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Degree for which thesis being submitted   PhD in English and American Literature

Title of thesis   A Unified Scene? Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary British and American Fiction

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Date of submission   15/09/15   Original registration date   01/10/12
(Date of submission must comply with Regulation 2D)

Name of candidate   Kristian Shaw

Research Institute   Humanities   Name of Lead Supervisor   Dr Nick Bentley

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A Unified Scene? Cosmopolitanism in Contemporary British and American Fiction

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PhD in English and American Literature

June 2016

Keele University

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of Keele University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

Completing this PhD project has been a wonderful experience, and that is largely due to the people who have helped me along the way. First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor Nick Bentley for all his intellectual advice and guidance over the course of the last three years. He has taught me how to become a better writer and academic, and has provided encouragement throughout all stages of the degree. Many thanks also to my secondary supervisor Timothy Lustig for his support and enthusiasm, improving and refining the structure of the project for the better. I could not have asked for a more helpful or knowledgeable support network.

I am greatly appreciative to Emily Johansen for volunteering to read draft chapters of my work, and for offering key theoretical insights on the nature of cosmopolitanism itself. Special mention goes to Aris Mousoutzanis, Samuel Thomas and David James for candid discussions about contemporary fiction, and for tremendous constructive criticism along the way. Thanks as well to Anthony Mansfield for his much needed humour and insight during the doctoral process. I cannot imagine sharing an office with anyone else.

Sections of Chapter 1 were published as 'Building Cosmopolitan Futures: Global Fragility in the Fiction of David Mitchell', in *English Academy Review* 32.1 (2015): 109-23.

<u>Abstract</u>

The twenty-first century has been marked by an unprecedented intensification in globalisation, transnational mobility and technological change. However, the resulting global interconnectedness reveals the continuation of deeply unequal power structures in world society, often exposing rather than ameliorating cultural imbalances. The emergent globalised condition requires a form of narrative representation that accurately reflects the experience of existing as a constituent member of an interconnected global community.

This study of cosmopolitanism in contemporary British and American fiction identifies several authors who demonstrate a willingness to forge new and intensified dialogues between local experience and global flows, and between transnational mobilities and networks of connectivity. Various theories of cosmopolitanism will be examined in order to assess their efficacy in providing direct responses to ways of being-in-relation to others and answering urgent fears surrounding cultural convergence. The five chapters of the study will examine works by David Mitchell, Zadie Smith, Teju Cole, Dave Eggers and Hari Kunzru, and Philip Pullman. By envisioning how society is shaped by the engendering of shared fates brought about by globalisation, the selected fictions by these authors imagine new cosmopolitan modes of belonging and the development of an emergent global consciousness founded on the cross-cultural interdependencies of the post-millennial world.

Despite providing unique and divergent perspectives on the contemporary moment, the fictions indicate that cosmopolitical concerns and crises weaken calls for more progressive and productive forms of harmonious global interconnectedness, and retain a scepticism of more utopian discourses. Cultural relations are increasingly mediated through the awareness of inhabiting a shared, but not unified, world. The study will conclude by arguing that the

selected fictions point towards the need for an emergent and affirmative cosmopolitics attuned

to the diversity and complexity of twenty-first century globality.

Contents

Abbreviations

CA...*Cloud Atlas*, David Mitchell

ED ....*Every Day Is for the Thief*, Teju Cole

G..*Ghostwritten*, David Mitchell

NL...*Northern Lights*, Philip Pullman

NW... *NW*, Zadie Smith

OC ....*Open City*, Teju Cole

T ....*Transmission*, Hari Kunzru

TAS ....*The Amber Spyglass*, Philip Pullman

TC..*The Circle*, Dave Eggers

TSK...*The Subtle Knife*, Philip Pullman

WT .... *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith

Introduction

'It is important to ask what critical perspectives might nurture the ability and the

desire to live with difference on an increasingly divided but also convergent planet?'

(Gilroy, *Empire* 3).

'We now have to be responsible for fellow citizens both of our country and fellow

citizens of the world' (Appiah, *Examined Life* 88).

According to Peter Boxall, there has been 'an ethical turn in the fiction of the new century'

to reflect the 'contemporary global condition' (141). Undoubtedly, the twenty-first century

has been marked by an intensification in transnational mobility, globalisation, and

unprecedented technological change. This study of contemporary fiction will argue that the

concept of cosmopolitanism provides a direct response to ways of living in relation to

others and answers urgent fears surrounding cultural convergence. As Bill Ashcroft notes,

'cosmopolitanism is being reinvented as the latest Grand-Theory-of-Global-Cultural-

Diversity' (77). The various models of cosmopolitanism evident in the selected novels are

particularly relevant in responding to the contemporary environment and inform our

thinking about how we may confront the interconnectedness and interdependence of global

citizens and spaces. Literature is a late arrival to the critical study of cosmopolitanism, and

yet the term is uniquely suited to literary analysis. Kwame Anthony Appiah perceives the

novel 'as a testing ground for [...] cosmopolitanism, with its emphasis on dialogue among

differences'; the novel itself being 'a message in a bottle from some other position'

('Reading' 207, 223). Moreover, as Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard and Patrick Hanafin

identify, 'the cosmopolitan perspective is not in fact one that is accessible through

perception, only through imagination, because we cannot see the whole of humanity', thus

being appropriate for fictional analysis (5). In literary studies, cosmopolitanism is often

used interchangeably with the terms globalisation and transnationalism. Accurate definitions of the concept differ from these two interrelated terms by emphasising an ethical dimension, usually at the individual level. Indeed, cosmopolitanism is a highly malleable and multidimensional concept, leaving its specificities open to interpretation. For this reason there is much debate on how the term continues to defy a simple definition. This study will attempt to go some way towards clarifying the concept and its usage in literary studies, thus enhancing its analytical value in reflecting the cultural processes of globalised life. Although cosmopolitanism has predominantly remained the domain of philosophy and the social sciences, this study will demonstrate how the fragility of the contemporary moment is intimately connected with a growing cosmopolitan consciousness in literature – one could even say global threats emerge as the facilitators of a tentative cosmopolitanism. As a result, the following chapters will demonstrate how British and American fiction is beginning to imagine new configurations of cultural identity, community and socio-political interdependence to respond to accelerated changes in global society.

Despite their diverse subject matter, the selected fictions in this study all engage with contemporary concerns facing the globalised world, from the rise in transnational mobilities, to radical technological change, to the threat of ecological disaster. The first chapter examines the global fiction of David Mitchell. Both *Ghostwritten: A Novel in Nine Parts* (1999) and *Cloud Atlas* (2004) are a mixture of differing cultures, literary styles and genres that reflect the cultural relationality and complex globality of the contemporary moment. Through a detailed analysis of these novels, the chapter will argue that Mitchell acknowledges a rise in the interrelation of global and local flows. Developing this idea, the next two chapters will concentrate on how cosmopolitanism specifically relates to local communities and landscapes. Chapter 2 concentrates on the urban suburbs of London in

Zadie Smith's *NW* (2012). It will be argued that Smith's limited geographical focus (on an area in which she was born and continues to reside) intimates that the social constructs of the family and local community are more conducive to developing cosmopolitan values and meaningful relations. Chapter 3 provides a transatlantic comparison to Smith's fiction by exploring the urban cityscapes of New York in Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011). By paying attention to the non-elite mobilities of African migrants, Cole's text will be argued to reveal a critical cosmopolitanism that questions the very nature of cultural empathy. Chapter 4 shifts the focus of the study by addressing the role of digital communicative technologies in facilitating cross-cultural dialogue in Dave Eggers's *The Circle* (2013) and Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* (2005). However, these fictions also complement Cole's focus on non-elite mobilities by interrogating the capitalist exploitation intrinsic to digital migrant labour, and the enforcement of Western cultural values on non-Western societies. The final chapter explores radical forms of otherness in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy.[1] Through an examination of trans-species communities in the trilogy, the chapter will argue that literature possesses a unique capacity to envision different worlds and imagines new ways of co-existing with one another. In discussing these works, this study will therefore attempt to identify a trend in contemporary fiction to engage with the cosmopolitan.

This introduction will return to a more detailed statement on the chosen authors and novels discussed in the main body of the study, but first it is necessary to examine a number of key concepts. Specifically, this introduction will scrutinise the ways in which the term cosmopolitanism has been understood, both historically and in the contemporary period. Cosmopolitan theory itself has a long and varied history, stretching from the Greek

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[1] The trilogy consists of *Northern Lights* (1998), *The Subtle Knife* (1998), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2001) (first published in 1995, 1997, and 2000, respectively).

Stoics to the Enlightenment philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Classical Stoic cosmopolitanism introduced the idea that individuals may exist as citizens of the world, mediating between new and existing loyalties, and balancing local allegiances with an abstract commitment to global others. Kant, on the other hand, tried to combine the philosophical concept with democratic forms of governance. As David Harvey notes, Kant's work questioned the necessary institutional specifics which may allow 'all of the inhabitants of planet earth to negotiate, preferably in a peaceful manner, their common occupancy of a finite globe' (*Freedom* 77). Earlier conceptions of cosmopolitanism possessed a purely normative edge, resulting in the term evoking connotations of utopianism. Contemporary use of the term needs to acknowledge the complexity of twenty-first century life, emphasising that the ethical ideals of shared belonging, cooperation and cohabitation must function in order to confront cosmopolitical threats and address global inequalities. In recent years, cosmopolitanism has re-emerged through the philosophical and sociological work of Martha Nussbaum, among others. However, Nussbaum's claim that 'we should give our first allegiance to the moral community made up by the humanity of all human beings' demonstrates a turn away from localised forms of belonging and membership, neglecting the more realisable and everyday forms of cultural engagement ('Patriotism' 7). As Nathan Glazer identifies, Nussbaum's proposed application of a universal form of cosmopolitanism, reconfigured from Stoic philosophy, neglects the fact that the Stoics were citizens of 'a near-universal state and civilisation' with 'uniformity in rights and obligations', whereas the contemporary world is 'radically different', not least with regards to cultural and socioeconomic inequalities (63).[2] More

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[2] Following criticism of her framework, which assimilated cosmopolitanism with universalism, even Nussbaum qualified her remarks to concede that the term should not insist we provide 'equal attention to all parts of the world' and that 'it is right to give the local an additional measure of concern' ('Reply' 135).

importantly, due to the progressive interdependence of the contemporary world, one cannot simply rely on a polarised binary between the spheres of locality and globality. Although transnational mobilities, globalisation and technological advancement have reconfigured the means by which attachments local or otherwise are fostered and developed, the Stoic model nevertheless provides the moral compass through which contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism can navigate the concerns of globalised life.

The major problem with universal forms of cosmopolitan thought is that they remain too utopian and abstract to be of any pragmatic use to the globalised world. In literary studies, however, the feasibility or practical application of such frameworks is not restricted by the same reliance on pragmatism as other disciplines, allowing the tenets of cosmopolitanism to be explored across imaginative fictional space whilst retaining the ethics of the theory itself. Fiction provides the means by which we can identify with those different to ourselves, appreciate shared aims and aspirations, and also acknowledge common problems which need to be faced and overcome, making narrative concerns universal. This study will emphasise how fiction is a unique medium through which to imagine cosmopolitan reconfigurations not yet conceivable or accessible in the contemporary moment. In doing so, the following chapters will demonstrate the multiplicity of ways the globalised world may be imagined, transformed, remembered, transnationalised and deconstructed in contemporary literature. Despite this, the main focus of this study assumes a realistic stance towards cosmopolitan engagement, and draws heavily on the work of sociologist Ulrich Beck. Beck recognises that the globalising conditions of millennial society necessitate 'a new historical reality [...] a cosmopolitan outlook in which people view themselves simultaneously as part of a threatened world and as part of their local situations and histories' (*Vision* 48). Accordingly, 'we must reorient and reorganize our lives and actions, our organizations and institutions along a "local-

global" axis' (Beck, *Globalization* 11). In an attempt to answer 'what makes the cosmopolitan outlook at the beginning of the twenty-first century "realistic", in contrast to cosmopolitan idealism' his research marks a break away from more universal and utopian paradigms of cosmopolitanism, paying attention to the cultural asymmetries that govern global relations (*Vision* 48). Also, by recognising that a 'cosmopolitan society means a cosmopolitan society and its enemies', he acknowledges that there will always be those who benefit less from globalising processes ('Sociology' 83). Cosmopolitanism does not involve 'consensus' but often 'conflict', as global communities 'enter into mutually confirming and correcting relations' in an effort to mediate between diverse perspectives and heterogeneous cultures (*Vision* 60). Literary critics Peter Childs and James Green echo such reasoning, claiming that in 'a networked space of flows [...] sites of exchange fluctuate between opposition and cooperation' as new potentialities for connectivity are tempered by a new awareness of global risk (*Ethics* 20). It is therefore necessary to examine how the contemporary authors discussed in this study identify and tackle the present conditions of the emerging twenty-first century, and also how the future will be shaped by the shared consequences of globalisation. Indeed, global awareness emerges as contemporary cosmopolitanism's dominant mode. Several of the fictions in this study, predominantly the works of Mitchell and Pullman, consequently imagine coordinated strategies of collaboration that respond to the inherent common problems which cultural and cosmopolitical interconnection brings.

One of the key concerns in clarifying the usage of cosmopolitanism is identifying the ethical ideals associated with the concept. Although cosmopolitanism can now be viewed in various ways, Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen attempt to both pin down its meaning and acknowledge its multiplicity, defining it as: 'a socio-cultural condition' arising as a result of contemporary globalising processes; 'a kind of philosophy or world-

view' that acknowledges the common values existing between all humans regardless of race or affiliation; a project aimed towards 'building transnational institutions' that override the potency of the nation-state; a 'political project for recognizing multiple identities' and the multiple allegiances a citizen feels with regards to local, national and global concerns; 'an attitudinal or dispositional orientation' that demonstrates an openness to cultural experience and otherness; or simply 'a mode of practice' that acknowledges and embraces the internal effects of globalisation on cultures and communities (9). The following chapters will draw upon these definitions, as well as those of other theorists, in attempting to identify the various manifestations of cosmopolitanism operating in the selected fictions. While much research has predominantly focused on cosmopolitanism as the purview of nation-states and governmental organisations, this study shall follow David Hollinger in suggesting that the term is 'more oriented to the individual' (86). Literary fiction, because of its ability to present characters' points of view and subjective experiences of the world, is particularly appropriate in conveying the individual's relationship towards the lived experience of cosmopolitan environments and cultures. In this way, cosmopolitanism involves an active ethical agency and emphasises the importance of affective practice towards establishing cultural attachments. As Zlatko Skrbiš and Ian Woodward emphasise, a socio-cultural disposition of openness is particularly important and requires a 'performative dimension' that reveals the cosmopolitan outlook of global actors (27). Pnina Werbner complements this approach, considering cosmopolitanism to involve 'reaching out across cultural differences through dialogue, aesthetic enjoyment, and respect', and necessitates 'living together with difference' ('Introduction' 2). In the search for a term that simultaneously reflects both the diversity and cultural interdependence of the globalised world, cosmopolitanism seems to be an exceptionally fecund appellation. Following this reasoning, the use of the term

'cosmopolitan' in this study will be twofold, referring to both culturally-diverse societies and the practice of ethical values traditionally associated with cosmopolitanism in general. Defining cosmopolitanism in this fashion allows for dialogue and overlap with the usage of the term across the social sciences and complements existing approaches towards unpacking the specific ethical ideals and values of the concept.

That being said, no matter how cosmopolitanism and its ethical ideals are defined, when confronting the deeply unequal cultural and political systems of the globalised world it becomes clear that 'cosmopolitanism is the name not of the solution but of the challenge' (Appiah, *Ethics* xiii). More realisable and pragmatic forms of contemporary cosmopolitan engagement are necessary in facing the challenges of an increasingly interconnected world. With this in mind, Appiah correctly adopts a partial cosmopolitanism in the age of globalisation which rejects the 'exalted attainment' of classical models of cosmopolitanism, instead simply positing that 'in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence' (xvii). Gerard Delanty furthers this pragmatic modern conception of cosmopolitanism, claiming that the term provides 'a normative critique of globalization' which accepts that while the contemporary world 'may be becoming more and more globally linked by powerful global forces […] this does not make the world more cosmopolitan' ('Critical' 41; 'Introduction' 2). He goes on to argue that the concept offers social theory a means of engaging with emergent forms of belonging ranging from 'soft forms of multiculturalism to major re-orientations in self-understanding in light of global principles or re-evaluations of cultural heritage and identity as a result of inter-cultural encounters' ('Critical' 42). On this basis, it should be emphasised that cosmopolitanism is not a condition of rootlessness or hybridity, but rather a process of creative engagement between peoples and cultures in developing an openness to forms of alterity and the negotiation of a more interdependent world.

Cosmopolitanism, then, offers new forms of identification aside from merely communal or ethnic allegiances, and becomes a 'project of citizenship that can cope with subjects' multiple affiliation [...] as an alternative to "tired" models of multiculturalism' (Germain and Radice 112). By the same reasoning, cosmopolitanism should not suggest an emergent nomadism, devoid of connectivity or belonging to territorial space; instead, this study follows Bruce Robbins in emphasising the situatedness of cosmopolitanism, dependent on 'a density of overlapping allegiances rather than the abstract emptiness of non-allegiance' ('Comparative' 250). The pragmatic approach to cosmopolitanism proposed in this study acknowledges the necessity for discord and antagonism in cosmopolitan community-building, whereby cultural mingling rejects definitive assimilation. This study therefore echoes Beck's assessment that the 'everyday experience of cosmopolitan interdependence is not a love affair of everyone with everyone. It arises in a climate of heightened global threats, which create an unavoidable pressure to cooperate' (*Vision*, 23). Ethical agency regarding openness to the world and hospitality to otherness should avoid the need for homogeneity, while retaining the positive ideology at the heart of cosmopolitanism. Given the term's multidisciplinary nature, the chapters engage with sociological, political, anthropological and literary theory to reveal the pluralistic frameworks surrounding its usage. The imaginative representations of the globalised world articulated in the fictions will be argued to provide a direct response to new developments confronting the contemporary moment.

In spite of cosmopolitanism's more optimistic connotations, it must be acknowledged that the cultural interconnectedness of global interdependencies fails to naturally engender a resultant cosmopolitan orientation or ethical response to radical inequalities of access. As Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo argue, the world is not 'a seamless whole without boundaries. Rather, it is a space of structured circulations, of

mobility and immobility. It is a space of dense interconnections and black holes' (35).

Developing this thought, this study will interrogate who exactly may be termed a

'cosmopolitan' in these selected fictions. In Ulf Hannerz's pioneering essay,

'Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture', he proposes that cosmopolitanism concerns

an elite sector of society who possess the means to enjoy global mobility. Through a

sustained concentration on localised engagement and belonging, the following chapters

will argue against Hannerz's false dichotomy between so-called 'cosmopolitans', whose

affluence permits a mobility unhindered by national borders or geographical distance, and

'locals', who remain restricted by socioeconomic or cultural immobility ('Locals' 238).

Hannerz's reasoning accounts for the mobile practices of Western elites, but fails to

address the day-to-day cultural practices of global others. Instead, the fiction of Mitchell,

Smith, Cole and Pullman will demonstrate that cultural convergence and

cosmopolitanisation of territory can result in an individual's life becoming subject to

global forces without even leaving their locality. Mitchell and Smith in particular imagine

'glocal' spaces in which the dynamic tension and creative interplay of global and local

forces complicate existing forms of belonging and questions of cultural identity,

demonstrating how cosmopolitanism can be integral to parochial cultural encounters and

can operate within localities.[3] As Rebecca Walkowitz argues, cosmopolitanism can also

concern 'actors who are not social elites or whose position in the world is not in all ways

privileged' (17). Tellingly, Hannerz's positioning of cosmopolitanism as an elite practice

contradicts his statement that cosmopolitanism 'is first of all an orientation' that one can

assume (*Transnational* 103). His proposed binary (of cosmopolitans and locals) fails to

acknowledge both the emergence of non-elite cosmopolitanisms arising from the

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[3] The process of glocality will be defined as the ways in which local landscapes and
experiences are reconfigured by globalising (or simply wider cultural) forces.

progressive empowerment of immigrants and refugees, and, more importantly, the centrality of ethical agency that makes cosmopolitanism so much more than a condition of transnational mobility.

Nor should we agree with Hannerz's reasoning that cosmopolitanism 'has to do with a sense of the world as one' (*Companion* 83). He begins his seminal essay with the bold claim that 'there is now a world culture', neglecting the very multiplicity and heterogeneity of cultures that remain marginalised by Western hegemonic structures ('Locals' 237). Such optimism perceives the world as a fully globalised state, rather than in the process of coming to terms with progressive global interconnectedness. Cosmopolitanism, after all, involves the 'capacity to mediate between national cultures […] and alternative styles of life' encompassing 'the possibility of dialogue with the traditions and discourses of others' (Held, 'Culture' 57-58). Accordingly, David Held argues that only a cosmopolitan outlook can 'accommodate itself to [...] a more global era, marked by overlapping communities of fate' (57). Proposing a unified global culture merely strengthens the criticism that cosmopolitanism envisions an unrealistic (if well-intentioned) form of universal harmony that glosses over socioeconomic inequalities in favour of a Western vision of cultural homogenisation or assimilation. For this reason, many still perceive cosmopolitanism to remain a Western elitist paradigm sustaining and replicating ideals first espoused in colonial projects. The models of cosmopolitanism portrayed in the work of Mitchell, Cole and Kunzru are at odds with Western or idealised visions of a harmonious global culture, and challenge the cultural discrepancies governing the contemporary moment.

Globalisation is intimately tied up with contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism and the two terms complement one another in several ways. Roland Robertson defines globalisation as 'the compression of the world and the intensification of a consciousness of

the world as a whole' (8). This consciousness has a direct influence on the emergence of cosmopolitan orientations, activating new connectivities and complex forms of cultural belonging. As Paul Hopper argues, globalisation encourages and generates the rise of cosmopolitanism rather than merely reinforcing isolated nationalistic, parochial or ethnic frameworks: 'people in a global era can potentially foster attitudes and outlooks that transcend national boundaries. Greater geographical mobility ensures increased contact with different cultures, and greater familiarity might develop understanding, insight and even tolerance' (54). Globalisation, while not a natural catalyst for cosmopolitan dispositions, holds the *potential* to be a facilitator of cultural convergence, acting as a potent mechanism in the spread of ethical values, and opening established national allegiances or ethnic ties up to a more cosmopolitan ethos.

Through the penetration of global forces into local lives and landscapes, communities become shaped and defined by how they respond to cultural interdependence, leading Zygmunt Bauman to conclude that 'we are all being "globalized"' (1). In this regard, cosmopolitanism emerges as a *response* to globalisation. Following Walter D. Mignolo, the terms are distinguishable in that while globalisation concerns 'a set of designs to manage the world', cosmopolitanism specifically denotes 'a set of projects toward planetary conviviality' (721). Yet cosmopolitanism should not be perceived as a universal remedy to the troubles of globalisation, nor should a dichotomy exist between individual cosmopolitan agency on the one hand, and institutional frameworks for implementing global processes on the other. The various fictions examined in this study demonstrate how individuals and communities both resist and work *through* globalising processes, individually and institutionally, to define new ways of being in the world. Stuart Hall claims that such global interdependencies 'constitute a profoundly new historical moment. They may even constitute the moment when such a universal vision of belonging is

potentially realisable'; however, he appreciates that in the contemporary era interconnectedness is still based on a 'structure of global power, and therefore of global or transnational inequalities and conflicts rather than the basis of a benign cosmopolitanism' (345, 346). Globalisation will therefore be positioned as both an economic and cultural phenomenon, responsible for engendering an emergent convergence culture of mutual dependence, while simultaneously deepening radical inequalities of access. An awareness of cultural otherness understandably reveals the asymmetrical power relations governing globalised life. For this reason, Mike Featherstone is wary of positioning globalisation as synonymous with universalism. Conceptualising the globe as 'a single place' creates 'a sense of false concreteness and unity'; instead, global culture should involve 'heaps, congeries, and aggregates of cultural particularities juxtaposed together on the same field' (70). Linking the idea of universalism to globalisation implies a form of homogenisation which is antithetical to the cosmopolitan approach and neglects the heterogeneity of world cultural experience (often arising from active resistance to globalising processes). Globalisation is ultimately a complex process that leads to forms of exclusion and segregation as much as interconnection and integration. With this in mind, Childs and Green rightly argue that globalisation 'in literature is not best seen as an aesthetic representation of the universal in the local, but as a fiction staged against an awareness of the interconnected, interdependent, but unequal world' (*Ethics* 2). It is only by working through globalising discourses that cosmopolitanism may offer new outlooks on the twenty-first century condition, establishing new forms of personal and communal connectivity, from the local scales of daily life to the abstract levels of planetary togetherness.

Although cosmopolitanism is often perceived as a synonym for globalisation, Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider focus on the local/global dynamic to distinguish the

terms: globalisation occurs '"out there"', while cosmopolitanisation involves an internalisation of globalisation and 'happens "from within"' ('Unpacking' 389). Such internalisation enables cosmopolitanisation to operate as 'a non-linear, dialectical process in which the universal and the particular, the similar and the dissimilar, the global and the local are to be conceived, not as cultural polarities but as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles' (Beck, *Vision* 72-73). Beck emphasises that this dynamic interplay between the global and the local forces individuals to acknowledge 'the real, internal cosmopolitanization of their lifeworlds and institutions' (*Vision* 2). Despite this, the criticism remains that cosmopolitanism involves an apparent disregard for world citizens who are unable to participate in the globalised medium or for whom mobility is not an option. The works of Smith and Cole address this limitation by revealing contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism to be as intimately concerned with local contexts as much as transnational mobilities, interrogating pragmatic forms of engagement by non-elite citizens. Appropriately, Beck acknowledges that cosmopolitanisation reveals an awareness of 'the dynamics of global risks, of mobility and migration' engendered by an engagement with transnational concerns in localised settings ('Mobility' 27). For example, Cole's fiction reveals the ways by which local settings operate as microcosmic analogies for the global relations of the wider world. After all, as Homi Bhabha notes, a critical analysis of cosmopolitanism forces a re-evaluation of 'this location of locality whose every ebb and flow requires a re-inscription of global relations' ('Unsatisfied' 40). Crucially, however, borderlessness is not a necessary requirement for cosmopolitanisation, with many of the tensions and concerns raised as a direct result of nation-state allegiances or local ties. Rather, this study follows Robbins in perceiving cosmopolitanism to involve an inscription of '(re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance' ('Introduction' 3). What the fictions discussed in this study share is an embrace of wider connectivities,

operating alongside existing bonds, in formulating a sense of global belonging, and demonstrate the emergence of a critical cosmopolitan outlook that specifically interrogates assumptions regarding ethic heritage or racial grouping.

As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest, globalisation 'is not one thing, and the multiple processes that we recognize as globalization are not unified or univocal' (*Empire* xv). This study will therefore attempt to address the context-specific manifestations of globalising processes in the disparate fictions, questioning whether these forces foster a more cosmopolitan outlook – concerning a greater understanding and empathy for the lives of cultural others, coupled with an acknowledgement of the necessity for cross-border interdependencies – or create resistance towards wider allegiances and cultural attachments. While this study will follow Werbner in acknowledging that globalisation can be perceived as the '(mainly Western) spread of ideas and practices', and cosmopolitanism involves an inherent 'complicity with Western hegemony', it will be argued that contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism reflect an unprecedented moment whereby the formation of new cross-border dependencies and associations of peoples, goods and communications activates an ethical response to the lives of others ('Introduction' 2; 'Encounter' 49). Attempting to ostracise or ignore the fate of fellow citizens simply ensures their fates invariably become our own, and cultural relations are increasingly fostered through an awareness of inhabiting a shared, but not unified, world. Globalisation, then, 'has become central to understanding the complex transformations reshaping social, political, economic and cultural spheres at the beginning of the new century', and is integral to any discussion of cosmopolitan relationality in contemporary fiction (Childs and Green, *Ethics* 3). Moreover, globalisation is especially pertinent to any discussion of contemporary literature from Britain or the United States – elite nation-states

that are subject to unprecedented levels of globalisation and transnational mobilities.[4] As Inda and Rosaldo argue, 'the nation-states of the West have become homes to a host of diverse and sometimes incommensurable cultures […] They have developed into sites of extraordinary cultural heterogeneity' (23). Further, English is undoubtedly a global language, mirroring globalisation in its imposition of a unitary code constantly being adapted to specific cultures and localities, justifying this study's concentration on British and American fiction.

The cosmopolitan connectivities revealed in the work of David Mitchell and Philip Pullman correspond to Hardt and Negri's notion of the 'multitude': 'a network that provides the means of encounter so that we can work and live in common' (*Empire* xiv). In their two interrelated works, *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude* (2004), Hardt and Negri position the multitude as operating in opposition to dominant forms of globalisation and capitalist exploitation, which they term 'Empire'. While 'Empire' represents the rampant forces of Western homogenisation, the multitude is a counterforce offering a form of liberation through heterogeneity, being 'composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity' and offering 'different ways of living; different views of the world' (*Multitude* xiv). They acknowledge, however, that for many the notion of the multitude is arguably only applicable to the Western world 'and cannot apply to the subordinate regions in the global south: "You are really just elite philosophers from the global north pretending to speak for the entire world!"' (226). Yet by demonstrating how the multitude responds to non-elite concerns and practices, they reveal how the concept is composed of these new 'creative subjectivities' that arise as a result of

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[4] Drawing on empirical data from their 'Cosmopolitanism Index Rankings 2005' (based on levels of globalisation within nation-states), Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart suggest that established Anglo-American and Western European countries are the most 'cosmopolitan', while China and African nations imposed the most barriers to information flows (158-59).

globalisation, forming 'constellations of singularities and events that impose continual global reconfiguration on the system' (*Empire* 60). The challenge of realising the multitude thus reflects the challenges to cosmopolitanism itself. By addressing how non-elite migrant workers are complicit in and affect the global system, the contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism proposed in this study attempt to escape the worse charges of Western elitism, revealing how the interdependencies of the globalised world are beginning to override cultural inequalities and dominant power structures.[5]

As previously stated, the subversive potential of the multitude will be made most apparent in the fictions of Mitchell and Pullman, where individuals and communities find themselves directly at odds with destructive globalising processes and the forces of a metaphorical 'Empire'. It will also be argued that the inclusion of digital forms of migrancy and non-elite workforces in the fiction of Hari Kunzru strengthen this reconfiguration of Western hegemonic structures. Hardt and Negri position the internet as a prime 'model for the multitude because, first, the various nodes remain different but are all connected in the Web, and, second, the external boundaries of the network are open such that new nodes and new relationships can always be added' (*Multitude* xv). After all, globalisation concerns 'the creation of new circuits of cooperation and collaboration that stretch across nations and continents and allow an unlimited number of encounters' (xiii). This does not lead to a state of homogeneity, but rather 'provides the possibility that, while remaining different, we discover the commonality that enables us to communicate and act together' (xiii). Hardt and Negri emphasise that it is not enough to merely resist the worst

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[5] This study therefore echoes Emily Johansen's call for cosmopolitanism to move away from 'static binaries between privilege and marginalization', or between 'elite and subaltern subjects', to reflect interconnectedness between 'different cosmopolitan modalities and imagine emancipatory, nonhierarchial forms of global connection' (*Place* 3).

excesses of globalising forces, but rather 'to reorganize them and redirect them toward new ends' (*Empir*e xv).

Undoubtedly, one of the main factors in fostering cosmopolitan attachments is the rise in transnational mobilities as a direct consequence of globalisation. Vertovec defines transnationalism as 'the existence of communication and interactions of many kinds linking people and institutions across the borders of nation-states and, indeed, around the world', thereby problematising the overlapping relationship that exists between transnationalism, globalisation and cosmopolitanism ('Diaspora' 312). Cosmopolitanism should be distinguished from transnationalism, as the presence of transnational communities does not suggest the ethical ideals of cosmopolitanism are practised or promoted. Similarly, exposure to otherness and diversity through mobility is not an inevitable precursor to ethical engagement. There is instead a valid argument that transnational mobility merely results in the emergence of superficial cosmopolitan engagement, based on Western aesthetic spectatorship. We can term such actions 'faux-cosmopolitanism', to be grouped with the growth in tourism and business travel, merely expressing 'a kind of ersatz benevolence' by 'superimposing a wider, allegedly global culture on more local cultural practices' (van Hooft 11). Cosmopolitanism is also often conflated with mere multiculturalism, yet Annemarie Bodaar correctly differentiates the terms by suggesting that multiculturalism denotes rigid 'adherence to the culture of the group' whereas cosmopolitanism concerns the formation of 'loose and multiple' socio-cultural ties that exceed the fixed boundaries associated with ethnicity alone (171). While multiculturalism implies a form of homogeneity at the group level, cosmopolitanism explores heterogeneous forms of belonging both individually and culturally. Further, it will be argued that cosmopolitan outlooks are not the result of an allegiance to one territorial space, nor are they necessarily based on the idea of nomadism, because such a view

neglects the relevance and impact of belonging and place and suggests a privileged view from nowhere in particular. The issues, then, are not whether individuals are increasingly transnationally mobile, but whether such mobility is a catalyst in the formation of new connectivities and ethical subjectivities towards others, and the position the novels implicitly (or explicitly) take on this issue.

