority groups. What makes New York's elites similar to the past elites of Venice, Amsterdam, and London is a combination of international experience in business and artistic and cultural exclusiveness. This cosmopolitanism, understood as an aestheticized fascination with pictures of ethno-racial diversity and identification with the cultural institutions' declared cosmopolitanism, can be found in the Karkowski's Polish immigrant novel *Kamienna drabina*.

Secondly, the everyday cosmopolitanism of Polish immigrants in Greenpoint is carried out in their workplaces and in the neighborhood itself. This is the case for both working-class and business-owning immigrants. Although often contested by both, working for and with members of non-Polish ethno-racial groups is treated as a fact that has to be dealt with and taken advantage of. The cosmopolitan everyday experience might be—and in case of the two cited immigrants, happens to be—connected with a strong attachment to ethnic professional and civic organizations as well as to ethnic neighborhoods.

This type of microcosmic, locally rooted cosmopolitanism is characteristic for the inhabitants of neighborhoods of the outlying boroughs outside the metropolis of Manhattan. Their cosmopolitanism is pragmatic, unintended, and is similar to what an ethnographer of New York, William Helmreich, calls "daygration." This term "refers to the contact that takes place when the group that lives in an area interacts with people of other groups who are there only during the day" (298). Typically, for immigrants working outside of ethnic enclaves, inter-cultural experiences result from work in the ethno-racially mixed, although stratified, labor market and of life in neighborhoods where several ethnic groups, rather than just one, cluster and businesses are operated by outsiders. The effect of this type of cosmopolitanism is a relatively peaceful coexistence, but without deep integration at the intimate level of friendship or romantic engagement. Even if accompanied by strong ethno-racial stereotypes, it prevents violent conflict and introduces what Jennifer Lee labeled "civility in the city," as participants carefully manage their relationships in actual everyday life transactions.

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V: The Powers and Perils of Cultural Expression

Annarita Taronna

***Black English* and the New Cosmopolitanism: Karima 2G's Linguistic Creativity as a Transethnic Performative Practice**

A cultural turn started in the 1980s and led to a focus shift in linguistics, moving from merely linguistic issues—centered on the study of a word/text—to a conception of language as an integral part of a cultural, literary, historical and ethnic-anthropological system. More specifically, both the recent and constant migration flows and the oldest colonial conquerors contributed to a progressive rethinking of concepts like language, translation, belonging, mobility, contact, nation, identity, and community; as well as to an analysis of the socio-linguistic and cultural implications of such categories in the lands of arrival. In particular, by creating a connection between the history of the African American diaspora and the present trans-Mediterranean migrations towards Italy, the theoretical reflection here proposed is centered on the emergence of new patterns of description and interpretation of a closed reality, with the aim of re-considering new linguistic and cultural scenarios, marked by a momentous change of paradigm.

From a strictly linguistic point of view, an illustrative example of this change would be the forming of new geo-localities and linguistic identities, represented by second-generation immigrants using African American English in Italy as a form of pidgin for communicative purposes that go beyond all linguistic, national and geographical borders. In particular, this unprecedented case study will be the rap written and interpreted by the African Italian Anna Maria Gehneyi, a.k.a. Karima 2G, whose new cosmopolitan performance and narration will guide us through the linguistic and cultural history of the color line in Italy. This will be possible thanks to her story: that of a second-generation Liberian Italian, rapping and playing with Black English or, as she likes to define it, Pidgin English, offering us a transatlantic vision of the traces left by the memory of the African diaspora. The semiotic-linguistic repertoire of her 2G album creates an image of the African in Italy based on Blackness as a performance of temporary identity, culture and language, and of rap as a form of criticism, resistance and denunciation of all of practices of racial repression. A thorough analysis of her repertoire triggers a reflection on the new forms of 'Italianness', that need to be constructed using a comparative approach, looking at the way the discourses on the color line coming from the United States interact with the Italian paradigms of language, identity and race.

By moving the color line towards a Black Italian imagery, Karima 2G uses her rap to question the respective factors and responsibilities when it comes to one's roots, be they white, black, mixed, English speaking, or non-English speaking, thus reflecting on the political meaning of linguistic and cultural crossings. Such a reflection focuses on the

question of whether and how diasporic and postcolonial English speakers can creatively negotiate place, space, and identity through Black English, adopting trans-idiomatic uses and contexts that are configured as alternatives to national communities, eventually sketching a transnational vision of Italianness—one capable of including not only those who have always been Italian, but also those who have become Italian recently, as well as those who at some point—or to some extent—have stopped being Italian.

1 Long Live Pidgin English: The Creative Language of Karima 2G

Karima 2G's linguistic, identity, cultural and musical route is particularly meaningful thanks to the fact that she belongs to both the Liberian and US cultures, and because she witnessed a history of colonization and of both old and new diasporas connecting Africa, the United States, and Italy. Karima 2G is an Italian rapper, singer, songwriter and beatmaker of Liberian origin, born in Rome in 1980. In 2010, she founded the *PepeSoup* duo with the DJ/Producer Cukiman, mixing with elegance the rhythms of West Africa, drawing from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Liberia, and Ivory Coast. In 2011 Karima 2G was selected by Al-Jazeera for a pro-integration project called *Surprising Europe*, joining other artists from across Europe. In 2013 she went to Liberia, discovering her roots. By the time she returned to Italy, she had acquired a new awareness of her origins, which she expresses through music and by committing to the cause of integration and the right to second-generation citizenship in Italy. In 2014 she released her debut solo album *2G (Soupu Music)*, written and produced by Karima 2G in Pidgin English, her mother tongue. She is now a student of political and communication science at the John Cabot University of Rome.

Her language, as well as her Liberian origin, takes us back to a United States colonial experience from 1820 which involved the American Colonization Society, an organization formed by rich slaveholders from the South to relocate freed slaves to Africa. Subsequently, the organization obtained from local leaders permission for African Americans to settle down in the Capo Mesurado area, which became known as Liberia in 1824. The fast-growing colony obtained independence in 1847. African Americans, and their descendants, were a privileged caste that had full political and economic power, without having to integrate with the local population. The bond with the United States granted access to North American political relationships and trade routes, but integration always remained a complex issue (Juang and Morrisette 692–695).

In the story of Karima 2G, the first hint of her colonial heritage is her contact with the language of the African American colonizers in Liberia, the Black English inherited by her parents, used as a pidgin for communicative purposes and beyond linguistic, national, and geographical borders. This section will concentrate on the

formation of new geo-localities and linguistic identities emerging from the multiple contaminations and exchanges among cultures in movement, as well as on the creative use of English in Karima 2G's rap. In particular, it is worth quoting some extracts from an interview that included questions concerning her relationship with her mother tongue:

My mother tongue is *Pidgin English*. This language is used in Liberia, my land of origin, as well as in other parts of West Africa. My parents have used Pidgin English with me since when I was a child. Their purpose has always been that of teaching me the importance of the traditions and customs of their cultures. They could not teach me both of their dialects (Grebo for my mother and Kpelle for my father), given the difficulty and the differences between the two, so they used Pidgin English as a common language. However, since I was born in Rome and have lived there for a long time, I also speak 'Romano' at home. (Personal interview)¹¹²

Pidgin English becomes a sort of lingua franca in the family context of Karima 2G. This affective bond with the mother tongue remains unbreakable, despite Karima being born and raised in Italy. Her choice of writing and rapping in Pidgin English, in spite of being perfectly proficient in Italian, has an unprecedented aesthetic and political value, as well as being an emblematic example of "flexible bilingualism" (Creese and Blackledge), in which the concept of identity is central and complex: "When you have two identities you have on the one hand a greater richness, on the other it is more difficult to find a synthesis, to represent it as a whole" (Karima 2G). Her dual culture becomes the *leitmotiv* of her solo album, which is intentionally called *2G*, a label to which the artist is strongly opposed. It is used in Italy to define second generations, drawing from a repertoire of discriminating discourses and narrations related to the entitlement to citizenship based on *ius sanguinis* and not on *ius soli*.¹¹³ Thus, it is not by chance that her album *2G*, released in 2014, came right in the middle of the debate concerning citizenship, migration flows from Africa on the Mediterranean routes, and embarrassing episodes of racism perpetrated by Italian politicians such as Roberto Calderoli. In the song *Orangutan*, Karima 2G replies with her desecrating and ironic rap, drawing from the African American practice of *signifyin'*, to the arro-

112 This and the following extracts have been translated into English by the author and come from email interviews carried out by the author with Karima 2G between February and September 2016, partly published in Italian in Taronna, "Black Power."

113 As of this writing (April 2017), the new law proposed to modify the existing law on Italian citizenship has not been approved by the Senate, despite the approval by the Chamber of Deputies at the end of 2015. A campaign was launched in 2011, "L'Italia sono anch'io" [Italy is me, too]: (www.litalia-sonoanchio.it/index.php?id=522) and, more recently, the appeal "#italiani senza cittadinanza" was launched [citizenship-less Italians]: (www.facebook.com/italianisenzacittadinanza/), through which a network of associations, syndicates, and citizens collected signatures from thousands of petitioners asking for a reform that would grant the citizenship to those children born in Italy from foreign parents, as well as granting them, as well as those persons who have consistently lived in Italy for at least five years the right to vote in city council elections.

gance of former Minister Roberto Calderoli who, in 2003, declared that it was not possible for Italy to let immigrants vote because “a civil country cannot give the right to vote to some bingo-bongos, who have been living in trees until a few years ago.” Ten years later, during a conference of his party *Lega Nord*, Roberto Calderoli draws from the racist repertoire of wilderness once again—defining the former Minister for Integration Cécile Kyenge as an “orangutan.” Karima 2G then raps about the caricatured image of Africans conveyed by some Italian politicians:

Two G
 Second Generation
 Citizen Right Who represent the Nation

 I love animals bears and wolves
 Mr Calderoli come and seat in my zoo
 Greenpeace protect the seas
 DRC Congo Kinshasa
 Black is my Skin
 Smile take my Picture
 Don't you ever Compare me
 Begin the game boy
 I'm a super Model
 Here come the big show

 Different culture spicy food
 Tribal Traditional
 What is your Rule
 Housekeeper wash the clothes and cleanna
 Pig Pissin you na smell the Urina
 Reflect on the use of Communication
 Rape is a Crime is not a Passion
 No Where we go
 Government Shut Down
 No Where we go
 Government Shut Down

The song is an answer to the verbal aggression against Kyenge—“caused” in 2013 by her proposal consisting of abrogation of the Bossi-Fini law, decriminalization of “illegal immigration,” abolition of score-based residency permits, closing-down of CIE, and passage from *ius sanguinis* to *ius soli* for obtaining Italian citizenship. Its lyrics unveil the historical and symbolic bond between the keeping of a clear color line in Italy and the fear of mixing races. As noted by Gaia Giuliani (172), the taboo of mixed race is central in the definition of the imagined Italian community because it would represent a border-crossing image, embodying both the evidence and the violation of racial hierarchies, with their precise definition of who must be at the top, as well as the degradation of an alleged whiteness through (sexual/biological) contact with blackness.

From an exclusively linguistic point of view, the lyrics contain some phonetic and morpho-syntactic features found in both Liberian English and African American English. To mention some, the replacement of the voiced velar stop [g] in the group [ing] with the nasal alveolar [n], e.g. *pissing* becomes *pissin*, a common feature of other regional varieties in the southern United States; the disappearance of the approximant postalveolar [r] in postvocalic position, e.g. *cleaner* → *cleanna*; the simplification of consonant clusters, e.g. *picture* → /'pɪktʃə/, *culture* → /'kʌltʃə/; phonetical reduction of -er group into the vowel sound -ə, e.g. *housekeeper* → /'haʊs,ki:pə/; vowel strengthening in the pronunciation of the verb *compare* /kəm'pɛə/ in /kəm'ppə/. Among morpho-syntactic features, it is worth mentioning the reiterated third person singular without the final -s (e.g.: “Greenpeace protect the sea, here come the big show, housekeeper wash, government shut down”), also found in other regional varieties of American English, albeit mostly as an episodic usage—while it is an integral part of Black English. A very interesting case worth discussing is the use of the auxiliary *na*, in the verse “Pig Pissin you *na* smell the Urina,” explained by the artist in the following terms: “The particle *na*, as I used it, means *had*. It must be said that this particle is used for emphasizing a statement and it is especially common in Nigeria, as well as in Sierra Leone and Ghana. The standard version of the sentence is: *You had smelt the Urina.*”

In order to explain the use of the particle *na*, it is necessary to go back to the origins of Pidgin English. It is a complex story, based on various sources and reconstructions that tend to call it, more scientifically, Liberian English (LibE), whose evolution, diachronically speaking, was marked by five crucial factors (Singler 252–255): 1. The spread of an English-based pidgin, born for trade reasons during the seventeenth century on the Liberian coasts; 2. The birth of Kru seamanship in the end of the nineteenth century; 3. the settlement of freed African American slaves in the nineteenth century; 4. The spread of English at the beginning of the twentieth century; 5. The constant influences coming from the Niger-Congo languages spoken in the country.

The intertwining of these factors caused the emergence of differences between LibE and African American English, such as the use of the completive-perfective auxiliary *na* with a double meaning. In fact, it can be used as an auxiliary in past perfect formation (e.g.: LibE: “the woman think the children *na* die” ≠ StE: “The woman thought that the children had died”), and also as an adverb expressing time (LibE: “Nobody know where he take the deed from, *ha na* bring it” ≠ StE: “Nobody knew where he got the deed from that he now produced”).

Disambiguation between the two acceptations is not always easy, also given the co-existence of at least three hypotheses explaining its origin. According to Singler, the first “substrate” hypothesis links the use of *na* to a Kru language, more specifically to Dewoin (249–274). The second hypothesis underlines the homophony between *na* and *now*. A further connection between the two would be the fact that in LibE the auxiliary *na* is often spelled *now*. More possible evidence of the connection between *na* and *now* is the fact that, as stated by some speakers, the two forms cannot coexist

in the same sentence. According to a third hypothesis, *na* might derive from the auxiliary *dɔn* (*done*), often found in other pidgin and creole varieties of West Africa. Even more crucially, this derivation would mean a connection with African American English, the base upon which LibE developed (also called ‘Settler English’) from the nineteenth century onwards. In Liberia, the use of *don* (*done*) is an affective mark linked to the identity of the colonizer. From a rhetorical point of view, it must be said that the verse *Pig Pissin you na smell the Urina* is clearly referred, with a metaphorical and challenging intent, to the Italian party *Lega Nord*, whose members have enacted racist and violent imprinting practices against mosques and Muslim cultural centers. In particular, Karima 2G is talking about what happened in Boulogne in 2011, when some *Lega Nord* affiliates threatened to pour pig urine on land destined for the building of a mosque.¹¹⁴ The image evoked by the rapper in this verse, just as explosive as the language used, can be regarded as a concrete example of the typically black rhetoric that Zora Neale Hurston defined “will to adorn.” Here, the will to adorn stems from the expressive strength of Karima 2G, who does not just name an object, an episode or a person, but indeed she illustrates her reference and criticizes it, thanks to a *mise en scene* made of action words.

On a more specifically visual level, the video has a pedagogical function, embodied by the repertoire of images coming from the movie *Sarafina!*¹¹⁵ dedicated to the young protagonists of the Soweto student riot of 1976 in South Africa during the apartheid era, after a government decree imposed Afrikaans as a co-official teaching language along with English. This episode, the last of a long series of Afrikaner impositions, was perceived as a part of the logic of segregation.

Drawing inspiration from all those events, *Orangutan* is a powerful invitation for all 2G people to overcome racial barriers and prejudices and to fight with the same perseverance as their African brothers to obtain civil rights in Italy. Given the deep awareness, consciousness, and attention paid by Karima 2G in her productions when it comes to the history of the African diaspora, it was important for me to ask her how she feels about looking back, fifty years after Selma, at the struggles that led to the Voting Right Acts and, consequently, to the overcoming of the final barriers preventing African Americans from accessing full citizenship rights. Her words problematize a vision of the African American diaspora and of the Selma march—calling for a distinction between different kinds of African diasporic peoples:

I think African Americans have their own history, which can definitely teach us something, but we need to avoid identifying ourselves in a history of an era that is totally different from ours. What unites all diasporic Africans across the world is the sense of belonging to Africa: we know she is our *motherland*, but we also know that nowadays we need to free ourselves from the chains

114 In 2014, *Lega Nord* members from Lodi and Padua actually poured pig urine on lands destined for the building of a mosque in order to prevent the building from being erected.

115 Directed by Darrell Roodt, released in 1992.

of a painful past, which does not allow a person to feel completely free. We need to realize that each African, first, second, third generation and so on, has her/his own experience and uniqueness. For this reason, indeed it is necessary to face the issues of the refugee, of the immigrant and of the second generations, like me, always being careful not to discriminate each other. I am an Italian of African descent and I want to be recognized for who I am. ... Selma was a protest ended up in a blood bath and, for as useful as it could have been back then for African Americans and for the whole humankind, I am afraid it is not as useful for diasporic Africans living in Europe today. I believe in revolutions, but not in violence. We have been raped through deportation, we have been raped through slavery, we have been and still are raped in different forms by colonialism. I think the time has come to stop all this violence and to concentrate on the challenges we face today. In Italy there is a whole reality that has been hidden and is now asking to be recognized as the new representative of this nation: I am talking about second generations. This is the present of Italy, and will increasingly be its future. (Personal interview)

Karima 2G's words unconsciously recall the thought of crucial theorists of the diaspora, such as bell hooks, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, who dedicated most of their work to the theorizing and re-thinking of the concept and of the places of the African diaspora, as well as of the impossibility of an essentialist representation of Blackness as a structure of identity to be used as a base to build one's subjectivity.

2 Karima 2G's Transcultural Aesthetics: Performing Race, Ethnicity and Bunga-Bunga Education

Embedded in such a context, Karima 2G's narrations and raps powerfully resonate today as a silent warning for those who have undertaken the task of reinterpreting history—and at times postulate a unification between diasporic Africans and African Americans when it comes to their relationship with the motherland of *Africa*, confusing their common need to find their roots with an ambiguous and anachronistic Afrocentrism. The need to trace back one's roots is real, but it is not just a nostalgia for Africa, but rather an urgent necessity to highlight those somatic, hematic, linguistic and cultural connectors that tell the story of a diasporic, migrant, and multi-layered African identity, not to be reduced to a banal pan-ethnic identity. All these instances clearly emerge in the song *Back to the roots*, from the album *2G*:

Karima 2G Talking to the new Generation:
 don't forget about your roots
 who you are and where you come from
 You don't know where you come from
 You don't know where you call home
 Who you are?
 Back to the roots
 Where we belong
 Back to the Roots

Back to the Roots
 We Belong

 Back to my Africa
 Back to Jamaica
 Back to di Mama
 Back to di Father

 What is your Identity?
 You can't create your destiny
 If you dunno who you are
 What you've done
 Where you come from
 Who you wanna be?
 Ten \$
 Who you wanna be?
 Ten \$
 Who you wanna be?
 Back to the roots
 Where we Belong

These lyrics deserve comment from a linguistic point of view, as they show some typical features of *sounding black*, for example in the realization of belong, pronounced as [ˈbɪlɒŋ] instead of [brˈlɒŋ], in the use of the pidgin form *di* instead of *the* (“back to di Mama, back to di Father”) and, last but not least, the realization of the negative form of simple present *dunno* (“If you dunno who you are”) instead of *don't know*. More specifically, it might be worth noting that, according to the *Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English*,¹¹⁶ the determinative article *di*, as well as the forms *dis* [this], *dem* [them], *dey* [they], seems recurring in many Pidgin English varieties, such as the ones spoken in Cameroon and Nigeria, but are also widespread in creole varieties like the ones of Barbados, Belize, Hawaii, Jamaica and the Krio-Sierra-Leonese, as well as in the early formations of African American Vernacular English. The use of *dunno*, on the other hand, was observed as not only recurring in *Liberian Settler English* (LibE), but also in colloquial interactions of both British English and American English. The same goes for the contraction used later on in Karima 2G's lyrics *wanna be* (“Why you wanna be”). As concerns the realization *dunno*, as shown by Auer et al. (138) the morphological and phonetic reduction to one unit can imply new pragmatic and rhetorical consequences that go beyond the literal negative meaning, shifting the emphasis on an increased or mitigated stress on the disagreement, which must be evaluated case by case.

116 One of the broadest and most comprehensive research projects available online. It was created between 2008 and 2011 by the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) in cooperation with the English Department of Freiburg University, Germany: ewave-atlas.org.

Karima 2G's aesthetic production also expresses the polyhedral nature of the diasporic experience in the song *Refugees* (2015), which is a narration of the diverse and unique experiences of the new African sea-crossers seeking the European dream:

Run Run
 Run Away across the Nation
 Find a solution
 Refugees let them go
 American dream
 Escape by the sea
 Come to Europe
 Police no big Deal
 Stand up Stand up
 Don't Bend
 Stand Up for the Land
 Stand Up and Shouuut!

 Somalia—Find a Solution
 Sudan—Find a Solution
 Nigeria—Find a Solution
 EU who? will Find a Solution
 Time to live in Peace
 No Gun No shit
 Sleep in the Camp
 The cold is killing me
 From Libya to Italy
 No Food to Eat
 Jump in the Boat
 No piece of pepper, No Drink!