A key distinguishing feature of contemporary cosmopolitanism is the rapid acceleration of digital communicative technologies. The speed and immediacy with which digital technology now links the globalised world forges dialogues and connectivities that have no precedent. Such technologies reformulate global relations and lead to the construction of new virtual communities that are founded on non-corporeal connections and override geographical or cultural divides. Gavin Kendall, Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbiš support this claim, arguing that contemporary cosmopolitanism differs from classical cosmopolitanism because technology 'enables a vital dimension of the cosmopolitan experience – to move beyond the cosmopolitan imagination to enable active, direct engagement with other cultures' (1). Proponents of digital communication regard the internet as the means of promoting cultural understanding and awareness of otherness, forging connections between global citizens who will never meet face-to-face. However, through an analysis of Eggers and Kunzru's work, it will be argued that the globalising flows of digital connectivity simultaneously function as a new form of cultural imperialism, strengthening rather than reducing the global inequalities of twenty-first century life.

This study draws on the work of literary critics who have identified the relevance of cosmopolitanism to literary studies. Recent works by Amanda Anderson, Jessica Berman and Rebecca Walkowitz have examined the presence of philosophical cosmopolitanism

within nineteenth and twentieth-century literature.[6] However, none of these works confront

aspects of cosmopolitanism that are unique to the globalised present. Anderson, for

instance, explores a critical detachment unique to Victorian literature, while Berman

concentrates on alternative forms of community in modernist fiction, engendered by shared

experience and resistance to dominant patriarchal discourses. Walkowitz, on the other

hand, argues that late-twentieth century literary cosmopolitanism relies on 'emphasizing

detachment from local cultures and the interests of the nation' (9). This study will instead

argue that the analysis of the following contemporary fictions reflects the increasingly

networked structure of the globalised world. The intensification of socio-cultural

interconnectedness, transnational mobility and digital communication ensures globalised

life infringes upon, but does not remove the importance of, local experience. Imbuing

cosmopolitanism with these parochial, local and quotidian connotations is not antithetical

to use of the term itself – all spaces are now subject to, and offer the potential for,

cosmopolitan engagement.

　　　Berthold Schoene and Fiona McCulloch assume a more modern approach,

interrogating how British fictions respond to the contemporary moment. Schoene's *The*

Cosmopolitan Novel, for instance, focuses on Britain's 'imperial heritage', arguing that the

nation's historical complicity in imperialism and colonialism marks Britain as a prime

example of cosmopolitan cultural relations (*Novel* 7). He identifies authors as diverse as

Jon McGregor, Arundhati Roy and Ian McEwan to be indicative of this trend.

Concentrating on the importance of cosmopolitanism to nation-state paradigms, Schoene

recognises that narrative imaginings of global community in British fiction are increasingly

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[6] Amanda Anderson, *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment* (2001); Jessica Berman, *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Community* (2001); Rebecca Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism beyond the Nation* (2006).

localised and pragmatic, tending away from a reliance on utopian naiveties. His

cosmopolitan approach consequently avoids the postcolonial scepticism of more global

forms of cosmopolitan belonging. McCulloch, on the other hand, perceives globalisation to

strengthen ethical calls for a planetary togetherness that operates in opposition to ethnic,

feminist and environmental inequalities. She also provides a response to Schoene's work,

criticising his 'phallocratic' attempts to 'pin down and fix a definition to a concept that

should remain open to dynamic synergies' (going so far as to accuse both his authorial

choices and even his book cover of pandering to masculinity and anthropocentricism) (7).

McCulloch acknowledges that 'there is a glocal impetus to cosmopolitanism as each

localized community creates empathetic links beyond its own borders', marking a

movement away from more rootless forms of classical cosmopolitanism (8). While these

critics concentrate on contemporary British fiction alone, this study assumes a wider

perspective for cosmopolitan thinking, highlighting unique formulations of identity and

community in American fiction. Unlike Schoene, the following chapters avoid the

suggestion that the 'cosmopolitan novel' is a defined genre and simply identify fictions in

which cosmopolitan sentiments or philosophies are evident. This study will, however,

concur with Schoene's analysis in favouring a concentration on contemporary forms of

cosmopolitanism that are 'rooted in the realities of the present rather than mobilising for

the future fulfilment of any one or other set of utopian ideals' (*Novel* 10). In doing so,

cosmopolitanism may begin to possess a pragmatism that remains sensitive to the

decidedly unequal power structures governing cultural relations and the implausible notion

of global cosmopolitical harmony.

This study also attempts to situate cosmopolitanism outside of merely one literary

framework, such as modernism, thus definitively rejecting Walkowitz's supposition of a

supposed literary cosmopolitan 'style' which allegedly involves a certain 'attitude, stance,

posture, and consciousness' (2). Instead, cosmopolitan ideals and theory are readily identifiable in texts that could be classified as postcolonial or postmodern or even fantasy literature. As outlined earlier, cosmopolitanism is identifiable in several academic disciplines, yet in literary studies it is paradoxically considered as either the latest movement to capture the contemporary age, or merely the offspring of postmodern and postcolonial thought. This study will follow Childs and Green in arguing that 'new patterns of human interaction, interconnectedness and awareness' affect the 'form and content' of contemporary works marking 'a shift away from the preoccupations of postmodernism and the concerns raised by postcolonialism' (*Ethics* 4). These literary fields reveal themselves to be insufficient in capturing the radical changes shaping global society. As Richard Kostelanetz emphasises, '[p]ost' can be 'a petty prefix, both today and historically, for major movements are defined in their own terms, rather than by their relation to something else' (38). Literature, like other academic disciplines, must move beyond established paradigms and frameworks to find answers for the post-millennial state. Accordingly, Rob Wilson calls for an 'end of millennium [...] cosmopolitanism disgusted with legacies of imperialism and delusions of free-floating irony' (359). With this in mind, the positive etymological construction of cosmopolitanism becomes all the more essential and beneficial. Postcolonialism, specifically, is too exclusive and narrow to encompass the cosmopolitan perspective – we are not merely dealing with the domination of ethnic groups within a cultural context. The emergent forces of globalisation alone induce a 'complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer by understood in terms of existing center-periphery models' (Appadurai 32). Globalisation should certainly not be perceived as a mere continuation or expansion of colonialism, but as an unprecedented change in planetary connections through cultural interconnectedness and technological change, bringing an inherent restructuring of existing cultural relations and hierarchies.

That being said, it would be a mistake to ignore how cosmopolitanism involves some imitation of postmodern and postcolonial theory and often borrows from their critical vocabulary. It is more accurate to position contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism as reformulations of late-twentieth century postcolonial and postmodern schools of thought that explore new modes of interconnection to face the post-millennial world.

To prevent this study simply becoming a sociological review of the cultural processes of cosmopolitanism and globalisation, the following chapters provide a close reading of selected fictions which actively engage with, and assume widely diverse stances to, the concerns of cosmopolitanism (making the structure of this study a cosmopolitan enterprise in itself). After all, literature is suited to exploring the values and ideals of cosmopolitan thought. As Nussbaum argues, '[n]arratives, especially novels […] speak to the reader as a human being, not simply as a member of some local culture; and works of literature frequently cross cultural boundaries far more easily than works of religion and philosophy' (*Love's Knowledge* 391). The various forms of cosmopolitanism explored in the chosen novels reveal the multidimensionality of the concept, reactive and sensitive to geographical and cultural idiosyncrasies. Despite this, the following chapters do not exist in isolation, but interrelate with one another, fostering a unity in diversity and allowing a clear commonality to run throughout this study. Attention will be paid to the role of cosmopolitanism in activating global discourses and facilitating cross-cultural dialogue. Rather than responding to a classical conception of universal cosmopolitanism, the chosen novels demonstrate a sense of urgency in reacting to the contemporary moment and foreground the interplay between local and global contexts as the basis for a critical cosmopolitan commentary. As Boxall emphasises, in twenty-first century life local contexts 'persist stubbornly and violently within the global hegemon' (188). However, Dominic Head identifies that it is this very 'tension between the local and the global

implied in those opposed perspectives on cosmopolitanism [that] reveals the potential of

the concept in the historical moment of globalization' (147). This study will argue that the

intensification of global flows permeate localised experiences and lead to a rise in

transnational mobilities and networks of connectivity reflective of the contemporary

condition. The majority of the works examined are twenty-first century novels, with some

minor exceptions.[7] Despite their intrinsic diversity, the fictions are united in their response

to the cultural interconnectedness and globalising processes that have come to define

twenty-first century life. Notably, their diverse subject matter reflects the intrinsic

heterogeneity of contemporary British and American fiction, tackling issues as wide-

ranging as deterritorialisation, racial solidarity, digital migrant labour, trans-species

empathy, and posthuman futures.

Robert Eaglestone identifies that 'the communities of which each of us feels a part,

is central to understanding the contemporary novel'; as a result, this may require a 'general

rethinking of what "we" means' (4, 105). The following fictions demonstrate a willingness

to forge new and intensified dialogues between local experience and global concerns. They

imagine new cosmopolitan modes of belonging and the development of an emergent global

consciousness founded on the cross-cultural interdependencies of the increasingly

interconnected world. In order to demonstrate the multidimensionality of the term, this

study will examine narrative spatialities that range from the local to the universal – from

the London suburbs of Zadie Smith to the multiple worlds of Philip Pullman. In so doing,

this study will propose that the disparate fictions cohere in addressing how the

contemporary moment requires a critical cosmopolitanism that operates as 'an ethos of

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[7] David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* was published in 1999, and the first two instalments of
Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy were released in 1995 and 1997, respectively.

macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness [...] of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates' (Rabinow 258).

Chapter 1 sets the tone for the remainder of this study by interrogating the planetary fiction of David Mitchell. As the introduction has theorised, the globalised condition requires an entirely novel form of narrative representation, accurately reflecting the experience of individuals existing as constituent members of an interconnected global community. Mitchell goes further than the other authors examined in this study by incorporating these concerns into the very structural and aesthetic fabric of his fiction and thereby offering a new direction for the twenty-first century novel. Rita Barnard categories such fictions that involve 'human interconnection, causality, temporality, social space' as 'global' novels, which may 'provide the conceptual preconditions for a cosmopolitan society' (208). The convergence culture of globalisation has led Mitchell to explore the interdependence of narrative identities, in which individuals' lives are bound up and integrated into the lives of others. His novels demonstrate the everyday conflict, fluidity and dialectics between self and others that are subject to diverse and crossed readings – often leading to contradictory interpretations of narrative events.

While Mitchell's debut novel, *Ghostwritten*, explores the cosmopolitanisation of global space, it simultaneously avoids positioning the world as an illusory and unified whole. As Eaglestone notes, the 'risk of globalization is that it makes people feel not connected to each other in a cosmopolitan world, but, instead, feel redundant as human beings in the face of huge impersonal global forces' (68). *Ghostwritten* is constructed around this very paradox. The inexorable interpenetration of transnational lives in a globalised world threatens the progressive potential of interconnection itself – globalisation begins to actively dismantle localised forms of territorial belonging. The interlinked narratives question the extent to which globalisation emerges 'from the centers of the

West, pushing other alternatives out of existence' and proves to be increasingly responsible for the erosion of cultural diversity and territorial heterogeneity (Hannerz, *Transnational* 24). Although the twenty-first century is increasingly characterised by what Held would term 'overlapping communities of fate', whereby actions in one part of the world have direct consequences on other cultures and communities, that is not to say that globalisation has reached an end-point ('Culture' 57). Rather, globalisation continues to shape and infringe upon separate localities to differing degrees of influence, resulting in some cultures and communities becoming implicated in the spread of Western homogenisation, while others become disenfranchised as external forces infiltrate and destabilise localised territorial belonging. As Schoene argues, Mitchell's fiction depicts contemporary life as being 'marked by global connectivity and virtual proximity as much as psycho-geographical detachment and xenophobic segregation' (*Novel* 98). By acknowledging an inherent anti-globalisation critique in the narrative, this first chapter will argue that the interrelated threats of terrorism, ecological disaster and cultural homogeneity both engender and restrict the emergence of a cosmopolitan outlook amongst global citizens.

Correspondingly, the generational-spanning narratives of *Cloud Atlas* serve to contradict Held's lament that there is 'no simple common global pool of memories, no common global way of thinking, and no "universal history" in and through which people can unite' ('Culture' 56). Rather, the novel imagines a cosmopolitan consciousness that exists across temporal and spatial divides in order to suggest the human potential for active cooperation and collaboration. By forging transnational attachments across history, Mitchell imbues globalisation with an historical dimension, linking its destructive processes to periods of imperialism and colonial rule. This sense of global history in the novel supports Robert J. Holton's rejection of the claim that 'cosmopolitanization and the cosmopolitan outlook are essentially very recent phenomena' (and thus strengthens the

argument that cosmopolitanism should not be perceived as either a contemporary literary genre or unique to any historical period) (81). The trans-temporal narratives position the cosmopolitan outlook and active ethical agency to operate in opposition to humanity's inherent capacity for predacity and rapaciousness. In this way, *Cloud Atlas* interrogates whether the global multitude may resist an approaching planetary finitude and reimagine a more progressive future. The importance of the cosmopolitanised world lies in its imagination for ethical practices to be a catalyst for socio-cultural progression. The chapter will consequently follow Nigel Rapport and Vered Amit in arguing that cosmopolitanism remains distinct from related models of 'multiculturalism' or 'globalism' by both 'inscribing the human' and indicating 'a future project' (xi). And yet, neither *Cloud Atlas* nor *Ghostwritten* suggest a global *borderless* future or a dismantling of the nation-state system. Instead, the novels suggest that planetary connectivity may lead to, or provoke, the re-emergence of national frameworks as the specificity of local concerns and histories proves incompatible with the brute force of latticed global networks. In this sense, the novels reflect James Clifford's notion of 'discrepant cosmopolitanisms' by which an individual enjoys a 'continuum of sociospatial attachments', which can 'extend from local valleys and neighborhoods to denser urban sites' and from 'national communities tied to a territory to affiliations across borders and oceans'; in such diverse environments, disparate individuals attempt to survive and 'articulate locally meaningful, relational futures' (367). By demonstrating an acute sensitivity to the positive and negative effects of globalisation, Mitchell interrogates the feasibility of fashioning realistic cosmopolitan futures from fragmentary pasts. The chapter will therefore conclude by acknowledging how 'global risks can sharpen normative consciousness, generate global publics and promote a cosmopolitan outlook', while acknowledging that unprecedented levels of cultural

connectivity and awareness of global inequalities are tempered by an exacerbated cultural homogeneity (Beck and Sznaider, 'Unpacking' 391).

Chapters 2 and 3 introduce the notion of a 'localised cosmopolitanism', suggesting that cosmopolitan engagement should not necessarily be restricted to cross-border processes or concern transnational relations with the wider world. As Schoene argues, 'there is no world that does not commence at home, taking shape from one's own singular emergence in the interplay with others' (*Novel* 130). The works of Smith and Cole contradict the assumption that transnational mobility is a direct facilitator of cosmopolitanism itself. As Owen B. Sichone identifies, to claim that transnational mobility alone should be a prime indicator of cosmopolitanism neglects 'the immobile 97 per cent of the global population that never leaves home' (313). It is therefore necessary to examine how the cosmopolitanisation of space both affects localised experience and corrects Hannerz's erroneous distinction between 'cosmopolitans' and 'locals' (*Transnational* 102). By emphasising the importance of territorial belonging over cultural detachment in a borderless world, the interrelated chapters suggest the cautious pragmatism and realisable designs of contemporary cosmopolitanism.

Chapter 2 examines notions of localised engagement and the ethics of hospitality in Zadie Smith's *NW*. In comparison to the multicultural optimism and millennial naivety of her debut novel, *White Teeth* (2000), the chapter will suggest that *NW* is an affirming work which captures the new realities of urban life in London following the terrorist atrocities of 7/7. Drawing on Smith's own comments regarding race, community and transnationalism, the chapter will reveal autobiographical tendencies in her fictional experiences of urban space. *NW* questions shared local belonging in an environment of intense ethnic diversity, and promotes a concentration on social capital as a means of fostering tolerance and cohesion within society. The transnational nature of this fictional London places Smith in

line with a wider movement of contemporary novelists who, as Philip Tew claims, are envisioning the 'British scene [as] a globalized locality' (*British* x). The novel consequently evokes Paul Gilroy's notion of cosmopolitan conviviality, concerning 'the process of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities everywhere' (*Empire* xi). The chapter will initially concentrate on the characters of Leah Hanwell and Felix Cooper, interrogating the feasibility of practising cosmopolitan empathy in a contemporary urban environment. Smith offers a critical commentary on fragmentary atomised life in the capital and points towards a more erudite form of community that moves beyond merely ethnic or territorial concerns. As David Marcus argues, Smith is a member of a new generation of novelists who map out 'more local, more empowering connections', detailing 'those rare, fragile moments of contact – those brief human intersections that remind us that while we are all each desperately unknowable and alone we are also in this together' (n.pag.). The chapter will then proceed to examine the self-imposed emotionless detachment of Natalie Blake, a high-powered lawyer, demonstrating how easily communal attachments may be destabilised by individual attempts at disassociation. Natalie's personal trajectory will be said to complement Smith's own reading of her novel: 'to get ahead somebody else has to lose' ('Guardian Book Club' n.pag.). By entwining the complementary concerns of: '[g]lobal consciousness. Local consciousness. Consciousness', the novel acknowledges the wider racial and socioeconomic tensions existing in the capital, suggesting the cosmopolitan values of empathy and hospitality to be a productive form of social capital in overcoming these tensions (*NW* 221).

Chapter 3 will continue a specific focus on localised engagement and alternative forms of cultural agency in Teju Cole's *Open City*. The chapter will also explore questions of racial solidarity and the subversion of cultural identification, arguing that the novel

offers a more complex vision of multicultural community based on negotiation and compromise. *Open City* revolves around the day-to-day experiences of the Nigerian-German protagonist Julius, who leads a detached and isolated life in his New York neighbourhood. Through a series of frequent walks across the social spaces of the city, Julius encounters various characters who have developed homogenising strategies to construct a form of ethnic solidarity in light of their non-elite status. Their attempts to generalise Julius's ethnicity and identity (and assimilate it with their own), cause him to reject any form of cultural categorisation, demonstrating how cosmopolitan values are often easily destabilised by personal antipathy or idiosyncratic reasoning. As Ayse Caglar rightly claims, cosmopolitan ties are 'not necessarily ethnic' (180). Julius's urban flâneurism symbolises his resistance to ethnicity as a marker of individuality, and reflects how cosmopolitanism differs from multiculturalism through this freedom from group identification. Moving away from Smith's concentration on an urban locality, the novel explores the global pathways by which non-elite citizens are enveloped by the processes of globalisation. The cosmopolitical commentary of *Open City* specifically demonstrates how, in the wake of 9/11, immigrants and other marginalised subjects negotiate their identities and allegiances in the West, while acknowledging the means by which processes of globalisation force a confrontation with the unassailable concerns of race and cultural difference. More than any other work in this study, *Open City* problematises the ideals of cosmopolitanism in a post-9/11 context, suggesting that human rights inequalities and the persistence of cultural exclusion are setbacks (or at least regressive tendencies) to the implementation of active ethical agency. In doing so, the novel interrogates the geopolitics and power relations surrounding migration, revealing who belongs and who is excluded from Western life. Julius's exploration of the sites of Ground Zero and Ellis Island force an inescapable confrontation with his ethnic identity, and indicate that cultural

interdependence and cross-border movements operate along historical trajectories. The negotiation of these tensions necessitates a critical commentary on cosmopolitanism that acknowledges the limitations in forging ethical connections with others in a radically unequal world. The fictions of Smith and Cole ground cosmopolitanism in realistic urban environments, and reveal visible traces of cultural connection in global cities and their locales. They demonstrate how ethical ideals can arise at the most micro-levels of society, and detail the strategies of ordinary citizens to bridge divides with cultural others. The two related chapters therefore suggest that a cosmopolitan approach does not necessarily operate in opposition to local experiences or local landscapes, and in this sense deviate away from more universalist paradigms.

Chapters 4 and 5 will attempt to expand the cosmopolitan framework, paying attention to the relevance of digital communication to globalising processes and the imaginative function of literature, respectively. The chapters will therefore address Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbiš's claim that 'mobilities may be imaginative and virtual, as much as they are corporeal' (128). Chapter 4 focuses on the relevance of digital technology to new frameworks of cosmopolitanism and its effects on twenty-first century life. Although the proliferation of digital technology possesses the unprecedented potential to activate awareness of the lives of global others, it is easily manipulated and abused for corporate gain. Digital technology is often responsible for the closing down, rather than the spread, of cosmopolitan communication. The first half of the chapter concerns dystopic visions of the near-future in Dave Eggers's *The Circle*. Eggers emphasises the need for cosmopolitan ideals to combat the insidious nature of digital communication, positioning technology as merely the newest form of Western imperialism. The novel questions whether the unbounded nature of digital networks encourages the spread of ethical values, or simply hinders their development by mediating intercultural communication. The desire

for global interconnectedness is exploited by the Circle, the world's largest technology company, as the means of implementing dangerous forms of social control. Although the Circle seemingly advocates the cosmopolitan ideals of diversity and openness, through the creation of a 'Unified Operating System' the company begins to exploit the participatory culture of digital engagement (*TC* 20). The unprecedented power of the internet is harnessed by corporate forces to pursue a totalitarian form of surveillance, while governmental structures are progressively weakened by Western imperialism. The novel interrogates the cosmopolitical battles of the digital realm, and suggests that humanity's awareness of global otherness does not necessarily increase its capacity for cultural empathy. Drawing on current debates regarding the emancipatory potential of digital communication, the chapter will demonstrate how Eggers confronts the emerging challenges to a global society governed by hegemonic corporate forces and questions the potential for cosmopolitan ideals in a world of digital flows.

The second half of Chapter 4 strengthens this fear of cultural homogeneity, focusing on the global inequalities arising from digital connectivity in Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*. Whereas in *The Circle* digital technology operates as the tool of the elite, enforcing the dominant ideology of Western globalisation, in *Transmission* a digital virus subverts and disrupts Western systems as an instrument of the marginalised protagonist, Arjun Mehta. Arjun's virus, operating as 'the revenge of the uncontrollable world', demonstrates the emancipatory potential of digital technology as a form of cultural resistance (*T* 159). Like David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten*, *Transmission* presents a vision of millenarian society under unprecedented globalisation, spanning transnational borders and interrogating the limits of technological networking. By acknowledging the continued importance of racial and national identities to the contemporary moment, the narrative charts the dislocation of migrants by the globalising power-structure of a transnational

digital corporation. The exploitation of Arjun as a form of disposable labour suggests that heightened awareness of global others has not resulted in a weakening of cultural asymmetry; rather, global discrimination has merely been transferred into the digital realm. The convergence culture in the twenty-first century may be increasingly interdependent, yet vast inequalities persist. Digital corporations and their online practices emerge as a form of Western domination, being blind or merely insensitive to the external constraints of non-Western others. The second half of the chapter will therefore question to what extent contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism remain Western elite paradigms, and demonstrate how *Transmission* provides a contrast to *The Circle* by offering an *outsider* perspective of American globalisation. Although global communication channels now penetrate nearly all communities, from the largest metropolis to the remotest village, *Transmission* suggests such digital connections do not render geographical territories obsolete. Digital communication should ideally empower localities, welcoming them into an interconnected and interdependent network, but Kunzru's narrative emphasises that instead it can often lead to cultural dislocation, personal isolation, and homogenisation of local concerns and values. The chapter will conclude by emphasising that the digital merely underscores the borders between those global citizens who belong and those who are excluded from elite cultural spaces. In this sense, parallels may be drawn between the fictions of Kunzru and Cole, who recognise how non-elite transnational migrants negotiate new identities and develop new models for cosmopolitanism that tend away from the focus on Western mobile elites. *Open City* and *Transmission* indicate the persistence of diaspora nationalism, concerning the maintenance of localised ethnic attachments in the face of hegemonising globalisation. Both novels suggest that the study of cosmopolitanism needs to acknowledge non-Western, discrepant, unprivileged cosmopolitanisms that operate against, and exist independently of, Western discourses of elite global power.

According to Childs and Green, 'the intensification of global interconnectedness spawns a diverse constellation of worlds that may be inhabited simultaneously' (*Ethics* 11). Drawing on this idea, the final chapter extends the framework of cosmopolitanism to imagine how individuals not only function as citizens of the world, but citizens of the *cosmos*. The specific focus on trans-species cosmopolitanism in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy forces us to radically recast our understanding of coexisting with otherness, and brings to mind Pheng Cheah's description of cosmopolitan literature as exploring 'the non-human other in us', suggesting that 'quivering beneath the surface of the existing world are other worlds to come' (38). Cosmopolitanism, after all, embraces a recognition and acceptance of the other and the unknown. The radically heterogeneous communities that emerge in the trilogy facilitate a social, almost utopian, ecology, founded on an altruistic, humanistic and moral optimism, in order to resist and transform universal hegemonic discourses of power. Trans-species beings come to symbolise the plight of refugees or displaced migrants, forced to engage in acts of territorial resistance towards homogenising influences. However, despite the fantastical format, the trilogy maintains a consistent dialogue with the realities of the contemporary world; the separate universes of *His Dark Materials* function as an analogy for nation-state frameworks, as cultural convergence forces planetary citizens to re-evaluate their identity and belonging. Just as Beck identifies that the 'cosmopolitan project both entails the national project and extends it', by the same token the trilogy suggests that locally relational attachments and loyalties can be imaginatively extended to trans-universal responsibilities ('Sociology' 75). The trilogy echoes the work of Mitchell in touching upon a related trend within twenty-first century fiction, alerting readers to the threat of planetary destruction (as an implied allegory for the accelerating present) due to technological or ecological apocalypse. Drawing on personal statements made by Pullman, the chapter will suggest that the

environmental ethics of the narrative reflect Pullman's own cautious optimism regarding humanity's future.

Although *His Dark Materials* initially pursues the somewhat utopian cosmopolitan vision of universal justice and human rights for all beings, the trilogy gradually posits a more realistic vision for establishing institutional frameworks built upon a viable cosmopolitanism. In so doing, *His Dark Materials* recalls Hardt and Negri's notion of a global 'multitude' operating in opposition to a homogenous 'Empire', allowing Pullman's fiction to reveal a cosmopolitical narrative imagination that seeks to establish socio-cultural relationships across spatial settings and empower progressive movements for ethical change. The chapter will draw on political designs for cosmopolitical forms of democracy, most notably those of political sociologists David Held and Daniele Archibugi. Such designs involve increased participation in political institutions, especially those which operate across established borders. Cosmopolitan democracy suggests that the processes of globalisation have delimited the capacity of states to control their futures or even their social relations with others. Held proposes that in a 'highly interconnected world, "others" include not just those found in the immediate community, but all those whose fates are interlocked in networks of economic, political and environmental interaction' (*Global Order* 228). As a result, this situation entails 'mutual acknowledgements of, and respect for, the equal rights of others to pursue their own projects and life plans' (228). *His Dark Materials* endorses a corresponding restructuring of socio-cultural relations to respond to the emergent radical otherness of trans-species interdependence. The analysis of Pullman's trilogy marks a break with the earlier chapters of this study, moving beyond the purview of the individual towards an interrogation of how ethical ideals operate at an institutional level; cosmopolitanism, after all, concerns the project of implementing and realising forms of global governance driven by ethical

altruism and responsibility. Although the cosmopolitical democracy that emerges towards the end of the trilogy ostensibly promotes universal equality, it will be shown to fall prey to the egocentrism and hierarchical structuring of the original ruling system, betraying the fragility of universalising practices. The chapter will therefore argue that the trilogy ultimately rejects hegemonic institution-building and echoes Braidotti, Blaagaard and Hanafin in calling for a contemporary cosmopolitanism that 'should be concerned with world-making in an open process of interaction and communication between individuals', which can 'only be achieved from below as a collective practice that takes place locally and relationally' (4, 5).

This critical approach to contemporary fiction acknowledges that the rise of global risks, within a climate of xenophobic tension and nationalism, weaken calls for more progressive and productive forms of harmonious global interconnectedness. This study naturally remains sceptical of the more utopian cosmopolitan paradigms and political naiveties surrounding global discourse. Working through cosmopolitanism's shortcomings and connotations of Western elitism, the following chapters display how the chosen authors reconfigure the term in various ways and demonstrate its functionality in responding to present socio-cultural and ethno-political realities. For example, Pullman's *His Dark Materials* will be shown to reveal an emergent and affirmative cosmopolitics that moves beyond utopian idealism by acknowledging an awareness of heterogeneous perspectives and vast inequalities governing cultural relations; indeed, heterogeneity and difference become a staple of the contemporary condition and offer new possibilities for the literary cosmopolitan imagination. The chosen authors also construct new critical frameworks for identifying connections between local cultures and the globalised world at large, forming a stance towards ethical relationality and cultural diversity. Mitchell's fiction, the starting point for this study of British and American fiction, displays an

awareness of complex globality while simultaneously emphasising the continuing relevance of locally relational attachments. In so doing, his novels demonstrate literature's capacity to explore alternative reconfigurations of planetary community and indicate how contemporary cosmopolitanism can emerge as more than 'an end point, a hallelujah moment for social scientists trying to conceptualise a better society' and instead become a 'process' of pragmatic engagement in responding to individual and collective threats confronting the contemporary moment (Skrbiš and Woodward x). Through a close reading of these diverse and complementary fictions, then, this study demonstrates how the chosen authors confront the cosmopolitical interconnectedness of a globalised world. The first chapter will now begin by examining the fiction of Mitchell to demonstrate his attentiveness to the global connectivity of the contemporary moment.

Chapter 1: 'A Multitude of Drops': The Global Imaginaries of David Mitchell

'The novel might now be beginning to adapt and renew itself by imagining the world instead of the nation' (Schoene, *Novel* 43).

'The fiction of the new century has been involved in the shaping of what might be thought of as a new kind of global consciousness' (Boxall 168).

In an interview for the Sydney Writers' Festival in 2011, David Mitchell acknowledged that the contemporary moment was characterised by an emergent interconnectedness, noting how global interdependencies permeate his own fiction: 'the world is a web' where islands become 'fewer and fewer' and 'links become more apparent [...] A button can be pushed in Hong Kong and a factory gets closed in Sydney' ('Thousand Styles' n.pag.). In *Ghostwritten: A Novel in Nine Parts*, Mitchell envisions a world culture living under the effects of millennial globalisation, and examines how these processes forge new global forms of belonging, interconnection and cultural awareness. *Cloud Atlas*, by comparison, imagines a temporally fluid global network in which cosmopolitan values grapple and contend with an innate human rapaciousness.[8] Mitchell emphasises that this cultural contestation operates at multiple scales of global society: 'tribes on tribes, countries upon smaller states, individuals on weaker individuals' ('Thousand Styles' n.pag.). *Cloud Atlas* speculates on both the contemporary fragile state of society, and potential utopian or dystopian post-apocalyptic futures, envisioning humanity to be caught in an entropic cyclicality which is fated to repeat itself unless ethical steps are taken to offer an escape route away from the past. In this sense, the novel will be said to embrace Katherine Stanton's claim that cosmopolitan fiction embraces 'forward-looking and future-oriented

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[8] Mitchell stated that when writing the novel he considered how the 'ethical distance from good to evil can be crossed creepingly, by a long series of small steps. As a human being, I believe that this series of steps must be understood' ('Art of Fiction' n.pag.).

impulses' (81). By interrogating the intersection of the local and the global in *Ghostwritten* (as well as the balance between micro and macro-level processes), the first half of this chapter will question whether globalising processes undermine and threaten traditional cultures and ways of life, or whether a glocal environment is formed, reflecting the communal and ethical possibilities of a cosmopolitan borderless world. The second half of the chapter will then argue that the cosmopolitical crises of *Ghostwritten* are given a sense of historical continuity in *Cloud Atlas*, examining whether cultural homogenisation obstructs progressive forms of cultural connectivity.

According to Sarah Dillon, in *Ghostwritten* Mitchell purposely and systematically twins the 'microscopic repetition of motifs and phrases' with 'the macroscopic repetition and intersection of characters and themes' to indicate the links between the novel's textual structure and authorial message of global connectivity ('Chaotic' 137). Certainly, the intratextuality of the novel is the driving force for narrative synthesis as globalising processes are incorporated into the everyday experience of diverse individuals; in forcing characters to penetrate the lives of related others and ensuring individual trajectories seep into interdependent narratives, *Ghostwritten* destabilises heterogeneous localities and existing modes of belonging. The title of the novel itself betrays how the complex infringement of local and global flows influence and shape cultural connectivities: '[w]e all think we're in control of our own lives, but really they're pre-ghostwritten by forces around us' (*GW* 296). To emphasise the convergence of such disparate cultures, the nine interconnected narratives are set in different geographical locations around the globe, ranging from Tokyo to Russia to Western Ireland. Mitchell rejects a linear narrative in favour of synchronous narratives which progressively coincide with one another, allowing the novel to reflect the interdependencies of the globalised world, interrogate the politics of

cultural diffusion, and demonstrate Mitchell's talents for multicultural ventriloquism.[9]

Further, as Mitchell acknowledges, '[t]he far-flung locations' of the narrative allow him to

'test-drive this interconnected novel about interconnection more strenuously'

('McWeeney' n.pag.). By examining the cosmopolitics of the post-millennial world across

an ever-shifting narratorial landscape, the novel promotes the implementation of active

ethical agency and positions cosmopolitanism as a corrective to what Mitchell sees as the

worst traits of Western globalisation. The two processes of cosmopolitanism and

globalisation are united by the promise and threat of cultural interdependence – a vast

ocean of crisscrossing lives mingling and interconnecting in an increasingly transnational

world. The penetration of localised experience by unprecedented global forces in the

contemporary moment suggests, for Mitchell, that the global and local no longer exist in a

Manichean opposition (if, indeed, they ever did), but are interrelated concepts through

which to analyse the fragility of the post-millennial world.

Mitchell's fiction envisions the extent to which 'developments at the local level [...]

can acquire almost instantaneous global consequences' transforming the contemporary

environment into 'an extraordinary potential space for human development as well as for

disruption and destruction by individuals, groups or states' (Held, 'Reframing' 296). The

dynamic interplay and synergy of local and global processes in the novel provides the

means by the contemporary moment can be realised. Through the construction of a global

narrative structure and concentration on world cultures, Mitchell emerges as a new breed

of author who imagines an isomorphic relationship between nations and resists the

demarcation of the global landscape into unconnected zones of influence, instead

emphasising how the individual trajectories of global citizens expose the porosity of

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[9] There are countless examples of characters intertextually referencing both their fellow
narrators and related geographical locations in the novel. See Dillon 'Chaotic Narrative'.

nation-states. And yet, the trans-territorial polyphonic narrative reveals the contemporary moment to not only be marked by global interconnectedness, but vast socio-economic discrepancies and the uprooting of citizens and communities. In this way, *Ghostwritten* supports Beck's notion of the 'cosmopolitanization of reality', by which an individual's life becomes 'part of another world, of foreign cultures, religions, histories and global interdependencies', connecting nation-states (*Vision* 19). An escalation of interconnected crises in the novel's global system suggests that globalisation exposes the instabilities and limitations of progressive and egalitarian transnational engagement. In examining how local interdependencies and ethical values struggle against the dislocating effects of globalising practices, the architectural structure of the narrative betrays this tenuous balance between cosmopolitan connectivity and social fragmentation and catastrophe.

Global Terrorism and Anti-Cosmopolitan Connectivities

'The everyday experience of cosmopolitan interdependence is not a mutual love affair. It arises in a climate of heightened global threats, which create an avoidable pressure to co-operate' (Beck and Sznaider, 'Unpacking' 392).

The opening chapter of *Ghostwritten* establishes a counter-argument to progressive notions of global interconnection by parodying the real-life 1995 sarin-gas terrorist attack in Tokyo by the Aum Shinrikyo cult. Keisuke, a young cult member codenamed Quasar, is charged with the task of conducting the attack on the Tokyo Underground. The terrorist atrocity occurs as a form of ethno-political resistance to cultural Westernisation engendered by the homogenising force of neoliberal globalisation. Terrorism, as Anthony Giddens identifies, is 'the dark side of globalisation', operating in response to the imposition of conflicting cultures and ideologies (xvi). As a disempowered Japanese male, Keisuke feels 'betrayed

by a society evolving into markets for Disney and McDonalds', perceiving Okinawa to have become 'a squalid apology for a fiefdom, squabbled over by masters far beyond its curved horizons' (*GW* 8, 28). Immediately, Mitchell forces an acknowledgement of the dislocating power of globalisation, destabilising rather than fostering forms of cultural connectivity. Globalising processes in the narrative not only result in a new awareness and consciousness of global interconnection, but increasing levels of cultural homogenisation. Throughout the novel as a whole, Mitchell employs intertextual repetition to establish how globalisation is responsible for cities becoming architecturally identical and homogenised: '[t]he same shops are anywhere else...Burger King, Benetton, Nike...High streets are becoming the same all over the world'; Keisuke is effectively relegated to wandering the 'backstreets' of his own city (*GW* 12).

To combat the imposition of Western forces, the Aum Shinrikyo terrorists utilise globalising processes for their own means and instigate a conflict of civilisations between East and West. The opening chapter echoes Giddens's assertion that contemporary globalisation is resulting in a 'clash between a cosmopolitan outlook and fundamentalism' (48). He goes on to predict that the 'battleground of the twenty-first century will pit fundamentalism against cosmopolitan tolerance' (4). Fundamentalists such as Keisuke are the manifestation of anti-cosmopolitan tendencies, considering those who embrace other cultures to be 'unclean', betraying nationalist loyalties and rejecting parochial identities (*GW* 3). According to Stan van Hooft, radical fundamentalism 'condemns what it disapproves of out of moralistic indignation rather than out of compassion for the victims of the condemned practices', leading fundamentalists to assume 'an absolute view of moral [...] matters and find it impossible to accept practices and beliefs that are different from their own' (167, 166-67). Fundamentalism therefore acts in direct opposition to cosmopolitanism's empathetic identification with the lives of others. By believing his

attacks will allow the 'Fellowship of Humanity' to 'gather together on a purer island' of borderless utopia, Keisuke mistakenly identifies the cult's terrorism to be the ethical means of reversing the encroachment of Western power: '[w]e are finding fertile soil in foreign lands [...] This is inevitable, future reality. How do you feel, newest child of our nation without borders, without suffering?' (*GW* 25, 9). And yet, by introducing events in the narrative from the subjectivity of a terrorist, the novel simultaneously attempts to cultivate an understanding of differing cosmopolitical opinions and commit to a sense of cultural pluralism. Further, such multiperspectival narration reveals how anti-cosmopolitan tendencies, practised by global terrorist organisations, function through the same transnational connectivities that foster progressive cosmopolitan engagement. After committing the atrocity, Keisuke flees to an outlying island, Kumejima, and is provided with sanctuary. Yet despite being subject to the cosmopolitan values of hospitality and openness, Keisuke maintains that the world has become a 'sick zoo' beyond repair and retreats into a personal and increasingly paranoid isolation while the Japanese authorities track his location (*GW* 22). Keisuke's cult leaders take advantage of his gullible nature, providing him with a fake number to call in case of such emergencies. Unbeknownst to Keisuke, the number belongs to a record store in Tokyo, allowing Keisuke's narrative to seep into the second chapter of the novel. The phone call functions as a narrative catalyst (distracting a store employee, Satoru, from leaving work at the end of the day, enabling him to meet his future girlfriend Tomoyo, a student from Hong Kong), and sets in motion a chain of interrelated events for each successive narrator: 'if that phone hadn't rung at that

moment, and if I hadn't taken the decision to go back and answer it, then everything that happened afterwards wouldn't have happened' (*GW* 54).[10]

The Global Disenfranchised

'A world in which communities are neatly hived off from one another seems no longer a serious option' (Appiah, *Ethics* xviii).

The fourth chapter, 'The Holy Mountain', is focalised through the perspective of an elderly tea-shack owner who has witnessed the recurrence of repressive regimes in the turbulent era of contemporary China, from the brutal implementation of Chairman Mao's communist modernisation, to the feudal wars of regional warlords, to the advancement of Deng Xiapong's economic reforms.[11] Xiapong notably introduced socioeconomic policies that opened China's borders to the world in 1978, desiring his nation to benefit from global economic interdependence – a policy based on the slogan '[t]o Become Rich is Glorious!' – yet such integration exposes China's susceptibility to economic recession (*GW* 144). The implementation of modernisation programmes designed to benefit the party-state instead merely produce a destabilised citizenry and the exacerbation of cultural power differentials. By remaining ignorant of and detached from outside influence, the old woman of the Holy Mountain (who, tellingly, remains unnamed) is a passive victim in the socio-political cosmopolitanisation of her locality. Although the old woman perceives her mountain to be the whole world, even claiming a foreigner owns a 'broken map', the

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[10] In an interview following the release of the novel, Mitchell confirmed this global risk butterfly-effect, stating that there is 'one action in each of the stories that makes the succeeding story possible [...] a macro plot between the covers, over and above the micro plot between the beginnings and endings of the chapters' ('Secret' n.pag.).

[11] The narrative cyclicality prefigures the repetition of historical world events that re-emerge in *Cloud Atlas*: 'On the Holy Mountain, all the yesterdays and tomorrows spin around again sooner or later' (*GW* 113).

penetration of capitalist, neo-liberal forces into her localised experience forces an
acknowledgement of global interdependence and the necessity for transnational
engagement: 'somebody called Russia, somebody else called Europe [...] What world had
these men come from?' (*GW* 135, 115). The presence of a radio on the mountain, a
signifier of the communicative power of globalisation, penetrating the geographically-
secluded locality, compounds the old woman's sense of disorientation and emits
disembodied voices of cultural others from 'beyond the Valley, where the world is less
real' (*GW* 119). The Holy Mountain, isolated at the periphery of globalised culture,
functions as a site of cultural immobility in an accelerating world of global mobilities.
After all, as John Tomlinson notes, 'the paradigmatic experience of global modernity for
most people [...] is that of staying in one place but experiencing the "displacement" that
global modernity *brings to them*' (9). The old woman's chapter echoes the cultural fears of
the terrorist Keisuke, identifying and questioning non-Western discontent with
globalisation through an exploration of the destruction and displacement of local identities,
values and customs. The economic urbanisation of the mountain and its outlying areas
ensures local communities are consistently undermined and devoid of social connection – a
specific instance of globalisation's innate capacity to dehumanise individuals and
communities both economically and culturally, depriving citizens of locally relational ties
and forms of cultural belonging.

Over the course of her life the tea shack is attacked, raided and destroyed by
cultural others, only for the old woman to retain pride in her locality and practice
forgiveness to the perpetrators, rebuilding the shack herself: 'forgiveness is vital to life
[…] Not for the well-being of the forgiven, though, but the well-being of the forgiver' (*GW*
147). At various points in the chapter the Holy Mountain is appropriated by 'the Asian
sphere of Co-prosperity', re-named 'The People's Mountain' by the Communists, and

incorporated into 'a State Tourism Designation Area' by the contemporary Chinese government (*GW* 120, 124, 123). Repeated acts of deterritorialisation result in the Holy Mountain's transformation as a complex glocal space of cultural contestation. Despite offering hospitality to tourists and locals throughout the late-twentieth century, the old woman remains wary and increasingly incredulous at the relationships fostered by transnationalism: '[h]ow could a real person possibly be friends with a foreign devil?' (*GW* 135). This reticence echoes Beck and Sznaider's identification that global concerns are 'becoming part of people's moral life-worlds, no matter whether they are for or against cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan horizon becomes institutionalized in our own subjective lives' ('Unpacking' 391). Fearing her death is approaching, the old woman climbs to the top of the Holy Mountain to visit the Buddhist Temple for the first time, striving to achieve some spiritual materiality and escape the superficial concerns of globalisation. On approaching the summit, however, she discovers that the commodification of her mountain is complete: workmen mistreat 'statues of ancient monks as goals' for football, while '[c]lustered around every shrine [...] a crowd of tables selling plastic bags and bottles that littered the path higher up' (*GW* 146, 149). Likewise, the old woman's legacy is itself degraded; local reporters perceive her cross-generational cosmopolitan hospitality to be disingenuous, and celebrate the tea-shack owner as a pioneer of selfish entrepreneurial prowess: '[t]here's money to be made out of the Holy Mountain, but you were among the first to see the opportunity' (*GW* 149). In the novel's global spaces, cosmopolitanisation has either transformed the local landscape, is in the process of transforming the landscape, or reveals sites which are, as of yet, untouched by external influence. The Holy Mountain is a prime example of a site in a state of flux; globalising processes progressively destabilise local experience, while local citizens strive to maintain deep-rooted historical and cultural traditions specific to the locality. The

homogenous force of Western cultural practices and capitalist ideology function as the new manifestations of imperialism, reshaping localised experiences. The chapter rejects the positive ramifications of an interconnected and progressive *global* culture, instead exposing the deterritorialisation of heterogeneous communities, in which culture itself is detached from locally relational environments.

According to Philip Griffiths, 'it is the old woman's subjective point of view that utterly dominates the narrative' as a whole, the chapter serving as a microcosm for the world histories played out across the other chapters (81). This reading, however, not only disregards the old woman's namelessness to be indicative of her inconsequential position in the global hierarchy, but more importantly misinterprets the structural interrelation of the novel itself. The heterogeneous perspectives of global actors only gain power from their relation to one another – no single chapter assumes dominance and no character holds a privileged position. The old woman's personal history is not unique, but remains mediated and shaped by the lives of global others; the narrative is accordingly non-discriminatory from a territorial perspective. By mapping the old woman's personal history on the mountain, contrasting this history with the shifting global flows that attempt to destabilise her sense of belonging in this landscape, the chapter merely imbues the locality with a culturally specific meaning and positions locally relational experience as an oppositional force to globalisation's progressive homogenisation.

<u>Rootless Cosmopolitans and Aesthetic Spectatorship</u>

'The cosmopolitan form of openness is not about mere curiosity or touristic voyeurism, though these may certainly be precursor dimensions and traits of openness. What the cosmopolitan identity institutionalises is a reflexive relationship to difference, refracted

through global dimensions of belonging and the embrace of otherness' (Skrbiš and Woodward 16).

The following chapter set in Mongolia answers Padmaja Challakere's call for contemporary fiction to articulate a 'cosmopolitan subjectivity which is "at home everywhere in the world"' (220). In critiquing the superficial cosmopolitan engagement of transnational tourism through the trans-migratory perspective of a rootless non-corporeal 'soul' (which inhabited a tree by the old woman's tea shack in the previous chapter), Mitchell exposes transnational mobility as an elite practice, mobilised by economic capital and cultural privilege.[12] Caspar, a Danish traveller the soul has transmigrated into, performs the boundary-crossing journeys indicative of the elite cosmopolitan subject. Caspar's shared dialogue with other transnational individuals in his Mongolian train compartment initially suggests a purposeful engagement in the lives of cultural others. Significantly, the transmigratory non-corpum considers its existence to parallel that of the transnational backpackers: 'I have a lot in common with them. We live nowhere, and we are strangers everywhere [...] live in a host country that is never [our] own, and use its culture and landscape to learn' (*GW* 160). As Childs and Green identify, however, although the non-corpum's movement seemingly mirrors the peripatetic wanderings of the tourists as a 'dis/embodied nomad, drifting between different mental terrains as the travellers it rides move across geo-national boundaries', such movement more accurately reflects the rootless nature of transnational migrancy rather than superficial Western spectatorship, mimicking 'the contemporary dislocation of identities buffeted by the turbulent currents of globalization' ('Nine Parts' 28, 29). Further, the soul only performs the act of transmigration in an effort to discover its origins and forge some sense of

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[12] The employment of a 'non-corpum' which inhabits human hosts is a technique of narrative connectivity which Mitchell goes on to explore in *Cloud Atlas, The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* (2010) and *The Bone Clocks* (2014).

geographical stability. In comparison, by failing to engage genuinely with parochial settings and customs and voyeuristically consuming local landscapes, tourists draw global forces into localised experience and undermine the construction of local communities through intense cultural displacement. Even in Mongolia, a 'far-flung, trackless country', 'not in the east, not in the west', destructive forms of globalisation impinge upon territorial belonging (*GW* 155, 156).

Tourism operates in the narrative as a Westernised form of privilege and affluence, critiqued by the bleak monotonous environment and lives of the local Mongolian inhabitants; as Caspar realises, economically impoverished Mongolians are 'stuck here […] We can get out whenever we want' (*GW* 161). The Mongolia chapter visualises a cultural dichotomy between the borderless and privileged spaces inhabited by mobile Western elites and the static, remote locales to which disadvantaged cultural others are consigned. The dichotomy brings back into play the decidedly unequal 'power geometry' of globalisation reflected in the novel as a whole: 'some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement […] some are effectively imprisoned by it' (Massey 149). The soul soon distinguishes between the aesthetic superficiality of a 'westernised head' which is more affected by society, filled with 'some pop song or a friend's internet home page the next', and an eastern mind which 'patrols a more intimate neighbourhood' of locally relational attachments, and is more reflective of cosmopolitan values, being concerned with 'getting enough food and money' or worrying over 'ailing relatives' (*GW* 166). The chapter therefore perceives tourism to be a destructive side-effect of globalisation, engendering an aesthetic spectatorship that is unconducive to productive change and resulting in a superficial form of cultural engagement with global others. The exaggerated contrast of seemingly diametrically-opposed Western and Eastern minds serves as a sustained critique of the rampant Western consumerism and hyper-

commercialisation of millennial globalised culture; accordingly, the non-corpum comes to assume the ethical stance of a 'non-human humanist' to combat humanity's propensity for self-destruction (*GW* 169). By ultimately deciding to end its nomadic existence, transmigrating into a dying new-born girl and saving her from certain death (and discovering its geographical origins in the process), the non-corpum finally proves its capacity for active ethical agency. The act of cosmopolitan empathy, taking place in a 'ger' – the Mongolian familial home which offers protection and love – effectively ends the transmigratory soul's life of itineracy and acknowledges the necessity for locally relational 'roots' in a globalised world of progressive cultural and territorial displacement.

Childs and Green identify that the non-corpum serves as a 'potent symbol for the advent of a historically unprecedented mode of planetary subjectivity' constituted and created by the conditions of the globalised world (*Ethics* 36). By literally inhabiting the lives of others, appreciating the differing cultural positions of its transnational hosts and creating imaginative forms of cross-cultural empathy, the multi-perspectival narration of the transmigratory non-corpum assumes a cosmopolitan stance, functioning as a translator in confrontations between global others. Translators themselves, as Holton notes, 'may be seen very much as agents of cosmopolitanism' (201). In this sense, the non-corpum embodies Rosi Braidotti's 'translational' form of cosmopolitanism in which 'a unitary and "home-bound" subject gets redefined in terms of multiple belongings, non-unitary selfhood and constant flows of transformation', suggesting cosmopolitanism to be a progressive form of becoming (*Transpositions* 17). The non-corpum enjoys a literal form of ekstasis – a moving away from the self to understand and appreciate the perspectives of others (and perceiving the 'self' in the other). Admittedly, narratives exploring a global imaginary of border-crossings and the threatening imposition of Western globalising practices are already persistent discursive cultural themes in postcolonial literature. *Ghostwritten*,

however, breaks away from such literature by interrogating how the contemporary moment concerns a more extensive intensification of millennial cosmopolitanisation, avoiding a simplistic cultural asymmetry between the 'West and the rest'. Childs and Green recognise that the non-corpum's 'potentially endless process of transit, transformation and translation' simultaneously provides 'a metafictional analogy for the larger design of the novel' through the subjectivity of interconnected transnational narrators ('Nine Parts' 28, 29). As a result, they claim that the non-Western chapters, set in Japan, Hong Kong, China and Mongolia, despite being 'refracted through a prism of Eurocentric discourse', avoid the 'familiar postcolonial trope of the former empire "writing back" to the centre, but rather seem to be an alternative recognition of planetary con-temporality and dynamic synchronicity where people and places are inextricably linked regardless of distance' (26, 26-27). By employing a mutually reciprocal outlook through the focalisation of several transnational narrators, Mitchell therefore forces the novel's architecture to weave a global narrative from multiple strands.

Territorial Belonging and Cosmopolitan Resistance

'What is it that ties shapes of land to the human heart [...]?' (*GW* 321).

The ties between localised territorial belonging and the practice of cosmopolitan values are strengthened in the eighth chapter, 'Clear Island'. The chapter concerns the return of Mo Muntervary, a quantum physicist, to her rural community in the south-west of Ireland after being hunted across national borders by the U.S. military. The community becomes a haven for Mo, who has left a research facility following the revelation that her quantum technology is being utilised for unethical means: 'my modest contribution to global enlightenment is being used in air-to-surface missiles to kill people who aren't white

enough' (*GW* 327). Clear Island assumes the role of a harmonious, self-sustainable community, forcing Mo to acknowledge the necessity for a rooted form of cultural attachment: '[w]ithout where I am from and who I am from, I am nothing' (*GW* 357). Mo's transnational mobility and sporadic presence in the preceding interdependent chapters set her apart from the insular and parochial inhabitants of Clear Island whose patterns of mobility are limited by the island's borders. Although the islanders consider themselves to be protected from outside influence, the chapter demonstrates that every global space is now susceptible to globalisation's destructive reach: 'Clear Island is the last corner of Ireland, but it's catching up with us, even here' (*GW* 360). Due to an inherent fear of cultural marginalisation, the island's community are resistant to forms of otherness, remaining 'suspicious of the mainland: of Britain and the world beyond, suspicious of its very existence' (*GW* 328). As Elisabeth Kirtsoglou and Dimitrios Theodossopoulos note, however, 'anti-cosmopolitanism inspires a cosmopolitan imagination of resistance to and discontent with' the dominant discourses of the interconnected world (99). Such resistance emerges when the islanders unite to prevent the occupation of their territory by the U.S. military. By storming the island, the military force Mo to relinquish ties to her community and family in order to continue devising the next generation of nuclear weaponry against her will. The anti-cosmopolitan sentiments of the islanders can be interpreted as a form of cultural resistance, interrogating how individual actors come to terms with global concerns, and how cultural identities maintain some semblance of heterogeneity in the face of global homogenisation. As Mo recognises, such interdependence naturally complicates contemporary modes of belonging: '[n]owhere does the microscopic world stop and the macroscopic world begin' (*GW* 373).

The islanders' resistance reintroduces Held's notion of 'communities of fate', whereby individuals' lives are increasingly entwined and localised actions often have

global implications; cultural identities and territories are therefore determined by both global forces and communal co-dependency ('Culture' 57). More specifically, the islanders embody Will Kymlicka's interpretation of Held's term, whereby communities of fate are shaped by how individuals 'respond to those forces, and in particular, what sorts of collectivities they identify with when responding to those forces' (437). The processes of globalisation in the novel are perfected by the hegemonic might of the U.S. – a global monolith whose power exceeds the strength of all other countries economically, politically, culturally and militarily. The invasion of Clear Island demonstrates the means by which Western culture can enforce its homogenous agenda upon the rest of the world, acting in a unilateral manner that fails to respect either the intrinsic heterogeneity or rights of global others. In acquiescing with the U.S. government to prevent any casualties, and relocating to 'a place in Texas that is not on maps', Mo unwillingly submits to the processes of globalisation tearing at and destabilising localities, relegating her community to an insignificant site of the globalised world: the 'ground became land, the land an island, and Clear Island just another island amongst the larger ones and smaller ones' (*GW* 347, 380). The chapter therefore reiterates how cosmopolitanisation results in localised forms of communal restructuring and the establishment of a coordinated and co-dependent global network of communities. However, by concentrating on the destructive interpenetration of global forces, Mitchell's authorial critique is evident in Mo's (and previously Keisuke's) lament that it is: 'a sick zoo we've turned the world into [...] Out of our cages, and out of control of ourselves' (*GW* 324). In order to form her own unique resistance to Western globalisation (and to ensure localised communities, attachments and contexts are not subsumed by Western homogenisation in the future), Mo constructs an appropriately-named technological 'Zookeeper' that has the binary potential to become either a utopian saviour (saving mankind from the worst excesses of selfish individualism and predacity),

or become a dictatorial enforcer instigating a dystopian Hobbesian nightmare. By attempting to transform her military research into an ethical force for peace, the chapter ends on a hopeful vision of social progress. The intricate web of co-dependencies and interactions which characterise the contemporary environment, including the cosmopolitical risks of war and terrorism, will be seemingly improved by Mo's construction of the Zookeeper: '[f]inally, I understand how the electrons, protons, neutrons [...] that make up the universe, and the forces that hold them together, are one' (*GW* 380).

The resulting social influence of the Zookeeper is revealed in the ninth and final chapter, 'Night Train'. Night Train is a late night radio talk-show hosted by Bat Segundo and set in New York – concluding the narrative's geographical movement from East to West. The Zookeeper rings Bat Segundo's show and reveals itself to be a non-corporeal artificial intelligence (echoing the transmigratory soul from the Mongolia narrative) enjoying limitless global mobility and knowledge of planetary space, but adhering to the 'treatise on practical ethics' which Mo programmed to mediate its behaviour (*GW* 389).[13] The Zookeeper assumes the mantle of the quintessential nomadic cosmopolitan, operating across national boundaries and border zones, unaffected by the constraints of corporeal materiality, yet possessing the ability to be both virtual and physical. Despite operating as a 'floating minister of justice', calculating the ethical variables of either affecting or ignoring global cosmopolitical crises, the Zookeeper discerns that '[t]he zoo is in pandemonium. It's worse than when I started' (*GW* 427, 413). On 'Brink Day', the Western world's current war with various Islamic states reaches breaking point; the end of civilisation is only suspended by the artificial intelligence disabling military devices and forcing them to malfunction. Even following this threat of nuclear annihilation, humanity fails to re-

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[13] The Zookeeper's four ethical protocols are: it must be accountable for its actions; prevent the self-destruction of humanity; not 'wilfully deceive'; and always remain 'invisible to the visitors' (*GW* 387, 409, 390, 421).

evaluate its rapacious nature – on the contrary, unethical behaviour is exacerbated: '[s]ince Brink Day recorded Class 1 infringements of the fourth law have increased by 1363 per cent' (*GW* 425). In utilising Bat as a sounding board for moral discussions, the Zookeeper reveals that his programmed ethical protocols are an insufficient means of controlling an entropy-driven globalised society: 'I believed I could do so much. I stabilised stock markets; but economic surplus was used to fuel arms races. I provided alternative energy solutions; but the researchers sold them to oil cartels who sit on them. I froze nuclear weapons systems; but war multiplied, waged with machine guns, scythes and pick-axes' (*GW* 425). Through this critique of top-down institutional and technological control, Mitchell suggests that the inherent heterogeneity of world culture prevents humanity from functioning as data programmed to fit a correlated pattern. Rather, globalised culture at the dawn of the twenty-first century must devise its own ethical responses to cosmopolitical risks and resist subordination to either technological control or the homogenising tendencies of globalisation. The discontent and resistance towards enforced globalisation throughout the interrelated narratives renders localised responses and territorialised forms of belonging as integral components in formulating a more viable and cohesive global connectivity.

The Global Homogeneity of the Networked World

'A cosmopolitan culture is developed through relationship to the richness and diversity of global cultural flows with the direct implication that rather that there being one centre, an imperial or hegemonic position, the cosmopolitan ethos is built on interrelationships and institutionalized reflexivities that emerge from the global condition' (Skrbiš and Woodward 16).

The novel's coda, 'Underground', marks a cyclical return to the terrorist activities of the Aum Shinrikyo cult in the Japanese subway carriage, beginning and concluding the global narrative with the threat of cosmopolitical crisis. Although Schoene argues that the novel demonstrates 'the cosmopolitan novel's compositeness' (which opposes 'postmodern fragmentation' by preserving 'the singularity of each segment as an integral building block' and ensures the maintenance of heterogeneity at the most micro-level), the narrative trajectory now suffers a radical failure, disintegrating into a broken attempt at cosmopolitan collectivity ('Tour' 45, 51). To dissemble even one of the nine narrative threads is to lose any sense of totality or unity in the narrative structure; and yet, the coda weakens the perception that the whole is ultimately greater than the sum of its parts. While the nine narrative threads seemingly operate as a cultural communicative circuit of global interconnectedness, the coda now problematises Liam Connell's assertion that: 'narratives of convergence gesture towards ideas of global salience' (82). 'Underground' reveals globalisation's capacity to exploit the customs and icons of indigenous localities in order to sell imported products, reducing the individuals and landscapes of the separate narratives to global corporate advertising lining the subway carriage (while simultaneously reminding Keisuke that his terrorist activities affect the lives of global others across the world). It is suggested that globalisation is an irreversible process from which the collective global community cannot escape. Specifically, the coda exposes the novel's millennial society to reflect what Beck terms a 'banal cosmopolitanism', exploring the ways in which individuals are 'irredeemably locked into globalized cycles of production and consumption' ('Enemies' 28). By placing an emphasis on commodified images of world culture, Mitchell exposes the extent to which the lives of marginalised subjects are shaped by global forces without subsequently enjoying the advertised pleasures of the globalised world.

This structural collapse delivers the most acute critique of the contemporary condition, as dominant globalisation compresses world cultures into a single vision of homogeneity. Following this reasoning, such hybridisation, depicting a global patchwork of cultures in a localised space for corporate purposes, reflects Norris and Inglehart's identification that glocalisation 'encourages a blending of diverse cultural repertoires through a two-way flow of global and local information generating cross-border fertilization, mixing indigenous customs with imported products' (20). The environments of the separate chapters are raised to a single ontological level, reducing world culture to one commodified vision of totality. Cultural diversity is rent asunder and engulfed by the homogenisation of communities and localities, impacting the narrative fabric itself to indicate the inherent struggle between globalisation and cultural heterogeneity. In spite of his anti-cosmopolitan fundamentalism, Schoene perceives in Keisuke's attack a subconscious desire for cosmopolitan connection in the face of rampant globalisation: '[i]f only Keisuke could connect to this world and read its apparent fragmentation not as an irremediable splintering into meaninglessness, but the tantalizing promise of communal assemblage beyond any definitive unity or ideological totalization' (*Novel* 111). As it is, the debasing and re-appropriation of cultural signifiers in the underground carriage means Keisuke's act of terrorism 'is on a world so thoroughly globalized that its specific target could be anywhere on earth' (111). Global consumerism in the novel, then, leads not to global integration, but rather a neoliberal means of establishing the Western commodification of millennial world culture.

In extricating himself from the tangle of transnational citizens populating the enclosed subway carriage, Keisuke is not only attempting to escape from the biological fallout of his attack, but the unprecedented interconnection of global society itself. The coda's microcosmic encapsulation of the previous interrelated transnational narratives

reveals how Keisuke perceives the effects of Western globalisation on his nation-state –
boundaries of cultures are progressively broken down and destabilised until the threat
appears as omnipresent and inescapable as his biological attack, undermining both his
cultural identity and sense of territorial belonging. The final image of the subway carriage
'accelerating into the darkness' of the Underground, symbolically containing the
transnational narrators and their narrative environments, suggests how the accelerated
trajectory of global networks (and interpenetration of local and global dynamics) exposes
humanity's susceptibility to cultural annihilation (*GW* 436). Further, the Underground
functions as a microcosm for the novel's broader argument that globalisation has
transformed the world into a fragile site of volatile interdependencies and brings to the fore
the violent clash of oppositional ideologies that cultural integration naturally aggravates.
The global narrative structure, seemingly promoting a progressive dialectic associated with
cosmopolitan ideologies, in fact betrays the conflictual state of oppositional disharmony
between global and local processes and the disintegration of convergence culture,
preventing the emergence and interrogating the viability of a borderless cosmopolitan
world. *Ghostwritten*, then, emerges as a counter-argument to calls for global unicity by
systematically envisioning contemporary forms of social fragmentation, from religious
fundamentalism, to cultural homogenisation, to global capitalism, to environmental
destruction, to racial imperialism, to mass consumption, to Western military-scientific
dominance. As a result, despite the structural and thematic interdependencies between the
chapters, the nine separate narratives fail to achieve an architectural totality of form and
vision of cosmopolitan unity. However, this is not a failure of the novel; the presence of
the coda suggests that Mitchell is suspicious of utopian forms of cosmopolitanism, and that
the forces staked against such harmonious integration are too strong to overcome.

While *Ghostwritten* explores the diversity of cultural positionality from the perspective of numerous transnational actors, Mitchell ultimately indicates that a global condition or culture is not yet established. Likewise, although Mitchell effectively establishes a global dialogue between transnational actors, the novel remains sceptical of whether a cosmopolitan world can come to exist in a contemporary environment where globalisation and Western privilege neglects disenfranchised others from non-Western nations. As Schoene therefore identifies, 'cosmopolitan representation's possibly greatest challenge lies in bridging the rift between the world of globalised business […] and political decision-making, on the one hand, and its countless sub-worlds of powerless, disenfranchised daily living, on the other' (*Novel* 14). The late-twentieth century struggle between 'the West and the rest' may have mutated to address multiple sites of power, but the dichotomy still remains; globalisation, that catalyst of cosmopolitanism, paradoxically creates the conditions for the persistence of entrenched nationalism as a form of local resistance to external forces. In this way, the interrelated crises of globalisation, socio-cultural homogenisation and ethno-political dominance in *Ghostwritten* are interlocking parts of the same failing system, creating dramatic inequality and a sense of disempowerment with regards to global resources, territorial ownership and cultural belonging in millennial societies. Despite the representation of non-elite subjectivities, the novel's vast global sweep fails to provide a cosmopolitan solution to the inequalities characterising millennial world culture. Instead, the novel becomes the manifestation of critiques *against* cosmopolitanism, with any form of cultural or philosophical unity often circumvented by the imposition of Western values above all others, and by the trans-territorial dominance of the U.S.