 Driving to Ethiopia
 Outside di Country
 Run like Dibaba
 Cross the river na di small thing
 What I've done?
 Just want to have fun
 Illegal position, now is my Turn! Run Away
 Across di Nation
 Find a Solution
 Refugees let them go

Dedicated to all the sea-crossers and those who lost their lives in the sea¹¹⁷ while trying to reach our coasts, and symbolically released on the World Refugee Day (June 20th 2015), this rap song conveys the expressive power of the *sounding black* practice,

117 The final scene of the video is an on-screen written dedication: "This song is dedicated to the memory of all those Refugees who are in Europe still Suffering and dying at our borders."

especially in the refrain (“Run away, across the nation, find the solution, refugees, let them go”), thanks to some phonetic features such as the doubling of the nasal in the realization of *run away* in [ranna-away], the transformation of the realization of nation as [ˈneɪʃə], the replacement of interdental fricatives [θ], both unvoiced [think] and voiced [them] at the beginning of a word with the alveolar occlusive [t] e [d], e.g. *let them* → [leddem]. Apart from the expressive power of her words, Karima 2G's video¹¹⁸ performance also takes on the symbolic power of her black body, first swimming and then on a boat, which looks rotting and unsafe, just like the ones actually used by the Mediterranean Sea-crossers. The reference to the sea and to the boats used to cross the Mediterranean Sea at all costs tell about the on-going history of diasporas and forced migration, creating bridges between the new African sea-crossers and the deported Africans on the Atlantic triangular route. Nowadays, this history reveals how the collective memory is based on a daily repel-oriented policy, inevitably linked to the violence of deportation, slavery, and colonialism. In this song, like in many others, the visual and linguistic repertoires used by Karima 2G in her video convey an image of the African in Italy that is based on *blackness* as a temporary cultural, linguistic and identity performance, and her rap—with the typical characters of the oral black tradition that it features—is a tool for “@esistenza”¹¹⁹ challenging and subverting the intrinsic epistemic violence of local and national racist practices and policies. The ability of Karima 2G's music to take on this task and give voice and space to the stories and instances of the second generations—empowered through her music—is an invitation to overcome victim complexes and resignation in order to strengthen their sense of dual or multiple belonging—comes from her use of Pidgin English, as she clearly states during an interview:

It is a language born from the encounter between English, the European colonial language, and the indigenous languages. It developed in different ways and places across the centuries as a consequence of colonialism. It is characterized by a very simple grammar structure, by its peculiar sound and rhythm, and by the mix between indigenous and English words. ... the use of Pidgin allowed me to convey a subversive potential that I could not have transmitted through standard English. (Personal interview)

Not only does the subversive power emanated by Karima 2G's Pidgin English lead the listeners to discover the performative and dramatic power of a language soaked in action, metaphors and similes, but it also invites us to perceive and recognize the creative power of those new linguistic models born around English—a language that is becoming less and less monolithic and more adaptable for negotiation. In such a context, it might be worth embedding Karima 2G's Pidgin English into the theoretical

¹¹⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=PexxLXtqROE. Accessed 1 Sept. 2016.

¹¹⁹ Word play created by the author in Italian, which contains the words *resistance* (*resistenza*) and *existence* (*esistenza*).

framework outlined by the linguist Alastair Pennycook who, in defining the new varieties of English as *Plurilithic Englishes* (194), tries to systematize and problematize the principles and conditions that might shape these new variations of English (i.e. “Englishes”). In particular, we accept Pennycook’s invitation to free ourselves from the academic obsession for reproducing circles, tubes and boxes—which has been done by linguists such as Braj Kachru and Tom McArthur for a long time—and to take into consideration those trans-idiomatic practices (Jaquemet 257–277) that help to negotiate, rather than prescribe, the linguistic norms, agency, locality, and context of the speaker during an interaction. In the unique case of Karima 2G, another epistemological key to reading her Pidgin English as a trans-idiomatic practice comes from Suresh Canagarajah, who focused his study on the issue of the self and of the way in which postcolonial English speakers can *creatively* negotiate place, space and the belonging of English to their lives. This allows for spreading a new linguistic model; one that can abandon the enclosure within national ‘borders’ as its founding base, embracing trans-idiomatic uses and contexts as alternatives to nation-state communities. In this sense, the creative negotiation enacted by Karima 2G through her Pidgin English reminds one of those specific linguistic dynamics of the diasporic black aesthetics elaborated by Kobena Mercer:

The subversive force of this hybridising tendency is most apparent at the level of language itself where Creoles, patois and Black English decenter, destabilise and carnivalise the linguistic domination of *English*—the nation-language of master discourse—through strategic inflections, reaccentuations and other performative moves in semantic, syntactic and lexical codes. (63)

The subversive strength of Karima 2G’s Pidgin English is reiterated in a central strophe of the song *Bunga Bunga*, from her album *2G*: “DB I’m speaking in Pidgin / You want to understand / Take the African Degree.” What shines through this strophe is not just the Pidgin English pride, but also the effort that interlocutor DB (Deputee Borghезio) is subtly required to make: to acquire the knowledge of African history and culture as the *conditio sine qua non* in order to gain access to her language and, consequently, her world. It must be said that *Bunga Bunga* is undoubtedly one of Karima 2G’s most sarcastic and desecrating songs—along with the aforementioned *Orangutan*—in her debut album *2G*, not only from a linguistic point of view, but also for the dense visual narration. In fact, she aims to contest some Italian politics based on the “bunga bunga” education—an expression that became popular in Italy and abroad in 2010 to define the alleged sex parties taking place at Silvio Berlusconi’s villas while he was Prime Minister of the Italian Parliament. In order to do so, Karima 2G plays with the Italian collective imagery and uses a full repertoire of racialized, hyper-sexualized and ambiguous themes and bodies, only to subsequently deconstruct it, moving into

the sub-urban scenery of San Basilio,¹²⁰ one of the angriest and most forgotten ghettos of Rome. The video opens with the image of a white male dancer, then children cycling along the roads, then colorful laundry hanging from the windows, and this will be the backdrop for most of the video. The camera then focuses on other details, building a Pasolini-like narration: the hardly readable letter B to signal the door of the public housing block, whose walls are crumbling, gates covered in rust and shutters rotting, while among the barely readable graffiti marking every wall it is still possible to see a blurry Italian flag. Against this scenery, Karima 2G and the dancers' (whose skins have different hues of color) are silhouetted, creating a unitary transcultural conjunction of performative bodies and music, made all the more dramatic by the ambiguous and provocative moves and clothing, as well as by the use of two Berlusconi masks worn by a black and seductive woman (maybe referring to one of Berlusconi's 'favorites', Ruby Rubacuori?) and a mixed-race male, clearly participating in the female's seductive moves.

Similar sub-urban scenery can partly be found in *Africa*, the single released by Karima in July 2016. After interiorizing the concept of African diaspora in the album 2G, the single represents the beginning of a new artistic route marked by the powerfulness of the sound, visual and body rituals of *gqom*, the beat of the new South African generation: "Its strength"—the artist declares—"shed light on a part of me that needed to come out. Every time I listened to a *gqom* song I could hear the marching pace of a people that won a long and exhausting battle. All this unleashed an interior revolution inside me" ("Karima 2G").¹²¹ Confirming her attention to the evolution and hybridization of the urban rhythms, Karima 2G concentrates on the theme of collective identity: "While writing this song, I started seeing myself as a synecdoche of a whole community, united by history, roots, and the intrinsic pride of being children of the same mother: Africa. As much as we can have different destinies and visions, we all come from the same land, we were born in Africa" ("Karima 2G").

Karima 2G's words inevitably recall the concept of *beloved communities* theorized by bell hooks, proposing the creation of communities in which all the subjects—who come from subaltern ethnicities and cultures, overcoming in-group divisions coming from differences, belonging and exclusiveness—tie bonds of alliance and new social and resistance relations both within the racialized community and with the former oppressors. This need for relations and affective alliances is magically given voice in the song *Africa*:

I go go go go (x 3)
Where?

¹²⁰ Also known as "il quartiere della rabbia" (the quarter of rage), given its high crime and homicide rates, San Basilio is a ghetto in the north-eastern area of Rome, between via Nomentana and via Tiburtina, right next to the A90 motorway (commonly referred to as *Grande Raccordo Anulare*).

¹²¹ From the press release accompanying the single release; translated from Italian by the author.

I go go go go
 Some People want go
 Some people want to stay
 Some people want to be the same
 Some people want to change
 Some people got in trouble
 Some people find the road
 Some people got the chance to
 Some people had enough
 Some people have to learn
 that the race is not the case
 same blood same land
 we come from the same place
 Born in Africa
 We were born in Africa (x 3)
 Please open your eyes
 is time to realize
 that you're fighting your own Mother, Sister
 Break the law, put a stop to the injustices
 Let the children live in peace
 Please open your eyes
 find yourself in the mirrow, there's a hero
 who was born in Africa (x 3)
 Violence brings violence
 Government keep silence
 I am save from the darkness
 proud of my blackness
 Political Oppression can create discrimination
 pretending not to see the criminal intention
 God forgive they don't know what they are doing
 Just tell them that we all come from the mother land

The song that Karima 2G dedicates to Africa is not just a simple exaltation of her origins, but is also an appeal to the “beloved communities” that share the same blood (“Same blood, same land. We come from the same place. Born in Africa. We were born in Africa”) and a statement concerning the implications (“political oppression can create discrimination, pretending not to see the criminal intention”) of historical processes like colonialism and imperialism, the real cause of the modern diasporas scattered across the world today, as well as the countless civil wars taking place. Talking to the sons and daughters of colonial diasporas, both ancient and modern, her singing encourages awareness (“please, open your eyes”), clear statements (“just tell them that we all come from the motherland”) and taking a stand against violence (“sister, break the law / put a stop to the injustices”), thus outlining a new way of coexisting by creating communities held together by common purposes, rather than common ethnic or racial features (“some people have to learn that race is not the case”). The faith that Karima 2G has for the beloved communities, as intended here,

can be traced back to her family history and to the bonds that her parents have with Africa, which can be found in her own words:

My parents arrived in Italy in 1978, for work purposes. My father was called by the Liberian Government, asking him to move to Rome and work for the Liberian Embassy there. My parents quickly packed up, leaving behind my eight-month-old sister Comfort (who lived with our grandmother until 1991, when she joined us in Italy). It was not easy for them to make this choice, but they had to. I only understood why they did it in 2013, when I first went to visit Wongbeh Town, my father's village. It is so distant from the city that it overlaps with the forest. Leaving that place is a real venture. The bond with one's land and community is strong and ancestral. In order to leave the village, you need an authorisation from the whole community, who gives the approval only if all of its members think that leaving is an act of devotion and responsibility towards the community itself. It is indeed an agreement foreseeing a reroute to the origin, bringing something new from the outside. My parents were the very first, in their respective communities, to leave their village and move to Europe. I came to the conclusion that human beings can travel the world, do great things and be recognized as individuals, but the full realization can only be obtained when going back to one's own land, one's own community. (Personal interview)¹²²

This powerful love bond between Karima 2G and Africa is particularly surprising when one thinks that Karima 2G was born in Italy (her real name is Anna Maria) and she only went to Liberia a few years ago for the first time. The uniqueness and the complexity of this “journey back home” are linked to the narrative strength by which her parents told her about Africa since she was a young girl:

I still remember the stories my mother would tell me when I was little. I was very curious and her stories took me there, in that land that I already felt like it was mine. In English, sprinkling it with some Italian words here and there, Liberia was passed on to me, not just narrated. If the fairy tales I was told at school would make me travel with imagination, my mother's stories were a direct transmission, as if I was right there right then. My mother passed on to me an unambiguous system in which everything is connected and interdependent. I have never been in Snow white's village and I never will, while I actually did go in Liberia. The most indelible stories for me are those about my father's village, where snakes were great friends of children. My mother had this great ability to take you to another place through her voice. I barely heard the words. What I lived were images, chants and sounds. The recurring sound were the drums. Still now, I believe that those percussions I heard were a call. (Personal interview)

In this intimate and familiar narration, Africa acquires an imaginative and figurative value, which can be perceived and given a name—irremediably evoking what Edward Said called “imaginary geography and history” (61). While being aware that there has never *literally* been a journey back home and that the land of her parents has somehow changed today, Karima 2G's Africa does not have a real territorial border: “wherever your feet are, that is Africa” (Personal interview).

¹²² This quote, like the following, refers to the interview carried out by the author with Karima 2G in September 2016.

3 Blackness Is (Not) for Real: Afro-Mediterranean and Transatlantic Diasporic Vernacular Aesthetics

Rather than breaking with the Black past, Hip-Hoppers seek to connect with past verbal traditions and to extend the semantic space of Black lingo by adding a contemporary flavor. They are not merely imitating and reproducing the past, but grounding themselves in it as they seek to stamp their imprint upon the Black tradition.

(Smitherman 233)

Geneva Smitherman's words are central for this section, as they forecast one of the fundamental issues of any route tracing back the history of rap as an emblematic example of the diaspora vernacular aesthetics, concerning the exotic relationship between music and history, culture and art, oral transmission and memory. The aesthetics to which rap belongs has a distinctive profile because it cannot stem from a deliberate and rational evaluation of the product, but rather from an inevitably subjective interpretation of the mimesis function of the performance, enacted in the processes of resistance and protest—towards emancipation, belonging or autonomy from the city. Thus, having such aesthetic aims, rap can be part of the “counter-culture” elaborated by Gilroy to define the artistic expressions of the African diaspora, gathering around the concept of Black Atlantic—used to historically configure a cosmopolitan, hybrid, and delocalized space that is cultural and social, which not only includes the traditional slave route across the Atlantic, but also the experience of the immigrant communities in postcolonial Great Britain. The theoretical challenge presented here is to inscribe the experience of the Afro-Mediterranean diasporic people, like Karima 2G, into the concept of the Black Atlantic. Gilroy himself allows this operation, since his intention was to create a common background to re-define cultural identities and alternative policies to the absolutist and essentialist ones, their specificity being/creating a diasporic black culture intended as a transnational form of cultural creativity. Here, a new diasporic aesthetics emerges, articulated around new social and cultural morphologies, overcoming the epistemological limits of ethnocentrism and giving visibility to other stories and dissonant voices, blurring the borders of modern nation-states and shaping the subject within new concepts of citizenship. Such aesthetic productions trace new creative routes, in which the need for spatial collocation coincides with the awareness that being out of place and out of space is the real dimension of living and feeling.

Thus conceived, the diasporic vernacular aesthetics have become, in the words of Gilroy, “formations of opposition,” which means anthropological places and logos bringing along traces of origins, memory and of transnational and creole aesthetics into contemporaneity. On one hand, these formations have fought to “resist” and subvert the most common cultural stereotypes used to enclose black culture,

namely essentialist ethnic or national definitions; on the other hand, they fought to re-contextualize the experience and the aesthetic products of the transatlantic and Afro-Mediterranean diaspora as alternative form(ula)s of existence—trying to escape from all forms of submission and all forms of socio-cultural hegemony. The result of this process of transculturation has led artists like Karima 2G to trace back their *root work*—that is to say in her case the expression of her black culture of origin, Liberia, and of her land of birth, Italy, activating a route of retrieval and return to the roots, while problematizing the contradictory interstices of the racial system centered on race as an attribute, having blackness as its referent. Those symbolic routes that trace back the origins invoke a journey *back to the roots*, not only as a geographical place, but also as a *state of mind*, a horizon made up of traditions, stories, and values, but also conflicts and contradictions. The experience of the African diaspora, as expressed in Karima 2G's Afro-Mediterranean aesthetic productions, is not defined by essence or pureness, but by the awareness of necessary heterogeneity and diversity, as well as by a conception of identity that lives with and through difference; it is defined by hybridity.

Starting from the analyses of these Karima 2G's literary and musical productions, the aim here is to theorize identity as something that comes into existence within representation and is able to give visibility to new kinds of subjects—allowing the articulation of a narrative discourse that is also sociological and anthropological, and talks about race and blackness beyond dichotomies such as black/white, racist/racialized. Thus, the color line is redefined and re-oriented towards a Black Italian imagery that takes into account the ways in which Italians—and especially those from the south—were considered *white ethnics*, classed as “dark whites” in the racial hierarchy of United States from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

The complexity and the interweaving of the issues and of the identity equivalences between Italians/dark complexion, eyes and hair, Mediterranean blood/African blood, black/“*terrona*”¹²³ mother, Sicilian/black/African have problematized Italian whiteness, creating an ambiguous cultural and racial perception, whose origins can be linked to the short distance between Sicily and Africa, to the invasion of Italy by Hannibal during the Second Punic War, and to the Arabic domination of numerous Italian areas during the 9th century. Once arrived in the United States, and clueless about the existence of a color line, Italians lived through complex and contradictory race experiences, being highly discriminated against and even lynched,¹²⁴

123 *Terróne* (f. *terróna*) is a derogatory term (at times used as a joke, depending on context but especially when used by its usual addressees as a form of re-appropriation) used by Northern Italians to define Southern Italians. It derives from the Italian word “*terra*” (meaning “land,” “ground” but also “Earth”) and it refers to the early days of the unification of Italy, when southern Italy mainly consisted of rural areas.

124 Lynching was usually perpetrated against African Americans, but Italian Americans were often victims too. The discrimination against the two groups tended towards unification, as linguistically

but also experiencing the racial privilege of whiteness, as recently narrated in the milestone study *Are Italians white? How Race Is Made in America* (Guglielmo and Salerno). The racialization described by these authors mainly concerned immigrants from Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Apulia, and Sicily, rural regions of south Italy with a history of colonial exploitation and subaltern politics, where the attribution of a dark complexion was due to the association with rural laborers.¹²⁵ These excavating operations, which permeate transatlantic and Afro-Mediterranean diasporic aesthetic productions, can be read as *re-memory*¹²⁶ practices—a term coined by Toni Morrison—which means the reconstruction and transmission of historical memory by speaking about old and new migrations in the ever-increasing trans-ethnic context of the present time. By breaching the consolidated and hierarchal binary simplifications of the concept of race, and revealing the artificial and circumstantial nature of each and every identity and political construction, Karima 2G's musical narrations contribute to the re-attribution of semantic meaning of interculturalism. Indeed, it becomes the main tool for unveiling the power strategies of assimilation, enacted by hegemonic and mono-cultural languages and narrations, and fosters practices of resistance, where ethnic differences remain and are not annihilated by a single language/culture. Her artistic productions reflect upon the way in which contemporary migrant and diasporic cultural production creates a sense of cultural belonging that strongly questions the attribution of citizenship based on biological criteria, and formulates new ways of conceptualizing the intersections between whiteness, blackness, and Italianness. Hence, based on such premises, *blackness* as a race referent stops being a category that refers to a single essence and becomes floating and openly significant, fictional, and artificial, which in turn triggers several complex issues, like the ones proposed by the Critical Race Theory and discussed in the Italian context by Anna Scacchi: race is but an illusion, a false perception of difference between human beings, a label imposed onto certain groups—a lens through which we can look and a sign that can be inhabited. Some of the answers in this chapter, though still partial,

confirmed by the racist language used by the whites who, among the others, used the label *Guinea* for both African slaves and their descendants and Italian Americans (starting from the beginning of the 20th century). Not many people are aware that the label *Nigger*, used by white US Americans to belittle African Americans, was also used by sugar cane plantation owners to address Sicilian labourers (Guglielmo and Salerno 27).

125 This theory was for a long time supported by the main Positivist anthropologists of Italy, according to whom the *Mediterranean* southern Italians, with their darker features, were a separate race from the *Aryan* northern Italians, who have fair features. The cause of the difference was attributed to the Mediterranean Italians having “inferior African blood.” According to those anthropologists, the geographical position of southern Italy, at the crossroads of Africa, Europe and Asia, had generated a people of “innate racial inferiority.” For more information see: Niceforo; Lombroso; Sergi.

126 For an analysis of translation as a re-memory practice, and in particular in its articulations with gender and race, see Taronna, “Writing.”

were provided through the analysis of the Afro-Mediterranean and transatlantic diasporic vernacular aesthetics. The analysis has revealed the emergence of elements concerning a discourse upon blackness and race intertwined with a reflection concerning the new forms of Italianness, which need to be re-defined through a comparative approach, where the color line discourses coming from the United States interact with the Italian ways of talking about language, identity and race.

4 Conclusion

The ethno-socio-linguistic analysis carried out here leads to a recognition of Black English as a new cosmopolitan language practice that can connect Italy and the United States, Africa and the Mediterranean, metropolitan cities and peripheries, and diasporic, migrant and postcolonial subjects, who can express their critical space through music, art, literature and cinema. It is an imaginative/imaginary space where, as Said put it, territories overlap and stories intertwine, pushing us beyond the objective and physical limits of self-referential aesthetics that the West has, at times, used to narrate itself. Given such a complex frame of reference, the theoretical reflections on Karima 2G's Black English and on the cultural identities and aesthetics that are linked to it have once again confirmed the idea of language as an interstitial space that is encountered by the speakers while they experiment and project their creole linguistic repertoires into a transformative social dimension. Actually, by breaking the rules governing the normative use of standard English, migrant, postcolonial and diasporic subjects who have chosen to use varieties like Black English or Pidgin English in different contexts and with different communicative purposes, have managed to express and convey the potential of their language in terms of aesthetic-political desirability.

In conclusion, the linguistic reflections proposed in this chapter encourage an innovative theoretical and methodological approach, including analyses concerning the plurality and pluricentrism that characterize English nowadays, to the growing and complex polyhedral nature of its contexts of use. Only an awareness of the need for alternative methods and re-readings opposing the monolithic and hegemonic vision of English language use can lead to an affirmation of the interdisciplinary and intercultural space that Ortiz defined as *transculturation*, namely a zone in which different languages and cultures converge syncretically, without hierarchies or censorship. Based on such premises, both African American diasporic aesthetics as well as Karima 2G's African Italian sense of identity can become models of transcultural communication in an Italian context, where the Italianness of second generations has to take into account national identity together with loyalty to family bonds, religion, and the ever-evolving sense of ethnic and cultural belonging. Being Italian today is a more complex process of identity formation, one that needs to take into account

blood bonds in addition to place of birth and legal residency. It is possible to infer that the cultural practices of second generations develop in a double time dimension, to be intended as a *re-memory* of a forgotten past and as a practice of democratic coexistence in the present, reifying an unheard declination of the concept of author—with consequences that cross national and linguistic borders. In their works, migrant and diasporic writers deal with the discourse of race and color in Italy beyond the binary oppositions black/white, racist/racialized, questioning the socio-cultural and identity dynamics where the re-production of power, resistance, inhabitation and re-inhabitation of the word *race* in its new semantic meanings coexist. With the production of their own cultural aesthetics, second-generation artists and writers breach the collective imagery of national identity, re-shaping Italian culture and society in a transcultural and translingual perspective.

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Tingting Hui

Cosmopolitan Hospitality and Accented Crossing: Forging an Ethics of Listening with Lawrence Abu Hamdan's Artworks

1 In What Language? In Which Accent?

Imagine this: Even as a citizen of the world, you own something, or are thought to own something legally or culturally, and have to decide whether or not to grant other people the right to use what you have. Just because you are a cosmopolitan, it does not mean that you are exempt from the everyday confrontations with the ethics of inclusion and exclusion. The most immediate example is your home. It is late at night, bleak and dark outside. A stranger knocks at your door, asking to take shelter in your house. In principle, you are sympathetic and ready to help anyone that is in danger or needs help. But still, you hesitate: Would it be safe if I let him in? How long would he stay? Would he behave respectfully? You thus ask him a few questions before you open the door: Where are you from? What's your name? What are you doing here?