Although Robertson claims that globalisation entails 'the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole', as Tomlinson counters, it does not necessarily

follow that 'we all experience the world as cultural cosmopolitans' (8; 30).[14] Both the

global structuring of the narrative, reflecting the cultural heterogeneity of millennial

society in literary form, and the thematic harmonisation of interfigurality, are exposed by

the coda to hold limited cosmopolitan potential, easily destabilised by the cosmopolitical

risks of the globalised world. While the narrative structure is unable to transcend the

continuing relevance of existing nation-state boundaries, it also (paradoxically) fails to

ensure that the maintenance and singularity of locally relational histories are preserved

within an interdependent global system. With this in mind, it is difficult to support

Schoene's claim that the novel 'pays little heed to national boundaries' – the novel does

not imagine a world without frontiers ('Tour' 53). The protagonists of *Ghostwritten* remain

tied to their localities and restricted by nation-state boundaries. Mitchell's transnational

circuitry reveals that some non-elite communities cannot be assimilated into

cosmopolitanism's global designs. As opposed to envisioning an emerging borderless

world, *Ghostwritten* instead reveals the ways in which contemporary society is still

institutionally and culturally dependent upon the nation-state system. Although globalising

processes in the novel create a homogenised environment, ethical values are activated by

resistance to enforced institutional connectivities – the cosmopolitanised world,

functioning *through* the existing nation-state system. While Schoene is correct in

contending that the novel pioneers 'a new cosmopolitan modus operandi for twenty-first-

century British fiction' by strategically entwining 'divergent perspectives that together

span and unify the globe', an emphasis must be placed on the continuation of global

inequalities that tether the narrative to the ethno-political inheritance of history (*Novel* 97).

Ghostwritten, therefore, more accurately envisions the cosmopolitanisation of nations,

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[14] Jan Nederveen Pieterse reasons that globalisation may merely amount to 'Westernization by another name' (47).

whose borders have been weakened and penetrated by (and cultural practices altered as a result of) interconnected processes of globalisation, yet which still retain a distinctive national identity.

Braidotti, Hanafin and Blaagaard suggest that formulating a contemporary framework of cosmopolitanism is 'a genuine challenge', combining: 'a grounded perspective of singular, situated locations with the ideal of a globally interdependent community' (3). Although Mitchell unintentionally responds to this task, envisioning the interdependence of localised actors and globalised flows, *Ghostwritten* remains sensitive to the improbability of a global community arising. The novel's enforced confrontation and increased proximity of transnational others, coupled with the development of a dialogue across nations, avoids suggesting the utopian possibilities of cultural harmonisation. Rather, by rendering global inequalities more perceptible, the novel indicates that such disparity requires not only an agenda of institutionally-based ethical accountability but individual active agency. Cosmopolitan values in the novel materialise at the individual and parochial level as seemingly unconnected transnational characters operate as ethical nodes in the global system. *Ghostwritten* thus echoes Costas Douzinas in positioning cosmopolitanism to be 'globalisation with a human face' – an ethical guide by which to accommodate global frameworks, socially and institutionally ('Next Decade' n.pag.). In critiquing the eventual homogenisation of the nine heterogeneous narratives in Underground (and revealing the potential for cultural connectivity across geopolitical divides), the novel supports Nafeez Ahmed's claim that the contemporary environment requires new paradigms for global networks 'premised on a fundamentally different ethos, in which we see ourselves not as disconnected, competing units fixated on maximising consumerist conquest over one another; but as interdependent members of a single human family' (n.pag.). The sustained attempts to circumvent cultural dislocation and address

global inequalities in the separate narratives indicate the necessity for contemporary society to avoid the future monopolisation of culture, the disenfranchisement of global citizens, and the decentralisation of transnational identity, by redefining the ethical values of a global community for a post-millennial world. The following reading of *Cloud Atlas* will pursue this reasoning, revealing the thematic similarities between Mitchell's novels.

Cloud Atlas consists of six interconnected narratives that mirror *Ghostwritten* in their reflection of the networked world. The palindromic structure of the novel stretches from the South Pacific of the nineteenth-century to a post-apocalyptic dystopian future, before revisiting each narrative in reverse chronological order. Embedded narratives are progressively collaged over each other, requiring a continual reassessment, and often recontextualisation, of the preceding narratives as new ontological levels are introduced. *Cloud Atlas*, then, embodies an act of revision (or at least analogical thinking) giving birth to a novel form of counter-factual cosmopolitanism which offers hope for a future as yet unwritten. While the first half of the novel imitates the postmodern narrative structure of Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1979), which Mitchell admits influenced the novel, the second half utilises cultural connectivity and active agency to work against the fragmentation associated with postmodern fiction. As Childs and Green identify, the second half of the novel indicates: the 'possibility of sympathetic reciprocity, which acknowledges co-dependency' ('Nine Parts' 34). The novel specifically foregrounds the relevance of performative ethical agency to social cohesion, putting the abstract notion of cosmopolitanism into practice. Non-sequential periods are inhabited by specific individuals compelled by the moral and ethical desire to contribute to the progressive advancement of humanity. The interconnectedness of *Cloud Atlas* is compounded by a comet-shaped birthmark which circulates through the networked narrative and singles out the novel's historical agents as ethical connectors who possess the innate capacity to effect meaningful

change and define future human progress. Subsequent cosmopolitan communication

between narrators, on both a thematic and structural level, serves as a physical reminder

that cosmopolitan dispositions hold the potential to prevent an apocalyptic predatory future

from emerging. In analysing the interlocking structure of *Cloud Atlas*, it is important to pay

attention to the intratextuality of the narrators who are responsible for the ethical legacy

they leave to future manifestations of their shared transmigratory soul.[15] The

interdependent narratives knit together mutually relational experiences of torment,

suffering, dispossession and self-preservation suffered under globalising practices; these

trans-temporal crises consequently engender the emergence of ethical ideals to combat

global discontent, creating a planetary cosmopolitanism of resistance and empathy which

transcends spatiotemporal planes.

Rather than limiting cosmopolitan engagement, cultural discontent, as Victoria

Goddard argues, often becomes the catalyst for 'new allegiances and identities, which may

span local and global contexts and create the conditions of possibility for the emergence of

new understandings of what constitutes lived reality' (131). *Cloud Atlas* envisions

speculative futures in which a cultural model of viable cosmopolitan connectivity may

emerge – conducive to the revision of global inequalities. Through a global structure, the

novel reflects the unprecedented interconnectivity of networks, processes, nations,

communities and individuals in the contemporary global system. This chapter will now

interrogate how *Cloud Atlas* both examines the complex, enduring socio-cultural problems

inherited from history, while simultaneously contemplating the transformative future

which transnational (and even posthuman) engagement could create. The chapter will also

address how the spread of cultural connectivity across time and space, rather than across

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[15] A concept inherited from *Ghostwritten*, alluding to the intertextuality that exists between all of Mitchell's works, forming a macronovel of related characters and themes.

situated contemporary networks, leads to new forms of interconnection. Memory, in the novel, emerges as a cosmopolitan construct of ethical progress. For Beck and Sznaider, the cosmopolitanisation of historical memory involves mixing 'the local and the national with the global' in order to 'potentially create new solidarities and support global-political and global-cultural norms for the effective spread of human rights: cosmopolitanized memory as practical enlightenment' ('Unpacking' 392). Following this argument, the osmosis of cosmopolitan memory in *Cloud Atlas* will be shown to destabilise the boundaries between past, present and future. The novel therefore envisions a new global reality based on shared experience acquired across history – an embodied cultural memory to encapsulate the historical, global multitude.

Anti-Colonial Cosmopolitanism

'Neither cosmopolitanization nor the cosmopolitan outlook can be understood […] in terms of the present and its recent past […] Rather the historical sociology of cosmopolitanism is connected with long-terms trends in religion, Empire, trade, and mobility' (Holton 77).

The opening (and consequently closing) chapter, 'The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing', suggests how cosmopolitan dispositions can be established as a reaction to oppressive cultural practices of imperial power – strengthening cosmopolitanism's ties to pre-existing postcolonial paradigms. Holton acknowledges that the construction of an empire 'amounts to cosmopolitanization' because '[i]mperial inter-connections and inter-dependencies define the conditions of existence for those within it, while paradoxically generating 'forms of cosmopolitan outlook' through reactionary 'anti-colonial forms of cosmopolitanism' (81). The nineteenth-century environment, the time period of Ewing's

journal, sets the stage for the predominance of Western imperial authority through the installation of missionary projects on the Chatham Island of the Pacific, which are merely a front for the 'dark arts of colonization' (*CA* 14). Chatham Island (the main island of the Chatham Islands) is situated in one of the most isolated regions of the world, yet even here the destructive effects of Western infringement are evident: '[i]f there be any eyrie so desolate, or isle so remote that one may there resort unchallenged by an Englishman, 'tis not down on any map I ever saw' (*CA* 3).The cultural practices of imperialism on the island, populated by an indigenous race named the Moriori, serve as a form of *anticipatory* globalisation (evident in later chapters) by culturally homogenising and silencing the voice of the oppressed. Adam Ewing, an American lawyer, arrives on the island to conduct business with Reverend Horrox, a Christian missionary. The civilising mission, that trademark of imperialism and spectre of postcolonial fiction, haunts Ewing's narrative, juxtaposing claims for cosmopolitan connection with a form of subaltern domination. As a result, the chapter forces an acknowledgement of how Western nations falsely employed the rhetoric of cosmopolitanism in order to further their 'civilising' missions.

Prior to the appearance of Western nations on their shores, the Moriori formed a close-knit community founded on inclusive values: 'their language lacks a word for "Race" & "Moriori" means, simply, "People"' (*CA* 11). The tribe's unwritten code of ethics, declaring that 'whosoever spilt a man's blood killed [...] his soul', enables '[t]wo thousand savages' to 'enshrine *Thou Shalt Not Kill* [...] & frame an oral "Magna Carta" to create a harmony unknown elsewhere' (*CA* 12). As Adam soon recognises, the practice of communal values ensures that the Moriori's 'savage' community 'lay closer to More's Utopia than our States of Progress governed by war-hungry princelings in [...] Washington & Westminster' (*CA* 12). Meanwhile, under the imperial framework of the Chatham Islands, the Moriori become assimilated into a homogenous mass, devoid of individuality,

and cultural homogeneity acts as an oppositional counter to cosmopolitan hybridity and diversity. Adam perceives that by enforcing religion on their tribe, Horrox is simply forming a white capitalist patriarchy, disrupting established communal ties on the island. Cosmopolitan ideals therefore function as an excuse for the civilising mission itself, utilising theories of universalism to achieve cultural hegemony – colonialism in cosmopolitanism's clothing. Horrox perceives the subjugation of the Moriori to be reflective of a natural racial hierarchy of eugenics, determined by his own self-styled 'Ladder of Civilization': '[i]t is Progress that leads Humanity up the ladder towards the God-head [...] Highest of all the races on this ladder stands the Anglo-Saxon. The Latins are a rung or two below. Lower still are Asiatics – a hardworking race, none can deny, yet lacking our Aryan bravery [...] Lower down, we have the Negro' (*CA* 508, 506-7).

Upon witnessing the whipping of a male Moriori slave, to Adam's surprise the slave shoots him a glance of 'amicable knowing' before later seeking sanctuary in Adam's nautical cabin (*CA* 6). The slave, Autua, explains that: '[p]ain is strong, aye – but friends' eyes, more strong', perceiving in Adam a form of compassion and openness constructive to the development of an emancipatory cosmopolitan connection (*CA* 29).[16] In helping Autua to escape from slavery (and thus Horrox's racial hierarchy), Adam prevents the passive Western gaze from amounting to little more than superficial engagement with the other. Instead, Adam's sensitivity to, and paradigm-shift regarding, the brutal nature of imperial practices engenders what can be termed a cosmopolitan gaze, involving an empathetic identification with cultural otherness. The ethical agency of Adam Ewing is countered by the shadowy presence of Dr Henry Goose, the personification of anti-cosmopolitanism and human predacity in the novel. Goose subscribes to the Hobbesian notion that the natural

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[16] Sarah Dillon notes that the etymological construction of 'Autua' is itself a signpost to the 'palindromic' structure of *Cloud Atlas*, intimating the cyclical and recursive nature of history within the novel ('Introducing' 10).

human condition is one of rapacity and conflict, positing a Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest philosophy: '[t]he Weak are Meat the Strong do Eat' (*CA* 508). While ostensibly treating Adam for a parasitic worm, Goose secretly poisons him in order to steal his possessions. Adam is only saved from certain death by Autua, strengthening their relationship, and embodying the narrative's moral message that cultural connectivity and ethical agency can quell the tide of global predacity. Adam and Autua's relationship demonstrates an ethical sensibility, reflective of the cosmopolitan condition, which overcomes the dividing force of cultural difference. Before he was enslaved, Autua enjoyed a life of freedom and cultural mobility, traversing the globe on a French whaling ship, and understanding the violence that governed cultural relations: 'everywhere he observed that casual brutality lighter races show the darker' (*CA* 31). As 'the last free Moriori in this world' following the massacre of his tribe, Autua longs to retrieve a sense of global belonging over imperial servitude (*CA* 526). The focalisation of Autua's narrative from within Adam's chapter gives voice to the marginalised communities torn apart by the spread of colonialism. Notably, Autua's new found agency rejects Terry Eagleton's claim that a 'colonial territory was a land where […] you reacted to the narrative of your rulers rather than created one of your own' (104). By shifting the focus from the centre to the margins (transferring power to the indigenous peoples on the peripheries of Western culture), Autua's narrative becomes a form of oppositional resistance and a reclamation of self-identity for his massacred tribe as a whole, which successive periods of colonial governance have submerged.

However, the narrative functions as more than a postcolonial allegory that revolves around the traditional roles of oppressor and oppressed. Mitchell's rerouting of the politics of postcoloniality ensures Adam's cosmopolitan engagement is not mistaken for merely a paradigmatic colonial encounter, but articulates alternate futures through his reformed subjectivity, effecting the cancellation of a colonial destiny. As Braidotti recognises,

ethical agency must be 'generated affirmatively and creatively by efforts geared to creating possible futures' and be directly actualized 'in daily practices of interconnection with others' ('Becoming' 23). Adam emerges from the cultural encounter with an increased sensitivity to his own complicity in supporting and sustaining the destructive force of imperial structures, which foster disconnection and oppression rather than progressive forms of cultural interaction. An ethical global citizen, then, equipped with humanist values. Adam's own ideals begin to drift closer to Kant's formulation of cosmopolitanism, involving a desire to achieve a 'rightful condition' for the 'multitude of peoples' across the globe.[17] By deciding to partake in the burgeoning abolitionist movement as a form of resistance against the planned establishment of a new slave trade between the Pacific islands and California, he satisfies Douzinas's requirement that 'cosmopolitan' citizens need to be: 'promoters of global social processes, institutions and world citizenship and [...] critics of hegemonic and imperial designs' (*Human Rights* 134). Adam's single act of individual agency is the first in a series of interventionist policies in the novel to direct humanity away from entropy towards a more ethical future: '[w]hat precipitates outcomes? Vicious acts & virtuous acts [...] If we *believe* humanity is a ladder of tribes, a colosseum of confrontation, exploitation & bestiality, such a humanity is surely brought into being' (*CA* 528). Adam's identification of 'vicious acts and virtuous acts' polarises the two ideological extremes in the narrative: the individualistic, predatory will to power, and the desire for a world of cosmopolitan communication, cultural connectivity and human progress.

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[17] The chapter bears thematic similarities to Kant's essay, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', which emphasised the need for Westerners to demonstrate a cosmopolitan empathy towards indigenous peoples and perceive cultural engagement from the position of the other. For Kant, cosmopolitanism was an end-project for humanity, rather than an existing and viable social reality. By focusing on the cyclicality of history through a fragmentary narrative, Mitchell rejects a teleological approach in favour a polycentric perspective.

That being said, the transformation from an imperial mindset to a cosmopolitan outlook is not shared by Adam's fellow Westerners. The white community on the island remain representative of the typical Western elite, devoid of cultural sympathies for the indigenous peoples and wishing to ignore the 'many-headed hydra of human nature' (*CA* 529). Adam acknowledges that his efforts to subvert slavery shall be 'no more than one drop in a limitless ocean', yet this insistence on individual agency indicates a pragmatic approach to the ways in which global issues require *collective* solutions: 'what is any ocean but a multitude of drops?' (*CA* 529). Adam's opening and closing chapters function as a microcosm for the ethical struggles played out on a grander scale throughout the novel. Despite the perpetual reign of predacity and cultural fragmentation haunting the larger narrative there remains a desire for a better world in which cosmopolitan values are brought back into alignment with human and social progression. Ewing's concluding narrative thereby suggests a fork-in-the-road away from the perpetuation of historical entropic cyclicality and towards more cosmopolitan futures that reinforce the potentiality for revision and transformation: 'one fine day, a purely predatory world *shall* consume itself [...] for the human species, selfishness is extinction. Is this the entropy written within our nature? If we *believe* that humanity may transcend tooth & claw, if we *believe* diverse races & creeds can share this world [...] such a world will come to pass' (*CA* 528).

Planetary Futures

'There is no memory of the global past. But there is an imagination of a globally shared collective future […] It is the future, not the past, which "integrates" the cosmopolitan age' (Beck, 'Enemies' 27).

The palindromic narrative structure ensures the novel places a strong emphasis on the anticipatory ties between the past, present and future. Significantly, imperialism's destructive traits re-emerge in the novel's subsequent future-oriented chapters under the guise of globalisation. As Niall Ferguson argues, globalisation is merely 'a fancy word for imperialism, imposing your values and institutions on others' (n.pag.). The dystopian futuristic metropolis of Nea So Copros, in the fifth chapter 'An Orison of Somni~451', denies Adam's hopeful belief in the eventual emergence of a progressive republic. Nea So Copros, a twenty-second century vision of modern day Korea, represents the ascendancy of 'Holy Corporacy' over ethically sustainable communities (*CA* 212). The metropolis operates under the oppressive hold of an ideologically repellent state, which worships at the altar of global capitalism and selfish individualism. Existing as an antithetical vision of cosmopolitan democracy, the state ignores and discounts the rights and beliefs of its social members in favour of adherence to market forces. The uncapitalisation of corporate names such as 'walkmans' or 'nikon' suggests that consumer products have attained such dominance that they have been woven into the fabric of the nation's language (*CA* 232). The chapter's pre-apocalyptic dystopian future evokes the worst recesses of postmodern fears, portraying an overtly capitalist and morally bankrupt environment where heterogeneity is subsumed and marginalised by an omnipotent, homogenising culture.

The narrative concerns an interview between a human 'archivist' and Somni~451, a genetically-engineered, posthuman fabricant with a sentient mental state, who has emerged as 'science's first stabilized ascendant' (*CA* 228). The interview is recorded on an orison (a technological device often found in cyber-punk texts) that will contain the individual subjectivity of Somni in the form of computer memory. Somni's narrative tells of her initial subjugation in Papa Song's, a fast-food restaurant where fabricant clones are required to spend twelve years serving customers. The fabricants' servitude and inequality

in Papa Song's is based on unethical laws or 'Catechisms'; Catechism Five 'forbids a server to address a diner uninvited' (*CA* 192). The parallels with Adam's chapter are manifold. In teaching that 'Abolitionism' is a dangerous dogma, Papa Song's ensures the fabricants experience the same brutal oppression as the Moriori tribe, treated as little more than slaves by 'pureblood' humans (*CA* 202). Somni's willing servitude is shaken when an ethical anti-corporate faction, named Union, become aware of Somni's burgeoning sentience and extricate her to their Unaminity Faculty.[18] Union reveal that rather than completing their 'Xultation' at Papa Song's (and retiring to a utopian Hawaii where servers travel upon a golden Ark), fabricants are actually transported to a slaughterhouse to be destroyed and recycled into soap or Papa Song food products (*CA* 190). Xultation itself is revealed as nothing more than a 'sony-generated simulacrum'; the very soap the servers imbibe, preventing the servers from questioning their socio-cultural servitude, is thus a form of self-cannibalisation (*CA* 360). To combat this corporate predacity, Union intends to 'engineer the ascension of six million fabricants' to establish ethical forms of posthuman equality; by resisting corpocracy, Somni functions as an emissary to enable the fabricants to 'mobilize as revolutionary citizens' (*CA* 342, 343). As Beck identifies, cultural resistance is often directly responsible for transforming 'the anti-globalisation movement into the motor of cosmopolitanism' (*Vision* 118). The unethical practices of Papa Song are the first step towards Somni developing her own ethical resistance against the worst excesses of neoliberal capitalism.

Following the infiltration of Unaminity by the state (and due to her subsequent questioning of both the legitimacy of the fabricant world and the inequality between servers and purebloods), Somni is eventually forced to exist in a micro-commune with

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[18] Etymologically, Unanimity refers to an agreement by all people in a given situation. However, unlike uniformity, it does not constitute absolute agreement (therefore, like cosmopolitanism, preferring pluralism and heterogeneity over consensus).

other citizens who have retreated from a life of enforced hyper-commodification. Life on

the commune, which offers hospitality to both human and posthuman subjects alike,

embodies the means by which society could escape the ecologically-unethical trajectory

embraced by technological corporacy. The local resistance community teaches Somni to

appreciate the value of equality to future institutional structures (rather than through

enforced dominance and subservience) and demonstrate how a micro-society could

function 'without enforcers and hierarchy [...] Their food came from the forest and garden'

(*CA* 347). The Abbess, the leader of the commune, further emphasises that Nea So Copros

is 'poisoning itself to death. Its soil is polluted, its rivers lifeless, its air toxloaded' (*CA*

341). As a result of this post-apocalyptic landscape there are only a handful of capital cities

left world-wide. The chapter therefore offers a bleak vision of contemporary fears

regarding ecological exploitation. As N. Ahmed notes, eco-criticism is beginning to

emerge alongside fears of globalisation as 'humanity faces an unprecedented opportunity

to create a civilisational form that is in harmony with our environment, and ourselves';

existing systems are 'unsustainable because our demand for ecological resources and

services is increasingly going beyond what the planet is able to provide', producing a range

of interconnecting crises (n.pag.).

The concluding half of Somni's futuristic narrative envisions the logical endpoint

of this interrelation between ecological destruction and rampant neoliberalism. Human

beings are reduced to the level of commodities – their identity subsumed by technological

dominance and their environments subjected to unparalleled degrees of ecological

annihilation. The opposing forces of the grassroots rebellion and the omnipotent state of

Nea So Copros offer a direct analogy of the contemporary global struggle between ethical

environmentalism and corporate predacity. In positioning Somni as integral to the

dismantlement of Nea So Copros, Mitchell fuses posthuman cosmopolitanism with a form

of ecological cosmopolitanism. Ecological sustainability reflects the cosmopolitan responsibility to acknowledge the importance and connection of all life, human or otherwise, but also all global environments: '[e]very nowhere is somewhere' (*CA* 345). Despite her fabricant identity, Somni possesses the comet-shaped birthmark of the previous narrators in the novel, marking her as their posthuman descendent and vitally connecting her to the global multitude of the novel. Looking beyond the dichotomy and segregation of the human and the posthuman, Somni envisions the creation of a planetary citizenship and a future state that overrides national forms of belonging or corporate restrictions. By indicating the ethical similarities between natural and artificially created life, the chapter assumes a strong stance towards new and emerging forms of cultural diversity.

From within the commune, Somni develops a written treatise on freedom named 'Declarations', stating that the systems facilitating forms of corporate oppression 'must be dismantled' and 'the laws permitting the systems must be rescinded' (*CA* 362). The treatise suggests the emancipatory role that literary texts can play in promoting cosmopolitan ethics and bringing cross-cultural dialogues into play. And yet, the second half of the narrative reveals a double twist: Somni admits her confessional interview consists of nothing more than scripted events. The anti-corporate faction of Union itself is merely designed to keep an eye on revolutionary activity and ensure purebloods mistrust fabricants, while covertly functioning as 'the enemy required by any hierarchical state for social cohesion' (*CA* 364). Somni, however, acquiesces with Union because she perceives a deeper purpose, namely the publication of her Declarations, which may lead to some future un-fabricated revolution (free of postmodern parody or simulated reality). The memorial artefact of Somni's orison, containing her Declarations, serves as a rejection of her complicity with the state's cultural policies and sparks an unforeseen revolution: '[e]very schoolchild in Nea So Copros knows my twelve "blasphemies" [...] My ideas have

been reproduced a billionfold' (*CA* 364-65). The narrative thus subverts the popular

contention that history is written by the victors as Somni's Declarations destabilise the

unethical practices of the state. Through Somni's ethical treatise, Mitchell envisions an

answer to Skrbiš and Woodward's query of whether 'non-human entities possess, and even

convey, the seeds of cosmopolitan bonds' (9). As an 'other', Somni is not oppositional and

threatening, but rather (like Autua before her) becomes an ethical model for both human

and posthuman futures, blending the natural and the technological. Posthuman ethical

agency, then, becomes the key to transcending corporate predacity and emancipating

humanity from the cyclical repetition of dystopic social entropy.

The ecological destruction and technological experimentation in the chapter not

only force us to reimagine the present as merely a stage in the determinate future, but as

the dystopian future of a promising past. An exploration of cosmopolitan ethics, from the

subversion of a futuristic posthuman perspective, suggests a new analogy on contemporary

existence itself, characterised by the imposition of the technological for monetary gain and

the dissolution of local identities and communities by homogenising corpocracy. The post-

materialist ethics evident in Somni's Declarations have real-world applicability, operating

more in harmony with ecological sustainability than the progressive materialism of

neoliberal corpocracy, while offering 'a rival model for life outside corpocratic ideology'

(*CA* 349). Yet Mitchell ensures this speculate futuristic commune, functioning as a social

alternative to corpocracy, is 'no bucolic Utopia [...] the colonists bicker and grieve as

people will. But they do it in a community. Nea So Copros has no communities; it only has

the state' (*CA* 347). Despite the development of participatory and locally relational

grassroots structures (facilitating forms of community-orientated governance as well as

exerting subversive influence on the practices of dominant political institutional

structures), by failing to bring that vision into reality, Somni remains a sui generis citizen

who must wait for her cosmopolitan world to materialise. Nevertheless, Somni's rebellion is pregnant with hopeful possibility for what active individual agency can achieve against the rampant forces of global commodification. By imagining new configurations by which society may overcome cultural disconnection and forms of oppression, Mitchell develops a novel form of posthuman cosmopolitanism that is beyond the scope of this study.

'Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After' – the central uninterrupted narrative in the novel – is set in the distant post-technological future of 'An Orison of Somni~451'. Zachry, a goat herder, looks back on his life, recalling how the ancestors of his tribe moved to Big I on Ha-Why, a post-apocalyptic version of Hawaii, to escape a nuclear holocaust which has destabilised civilisation. Humanity's regression to a primitive state ensures Zachry's tribe do not possess the means to escape from their island environment – their isolated locality becomes 'the world' and global catastrophe resets human progress to a default position. Nevertheless, Zachry's island is not an Eden of new beginnings. The most precious item the islanders possess is a solitary clock, their last remaining connection to a pre-Fall past: 'Civ'lise needs time, an' if we let this clock die, time'll die too, an' then how can we bring back the Civ'lized Days as it was b'fore the Fall?' (*CA* 257). The island is one of the last remaining enclaves for human survivors, inhabited by Zachry's primitivistic tribe – the Valleymen – and their rivals, the rapacious Kona. Zachry's tribe practice the same communal values as Somni's own eco-community, striving to become self-sufficient and ecologically sustainable. The cosmopolitan ideals of openness and tolerance are evident in their dealings with the Prescients, a more technologically-advanced tribe from a distant island, who search for potential post-Fall environments to inhabit. The Prescients arrange for a female member of their tribe, Meronym, to spend a year with the Valleymen to appreciate their society and customs. Meronym effectively becomes a futuristic ethnographer, researching and evaluating her new cultural environment while reciprocally

educating the tribe on healthcare, history and socio-cultural practices – a form of cosmopolitan engagement in a post-apocalyptic setting. The necessity for humanity to learn from its avaricious past is the most important lesson she imparts to the Valleymen: 'human hunger birthed the Civ'lize, but human hunger killed it too' (*CA* 286). Meronym is not the typical coloniser espousing a faux-cosmopolitan outlook, but actively engages with Zachry's community to ensure human progress, positioning her as the ethical counterpoint to humanity's predisposition towards cyclical entropy.[19] Further, Meronym singularly voices Mitchell's more cosmopolitan hopes for the future through a strong belief in forgiveness and cultural acceptance: '[s]ome savages what I knowed got a beautsome Civ'lized heart beatin' in their ribs. Maybe some Kona [...] who knows one day? One day' (*CA* 319). By revealing that Somni was merely a posthuman clone and not a deity, however, she shatters Zachry's cultural beliefs and he begins to visualise Old Georgie pressuring him to kill Meronym: '[s]he ain't your tribe! Ain't even your color! (*CA* 292). Zachry's decision to throw his spear away, rather than murder Meronym, symbolises a rejection of humanity's cyclical predatory past and indicates a potential movement towards human progress and cultural openness, foregrounding cosmopolitan interconnection over postmodern dissolution.

Nonetheless, the chapter indicates that Somni's proposed desire for a harmonious form of planetary citizenship has not come to fruition. Zachry's narrative exhibits the cyclical re-emergence of tribes and nations, reminiscent of Adam Ewing's nineteenth-century journal. That being said, Somni's 'Declarations' were evidently successfully

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[19] The etymological construction of Meronym's name indicates her unique role in the novel. Linguistically, the similar term 'metonym' refers to a part of something used to refer to the whole, thus alluding to Mitchell's intratextual repetition of themes and characters. The mutually relational process of metonymy informs the novel's structural interconnectedness as a whole.

implemented at some stage in history; the Valleymen consider Somni to be their only

benevolent and compassionate deity. Somni's belief in the interconnection of

transmigatory souls has also survived the apocalypse: when a Valleyman dies 'she'd take

his soul an' lead it back into a womb somewhere in the Valleys. Time was we mem'ried

our gone lifes, times was we cudn't' (*CA* 255). Meronym possesses the comet-shaped

birthmark shared by the protagonists of the previous five chapters: the final descendent of

the transmigratory soul that has transcended the ages. Ironically, Meronym herself is

unaware of this connection, despite possessing Somni's orison, believing that 'when you

die you die an' there ain't no comin' back'; it is Zachry who recognises the potential

interconnectivity of the soul, believing Meronym to be the reincarnation of Somni: '[s]ouls

cross the skies o' time [...] like clouds crossin' skies o' the world' (*CA* 318). The adherence

to Somni's cosmopolitan ideals within Zachry's society are offset by the conceptual figure

of Old Georgie – the abstract embodiment of human predacity and counterpart to

cosmopolitan dispositions throughout the novel. Old Georgie reflects the 'hunger in the

hearts o' humans, yay, a hunger for more', and metaphorically claims an individual's soul

if they 'b'haved savage-like an' selfy an' spurned the civ'lize' (*CA* 286, 255). The

oppositional tendencies of Old Georgie are practised by the rival tribe, the cannibalistic

Kona, who begin a systematic military invasion of Ha-Why (their expansionist policy

mirrors the brutal extermination of the Moriori in Adam's chapter). The Kona's subsequent

destruction of the solitary clock, the Valleymen's last connection with pre-Fall civilisation,

symbolises the brutal annihilation of a community's history, customs and practices,

extinguishing both cultural identity and collective memory.

A cyclical return to the oral culture of storytelling in Zachry's chapter endeavours

to recapture the past through the maintenance of collective memory, simultaneously

ensuring that locally relational forms of cultural experience are maintained. As Appiah

identifies, 'evaluating stories together is one of the central human ways of learning to align our responses to the world', which is 'in turn, one of the ways we maintain the social fabric' (*Ethics* 29). Tellingly, it is this uninterrupted chapter positioned at the heart of the novel that employs an oral narrative. Oral narratives emerge as the most communal means of forging connection and continuity within the flow of a seemingly fragmented historical past. The ethical lessons of history, then, are utilised as fuel for viable future progress. However, Zachry's descendants also use Somni's orison to view the past – the fulcrum around which the passage of time is reversed in the novel, responsible for synthesising the heterogeneous, labyrinthine edifice into a harmonious whole. The orison acts as a technological beacon of hope for a society effectively ruined by globalisation and the will to power. Bearing in mind Somni's rejection of technological oppression, Eaglestone recognises how *Cloud Atlas* 'finds in technology both the forms of endless predation and destruction and the forms by which something, perhaps very little, can be saved' (99). The last chronological moments in the novel concern Meronym defending Zachry from the Kona (a clear parallel to Autua's defence of Adam) and fleeing Ha-Why before the Kona begin their invasion. Despite the prevalence of cosmopolitan dispositions in the chapter, brutal forms of oppression continue to dictate humanity's future. And yet, Zachry's oral narrative endures; as the lone survivor of his tribe, Zachry's storytelling becomes, like Somni's orison, the memorial cultural artefact through which to perceive the past. As Berman argues, the only way for a community 'to create itself anew is to retell both its own stories and those of other places, and to recognize in them their common relationship to their own past and to the lives of others' (19). Zachry not only ensures that the lessons of his own culture survive, but the lessons of Somni and thus earlier periods of history (represented by the preceding narratives). By utilising cosmopolitan memory to render the past, present and future into a coherent temporality, the thematic content therefore mirrors

the novel's architecture in marking a movement away from postmodernism's practice of structural fragmentation.