For Jacques Derrida, this image is the prototype for thinking about cosmopolitanism: it is where the concept of hospitality enters into the picture of the Kantian notion of the cosmopolitan right, and where pragmatic concerns contest and reconfigure the political ideal. Whereas Kant ideally grounds cosmopolitanism in the principle of universal hospitality, Derrida unpacks the tension inherent in the notion of hospitality, which is particularly manifested in the metaphor of the host and guest relationship. If an unconditional openness to the arrival and visit of the other is essential for the idea of universal hospitality, does this mean that the demand to know the other's name and country of origin—a gesture of hesitation on the part of the host—testifies to the flawed and impure practice of cosmopolitanism and hospitality? While pointing out that the Kantian notion of universal hospitality is nevertheless conditioned “to the political, to the state, to the authority of the state, to citizenship, and to strict control of residency and the period of stay,” Derrida, in an interview with Geoffrey Bennington in 1997, reframes the conditionality not in terms of a betrayal of the proclaimed universality, but as a necessity for cosmopolitanism to assume a realizable form:

I have to—and that's an unconditional injunction—I have to welcome the Other whoever he or she is unconditionally, without asking for a document, a name, a context, or a passport. That is the very first opening of my relation to the Other: to open my space, my home—my house, my language, my culture, my nation, my state, and myself. I don't have to open it, because it is open, it is open before I make a decision about it: then I have to keep it open or try to keep it open unconditionally. But of course this unconditionality is a frightening thing, it's scary. If we decide

everyone will be able to enter my space, my house, my home, my city, my state, my language, and if we think what I think, namely that this person entering my space unconditionally may well be able to displace everything in my space, to upset, to undermine, to even destroy, and that the worst may happen and I am open to this, the best and the worst. But of course since this unconditional hospitality may lead to a perversion of this ethics of friendship, we have to condition this unconditionality, to negotiate the relation between this unconditional injunction and the necessary conditions to organise this hospitality, which means laws, rights, conventions, borders of course, laws on immigration and so on and so forth. (“Politics”)

In re-conceptualizing hospitality and cosmopolitanism via the tension between the absolute and the conditional, Derrida releases these concepts from the harness of moral laws and imperatives, rejuvenating them with an ethics of encounter, the terms of which are to be invented and negotiated on a case-by-case basis. In this chapter, I aim to examine the tension inherent in the idea of cosmopolitan hospitality from the aspects of language and speech. Indeed, language matters when it comes to welcoming the other. “In what language can the foreigner address his or her question? Receive ours? In what language can he or she be interrogated?” (131), asks Derrida in *Of Hospitality* (2000). Notably, when he asks these questions, Derrida is concerned with linguistic singularity and assimilation, with familiarity and sameness, as laws that dictate recognition and solidarity.

What I address in this article, however, has to do with the law that urges the other to speak like the other and to demonstrate an “authentic” accent that testifies to one’s singular mother tongue. I begin with the case of language analysis, which is often loosely referred to as the “accent test,” used internationally since the 1990s in asylum procedures to verify and determine the countries of origin of applicants. I then further contrast the case with Lawrence Abu Hamdan’s artistic response to it—in particular, in his audio documentary work *The Freedom of Speech Itself* (2012)—in order to frame the inherent tension that stretches the concept of cosmopolitan hospitality in different directions, and to reframe the confrontation between determinable and calculable rights and the unconditional gesture of welcome in the sense of forging an ethics of listening.

2 A Native Ear: A Good Ear?

In daily conversations, we often take pleasure in speculating about a newcomer’s origin by his or her accent. It is entertaining and works quite well in terms of striking up a conversation. But how should one assess this pastime activity when it is formalized into a method for linguistic profiling? What happens when the juridical ear tunes into the speaking body, attentively listening to accents as traces and proofs of the speaker’s linguistic and national background? In response to the concern that the asylum applicants might make false claims in terms of their countries of origin in order to advance their applications, since the 1990s language analysis has been

used by the governments of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland in asylum procedures to evaluate the language profiles of asylum applicants who present no documentary proof of their origins. Although the specific operating methods vary from country to country, language analysis in general consists of two stages. In the beginning an interview, in the presence of the asylum applicant, an interpreter, and an immigration official, is carried out and tape-recorded.¹²⁷ Afterwards, the recording is sent to analyst(s) and linguist(s), who compile the results of the evaluation into a written report which is later presented to the immigration department, where, as Diana Eades indicates, “it can form the basis of a decision about the granting of asylum, or where it can be one of many factors involved in making such a decision” (31).

Ever since the method of language analysis was implemented in asylum procedures, there have been heated debates over its theoretical assumptions and operating conditions. Linguists and practitioners of language analysis have to address questions such as: Can the borderlines of language varieties be unequivocally mapped and do they strictly overlap with the territorial borders of nations and regions? How reliable is speech and accent in verifying and determining a speaker’s national origin in a multilingual context? In 2004, an international group of linguists called the “Language and National Origin Group” (LNOG), drafted a set of guidelines aimed at regulating LADO practice (Language Analysis for the Determination of Origin) and assisting governments and legal professionals in deciding when it is appropriate to apply LADO (Fraser 116). The Guidelines respond to several concerns: First of all, the governments appear to rely too heavily on the test results, while disregarding the testimonies of the asylum applicants. Linguistic advice, the Guidelines emphasize, should only *assist* governments in making decisions about the applicants’ national origins (LNOG 261). Secondly, it happens that sometimes the duration of the recording can be too short to draw a conclusion, or sometimes the interpreter does not speak the language of the applicant. The Guidelines insist that on such occasions, or where the collected data are found to be insufficient or unreliable, language analysis should not be carried out. Furthermore, in order to guarantee the quality of analysis, the Guidelines explicitly demand that language analysis must be done “*only by qualified linguists* with recognized and up-to-date expertise, both in linguistics and in the language in question, including how this language differs from neighboring language varieties” (262; emphasis added).

In terms of the first two principles, there is little to dispute. But when it comes to the last one, opinions begin to diverge: Who—the linguists or the native speakers—should have the authority to make judgments about the applicant’s way of speaking?

127 Eades mentions that Switzerland has a different approach to LADO. The interview is done “by phone by the linguist, who also carries out the analysis,” and the test result is considered together with other factors, including the applicant’s testimony. See Eades (32).

Whereas the Guidelines insist that native speakers lack appropriate expertise and scientific qualifications to perform language analysis, Tina Cambier-Langeveld, a forensic phonetician who worked for the Netherlands Forensic Institute for six years and has been employed in the field of LADO since 2005, challenged this view in a paper presented at a specialist Workshop on LADO in Amsterdam in 2007: “The risks when no native competence is involved in L[anguage] A[nalysis] [are that] a linguistic expert who is not a native speaker can never be expected to acquire a “native ear.” The *presence* of speech features is tested. The *authenticity* of these features is not tested” (qtd. in Fraser 117; emphasis in original). For Cambier-Langeveld, compared to the judgments of linguistic experts the judgments of native speakers are more reliable when it comes to whether certain speech features are genuine or fake, and thus should be appropriated as a valid and complementary form of knowledge. This proposal subsequently divides linguists and LADO practitioners into two opposing camps. One camp, whose prominent advocates are Cambier-Langeveld, Anne-Marieke Samson, Francis Nolan, Kim Wilson, and Paul Foulkes, recognizes the approach of drawing on trained native speakers—who should nevertheless be supervised by linguists—to carry out language analysis.

The other camp, in contrast, defends the current position of the Guidelines, arguing that native speakers tend to be overconfident about their folk knowledge and beliefs. Helen Fraser, for example, claims that:

[P]eople without extended training in academic linguistics are often ignorant not just about many aspects of language, but about their own ignorance, and so tend to put unjustified faith in their own ‘folk knowledge’. Linguists of all persuasions have been engaged for many years in fostering appreciation of linguistics as a discipline among other professions and in society at large (Hudson 1981), promoting the view that a ‘linguist’ is not someone who can speak several languages or knows ‘good grammar,’ but someone with advanced academic qualifications and professional expertise in the science of language—*equivalent to a chemist, psychologist or engineer*. (114; emphasis added)

It is clear that this ongoing debate is not merely about whether and how native speakers’ judgments can be efficiently incorporated into LADO. The real danger in handing over the right of language analysis to native speakers is, as Fraser implies, that it might discredit the field of linguistics as a whole. For Fraser, linguistic studies have experienced a hard time in being accepted as a valid branch of science; and the promoted differentiation between linguists and native or “good” speakers marked a watershed in this debate. If native speakers were to be permitted to interpret LADO data, this is the equivalent of saying that the knowledge and expertise of linguists is not exclusively “owned,” and cannot be effectively differentiated from the instinctive perceptions and understandings of the native speakers of a certain language. Whereas a chemist, psychologist, or engineer would seem to have acquired his or her scientific status rightfully, a linguist only becomes one of them after proving that with

regards to language he or she knows more, or at least knows it in a different way, than does a native speaker.

The possibility of having native speakers “transcend” their position of being merely research objects certainly touches a nerve in some linguists, raising anxieties about linguistics as a scientifically legitimate discipline. Ironically, Fraser mentions that one of the concerns about consulting native speakers in language analysis has to do with “the difficulty of defining “native speaker” in multilingual contexts such as those in which LADO is relevant” (117). If, indeed, the notion of a native speaker is difficult to define, then on what premises can anyone proclaim to give scientific accounts of a speaker’s national origin? If it becomes more and more unlikely that a speaker is exclusively “native” to one language and one mother tongue, how can one’s speech and accent unequivocally testify to a national origin and its essential relation to the speaker? Fraser seems to forget that the LADO method itself draws more or less on native speakers as ideal and stable representatives of a language, a community, and a region. The ambiguous definition of “native speaker” is good enough for Fraser to dismiss the role of native speakers in the practice of LADO, but does not seem to add any nuances to her conclusion that “[f]rom the point of view of linguistic science, LADO is an entirely reasonable pursuit” (Fraser 114).

It is worth noting that Cambier-Langeveld metaphorizes the linguistic competence of native speakers into a reference to the “native ear.” Leaving aside the ability to tell “fake” accents apart, Cambier-Langeveld relies on the body, especially the ear, to register and recall “genuine” vocal performances of “fellow native speakers.” Considered as the organic condition of speaking and listening, the native body is called upon here to delineate and enact an appropriate speech situation whereby the accent can be entrusted to be a faithful bodily register of the applicant’s citizenship. However, is a “native ear” necessarily a “good ear”—good in the sense that the competence of the tongue can be accurately transferred into sensitivities and nuances of the ear? In response to Cambier-Langeveld’s formulation, Fraser comments that this debate is indeed about “what constitutes a ‘good ear,’ how important a ‘native ear’ is, and how these ‘ears’ can be tested” (Fraser 133).

The rivalry between these two camps, at this point, clearly frames LADO as a listening technique that has been used in asylum procedures to construct accents as performative speech acts and to delimit the LADO context as a scientifically and legally reliable speech situation. This leads us to an accented speech situation, where the technique of listening interweaves state sovereignty and national ideologies with linguistic discourses. In a way, the practice of LADO can be seen as a modern version of the “shibboleth test,” whereas the old technique of using *catchwords* to reveal the alien tongue is replaced by a rather comprehensive evaluation of speech features conducted by expert linguists. By drawing upon linguistic discourses, LADO is able to claim that it listens professionally and scientifically, and can thus be rightfully deployed by governments and institutions to accentuate and reinstate national borders.

3 An Artistic Response: How to Graft a Nuanced Ear?

When Socrates, accused of being a skillful but deceptive speaker, was brought before Athenian judges, he pointed out that he was like a foreigner who did not speak the language of the courts, but was forced to use this language to defend himself. In fact, as Socrates explained, he was treated worse than a foreigner would have been in front of law, because “if I were really a foreigner [*ei tō onti xenos etugkanon ōn*], you would naturally excuse me if I spoke in the accent and dialect in which I had been brought up.” Commenting in *Of Hospitality* on Socrates’s words of defense, Derrida notes that:

This passage teaches us something else. Joly reminds us of it, as does Benveniste, whom I’ll be quoting in a moment: at Athens, the foreigner had some rights. He saw he had a recognized right of access to the courts, since Socrates assumes it: if I were a foreigner, here in the court, he says, you would tolerate not only my accent, my voice, my elocution, but the turns of phrase in my spontaneous, original, idiomatic rhetoric. There was thus a foreigner’s right, a right of hospitality for foreigners at Athens. (“Foreigner Question” 19)

Here Derrida interprets the juridical tolerance of one’s accent and voice as “a foreigner’s right,” and emphatically “a right of hospitality for foreigners at Athens.” If Derrida’s term “right of hospitality” largely conflates legal and moral terms—namely, “right” both as a duty and as the good thing to do—I suggest here that the right of *not* having one’s way of speaking implicates oneself in testimonies, for Derrida ties jurisdiction to moral demands while pointing out the juridical hospitality to the domain of language and speech.

Seen in this light, in exploiting the nuances of speech and accent to distinguish “bogus” and “undeserved” asylum seekers from “real” and “worthy” ones, the listening technique performed by LADO manifests a condition for hospitality that suspends the very common ground between law and morality. In an article entitled “Aural Contract: Forensic Listening and the Reorganization of the Speaking-subject,” Lawrence Abu Hamdan, a contemporary artist whose works often experiment with various and miscellaneous audio-visual forms and explore the relationship between the act of listening and politics, raises concerns over the listening practice of the juridical ear which, according to Hamdan, has undergone a radical shift from “simply hearing words spoken aloud to actively listening to the process of speaking, as a new form of forensic evidence” (201). Hamdan pinpoints the enactment of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), which requires police interview rooms to be equipped with audio-recording machines, as the crucial moment that announced this shift. Although this code of practice was meant to govern police powers, Hamdan observes that the audio-recorded interviews are often used—not necessarily with the consent or knowledge of the suspect—for forensic phonetic analysis. Consisting of expert listeners who promise to listen well and professionally, this little-known field of forensic linguistics formalizes the legal practice of employing speaker profiling, voice identi-

fication, and voice prints to have the suspect testify (unknowingly) for or against his or her own testimony. This convergence of legal jurisdiction and forensic linguistics, Hamdan implies, has advanced the practice of forensic listening and radically transformed the speaking subject in front of law into a speaking *body*, whose act of speaking is split into the voicing of language and the voicing of body.

Listening to the body as a vocal expression, the law thus finds a way to frame testimonial accounts into acts of self-incrimination. In the same article, Hamdan traces the dynamic interchange of speaking and listening to the invention of the stethoscope in 1816—a medical instrument that allowed the doctor to listen to the inner sounds of the body and to communicate with the patient’s body directly (206). When tracing the medical practice informed by this new technology of listening, Hamdan tracks down a very compelling moment:

While listening to the lungs with a stethoscope, the patient is asked to say the letter “e.” If the lungs are clear, the doctor will detect the spoken “e” (“ee”) as sounding like an “ee.” Adversely, if the lungs contain fluid or a tumour, the patient’s spoken “e” will sound like a phonetic “a” (“ay”). The “e” sound gets transmuted to an “a” sound through the body. This “e” to “a” transmutation shows us the ways in which the voice becomes doubled in the medical ear and how one voice can produce multiple accounts of itself. (207)

The stethoscope, Hamdan argues, allows the medical ear to follow the passage of the phoneme in the body, and further encodes the health condition into a bifurcation of the vocalized sounds of the phoneme. Presupposing no meaning of its own, the spoken “e” is picked out to facilitate and amplify the audibility of the bodily idiosyncrasy. It is a distinct unit of sound that exemplifies how the body can stop making “sense” with its act of voicing, but is deployed *purely* as a sound device.

In light of this juridico-political shift to techniques of listening, Hamdan proposes that our critical engagement should accordingly “shift from a politics of speech to a politics of listening, where listening is understood as an act that produces the speech of others” (79–80). The question is, how can art and literature emphatically tune into this shift, mobilizing different and subtler modes of listening when it comes to speech varieties and accents? Hamdan’s artistic practices, which demonstrate a continuous fascination with sound and voice, seem to respond to this call with vigor. In his trilogy of *Aural Contract* (published 2012–2014), Hamdan extensively engages in the political use and abuse of techniques of listening. *The Freedom of Speech Itself* (2012) and *The Whole Truth* (2012) focus, respectively, on the use of accent tests by border agencies, and on voice analysis for the purpose of lie detection. Drawing primarily on the form of audio documentary, both works deliberately “deprive” the audience of the ease and habit of establishing a predominant visual relation with the art objects. It is as if vision and sound are always vying for attention, and the most effective way of accentuating the voice as an acoustic object and a legal and politicized phenomenon is to “protect” the eyes from a “compulsive” exposure to visual representations.

On one hand, in an era where visual images constitute the most persuasive—but at the same time highly deceptive—form of media, the influence of vision has proved to be rather dominant in formulating and sustaining any interpersonal, epistemological, and ethical relations. The ability of the eyes to bear witness to the “truth” often overshadows other senses, whose features of hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting are considered to be responsive to the other basic and non-intellectual instincts and perceptions. By retreating to the audio form even when videos are convenient and accessible, Hamdan demands that the audience “lend him their ears” so as to speak to them. Initiating the audience into an “aural contract” with his artworks, Hamdan channels one ear of the listener to the “truth” manifested through words, and the other ear to the “truth” registered in accents and voices.

To enable the audience to hear the “truth” in this dual form, I suggest that Hamdan’s works often deploy and activate two modes of listening, namely “semantic listening” and “reduced listening.” In *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (1990), Michel Chion proposed three listening modes, each of which features different aspects of sound and gives rise to different listening experiences. “Casual listening” refers to the act of listening to a sound in order to identify its cause (Chion 25). “Semantic listening” is to listen for meaning. In this mode of listening, even if two pieces of sounds are not completely identical, they may be heard as the same so long as they do not interfere with the listener’s perception of the message (28). For example, the different pitches of voice involved in pronouncing the word “truth” do not, in most cases, lead to a different understanding of its meaning. In contrast, “reduced listening,” a term originally coined by Pierre Schaeffer, refers to the experience of attentively listening to the acoustical properties and sonic textures of the sound itself (Chion 29). In this case, the different pitches, timbres, and qualities of the voice are noted, which may or may not influence the perception of the sound in question. Whereas upon hearing a sound one is inclined to identify its causes and search for its meaning, it usually takes sustained intention and efforts on the part of the listener to focus on the sound alone. So what is this practice good for? Chion says, “reduced listening has the enormous advantage of opening up our ears and sharpening our power of listening. ... The emotional, physical, and aesthetic value of a sound is linked not only to the causal explanation we attribute to it, but also to its own qualities of timbre and texture, to its own personal vibration” (31). In other words, reduced listening trains the ears to distill the psychic and aesthetic effects from the sound itself; it is a practice of having the listening body vibrate in and through sound while remaining loyal to the medium itself.

While Hamdan’s works frequently appeal to the mode of reduced listening, it is often not aimed at awakening the audience to the aesthetic qualities of the voice. In the trilogy, the narrating and performing voices are distorted and estranged to various degrees, so as to widen the gap between meanings that are “neutrally” understood and sounds that are “accentually” heard, and to further investigate the role of the voice in legal and political contexts. For instance, in focusing on the application of accent and speech analysis in asylum procedures by the UK border agency, *The Freedom*

of Speech Itself brings together interviews and testimonies of lawyers, phonetic linguists and linguistic anthropologists, asylum seekers, Home Office officials, and the artist himself. There are no visuals to enhance the audience's identification of the people who are speaking in the audio. To make it more complicated, words and voices continuously interweave with and interrupt one another, to the point that different strands of thoughts and observations are fragmented into sonic clues to identify who is speaking and whose voice it is. Whereas the voices of the experts, officials, and the artist himself—no matter whether accented or not—usually sound calm and even (and are therefore hard to be immediately separated from one another), the asylum seekers can easily be distinguished by their rather marked English accents, “excited” voices, or “exotic” languages. The anxious and stirring emotions of the asylum seekers can, to the audience's ears, also be intensified because of the rough and coarse background noise, which is not there in most expert interviews. The background sound becomes a prominent medium that registers different levels of precarity and senses of security in terms of the living and working environments of asylum seekers, experts, and officials.

At one point, following a brief moment of chirpy and carefree background music, one hears only a constant and squeaking repetition of the “a” sound, as if the cassette tape is jammed. As the sound gradually fades away, a male voice (very likely that of the artist) impassively explains:

This syllable is the sound that provides the UK border agency with the alleged certainty of Muhammad's Syrian origin. They designate this vowel as a Syrian national, and imply that its use in the word ‘tomato’ is coterminous with Syria's borders. But locating this Syrian vowel in the speech of a Palestinian surely proves nothing more than the displacement of the Palestinians themselves. In other words, the instability of an accent, its borrowed and hybridized phonetical form, is testimonial not to someone's origins, but only to an unstable and migratory lifestyle, which is of course common in those fleeing from conflict and seeking asylum. Is it not more likely then that a genuine asylum seeker's accent would be an irregular and an itinerant concoction of voices, a set of a biography of a journey, rather than an immediately distinguishable voice that vows its unshakable roots to a single place? The fact that this syllable designates citizenship above a Palestinian identity card that contradicts it forces us to rethink how borders are being made perceptible and how configurations of vowels and consonants are made legally accountable. So, what is the legal status of our voices? What is the connection of our accent to our citizenship? Is there any law that stipulates how our voices should conform with our national borders? And can this phoneme renounce its citizenship? (*The Freedom*)

Throughout this segment of analysis, the repetitive utterance of the phoneme “a” stubbornly stays in the background, while the male voice evenly performs itself. Because of its irregular frequencies and amplitudes, it haunts the narrating voice—sometimes like a restless machine that malfunctions, and sometimes like a wounded and grunting animal. While the male voice stays neutral and nonchalant, as the rate of repetition slows down the background sound seems to add emotional tones (desperation and sympathy) to the voice's plea for justice. However, when the sound suddenly

accelerates and overtakes the voice, the shrieking sound constitutes a striking contrast to the even and unchanging voice, making one wonder in which sense one can expect the seemingly indifferent voice to do justice to the unrecognizable sound, and whether the knowledge that arises from these two different forms of voicing can ever be compatible. Calling upon the haunting effect of the sound itself, the monotonous repetition of the phoneme “a” prompts a mode of reduced listening that approaches phonemes as sound bites without meaning and signification. However, one hears meaning in the sound anyway for as long as the narrating voice continues to ascribe juridical and political significance to it. In this sense, it is rather the interpretive voice that haunts the sound of the phoneme, refusing to leave it alone to the realm of “pure” listening. The way that the artist embeds reduced listening in the mode of semantic listening metaphorically gestures towards the expert and bureaucratic approach to language analysis, which manufactures legally accountable phonemes by imposing a neutral, “truthful,” and authoritative voice of interpretation.

The question remains: To what extent can the artist claim to speak for those asylum applicants whose voices stay rough and raw, distant from that of the artist? Compared with voices of the linguistic experts and Home Office officials, does the voice of the artist necessarily hold more truth? When the pronunciation of certain phonemes does not satisfy the expectation of the juridical ear, is it the speaker or the listener that should be held accountable for the linguistic transgression of borders? It is here, I suggest, that this work becomes self-referential. Whereas the content of the audio documentary clearly frames the artistic voice as superior and closer to truth, the form of it questions the limits of its knowledge and adds nuances to what it affirmatively states. By accentuating the gap between what the artwork says and how it can be listened to, Hamdan translates the discrepancy between voice and language, which is emphatically heard in the asylum context, into the dissonance of form and content that makes his artistic expression open and unfinalized. This piece of work aims not only to inform the audience of the practice of forensic listening, but also to problematize it by “imposing” on the audience the similar kind of listening technique that registers the “truth” at various levels. However, unlike the expert listeners of language analysis, who are asked to navigate through conflicting revelations of speech and voice and to ultimately arrive at a single image of truth in terms of the applicant’s national origin, the artwork and the audience of the artwork are under no such obligation. In other words, if the juridical and linguistic ears are made to facilitate or force the accent to act out its borders and citizenship, the ears grafted by the artwork are precisely called upon to *suspend* the intended performativity of the accented speech. Whereas the heated debates on language analysis are meant to agree on and formalize a set of reliable conditions that render accents legally accountable for acts of border-crossing, Hamdan’s artwork, by mixing the voices of people from conflicting positions into a cacophony of fragmented “truths,” dooms to failure any attempts to delimit the “proper” context of language analysis.

Interestingly, when trying to adapt his audio documentary *The Freedom of Speech Itself* into the context of an exhibition, instead of merely dumbing the sense of vision to sharpen the audibility of the ears, Hamdan incorporates sculptured forms of voiceprints to create a dynamic audiovisual space. The voiceprints resemble visual representations of the frequency and amplitude of two voices saying the word “you.” The voices are materialized in the form of 3D map, which delineates the borders and territories of “you” demarcated by the addressing or hailing voices. Made from acoustic absorbent foams, these sculptures “suck” in sounds and voices that may flee from the footsteps of visitors, the private dialogues of lovers and friends, the occasional exclamations of children. Together with the audio documentary, the voiceprints convert the exhibition space into a giant abstract listening ear; whoever speaks unwittingly confronts the borders laid out by the anonymous call. Touring through the exhibition space, the visitors experience their presence as being both welcomed and rejected—welcomed because they are acknowledged as addressees and potential dialogue partners; and rejected because the sounds they make provoke no resonance. If indeed, as Hamdan implies, the current socio-political surveillance tends to appropriate an institutionalized technology of listening, and the political struggle should be more attentive to the politics of listening, this piece of artwork shows how art can critically engage with this shift by facilitating an awareness of the listening conditions that influence how our speech acts, and by mobilizing alternative listening modes that give rise to rather private and more nuanced ears.

4 Towards an Ethics of Listening

Inviting, receiving, asylum, lodging, go by way of the language or the address to the other. As Levinas says from another point of view, language is hospitality. Nevertheless, we have come to wonder whether absolute, hyperbolic, unconditional hospitality doesn't consist in suspending language, a particular determined language, and even the address to the other? Shouldn't we also submit to a sort of holding back of the temptation to ask the other who he is, what her name is, where he comes from, etc.? (Derrida, “Foreigner Question” 133, 135)

In noting that the concept of hospitality entails the negotiation between mutual and irreconcilable tendencies to both dispense with and subscribe to law and duty, Derrida, as it is shown in the passage above, questions whether the very practice of any languages would not instantly corrupt the regime of absolute and unconditioned hospitality which, as a consequence, dismantles the push-pull dynamics between the two regimes. Therefore, as Derrida implies, the language of total intimacy is to be found only in profound silence. Whereas Derrida conceptualizes cosmopolitan or universal hospitality in terms of the very suspension of language, the practice of language analysis in asylum procedures and Hamdan's artistic responses to it have

emphatically shifted the discussion of hospitality and language to the different modes and techniques of listening.

I want to emphasize that what Derrida says in the interview: “Hospitality, and hospitality is a very general name for all our relations to the Other has to be re-invented at every second, it is something without a pre-given rule.”—is equally applicable and significant when it comes to language (“Politics”). As the concept of hospitality dismisses any pre-defined terms, it calls for the elasticity of encountering and a fine attunement to the situation. Although the choice of a language and the staging of an accent can unwittingly trigger certain types of stereotypical projections and political sentiments, the act of speaking itself does not have to be the end of the matter. Hospitality is about the willingness to improvise and the confidence in goodwill: Even if my initial choice of a language might disappoint you like a misplaced note, the idea of hospitality can be restored by the practice of sympathetic and attentive listening; real hospitality, which emphasizes reciprocity and generosity, comes from the benevolent ears that listen to the echoes of one’s speech in the vocal valley of other people’s speech, and from the intention and effort to restore the trust and order through the dynamic interchange of speaking and listening.

The current and prevalent concern with language analysis is that it freezes concepts such as asylum, border, and hospitality in the moment where techniques of listening dissolve and reproduce the act of speaking, where the very deployment of the “refined” lingual forensic ears serves to map out the geographical and national origin of the speaker in question. If the LADO practice aims to delineate and formalize what J.L. Austin calls a “total speech situation” (26), where accents are construed to be performative in the sense that they are measured exclusively in relation to the mother tongue as the appropriate convention and the native speaker as the supreme authority, LADO and Hamdan’s artistic response exemplify the contrasting manners of performativity that accented speech can give rise to—one has the power to legitimize or delegitimize the act of border crossing, and the other showcases the vulnerability of body and voice. Most importantly, they point to a critical dimension of the speech situation that has been left unexplored; namely, how do techniques of listening interact with speech acts?

On the one hand, I suggest different speech acts solicit and engage with certain listening modes. Particular speech contexts often contain and manifest clues in terms of how an utterance can be best listened to. For instance, the theatrical setting of a show invites the audience to take the words of actors and actresses as bearing no straightforward relation to reality, whereas the formalized rituals of marriage bind the ears of listeners to the oath of the couple as genuine, factual, and consequential. Besides conventionality, many other factors—which can be as trivial as the speaker’s facial muscular movements or as unobservable as the listener’s knowledge of the speaker’s personality—are consulted, explicitly or implicitly, by the listener to decide whether what he or she just heard should be taken as joke or an insult, as meaningless babble or a serious promise.

On the other hand, not only is the listening mode informed by suggestive features involved in speech situations, but it also intervenes in speech acts via *a priori* knowledge, discourses, beliefs, and techniques. *How an utterance is listened to may form the very condition of how the speech acts.* I want to suggest further that this dimension of listening adds a degree of nuance to the credibility conditions governing speech acts, by showing that the principle of sincerity and intentionality, construed by Austin as an audible “fact” that is consciously stated by the speaker, might also be an effect of a biased and modified listening. Be it accented speech or hate speech, if they are able to convey and do anything at all the effects are never achieved once and for all. The force of speech acts is not constituted solely at the moment of utterance; it can and should be seen in terms of how different forms of speech mobilize certain dynamics of speaking and listening, and how techniques of listening may transform or temporarily “finalize” intended speech acts.

In his essay “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening,” Dori Laub, a clinical professor of psychiatry and a practicing psychoanalyst, calls attention to the importance of compassionate and empathetic listening as *bearing witness*—a welcoming gesture that lays out an ethical and critical ground from which holocaust testimonies can emerge. “Bearing witness to a trauma is, in fact, a process that includes the listener,” writes Laub, “For the testimonial process to take place, there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of an other—in the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude” (70–71). Here, in a different context, the very possibility of speaking is considered to involve and even depend on the practice of listening. Words await in silence and in white noise for the right ears to register the passion, desire, and suffering of the speaker. Does this mean, however, that in order to be heard one’s speech has to predict the ethos of the ears and to comply itself with the listening mode in use? If testimonies and accented speech are to be understood in terms of speech acts, and if appropriateness is central to what Austin proposes to be the credibility conditions of the performative utterance, doesn’t it eliminate the possibility of speech to go beyond the boundary demarcated by the listening ears? What makes “leftover speech”—speech that fails to be contained by the ears—audible and affective? How does one tune the ears into a specific listening mode when the speech itself presents no straightforward frames of reference, and thus cannot be assessed in terms of reliability or efficiency?

These questions point to the inadequacy of fashioning an ethics of listening and a theory of hospitality solely by reference to speech act theory. Seen in this light, in a way LADO embodies both the danger and allure of marrying the technique of listening with accented speech acts. The consequence of listening to speech as acts—or more precisely, as acts of crossing and evidence of citizenship—is the very annihilation of the expressiveness of language and renunciation of the potential digression of the ears. Stanley Cavell, in his essay “Passionate and Performative Utterance: Morals of Encounter,” voices concern about “a theory of language that pictures speech as at heart a matter of action and only incidentally as a matter of articulating and hence

expressing desire” (180). For Cavell, speech act theory pronounces philosophy’s preoccupation with statements and assertions, and its continued dismissal of language as expressions of passion and desire. Such a tendency can be easily discerned in Austin systematic exclusion of literary and fictional speech from the category of performative speech acts. “I mean, for example, the following: a performative utterance will,” observes Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962):

for example, be *in a particular way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. This applies in a similar manner to any and every utterance—a sea-change in special circumstances. Language in such circumstances is in special ways—intelligibly—used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use—ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language. (22; emphasis in original)

Literature poses a conundrum for Austin. On the one hand, he draws upon literary works and plays to construct various speech situations that serve to illustrate different types of the performative act. On the other hand, the rhetorical and fictional dimension of literature seems to resist a generalized account of speech as action. For example, how to understand a marriage proposal happening in a play? Do the sweet tears, flickering eyes, and the excited “Yes, I do” bind the actors offstage?

The debate which took place at the end of 1970s between Derrida and John Searle continued this discussion and staged a head-on confrontation between speech act theory and literature. Searle, who inherits Austin’s mistrust of literature, emphasizes that when a speech act—for instance the act of promising—is transported into a literary context, it undergoes moments of corruption that influence both the genuineness of the intention and the authenticity of the conventionality. It is for this reason that Searle takes fictional discourse as a sort of “nondeceptive pseudoperformance” (325), whose effects are dependent on the ordinary usage of the speech and can only be conveyed through a prior exposure to and understanding of the speech in question outside fiction. However, for Derrida the speech situation in general is cannot be totaled up, because neither the context nor the intention of the speaker can be fixed or determined. It is impossible to discriminate among parasitic and normal uses of language, insofar as an utterance can be cited out of its intended context and repeated in spite of the absence of the author/speaker. There is no original and privileged context, Derrida notes, which can anchor and guarantee the performativity of an utterance.

Cavell, although not being explicitly engaged in this debate over literature and speech act theory, re-conceptualizes the matter in terms of the nature of language and speech. Cavell writes, “From the root of speech, in each utterance of revelation and confrontation, two paths spring: that of the responsibility of implication; and that of the rights of desire” (194). This divergence results in two types of speech: One is performative utterance and the other is what Cavell calls “passionate utterance.” “A performative utterance is an offer of participation in the order of law,” writes Cavell, “And perhaps we can say: A passionate utterance is an invitation to improvisation in the disorders of desire” (194). Literature, seen in this light, is not to be understood by

reference to speech acts or to the spatio-temporal suspension of speech as action. Literature is not only “parasitic” upon the everyday use of language but also dependent on other texts to make expressions simultaneously intelligible and singular. If such constitutes the very exclusion of literature from speech act theory, this is not to say that literary speech has no force. Rather, it points to the possibility and necessity of understanding language and speech as giving the indeterminacy and ineffability of desire a tentative verbal form. Literary speech is to language a desiring machine that produces disorders and solicits responses. Bringing into play the expressive dimension of language, Cavell aims not only to disentangle the enunciation of words from instant confirmation and the sanction of proper rules and terms; as Cavell explains, “the view is meant in service of something I want from moral theory, namely a systematic recognition of speech as confrontation, as demanding, as owed” (196). Passionate utterance, which suspends the enduring framework of speech acts, refers to both the interlocutor and the listener as neither a regulator nor a by-product of one’s speech and discourse. Instead, it singles out the listener as the one to whom the speech entrusts itself, and from whom the speech solicits a response in kind.

Whereas a performative utterance—as it is in the case of LADO—prompts a politics of listening that predisposes the ears to particular ethos and laws, and to the idea of hospitality as duties and conditions, a passionate utterance opens up an ethics of listening, which entails not only postponing the agenda of its own, but also renouncing the ambition of enclosing or containing the speech within the range of its audibility. Indeed, given the current practice of language analysis it seems impossible to talk about hospitality in relation to language: As the act of speaking and the technique of listening are mutually embedded and managed in a way that gives rise to terms of hospitality, accents—when they fail to help track the body back to anticipated trajectories and profiles—are the equivalent of a performative gesture of falsehood and illegitimacy. Speech, when reduced to sound bites and units of phonemes, deprives the audibility of the speaker’s will to express and to desire. Hamdan’s audio documentary *The Freedom of Speech Itself*, while exposing the problematics of accented speech acts and the politics of listening, points to the possibility and necessity of listening to accents as a register of passion and desire, whose order cannot be exhausted by the hierarchy of truth and falsity, trustworthiness and untrustworthiness. Confronted with a formalized accented speech burdened with the duty of action, Hamdan responds with a cacophonous mixture of accents and voices, which amount to an expression of fictionality that fragments the singular enunciation of “Truth” and replaces it with truths in its plural form. The incompatibility of localized truths and the bifurcation of speech into action and passion make the practice of listening an ethical choice and a conduct taken up by the audience, who have to forge a dialogue between the two orders of hospitality and accept that the two regimes that structure speech and hospitality will remain irreconcilable. An ethics of listening, therefore, is not to listen without prejudices or ideologies—it is to listen in spite of them.

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Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez

Imagining Something Better: *Rolas* from My Border Hi-Fi

The list is the origin of culture. It's part of the history of art and literature. What does culture want? To make infinity comprehensible. It also wants to create order—not always, but often. And how, as a human being, does one face infinity? How does one attempt to grasp the incomprehensible? Through lists, through catalogs, through collections in museums and through encyclopedias and dictionaries.

(Umberto Eco)

1 “It Started with a Mixx”—Los Campesinos!

When I was a teen, one of my favorite books was *The Book of Lists*, an almanac of curious information and trivia. The lists included “worst places to hitchhike,” “people misquoted by Ronald Reagan,” “18 famous brains and what they weighed,” “10 words you can’t pronounce correctly,” etc. I had not thought about the book in years until, in 2003, I picked up Alberto Fuguet’s *Las películas de mi vida* (*The Movies of My Life*), and the narrator, Beltrán Soller, starts talking about the gift he received from his grandfather: *The Book of Lists*. For the protagonist, that gift becomes a point of departure for the eventual listing of the 50 movies that shaped his life. *Por esas cosas que pasan*, *The Book of Lists* also shaped my life for collecting random scraps of information and for making lists. Because lists, as Umberto Eco notes, can serve as attempts to make “infinity comprehensible.”

Confession: I’m a keeper of lists. Mostly, they revolve around music: the music of my life. My favorite period is that of the late ‘70s through mid-‘90s, from roughly the birth of Joy Division through Beck, from punk through post-punk, new wave, electro and alternative. I’m a musicophile, a music geek, or, as some friends have accused me of being, a rock snob.

I think I’ve been this way forever. I think of my past and I recall a particular song or a band: I think of a band or song and I remember the feeling, the things that I was going through at the time. Walking around *el centro histórico* of Mexico City, past the traffic and crowds, I often think of Depeche Mode’s *Music for the Masses*. I was living there when I received the album, and I used to listen to it all the time on my Walkman. The Pixies’ “I’ve Been Tired” is another song I closely associate with Mexico City as I was also living there when the song came to me on a mixtape sent by a friend. I had a lot of mixtapes with me. Many were my own mixes, and a few came from my friends.

Mixtapes were important for me as they maintained a link to *mi gente*—my family and my friends—in California.

I got into making mixtapes back in the 1980s, when I was a kid with the heart of a sad punk. In other words, high school. But I never shared those mixes with anyone. They were more my personal soundtrack culled from my collection of 45s, vinyl, and tapings off the radio. In 1984, when I entered university, I became a college radio DJ and arrived at the tail end of British post-punk—bands like the Cure, Joy Division, Gang of Four, Wire—and the rise of US indie music—R.E.M. being the key reference. This was the soundtrack of my life, and my mixtape production increased. Sometimes my tapes were culled from my own radio shows, or they were dedicated to whichever particular *chica* had caught my eye, or they were mixes that I made in our production studio using the vast music library of KCSC that was at my disposal.¹²⁸

The best mixes construct soundtracks for a life: They are in some ways autobiographies told in three-and-a-half-minute bursts at the velocity of a cassette tape, a CD, or an iPhone. They are stories constructed in songs that help guide the listener and reveal the narrator. They ask for a dialogue, a union, a conversation. As Nick Hornby declares, making a mixtape is “like writing a letter—there’s a lot of erasing and rethinking and starting again,” and making one is “like breaking up, hard to do” (88–89). Sitting in front of a computer or—if one is old-school—a stereo to listen to music, making a playlist or a mixtape can be a way of starting a dialogue or a conversation: crafting a listing of songs into a particular order is an act of identity.

At its most basic, the following is a playlist of songs that makes up so much of my life as an unrepentant border-crosser. Music adds a soundscape that can contribute to the casting into sense of a surrounding space; it can function as another way of creating a sense of place while uniting disparate places, countries, and histories. What I reflect on here, then, is a blend of the personal with the public, the autobiographical with the scholarly, to write about how music works, but more than that, what music, primarily Chicano/a and rock *en español*, does. How does music affect us? In particular, this is about what music did for me, one of its listeners.

128 A bunch went to a young gymnast who I thought was neat. Fortunately, she thought the same. And while that’s always a good beginning for a story, this one does not end well: While my mixes were carefully planned, hers were often hastily put together. Aside from breaking many rules of making a mixtape—placing two songs by the same artist in a row, not paying attention to the flow—her mixes also told me that our musical tastes were never going to mesh. Where I offered Wire Train, For Against, and the Cocteau Twins, she responded with REO Speedwagon, Journey, and Cindy Lauper (her most “new wave” offering). Clearly, if there could be no conversation in our musical tastes, there could be no future for us.

2 “Everyday I Write the Book”—Elvis Costello

After his girlfriend leaves him, Rob, the narrator of *High Fidelity*, sets out to reorganize his record collection. Rather than follow a common system of classification—by artist, by album, or by genre—he chooses to organize his records autobiographically. As he explains:

... I fancy something different, so I try to remember the order I bought them in: that way I hope to write my own autobiography without having to do anything like pick up a pen. I pull the records off the shelves, put them in piles all over the sitting room floor, look for *Revolver*, and go on from there; and when I've finished, I'm flushed with a sense of self, because this, after all, is who I am. (54–55)

By organizing his records in this way, Rob attempts to bring order to his life, which has become chaotic and messy. In the film version, this moment is illustrated by a visit from Dick, one of Rob's employees at the small record store that he owns. Dick comments on the records that are already organized and asks about the system, confessing that he can't figure it out. When Rob explains it, the expression on Dick's face is key: It is one between approval and envy. Dick perfectly understands Rob's affliction: It is the same one that all of us who place too much on a song carry. Our affliction is that of having music inside us to the point where it is an essential part of our existence. This is not about the practice of making music but about the practice of listening, of recognizing that music is a necessary, vital element.

Whenever I move to a new home, one of the first things I install is the stereo. Whenever I travel, I carry at least two pairs of headphones, in case one fails. Each gesture towards music in my life—working in a record store as a graphic artist, being a radio DJ, spending hours crafting mixtapes, wandering around cities with my headphones serving as a soundtrack to my walks—is an act of identity. When we tell someone, “Hold on, I'll make you a mix,” we are offering a part of ourselves. Thanks for the Memorex, as Sarah Vowell once titled an essay of hers.

3 “Mexican Radio”—Wall of Voodoo

My life has been spent crossing borders. Up until I was sixteen years old, I spent every summer in Mexico, in Mexicali, the border city where my family is from. As an undergraduate and then graduate student, I traveled frequently to Mexico City for research. Later, my border crossings took me frequently to Spain, where I lived off and on for a number of years. In the last twelve years, my travels have taken me to Turkey. My travels to Istanbul are so frequent that it is thought that I really live there and occasionally fly to New Mexico to teach.

In my wanderings, as my friends on Facebook know, I frequently reflect on travel and migration, on forms of border crossing, on my passages through the Middle World that exists in the seams between countries and communities. Border crossing, migration, wandering—touching intervening spaces—opens up the possibilities of “alter/native ficto-historical texts that can create a world in process while continually freeing themselves from their own biases” (Gaspar de Alba 12).

My work in general flows along these hybrid cultural strategies, which I have termed Wandering strategies, and what Chicano critic José David Saldívar identifies as *pensamiento fronterizo* or border thinking—a process that comes from the marginalized to undermine hegemony. Wandering resists domination and exploitation through a high degree of hybridity. By focusing on wandering, notions of a point of departure, or of arrival, become less important: What matters is the journey.¹²⁹

It needs to be stressed that Wandering does not imply a mindless meandering, not a wandering lost, but a journeying along multiple trajectories, guided by the itinerant system of signs that the borderlands offer. Wandering culture wanders—flows—in the limen between cultures to construct not a fixed place but rather to deterritorialize the notion of fixed cultural identities. The identity that arises is not one based on territory; rather, the border identity that is proclaimed is forged between national cultures, in a migrant movement that is situated in an intervening space.

4 “Desaparecido”—Manu Chao

A day after arriving to Paris at the end of May in 1998, I stopped into the Virgin Megastore on the Champs Élysées to see what I could find. It was there that I found out that Manu Chao, lead singer of Mano Negra, had recently released his first solo album, *Clandestino*. Having been a fan of Mano Negra and the way in which, over the course of four albums, they traced a musical geography that incorporated punk rock, American jazz, Moroccan rhythms, reggae, dub, punk, and United States/Mexico border music into one highly diverse package bordering on *caótico*, I bought the CD without going to the listening station. *Clandestino* is a musical bomb thrown at the heart of rock/world/ethnic music, enacting a form of globalization not from above but from below, from the streets. In a continuation and departure from the final Mano Negra album, *Casa Babylon*, Manu has pared down the multiple layers to basic beats, but no less eclectic than what he had done in the past. Under a multi-textured soundscape incorporating sounds from the so-called Third World—North African leading to Carib-

¹²⁹ This is different from the notion of travel. As Iain Chambers states, “to travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming” (5).

bean to Latin American—Manu sings of wandering, of conflict, of crossing borders, of migrants forced to travel diverse routes in search of work.