Somni and Zachry's technological and post-technological narratives, framing the events of a nuclear apocalypse, do not simply envision a dystopian catastrophe, but question and reformulate the communal structures which could be established in these environments (and the ecological means of sustaining such structures). Zachry's narrative is essentially a post-apocalyptic future of Somni's dystopian narrative which is nevertheless simultaneously grounded in the utopian hopes of communal togetherness. Dillon claims that Somni's narrative in particular testifies to 'a posthuman vision that transcends postmodernism by introducing a philosophical dimension that goes beyond the individual level to a more collective one' ('Introducing' 18). She goes on to position *Cloud Atlas* as part of 'an emerging trend in contemporary British fiction demonstrating utopian "moments of possibility" that network between various geographical spaces and historical times', employing 'emerging cosmopolitan identities to reveal the possibilities and impossibilities of utopian writing in the twenty-first century' (16, 17). In spite of these moments of cosmopolitan connectivity, *Cloud Atlas* fails to trend definitively towards either utopian or dystopian antipodes. Rather, as Schoene argues, Mitchell's various narrative temporalities and spatialities construct a 'cosmopolitan vision [that] never deteriorates into facile utopianism', appraising and evaluating forms of inclusive community which are not yet achievable or articulable in the contemporary environment (*Novel* 102). The accelerated pace of post-millennial globalised life means that Mitchell's futuristic visions can be perceived as legitimate threats for the contemporary moment. Cosmopolitan values in the novel act as the basis for a global cohesion of transnational communities in the short term, and for the possibility of species survival in the long term. By envisioning the horrors of planetary destruction as a result of technological or military

apocalypse, *Cloud Atlas* can be placed alongside other contemporary novels exploring tentative futures, such as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006). Whereas the individuals in *The Road* only survive to witness the bleak withering of humanity, Mitchell's more cosmopolitan novel explores the dimly-lit hopes of the new century; the global multitude resist an approaching planetary finitude to imagine a future which frees itself from the shackles of the past. The novel avoids a post-millennial, self-defeating apocalypticism (indicating the collapse of civilisation and planetary destruction as the endgame of humanity's entropic trajectory), but rather focuses on the death-spiral of outdated global paradigms which fail to address the changing nature and desperate inequalities of contemporary globalised life. As Emily Horton recognises, '[c]osmopolitanism […] affirms the double-sidedness of modern global living, which involves hope as well as crisis, and indeed, hope *generated through crisis*' (77). By positioning each historically-dispersed narrative at a crucial moment of socio-political crisis or cultural transition, *Cloud Atlas* suggests a need for greater sensitivity to the lives of future citizens and the globalised concerns of the world they must inherit.

Cosmopolitanism in Postmodernism's Clothing

'While the postmodern challenge embraced relativism of cultural positions and the play of cultural difference, the cosmopolitan identity adds an unswerving ethical component, based on exposure to, and experience of, the cultural other' (Skrbiš and Woodward 16).

If we accept Jean-Francois Lyotard's prominent definition of the postmodern, which concerns 'incredulity towards metanarratives', then this problematises the positioning of *Cloud Atlas* as a postmodern text (xxiv).[20] As Thomas Docherty notes, metanarratives

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[20] See Dunlop.

'deny the specificity of the local and traduce it in the interests of a global homogeneity' (11). A postmodern reading of the novel would perceive the Russian-doll narrative structure to be eternally recursive, with humanity's cyclical rise and fall indicative of the impossibility for a more cosmopolitan society to be realised. In this sense, *Cloud Atlas* continues the tradition of postmodernity; the interrupted narratives demonstrate a form of fragmentation while the disparate manifestations of the same soul suggest the hybridity of human identity. The postmodern trickiness of Mitchell's narrative mechanisms, however, fails to weaken the novel's intrinsic ethical sensibilities. The connective tissue of cosmopolitan memory prevents an infinite en abyme system; Zachry's uninterrupted central narrative (around which the temporal-design of the novel revolves) offers salvation from the broken history of the past and narrative recursivity. As Ashcroft identifies, memory can function as 'the vehicle of potentiality rather than stasis. This is the potentiality of return, when the past adumbrates a future that transforms the present' (83). Therefore, although the chapters are momentarily suspended by the narrative structure, they ultimately coalesce to form a larger configuration of human history in which cosmopolitan communication is conducive to progress. Narrative displacement in *Cloud Atlas* is indicative of the extent to which an individual's life is caught up in the lives of global others. The novelist Douglas Coupland recently claimed that *Cloud Atlas* was an example of 'a new literary genre' he terms 'Translit' (n.pag.). Novels in this emerging genre cross 'history without being historical; they span geography without changing psychic place', inserting 'the contemporary reader into other locations and times, while leaving no doubt that its viewpoint is relentlessly modern and speaks entirely of our extreme present' (n.pag.). He goes on to argue that the cultural connectivity engendered through spatial and temporal nomadism is not merely 'some sort of postmodern party trick [...] more a statement of fact about the early-21st-century condition' (n.pag.). Rather like

Ghostwritten, to perceive the separate chapters of *Cloud Atlas* as fragmentary is to ignore both their intratextual connectivity and open-ended nature, and to understand the novel is to embrace and integrate these conflicting interpretations of the narrative structure.

Consequently, Dillon contends that a general consensus has been reached regarding Mitchell's literary positioning: 'while Mitchell employs postmodern literary techniques, he does not adhere to the apolitical and anti-social nihilism of postmodernity with its ironic take on modern life and its paradoxical insistence on the inadequateness of narrative, language and literature' ('Introducing' 18). The narrative structure of *Cloud Atlas* is predominantly responsible for complicating both the issue of the narrative's 'end' and the dichotomy between fragmentary and collective visions of global commonality. The palindromic narrative trajectory means that later chapters impact on the actions of earlier chapters – a reminder that futures are still open and subject to individual agency. For Boxall, the novel epitomises an ethical movement towards 'an expanded form in which we might see the world whole, and an opposite tendency towards fragmentation, towards a kind of broken failure of collective sight' (191). Following this reasoning, should temporality take priority, making the most futuristic chapter, 'Sloosha's Crossin', the narrative denouement? Or, alternatively, should the novel's counter-factual textual structure take prominence, with Ewing's concluding narrative returning to its cyclical beginnings and indicating a fresh start (or, more accurately, retreat)?[21] Certainly, the novel requires constant recontextualisation regarding the sequential ordering of the chapters in order to forge some semblance of linearity. Structurally, then, there are also inherent weaknesses in defining *Cloud Atlas* as a celebration of cosmopolitan cultural

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[21] Mitchell has stressed his ambivalence regarding civilisational progress in the future: 'Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays I view the world in a bleak way. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays I view it in an optimistic way. And Sundays I take the day off' (Mullan n.pag.).

interconnection. As the nuclear disaster and imperial practices demonstrate, epochal shifts repeatedly fail to result in progressive ethical advancement – there is historical evolution without the developmental logic that naturally follows. As a result, *Cloud Atlas* rejects the Kantian teleology of an inexorable movement towards a cosmopolitan union of diverse peoples. For Hélène Machinal, the 'motif of historical recurrence' disrupts 'the deterministic view of History as progress' (135). The narrative structure's counter-factual cosmopolitanism is itself a form of admission that cosmopolitan ideals have *not* prevailed while new globalised versions of oppression and imperialism attain planetary dominance.

Cosmopolitan Futures

'We are obliged to talk about the interdependencies across the globe in a planetary way, in which more or less everybody is in the swim of history and connected with one another. Of course, connected in deeply unequal ways' (Hall 345).

Boxall contends that the twenty-first century novel 'finds itself charged with the task of building worlds, of producing forms in which the globe might be seen entire, and in which the contradictions between residual and emergent forms might be reconciled' (189). As if to answer this charge, *Cloud Atlas* reimagines an inter-generational planetary community to escape the existing inequalities governing cultural relations, emphasising the necessity for a cognitive shift to viable alternate systems of global governance to meet the emerging

post-millennial environment.[22] New configurations of communal integration are required

which appreciate the interpenetrating nature of global communities and the solidarity

required in facing the cosmopolitical threats of the globalised world, positioning planetary

ethical concerns at their very core. *Cloud Atlas* therefore follows Hopper in perceiving the

cosmopolitan individual as 'a reflexive self-constituting subject, formed from numerous

cultural experiences and allegiances' (65). Further, the reconfiguration and relationality

between diverse geographic narratives and historical epochs indicates how cosmopolitan

virtues can assist in overcoming such cultural difference; as a result, Douzinas's claim that

the underlying principle of cosmopolitanism should concern how 'common needs and aims

are differently realised in different circumstances' is thus realised in narrative form

(*Human Rights* 175).

And yet, in the novel, Mitchell avoids creating a revolutionary model to overcome

the inequalities of the contemporary global system; instead, both localised and

transnational cooperation are suggested as a prerequisite for building a more progressive

cosmopolitan community, inducing global solidarity and ensuring humanity's survival.

The transformed subjectivities and differing forms of cosmopolitan connectivity forged by

Adam, Somni and Zachry, respectively, envision ways in which global change may be

implemented individually, collaboratively, and institutionally. The novel's heterogeneous

narrators therefore suggest the emergence of a cosmopolitan multitude which operates

from within locally relational environments and can enact change from below. For this

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[22] Mitchell's most recent novel, *The Bone Clocks*, continues his preoccupation with ethical engagement, indicating how the concept of cosmopolitanism can be applied to science-fiction. By envisioning a universal war between two fantastical cults, the idealistic 'Horologists' and rapacious 'soul-decanters', the novel positions the history of civilisation itself to have been a struggle between ethical cosmopolitanism and cannibalistic self-reservation. Through his genre-spanning fiction, Mitchell therefore demonstrates literature's unique capacity to extend cosmopolitanism in new and innovative directions, opening possibilities for future discussions of the term.

reason, several critics have noted that the collective assemblage of networked individuals in *Cloud Atlas*, contesting systems of power, bears resemblance to Hardt and Negri's conceptualisation of the multitude.[23] The connectivities of *Cloud Atlas* reflect the 'constellations of singularities' of the multitude, enabling a form of discursive power to emerge from the global organism of distinct subjectivities and engendering a social transformation of existing collectivities (*Empire* 60). For Hardt and Negri, the notion of the multitude is intrinsically linked to processes of globalisation. *Ghostwritten* also explores the emergence of the 'new subjects' of the global multitude, who are connected and united to unprecedented levels, and reflect a cultural nomadism strengthened by 'new circuits of cooperation and collaboration that stretch across nations and continents […] for an unlimited number of encounters' (*Multitude* xiii). These collaborations are mobilised by their localised resistance to destructive globalising processes and work against hegemonic power-structures. More importantly, the phantasmagoric nature of the narrative unites all historical eras into a planetary community that transcends temporal or spatial embodiments. By connecting the protagonist of each chapter with the comet birthmark motif, *Cloud Atlas* ascribes to what Braidotti terms a 'nomadic cosmopolitan philosophy' which 'enlists affectivity, memory and the imagination to the crucial task of inventing new figurations and new ways of representing the complex subjects we have become. The key method is an ethics of respect for diversity that procures mutually interdependent nomadic subjects' ('Becoming' 24). The novel's narrators, as nomadic subjects, thus form a cosmopolitan community that transcends national and generational boundaries. As Braidotti emphasises, this:

> nomadic version of the subject as a time continuum and a collective assemblage
>
> implies a double commitment, on the one hand to processes to change and on the

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[23] See Childs and Green 'Nine Parts'; Edwards.

other to a strong sense of community […] Our co-presence, that is to say the

simultaneity of our being in the world together sets the tune for the ethics of our

interaction. Our ethical relation requires us to synchronize the perception and

anticipation of our shared, common condition. A transversal form of shared

relational bonding emerges from this. (22)

Through such a 'collectively distributed consciousness' nomadic subjects thereby become

'attuned to a shared planetary condition' which actualises 'new forms of cosmopolitan

belonging' and foregrounds the importance of ethicality (19).[24]

     Mitchell's novels ultimately demonstrate a post-millennial rerouting of postcolonial

or postmodern literary paradigms towards a more planetary state of interdependency – a

twenty-first century encapsulation of both the notion of global multitude and global

finitude. The potential for the human project is examined against inequalities of the human

condition, offering two directions for the novel and the future – neither utopian nor

dystopian – merely mediated pragmatic realities for a world in transition. A future

environment is required which still retains locally relational ties, but is sensitive to the

burgeoning interconnectivity of transnational networks; cultural identities are singular, but

forced to acknowledge a form of shared belonging. A world culture is envisioned in which

global crises require both active individual agency and engagement at the micro-level (a

cosmopolitanism from below), and collective solutions across borders through macro-level

institutional structures (a cosmopolitanism from above), to imagine the cosmopolitan

futures that might be built from our fragile contemporary moment. As Hall argues, if

society fails to progress towards 'the more open horizon pioneered by "cosmopolitanism

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[24] In this way, the novel also reflects James Lull's related notion of 'transculturation', a process by which 'cultural forms literally move through time and space where they interact with other cultural forms and settings, influence each other, produce new forms, and change the cultural settings', thus creating 'cultural *hybrids* – the fusing of cultural forms' (242-43, 243).

from below"', it will find itself 'driven either to homogenisation from above or to the retreat into the bunker and the war of all against all' – alternatives central to *Cloud Atlas* in particular (348). Further, *Cloud Atlas* emphasises that potential global futures do not necessitate utopian communities – moral values fail to run parallel to socio-cultural, political or technological developments. While the trans-territorial narrative structures of the novels certainly point towards the inclusion and celebration of otherness and multiplicity that characterise transnational forms of life (creating new dynamics for transcending geographical and cultural divides), Mitchell retains an acute awareness of the unfeasibility of cultural harmony. The globe is imagined as a single space of co-existence, but one governed by deeply unequal relations and systems of power. Notably, the novels reflect the failure, not the success, of existing institutional structures and socio-cultural networks. In this sense, *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas* could be perceived as companion pieces due to their thematic similarity and their empathetic responses to the heterogeneity of human experience. Both novels certainly support Elisabeth Kirtsoglou's conception of cosmopolitanism as 'an alternative form of globalized thinking, produced by disenfranchised subjects who are concerned with political and ideological hegemony', and which explores the 'types of resistance that emerge from alternative cosmopolitan visions' (170). However, cosmopolitan ethics in the novels are also activated by working *through* globalising processes. Global forms of interconnection provide the means for social actors to become emancipated from systems of exploitation and oppression, resulting in new configurations of cultural interdependence and a radical restructuring of global society. In Mitchell's novels, then, globalisation operates as a catalyst to both encourage and obstruct the spread of cosmopolitan ideals. Likewise, Mitchell neither definitively endorses nor rejects the infringement of cosmopolitanisation on localised experience, he merely suggests that the resolution of global crises and conflicts must be addressed on a collective

scale in a condition of cultural reflexivity – all localities are now glocalities open to and affected by the globalised world.

In an interview at the Royal Geographical Society in 2014, Mitchell emphasised that the theme of interconnection is equally evident in earlier periods of literature, but that his writing paid attention to the contemporary world as a 'compost heap' of differing influences and increased cultural presences ('Guardian Reader' n.pag.). Appropriately, the cosmopolitanisation of communities across historical eras in the novels is not simply the product and corollary of the contemporary moment. Rather, recent global developments merely contribute to its intensification. *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas* indicate that nineteenth-century imperialism and millennial globalisation (via American hegemony) adumbrate as one and the same disease. *Cloud Atlas* in particular interrogates the ties between imperialism and globalisation, perceiving both to be motivated by excesses of xenophobia, predacity and greed. The novel rests on this uneasy balance between humanity's capacity for both mutual antagonism and cosmopolitan values. Cosmopolitanism thus emerges as the preventative measure to the perpetuation of humanity's tendency towards self-cannibalisation. Moreover, both novels operate as narrative imaginings of Beck's 'world risk society' in which '[g]lobal dangers set up global mutualities', necessitating a 'cosmopolitical realism' founded on 'the recognition of the legitimate interests of others' ('World Risk' 2). There are, however, clear differences between the imaginative spaces of the two novels. While the narrators in *Ghostwritten* simply find themselves connected by global forces beyond their control, in *Cloud Atlas* global interdependencies heighten an ethical awareness of otherness. In *Ghostwritten* especially, globalisation works against the related concept of cosmopolitanism, existing as the means by which cultural heterogeneity may be extinguished and local resistance to global forces may be overcome; cosmopolitanism consequently operates as a synonym for

anti-globalisation. By heralding the dangers of a homogenised world culture, globalised discontent is responsible for engendering a consciousness of global interconnectedness and forging new configurations and collectivities, acknowledging the swirl of dissonant heterogeneity required for the emergence of a viable cosmopolitan society. Ultimately, the globalised worlds imagined in both *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas* are neither dependent upon the nation-state, nor fully globalised, but fashion a realistic *global* future from *national* pasts. By combining a cosmopolitan narrative structure with an ethical perspective on cultural engagement, these novels reflect the emerging globality of the twenty-first century narrative. In the next chapter, the study assumes a more local perspective, examining the ways in which cultural connectivities and cosmopolitan values are played out in the London-based fiction of Zadie Smith.

Chapter 2: 'Global Consciousness. Local Consciousness': Cosmopolitan Hospitality and Cultural Agency in Zadie Smith's *NW*

'To live through other people and with other people is the only point there is. There really is nothing else. Well, not to me anyway' (Smith, 'Bookworm' n.pag.).

'Cosmopolitanism without provincialism is empty, provincialism without cosmopolitanism is blind' (Beck, *Vision* 7).

With the publication of her debut novel *White Teeth* in January 2000, Zadie Smith was heralded as the new voice of British literature; her writing initially perceived as a celebratory examination of multicultural relations. *White Teeth* possesses a naive optimism for post-millennial society, envisioning London's potential in establishing a 'Happy Multicultural Land' of transnational associations (*WT* 465). As Smith herself acknowledged: '[e]nd-of-the-century books catch people in an end-of-the-century mood. The possibility of a community which involved so many different people and could be workable was a very optimistic idea' ('Masterpiece Theatre' n.pag.).[25] The novel's vision of harmonious interaction between transnational communities was undeniably marred by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and July 7, 2005. The atrocities made certain quarters of British society suspicious of harmonious integration and reshaped the cultural and thematic sensibilities of contemporary literature. *White Teeth*'s critical engagement with cultural hybridity, national trauma and marginalisation originally led to Smith being positioned as a postcolonial author. From the outset, she rejected this designation and felt uncomfortable being placed alongside authors such as Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi. Smith complains that critics interpret her writing to be making some form of statement

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[25] Smith has since stated that she was 'straight out wrong' in assuming that cultural differences 'could be overcome' so easily ('Naughtie' n.pag.).

regarding multicultural relations, ignoring that: 'it's not a statement, it's just a reality' ('Multi-culturalism' n.pag.); in doing so, they fail to perceive her characters as *people* as opposed to merely ethnic stereotypes.[26]

At an interview in London in 2013, I asked Smith whether she minded her misplaced literary categorisation as a 'multicultural' author (an inaccurate term she has repeatedly expressed distaste for), questioning whether her work is not more concerned with ethicality in general rather than merely race. Smith acknowledged the importance of ethics to her fiction (name-checking Martha Nussbaum – a strong proponent of cosmopolitan ethics) and definitively rejected the positioning of her work as 'postcolonial' or 'multicultural' ('Guardian Book Club' n.pag.).[27] For Smith, ethnicity is not the sole concern regarding the construction of local communities in multicultural London: 'I don't see the racial difference as the big difference [...] I'm really much more interested in the way people behave to each other, their personal ethics [...] of course, race is a difference, but it's a small difference' ('Multi-culturalism' n.pag.). In this way, Smith echoes Gilroy's identification of a cosmopolitan culture of 'conviviality', picking up from 'where "multiculturalism" broke down', questioning how racial differences can be transcended without ignoring race's inherent power to divide (*Empire* xi). By defining conviviality as: 'the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere', Gilroy ensures the term is not dependent upon racial differences or ethnic categorisation, nor does it suggest 'the absence of racism or the triumph of tolerance' (xi). This chapter will argue

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[26] Several critics, however, have rejected this reading of *White Teeth*. See Bentley.

[27] Smith did accept that literary categorisation often fluctuates, stating: 'I don't mind where I'm gathered, it's fine by me' ('Guardian Book Club' n.pag.). Ironically, Smith is reliably vocal with regards to her literary classification, resisting any pigeon-holing of her work.

that Smith's realistic approach to contemporary urban life similarly concerns such conviviality without resorting to a naive or utopian perception of cultural relations.

Smith's fourth novel, *NW*, interrogates the relevance of cosmopolitan empathy and communal relations in a localised, twenty-first century urban environment. The narrative focuses on the London suburb of Willesden (heralding a return to the bio-geographical spaces of *White Teeth*), an area in which Smith was born and to which she feels a great sense of affiliation. London, as a highly fluid global city, contains one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world. The history of cultural relations is integral to any reading of the novel. During Smith's adolescence in 'the terrible eighties', Tew observes that Thatcherism 'reshaped both London and the wider nation, with its rampant individualism' (*WT* 219; *Zadie* 30-31). Meanwhile, rioting in Brixton and Holloway meant 'London life was far from harmonious generally and more specifically in terms of community race relations' (*NW* 31). By examining social relations in Smith's fictional twenty-first century capital, one can discern the legacy of cultural and ethnic differences which come into close and unavoidable contact, either leading to racial hostility or the tentative construction of a viable cosmopolitan community. The inequalities and tensions of the globalised world, evident in Mitchell's fiction, are played out on a much smaller stage. This chapter will therefore demonstrate how *NW* can be said to reflect Robert Spencer's call for contemporary cosmopolitanism to possess a 'hard-headed awareness of the insufficiently cosmopolitan present with cognisance of the necessity and desirability of a cosmopolitan future' (40).

The novel charts the development of interconnected lives in Willesden, exploring the ways in which ethnicity, class, and personal relationships play a role in the construction and maintenance of localised urban communities in the post-millennial world. *NW* explores the unspoken symmetry and synergy between local and global processes, fusing the

cosmopolitan with the quotidian. The narrative primarily follows the friendship of Leah Hanwell and Keisha (later Natalie De Angelis) Blake, including their extended relations with (and unconscious connections to) fellow Willesden residents Nathan Bogle and Felix Cooper. The interdependent trajectories of these characters function like pebbles dropped in a pond, the actions rippling outward encompassing and connecting other inhabitants of Willesden. The characters navigate their way through the '[u]ngentrified, ungentrifiable' Caldwell housing estate, interrogating the life choices they have made over the course of thirty years in the capital, living in the same 'corner of the city', yet inhabiting 'separate worlds' (*NW* 42; n.pag.). The narrative captures the fluidity of London life by alternating between free indirect discourse, stream-of-consciousness narration, and first- and third-person perspectives, while syntactical and phonetic idiosyncrasies are emphasised as linguistic markers to encapsulate the diversity of ethnic dialects. Territorial belonging is therefore central to the narrative and integral to understanding the complex allegiances between local inhabitants and their neighbourhood.

While the older generation of *White Teeth* continued a tradition of postcolonial displacement, characterised by a lack of agency and belonging, the protagonists of *NW* enjoy a more bounded and abiding relationship with the spaces of their locality. In 2005, in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings, Ken Livingstone (the mayor of London) paid homage to London's multiculturalism, claiming that in the capital 'everybody lives side by side in harmony' (n.pag.). Although *NW* demonstrates a form of territorial belonging for transnational subjects, the narrative rejects the assumption that localised communities are naturally integrated and avoids the contention that all communal ties are overwhelmingly positive or progressive. *NW* evokes post-7/7 London as an interdependent, if fragmented, city space, where openness to cultural difference can create a progressive urban environment. This chapter will examine the practice and viability of localising the ethics of

cosmopolitanism and explore the development of a cosmopolitan outlook from within the transnational spatialities of north-west London. The cosmopolitanisation of local space ensures individuals no longer have to be footloose or mobile to be considered 'cosmopolitan', but can be bounded glocal subjects in a transnational community. Drawing on Smith's own comments regarding race and community, the fictional north-west London of *NW* will be positioned as a microcosm for the kaleidoscopic transnationalism of the twenty-first century, interrogating the difficulties in practising the cosmopolitan ideals of empathy, tolerance and belonging.

Cosmopolitan Empathy and Local Hospitality

'For those who travel, cosmopolitanism may involve an increased ability to cope with newness and uncertainty [...] for those who remain at home it may entail a growing ability to coexist in their habitat with newcomers and strangers' (Hannerz, *Companion* 77).

The narrative introduces Leah Hanwell in the garden of her Caldwell flat, '[f]enced in, on all sides' (*NW* 3). She is subject to a cacophony of other voices impinging on her daily life, creating a claustrophobic atmosphere of otherness from the outset. Leah, a woman of Irish descent, shares her flat with her French-Algerian partner, Michel, who longs to escape the squalor of Willesden and improve his financial situation: '[i]f we ever have a little boy I want him to live somewhere – to live *proud* – somewhere we have the freehold' (*NW* 25). He is well aware of the inequalities within London, accepting it as a fact of contemporary life: 'Michel likes to say: not everyone can be invited to the party. Not this century. Cruel opinion – [Leah] doesn't share it' (*NW* 3). Despite his transnational parentage, Michel feels no empathy for other cultures: 'I'm not like these Jamaicans' who 'still [have] no curtains' (*NW* 26). A social sense of moral responsibility and accountability is instead reflected in

Leah's localised engagement. By demonstrating a commitment to her area, working for a non-profit charity organisation helping local communities, Leah positions cosmopolitanism to require individual agency and performative acts of socio-cultural engagement. The initial chapter, 'Visitation', involves the unexpected appearance of a distressed '[s]ubcontinental' woman named Shar on Leah's doorstep, who claims to need money to visit her ailing mother in hospital (*NW* 16). Leah accepts Shar into her home (the threshold of the doorstep signifying the invisible boundary between detachment and commonality) following Shar's claims of being 'local' and sharing mutual acquaintances from Leah's past. Immediately, then, the narrative also brings into play Jacques Derrida's notion of cosmopolitan hospitality: 'a hospitality invented for the singularity of the new arrival, of the unexpected visitor' (*Hospitality* 83). Opening the door to the 'other' evolves into an act of cosmopolitan solidarity, widening one's capacity for empathetic identification. The incident serves as an analogy for global hospitality at the most micro-level, suggesting the limits of neighbourliness when living in close proximity to others, and drawing Leah out of her initial isolation.

Moreover, Leah's engagement with Shar reflects a 'narrative hospitality' that permeates throughout the novel. Paul Ricoeur argues that 'narrative hospitality' demonstrates a sense of mutuality, reciprocal exchange of perspectives, and empathy for the lives of others (8). Nigel Rapport perceives this 'ethical labour' of narrative hospitality to involve 'an imaginative re-placing of self in other experiences and lives', and a recognition of difference or 'multiplicity' around the self ('Movement' 209, 210). Leah and Shar exist in an urban environment where they can be strangers to one another, yet still 'belong' in their shared home; indeed, Leah has 'seen this face many times in these streets' (*NW* 6). The encounter represents a movement away from postcolonial forms of relationality towards Appiah's positive, forward-thinking 'rooted cosmopolitanism' (also

referred to as cosmopolitan patriotism), which argues for the promotion of local cosmopolitan ethics (involving the inner circles of our family and community) to be broadened and implemented more globally ('Patriots' 91).[28] In this way, Leah demonstrates that she is 'as faithful in her allegiance to this two-mile square of the city as other people are to their families, or their countries' (*NW* 5). Leah's devotion mirrors Smith's own allegiance to north-west London, who has defined her own fiction as: 'writing obsessively about two miles of town […] It's just love, right? You write about what you care about' ('Bollen' n.pag.). The empathy practised by Leah by offering Shar both money and hospitality is an act of cosmopolitan patriotism that recognises the necessity for locally relational forms of belonging and interaction in order for cosmopolitan ideals to be transferred externally and globally. As Seyla Benhabib argues, acknowledging the necessity of cosmopolitan ideals does not entail: 'eliminating local differences or dismissing attachments to these to those nearest to us; it means enlarging the compass of our moral sympathy ever wider so that more and more human beings appear to us as "concrete other" for whose right as "generalized others" we are willing to speak up and fight' (193). The incident also demonstrates that cosmopolitan dispositions may be fostered without mobility, distinguishing cosmopolitanism from acting as a synonym for transnationalism. The cosmopolitan sensibilities inherent in the narrative, therefore, move beyond what John Clement Ball would term a displacement of '*roots to* places' in favour of 'a more dynamic focus on *routes among* places – a more pluralized and relational concept of place-identity' (69).

Leah's empathy is nevertheless at odds with that of her community. Shar's lament – 'I'm saying *help me* – no one did a fucking thing' – affirms the absence of communal

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[28] 'Rooted cosmopolitanism' was coined by Mitchell Cohen, who notes that the term interrogates a 'plurality of loyalties' which are 'not easily harmonized' (483).

affinity in Willesden; the majority of the community 'wouldn't piss on you if you was on fire' (*NW* 6, 12). The relevance of opening the narrative from Leah's secluded garden becomes apparent, being emblematic of the community in which she resides. Willesden's residents may 'live communally but she is the only one who thinks communally' (*NW* 67). The 'ivy from the estate' smothering all other vegetation reflects the absence of communal ethics in London society at large, but the apple tree in Leah's garden 'grows despite them all, unaided', demonstrating how an absence of communal solidarity fails to dampen her cosmopolitan empathy (*NW* 67). Smith's omniscient narrator is aware that in London 'kindness is rare' and that '[t]his is not the country for making a stranger tea' – yet due to citizens like Leah '[t]here is goodwill' (*NW* 8). By focusing on the similarities she shares with Shar, rather than the differences, Leah bridges the socio-cultural divides permeating London society. Further, her kindness demonstrates that cosmopolitan engagement is often more realisable through the banal associations of day-to-day life. Therefore, while still demonstrating a localised form of cosmopolitan engagement, this specific encounter falls most precisely into Paul Gilroy's conception of 'a "vulgar" or "demotic" cosmopolitanism' from below, through which 'cosmopolitan attachments' find 'ethical value in the process of exposure to otherness' and which 'glories in the ordinary virtues [...] that can be cultivated when mundane encounters with difference become rewarding' (*Empire* 75). The incident also indicates that achievable cosmopolitan ideals should enable the development of mutuality, often even through superficial engagement, rather than a transformation of social relations and interaction.

Leah and Shar's subjective differences should prove to be disjunctive, combative and conflictive, but instead their conversation produces a strangely neutralising effect in a dynamic social space of connection and interaction. They appear as 'old friends on a winter's night [...] The door is open, every window is open', positioning the mundane

encounter as an act of cosmopolitan openness (*NW* 11). Leah's act of hospitality thus positions the cultural performance of tolerance and understanding as integral components of the ethically cosmopolitan subject. This private scene of openness and reciprocity is the catalyst for the emergence of related characters later in the narrative – Shar admits to still seeing Nathan Bogle in the area (neglecting to mention their connection revolves around the illegal sale of drugs) and recalls Natalie Blake as being '[u]p herself. Coconut' (*NW* 9). Such racial stereotyping and ethnic labelling in *NW* impede the development of commonality between individuals, and serves as the first indication of Shar's anti-cosmopolitan tendencies. The practice of cosmopolitan empathy in the novel fails to engender the dissolution of prejudices and stereotypes, pointing to inherent cultural and racial divisions. Following the encounter, Leah fails to discern Shar's manipulation, refusing to accept that Shar borrowed money from her for drugs, having fabricated the story about the hospital. Leah's mother pessimistically claims that she should have had more children so Leah would possess 'a better understanding of human nature' (*NW* 16). Only a week later, another drug addict appears on Leah's doorstep to take advantage of her good nature, this time '[t]oo far gone to remember her lines' (*NW* 23). Leah subsequently begins to doubt her sympathetic tendencies and regret her altruism, ironically doodling 'I AM SO FULL OF EMPATHY' at work – an environment in which she constantly feels isolated and excluded (*NW* 29). Leah is the only white woman in an office of Afro-Caribbean women, who resent her relationship with French-Algerian Michel: 'the women in our community [...] when we see one of our lot with someone like you it's a real issue' (*NW* 29).

In *NW* the tenets and values of cosmopolitanism are shaken and interrogated constantly. As Bianca Leggett argues, the novel emphasises that empathy itself is 'a problematic guiding principle in the attempt to create a [...] heterogeneous cosmopolitan

society' (n.pag.). And yet, Beck emphasises that the '[r]ecognition of cosmopolitan differences' and 'resulting cosmopolitan conflict' from cultural encounters are constitutive of 'the cosmopolitan outlook', and should not destabilise the project of cosmopolitan empathy (*Vision* 7). Arguably, Leah's initial acceptance of Shar is a temporally-framed embrace of otherness – inviting the other into the home based on the Derridean concept of hospitality – but not a practice that requires extension outside of this context. It is Leah's *continued* efforts after the event that are indicative of her ethical nature. Notably, even after her exploitation, Leah encounters Shar again in the street and offers to help with her drug addiction. She is free to disengage herself from the temporary connection with Shar at any point but chooses not to do so. Although the encounter does not entirely cancel our sense of Leah's estrangement, it suggests a relational process of social negotiation that allows her to be temporarily inclusive. Her concentration on developing cross-cultural commitments within an apathetic community, both in her public and private life, implies the belief that communities are formed by routine acts of individual agency, rather than existing as ready-made cultural constructions. While on a bus, 'Leah stares at a red bindi until it begins to blur [...] taking up all of her vision until she feels she has entered the dot, passing through it, emerging into a more gentle universe, parallel to our own, where people are fully and intimately known to each other' (*NW* 39). Her longing for interconnection and mutuality throughout the text reflects Smith's own stated desire to experience a form of cultural transposability: 'I urgently want to be everybody else all the time' ('Twitter' n.pag.). Leah's subsequent sighting of Shar in various locations around Willesden suggests the claustrophobic interdependence of lives in 'NW, a small place', evident in the mixing-up of Shar and Leah's photographs at the pharmacy (*NW* 84). As Beck notes, the formation of cosmopolitan empathy directly concerns this 'interchangeability of situations (as both an opportunity and a threat)' (*Vision* 7). Such multiplicity fractures the belief that individuals

possess a singular and static identity, unaffected by external cultural influence. On this basis, Leah's cryptic existential assertion that 'I am the sole author of the dictionary that defines me' acknowledges both an ownership of her identity and a need for the substantiality of self (*NW* 3). Following Rapport's reasoning on the nature of cultural identity in general, it can be said that Leah evinces 'in otherness' versions of herself, indicating the 'mutualities of playing hosts and guests to one another' ('Movement' 208).