In many ways, Manu sings from what Breyten Breytenbach has called the Middle World, a space between the First and the Third Worlds where the main condition its citizens—*uncitizens*, he calls them—know is migration. For Breytenbach, the Middle World uncitizen is one who has ventured into zones where “truths no longer fitted snugly and where certainties did not overlap, and most likely they got lost there” (135). Breytenbach’s model for the Middle World is helpful for understanding the consequences of mass movements across borders. He further emphasizes that though the Middle World is everywhere, “belonging and not belonging,” it is not “of the Center ... since it is by definition and vocation peripheral; it is *other*, living in the margins, the live edges” (136).¹³⁰ It is a border space connecting all other border places, in an archipelago of wandering.

This soundscape that Manu lays down is a blending not just of different styles, but also national terrains, primarily from the global South. In this fusion, his songs construct an audiotopia of the Middle World. An audiotopia, as Josh Kun remarks, is a sonic space “of effective utopian longings where several sites normally deemed incompatible are brought together” (23). As a site, like Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, it contains multiple sites/histories/narratives. The music of Manu Chao offers an audiotopic map of geographic encounters, a wandering across borders and time zones into a contact zone that lies between nations.

Crossing a border is always a crossing, if only briefly, into the Middle World. But sometimes, in the case of migrants who are forced to leave their countries—because of exile, because of economic conditions—the passage through the Middle World can be longer as they adjust to the new social realities. In some cases—as Manu sings in “Desaparecido”—there is no adjustment, no acculturation, and no nostalgia for the home left behind but rather a permanent state of suspension.

1998. Summer. I am on an overnight train from Paris to San Sebastian, in the Basque country. As the nocturnal landscape passes with the rumble of the train, I sink off into sleep, the songs of *Clandestino* in my ear, the CD player on repeat. From San Sebastian I travel to Bilbao, to Barcelona, to Madrid, and back to Paris. Throughout the train trips Manu is constantly singing. Overnight to distant cities in Spain and France, I am traveling also to Jamaica, to Cuba, to Algeria, to Chiapas. I am traveling also to Tijuana, the central city in this geography that Manu is mapping. Listening to

130 For him, to be of the Middle World “is to have broken away from the parochial, to have left ‘home’ for good (or for worse) whilst carrying all of it with you, and to have arrived on foreign shores (at the onset you thought of it as ‘destination’, but not for long), feeling at ease there without ever being ‘at home’” (143). Breytenbach also speaks to various levels of Middle-Worldness: from the trauma of exile to the economies of migration to the tragedy of being a refugee to the possibilities of being an expatriate. The Middle World posits a counter-narrative to the flows of power that would attempt to control, to place limits.

the music while crossing Spain, I move to the beat of the Middle World, placed and misplaced—a young border crossing Chicano straddling the north and the south at the same time—in different locales and temporalities. With this album, Manu shows that more than a musician, he is a border *brujo*, crossing—and in the process crossing out—borders to create new geographies.

5 “One Step Beyond”—Madness

October, 1984. About a week after entering university, at the end of August, 1984, on a whim I walked over to the student-run campus radio station, KCSC. As a shy teen who often felt misplaced in social situations, I spent most of my weekends in my room at home, listening to music. The last few years had been difficult. One of my younger sisters, the one closest to me in age, had contracted cancer at eleven; This was less than a year after my parents had divorced. The upheaval of the divorce and then my sister’s cancer shook our lives with the force of an earthquake. With the mounting hospital bills and my sister in the cancer ward at Stanford, my mother couldn’t afford to keep all her children together. My youngest sister went to live with my grandmother, my brother and my other sister went to my father. Since mom found it difficult to find a place for me, I lived with her for six months until she could convince one of my aunts in San Diego to take me in. In the meantime, I spent my weekends next to my sister in the cancer ward. I slept on a cot by her side. After a year, mom was able to reunite her children under one roof in San Diego. A year later, my sister’s cancer in remission, mom moved us all back to northern California, to the small farming town of Orland, where I had lived until the divorce.

We lived in a farmhouse on the edge of town, and on Saturday nights, I would be in my room, reading and listening to the radio. A nerd, a geek, with few social skills. One night, while moving the dial, I picked up the strains of a song that I hadn’t heard since moving away from San Diego, “One Step Beyond,” by Madness. My siblings and I were sitting in the living room one night watching a TV station that occasionally showed music videos when this crazy song came on with six guys bouncing around to a rock-steady beat. My sister and I were hooked. Finding that song on the radio in northern California was a revelation. Since returning to that part of the state, the new wave and punk that I had been listening to in southern California had been replaced by classic rock that said very little to me. The radio program was from a tiny station in the Sierra Nevada mountains that had blocks of programming. One block would be folk music, another would be reggae, another would jazz. On Saturday night, three hours were dedicated to punk and new wave. It became my favorite radio program, though I couldn’t always tune in. The station was far from Orland, and the reception was never that great. But when I could get it, I would hear the music that shaped my

life from then on. It was there that I first heard New Order, Joy Division, the Stranglers, and the Cure. It was there that I began to consider the possibility of working in radio.

On my first visit to KCSC, I was unsure of the process. Walking into the station, I was taken by the used furniture, the walls covered by posters for bands, the air of an operation working on a shoestring budget. While standing there in the lobby, taking it all in, a woman came out of one of the offices. She asked me if there was something I needed help with, and I stammered out, “I want to be a DJ.”

At the beginning of October, at 1:45 in the morning, I rode my bike over to the station where I was greeted by the DJ who had the Saturday night 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. slot. As he prepared to end his show and I got ready to start my first, he asked me: “Do you have a radio name?” I hadn’t thought about one, but finally I said: “Jimi, Jimi the Geek.”

At 2 a.m., on that early October night in 1984, I opened my first radio show with “One Step Beyond.” For a person with a low sense of self, one who had trouble speaking in public or in social situations, working on the radio was transformative for me. I found my voice on the radio, and found a community of other misfits like me; people who moved to a different beat, who created art, who lived and thought and loved in ways that were distinct from the mainstream.

6 “Con la tinta de mi sangre”—Los Relámpagos del Norte

In his novel *Out of Their Minds: The Incredible and (Sometimes) Sad Story of Ramón and Cornelio*, the Tijuana writer Luis Humberto Crosthwaite adds to the musicality of his border city of Tijuana through a novel about two friends from there who go on to become one of the most popular *norteco* duos in Mexico. The novel is a fictional, and parodic, biography of two *norteco* superstars, Ramón Ayala and Cornelio Reyna, and their rise to fame as the duo Los Relámpagos del Norte. In the novel, the two friends are simply Ramón and Cornelio and their band is Los Relámpagos de Agosto.¹³¹ One of the characters in the novel is their manager, my literary counterpart, Jimmy Vaquera, a Chicano from California who feels, literally, that he carries music inside him.

In the chapter “Heaven, I’m in Heaven,” Jimmy recounts to Ramón y Cornelio his relationship to music.¹³² He claims that he carries music, literally, in his veins.

¹³¹ The name of the band is both a reference to the band of the real Ramón y Cornelio, but also a reference to a novel by the Mexican writer (and brilliant ironist) Jorge Ibarguengoitia.

¹³² Though the novel was originally written in Spanish, I am quoting from the English translation. Where in the original, many of the chapter titles take their names from classic *norteco* songs, the translator, Johnny Bird, has replaced them with titles of songs from the US songbook.

And because of this, he has a close connection to it. He explains how at the age of four he tripped and cut his knee: “It was terrible and beautiful. Blood was spurting, it wouldn’t stop flowing, coloring the floor, and together with the blood, music came sailing, grandiose, emanating from my veins. Of course, no one else could hear it ... because it was inside my body” (46). He goes on to tell them how in high school he tried to show a girl he liked what flowed through his veins. He wanted to share his music with her and so he slit his wrist.¹³³ Jimmy ends up in the hospital where he is given a blood transfusion that frightens him. To him this is the worst thing that could happen. He asks himself: “What if it was the blood of someone that was tone deaf? What happened if this transfusion was the end of my melodious circulation?” (46). When he has the chance, he opens the wound and is pleased to discover that “my blood, my heart, my veins and arteries continued to be my own orchestra, my own private soundtrack” (47).

Music for Jimmy, as it is for Rob in *High Fidelity*, is his own form of rootedness. While it lives inside him, it keeps him grounded, and he realizes that he must protect it. And being a Chicano who understands what it means to be displaced—crossed by the border, placed and displaced by both Mexico and the United States—he knows that grounding in a region like the northwestern Mexican borderlands, a space that is often defined by its migratory flows, has to be found in forms other than roots in land.

7 “Noche oscura”—Café Tacvba

1993. The first time I heard about the Café Tacvba was in a fanzine I picked up in Mexico City in 1990. I was intrigued in this new Mexican rock band who performed in a variety of regional genres—*boleros*, *jarochos*, *norteño*—along with fast punk style songs using primarily acoustic instruments. On subsequent visits to Mexico City, I would spend my Saturday mornings at the Tianguis del Chopo, a vast Saturday market dedicated to music, from rock to blues to punk to electronic to reggae. There were T-shirts, bootleg tapes and CDs, and vinyl records, and the place was crowded with rockers, punks, and other members of the diverse Mexico City subcultures. On one visit, I left with a pile of tapes of strange electronic and folk music; on another, I walked out with bootleg tapes of Caifanes and Café Tacvba. So, in the spring of 1993, when I heard that Café Tacvba were playing at the famed Whiskey A Go-Go in Hollywood, I knew I had to go.

133 This act is an intertextual reference to the classic song “Sombras” by José María Contursi. The song begins with the singer declaring that he would like to open his veins and spill his blood at the feet of his lover, to show her the limits of his love for her. Though originally composed as a tango in 1943, the song was recorded in 1964 by the Mexican Javier Solís as a *bolero ranchero*—a type of arrangement in the *ranchero* genre that fuses Mexican *mariachi* instrumentation with a *bolero* beat.

When the band bounded out onto the stage, Meme leapt to the keyboard and melodica at the back, Quique ran out with a wooden upright bass, Joselo with his acoustic guitar, and then came the lead singer, Rubén Albarrán, in a Mexican field-worker outfit and a straw hat.¹³⁴ The band appeared to embody the folkloric imaginary of the Mexican held by the United States, the fantasia represented by Speedy Gonzalez and other racist stereotypes used by United States popular culture to imagine Mexico as backwards and poor. Launching into the opening track of their self-titled debut, “Noche oscura,” the Tacvbos demonstrated their musical skills as the singer bounced around the stage like Speedy Gonzalez gone punk. In embodying the United States hallucination of the Mexican, the band subverted that imaginary by laying claim to it. In their musical genre mixing, from *ranchera*, to *bolero*, to *cumbia*, to punk, they cultivated their own Mexican and rock imaginary through a bifocal perspective, creating families of resemblance to not only Mexican regional music, but also to a rock tradition, one that flowed not from North to South, but rather, South to North.

8 “Ay te dejo en San Antonio”—Los Lobos

In the introduction to his edited collection, *The Tide Was Always High*, Josh Kun notes how Blondie’s inclusion of mariachi horns in their cover of “The Tide Is High” is an example of how Latin America, or more precisely Latin America in Los Angeles, inserts itself into North American punk. The particular audiotopic fusion of the song, a reggae song from the Caribbean covered by a New York punk/new wave band and recorded in Los Angeles, slyly creates a musical geography where the Americas come together. What is fascinating about Kun’s telling about the recording of this song is his focus on the uncredited session musicians who contributed to it. With an ethnographic eye towards examining the conditions of the recording process, he is, in some ways, exposing the scaffolding that holds the process together, the musicians who make their living recording for others. By telling their stories, Kun illustrates how session musicians, primarily from Latin America, hold up the California sound of the late ‘70s and early ‘80s, in music by Linda Ronstadt (prior to *Canciones de mi padre*) and Jackson Browne.

In his book, *Dangerous Crossroads*, George Lipsitz reminds us that due to popular music’s relationship to place, it “alters our understanding of the local and the immediate, making it possible for us to experience close contact with cultures from far away” (3). We can note this in the Blondie version of the “The Tide Is High” in its mapping of an audiotopic space that blends two particular musical histories, the incorporation of reggae and other Caribbean rhythms by British punk, primar-

134 The lead singer, Rubén Albarrán, often changes his name for each album.

ily the Clash, and the recognition of Latin American musical traditions within L.A. sound. The fusing of Caribbean reggae in songs like “Rudie Can’t Fail,” and “Guns of Brixton” by the Clash, and in the British Two-Tone movement bands like the Specials, Selecter, and Madness, is a recognition of migration into the UK. On the West Coast of the United States, this migration is primarily Latin American, and the incorporation of mariachi, or other Latin rhythms, is noted in bands like Los Lobos or el Chicano.

While most would remember Los Lobos’ version of “La Bamba,” it is with their first nationally distributed record ... *And a Time to Dance* where we can see how they—like Manu Chao fifteen years later—musically cross borders.¹³⁵ Though not as outwardly experimental with sound as Manu Chao—or Mano Negra—on this album, Los Lobos are masters of playing a diversity of genres, from Mexican *boleros* to Cajun *zydeco*, to Tex-Mex and straight-up rock-and-roll and blues. Coming out of the L.A. punk scene, Los Lobos are not a band that one would associate with punk rock. However, as Alicia Armendariz Velasquez—a.k.a. Alice Bag, the lead singer of the hardcore punk band The Bags—notes in her autobiography *Violence Girl*, “There was no clearly defined punk sound, no dress code ... the movement was one of individuals and individual expression” (222).

... *And a Time to Dance* is composed of seven songs, three of them cover versions, including the Tex-Mex classic “Ay te dejo en San Antonio.” The song, originally written by Santiago Jiménez Sr., and popularized by his son Flaco Jiménez, is a classic, fast-moving Tex-Mex polka where the accordion takes the lead. That it would enter into the repertoire of an east L.A. Chicano rock band is obvious; that it became popular with punk rock crowds in the early 1980s is less so. However, if we recall Alice Bag’s quote about there not being a clearly defined punk sound, it makes sense. There is a family of resemblance, not just in Los Lobos’ own love for covering songs from the Mexican American community, but also in the idea of punk rock as being music played fast and out of control.

Songs are not only a set of signifying practices that create an affective bond in the listener. They are also diatopic and diachronic—they contain multiple places and times—at the same time that they are syntopic and synchronic—they are the product of one place and time. “Ay te dejo en San Antonio” will always be a song from south Texas, but each time it is performed by a different band, or heard by a listener, it is recontextualized for that time and that place. Cover songs are very interesting in this regard, for they bring with them the traces of the original, but at times are often new renditions for a different moment in time. They are, at their base, translations that are both faithful and unfaithful to their original while creating a dialogue with it. Though the Los Lobos cover of “Ay te dejo en San Antonio” hews closely to the original, their

135 The album ... *And A Time to Dance* came out on L.A. punk label Slash in 1983, but in 1978 the band self-released *Del Este de Los Angeles*, an album of covers of traditional Latin American regional folk songs.

cover of Richie Valens’s “La Bamba” demonstrates their own role as musicians, but also as musical anthropologists, as I will discuss below.

9 “Aklım Nerede”—Biz

November, 2007. A few minutes after checking out of my hotel in Ankara, I got into a taxi to head to the train station to catch a train back to Istanbul. Three minutes later, and about two blocks from the hotel, the taxi stopped dead in the middle of the street. It was November 10, 9:05 a.m. At that time, on that date every year, everything stops. Everything. For one minute, sirens all over the country sound in commemoration of the passing of Atatürk in 1938. I sat in the back seat of the taxi and noticed that a couple who had been walking down the street were also stopped in their tracks. The taxi driver turned off the stereo. We sat in silence listening to the sirens. I imagined that even the birds stopped.

And after the sirens cut off, the couple began to walk down the street, and the taxi driver turned on the stereo and started the car. The driver then began to ask me questions. He had almost no English, and I could make out some words here and there, though my Turkish was extremely limited. Most of our conversation consisted of hand signals—mostly thumbs up—and nodding. At one point, we began to talk about music. I think. The driver put on a CD of Turkish Arabesque music, and we talked about that, too. I think. The driver liked the music. I did too, as I recognized in the singing themes of longing and melancholy. When I first heard Arabesque, it immediately reminded me of Mexican *ranchera* music, primarily *boleros rancheros*, as I associated the music with working-class listening tastes. I asked who was singing, but couldn’t figure out the response from the driver. When we got to the station to catch my morning train back to Istanbul, the driver popped the CD out of the stereo and handed it to me. A gift.

On the train back to Haydarpaşa station in Istanbul, I listened to a mix of Arabesque and Turkish pop that I had on my iPod and thumbed through my ragged copy of Daniel Kalder’s book on anti-tourism, *Lost Cosmonaut*, where he chronicles his travels to the forgotten regions of Russia. Nearing Istanbul, I switched my playlist over to a mix of the Pixies, the Breeders, and Throwing Muses, bands from the late ‘80s and early ‘90s who shaped a large part of the music of my life. As we entered the city limits, the Pixies’ song “Where Is My Mind?” came on, and it seemed a fitting song for arrival in a city that still confused me in many ways.

2017. A decade later, while I am living in Ankara, a friend recommends that I check out a Turkish band, Biz. They do a cover of “Where is My Mind?” in Turkish, “Aklım Nerede.” As the familiar instrumentation comes on, giving way to the singing in Turkish, I remember the Turkish taxi driver and our halting conversation about music on the way to the train station.

10 “We Don’t Need the English”—The Bags

In Penelope Spheeris’s film, *The Decline of Western Civilization*, a documentary on the late 1970s punk rock scene in Los Angeles, Alice Bag, in a tight pink mini-dress and pink pumps—looking for all the world like an angry *chola*—struts intensely across the stage, staring out at the audience while excoriating a society based on “gluttony.”

In her memoir, *Violence Girl*, Alice Bag writes about her struggles to come to terms with her Mexican American identity in Los Angeles in the early 1970s. A fan of progressive and glam rock, she had difficulty identifying with the Chicanas at her high school. Her sense of alienation from the Chicano community and her father’s Mexican community was profound, and her way out was through music, primarily the punk rock scene in Los Angeles that was coming into importance and giving voice to a generation of disaffected youth growing up in the urban center. She writes, “When punk came along, it was just the perfect vehicle to express who I was as an individual. It was completely new and wide open” (222).

The punk aesthetic, coming out of Britain in the mid-’70s, appealed to the Chicano and Chicana urban youth for its DIY (Do It Yourself) ethos and its critique of the status quo, of poverty, of sexuality, and of class inequality. In the case of the Chicana punk rockers like Alice Bag or Teresa Covarrubias (lead singer for The Brat), Michelle Habell-Pallán astutely notes that the “visual and sonic language of the punk subculture allowed them to express their private rage about restrictions placed on and the violence done to their own bodies and to their mother’s bodies” (156).

Chicano punk from Los Angeles, while at times stylistically similar to the British version, also drew upon local, regional styles to create a connection to the Latino/a musical history of Los Angeles. When the Bags sing, “We Don’t Need the English,” Alice Bag is referring not only to British styles of punk, but also British and US styles of sound or dress. We can see this in the way that Alice Bag presents herself in *The Decline of Western Civilization*, strutting across the stage in a pink mini-dress, removed from what we often associate with “punk culture”: jeans, ripped t-shirts, bondage wear, and safety pins.

In these moves to distinguish British punk from Chicano punk, we see how bands like the Plugz, the Brat, Los Illegalz, and the Zeros demonstrate that punk is not about musical conformity, but about refusal. Punk is refusal. Refusal of social norms, of style, of constraints that would attempt to define a community. Thought of this way, we can see how punk can be a vital survival strategy for my generation of Chicanas and Chicanos, Mexican Americans who find themselves marginalized and disenfranchised by various society gatekeepers. The embrace of punk is not a denial of culture or heritage, but a rethinking of how we as Latinos can relate to culture and heritage.

The Chicano generation gave us post-Chicanos a voice and offered a path for getting out of cultural marginalization. That path was to stand and declare our own right to be first-class citizens of these United States. The question that they posed, as a generation, could be asked in this way: “Who are we?” An important and necessary

question that every cultural, regional, national identity needs to ask itself. “Who are we?” the Chicano poet Ricardo Sánchez asked, later responding: “We are the urgent voices” (131). Our voices need to be heard.

11 “Latinoamérica”—Calle 13

September, 2016. 90 minutes into welcoming 50, I strolled back to my place with my earphones in place. I pressed play, to see what song my iPhone would give me. “Latinoamérica” by Calle 13. With that song as an opening soundtrack for the next year of my life, I walked beneath the trees that line my street. Just before turning into my apartment block, I stopped beneath a street lamp and looked out around me, at the sleeping buildings, the closed shops, the occasional passing cars, and the towers of the city in the distance. And I thought too of the routes that had led me to Turkey. I thought of my connections to home—wherever that is—and to my family and my friends, spread out over multiple continents, countries, and time zones. I thought about the stories that bring us together, that connect us, that bind us as a community.

Standing beneath that streetlamp at 1:30 in the morning, on my quiet street on the edge of Ankara, I thought about all this, about routes and roots, about the personal soundtracks we make in our steps, about the secret pathways of the heart and the power of communion and community.

12 “Don’t Push Me Around”—The Zeros

In Jim Mendiola’s short film, *Pretty Vacant*, we see this question of how to merge Latino ethnic identity with punk culture—short answer, you don’t question your ethnic identity, but you embrace the diverse possibilities of cultural identity. Near the beginning of the film, his protagonist, Molly, speaks to this directly when she mentions that she was born on the day that the Raza Unida party met for their first national convention, and which was also the day that David Bowie released “Ziggy Stardust.” In making this claim, she is inserting herself into the intersection of ground-level Chicano activism and global pop culture and promotes a bicultural, bifocal identity.

The film is shot in black and white and told in voice-over, giving it a very DIY punk aesthetic that resonates with the Chicano/a cultural practice of *rasquache*. *Rasquache*, as the Chicano critic Tomás Ybarra-Frausto describes it, is an aesthetic practice of Mexican origin that is defined by resourcefulness, irony, and the transformation of quotidian articles into aesthetic objects. As he writes, “Bright colors are preferred to somber, high intensity to low, the shimmering and sparkling over the muted and subdued” (5). In a sense, it is a practice by a marginalized class to make do with material objects at hand. In the case of the creation of art, *rasquachismo* is

an oppositional praxis of resistance to a dominant aesthetic code that “both evades power and empowers itself” (Gáspar de Alba 12).