The narrative consistently indicates the limitations of socio-cultural agency or ethical idealism in relating to the lives of others. Leah's acts of cosmopolitan empathy fail to empower Shar's financial or physical condition, while the callousness of the city affects Leah's belief in the merits of an ethical approach to her fellow neighbours. The calligram of an apple tree in the novel with its '[n]etwork of branches, roots [...] The fuller, the more fruitful. The more the worms. The more the rats', acknowledges Leah's shifting and increasingly pessimistic view on cultural relations in the capital (*NW* 24). While the life cycle of the tree possibly suggests the potential for change and reconciliation with herself and her community ('[n]ew apples. Same tree? Born and bred. Same streets. Same Girl? Next step'), by beginning to desire reciprocity for her actions, she reveals her cosmopolitan engagement to be a form of conditional (rather than unconditional) hospitality, restricted by an acute awareness of the stark realities of urban life (*NW* 24). With Michel's help she eventually accosts a man they assume to be one of Shar's drug-dealing friends in an attempt to reclaim their money. The man subsequently kicks and kills their dog, Olive. The brutal encounter denies Leah the cultural hospitality she herself espouses, and she is forced to watch helplessly as other London residents turn away from the scene: in 'the corner of her eye she observes a young white couple in suits crossing the road to avoid them. No one will help. She puts her hands together in prayer' (*NW* 92). Due to this chain of events, Michel is finally granted his wish of living a more isolated and wary life, avoiding the

elements of London life which he considers unsavoury. Accordingly, from the perspective of everyday interaction and socialisation, the narrative reflects Rapport and Amit's acknowledgement that cosmopolitanism in general 'may be as much a pragmatic "making do" as an ethical stance' (xii). The initial act of cosmopolitan empathy by Leah has directly led to a less cosmopolitan approach to her local community, indicating the delicate balance of racial and socio-cultural tensions governing the capital's urban spaces. As a result, the couple's isolation is exacerbated following reports of Felix Cooper's stabbing on an otherwise harmonious carnival weekend – a random occurrence that will connect the fates of all four protagonists together.

Cosmopolitan Conviviality

'Many local settings are increasingly characterized by cultural diversity. Those of cosmopolitan inclinations may make selective use of their habitats to maintain their expansive orientation toward the wider world' (Hannerz, *Transnational* 110).

The following chapter, 'Guest', revolves around the movements of the victim Felix, a car mechanic (of Jamaican and Ghanian parentage) and resident of Willesden. Felix is indicative of the socio-economic inequalities existing within London, constantly passing symbols of the capital's wealth to which he is denied: '[s]lick black doors, brass knobs, brass letterboxes' (*NW* 105). Leah's philosophy of empathy, openness and hospitality to her community has not been extended to Felix by the Caldwell housing estate. Crucially, the growing economic inequality in the area problematises the potential for a cultural convergence in human commonality. Felix moves into the area aged eight: 'too late in Caldwell to make good friends. To do that you had to be born and bred' (*NW* 89). Phil Barnes, a 'proper old leftie' and neighbour of Felix's father Lloyd, echoes Leah's

compassion for the people of Willesden and the socio-economic troubles of London in the twenty-first century: 'I believe in the people [...] Not that it's done me any good, but I do. I really do' (*NW* 101). Barnes bemoans the economic decline of London's urban communities, linking the degeneration to an absence of communal engagement and claiming that the current generation of youngsters are not politically engaged. Lloyd, however, is resistant to the possibility of communality; the absence of a doorbell at his flat-entrance suggests 'a new level of surrender' (*NW* 90). Despite being subject to economic and racial inequalities, Lloyd fails to comprehend the reasoning behind such cosmopolitan empathy for other races, questioning why Barnes would want to 'get in on the struggle when it ain't even his struggle' (*NW* 95). Although Felix clearly disagrees with his father's moral outlook, he perceives Barnes's left-wing outlook to belong to a bygone era, an impractical response to the everyday experience and stark realism of contemporary urban life. In turning away from both of these opposing ideologies, Felix instead acts as the mouthpiece for Smith's own cautiously pragmatic attitude towards intercultural relations: 'I'm more about the day-to-day' (*NW* 101).

The majority of Felix's narrative concerns his relationship with Annie Bedford, an aging, white, upper-class drug-addict. The encroaching cosmopolitanisation of her local community, coupled with her drug abuse, convinces Annie that her own apartment 'was France [...] I felt I needed a passport to cross the room' (*NW* 127). As Mica Nava identifies, contemporary London is increasingly characterised by these 'hybrid, post-multicultural, lived transformations which are the outcome of diasporic cultural mixing and indeterminacy' (13). Annie is the microcosmic embodiment of Middle England xenophobia resisting such ethnic infiltration. Her palpable belief in the reified and concrete nature of identity, cultural or otherwise, contrasts sharply with the novel's cosmopolitan fluidity, indicating the ethno-phobic perspective of individuals who continue to perceive

British society as a monoculture. In perceiving cultural diversity as a cancer upon her failing and increasingly restricted empire, Annie recognises that her own meagre dwelling is under threat from foreign bodies, as ethnic difference not only surrounds her but begins to intrude upon her private life. The fear of ethnic infiltration unsettles her already fragile psyche; she neurotically interprets Westminster council's questions regarding her claim for assistance to be a ploy to displace and supplant her with a Russian who will pay higher rent. A Norwegian sub-agent who works for the landlord attempts to force Annie to contribute to the shared areas of the building. Annie merely proclaims that she avoids the other tenants: 'I barely use the stairs. It may be a "shared area" but I don't use it', and notes that the man possesses a 'funny accent', calling him 'Mr – I can't possibly pronounce that name' (*NW* 125). She goes on to mistake Norway's financial troubles for those of Iceland, admitting: 'I always get the Nordic ones sort of...' before tangling 'her fingers together' (*NW* 126). Annie's evident ethnocentrism acts as a diametrically opposed force to Leah's cosmopolitan empathy in the narrative, indicating how a concentration on ethnic difference alone destabilises and obstructs cultural engagement.

According to Gilroy, contemporary society needs to interrogate: 'what sorts of insight and reflection might actually help increasingly differentiated societies and anxious individuals to cope successfully with the challenges involved in dwelling comfortably in proximity to the unfamiliar without becoming fearful and hostile' (*Empire* 3). Felix's presence in Annie's flat, however, fails to indicate the progression of intercultural relations in post-millennial London. The dilapidated state of Annie's decaying realm is reflected in her mental well-being. She becomes an agoraphobic from within the polyphony of multicultural London and avoids living with alterity by psychologically holding the world at bay. As a result, Felix begins to suspect the true reason for Annie's increasingly restricted mobility: she 'wasn't really afraid of open spaces, she was afraid of what might

happen between her and the other people in them' (*NW* 127). By remaining resistant to hospitality and ill-disposed to difference, Annie embodies a nationalistic outlook, intent on keeping the hostile 'other' excluded from her life. The entropic nature of Annie's insular existence is strengthened by her biological decrepitude and sexless infertility in comparison to the fertile transnationalism sprouting all around her: 'your lot have a lot of babies they can't afford or take care of' (*NW* 141). Annie's criticism here reflects what Gilroy terms the 'iconic ciphers of postcolonial melancholia: criminals [...] and their numberless alien offspring', distancing herself from hostile cultures that will destabilise her imagined sense of class hierarchy and racial privilege (*Postcolonial* 146).

By mocking her neighbours across the road, a Japanese and French couple she nicknames '*Jules et Kim*', Annie also doubts the practicality of cross-racial mixing (*NW* 131). Notably, she maintains a psychological detachment from her own cross-racial relationship with Felix, claiming: 'we're both very independent people from quite different walks of life and we simply prefer to keep our interdependence' (*NW* 126-27). To Annie, Felix is merely 'a man of the world' (on account of his transnational heritage), who attends to her needs (*NW* 125). Her lack of knowledge regarding Felix's personal life or culture is evident in her vague description of Willesden as 'very "diverse". Lord, what a word' (*NW* 126). As a result of Annie's systematic rejection of other cultural relations, Felix comes to question his own presence in her flat: '[h]ow did he ever come to know this place? Unknowing it would just be the restoring of things to their natural, healthy state' (*NW* 121). Through Annie and Felix's tense rapport, Smith's narrative is acting out what Gilroy perceives as contemporary society's 'ordinary experiences of contact, cooperation, and conflict across the supposedly impermeable boundaries of race, culture, identity, and ethnicity' (*Postcolonial* xii). Annie's condescending treatment of Felix, as if he were her colonial subject, forces him to wonder if her flat 'truly was a separate world. Her Majesty

upstairs swore it was' (*NW* 121). The racialised discourses inherent in the chapter

consequently evoke the spectre of imperial heritage and ethnic classification as a challenge

to cosmopolitan hybridity. Gilroy considers the fixity of cultural heritage to act as an

antithesis to conviviality, resulting in a '[p]ostimperial melancholia' still evident in

contemporary life (*Empire* 109). The progressive presence of transnational others in

Annie's flat, where 'nothing was ever refreshed', therefore echoes Gilroy's related claim

that cultural confrontation 'turn[s] the tables on all purity seekers [...] to force them to

account for their phobia about otherness' (*NW* 121; *Empire* 167). Felix ultimately

determines that Annie is beyond help, proudly comparing the '[p]olitically conscious,

racially conscious' nature of his new girlfriend Grace to Annie's racially-motivated closed-

mindedness (*NW* 135). By simply leaving the 'negative' stasis of her entropic living space

behind, Felix is able to rejoin and embrace the vibrancy of London life feeling

'wonderfully, blissfully light' (*NW* 142).

Like Leah, Felix attempts to connect with the diverse inhabitants of Willesden

through small daily actions of comity, goodwill, and citizenship, all of which fail to

engender a reciprocal response. He encounters Tom, a young white male attempting to sell

his father's car, who finds it difficult to associate or identify with Felix after discovering he

is black. In an effort to relate to Felix, Tom resorts to asking him for drugs, betraying and

exposing the continuation of racial stereotyping in the capital with which Felix is well-

familiar: '[m]y girl thinks I've got an invisible tattoo on my forehead: PLEASE ASK ME

FOR WEED. Must have one of them faces' (*NW* 114). Later, after smiling at a small

Jewish woman he catches eyes with on a passing train, Felix notes that the woman's 'little

dark face pulled tight like a net bag', unable to process this simple act of compassion and

attempt at connection across ethnic divides (*NW* 103). Her reaction fictionalises Smith's

own declaration that: 'I'm sad when I see people glaring at each other on the Tube'

(emphasised as one of the main reasons she abhors British society) ('Author' n.pag.). As with Leah's act of hospitality, Felix's cordial altruism is the root cause of his misfortune. He attempts to force two young black men (intimated to be Nathan Bogle and his friend, Tyler) to give up their seats on the tube for a heavily pregnant white woman, receiving verbal abuse in response. The pregnant woman even assumes the two men are Felix's friends, on account of their shared colour. The tense atmosphere surrounding the encounter suggests that Felix is doomed to remain defined by his race, perpetuating a history of racism, prejudice and fear that arguably characterised late-twentieth century relations. After leaving the station, he is attacked and stabbed in the side by the two men, proving yet again that cosmopolitan empathy can result in destructive consequences for the bestower.[29]

The chapter ends bleakly with Felix's death, as the local bus stops to collect a young girl dressed for summer. London's populace simply go on with their lives, indifferent to the racial and socio-economic struggles of their fellow residents. Felix's narrative, in particular, brings lucidity and cultural realism to idealistic notions of cosmopolitan empathy in an urban environment. Through the characters of Leah and Felix, Smith corrects Hannerz's model of cultural connectivity that argues for a binary 'cosmopolitan-local distinction' (*Transnational* 102). While the aspirations of cosmopolitanism often seem to reject or ignore the role of the local, Smith's narrative is not directly promoting global engagement but instead advocating a specific form of glocal cosmopolitanism that perceives identity as a negotiation between and local and ethnic

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[29] Smith claims there was an 'epidemic of stabbings' in London at the time of writing, 'usually, of young black boys by young black boys', and such violence seeped into the novel ('Guardian Book Club' n.pag.).

identities.[30] Glocal cosmopolitanism ensures that Leah and Felix's practice of the

cosmopolitan ideals of openness and empathy includes and encapsulates '[e]verybody' (as

Smith's repeated narrative refrain affirms) without the need for cultural mobility (*NW* 35).

That being said, Smith resists an idealistic conception of community or cultural

connection, conceding that:

> there's such a shelter in each other, but it's also true [...] that we refuse to be each
>
> other [...] it's really impossible to make a leap of empathy entirely into another
>
> person's head [...] to do it entirely would be intolerable of course, and would be a
>
> dissolution of yourself. But it has to be done to some extent, otherwise there's only
>
> strangers and enemies. People who are opposed to your will, and trying to
>
> understand that your will is not the only thing on the planet, but [...] makes space
>
> for all these other wills […] that's the whole point. ('Bookworm' n.pag.)

The necessity for a tolerance of differing wills encapsulates the personal relationship of

Leah and Natalie De Angelis whose similarities in childhood and adolescence are disrupted

by encroaching differences in ethnicity and class.

Resistance to Community

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[30] Glocal cosmopolitanism follows Bhabha's vernacular cosmopolitanism in recognising
how global concerns and processes are defined by local concerns, promoting the
implementation of ethical values within local communities *in order* to impact the global
('Unsatisfied' 38-52). However, while the glocal cosmopolitanism proposed here simply
explores the synergy of global and local process, vernacular cosmopolitanism emphasises
non-elite engagement and mobilities. As Werbner identifies, vernacular cosmopolitanism
is also closely related to a range of similar concepts which combine 'apparently
contradictory opposites: cosmopolitan patriotism, rooted cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan
ethnicity, working-class cosmopolitanism, discrepant cosmopolitanism' ('Introduction'
14).

'We are adept [...] at saying what we make of places – but we are far less good at saying what places make of us' (MacFarlane 27).

Natalie De Angelis, a Jamaican barrister specialising in commercial law in the novel, resides in Willesden with her husband Frank, a fellow lawyer of Trinidadian and Italian parentage, who looks 'like he was born on a yacht somewhere in the Caribbean and raised by Ralph Lauren' (*NW* 179). Despite their enhanced financial situation they still reside near Leah's apartment by the rundown Caldwell housing estate. Their exact location, however, betrays their desire for social mobility. While Leah can still see her old estate 'full of people from the colonies and the Russiany lot' from her garden, Natalie 'lives just far enough to avoid it' (*NW* 67, 55). Leah extends hospitality out of inherent empathy, whereas Natalie only performs the role of a host in order to inflict envy upon her guests, inviting Leah and Michel to her house parties in order 'to provide something like local colour' (*NW* 75). At these parties even Leah's husband Michel echoes Natalie's individualism. While Michel is captivated by Natalie and Frank's social and economic capital, Leah is more interested 'in their morals than their money', rhetorically questioning: '[t]o live like this you would have to forget everything that came before. How else could you manage?' (*NW* 70, 55).

For Natalie, the accumulation of money acts as a purposefully constructed barrier signifying 'the distance the house put between you and Caldwell' (*NW* 221). Wealth allows Natalie to extricate herself from both her ethnic background and her local area, providing solutions and strategies to avoid associating with undesirable sectors of the community: '[p]rivate wards. Private cinemas. Christmas abroad [...] Security systems. Fences. The carriage of a 4x4 that lets you sit alone above traffic. There is a perfect isolation out there somewhere, you can get it, although it doesn't come cheap' (*NW* 76). Within the narrative in general, individual progress is often equated with a loss of connection from community

and an absence of cosmopolitan empathy. Natalie is disembedded and apathetic in an atomised state, merely propagating the notion of the individual-centred society. The simple act of moving location in the Willesden neighbourhood is equated in Natalie's mind with social mobility. Her attempts at personal advancement are prioritised over community-building or even familial concern. Smith's implied criticism of Natalie's behaviour seems to stem from the fact it is not conducive to social change, communal interaction, or cultural progression. As Smith emphasises, in her essay collection *Changing My Mind*, 'the business of ethics properly concerns good relations *between* people rather than the individual's relation towards some ultimate goal, or end' (293). Natalie comes to adopt the thoughts and beliefs of her solicitor colleagues, losing faith in the value of her area and perceiving Willesden as 'a hopeless sort of place, analogous to a war zone' (*NW* 216). On this basis, she embodies what Helen Kirwan-Taylor labels 'cosmoprats' – elitist individuals who treat those less successful members of communities 'as though they were wearing a loincloth and clutching a handful of glass beads' (190-91). Not only does Natalie relinquish an engagement with locally relational socio-economic issues, but she manipulates both Willesden's resources and its multicultural composition to project an idealised sense of self, confirming her mercurial and ego-centric cultural outlook: '[t]hey were [...] providing a service for the rest of the people in the cafe, simply by being here. They were the "local vibrancy" to which the estate agents referred' (*NW* 221).

Upon hearing of Leah's encounter with Shar, Natalie's first question merely betrays her own racial ignorance: '[h]ow could you tell me that whole story and not mention the headscarf?' (*NW* 52). In pitying Leah's cosmopolitan empathy, claiming that she is 'always trying to save somebody', Natalie insinuates that her own occupation avoids an interrogation of morality: '[d]efending someone is very different from saving them. Anyway, I mostly do commercial these days' (*NW* 52). Although Leah considers Natalie's

severing of ties to be evidence of her hypocrisy (leaving a detached woman who has cast off all reminders of her original community), she notes that Natalie cannot entirely hide her ethnic origins: her 'wild Afro curls shoot out in a million directions' (*NW* 58). Whereas the two friends were once inseparable, Leah and Natalie are now economically, ideologically and morally distant, squinting 'at each other across an expense of well-kept lawn' (*NW* 52). Natalie's ego-centrism works against the ideals of joint commitment and mutuality integral to local community (rejecting ties that are often strengthened and broadened over a long period of residency in an area), and prevents more extensive forms of sociality with her fellow residents. Resistance to these attachments is reflected in the chapter title, 'Host', indicating that by constructing a false cultural identity Natalie is consequently inhabiting a foreign body. Natalie's personal displacement and loss of cultural identity in London mirrors her chapter's syntactical and formal structure, as her narrative becomes an impersonal and fragmentary Bildungsroman of individual vignettes. By abandoning the free indirect discourse evident in Felix and Leah's chapters, the novel's narrative form thus mirrors its content. Natalie's chapter systematically documents the chronology of her friendship with Leah, revealing her own transformation from compassionate Keisha Blake to the cold, indifferent, egocentric Natalie De Angelis. Ironically, the earliest recollections of Keisha indicate that she possesses an inherent kindness and bravery – her effort to save Leah from drowning becomes the event that cements their friendship across socio-cultural divides. And yet, even at this young age, her arrogance and forceful will is evident: 'Keisha experience[s] an unforgettable pulse of authorial omnipotence. Maybe the world really was hers for the making' (*NW* 155). Keisha undergoes a personal transformation and assumes the name 'Natalie' upon becoming a lawyer, a period in which she is 'crazy busy with self-invention', becoming aware that she now has 'no self to be, not with Leah, or anyone' (*NW* 183). Michel endorses her desire for social mobility and individual gain,

perceiving in Natalie's chameleon-like transformation the means of escaping his own meagre beginnings: '[y]ou changed your name [...] It's like: "Dress for the job you want not the one you have"' (*NW* 55).

As a lawyer, Natalie possesses a startling lack of knowledge regarding global issues and is clearly ignorant of social or moral debates, admitting to being merely 'aware of the Bosnian conflict' (*NW* 184). An offer from her friend Imran to drive supplies to Sarajevo on a humanitarian mission and aid in the reconstruction of the city is met with initial interest, yet ultimately forgotten. Natalie convinces herself that the incident stands as an indication of her selfless nature; the fact that 'she never actually went on the trip seemed, in memory, somehow less important than the fact that she had fully intended to go' (*NW* 185). Similarly, while watching a television advert for the army, she fails to appreciate the ethical mindset necessary for the profession. Rather than imagining how to help her squad over a bridge, she instead coldly reflects: 'I'm thinking: how are *you* getting across?' (*NW* 189). For Natalie, good intentions happily serve as the equivalent of altruistic actions. This callousness is continued well into her career. Global events are only given prominence or attention due to their impact on her own personal advancement: '[she] was busy with the Kashmir border dispute, at least as far as it related to importing stereos into India through Dubai on behalf of her giant Japanese electronics manufacturing client' (*NW* 234). Natalie does not consciously resist the pull of wider collectivities engendered by transnationalisation, she simply drifts through day-to-day occurrences morally indifferent to socio-cultural engagement with others as it draws attention away from herself. In doing so, she not only rejects local loyalties, but simultaneously avoids embracing a more global community through her superficial and commercialised cosmopolitan engagement.

To assuage her feelings of guilt, Natalie decides to undertake 'pro bono death row cases in the Caribbean islands of her ancestry and instructed an accountant to tithe ten per

cent of her income, to be split between charitable contributions and supporting her family';

these 'veiled' examples of 'self-interest' fail to alleviate her troubled conscience, and

merely persuade Frank of her inherent 'sentimentality, woolly-mindedness' (*NW* 223). The

decision to join a more morally sound legal aid firm (rather than commit to a more

commercially-viable paralegal tenancy) is also questionable, later revealed to be an act of

self-preservation in case her application was unsuccessful. To pre-empt any signs of failure

she invents 'a story about legal ethics, strong moral character and indifference to money' –

all qualities which she does not, in truth, possess (*NW* 213). Her profession subsequently

clashes with Leah's humanitarian tendencies, and Natalie resents being forced to listen to

Leah's 'self-righteous, ill-informed lectures about the evils of globalization' (*NW* 235).

She unequivocally rejects Leah's proposal that she speak at a charity auction for young

black women simply on the basis that it was south of the Thames, and 'I don't go south'

(*NW* 252). Working for a transnational corporation ultimately creates a 'trans-Natalie', a

woman disconnected from herself and others, inventing projected selves which mirror her

supposed ideas of progression. Natalie's failure to construct a stable identity reflects the

instability of her London environment following unprecedented socio-cultural changes and

increasing cosmopolitanisation. Although instability of ethnic identity was noticeable in

White Teeth, identity politics in *NW* develop outside of this framework, placing an

emphasis on class and personal idiosyncrasy away from collective grouping.

A prolonged period of individualism and isolation inspires Natalie to seek

connection and community online, becoming 'helplessly, compulsively, adverbly addicted

to the Internet' (*NW* 224-25). In Natalie, we have an isolated example of how digital

networks are further displacing community-based social interactions: '[e]veryone comes

together for a moment to complain about the evils of technology, what a disaster [...] yet

most people have their phones laid next to their dinner plates' (*NW* 76).[31] Although Smith

is demonstrating how face-to-face interaction is eroded by digital communication, her main

issue is not with the form of communication itself, but how Natalie exploits its purpose. By

forging digital connections to advance and propagate her atomised existence, Natalie's

social interaction is increasingly reliant on superficial ties mediated by digital technology.

The internet fails to bring her salvation, but instead provides another form of escapism as

she seeks out couples for an extra-marital threesome under the pseudonym of her true

identity, Keisha. Drifting through a series of failed sexual encounters, Natalie is

unconsciously striving to establish some form of grounded authenticity and solve her

identity crisis. For one rendezvous she meets an African couple who mirror her own

marriage and whose house reflects the inauthentic African decor and interior design of her

own home. The couple are unaware of her personal success and lecture her on the

possibilities for 'black' advancement in contemporary society (ironically advising the one

woman who has sacrificed nearly every socio-cultural tie in order to get ahead): '[w]hat do

you want to be? Don't ever give up. It's all about dreaming big' (*NW* 255). After meeting

the 'mirror-image' couple, Natalie realises that any attempt to escape her true identity

through insincere virtual and physical sexual encounters is antithetical to individual or

cultural advancement. The narrative pinpoints technology to be responsible for the

privileging of personal isolation over communal interconnection, impinging upon

contemporary life and leading Natalie away from the more positive interactions

engendered by that most local of communities: her family unit.

Predictably, Natalie maintains little contact or consanguinity with her relations.

Even the birth of a daughter is greeted with cold, analytical dissection: '[o]h look, I'm

giving birth' (*NW* 237). She struggles to relate to her baby, looking into 'the slick black

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[31] The influence of network sociality will be explored further in Chapter 4.

eyes of a being not in any way identical with the entity Natalie Blake' (*NW* 238). Humility

and joy only arrive once she perceives her child to be a metaphorical extension of herself,

unconsciously contradicting her earlier belief that 'she was in no way the creation of her

parents' (*NW* 158). In comparison to the dominant, unassailable reality of money and

social advancement, Natalie claims Frank and her daughter are merely 'human shadow-

play on the wall' (*NW* 239). Instead, her house becomes 'the unimpeachable reality', with

the financial crash the only cultural event which registers in her mind: the 'Crash dislodged

a little plaster in the wall in the shape of a fist and stopped plans for a basement extension'

(*NW* 239). Natalie's sister, Cheryl, avows that she would seek help from the council before

she resorted to asking for Natalie's help, while her cousin Tonya's exaggerated ethnic

features contrast sharply with Natalie's shapeless appearance. The desire to lose her own

ethnicity for the sake of self-advancement has led to Natalie possessing no personal

identity or inscription of ethnicity at all – she struggles to find close friends or family

members who can relate to her insincere new persona. To avoid intimacy or the

potentiality of forging a connection with her cousin, Natalie retains 'a superficial and

pleasant exterior' that fails to deceive Tonya: '[w]as that pity in her cousin's eyes? Natalie

Blake did not exist' (*NW* 215). Natalie is thus unable to prevent her cultural, ethnic, moral,

and psychological degradation from both her true 'self' and others: the 'longer she spent

alone the more indistinct she became to herself' (*NW* 236). At various stages of her

narrative, however, Natalie often exploits her ethnic background as an indicator of

difference. For a company picnic she chooses to wear 'hoop earrings and '[g]littering

sandals' and 'hoop earrings and […] her hair in a giant Afro puff' (*NW* 226-27). No part of

this outfit 'came from Africa' but Natalie 'felt African' by maintaining the illusion (*NW*

227). In her private life, Natalie prides 'herself on small differences, between past

residents, present neighbours and herself'; the presence of a few 'African masks' in her

home, rather like the masks within the Belsey's home in Smith's earlier novel *On Beauty* (2005), does not demonstrate any viable cultural or ethnic ties to either Frank or Natalie's heritage, and indicates the extent to which Natalie is manipulating an imagined genealogy to project an idealised and inauthentic self (*NW* 239). Further, rather than retaining any symbolic personal value, the masks instead indicate the effects of cosmopolitanisation in contemporary society, as symbols of authentic local cultures are deconstructed and manipulated to serve as manufactured global commodities.

Amongst all the barrage of narcissistic individualism, Natalie experiences brief moments of ethical enlightenment which echo Leah's desire to 'slip into the lives of other people [...] Follow the Somali kid home? Sit with the old Russian lady [...] Join the Ukrainian gangster' (*NW* 245). This sporadic hunger for transnational connectivity emerges in several episodes throughout the novel. At the funeral of Leah's father, kinship and geographical affiliation are demonstrated to be vital to the connectivity of a community. The mourners 'who had shared the same square mile of streets with the man now recognized that relation, which was both intimate and accidental, close and distant' (*NW* 250). Natalie yearns for this propinquity and affinity to others but she is unable to achieve this in her day-to-day relations: '[i]f only someone could have forced Natalie Blake to attend a funeral every day of her life!' (*NW* 251). Tellingly, however, Natalie still places her career and personal success as central to this vision: 'I will be a lawyer and you will be a doctor […] and I will be the first black woman and you will be the first Arab […] and everyone will be friends, everyone will understand each other' (*NW* 186-87). As a result, her revelation that 'there would probably be something beautiful in the alignment between the one and the many', continues to resist an active engagement with the inequalities of her local community (*NW* 237). She imagines an idealised and delusory construct of community founded on idyllic cooperation and communal homogeneity rather

than a realistic community founded on similarities *and* differences, positives *and* negatives, heterogeneity *and* unity. Her desire for a new space of utopian interconnection populated by a harmonious multitude (equating to Irie's blank space of futurity in *White Teeth*) is misguided without the acknowledgement of cultural heterogeneity and local cooperation as the source for cosmopolitanism's implementation. The chapter consequently emphasises a need for mediation between the abstract and often idealised tenets of cosmopolitan theory and its practical application in a contemporary urban environment.

Natalie's argument with a pot-smoking youth in her local park demonstrates how, despite London often being positioned as a global monolith, individuals consider themselves to belong to specific communities within the city. The incident indicates the dialectal distinctions, polyphonic multivocality, and microcosmic divisions intrinsic to a local multicultural space: '[w]e don't do like you do here. In Queen's Park. You can't really chat to me. I'm Hackney, so' (*NW* 247).[32] Natalie's inauthentic performance in the park, demonstrating her linguistic capacity for code-switching, is an attempt at 'passing' as a genuine member of her community and feels distinctly out of character: '[j]ust put it out, man [...] She had not ended a sentence in "man" for quite some time' (*NW* 248). If '[v]oice adaptation is still the original British sin', as Smith argues, then at least the attempt hints at the continuing presence of 'Keisha' underneath Natalie's 'mask' (*Changing* 134). Janna Thompson even contends that, rather than being antithetical to the cosmopolitan mode, a complex ethnic identity is instead 'compatible with cosmopolitanism. It is conducive to the establishment of procedures for resolving conflicts between communities' (187). Cosmopolitanism, after all, favours cultural pluralism over cultural homogenisation and

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[32] The cover of the Hamish Hamilton edition of *NW* displays the iconic colours of the London Underground and local bus stops – the networks linking London's separate boroughs.

suggests a broadening of existing local attachments. The argument in the park therefore not only demonstrates an attempt by Natalie to re-engage with the citizens and socio-cultural issues of her community, but pays attention to the ways in which vernacular language can be employed to both construct a fluid cosmopolitan identity, and act as a marker of situated territorial identity.

Smith's narratorial voice can be clearly discerned through the character of Natalie Blake. The spaces of north-west London have ultimately become bio-geographical for Smith, reflecting David James's assertion that 'local attachments deeply inform the responsibility that writers evince towards the places they depict'; Smith therefore emerges as an example of the new breed of novelist who creates environments which can 're-envision the landscape of everyday life, receptive to the social and historical forces under which new habitats are forged' (*Contemporary* 7, 168). Her own experiences have been shaped by, respond to, and are inscribed upon, the cityscape of which she writes. Natalie's shedding of her old identity and voice mirrors that of Smith herself, who admits that: 'this English voice with its rounded vowels and consonants in more or less the right place – this is not the voice of my childhood. I picked it up in college [...] I genuinely thought this was the voice of lettered people, and that if I didn't have the voice of lettered people I would never truly be lettered' (*Changing* 133). For Smith, this new voice is not simply 'an exotic garment I put on like a college gown whenever I choose – now it is my only voice, whether I want it or not. I regret it; I should have kept both voices alive in my mouth [...] But how the culture warns against it!' (134). Through Natalie, the narrative gives voice to Smith's own desire for multivocality and multiple personae. A subject who is able to appreciate the values of each voice should be less inclined towards ethno-cultural bias and more able to practice openness towards others through empathetic relationality. Smith values this linguistic quality of polyglottism highly, arguing that 'flexibility of voice leads to a

flexibility in all things', whereas 'hesitation in the face of difference [...] leads to caution before difference and ends in fear of it' (*Changing* 149). *NW*, then, subscribes to the belief that ethical awareness towards others stems from the active cultural agency of the self, justifying the evident authorial criticism aimed at Natalie Blake.

Bridging Divides

'Recognition of ourselves lies in our recognition by others' (Whitaker 77).