As an example of *rasquache* or DIY film-making, *Pretty Vacant* is very self-aware of its aesthetic. There is a cut-and-paste feel to the movie, as if it were constructed out of many different fragments, almost like a punk zine from the 1980s. This is made even more evident by the fact that Molly is a bisexual, working-class Chicana punk who makes art out of found objects and also has a zine, *Ex-Voto*. While the zine is San Antonio-based, it also has readers in California. This highlights the sense of a punk, alter-Latino community at a distance, one that is bound together through alternative material culture, zines, comic books, and music. The film tracks a week in the life of Molly as she puts together the latest issue of *Ex-Voto*, prepares for a show with her band, and avoids her father. The main story of her zine is about how she discovered a clue that the Sex Pistols were going to merge punk with Tex-Mex, but they broke up before this could be realized. Her band is called Aztlán a Go-Go and is a trio of women. She is avoiding her father because he is preparing for the annual family vacation to Mexico, and she wants to stay behind to work on her art.

There is a scene that illustrates well Molly’s bicultural identity. In it, there is Molly in profile cutting out images for an altar that she is building while she talks about her family’s annual trip to Mexico. It is largely because of her father, who, though he was also born in San Antonio, feels that it is an important tradition to keep. She can understand his desire for his annual reconnection to Mexico, but she does not feel it necessary for her. On the wall to her side, she has posters of Che and Zapata. As she says—in voice-over—that she has “other concerns,” the camera switches from a profile shot to a close-up shot of Molly and the wall behind her. On it is a vast cut-and-paste collage of punk bands—the Ramones, the Clash, the Sex Pistols—and Chicano popular culture, primarily comics—the work of the Brothers Hernández and their classic 1980s comic, *Love and Rockets*. What we see with this scene is the merging of Molly’s interests: punk rock, Chicano/a culture, and Latin American political history. The collage demonstrates one of the film’s central themes, the mixing, blending, and fusion of different objects of culture. Molly’s room in this brief scene also spotlights how Chicano and Chicana artists and punk bands of the 1980s and 1990s transformed punk culture into sites of possibility where national and transnational conversations could take place.

13 “The Headphonist”—Kinky

October, 2016. Whenever I visit a city I make it a point to hit up record stores. On a visit to Istanbul, I spent a few hours one night with a record store worker pulling out and listening to CDs of various types of Turkish music, from the Turkish pop of Gülşen through the Arabesque of Ibrahim Tatlıses, the Kurdish songs of Aynur, the ambient

sounds of Mercan Dede, to Sufi music. On my first visit there, in an out-of-the-way record store crammed into a space about the size of a utility closet, I picked up a couple of CDs of Turkish pop and one mixtape CD of Turkish pop hits. In Mexico City, upon entering Gandhi bookstore, I would often head first to the music section to flip through the racks.

In Dublin, in the fall of 2016, while walking around with my headphones on, I ended up at Tower Records. I had not been in one since the 1990s when I used to go to a Tower Records in Mexico City. Though I do not buy as much physical music as I used to, I still had to step inside as Tower Records holds a special place in my memories. In the 1980s, while a college radio DJ in Chico, California, I worked for a time at the local Tower. In Dublin, I spent an hour wandering through the stacks, flipping through the vinyl, recalling the years spent in record stores, the albums that shaped my life, and the songs that make the soundtrack of my life. Whereas in the past I would often leave a record store with a pile of CDs or vinyl records, on that trip I walked out with a couple of stickers, but a lot of memories.

14 “Tijuana Sound Machine”—Nortec Collective

There is this: The border is sound. It is in the sounds of the cars waiting to cross; in the crowds; in the mix of sounds from the mega dance clubs and the honky-tonks steps away from each other in the border cities. Cruising Revolution Avenue in Tijuana on a Saturday is a trip across a varied aural landscape. The urban sounds connect distinct places. By disrupting notions of national homogeneity (if such a thing ever existed), the mixed sounds and languages coming from the mega-discos, nightclubs, and the stereos of passing cars negate the physical, material border instituted by nations trying to impose border controls.

Like other bands from northern Mexico—such as Plastilina Mosh, Kinky, and El Gran Silencio—and the United States Southwest—in particular, Piñata Protest—the Nortec Collective use the sounds of the border, constructing musical geographies to unite disparate places: mapping out the soundtrack of the Middle World. Through the use of tape loops of northern Mexican *banda* mixed with European techno, the collective constructs a soundtrack for another type of migrant passing through the Middle World: the migrant who follows the global flows of electronic music. But it also illustrates how the border is made up of migrant flows, of diaspora, of transculturation. The loops of *norteño* music threaded through the electronic background are traces, echoes, specters of a larger history of migration and flow in the borderlands. El Gran Silencio, from Monterrey, Mexico, and Piñata Protest, from San Antonio, Texas, construct a hybrid sound built upon a *norteño* grouping: an accordion, acoustic and electric guitars, drums, and keyboards. But instead of playing “traditional” northern Mexican music, their sound slips and slides between *cumbia*, *norteño*, punk, and ska.

As with the music of Café Tacvba, when these bands unite Latin American rhythms with US rock, they lay bare the connections across borders, and align themselves with histories of migration, both northern and southern. What bands like these do is not just cut up musical DNA but scramble and reconfigure it to show off the borderland’s audiotopia.

15 “El extranjero”—Enrique Bunbury

May, 2017. After a long day at the office, I take the faculty service bus back to my neighborhood in Ankara. Though I always greet my fellow passengers on the bus, I often sit alone, wearing my headphones. It’s not because I don’t like them; it’s because in the nine months of living in Turkey, my Turkish hasn’t advanced much.

In Turkish, the word for foreigner is *yabancı*. It’s a word that I closely identify with, not just because I’m a foreigner in Turkey, but because my life has always been, in a way, about being foreign. Wherever I go, I’ve always been an *extranjero*, a *yabancı*, a foreigner. A few months earlier, on the metro to downtown Ankara, a man approached me to ask a question. I pulled off my headphones and asked him to repeat his question. I think he was asking me for directions somewhere. This was something that often happened to me in Turkey; I was often stopped because it was believed I was Turkish. When I told the man that I didn’t speak Turkish, he stared at me as if he didn’t believe me. On a flight once to Istanbul from Munich, a man sitting beside me was convinced that I was Turkish. When I told him I wasn’t, he thought I was trying to deny my heritage, that maybe I was a German Turk, an *Alamanlı*, ashamed of my background because I couldn’t speak. As soon as I spoke, the man on the metro looked at me for a bit before stepping back and telling everyone in our vicinity, “Yabancı.” “Evet, ben yabancı,” I responded. Yes, I am a foreigner.

Sometimes, when people ask me where I’m from, I tell them Mexico. It is easier for me as then I don’t have to go into an explanation of what it means to be Chicano. If I could speak more, I would probably say that I’m a permanent *yabancı*, that I feel out of place in English and Spanish. When I was in graduate school, at the University of California, Santa Barbara, I once went to a public lecture by Derrida. One of the first things he said was something along the lines of “the language that I am speaking to you is not my language. But it is my language.”

The tongue in which I write is not my own, but it is.

16 “La Bamba Rebelde”—Las Cafeteras

As Chicanos born in the 1960s, my generation—*Generación meX*—sought out a voice that departed from the Chicano movement while at the same time furthering its aims.

For communities living between cultures, hybrid strategies for negotiating the limen between national cultures or centers of power become empowering methods of constructing identity. This blended identity—meshed in language and cultural attitude—can best be described through a term used by Alicia Gáspar de Alba: Alter/Native. Our generation forges an alternative path—in style, in attitude (ours is a generation that loves both Oldies music and the Smiths)—but also an Alter/Native identity to the earlier Chicano movement generation and to United States culture in general. Through Alter/Nativity, we imagine something better, something that fits our particular style. The generation that follows mine, Gen Latinx, needs to continue to do this, especially as we suffer through yet another cycle of violence against our communities.

One strategy is through recovery or refashioning of models from popular culture. An example from music would be “La Bamba.” The Richie Valens version is enlightening, for it comes at a moment when there is a sort of Latin boom happening in the United States *I Love Lucy* was one of the most important TV shows at the time, Latin dances like the cha-cha-cha and the mambo were the rage, and then along comes a young Mexican American with a rockified rendition of a traditional *son jarocho*, “La Bamba.” This song, borrowed from Mexican folk tradition—a *son jarocho* from the state of Veracruz—incorporated into a 1950s rock grammar, becomes one of the biggest hits in rock-and-roll, and its influence continues to be felt today.¹³⁶

Ralph Ellison once said that the US is “jazz shaped.” It might be argued that rock music in the Southwest is “La Bamba” shaped. For each historical moment in which the song is covered, in the late 1970s with the punk version by the Plugz, the 1980s with the Los Lobos version, and recently with the version by Las Cafeteras, it has been restructured to include not only its particular moment, but also to refer to an earlier one. While the Los Lobos 1987 rendition is the most recognized, the version that might have the closest family resemblance to the Valens version might be the 1979 punk version by the Plugz. Though speeded up for a punk rock crowd, the raw recording and instrumentation is fairly close to the Valens version, and the major differences—aside from the speed, the Plugz version clocks in at one-and-a-half minutes while the Valens version is thirty seconds longer—are in the lyrics. The Plugz add a verse where they claim to be against capitalism and supporters of anarchy.

The Los Lobos “La Bamba” also sticks close to the instrumentation of the Valens version, at least at the beginning. But, following the guitar solo, a *zydeco* accordion—a throwback to some of their earliest songs, like “Let’s Say Goodnight”—is added to the mix. And, at the conclusion, the song harkens back to its more traditional/folk version with the rock song blending effortlessly into the *son jarocho*. In this way, Los

136 “La Bamba” has its roots in Veracruz. Its earliest recording is in 1939, and the Valens rock-and-roll version is from 1958. It becomes an immediate top 40 hit on the US charts and even charts around the world. Though not acknowledged, the Beatles hit, “Twist and Shout,” from 1963, bears a strong resemblance to the beginning of “La Bamba.”

Lobos not only insert “La Bamba” into a longer history of American music—with the zydeco accordion—but also tie it back into its folk roots. In so doing, they lay bare its trans-American roots.

Las Cafeteras—also from L.A., like the Plugz and Los Lobos—bring La Bamba back to its roots by playing it in a more traditional *jaroch* style. If the late 1970s and early 1980s Chicano rock scene was informed by punk—in bands like the Zeros, the Bags, or the Plugz—in the 1990s, it was *rock en español*—Ozomatli being a key reference—and since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the scene has gone back to more folk roots with bands like La Santa Cecilia, Cambalache, and Las Cafeteras. One of the scenes is built around *jaroch* and the concept of *convivencia*. As Martha Gonzalez uses it, this term—which literally means “coexistence”—is the “act of being with each other as community” and is a “social, moral, and musical aesthetic” (270).¹³⁷ In building a sense of *convivencia* around the praxis of *jaroch*, the organizers of the scene strive for communal relationships over musical “product.” One of the bands that formed around this scene was Las Cafeteras, a group of men and women who use the *son jaroch* as a tool for social activism and awareness. Their rendition of “La Bamba,” which they call “La Bamba Rebelde,” embodies this.

The folk version of “La Bamba” is performed by a group playing traditional instruments from the region, including the *jarana*—a type of small, eight-string guitar—and the harp. When sung, “La Bamba” has multiple verses, far more than the Valens version, and each singer of the band takes a verse. At the end, the final singer calls for the song to conclude. The rock versions of “La Bamba” do not do this.

Las Cafeteras, however, not only bring back the folk instrumentation, but also the multiple verses. Each verse is dedicated to a different social topic within the Chicana/o community. In one, the singer calls out that they, the band, are Chicanos from east L.A. In another, the singer calls out to the Dreamers, another to Chicana feminism, another to the need to cross borders. The bands brings to the fore the rebel possibilities of “La Bamba,” hence the *rebelde* in the title of their rendition. What “La Bamba Rebelde” does is create community and cohesion through a song that has crossed multiple borders.

In these renditions of “La Bamba,” we can hear how music is grounded in one specific place and time—syntopic and synchronic—but at the same time, it is also diatopic and diachronic in the sense that diverse spaces and diverse times converge within it. The audiotopias are transnational and speak to migration and border crossing.

¹³⁷ *Convivencia* is also a term used by scholars of Spanish medieval history to talk about the period from the eighth century to 1492 when the Iberian peninsula was conquered by the Umayyad Caliphate—in 711—and reconquered by the Spanish Catholic kings in 1492. In the centuries before the completion of the *Reconquista*, it is hypothesized that the three major religions on the peninsula, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, coexisted in relative peace.

17 “La vida es llena de cables”—Señor Coconut and His Orchestra

May, 2005. There we were, three Palestinians, a Canadian-Lebanese, a young Turkish student, and me, sitting in a bar in Izmir, Turkey. MTV was on the television, but we were concentrated on our conversation. Though we had all come from different countries—one of the Palestinians was completing his doctorate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, another was a professor in London, the third taught at a university in Gaza, the Canadian-Lebanese was a grad student in the process of reconnecting with her Arab roots, and the undergrad from Izmir, the only local, was our translator and guide—we had all come together as a group united by our own ex-centric experiences.

We were in Izmir for the Cultural Studies Symposium at the University of the Aegean, Ege Universitezi. The theme of the symposium was “When ‘Away’ Becomes ‘Home:’ The Cultural Consequences of Migration.” Sitting around that table, we all lived the consequences of migration.

Later, all of us piled into a tiny taxi driven by a Kurdish man, and we all began to sing Arabesque music, though half of us—in particular, me—didn’t know or understand the lyrics. That taxi, full of nationalities and cultural identities, took us through the streets of the ancient Smyrna, now Izmir, to a basement bar near the university. At the same time, stuffed into a Kurdish taxi, we were on a nocturnal *paseo* through the Middle World, guided by a soundtrack of Arabesque music.

The music that we hear, the music that we carry deep inside us, is more than simple background music. The music that we hear is the music that transforms us and marks out a zone of resistance, a spot through which we can open up a space for critique, for seeking change, or for gaining agency. It is a series of cables that connect us to others and to other places, like in the musical geographies of Manu Chao, Los Lobos, and Café Tacvba, or in the electronic salsa/merengue/son covers of Kraftwerk, Yellow Magic Orchestra, Los Samplers, and Daft Punk that Señor Coconut and His Orchestra present. Music is a time machine—for my fellow Whovians, I often say that music is my TARDIS. It can help make sense of our local realities, while also rooting us in a place that is mobile. And it does this by asking us to listen.

Slavoj Žižek has commented that the enemy is “someone whose story you have not heard” (82). To know that story, to recognize the Other not as an enemy but perhaps as a potential ally, opens a space for dialogue and, hopefully, collaboration and coexistence. We need to listen to the stories that surround us so that we can create effective responses to other stories that would attempt to silence or marginalize us. Mine is a community united by stories, threaded across distance, held together by history, and bound in a book that travels with me. Part of my job, I always tell my classes—probably the smallest part—is to tell a story; the other half is to listen to others tell me theirs. In this way, hopefully, we can bridge those things that would attempt to separate us.

18 “Clumsy Sky”—Girl in a Coma

About fifteen years after *Pretty Vacant*, Mendiola directed the video “Clumsy Sky” by Girl in a Coma. Three *chicas chicanas* from San Antonio, Girl in a Coma take their name from a song by the Smiths, but play in a style that is more influenced by punk and North American roots rock. In a way, they continue the blending of musical and cultural styles evinced in *Pretty Vacant*.

In their video for “Clumsy Sky,” Girl in a Coma play in a Chicano bar. The bartender is an old *vato veterano* and the locals are older Chicanos and Mexicanos. The walls of the bar have photos of the different bands that have played in the space, primarily older Tejano bands with traditional instruments—accordion, guitar, bass. The band, three young women, play before a traditional Chicano mural of an Aztec warrior carrying an Aztec princess. “Clumsy Sky” starts slowly then quickly revs up to a hard, rocking song. As the bar begins to fill with young Chicanos and Chicanas, we see how the older bar denizens start to make connections with the newcomers. Tattoos are discussed, drinks are shared. The song ends with the photo of the band being taped to the wall, their own place assured as members of the musical community, but also the Chicano Tejano community of the bar.

19 Bonus Track: “Somos Sur”—Ana Tijoux (Featuring Shadia Mansour)

December, 2017. One of the classes that I taught this past semester was Chicano/a Pop Culture. I often start each class meeting with a music video which we then discuss. We work from the premise that popular culture as a site of representation can also be a site of resistance where an oppositional consciousness can be pulled out. Some of the videos include “Clumsy Sky” (Girl in a Coma), “Ingrata” (both the version by Café Tacvba and the cover by La Santa Cecilia), “There’s a Light That Never Goes Out” (the Smiths song covered by the Mariachi Manchester), and “La Bamba Rebelde” (Las Cafeteras). I also invite my students to contribute with suggestions. One day, we watch Miguel’s video for “Now,” filmed at the High Desert Detention Center in Adelanto, California, and we talk about human rights and social justice. Another day, one student suggests “Somos Sur” by Chilean singer Ana Tijoux. The song is a collaboration with the Palestinian rapper Shadia Mansour, and is a shout-out to the global South. We talk about transnational connections, especially between the so-called Third World, and we talk about migration through the Middle World. We talk about the possibilities contained in songs, about the stories, about how they can affect us as listeners.

What does music do? It can help us imagine something better. Some may argue that poetry or music may not have an immediate political or even social effect—love will sometimes keep us together, and it will often tear us apart—but this, I argue, is

the wrong way to approach artistic forms. There might not be an immediate effect, but there is immediate affect. Music connects and binds us in ways that may surprise us. We may discover that while this ain't no party, this ain't no disco, this ain't no messing around, at the same time, this just might be the place.

As my playlist comes to a close on this evening in December, 2017, I think about the transnational flows of the music of my life, of the stories that can be shared, of the connections that can be made in the crossing of borders. If there is one constant in my life, it is crossing borders. If my work has any meaning, it's because I live/travel across borders with neither fear nor with a fixed route—wandering is my friend. It's because I often carry a better soundtrack—in my head. It's because the people I meet always have interesting stories to tell. While others fear border crossing because of the supposed danger, I prefer it for the cultures and dialogues that arise in the meeting of communities: Yes, I am an unrepentant border crosser.¹³⁸

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¹³⁸ If you are interested in this playlist, I've made it available on Spotify. The title is "songbook": open.spotify.com/user/santv66/playlist/ONTSD02U64b9Q7eSmZTC9a

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Sheena Garrant

“A White Slave”: Albinism in Barbara Chase-Riboud’s *Sally Hemings*

To the enigma of the historical Sally Hemings.

(Barbara Chase-Riboud)

Created in 1972, *The Albino* is a 12’ 4.5” by 9’9” sculpture that Barbara Chase-Riboud crafted out of black bronze and black wool. Chase-Riboud’s definition of albino—from her poem titled after the sculpture—is “White African,” “the absence of color,” and “[w]alking negative” (From 19–20). *The Albino* is, in fact, its own walking negative. It is a black sculpture set against a completely white background. Using the white background as part of her composition, Chase-Riboud defies expectations of an albino image by having a black one. It negates (and masks) expectations and reflects how whiteness is a prerequisite for the blackness of the sculpture. A thin cylinder of brass supports the substantially heavier brass base of *The Albino*. The base extends into two arms of brass forming a “U.” The brass “U” hides under the intricate weaving, sewing, and braiding patterns of the black wool that has itself transformed into various textures and shapes. The wool also masks part of the round base. The sculpture, then, looks like a floating and falling “U,” simultaneously. Chase-Riboud’s “U” turns the hegemonic gaze back toward the reader.

To reconcile one’s understanding of albinism—“an absence of pigment” that causes “milk-white skin” (Merriam-Webster)—and the image the artist presents, a black figure, one must turn an eye inward. How do “U” participate in creating reality instead of accepting what is real, which is, namely, the production of concepts like race? How do “U” perpetuate racism (or any -ism), which is rooted in so-called “reality?” How do “U” reify hegemony? Lastly, how and why does the artist write black onto the albino sculpture? Indeed, different itineraries are created by Chase-Riboud to draw attention to the disconnect between what is perceived and what is the reality. Claudine Armand asserts that Chase-Riboud’s plastic and textual artwork forces “the reader’s eye [to be] active and its [the reader’s eye] itinerary [is] different for each viewer” (982). *The Albino* appears to be floating and to be supported by fabric. The arms of the “U” make it look as if the fabric is defying gravity and holding itself up without support. *Reason* tells the viewer that there is something unseen or invisible holding the structure of the sculpture up, hidden underneath the black material. To decode the sculpture and its signification of the text (the title), “we will have to point out everything that it is not, and, consequently, that it has neither existence nor essence” (Derrida 282). It is not floating. Its fabric is not defying gravity. It is not white. Its blackness depends on

the stark white background. Blackness is written—braided, draped, and sewn—onto the *albino* sculpture. It is, in fact, not magic but socially constructed.

Viewers and readers must decode Chase-Riboud's work. The title *The Albino* functions as a sign for Chase-Riboud's black structure against a white background. The image evoked by the symbol (auditory or visual) of the title does not resemble the reality of the image. One's understanding of race and color—albino, white, and black—will inform how one reads the sculpture. In "In the Interstices of Sculpture and Poetry: Sewing and Basting," Claudine Armand reduces Chase-Riboud's poetry and art to an unraveling of "tensions and binary oppositions" (981). She elaborates by saying that the poem "The Albino" erases differences and "questions the notion of essence" (993), creating "the image of hybridity" (993). While Chase-Riboud does, in fact, attempt to overcome binaries, her work extends beyond up-ending them. Spectators become active participants in decoding the sign(s); here, the title and the meaning conveyed through the title and the sculpture itself. The definitions of *black* and *white*, as colors and as racial markers, seem fixed and oppositional. *Albino* is not a color but a term used to describe a person or a condition that affects skin pigmentation and causes a lack of color, which presents as whiteness. In "The Albino," she writes, "If color exists then / The absence of color must exist / As well" (20). The absence of color, then, becomes Chase-Riboud's solution to the "moral question" (21) or the "color problem."

Rather than embracing creolized identities, Western thought supports fixed, static, and pure views of race (black and white) as reality and as indicative of innate difference. In *Nationality between Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Theory: A New Cosmopolitanism*, Philip Leonard describes this tendency as "the West's [continued] investment in ideas of cultural legitimacy, national *authenticity*, and racial *particularity*" (3; emphasis added). In other words, both dominant and resistant parties continue to perpetuate oppressive hierarchies by insisting on separate "racial, cultural, or national character" (13). Therefore, the hegemonic gaze, including the hierarchies, continue to be reified. Chase-Riboud's image (reality) differs (and defers) the understanding of race and color via its conjunction with the title: *The Albino*. With a slight of hand, Chase-Riboud's plastic and textual artwork illustrate how meaning-making and the perception of reality (what Enlightenment thinking calls reason) are not innate but remain created. Enlightenment ideology treats meaning-making and reality as existential and privileges "reason" as the "primary source of authority and legitimacy" (Outram 29). In "The Fact of Blackness," Frantz Fanon describes blackness as a way of being and seeing that is written onto black bodies in opposition to white bodies, as opposed to being self-created or existing on its own. Fanon's brown skin becomes his "uniform" that he wears despite his viewers' assumptions that his brown skin determines his character: " 'Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened.' ... I sit down at the fire and I become aware of my uniform. I had not seen it. It is indeed ugly" (Fanon). The "fact of blackness" reflects the West's fixed and misconceived view of race.

Early US writers, such as Charles Brockden Brown, countered the ongoing discourse on reason by suggesting that what someone perceives as reason is largely influenced by how one sees and thinks. Chase-Riboud’s aesthetics invite viewers/readers to recognize that an individual’s racial makeup is contingent on and determined by a Western, hegemonic gaze, not by some fixed essence. She shows through her simultaneously contradictory and unifying aesthetic how even when appearances contradict what society perceives as reality (or as black or white), the hegemonic gaze simply changes its definition of what is perceived to fit its agenda and its reasoning; both the definition and the agenda are contingent on power and language. In *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, Annette Gordon-Reed describes this practice as reading “in a way designed to confirm” (23) one’s beliefs. In effect, *The Albino* confirms the confirmation bias produced by the hegemonic gaze: The image seen is a black structure since albinos are “White Africans” and “walking negatives” (From 19). As such, it also provides a visual text for how race gets written onto even white subjects. In essence, Chase-Riboud’s work illuminates the delusions produced by confirmation bias.

Published in 1979, *Sally Hemings* defies black and white terms; the race of each character is constructed and performed, and Chase-Riboud negates other binary modes of thinking—male/female, free/enslaved, and right/wrong. In the novel, Sally Hemings—known for her relationship with her owner Thomas Jefferson—is not black or white; she is neither simply a slave nor free; she is neither fictional nor historical. In *Sally Hemings*, Chase-Riboud illustrates how racial ideology is not rooted in science, like genetics,¹³⁹ but is created, perpetuated, and reinforced by a hegemonic gaze. She does this by transforming both slave narrative and historiographical generic conventions, depicting Sally Hemings as a white woman on the novel’s cover and as a black (and sometimes white) woman within the narrative depending on who is viewing her by fictionalizing history and historicizing fiction and by employing several characters (white and black) that decide Hemings’s race depending on their agendas. Also, race performs within the novel, producing black material for the reader to drape over the cover’s subject, which results in a replication of *The Albino*. The structure of the novel and the role race plays in the novel, ultimately, has caused readers to ignore the white subject on the cover and the whiteness indicated in the novel and to write the blackness displayed in the novel onto the white subject. In other words, Africa gets written onto the outside of the “White African.”

Recognizing her use of a white African, an albino, and her refusal of black or white binaries is essential to unveiling the result of the very history that the novel depicts and that the hegemonic gaze still refuses or attempts to dissuade: the creolization of the US. Shalini Puri states the necessity of recognizing and interpreting creolization and hybridity in discourse rather succinctly: “At stake are not pure origins but egalitar-

139 Racial differences may be rooted in science, like the science of eugenics, which predated genetics.

ian futures” (38). Similarly, when describing the West’s hybrid state (hybridity being a form of creolization), Leonard illustrates how different “hybridities work against some of the most entrenched and violent attempts to separate one racial, cultural, or national character from another” (13). Like Fanon, Derrida, Spivak, and Bhabha, Chase-Riboud confronts the conceptual systems that aim to be “anti-ethnocentric, anti-racist, and counter-colonial” (Leonard 11). Through her plastic and textual work, Chase-Riboud shows the impossibility of defining racial difference without also reifying the racial hierarchy.¹⁴⁰ Her albino is her creole-cosmopolitan figure. The novel crosses national, racial, ethnic, and even gendered boundaries. Historically, each participant in the Hemings/Jefferson controversy has approached the debate by focusing on Jefferson’s whiteness and the Hemings’s blackness. To different ends, these participants succeed in reifying the hegemonic gaze Chase-Riboud destabilizes. By using fiction as her mode of historicization, she participates in the “apparent void of history which haunts the black man ... in the Americas as a whole” (Harris 17). Recognizing and acknowledging creolization, according to Chase-Riboud, signifies the acceptance of parts of history typically blotted out by the dominant narrative that serves to reify current power relations. After defining creolization, I will analyze the visual aesthetic of the novel, including the cover art of the 2009 edition and the structure. Second, I will discuss the structure and genre of the novel as it relates to the sculpture. Lastly, I will examine how race performs in the novel.

Creolization is a term coined and used by Caribbean writers to describe the process of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic crossings between different groups of people which began with the transportation of Africans to the “New World.” Implicit in understanding creolization is that the process, then, reflects a particular history, starting with the Middle Passage and the introduction of Africans to the Americas and chattel slavery, and involves an ongoing interchange and genesis of identity since identity (racial and otherwise) is unfixed. Trying to erase everything African to enforce knowledge power over the slaves, slave owners caused the submersion of African culture and the surfacing of Eurocentric culture and ideologies. However, African cultural roots remain and are visible today to astute surveyors. The earliest use of the term *creole* was by blacks in Brazil (Allen 49); the term meant outsider and “coincide[d] with the attitude perceived among Africans towards their locally born offspring” (49). From its inception and usage among blacks, *creolization* implied a difference that was not just based on racial difference, like the birth of mulatto slaves, but also based on cultural and, perhaps, ideological differences. Edward Brathwaite discusses how when “Africa [is] diluted, even submerged, and certainly safely out of the way” (200), the reification of the white/black, European/African hierarchy will continue if one part of the dyad remains elevated over the other within the discourse on creolization. Thus, creolization is used by Caribbean writers to highlight transcultural, transnational,

140 The conflation of race with culture is part of this misstep.

and transregional identities in which tension and conflict are inherent (Allen 56), recognizing all crossings while not qualifying one contribution over another. The parallels between creolization and cosmopolitanism, then, are clearer: creolization and cosmopolitanism reflect the “interrogat[ion of] the conditions for thinking [of] the future of national and international identities” (Leonard 13). Creolization, however, describes the crossings caused by the transatlantic slave trade with emphasis on the black diasporic experience. Since this chapter focuses on race and ethnicity, the term creolization is used. Chase-Riboud’s illustration of creolization, then, includes the recognition and acceptance of a particular history—the submerged mother—as well as the ethnic and cultural crossings that resulted from this history, which goes against the alleged racial purity reflected in discourses on whiteness and blackness.

Both the first edition—Viking Press—and the most recent 2009 edition—Chicago Review Press—have a “white” Sally Hemings on the cover. How Hemings actually looked is not as important as what these white images represent and their inversion of how Hemings is typically portrayed (i.e., as a black woman): an albino, “the absence of color,” a “walking negative,” a “White African” (*From* 18–20). Although Chase-Riboud may not have had the last input regarding the cover art, she has a history of insisting on wanting images that best reflect the content of her work. As a visual artist, it is more likely than not that she would have remained cognizant and vocal about the cover of her art—the novel—working in conjunction with the narrative itself. The cover of the 2009 edition also has a quote from the *New York Times* that supports a creolized lens: “Sally Hemings was the quadroon slave with whom Thomas Jefferson lived for 38 years.” *Quadroon* is, at a basic level, another way of pointing out Hemings’s creole identity. Still, a review printed on the first leaf of the edition contains the following sentiment by Gordon-Reed: “Hemings was portrayed as a person with actual thoughts and conflicts, giving her a depth of character seldom attributed to US slaves or to black people in general ... she was taken seriously and presented as a full human being.” Gordon-Reed, then, reifies the black or white binary which, by extension, upholds the hegemonic ideology Chase-Riboud disrupts.

The Hemings/Jefferson controversy gets reduced to a battle against historicization: Participants choose a side, i.e. white or black. Consequently, the “reality” that the historical figures of the Hemings family represents remains submerged in exchange for the surfacing of only Africa, rather than an acknowledgment of the renaissance that the Middle Passage and slavery caused: creolization and creole identities. In “The West Indian Writer and His Quarrel with History,” Wilson Harris describes the West Indian writer’s attempt to undo the silencing of her/his history by writing history. By writing history in response to the Western ideological view of the Caribbean’s absence of history, Harris says, writers become psychological servants to a colonialist perspective of history; in other words, writers respond with a history that is, in fact, a response to the history the colonial educational system teaches, as opposed to writing history. This quarrel with history reifies colonialist ideologies in the same way people in the United States responding to the history of Hemings/Jefferson con-

tinue to reify the hegemonic gaze. The response reveals the hidden power forces that still need to be acknowledged and rectified. Instead, scholars mistake an effect to be a cause. In “The Muse of History,” renowned Caribbean writer Derek Walcott puts this succinctly: “To try and understand why this [an event] happened, to condemn or justify is ... the method of history, and these explanations are always the same: This happened because of that, this was understandable because, and in [those] days men were such. These recriminations exchanged, the contrition of the master replaces the vengeance of the slave” (4). Part of the solution, then, according to Harris, Walcott, and Chase-Riboud, is to let imagination fuel the writing of history to get at the cause instead of the effect, which for Chase-Riboud includes language and power as reinscribed through language.

Chase-Riboud historicizes fiction and fictionalizes history. Mirroring the structure of a slave narrative, *Sally Hemings* contains an authenticating note that precedes the narrative: “There are documents included in this novel which are not only authentic, they are central to the story of Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson.” Ironically, the note is, of course, by the author; she authenticates herself, but the voice of the narrative alternates between third and first-person (Sally’s voice), suggesting that the author’s note simultaneously affirms Sally’s testimonial and the author’s authority. She historicizes her fictional account of the historical facts surrounding Hemings. Also, she plays with generic conventions of neo-slave narratives by using first-person voice for approximately three-quarters of the novel and third-person voice for about one-quarter of the novel instead of first-person throughout. This shift in the voice of the narrative slightly undermines the so-called authenticity of the Hemings’s story, illustrating, if not highlighting, the novel as fiction.

Consistently toeing the line between fiction and history, Chase-Riboud quarrels with history in the manner Harris and Walcott argue is necessary for postcolonial citizens: She uses her imagination and challenges “the conventions of the American historiographical tradition” (Rushdy 105). Before the authenticating author’s note, there is an epigraph; the epigraph is a quote by William Shakespeare and a quote by John Adams. Shakespeare’s quote speaks to the enslaving nature of love: “That God forbid that make me first your slave.” Adams states that “[h]istories are annihilated, or interpolated, or prohibited.” Chase-Riboud includes Shakespeare (a renowned writer) and Adams (Jefferson’s vice-president and also a former president of the United States) on the same page, drawing clear parallels between history and fiction, reality as myth, and black/white ideology as blurred, as she did with *The Albino*. Adams is simultaneously both a history figure and a character in the novel. Shakespeare is a lauded writer whose reputation etches him into history. Chase-Riboud’s use of both figures brings to the surface potentially conflicting identities which, in turn, causes Adams and Shakespeare to be walking negatives. *Sally Hemings* becomes a “walking negative” (From 19–20) from the cover to the pages preceding the narrative: “To the enigma of the historical Sally Hemings.” Further complicating generic conventions of both the historiography and the neo-slave narrative, the novel is composed of seven parts

and 45 chapters that progress in non-chronological order and has acknowledgments, source documents, an afterword, and a reader’s guide as supporting documents, similar to those found at the back of slave narratives. Each chapter includes quotes from historical figures/documents, like notes by Jefferson, or quotes from literature, like *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* or Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. The order of the chapters and the epigraphs serve as further authentication while simultaneously negating the content of the novel.

Race-mixing and other forms of creolization were outlawed in the Americas. According to Chase-Riboud, “miscegenation laws had been abolished [in the United States] only a dozen years before” the publication of *Sally Hemings* (350). With the novel, she hopes to “illuminate our [US] overweening and irrational obsession with race and color” (350). The structural and generic mixing of the novel and the inclusion of “supplemental memory and written historical record” (Rushdy 106) reflect the race-mixing or the mixed racing that happens within the novel. The novel begins and ends with a white man spying on Sally Hemings, a mulatto woman. In fact, the first chapter starts with two white men: a statement by Jefferson from his *Notes on the State of Virginia* and the appearance of Nathan Langdon, a census taker. White men begin—in more ways than one, through Adams, Shakespeare, Jefferson, and Langdon—the story of Sally Hemings; this is significant because although Hemings strives to stand “beyond love, beyond passion, [and] beyond History” (343), the novel’s structure combines the biographies of those within the prose, better reflecting the creolized US landscape. The combination of the biographies is a violent one, evoking the history of violence the novel conveys and the history that was prompted by the Middle Passage: “[Sally Hemings] picked up her skirts and started up the mountain toward the safety of her beloved shade trees, just as, with a kind of violence, the census taker turned away and headed back down her road” (344). The inherent tension Chase-Riboud depicts is a necessary part of how Caribbean writers illustrate creolization in their novels. While the novel works toward pointing to the walking negative that is the United States, it is important to note that Chase-Riboud does not merely romanticize the history that creates the US or her albino.

Historically, people have responded to the Hemings/Jefferson controversy by denying her humanity based on her “blackness” or elevating Jefferson because of his “whiteness.” In his review of the novel, Larry Martin concludes that Hemings “soon becomes a minor captive planet in the Jefferson universe” (275) and that the novel would have been more aptly titled, *Jefferson: A Monticello Perspective* (275). According to Martin, Chase-Riboud’s attempt to reinsert Hemings into history is a failed one. Martin’s reading is a common one, and one that aligns with “a new wave of Jefferson historians [who] have continued to try to reduce Sally Hemings to an historical zero” (353). In fact, the structure of the novel (i.e., Hemings appearing to be subsumed by the white men who try to exert power over her from the beginning to the end) encourages readers to question the author’s effectiveness. Yet, the novel ends with combined biographies (344), though it professes to be the story of Hemings, and inverts the idea

of pure origins and history that reifies the hierarchies because of monolithic prescriptive: “[T]o Jefferson specialists, the idea of US history being influenced in any way by the relationship between the hallowed third president of the United States and his mixed-blood slave family was so repugnant that it trumped all obvious evidence to the contrary” (353). The author does not aim to project a “pure” account of Hemings’s life as completely separate and different from the lives of Jefferson and the other characters. In fact, Chase-Riboud’s “pure” account of Hemings’s life requires the inclusion of other characters and lives regardless of race, gender, nationality, and the like. The history creolization—i.e., the Submerged Mother—acknowledges becomes a vital part of Chase-Riboud’s project. Similarly, Martin’s assertion of Hemings’s becoming a “minor captive planet” (275) highlights Chase-Riboud’s point: Hemings’s story is inextricably tied to and influenced by that of Jefferson’s. He misses the reciprocal nature of Hemings’s and Jefferson’s relationship and the fluidity in which Chase-Riboud depicts the language and power currents that inform US history and fiction. In her 2009 afterword, she affirms this trend saying, “[w]here *Sally Hemings* was once dismissed as fiction, it is now co-opted into cant with footnotes. Thus my literature has become history by default, and as invisible as it was in the days when it was defamed to CBS as pornography and censored by Warner Bros.” (353). The discourse surrounding the novel continues to be in black or white terms.

Sally Hemings defies the myth of racially “pure” US history through its performance of race (363). The first chapter draws on the evidence of a census taker recording Hemings’s race as white. Langdon (the census taker) meets Hemings in Albemarle County in 1830. Hemings’s eyes are like “liquid gold in an *ivory mask*” (4; emphasis added). Langdon notes that Virginia law mandates that former slaves leave the state. However, he writes whiteness onto her and her sons in the census as a means of protecting Jefferson, not her: “there was one thing he, Nathan Langdon, was determined that Thomas Jefferson would not be guilty of: the crime of miscegenation” (16). He recognizes her as the former president’s “slave mistress” (4) but not as the creole figure she is. He views her as both “childlike” and “[a] woman” (5) but struggles to accept her whiteness, thinking, “How did one address a creature who did not exist, who was the *negation* of everything he had been taught to believe? There were no white slaves. There could be no white ex-slaves” (8; emphasis added). Again, Langdon perceives Hemings as a “[w]hite African” (*From* 19), and Chase-Riboud points rhetorically to Hemings’s albino and creole status by having Hemings be the negation of what Langdon learned. Langdon’s confusion is the first of many instances in the novel when Hemings’s phenotype disarms other characters. However, race performs at the hands of each character as they each decide Hemings’s race despite her phenotype and what they initially believe. Imagine another braid of black wool thrown over the cover’s subject.

Power determines race. Langdon’s willingness to “change” Hemings’s race to protect Jefferson’s whiteness becomes even more ironic when Hemings and Langdon talk about race and the law in the sixth chapter. Hemings wants Langdon to “take on

the case” of “a mulatto” (49). He does not recognize her as a mulatto in this chapter and justifies his confession—“In the census. I listed them [her sons Madison and Eston] and you as white”—saying, “After all, by Thomas Jefferson’s definition, you are white” (50). Jefferson’s “algebraical notation” expresses “the pure blood of the white in capital letters of the printed alphabet [and] the pure blood of the negro in the small letters of the printed alphabet” (17) in the second chapter in the form of a letter to Francis C. Gray. Despite his own calculations and presumably with his slave family in mind, Jefferson concludes, “Whoever they were, black or white, they belonged to Monticello. And to him” (19). Jefferson, then, illustrates how race and power are intertwined. As slaves, whiteness (any fraction of it) becomes unimportant and debatable. Similarly, Langdon tells Hemings that he cannot help a mulatto because under the law—under the *powers* that be—mulattoes are black, not mulatto, and cannot testify against whites in court: “He is still legally mulatto, therefore he cannot testify against his white cousins in the case. It is no longer a question of slavery but that of a black man testifying against a white man” (50). He goes on to say that the Hemings family can “testify against anybody on earth” (50) because he listed them as being white on the census, making them white in the eyes of the government. In response, Hemings denies her own whiteness or creole identity by pointing to her lack of power: Despite Jefferson’s calculations, as argued by Langdon, “[b]y Thomas Jefferson’s life, I’m a slave” (50), says Hemings. She also recognizes that the census taker changes her race for selfish reasons, not to benefit her or her sons. A white slave—in other words, a white African—is the antithesis to the sensibility of other characters, too. Sew a piece of black wool and silk together and drape it over the novel’s cover.

Race continues to perform and to blur the hegemonic gaze, albeit momentarily. “Sally Hemings was Thomas Jefferson’s half-sister-in-law” (74), which means that Hemings was the aunt of Jefferson’s children: Polly and Martha. When Hemings is fourteen years old, she travels with her nieces to meet Jefferson in Paris, France, where she was to remain enslaved and work as Polly’s “maid” (63). Her mother hopes Hemings will free herself in France since France’s laws protect blacks. On the journey to Paris, Hemings charms the ship’s crew, and Monsieur LaFaurie asks Hemings why people refer to her “as being a Negro slave? Since obviously I was neither a Negro nor a slave. ‘Why, you are whiter than I,’ I remember him saying in astonishment” (68). She realizes that she could have told him that she “was a slave not because of [her] color, but because [her] mother was a slave and her mother before her” (69) but, instead, lies. She concocts a story about being a “Spanish orphan from New Orleans” (69) who was not a slave but, in fact, a true “lady’s maid” for Polly Jefferson. Captain Ramsey, the ship’s captain, finds out about her lie and tells Monsieur LaFaurie the truth. Ramsey scolds Hemings, telling her that what she considers charming behavior, given her status as a “female slave” (70), is actually “[p]rovocation ... flirting ... frolicking” (70). He threatens to lock her in her cabin if she keeps lying and behaving like a “siren” (70). While she “wanted to impress Monsieur LaFaurie because he hadn’t treated [her] any differently for being ‘black’ ” (69), the captain gives her a

scolding lesson on how her whiteness operates differently from Polly's whiteness and how her status as a slave, essentially, erases the whiteness her skin reflects. In her 2009 afterword, Chase-Riboud asserts that "[e]ven [Hemings's] whiteness is perceived as blackness" (363). Indeed, every action Hemings takes is viewed differently when her "blackness" reveals her lack of power.

Just as Fanon recognizes that blackness is his uniform, blackness performs in the novel and continues to get written onto Hemings, like a uniform. Abigail and John Adams meet the children—Sally, Polly, and Martha—at the dock in Paris with plans to look after the children until Jefferson is available and able to pick them up. Abigail Adams, an abolitionist, sees Hemings for the first time and mistakes her for Jefferson's dead wife: "‘A WHITE SLAVE!’ Abigail Adams would never get over the shock of seeing the image of Thomas Jefferson's late wife descending the gangplank of Captain Ramsay's ship in the guise of a Negro slave" (73; capitalization in original). Abigail's exclamation and discomfort come after Hemings says, "I am Mistress Polly's slave, Ma'am" (72). Her response, though, to Hemings's assertion is significant on many levels. She sees Hemings as simultaneously white and a slave. Her distress stems from Hemings's power status as it relates to Hemings's color: "Her color only underlines the horror of her condition because it's our color" (73). Here, the albino figure serves rhetorically as the solution to the "moral question" (*From* 20). Hemings's slave status becomes associated with color, not a continent. For most of the characters, her color masks her African heritage. However, Abigail's reaction betrays her: "Several expressions passed quickly across her face, but the one that settled there was one I already knew well: that of a rich white lady eyeing a poor *darky* slave" (*Sally* 72; emphasis added). At this moment, the physical manifestation of blackness gets written onto Hemings by Abigail.