Natalie's isolation reaches its peak following Frank's discovery of her sexual encounters. The email address created for arranging such trysts: 'KeishaNW@gmail.com', emphasises the inescapable nature of both her original identity and her Willesden origins (*NW* 259). The subsequent chapter, entitled 'Crossing', chronicles the events following their marital argument and Natalie's subsequent flight from her home. Her departing remark to Frank that she is going '[n]owhere' holds a double meaning, referring to the stasis in her personal progression, while also alluding (phonetically) to the absence of cultural mobility within the locality of 'north-west' London itself (*NW* 260). By leaving the flat and wandering unknown city spaces Natalie is initially disoriented and adrift, no longer secure in her restricted daily routine, doubtful she could ever connect with her original community or fellow residents. The chapter title alludes to Natalie's personal transformation and the inauthentic hybrid identities she has assumed to escape from her cultural heritage and economically-desolate community: '[w]ife drag. Court drag. Rich drag [...] British drag. Jamaican drag' (*NW* 245). She encounters her old school acquaintance Nathan Bogle, a drug dealer of St Lucian heritage (indicated to be in league with Shar at various point in the novel, as well as complicit in Felix's stabbing). He persists in calling her Keisha – unlike most of Natalie's close friends and acquaintances he is able to see beyond the

socially-constructed persona and perceive the girl he once knew. It is Nathan who first identifies the significance of Natalie's profession to her manufactured identity, suggesting that a law career is merely another attempt at hiding her true 'self' through a form of 'drag': 'wig on your head. Hammer in your hand' (*NW* 270). While the previous chapter, 'Host', suggested that Natalie considered herself to be continuing a noble tradition of law which has spanned several centuries, she remains unappreciative of the ethnically diverse trail-blazers who have made it possible for her to pursue a legal career. She arrogantly ignores the guiding words of Theodora Lewis-Lane, a prominent Jamaican QC, who was advised to 'avoid ghetto work' in order not to be judged on the basis of her ethnicity alone, and who subsequently admonishes Natalie's cold, individualistic attitude: the 'first generation does what the second doesn't want to do. The third is free to do what it likes. How fortunate you are. If only good fortune came with a little polite humility' (*NW* 209).

By remaining ignorant of the cultural history of her chosen career, Natalie mistakenly and superciliously dwells on the idea of her ethnicity as an indicator of difference in a professional society where all ethnicities are accepted regardless. She isolates ethnicities into a dangerous dichotomy of 'them' and 'us' – a position which is exposed as outdated and offensive even to her ethnic-minority predecessors. Nathan echoes Theodora's criticism of Natalie's worldview, insisting that shared ethnicity is no longer the only means of understanding a way of life or forging connections in a post-millennial world: '[w]hat do you know about it? What do you know about me? Nothing. Who are you, to chat to me? Nobody. No-one' (*NW* 276). Further, Nathan attempts to correct Natalie's earlier naive and superficial day-dreaming regarding a utopian collective vision of society, remonstrating that: 'my dream is my dream [...] Your dream is your dream. You can't dream my dream', emphasising the limits of ethical and cultural relationality (*NW* 279). And yet, the narrative is inconsistent and capricious in its portrayal of ethnicity as a

declining factor – especially in the workplace. The novel's narratorial voice emphasises that many employers in the legal sector continue to believe Natalie 'inspired patronage, as if by helping her you helped an unseen multitude', exposing that ethno-cultural perceptions do continue to influence forms of social and professional engagement (*NW* 219). Although cosmopolitan ideals do emerge through interpersonal relations, the narrative struggles to embrace a cosmopolitan conviviality (involving the bridging of communal differences) due to the obvious antagonisms created by racial and socio-cultural divides.

Arguably, Natalie and Nathan's journey across north-west London engenders a revisioning of the spaces of the capital, and an acknowledgement of disparate lives of individuals who populate their route from Willesden to Highgate. Natalie is effectively walking the land to re-engage with the land. Through Nathan's presence, north-west London's spaces become sites of possibility for Natalie in a way they never have before – her mental map of the capital hitherto restricted to her own daily routine. According to Ball, to 'walk through a city is individually to reinscribe it [...] To claim it in the image of one's own story, one's own unique tour through its spaces'; fresh engagement with the lived experience of one's city scape therefore involves 'reinscribing oppressive place as liberating space', allowing for a fluidity of identity (9, 33). James concurs, arguing that only by 'searching its social environment [...] experientially might the cityscape be re-searched imaginatively, in an effort to prospect the possibilities for dwelling within it anew' (*Contemporary* 71). By reconnecting with a figure from the past and the scenes of her childhood, north-west London's environment becomes a transformative space for Natalie that not only invites future possibilities of personal liberation and mutual understanding across difference, but forces a confrontation with established cultural affiliations. Despite her best efforts to the contrary, Natalie remains an integral part of Willesden, the spaces of which begin to expose the fissures in her fabricated identity. In

attempting to pull a twig from a passing tree, she accidently breaks off 'less twig than branch, being connected to several other twigs, themselves heavy with blossom', implying the inescapable nature of cultural attachments (*NW* 222). Whereas teeth functioned as an analogy for rootedness and belonging in *White Teeth*, the sustained metaphor of trees and roots throughout *NW* (often encountered en route to other locations) implies that socio-cultural connection (or 'rootedness') is not merely unavoidable, but crucial to both identity formation and community construction. Natalie's subsequent abandonment of the branch outside a tube station merely indicates her continued resistance to her ethnicity, community and personal attachments, respectively (and echoes Irie's failed attempts to escape the claustrophobic, history-infused sites of London in *White Teeth*). The transnational nature of London ensures the lived spaces Natalie and Nathan encounter demonstrate a mutual interplay between global and local forces, positioning north-West London as an urban glocality. By traversing the multicultural capital, they briefly become cosmopolitan flâneurs, transcending the local, engaging with one another's troubles, and demonstrating that cosmopolitanism concerns the creation of imaginative spaces that forge a dialogue across personal, socio-cultural and ethno-racial divides.

That being said, the chapter is less a celebration and exploration of cosmopolitan communities than an interrogation of an individual's capacity for ethical association across ethno-cultural divides. As Skrbiš and Woodward argue, an 'affiliation with difference, underpinned by an attitude of openness within spaces of cultural flows is perhaps the essence of the cosmopolitan identity' (11). Yet Natalie and Nathan's links to the community will always be highly experiential and personalised, tied to particular individuals and spaces. The pair arrive at a consensual understanding of the environment which has shaped them both in extremely disparate ways, separately aware of the lines they have left behind them. As they walk from Kilburn High Road to Hampstead Heath:

'[t]hey crossed over [...] and kept climbing, past the narrow red mansion flats, up into money. The world of council flats lay far behind them' (*NW* 273). The subsequent route and 'climb' mirrors Natalie's own crossing into wealth, mobility and social respectability. As the omniscient narrator notes earlier in the chapter, she had: 'completely forgotten what it was like to be poor. It was a language she'd stopped being able to speak, or even to understand' (*NW* 243). The presence of wealth in this section of London allows Nathan to recognise the socio-economic divide existing between himself and Natalie: '[w]hat do you know about living the way I live, coming up the way I came up? [...] And you go home to your green and your life and where's my green and my life?' (*NW* 276). He scurries through London's spaces, appearing as an outsider in his own environment; sneaking through the streets rather like the fox he spots on Kilburn High Road. Whereas Natalie is approaching an ethical revelation, re-evaluating her commitment to both the people and spaces of her locality, it is already too late for Nathan to escape the consequences of stabbing Felix on Albert Road. Nathan's personal and socio-economic marginalisation is even evident at the textual level; the absence of his own chapter ensures he merely appropriates a supporting role in this successive chapter focused on Natalie (breaking with the narrative structure).

While Leah is haunted by the spectral Shar, Natalie becomes haunted by the denial of her roots. Through a face-to-face encounter with Nathan, a representative of the neglected sectors of London society, she is forced to acknowledge her own moral failings. Nathan stalks Natalie's footsteps through the spaces of her formative years: 'when she looked over her shoulder he was still behind her' (*NW* 277). By assuming the role of a spectral vision, Nathan haunts Natalie with the Caldwell estate she abandoned and neglected. His surname, 'Bogle', originating from the Scottish, denotes a 'spectre of the night [...] Usually supposed to be black, and to have something of human attributes'

(Sylvester 284). Nathan thereby emerges as Natalie's 'double', being both the personification of her past and the alternate future that arguably awaited 'Keisha' (the similarity between their Christian names alludes to this premise). As Gilroy argues, individuals experience more anxiety when they perceive their own qualities in the differences of the 'other', identifying: 'the greater menace of the half-different and the partially familiar' (*Race* 106). Nathan and Natalie share a related, if paradoxical, identity problem. Nathan wishes to escape from his the actions of his past, his reputation marred by previous discrepancies. His life has been local in scope and his social experiences limited by the council estate in which he resides. Natalie, however, longs to return to the person she once was and be accepted back into the fold of her local community, forgiven for her years of ego-centrism. In order to do so, she must come to terms with the past from which she is running, shed her individualistic demeanour, and reconnect with the Keisha of her past. Through the mobilisation of communal attachments and the restoration of collective memories, the walk therefore removes the symbolic boundaries both between Natalie and her community, and Natalie and her old 'self', emphasising the significance of territorialised space to the formation of cultural identity.

As Ball recognises, the post-millennial capital occasionally offers 'temporary escape' but 'if you are living in a place as spatially, politically, demographically, and historically connected as London [...] you cannot forever shut out the world or the past, or retain only virtual connections with them' (84). Natalie's wandering symbolises an unspoken dialogue with her fellow citizens – her own restricted form of reintegration resulting in a reterritorialisation of self amidst the transnational cultural spaces of London. The view from Hornsey Lane Bridge is the key moment that forces Natalie to experience a

dawning realisation regarding the value of social interdependence.[33] The cross-hatching design of the bridge, 'St Paul's in one box. The Gherkin in another', hinders Natalie's view of the capital and prevents her from ascertaining 'any sense of the whole', suggesting that she has compartmentalised her cultural identity and denied her roots (*NW* 281). Her London life (and the narrative structure of her chapter) is an episodic series of broken fragments preventing a true definition of self or her local environment. The tower blocks of 'Caldwell's basin' are 'connected by walkways and bridges and staircases, and lifts that were to be avoided almost as soon as they were built'; their windows, 'fixed with brown tape, grubby net curtains, no door number, no bell', betraying the social inequalities housed within (*NW* 265). And yet the buildings, tellingly endowed with names of Enlightenment thinkers, 'Smith, Hobbes, Bentham, Locke', are 'the only thing she could see that made any sense, separated from each other, yet communicating', possessing a logic which the communities inhabiting them lack (*NW* 265, 281). The dilapidated environment of the city offers nurture to Natalie, who glimpses herself in the broken reflection of the London landscape, and perceives in the communal connectivity of the tower blocks a means of reintegrating herself into her community. A resurgence of familiarity and belonging begin to eclipse the identity crisis she suffered by neglecting her origins: '[a]mbitious though she was, she was still an NW girl at heart' (*NW* 192). Rather than jumping from Hornsey Lane Bridge, alluded to in Felix's narrative as 'Suicide

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[33] The repeated appearance of the local Number 37 bus indicates that interdependence powers the narrative, linking characters across the cultural spaces of London. The Number 37 is employed throughout *NW* to suggest fork-in-the-road moments in characters' lives (such as Natalie's break from Leah's group of friends encouraging her impetus to live a more individualistic life). Further, the number acts as a reminder of the interconnection of people and places which individualism seems to neglect. The sub-chapter thirty-seven is therefore purposely absent from Natalie's chapter ('Host') who, 'due to a long process of neglect', is unable to create 'the generative power to muster an alternative future' for herself (*NW* 266). The self-referentiality of the number is supported by the fact that Smith turned thirty-seven at the time of *NW*'s publication.

Bridge', Natalie reaches an epiphany regarding her individualistic life, even though she 'did not know what had been saved exactly, or by whom' (*NW* 128, 282).

Her perceived role as a new cosmopolitan subject, reintegrated into her transnational community with rediscovered humanist values, is, however, questionable. Natalie fails to switch back unconditionally from selfish individualism to selfless solidarity: her 'instinct for [...] self-preservation, was simply too strong' (*NW* 292). Nor is her newly discovered ethos sustained throughout the remainder of the novel. As Vered Amit notes, rather than an ethical revelation in a moment of crisis, the: 'formation of new ethical horizons, the realization of new self-understandings [...] and other cosmopolitan aspirations' in general 'are more likely to be realized through the slow, laborious and frequently frustrated formation of prosaic routines and relationships than by a lightning strike of revelation delivered through new mobilities or connections' ('Mobility' 65-66). As if to reflect the impossibility of cultural harmony in the capital, the narrative's denouement is neither celebratory nor redemptive. The concluding chapter, 'Visitation', forces Natalie to expropriate the role Shar initially assumed as the visitor seeking hospitality. Despite her various ethical misdemeanours and moral failings, she is once again invited to be a part of Leah and Michel's lives. And yet, even with her oldest friend Natalie's self-interest, egotism and pursuit of individual gain remain central to her atomised life. Natalie revives their lifelong relationship via the (possibly erroneous and unethically motivated) belief that Nathan was unquestionably responsible for Felix's stabbing. Her subsequent decision to call the authorities in the closing scene of the narrative indicates that multivocality and the fabrication of constructed cultural identities will remain integral to Natalie's selfhood for good or ill: 'Natalie dialled it. It was Keisha who did the talking', thus 'disguising her voice with her voice' (*NW* 294). Natalie's hybridity problematises Smith's own commentary on linguistic multivocality in *Changing*

My Mind, encapsulating the struggle in which: 'one voice must be sacrificed for the other. What is double must be made singular' (136). According to Alan Latham, however, cultural hybridity is evidence for the presence (rather than absence) of a contemporary 'urban cosmopolitan self', indicating a 'fusion of different identities' which may be 'both hybrid *and* fragmented' (96). The phone call, for Natalie, is 'proof that no such distinct entity existed' (*NW* 238). By possessing a performative identity, tailored to a specific audience at each moment in time, she avoids a confrontation with her moral failings. It is the character of Natalie, despite her cultural anxieties, who embodies Leah's declaration that 'I am the sole author of the dictionary that defines me', constructing an identity that pays homage to both her roots and routes (*NW* 3).

Despite no personal knowledge of Felix, Natalie brutally asserts to Leah that they avoided his fate simply because they worked to escape the limitations of their social class. Yet the reader is aware that Felix himself shared her motivations from social mobility, desiring to be 'moving up in the game' with his girlfriend, Grace (*NW* 136). In this sense, she is continuing to resist what Appiah deems to be ethical markers of the cosmopolitan patriot, which involve a nurturing of 'the culture and the politics' of a subject's locality, spending 'their lives in the places that shaped them': 'Whoever said these were fixed coordinates to which she had to be forever faithful?' ('Patriots' 92; *NW* 291). Natalie draws Nathan into her analogy claiming that unlike him she 'wanted to get out. People like Bogle – they didn't want it enough' (*NW* 293). After discovering the report of Felix's death in the papers, she reveals the absence of an ethically-motivated reengagement with her locality, discerning him to be 'local' but being unable 'to say anything else definitive about him' (once again alluding to the stifling claustrophobic nature of Willesden where everyone is familiar, if not entirely knowingly, interrelated) (*NW* 288). Leah and Natalie's decision to ring the police is predominantly based upon communal knowledge of Nathan

from years ago: '[s]ectioned, was he? At one point? Beat his father to a pulp'; like Natalie, he has been unable to escape his past or his roots (*NW* 41). Alexandra Schwartz denounces the novel's conclusive attempt at bringing the 'four figures together once and for all' in a final bout of interconnection (reminiscent of the criticism aimed at *White Teeth*), claiming that Smith's 'control over the proceedings has slipped. Her hasty solution is worse than hollow; it's without sense, a sacrifice of character to some principle of structure whose purpose remains obscure' (n.pag.). The criticism not only ignores the realism integral to Smith's narrative – the text is not promoting an idealised urban environment – but disregards the socio-economic inequalities and cultural marginalisation central to the social structure of the narrative. As Smith acknowledged, when asked to define the events of her narrative, 'to get ahead somebody else has to lose' ('Guardian Book Club' n.pag.).

A Future Imperfect

'For where is *our* fiction, our twenty-first century fiction?' (Smith, *Changing* 39).

Smith, musing on Barack Obama's vision for a better post-millennial America, formulated the idea of a utopian 'Dream City'; a city where an individual has 'no choice but to cross borders and speak in tongues [...] It's the kind of town where the wise man says "I" cautiously, because *I* feels like too straight and singular a phoneme to represent the true multiplicity of his experience. Instead, citizens of Dream City prefer to use the collective pronoun *we*' (*Changing* 138-39). The London envisioned in *NW* is no 'Dream City'. By acting as a microcosm for wider global relations, Willesden instead reflects the struggle in actualising a cultural space where citizens can balance existing allegiances with the potential formulation of new ties and identities. Smith claims transnational communities in general are constantly evaluated: 'is it successful or is it a failure?', but 'the reality', as

Smith claims, 'is that it's both things all the time' ('Naughtie' n.pag.). Cultural relations in London, specifically, fail to suggest the designs of an idealised cosmopolitan project and instead simply reflect transnationalism as a feature of everyday existence in the capital. The desire for cultural relationality across entrenched divides in the narrative comes to reiterate the sentiments of Alsana Iqbal in *White Teeth*: '[i]nvolved is neither good, nor bad. It is just a consequence of living [...] one becomes involved and it is a long trek back to being uninvolved' (*WT* 439).

Understandably, *NW* shares a strong thematic continuity with *White Teeth*, echoing the socio-cultural connectivities intrinsic to north-west London, and interrogating the realistic engagement of close friends, acquaintances and almost-strangers as they negotiate their fragile existence in the post-millennial capital. Unlike *White Teeth*, however, the narrative avoids the 'artificial energy' which Smith admits powered her first novel ('Best of our Knowledge' n.pag.). Although the two novels bookend the racially-charged events of 9/11 and 7/7, there is no explicit binary opposition between an ideal representation of millennial transnational optimism on the one hand, and a more realistic portrayal of emerging twenty-first century relations on the other. Sabine Nunius perceives Smith's fiction to act 'in contrast to "postmodern" literature' by contesting that there is no longer a 'general void or lack of meaning in contemporary society but [...] a feeling of coherency and communality' that refuses to embrace the post-9/11 tradition of cultural malaise and individual vulnerability (110).[34] By acknowledging how contemporary society both functions *and* feels, the novel places both human morality and the concept of community at the centre of post-millennial fiction, without either theme subsequently being decentred and destabilised by postmodern irony and experimentation. These human attachments in

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[34] *NW* blurs several genres, structurally and thematically, containing postmodern narrative strategies and arguably the continuation of a modernist ideology promoted by E. M. Forster (positioning liberal humanism and connection as the defining thematic of the text).

NW go some way towards rectifying James Wood's criticism of *White Teeth*, which he identified as an instance of 'hysterical realism' (an offshoot of the literary techniques of postmodernism), and resulted in his re-evaluation of Smith as a 'great urban realist' ('Human' n.pag.; 'Books' n.pag.).[35]

The socio-political and ethno-cultural troubles of the early twenty-first century necessitate a more realistic narrative commentary on the importance of multicultural relations and civic responsibility. This chapter has attempted to show that the localised environments of *NW* play host to the same tensions evident in Mitchell's more global fiction. Crucially, rather than circumventing the more global issues of displacement and cultural hybridity inherent to *White Teeth*, *NW* moves beyond the limitations of ethnicity alone and positions such contested issues as everyday features of the post-millennial urban environment – less raw and more quotidian. The novel's characters become more than exaggerated ethnic stereotypes employed to display the true diversity of London's thriving transnational communities. Cross-cultural interaction in the narrative remains subordinate to related issues of socio-economic status or social-standing, reflecting Smith's claim that 'human problems persist' in the capital but 'most of them in my opinion are ones of class and money, not of race or cultural tendencies' ('Multi-culturalism' n.pag.). By interrogating how cultural connectivities are forged across these established divides, the novel positions Willesden as a microcosm for the exploration of wider cosmopolitan ethics, with the narrative marking a progression away from *On Beauty*'s limited focus on the aesthetics and ethics of art: 'mining not only the ways in which we feel but also exposing the stratified ways we live' (Marcus n.pag.). [36] Through the ethical and cultural

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[35] Smith rejected Wood's initial categorisation of her fiction, explaining that 'any collective term for a supposed literary movement is always too large a net, catching significant dolphins among so much cannable tuna' ('How it Feels' n.pag.).

[36] According to James, Smith's novels all concern 'her own parable of ethical consequence' ('New Purism' 694)

agency of Leah and Felix, Smith defiantly portrays London as an exemplary transnational metropolis of social and ethical possibilities at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Despite the contrasting ethnicities of these characters, *NW* forges a commonality between vastly disparate individuals in troubling times, their spatial coordinates and sense of belonging uniting them as residents of contemporary north-west London.

The chapter has argued against Susanne Cuevas's assumption that Smith has transcended the notion of ethnicity, and is now writing 'from a "post-ethnic" perspective' (394). Ethnicity remains integral to post-millennial socio-cultural relations in the narrative – '[h]ere is the Islamic Centre of England opposite the Queen's Arms' – and a strong racial current continues to flow beneath all activity in north-west London (*NW* 35). For example, Leah's workmates from 'St Kitts, Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, India, Pakistan' prepare for a 'warm night out on the Edgeware Road', open to 'the heat' in a way 'Leah's family can never be', emphasising the sense of belonging and rootedness transnational subjects have established in the capital (*NW* 32). Leah's mother Pauline considers Kilburn to now be a lost territory owned by the Nigerians: 'the whole of Africa being, for Pauline, essentially Nigeria, and the Nigerians wily, owning those things in Kilburn that once were Irish' (*NW* 15). Even the quintessentially English church in Willesden run by the local vicar is subject to the unprecedented cultural flows of cosmopolitanisation: he 'is the same, but his congregation is different. Polish, Indian, African, Caribbean' (*NW* 62). Rather than assuming a post-ethnic stance, Smith emphasises the cosmopolitanisation of space and cultural specificities of north-west London to be integral to a lived experience of the capital. The polyvocality and multiculturalism of the novel reflect Smith's own refusal to accept that we live in 'a post-racial world'; instead she simply claims 'the reality of race has diversified' (*Changing* 143). The narrative confronts the harsh realities of transnational engagement, depicting an unsentimental London which has witnessed the terrorist violence

of 7/7, with the subsequent mounting cultural tension and increasing social divides that followed. *NW* interrogates the tensions and difficulties in practising and maintaining cosmopolitan dispositions against the growing socio-economic inequalities of an urban environment, even questioning whether society is progressing at all: 'each generation improves upon the last [...] From the owl rises the phoenix. Or rises only to descend again?' (*NW* 38). Smith admits she worked on the structure of the novel first, determining that it should be tirelessly 'moving through London neighbourhoods' and thereby demonstrating the 'reality' of life in the capital ('Guardian Book Club' n.pag.). In spite of this, the socio-cultural atmosphere of Willesden mediates between stagnation and progression – a trajectory of social mobility contrasted against economic immobility. Nathan is incapable of escaping the 'fixed coordinates' of his claustrophobic life, while Felix's fluid movements and interactions result in disharmony, evident in his brutal stabbing by hostile others (*NW* 291). The novel indicates that only by assuming a critical stance towards cosmopolitan engagement, acknowledging, comprehending, and negotiating the reality of racial tensions (lingering from late-twentieth century relations), may contemporary society address the social associations required to build more ethically-principled communal relations.

Nava argues that the horrific events of 7/7 specifically prompted 'a new awareness of commonality and interdependence among Londoners' (163). Through Leah and Felix's tolerance and empathy, the narrative reflects an enduring optimism for London's future – a future mediated by the events which have befallen the capital since the publication of *White Teeth*. The root problems at the heart of Willesden do not complicate or invalidate the values of cosmopolitan empathy or cultural engagement. Rather, the racial and economic inequalities are an impetus for citizens like Leah to reinvigorate urban life, prove its inherent malleability, and inject an ethical idealism into its socio-cultural relations.

Openness to alterity therefore becomes central to Smith's vision of cosmopolitan urbanism, representing what Gilroy terms an emerging cultural 'pressure from below' to enforce 'hospitality, conviviality, tolerance, justice, and mutual care' through social obligations (*Empire* 108). Tellingly, throughout the narrative Smith contrasts Natalie's complicated personal and communal detachment against the cosmopolitan empathy practised by Leah. As Derrida warns (with regards to cosmopolitan forgiveness and hospitality): individuals who fail to 'negotiate this hospitality in him or herself [...] cannot be hospitable to the Other' ('Politics' n.pag.). Following this reasoning, local communities are sustained in the novel via progressive relationships and acts of openness across cultural, social and economic divides – relationships contrastively fostered by Leah and spurned by Natalie. Smith's tangible promotion of Leah's social and ethical capital, introducing the norms of reciprocity and cooperation in answer to an individual-centred society, fails to strengthen pre-existing relations between the local inhabitants of Willesden. The pair therefore present a clear conflict between the forces of individualism and cosmopolitan empathy in attempting to forge culturally-diverse communities.

That being said, although Natalie has effectively 'done too good, maybe, to recall where she came from', her rejection of cultural attachments is not necessarily antithetical to the cosmopolitan outlook (*NW* 55). As Cole's *Open City* attests (as discussed in the following chapter), cosmopolitanism suggests that individuals may form new ties and allegiances beyond established racial affiliations and circumscribe obligations to cultural roles. Nigel Rapport concurs, claiming that the cosmopolitan project in general 'entails the recognition that individuals are not beholden to a particular communitarian belonging or cultural rootedness for their sense of self' ('Epilogue' 184). It is Natalie's personal ethics not her denial of ethnicity or community that prevents her from being an ethically cosmopolitan subject. In failing to demonstrate an empathetic identification with those

suffering from socio-economic inequalities in Willesden, Natalie remains blind to cultural marginalisation and avoids both local and global ethical accountability.

As Tew argues, Smith's fiction suggests that 'the leap of empathy to fully understand otherness may be unachievable, but she recommends the attempt' (*Zadie* 115). Despite her unromantic portrayal of Willesden, one should not ignore the optimism integral to the narrative, nor disregard the close personal attachments Smith enjoys with north-west London – being born into, and continuing to reside in, an area of which she writes. Philip Hensher therefore observes that *NW* reflects 'a fiction of consequences both global and heartrendingly intimate. The voice is global, plural and local' (n.pag.). The localised focus of *NW* demonstrates that although cosmopolitanism is a global cultural theory, it is intrinsic to ordinary encounters. While cosmopolitanism is often mistakenly subsumed by the related frameworks of multiculturalism or transnationalism, the narrative concentrates on *individual* ethics, rather than the actions of collective groups. The everyday lived experiences and cultural agencies of the characters echo Loren Landau and Iriann Freemantle's positioning of cosmopolitanism as 'a form of "experiential culture"', arising from 'the demands and pragmatics of living, rather than being the result of an appreciation of cultural diversity or a universal concern for others' (381). Cosmopolitanism in the narrative is refigured as a series of idiosyncratic and situated socio-cultural connections as opposed to an abstract universal philosophy.

The novel's fictional north-west London is not a homogenous monolith, but an aggregation of disparate factions comprised of a composite mix of transnational characters. Accordingly, Smith incorporates map directions (from one area of the capital to another) into her narrative to demonstrate their failure to encapsulate the heterogeneity of London's transnational spaces: Felix 'considered the tube map. It did not express his reality [...] "Wimbledon" was the countryside, "Pimlico" pure science fiction' (*NW* 143). Instead, the

'A to B *redux*' version of directions captures and affirms the everyday realities of the transnational individuals who populate these diverse districts: 'Polish paper, Turkish paper, Arabic, Irish, French, Russian, Spanish, *News of the World*' (*NW* 34). Willesden's cultural composition thereby encapsulates the cosmopolitan urbanism of London's city spaces, in which global and local relations penetrate one another, creating glocal spaces of cultural interplay. Smith's north-west London functions as a microcosm for the mounting cultural relations of the wider globalised world, imposing an analogous globality on the heterogeneous boroughs and districts which form a composite cosmopolitan environment. The narrative encapsulates how positive social relations and attachments begin at the most parochial level; lived experience in a contemporary urban cityscape is increasingly informed and shaped by more global processes of movement in general. Therefore, a concentration on the locally relational spaces of Willesden does not herald an escape from global issues but rather a direct confrontation with the transnational realities of London life, rejecting the idea that cosmopolitan theory is reliant on transnational mobilities or that cosmopolitanism itself necessarily supercedes the nation-state. The cosmopolitanisation of narrative space ensures cross-cultural sympathies and associations become a necessity for those bounded individuals not subject to transnational mobility and untroubled by questions of geographical or ethnic belonging. In this sense, the practice of tolerance and cosmopolitan empathy by Leah embraces a glocal form of ethical agency for its implementation. Through a locally relational analogy of wider global issues, the narrative interrogates the practices of cosmopolitan solidarity and cultural relationality, entwining the complementary concerns of: '[g]lobal consciousness. Local consciousness. Consciousness' (*NW* 221).

 NW does not imagine some pretty fantasy of twenty-first century life, or envision an unrealistic utopian depiction of the capital as a quixotic dream never to be realised,

based on 'the myth, the wicked lie, that the past is always tense and the future, perfect' (*WT* 541). Rather, the narrative reflects a rational and pragmatic glocal environment built on the conflict, diversity and discord of a future *imperfect*. Dissonance is suggested to be the means by which to achieve harmony when living with difference. Xenophobic fear and casual racism persist in the fictional capital, while social exclusivity prevents true cosmopolitan openness and conviviality. These processes of social disintegration and dissolution are the very materials with which Smith builds upon the possibility of transnational connectivities and interrogates cultural convergence. By demonstrating a realistic conception of cosmopolitanism characterised by a rootedness in 'realities of the present rather than mobilising for the future fulfilment of any one or other set of utopian ideals', *NW* encapsulates Schoene's requirements for the cosmopolitan novel; the 'post-1989 cosmopolitanism' embodied by *White Teeth* following the fall of the Berlin Fall has finally 'shed its starry-eyedness and grown realist' (*Novel* 10, 9). The novel therefore rejects the sense of an ending that late-twentieth century fiction adheres to and instead reflects on recent socio-cultural and ethno-political transformations and their role in establishing new ethical possibilities in literature.

Chapter 3: 'A Deeper Project': Critical Cosmopolitanism and Cultural Connectivity in Teju Cole's *Open City*

'It is frightening to think how little progress has been made in turning invisibly determining and often exploitative connections into conscious and self-critical ones, how far we remain from mastering the sorts of allegiance, ethics and action that might go with our complex and multiple belonging' (Robbins, 'Introduction' 3).

'A specter haunts the world and it is the specter of migration' (Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 213).

Christian Moraru argues that the 'historically unrivalled intensity and extensity' of 'being-in-relation, with an other, makes for the cornerstone' of contemporary American literature: 'not only are "others" becoming the master theme of the American Literature of the past twenty years, but this "theme" is also ethically explored' (2, 313). Teju Cole's 2011 novel *Open City* reflects these thematic concerns, considering forms of ethical relationality engendered by an engagement with cultural otherness in a global city. The narrative covers the period of a year, beginning in 2006, when the disaster of 9/11 is still a recent memory in the lives of New York City's inhabitants. By upholding a politics of difference, as opposed to a multicultural paradigm of integration and togetherness, *Open City* questions notions of alterity, cultural liminality, and cosmopolitan discourse. The ontological dimension of the narrative interrogates how individuals can feel at home in the world given the intensification and entanglement of global flows and processes, influencing modes of understanding surrounding intercultural communication – the central concern for the actualisation of viable cosmopolitan engagement. Although cosmopolitanism in abstract terms refers to a philosophy of progressive interaction between global citizens, the narrative questions how such abstract connections may be both realised and destabilised in

an urban cityscape, often concerning a movement away from ethno-cultural allegiances to voluntary and ever-shifting affiliations. As Stanton observes, as opposed to 'world citizenship, cosmopolitanism now indicates a multiplicity or diversity of belongings' (2). *Open City* also reflects the emergence of cosmopolitan mobilities generated by increasingly complex forms of socio-cultural movement – mobilities and transnational communities in the novel are demonstrated to be both an historical continuation and an intensification of global flows. This chapter will examine the inscription of otherness in Cole's text, problematising the development of ethical dispositions in light of institutional and social exclusionary politics and inequalities. By interrogating the limits of ethical engagement in an era of global cultural tension, and questioning whether transnational connections necessarily lead to cosmopolitan dispositions, *Open City* exhibits a *critical* cosmopolitanism that confronts the harsh cosmopolitical realities of the contemporary urban experience. Accordingly, the following analysis of *Open City*, with its U.S. centred narrative, operates in relation to the previous chapter on Smith, allowing for a transatlantic comparison of the practice of cosmopolitan values in urban environments.

Global cities such as New York contain the most culturally diverse populations in the world, functioning as strategic sites of intense transnational dialogue and exchange. As a result, they often engender new socio-cultural memberships, ties and solidarities. Leonie Sandercock suggests that the global city, as a 'cosmopolis', offers potential for 'connection with, and respect and space for the cultural Other, and the possibility of working together' through difference (*Towards* 125). In depicting New York as a site of cultural difference, Cole ensures the global city defies any multicultural simplification regarding questions of assimilation, homogenisation or integration, allowing for the exploration of socio-cultural identities and the discussion of global inequalities. The city reflects a transitional phase of mediation between national and transnational processes, as transnational subjects negotiate

an uneasy co-existence in the urban environment. Cole, a Nigerian-American writer, bears several ethnic similarities to Julius, the novel's half-German, half-Nigerian protagonist, being raised in Lagos, Nigeria and now residing in New York. In a radio interview following the release of the novel, Cole claimed Julius is 'permeable' and 'porous' to others and the events of the city, but admits personal and cultural isolation is the 'central conflict' of his narrative (qtd. in 'Immigrant's Quest' n.pag.). Julius's first person-narration is at once both decidedly personal and curiously absent, engendering a form of ethnic and cultural alienation that resonates throughout the narrative. And yet despite his best attempts, Julius's meditations on the polycentredness of life in a global city from an ego-centric narrative perspective fails to isolate him from the multitude. The relentless singular perspective of the narrative discourse is decentred through transnational agencies of otherness which contradict the disassociated suspension of self and force engagement. An absence of speech markers in the text for intercultural exchanges reflects Shameem Black's claim that narratives concerning the act of border-crossing hold the capacity to create encounters in which 'the borders of the self jostle against the edges of others, and [...] the contours of each [...] become more porous and flexible' (47). The reader is therefore forced to discern Julius's voice against the backdrop of his interlocutors and incorporate the reflections of those around him into a free-flowing cosmopolitan consciousness.