Since race performs in the novel, much like the stark white background and the black material used on *The Albino* perform, blackness and whiteness are transient and enigmatic in *Sally Hemings*. Just as Abigail erases Hemings's whiteness and replaces it with blackness, a moment Hemings relates to the reader, Hemings erases her blackness: "I had never seen such a place filled with more white people than I had ever imagined in one place. Not one black face anywhere. ... There were no slaves. This [Paris] was another world" (71). Rhetorically, Hemings counts herself as one of the white faces in Paris and, by extension, attributes power and freedom to whiteness. Echoing Abigail and Langdon's denial of the existence of a white slave (i.e., a white African), Hemings believes that the absence of color in Paris, including her own, directly reflects the absence of slaves. In other words, the absence of pigment, albinism, is "the answer / To [the] moral question" (*From* 21) of slavery. Hemings returns to the United States pregnant with Jefferson's first son, and her mother (re) writes blackness back onto her: "Did you forget about that over there in France? That you returned to the same burden as the blackest, most ignorant field hand? You forgot the first lesson of slavery, your blackness" (*Sally* 179), Elizabeth Hemings asks. At times, Hemings does "forget" her blackness and, on other occasions, her whiteness,

even as other people write race onto her; moreover, she tries to live her albino status that should, theoretically, place her outside of slavery. However, her love for Jefferson repeatedly prevents her from liberating herself. The power state of the Hemings family, then, determines their color.

Enslaved, the Hemingses are black. Free, the family is white. Langdon’s irrational obsession with Hemings coupled with his inability to own her cause him to collect (and therefore own) biographical information about Hemings. Aaron Burr, one of Jefferson’s political rivals, says, “THE ONLY THING I know about Sally Hemings is that she was for a time the most famous lady of color in the United States” (161; capitalization in original). Ironically, Chase-Riboud consistently describes Hemings as lacking color, but Hemings is still a “lady of color” because of her status as a slave. Similarly, Jefferson and Hemings’s children who free themselves, something Sally Hemings could have done for herself on several occasions, permanently write whiteness onto their bodies after their liberation. Rather than representing an absence of color, like an albino, Harriet and Thomas must choose whiteness to be free: “She would be white. White. For the rest of her life she would live this lie” (318). Harriet’s choice to be white is a lie because she is both white *and* black, a white African. Her red hair, “creamy complexion,” and the yellow and blue eyes “of her father” will help her “pass for white” (319), recognizes Adrien Petit, Jefferson’s servant from France. Harriet, like her mother, cannot choose to live as both because the United States is obsessed with perpetuating the myth of racial purity, so much so that racial mixing becomes outlawed in most states. Power determines race, and Harriet wants power. She must choose to be white.

Ironically, black slaves create “the impeccable whiteness of Monticello” (277). Thomas Jefferson-Hemings, like his sister, “ ‘stroll[s]’ away” (277) from slavery and “pass[es] for white” (277). According to Hemings, Thomas “leave[s] Monticello a white man” (277). Protected by his auburn hair and “pale hooded eyes” (278), Thomas flees slavery and passes for white. Madison, another of Hemings’s sons, clings to his blackness and slavery, by extension, saying, “Never. I’ll never pass. It’s worse than being *sold*. Selling yourself for whiteness” (317; emphasis in original). Madison, the son credited and also blamed for exposing the Hemings/Jefferson affair, cannot bring himself to deny his blackness by embracing his whiteness despite the shift in power the denial would cause. Like Harriet and Thomas, though, Hemings reverts to trying to erase her blackness in the presence of whites in the United States “There was not one black person to be seen as Sally Hemings stood in the white mob disguised by her color” at the execution of Nat Turner and his “army” (55). She and Eston, another son, remain hidden in their “pale” skin (56). Hemings and her son consider themselves to be the only albino figures (white Africans) present at the execution: “They were without doubt the only black witnesses to this awful moment” (56). Mother and son stand like *The Albino*, walking negatives, indeed. Here, the main difference between how race performs for Hemings in Paris and how race performs for her and her children in the United States is clear: their lives—their power—depend on the whiteness

of their phenotype. Obsession with race in distinctly black or white terms causes the sewing, braiding, and weaving of blackness to get strewn onto Sally Hemings, Chase-Riboud's albino, despite Hemings's white complexion.

Through her plastic and textual art, Chase-Riboud reveals the ways in which race is constructed and reified in the United States. The structure, genre, and content of *Sally Hemings* mirror the structure and content of *The Albino* and "The Albino." Just as *The Albino* cannot escape being covered in blackness even as it exemplifies the absence of color, Hemings's "whiteness is perceived as blackness" (*Sally* 363). Hierarchies inscribed through discourse on blackness remain written onto her with each spectator's eyes (i.e., Langdon, Jefferson, Elizabeth Hemings, Abigail Adams, historians, literary critics, and so on). Consequently, "America's racial history [remains] more complex and hidden than most of us care to acknowledge" (362), writes Chase-Riboud in her 2009 afterword. In *Sally Hemings*, the artist rhetorically removes and replaces race in ways that highlight the US American creolized racial identity and history. In the "Acknowledgments" section, which immediately follows the last page of the novel, Chase-Riboud acknowledges using some of the following sources: Fawn Brodie's book, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History*, the memoirs of Madison Hemings, Edmund Bacon, and Israel and Isaac Jefferson, the diaries of Aaron Burr and John Quincy Adams, and letters of John and Abigail Adams (345). Just like the US landscape, the novel's scape is "the infinite chiaroscuro of silence, where all biographies become one" (344). Chiaroscuro is a technique used in oil painting and photography that uses strong tonal contrasts between light and dark. It is a mainstay of black and white photography. The novel becomes a chiaroscuro of sorts: *The Albino* requires its stark white background as part of its composition; similarly, Sally Hemings (the novel and the figure) requires the biographical information found in the sources listed above to shed light (and whiteness by extension) onto her blackened figure. The result is a duplicate of *The Albino* and, ultimately, a woman who represents a creole and cosmopolitan figure.

Chase-Riboud thinks that she is "the only one left standing to contest the establishment whitewash" (362). She says that her goal includes wanting "to illuminate our overweening and irrational obsession with race and color in this country" (350). Her use of Jefferson—"the man who almost single-handedly invented our national identity" (350)—and Hemings—"the emblematic incarnation of the forbidden, the outcast [and] the rejection of that identity" (350; emphasis added)—positions Hemings as someone with a condition, like albinism, that extends beyond being black and white and beyond being black or white. Returning to the artist's plastic and textual work and further analyzing her use of black and white can return Sally Hemings to history and can expose the United States's albinism, which would help unravel the black material the hegemonic gaze drapes over the girl on the cover and could be "the answer / To a moral question" (*From* 21). In conclusion, I would like to leave you with an extensive quote from *Sally Hemings* that reiterates the analyses this chapter shares:

They were all bloodied, thought Sally Hemings. The whole race was bloodied. Not only with the real blood of suffering, the real blood of chains and whips and hatchets, but the blood of race, polluted, displaced, and disappearing in rape and miscegenation, and cross-ties of kin—that fine lace of bastardy that stretched across the two races like the web of a spider filled with love and hate—claiming cousins and nephews, daughters and sons, half sisters [sic] and half brothers [sic]. ... The whole race was bloodied, the whole race had served with bloodied hands and had wiped them on their masters. (286)

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Contributors on Their Cosmopolitan Experiences: A Postscript

Samir Dayal

My interest in cosmopolitanism and related topics such as diaspora, immigration, transnationalism, hybridity, and even citizenship certainly has a personal dimension. I was born in India and have now lived longer in the United States than in the Subcontinent. My immediate family are now spread across three countries, and I have close family connections across several continents. Yet I have always been keenly sensitive to the hazard of unreflectively identifying oneself as, or claiming to be, “cosmopolitan,” as if one had the luxury of being at home everywhere, just as I have often and long resisted a merely autobiographical—a predictable—interest in South Asian and postcolonial studies, domains in which I nevertheless now work and publish, though not exclusively. If people across the world are to be able to be interested in, to care for and be responsible for, one another, I believe that we need to think of ourselves as inhabiting a shared world: In that sense cosmopolitanism is socially and ethically defensible. So I would say I have had a complicated interest in both cosmopolitanism as an attitude of openness to the world *and* cultural *difference*, culturally specific self-fashioning, and subject-formation, from scholarly and personal perspectives.

Taoufik Djebali

I have a personal and an academic interest in cosmopolitanism. Indeed, I was born and raised in Tunisia, a former French possession in North Africa, known for its cohesion and ethnic homogeneity. In the 1980s, like many North African students, I decided to move to Paris to pursue higher education. After I got a degree in sociology and a Ph.D. in American studies on race and public policy, I started a career in teaching at the University of Caen in the northwest of France. Since then, I have been dividing my time between the port city of Caen and Paris, the French cosmopolitan city par excellence. For me, however, cosmopolitanism is not just a concept dealt with in the academia. It is also a cultural, a social, and a psychological experience that takes place in a country (France) that is anxiously and hesitantly facing diversity and multiculturalism.

María Frías

Born in Spain in a family half Andalusian and half German, I soon learned to walk that liminal state both at home and abroad. Following Zora Neale Hurston’s advice: “You have to go *there* to know *there*,” I have lived and taught in Ghana, where I went in search of the woman who was the protagonist of a research project. And so I did in Senegal, and in Peru. As I work with African emigrant women, serve as a volunteer at the local prison, and listen to nomadic and transnational stories about invented/

liquid borders, these African men and women teach me about their resilience and the need to look at the heartbreaking reality of a bloody Mediterranean Sea. My students learn about it, too.

Andrea O'Reilly Herrera

I am the daughter and granddaughter of Cuban and Irish migrants. Acculturated primarily by our maternal Cuban relatives, we grew up fully conscious that we were members of a tight-knit diasporic community. Sensitive to the plight of others as a result of their experiences, my parents opened our home to an eclectic gathering of people from across the world; this included blood relatives, acquaintances, and even complete strangers, all of whom had left their native countries under some form of duress and consequently became part of our “extended” family. When I was a child, the world appeared as though it was *without frontiers*. *Privy to passionate and oftentimes painful discussions regarding the adverse emotional and psychic conditions to which displaced peoples adapt and survive, my sense of identity was shaped indelibly by their stories*. It wasn't until adulthood that I realized that my consciousness and my cultural imagination were supplanted, for they were based on an idea of a nation that was at once present and absent—a *displaced nation of word and memory*. The deep seeded sense of belonging to Cuba that was cultivated in us from earliest childhood accounted, in some sense, for the profound and perpetual sense of un-belonging that I—like others—experience, though we are not displaced in any literal sense. Caught in this conundrum, our lives have been defined by the paradoxical struggle of *recuperating and eliminating space*. This struggle, I suppose, is the legacy of colonialism, and the particular form of cosmopolitanism that has emerged in its shadow.

Sheena Garrant

Alain Leroy Locke's conceptualization of cultural pluralism and relativism as a philosophy that would lead society toward world peace echoes a vision of cosmopolitanism and unity that I sought growing up. My adoptive mother immigrated from Panama to the United States when she was 20 years old. My adoptive father, an upstate New Yorker, traveled the world through his service in the United States Navy. My hometown was small and primarily white, aside from my nuclear family. I experienced racism frequently and always felt like an outsider. Similarly, abused and neglected as a child by my adoptive parents, I became nomadic, traveling from state to state after my sixteenth birthday. Home was wherever I was, and I always viewed moving to different places, even if sleeping on park benches, and traveling as opportunities to grow and learn more about the world. I was also looking for a place to fit in. As an emotional and intellectual escape mechanism, I read voraciously as a child and teen. I read anything and everything and was reading adult books well before I was a teenager. My childhood and experiences as a teenager then gave me the capacity to inhabit various ways of being and seeing that the majority of my peers lacked. My frequent movement and mobility strengthened my intellectual and emotional intelligence in ways that

inspire cosmopolitan inclinations and interpretations. However, I view cosmopolitanism as a sort of foundation for my movement “past” and through such philosophies to a conceptualization of the world that has more liberatory potential.

Tingting Hui

As to the question of my personal and academic trajectory in relation to cosmopolitanism, three years ago I moved to the Netherlands from China for my studies. This experience of a new strange language and culture unmoors me from my comfort zone, which incites self-doubt, but also invites reflection and reconstruction of my past and present. I have become quite engaged with the topic of hospitality and cosmopolitanism and with the pain and liberty of being a foreigner. In the end, who’s not a foreigner—a foreigner to other people, to other systems, and even to oneself?

Joanna Jasińska

The source of my cosmopolitanism has been curiosity. Growing up in Poland, where almost everybody was Polish, white, and Catholic, I have always been attracted by people who looked, behaved, and thought differently. As a teenager, I hitchhiked all over Europe to see firsthand what the world looked like. Today I work in an international environment as a sociologist, a musician, and a linguist. My students come from all over the world, I do sociological research in Sicily, record my music in Canada, and have my radio program where I invite migrants who tell their life stories. Poland is still white and Catholic, but I have found my own place here.

Raphaël Lambert

Something strange happened to me twenty years ago. I moved to the United States to complete my education, and I became, overnight, a “privileged white man”—just like that! Born in a French village to a large family of modest means, the metamorphosis wasn’t short of extraordinary. Today, I teach African American literature and culture in Japan, which makes me, no doubt, a cosmopolitan man. Or does it? Cosmopolitanism is neither a label nor a condition: It must be cultivated, like Voltaire’s garden, and the best way to do so is by embracing the definition Victor Ségalen gave of diversity back in 1904: “Let us not flatter ourselves for assimilating the customs, races, nations and others who differ from us. On the contrary, let us rejoice in our inability ever to do so, for we thus retain the eternal pleasure of sensing Diversity.” Ségalen synthesized this attitude through the figure of the *exot*, who “is a born Traveler, someone who senses all the flavor of diversity in worlds filled with wondrous diversities.” When I become a genuine *exot*, I will feel genuinely privileged.

Ewa Luczak

I was exposed to the language of social justice, cross-ethnic and cross-racial solidarity, as well as a belief in transnational friendship as a child without knowing the term “cosmopolitanism.” My mother, who as a teenager experienced WWII, taught me

many hard lessons about the consequences of the discourses of political supremacy, tribalism, and exclusionism. She lived her simple post-WWII life without ever seeing another country, yet she inculcated in her children the value of openness and dialogue. When I left Poland for the first time as a twenty-year-old young woman to experience the life of a poor immigrant, it was only natural for me to fall back on what I learned at home. Later on, living on a different continent and meeting people coming from all walks of life and parts of the world and pursuing my studies of African American literature, I came to better understand the lesson taught by my mother. Now I continue to build on that, and recently in my research, I have turned towards the critique of one of the most divisive and exclusionary scientific discourses of the twentieth century—that of eugenics.

Aparajita Nanda

I understood “cosmopolitanism” from my mother, an eminent scholar, who did her Ph.D. at the London School of Economics right after World War II. She retired as Professor Emeritus, one of only six who were awarded the emeritus status in early 1970s India. In the late 1940s, when female education was just picking up in India, and higher studies for women was unheard of, she won a state scholarship and came to England to do her Ph.D. She embraced one and all, irrespective of caste, creed, or color, and brought me up to respect everyone as human beings, no matter what their religious faith may be or their economic standing. Today, I can say I am a “citizen of the world”—Indian by birth, US American by citizenship. I teach at the University of California, Berkeley, and Santa Clara University. I teach African American and Indian literature with the same passion and commitment. And as I tell my students: “If you have not felt the stories come alive, not felt them on your skin, you and I have never met.”

Kudzayi Ngara

Born in rural, colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), I was the first black head-boy of my former whites-only primary school. I fell in love and disgust, in equal measure, with Dickens’s London in high school and beyond. After enrolling for postgraduate studies and working in South Africa, I have had the opportunity to travel the world. The nodes and networks of traversal are fodder for my intellectual musings. I am cosmopolitan.

Malin Pereira

My mother was a cosmopolitan. Despite a narrow range of personal and career options available to her as a woman in the 1950s and 1960s US, coming from a small town in Kansas and having limited means, my mother moved to Washington, DC, after college and worked for a senator. She read widely, knew artists (some of whom became recognized figures in opera, painting, and modern dance), learned how to cook international foods, and mastered *découpage*. When I began studying African

American literature it was the 1980s, the era of Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Houston Baker. The foundations of the field were in the oral tradition and the music; moreover, the African American literary tradition was being conceived around how the texts were in conversation with other texts in the tradition. Because of my own background as well as a rather traditional (read: white US Americans and British) undergraduate education in English, I kept seeing other conversations black writers were having, conversations I eventually came to understand as cosmopolitan.

Anna Pochmara

My personal engagement with cosmopolitanism is directly linked to my academic experience. During a year in Berlin and a year in New Haven, I lived in multinational communities of immigrants and visiting scholars. Such experiences of foreign homes were shared by many Poles in the twenty-first century, especially after we joined the European Union. The increased mobility largely contributed to the rise of new patriotism, parallel to rooted cosmopolitanism. In the recent wave of pro-democratic protests in Poland, people in the streets bore Polish national flags and flags of the European Union. Many Poles have formed a multilayered, rooted cosmopolitan identity that combines their local histories with the global, though mostly white European intracontinental, context.

Anna Sosnowska

When I was in my twenties, I discovered cosmopolitanism as a thrilling mystery that should be understood. Studying in New York City, and visiting European cities for scholarships, conferences, summer schools, and tourist stays, made me curious, excited, and hungry for more. Complicated layers of history, changing boundaries, multiple legacies of places full of immigrants and students from around the world seemed a perfect environment for an aspiring intellectual. Now in my forties, married to a foreigner, raising bilingual and bicultural children, and having parents-in-law and numerous cousins-in-law coming from another culture, I see cosmopolitanism as an everyday life task that requires effort. Cultural difference remains a mystery to be understood but can be a source of frustration, boredom, and exhaustion. When visiting the same and new cosmopolitan cities in the United States and Europe, I see them now as scenes of unprecedented social experiment and immigrants—as heroes.

Annarita Taronna

My personal experiences and views on cosmopolitanism are closely related to the practice of translation that I have been theorizing and experimenting with since my undergraduate degree in Modern Languages and Literatures. Since then, translating from Catalan, Chicano, and African American English into Italian has led me to outline extraordinary accounts of linguistic and cultural cosmopolitanism as openness to a world in which citizenship is decoupled from its national bearings and boundaries. This idea is obsessively part of the fabric of my everyday life as a southern Italian

citizen, translator, and academic living on the Mediterranean cosmopolitan borders of Apulia, expressing hostility towards the closure of borders and denial of rights to non-European-nationals, and showing hospitality towards the unstoppable flows of people and bodies.

Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez

My connection to cosmopolitanism is both personal and scholarly. Growing up in the fissure between Mexico and the United States, my life has always been about crossing borders. Having lived and spent much time in cities like San Francisco, Mexico City, Madrid, Barcelona, and Istanbul, cosmopolitan migrant flows have always been on my mind. For me, Gloria Anzaldúa's dictum to "be a crossroads" when you live in the borderlands —wherever those contact zones may be— is fundamental to my writing, research, and teaching: It is by positioning oneself at the crossroads, as difficult as that can be, that I seek to engage my classes to understand and hopefully accept the possibilities inherent in being, as Rubén Martínez once wrote, both "North and South in the North and in the South."

Hanna Wallinger

My personal background as the daughter of parents who were both dislocated after World War II has contributed to my interest in migration studies and cosmopolitanism. My seminars on migration narratives have shown to me that this topic is more than important for the present generation of students and scholars and that the teaching of and writing about transnationalism/cosmopolitanism/mobility and immobility are relevant in discussions about nation, migration, and home.

Marta Werbanowska

Living at the crossroads of Polish and North American geographies and cultures, I inhabit a version of the cosmopolitan experience—and the opportunities as well as the challenges that come with it—in my daily life. I see cosmopolitan nomadic consciousness as a promising political and ethical standpoint from which to approach the increasingly difficult questions of human and nonhuman relationality at all levels, from the intimately personal to the globally inter-communal.

Melanie Masterton Sherazi

Reading William Demby's transnational fiction, with its meditations on national and global belonging, drew me into the orbit of post-WWII Italy's artistic communities. Having lived my life in Los Angeles, the daughter of a Scottish immigrant father and with family in Scotland, Mexico, Canada, and Pakistan, I privilege boundary crossings and affiliative connections in my work.

Joanna Ziarkowska

My maternal grandfather's WWII history—an experience of dislocation, forced adaptation to a new environment, and a long-awaited return home—quickly made me aware of the complexity of concepts such as “home,” “border,” and “movement.” While undeniably traumatic, his experience of forced dislocation was also one of making friends and learning the skill of cultural translation. Many years after hearing his war story for the first time, I am tracing transnational and transindigenous motifs in Native American literature and I am moved, again, by how stories of leaving home, travel, migration, and cultural survival become part of debates on the multiple forms and manifestations of contemporary cosmopolitanism.

Notes on Contributors

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Sheena Garrant is a doctoral student at Howard University in Washington, DC. She specializes in African American, Caribbean, and US literature and has a special interest in discourses on creolization and cosmopolitanism. She is searching for language to discuss the literature of black writers that requires language outside of black and white terms. Barbara Chase-Riboud's *Sally Hemings, From Memphis and Peking*, and sculptures have led her a few steps closer. Additionally, she is conducting extensive research on Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*, *Home*, and *The Origin of Others*, and Gayl Jones's *Corregidora*, *Eva's Man*, and *White Rat*. Further, her examination of mulatta (tragic and otherwise) figures in African American and Caribbean literature also inspires her to progress the conversation beyond race to resist and unravel racism.

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Malin Pereira earned her doctorate in English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studying African American literature under Nellie McKay and Craig Werner. The majority of her scholarship has focused on the shifting confluences of culture, race, and identity in African American literature. She has published essays on Toni Morrison's revision of *The Tempest* in *Tar Baby*, re-reading Natasha Trethewey's early poetry through mixed race studies, Elizabeth Alexander's and Cyrus Cassells's post-Soul cosmopolitanism, black women writers' responses to Sylvia Plath, and Brenda Marie Osbey's black internationalism, among other topics. Her books include *Rita Dove's Cosmopolitanism* (2003) and *Into a Light Both Brilliant and Unseen: Conversations with Contemporary Black Poets* (2010). She is Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where she leads the Honors College. Currently, she is pursuing three lines of research in contemporary black poetry: Thylis Moss's *Slave Moth* as performance art, the use and adaptation of ekphrasis, and airplane poems.

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Demby's papers in Italy, which detail his decades of work in 1950s and 1960s Rome as a novelist, journalist, screenwriter, translator, and actor for the Italian cinema. Demby's papers pointed her toward a larger network of African American writers and artists living in postwar Rome and collaborating with Italian leftist filmmakers and artists. Sherazi has published work about a range of US authors, including Ralph Ellison, Carson McCullers, and William Faulkner. She edited and wrote the introduction to William Demby's novel *King Comus* (2017).

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