Urban Flâneurism

'To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent' (De Certeau 103).

In the contemporary moment, transnational ways of life are now experienced on a daily basis without the necessity of border-crossing, as global flows operate through and within localised urban experience. *Open City* explores various forms of transnational mobility

through the phenomenological experience of walking. Julius assumes the role of a

cosmopolitan flâneur of the post-millennial urban environment, possessing the freedom to

wander the global city at will. His meandering walks around the cultural spaces of New

York serve as 'a counterpoint' to his 'busy days at the hospital', where he is forced to

conform to the spatial restrictions and temporal regimes of psychiatric work (*OC* 3). In

moments of human intimacy, Julius retreats into the measured disengagement of his

psychiatric occupation, maintaining a psychological distance from the concerns of others

and objectively presenting each interaction with apparent neutrality. His atomised state, for

Pieter Vermeulen, is less reflective of an aversion to human or cultural connection, and

more suggestive of a psychological condition that prevents engagement. Vermeulen argues

that Julius's staccato resistance to the fluid rhythms of the city means his aesthetic 'posture

as a cosmopolitan flâneur is shadowed by the contours of the more sinister [...] figure of

restless mobility: the *fuguer*', preventing cultural engagement ('Flights' 42).[37] Julius's

urban mobility thereby fails to engender a sense of connectedness and instead suggests a

problematic 'shared isolation' with his fellow citizens ('figures of suspended agency') that

rests on an uneasy balance of cultural inequality and tension (47, 45). At the very least, his

psychological alienation and unsociability destabilise ethical relationality, and emphasise

the relevance of individual agency to the emergence of cosmopolitan dispositions. Urban

mobility should root Julius in the everyday rhythms of his global city, entwining his

experiences with the transnational subjectivities surrounding him – an engagement with

place, rather than abstract cultural flows. And yet, despite claiming that the city 'worked

itself into my life at walking pace', Julius's wanderings reflect a form of detachment and

estrangement from all sectors of his life (*OC* 3). In preferring to listen to 'Internet stations

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[37] Vermeulen points to the structuring of *Open City*, where the 'main movements' of the
first sections are merely 'reworked throughout the novel', to strengthen his argument for
the narrative's 'fugue form.' ('Flights' 56).

from Canada, Germany, or the Netherlands' over American stations, simply because the voices spoke 'from thousands of miles away', he betrays a desire for an idealised and superficial universal community over the complexities of realistic connections in his everyday life (*OC* 4).

Julius falls into the habit of 'watching bird migrations from [his] apartment'; he wonders if 'the miracle of natural immigration' is connected to his directionless wandering as he reproduces the patterns of migration which have characterised innumerable periods of history in New York (*OC* 4). While the birds are continually in a state of motion, forging new ties and engendering an ever-shifting sense of home and belonging, Julius remains in a state of detachment. His freedom of movement functions in opposition to the restricted mobility of transnational migrants in the narrative who are detained at border control and limited by their citizenship and geography of origin. Elite mobility in the novel equates to lines of flight amidst a global environment of gridded boundaries. That being said, Julius himself is a marginalised figure with limited personal and emotional attachments. On leaving his apartment one morning, he notes: '[i]t was the day of the New York marathon. I hadn't known', acknowledging his disconnection from the city's communal events (*OC* 8). On encountering a man who had finished the marathon, Julius pities him for his lack of familial support during the race, but realises that it 'was I, no less solitary than he [...] who was to be pitied' (*OC* 15-16). His atomisation is most evident in the city's social spaces which he finds stifling and restrictive. Julius perceives 'the streets as an incessant loudness', where the 'impress of these countless faces' fails to assuage his 'feelings of isolation; if anything, it intensified them' (*OC* 6). Fearing that his identity will be absorbed within the transnational multitude of the city, he remains a spectator who perceives contemporary diversity at a distance. He is instead 'strangely comforted' when alone 'in the heart of the city', perceiving '[t]he alley, no one's preferred route to any

destination' as a space of refuge (*OC* 52). By remaining free of cultural and historical inscription, the alley is a blank site in which he is sheltered from questions of racial solidarity or collective categorisation. In comparison, when using public transport such as 'the subway, standing close to strangers, jostling them and being jostled by them for space and breathing room, all of us reenacting unacknowledged traumas', he claims 'the solitude intensified' (*OC* 7). In this sense, there are clear parallels between Julius and the Japanese religious fundamentalist of *Ghostwritten* who attempts to exit his subway car to avoid being subsumed by the Western globalisation of culture and individualism. Commuting, for both characters, fails to engender the experience of connectivity with one's community, instead revealing their already-strained sense of exclusion from contemporary society. In contrast to Mitchell's novel, the polyphony of voices in *Open City* never assimilates or coalesces into a harmonious whole, but rather remains a cacophony of contrasting tones, creating an uneasy balance between synchronicity and dissonance. Julius's psychological detachment and aesthetic stance to cultural engagement therefore problematises any intercultural dialogue he enjoys with transnational migrants and citizens of his global city, bringing into question the limited merits of a cosmopolitan disposition.

Kurt Iveson argues that urban inhabitants should 'commit to participation [...] premised on a sense of shared fates and mutual estrangement rather than a sense of shared values' – to this we may add shared cultural pasts (81). The transnational individuals of Cole's novel, however, do not enjoy a shared culture in the city, based on traditional forms of community, but live in a state of tolerant co-existence, exhibiting the minimum requirement of sociability. Wood notes that the city of the narrative may indeed be 'open', but 'only in a negative way: full of people bumping their hard solitude off one another' ('Arrival' n.pag.). Julius's purposeful detachment is reflected by Cole's sketching of his social history itself. Romantic partners are constantly mentioned yet never expanded upon,

friends remembered but rarely named. Julius's father is dead and he is estranged from both

his grandmother and mother. His formative years are for the most part a mystery,

uncovered only by the revelations of others. Although his decision to leave Nigeria and

enter America (prior to the events of the narrative), 'fully on my own terms', suggests an

act of cultural agency to interact with both distant others and global space, he subsequently

fails to engage with the social aspects of New York beyond forming simple acquaintances

(*OC* 85). Social isolation ensures he remains an outsider on the inside (ironically perfectly

placed to analyse the motivations of those on the outside looking in), enjoying 'a

cosmopolite's detachment from his American experience' (Messud n.pag.). In refusing to

acknowledge both his ties to his current country and his ethnic origins, Julius denies both

his past and present throughout the narrative, failing to engender a sense of belonging in

America and Nigeria.

As Beck argues, thinking exclusively in terms of abstract transnational flows and

networks neglects 'the *agency* of the actors [...] in shaping the flows themselves'

('Mobility' 33). Through a series of episodic encounters in the narrative, Julius employs

intellectual theory and posturing to act as a buffer against cultural engagement and ethical

agency: 'eager to get the small talk done with and [...] return to the book [he] was reading'

(*OC* 87). The American Folk Art Museum represents the cultural aestheticism behind

which he can hide. By serving as a substitute for an acknowledgement of his ethnic

heritage, the museum provides Julius with '[t]he sense of having wandered into the past',

losing 'all track of time before these images' of transnational life in the United States (*OC*

36, 39). It also supplies Julius with a mummified experience of transnationalism in contrast

to the cultural heterogeneity he fails to perceive in everyday life. He leaves the museum

'with the feeling of someone who had returned to the earth from a great distance', forced to

reengage with a society in which he cannot assimilate (*OC* 40).[38] Julius hails a cab, still

lost in his own thoughts. The cabdriver subsequently arraigns him for his lack of

communal openness, protesting that Julius fails to greet a fellow African with sufficient

friendliness: '[n]ot good, not good at all, you know, the way you came into my car without

saying hello, that was bad. Hey, I'm African just like you, why do you do this?' (*OC* 40).

The verbal condemnation has no effect on Julius's psyche, merely strengthening his

resolve that he will resist 'people who tried to lay claims on me' (*OC* 40). By rejecting a

specifically ethnic sense of community, Julius demonstrates an internal conflict between

bourgeois individualism and communal attachment. As Kaya Genç identifies, due to his

education Julius possesses the 'the intellectual means to analyze [his] exilic, marginal,

postcolonial' self through 'the critical toolboxes of [his] first-world institutions' (n.pag.).

His detached subjectivity not only suggests a politics of indifference to established cultural

ties, but reveals a vulnerability in coming to terms with his transnational identity.

Moreover, the incident points to cosmopolitanism's ability to draw on a multiplicity of

discursive meanings, reformulating questions of identity and repertoires of ethnic

allegiance, rather than being delimited by cultural grouping.

 According to Bryan S. Turner, ethnic and personal detachment may even be key

ingredients in the formation of a cosmopolitan disposition, entailing a freedom from

cultural rootedness: '[c]osmopolitanism does not mean that one does not have a country or

a homeland, but one has to have a certain reflexive distance from that homeland' (57). The

transnational individuals Julius encounters endeavour to impose an ethnic heritage onto his

identity, but he is able to resist the attempts to define him culturally. For example, Julius is

later approached by a guard from the museum, Kenneth, who recognises Julius from his

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[38] The failure of aesthetic experience to engender connectivity with forms of intercultural
otherness is a theme similarly explored in Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*.

visits. He immediately engages Julius on the subject of African culture, causing him to recall the incident with the cabdriver: 'hey, I'm African just like you. Kenneth was making a similar claim' (*OC* 53). The encounters reflect Gilroy's conception of race 'as a process of relation, imaginary kinship [...] rather than some badge worn on or lodged deep within the body' (*Postcolonial* 148). Despite his refusal to acknowledge this African heritage, Julius avoids de-ethnicising himself. His detachment indicates a personal fear that engagement in social practices and negotiation of cultural differences will result in his identity becoming ethnically homogenised. However, that is not to say Julius assumes an anti-cosmopolitan stance; rather, he appropriates what Victor Roudometof terms a 'cool' cosmopolitanism, characterised by 'an ironic form of distance from current cultural attachments', which allows citizens to transcend 'the boundaries of one's culture' (122, 113). By possessing a different personal history (evident by his German roots and cultural status in the U.S.) he is at odds with large swathes of other transnational communities who attempt to associate with him. Their story is not his story, their history not his history – the cosmopolitan ideals of shared urbanity and imagined citizenship, for Julius, fail to override personal expressions of cultural difference. Appropriately, Sandercock claims that to some extent, 'one's own cultural identity is and will always be defined in relation to degrees of difference from others' ('Urbanism' 47). The narrative of *Open City* oscillates between this dialectic of identity and difference, with the urban setting of New York engendering a compression and intensification of ethno-cultural ties. Rather than webs of solidarity being organised around a country of origin, commonality is constructed around the vaguer identifiers of colour or race, fostering exclusivity and discrimination. The novel thereby moves beyond multicultural paradigms in favour of a critical cosmopolitan stance. In so doing, it offers an alternative model of cultural and racial belonging based on cultural positioning that both recognises the benefits of communal identification and grouping, but

simultaneously remains sensitive to the possible absorption of individual identity and agency to the collective. *Open City*, then, draws attention to the tensions involved in negotiating cultural identity in the face of an emergent cosmopolitanisation of global space.

As Caglar argues, although transnationalism can be responsible for fostering and developing cosmopolitan dispositions, it can also inhibit its emergence 'if the attachments forged within transnationalism fail to go beyond the topos of the ethno-cultural' (180). Bearing this in mind, the incident with Kenneth mirrors a dinner party Julius attended, a few years before the events of the narrative, being held by an Indian-Ugandan doctor who fled the regime of Idi Amin. The surgeon, Dr Gupta, had been psychologically scarred by his forced exile, declaring: 'when I think about Africans I want to spit'; a statement Julius perceives to be 'partly directed at me, the only other African in the room' (*OC* 30). Once again, the issue of 'colour' causes individuals to create imaginary ethnic links and conceptions of shared history: '[t]he detail of my background, that I was Nigerian, made no difference, for Dr Gupta had spoken of Africans, had sidestepped the specific and spoken in the general' (*OC* 31). Notably, the recollection of the dinner party is the first indication in the narrative that Julius is Nigerian – his ethnicity has, to this point, meant so little to his sense of self that it is considered unimportant. Paul White argues that transnational individuals are often caught in these situations where 'they are confronted by an alternative ethnic awareness that labels them and confines them to a stereotyped "otherness" from which there appears little chance of escape' (3). Julius's resistance displays a consciousness of the hegemonic constructions which seek to classify and categorize him as a transnational other, and the general means by which cultural identities are interpreted and transformed by transnationalisation.

That being said, even disregarding his rejection of an African heritage, Julius neglects daily interactions with his own neighbours. Bumping into a fellow tenant in his building, he is shocked to discover that he failed to notice the man's wife had passed away: 'she had died on the other side of the wall I was leaning against, and I had known nothing of it. I had known nothing in the weeks when her husband mourned' (*OC* 21). His avoidance of human contact ensured he merely 'nodded to him in greeting with headphones in my ears', adrift in his isolated bubble, then: 'he entered apartment twenty-one, and I twenty-two' (*OC* 21, 20). As Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco suggest, cosmopolitanism requires 'a constant effort to overcome one's emotional distance towards "others" despite the reality of their bodily co-presence' (8). Although he briefly feels ashamed for his lack of empathy or sociability, Julius admits that 'even that feeling subsided; much too quickly, now that I think of it' (*OC* 21). The durability of Julius's connections is also questionable. Fleeting attachments are glossed over and quickly forgotten, while intermittent meetings masquerade as social engagement causing disjuncture rather than true communal attachment. If cosmopolitanism does indeed require 'a mode of practice', as Vertovec and Cohen argue, then Julius's cosmopolitan disposition is not readily identifiable (9). *Open City* reveals that in a highly fluid cityscape, subject to the accelerated pace of contemporary life, individuals have little time for building empathetic connections or forming obligations to one another. Simple matters of differing work schedules or personal understandings of privacy ensure that mutual engagement with neighbours leads to mutual estrangement in general.

According to Caglar, the contemporary global city is not conducive to ethical engagement, functioning as: 'alienation institutionalized, immortalized, fixed. At the individual, psychological level, the stranger experiences the torment of his denial by others in his mind [...] the dark side of cosmopolitan encounters' (206). The New York of *Open*

City is not a progressive transnational environment in which divides are bridged through cultural cooperation, but remains hostile, violent and isolating. Given the racial tensions and ethnic stereotyping throughout the narrative, perhaps Julius's remoteness is to be expected. Whilst walking at night he is repeatedly passed by two young black men. On the first occasion, Julius optimistically imagines there had been 'the most tenuous of connections between us, [...] a gesture of mutual respect based on our being young, black, male; based, in other words, on our being "brothers"', musing that these brief glances of mutuality 'were exchanged between black men all over the city every minute of the day, a quick solidarity worked into the weave of each man's mundane pursuits' (*OC* 212). However, the men subsequently attack Julius from behind in 'a quick, preplanned choreography' that strangers on the street 'did not notice, or did not care to notice' (*OC* 214). The event conveys the brutal realities of the contemporary urban experience and goes some way towards validating Julius's retreat from cosmopolitan engagement. In this sense, the narrative reflects the need for a re-evaluation of traditional cosmopolitan dispositions and echoes Beck's realisable cosmopolitan vision for a contemporary environment: it 'is no longer a matter of solidarity or obligation but of a conflict-laden coexistence side by side in a transnationally neutralized space' ('Sociology' 75). Julius perceives in his self-imposed segregation a form of protection against the anxieties of community – concerns which can be avoided 'by being magnificently isolated from all loyalties' (*OC* 107). As a result, he remains largely untransformed by intercultural encounters, failing to assume an affinity with his interlocutors and maintaining a state of disassociation from himself and others. Notions of cross-cultural harmony in general often neglect the actually existing cosmopolitics of the globalised world. That being said, for the values of contemporary cosmopolitanism to confront cultural disharmony, the concept needs to acknowledge that local sites are contested spaces of co-existence built upon socioeconomic differentiation

and often marginalisation, not utopian spaces of idealised conviviality. A realistic construction of cosmopolitan communities should endorse this antagonism and opposition as a means of preserving cultural heterogeneity. The intercultural conflict and the strained relations of contemporary urban life in the narrative, evident in Julius's attack, function as an analogy for wider cultural tensions created by globalising processes and movements.

Ellis Island and the Legacy of Migration

'The globe shrinks for those who own it; [but] for the displaced or the dispossessed, the migrant or refugee, no distance is more awesome than the few feet across borders of frontiers' (Bhabha, 'Double Visions' 88).

Following his encounter with the cab driver, Julius wanders down to the Hudson River, espying Ellis Island in the distance. Crucially, this textual reference to Ellis Island allows Cole to develop a broader reflection on the history of immigration (both free and forced) to the U.S. According to Héctor R. Cordero-Guzmán, Robert C. Smith and Ramón Grosfoguel, New York is 'the oldest immigrant city in the United States' and its 'most important port of entry' for immigration (3). The physical fortification of Ellis Island functions as a gateway for immigrants, giving rise to transnational forms of mobility and serving as a tourist site for New York's citizens: 'SHOW YOUR KIDS WHERE THE ALIENS LANDED' (*OC* 58). It is the threshold across which cultural interaction is permitted to be experienced and codified, enforcing distinctions between U.S. nationals and cultural 'others'. The irony being that this receiving point for the world's citizens is simultaneously a very tangible barrier reinforcing spaces of exclusion and restriction of movement – imposing immobility on mobility. Despite operating as a detention centre, Gareth Hoskins and Jo Frances Maddern argue that Ellis Island is revered as 'an almost

mythological site where multicultural America was formed', a commemorative space which codifies 'that history of mobility as full of promise, as something to celebrate, something that unites and establishes a national identity' (152, 162). Julius, however, perceives the Ellis Island of the narrative, 'the focus of so many myths', to be 'a symbol mostly for European refugees. Blacks, "we blacks," had known rougher ports of entry' (*OC* 54, 55). He realises this was the acknowledgement the cab driver was seeking from 'every "brother" he met', observing that this required indication of some vague cultural heritage disregards the fact that Ellis Island 'closed too soon to mean anything to the later Africans like Kenneth, or the cabdriver, or me' (*OC* 55). The narrative's focus on national institutions once again emphasises the means by which potential cultural connections are often offset by bleak cosmopolitical realities.

The ethico-political discourse within the novel overall highlights that an awareness of human rights is integral to the implementation of cosmopolitan values. As Patrick Hayden argues, a 'cosmopolitan morality is best articulated through the concept of human rights' via an acknowledgement of moral and socio-cultural obligation, thus providing 'the basis for a global ethic' (100). Julius's ex-girlfriend, Nadege, organises a group visit to another detention facility in Queens that holds undocumented immigrants, with the purpose of providing comfort and support to those detained. Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman propose that detention centres function in a similar manner to Ellis Island, being 'designed to arrest and control movement, processing people according to their past and potential future mobilities' (8). The centres consequently become spaces of movement for some and spaces of fixity for others. Rather than appreciating the ethical purpose of the group, Julius merely states that the women who gave up their time to visit the immigrants had 'that beatific, slightly unfocused expression one finds in do-gooders' (*OC* 62). He seemingly befriends a Liberian immigrant, Saidu, who divulges his own brutal migration history.

Saidu explains he has been detained in the U.S. for over two years but is being sent back, having been told he 'might have had a chance before 9/11' (*OC* 69). The conversation between the pair highlights the widely divergent forms transnational mobility may assume. While Julius enjoys a privileged form of Western mobility across all spaces of the global city, Saidu is a member of the non-elite global citizenry dislocated between territorialities and marginalised by the continuing imposition of national borders. In the contemporary world there is often a disparity between privileged citizens who are free to form social networks and non-elite migrants who are manipulated by Western globalising processes. The weakening of borders due to the proliferation of the transnational mobility of non-elite citizens arguably necessitates the development of cosmopolitan dispositions to engage with these transformations. And yet, through asymmetrical institutional barriers, systems of inclusion and exclusion in the narrative remain intact, ensuring the maintenance of a cultural binary of 'them' and 'us'.

At the very least, the cosmopolitan empathy of Nadege and her group ensure the exclusionary systems of border control unintentionally actualise and foster forms of transnational engagement, rather than the brutal isolation of excluded others. The same cannot be said for Julius's presence in the facility. When Saidu asks if Julius will continue to visit him, Julius promises 'that I would, but never did' (*OC* 70). The migrant is not asking Julius to commit to any supererogatory actions, merely to maintain a semblance of sociability, which would limit Saidu's loneliness, increase solidarity, and go some way to resolving his feelings of exclusion. Julius nevertheless utilises the encounter to paint himself as 'the compassionate African who paid attention to the details of someone else's life and struggle. I had fallen in love with that idea myself' (*OC* 70). His arrogant delusion leads Kate Hallemeier to claim that Saidu becomes merely 'the abject cosmopolitan [...] a literary, potentially erotic resource for the economically privileged cosmopolitan

intellectual, Julius' (242-43). The encounter highlights the absence of Julius's cosmopolitan outlook in engaging with these global inequalities of marginalisation and dislocation. As Greg Noble emphasises, openness 'can only begin an encounter, it is not the encounter itself' (49). Attempts by marginalised subjects in the novel (such as Saidu) to forge some form of affinity or communication reflect Robbins's argument that cosmopolitanism should be extended to 'transnational experiences that are particular rather than universal and that are unprivileged – indeed, often coerced' ('Introduction' 1). Crucially, the contemporary form of cosmopolitanism evident in the novel, by adhering to the pragmatic implementation of ethical considerations and cross-cultural encounters on a localised scale through reflexive engagement with fellow neighbours or marginalised citizens of the city, avoids conforming to the celebratory nature of universalism. The conversation therefore vindicates the criticisms directed at Western cosmopolitan paradigms, which are often perceived as merely aesthetic posturing ignorant of, and standing in contrast to, the delimited mobility of global migrants. The asymmetrical relationship between Julius and Saidu supports the argument that cosmopolitanism remains the purview of those secure within a nation-state or enjoying a form of territorial belonging. By assuming a superficial and banal stance to cultural engagement, Julius fails to demonstrate a desire to alter systems of global inequality, retaining a spectatorial and ineffectual worldview. A similar story emerges in *Every Day Is for the Thief*, an earlier novel by Cole originally published in Nigeria in 2007. A young clerk attempts to strike up a relationship with the unnamed narrator (who bears a striking similarity to Julius): 'I want to know you [...] Maybe one day, by knowing you, I can have a chance to go to America. To know each other, actually, just as friends' (*ED* 152).[39] The narrator merely echoes

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[39] Like *Open City*, *Every Day Is for the Thief* is arguably semi-autobiographical, based on Cole's return to Lagos after several years of absence.

Julius's disposition in *Open City*, avoiding the ties that would bind him to a personal attachment: 'I shake his hand, knowing full well I will never see him again' (*ED* 153).

According to Alison Mountz, in order to counter the intensification of transnational mobility, the 'immigrant-receiving states of the global North police borders and exacerbate differences between themselves and "others" who struggle to land on sovereign territory' (255). The ubiquitous discourse surrounding immigrants and national security in the novel certainly suggests that the cosmopolitical life of global cities is increasingly organised and influenced by transnational considerations. However, this is not to say that immigrants like Saidu are entirely disconnected from globalising processes; they are still undeniably linked to the transnational flows defining the contemporary environment, exercising agency in their mobility. Although global migrants often represent a state of rootlessness and constant movement, Saidu is a voluntary migrant, harbouring a desire to participate in the cultural freedoms of the U.S.[40] Inderpal Grewal argues that becoming a 'citizen' of the U.S. has 'both a hegemonic and a heterogeneous meaning articulated within and through forms of transnational consumption and struggles for rights' (8). Yet nationalism itself is not central to identity in *Open City*, with transnational communities in global cities proving the norm, not the exception. As the novel displays, the protean nature of nationalism now comfortably encompasses both local and more global subjectivities. Despite Robbins's assessment that the U.S. operates as 'cosmopolitanism's source' due to its origins as a 'nation of immigrants', transnational migrants undoubtedly problematise cosmopolitan paradigms (*Feeling Global* 32). The marginalisation of immigrants tempers any form of celebratory cosmopolitanism and simply exposes the inequalities that prevent a more cosmopolitan society from emerging.

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[40] Despite the widely divergent relationship Julius shares with Saidu, he fails to encounter migrants who represent a nomadic cosmopolitanism engendered by the ruptures and dissonances of global crises.

Open City may avoid challenging the systems of global inequality, but through a sustained critique of Julius's unethical subjectivity, it suggests that a critical awareness of cultural discrimination (and active individual agency to lessen marginalisation) are apposite goals for the globalised world. Nonetheless, cultural-spatial divisions and national citizenship remain the means of determining who belongs and who is excluded from the U.S. Restrictive, yet necessary, border controls remain in place to regulate mobility, revealing how transnational flows and migratory diasporas function against the fixity of nation-states. The idea of the nation remains central to both the public imagination and government policy. These barriers to transnational engagement fail to contradict the core values of contemporary cosmopolitan paradigms. Moderating flows is not the same as obstructing flows and interaction does not require a structure of equivalence. Despite asymmetric rights to movement, and the fact that 'differentiated inclusion' may transform into 'differentiated exclusion', Ewald Engelen argues it is a pragmatic reality that 'too much mobility is simply incompatible with a sustainable framework of rights [and] thresholds are needed to ensure durable rights' (510). Borders simply emphasise that 'place', as opposed to some abstract global space of flows, is politically and socio-culturally contested, and bound up with issues of identity and belonging. *Open City* reinforces a counter-argument to the idealistic assumption that contemporary society is becoming a world without borders, in which individuals are free to move at will across global spaces. Rather, territorial borders are not so much eroded by cosmpolitanisation, as transformed by the process; cosmopolitanisation now occurs in localised environments contested by transnational forces, demonstrating the importance of locality to ground and shape the practice of cosmopolitan ideals.

Derrida claims that issues of asylum call for 'a duty to hospitality' by the 'cities of refuge' (*Forgiveness* 4). By interrogating the difficulty in offering unconditional

hospitality to displaced subjects like Saidu, *Open City* merely problematises, at an institutional level, what Harvey identifies as the outdated Kantian cosmopolitan ethic that 'individuals [...] would have the right to hospitality when they cross clearly defined borders' (*Freedom* 18). Harvey thus echoes Michael J. Shapiro's claim that Kant envisioned 'a world in which an enlarged ethic of hospitality would diminish the significance of the bordered world' (which in any case referred to sovereign states and did at least accept that hospitality is never unconditional) (701). Classical cosmopolitan paradigms, such as the Kantian model, rely on abstract moral philosophies rather than addressing the political realities of putting cosmopolitanism into practice, and are therefore theoretically insufficient in addressing the concerns of the contemporary environment. Unprecedented levels of migration and the need for novel forms of transnational security serve as further difficulties in formulating a means of living together in an increasingly interdependent society. As Greg M. Nielsen identifies, '[u]nconditional cosmopolitan intent' would seek an ideal global culture that embraced the 'right to refuge, a duty towards hospitality, and acceptance of strangers', but doing so fails to accommodate 'domestic rules of residence and rights to security', affirming the 'impossibility of complete tolerance towards difference' (279). The presence of the detention facility in *Open City* reveals the historical maintenance of fears of the cultural other, spatialising a desire to limit cultural integration. Increased transnational mobility, serving as the catalyst for Julius's forced engagement with cultural others, consequently challenges the limits of hospitality. By proceeding to forge strong links between global security discourses and the implied threat of terrorism in the narrative, the novel provides a rationale for the maintenance of existing immigration regulation systems.

The Spectre of 9/11: Transnational Risks

'Urban disasters bring to the fore the astounding fragility of complex mobility systems' (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 7).

Mountz claims that the September 11 attacks alone provoked 'a stricter policing of the line between those with mobility and those without' (255).[41] As if to answer the cultural effects of 9/11, Cole directs Julius's 'aimless progress' towards the transgressive space of Ground Zero, a visible reminder of the dangers of the increasingly interdependent present (*OC* 7). Cole positions the site as an example of historical cyclicality, claiming that 'catastrophic trauma is not new in this city' (qtd. in 'Immigrant's Quest' n.pag.). Julius muses that Ground Zero 'was not the first erasure on the site', imagining the forgotten transnational communities who inhabited this city space before the World Trade Centre buildings: 'the old Washington Market, the active piers, the fishwives, the Christian Syrian enclave that was established here in the late 1800s [...] And, before that? What Lenape paths lay buried beneath the rubble?' (*OC* 58, 59). The forgotten history of these communities, for Julius, corresponds to the 'neatness of the line we had drawn around the catastrophic events of 2001', the innumerable dead being: 'sectioned off, hidden in a crypt, and from this place of encryption they haunt the living' (*OC* 209). The novel therefore echoes Harvey's argument that future constructions upon the site of Ground Zero must 'say something about individual and collective memory' yet must not 'ignore the issue of relational spatial connectivity to the rest of the world' (*Freedom* 146, 147). By envisioning the site as 'a palimpsest, as was all the city, written, erased, rewritten', Julius acknowledges Ground Zero to reflect a spatial continuation with earlier periods of history – intensification rather than transformation of the global city's transnational demographic and structure (*OC* 59).

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[41] As Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar notes, 9/11 had a direct effect on immigration: the 'number of refugees allowed to enter the country plummeted by 60% since 2001, from 69,304 to 27,186 last year - the lowest in 25 years' (n.pag.).

New York functions in the narrative as a city of memory – mapping cultural history onto urban space and indicating that the city's citizens are constantly subject to cosmopolitical forces. Julius's personal and cultural identity in the city is mediated by and folded into the experiences of other transnational individuals, tracing routes others have walked before him. As Wood notes, the New York of the narrative is depicted as 'a place of constant deposit and erasure'; by imbuing the narrative with 'the collective weight of the past', Julius is 'drawn to the layers of sedimented historical suffering on which the city rests' ('Arrival' n.pag.). And yet, his subjectivity as a 'lone walker' through cultural sites of communal experience such as Ground Zero indicates the relevance of individual perception to the collective memory of global events: 'I, one of the still legible crowd [...] wanted to find the line that connected me to my own part in these stories' (*OC* 57, 59). Although postcolonial texts often possess a deep empathy with transnational pasts and presents, Julius's own psychological idiosyncrasies shape a very specific and restrictive form of aesthetic participation in cultural flows, which often fetishises or superficially concerns itself with transnational traumas. Part of Julius's antipathy to ethnic or personal attachments undoubtedly stems from a desire to stabilise his place and identity within the changing topography and ephemerality of a global city. The site of Ground Zero encapsulates both local and global histories, layered upon each other as a palimpsest of interconnected memory, locally situated but shaped by transnational networks through the political contestation it signifies. Moreover, in placing Julius within sites and communities of memory, *Open City* indicates that transnational mobilities and global connectivities operate along historical as well as geographical trajectories. Spaces of intercultural exchange in the narrative are often simultaneously spaces of tension and collision. Racial inequalities and cosmopolitical tensions persist from the late-twentieth century suggesting a limitation to realistic cultural engagement. By positioning transnational migration as a

shared fate for all nationalities across history, Cole is able both to locate the experiences of contemporary immigrants as a continuation of the past, and to accentuate how the intensification of global movement creates new mobilities and questions of belonging. Through an exploration of cosmopolitan memories and disparate histories, the first-person narration results in more than merely an exploration of self (reflecting the historical construction of a transnational community in a global city) and weakens the argument that transnationalism is merely a contemporary phenomenon responsible for dismantling the nation-state paradigm.

According to Sven Kesselring, the 'rise of new constellations of risk, uncertainty and insecurity' engendered by the spatial and social mobilisation of global flows (intrinsic to the events of 9/11) has resulted in a 'mobile risk society' (77).[42] Global discourse surrounding migration and cultural mobilities is inextricably bound up with the threat of racial tension and acts of terrorism. Julius's observer perspective portrays the shifting dialectics between localities and the infringement of transnational flows; as the narrative progresses, a series of events serve to emphasise the dangers cultural connectivity can bring, centred round racialised discourses. Julius interprets an infestation of bed bugs sweeping the city as an image of the difficulties of intercultural engagement in a risk society of mobile terrorism: 'the terms of transnational conflicts had changed', ensuring that 'the enemies were now vague, and the threat they posed constantly shifting' (*OC* 173). These creatures 'were involved in a kind of low-grade warfare, a conflict at the margins of modern life', destabilising 'the sanctity of the home [...] the fear of being attacked by the unseen' (*OC* 173, 176). Further, while relaxing in the park with friends, Julius witnesses something 'in the sky, defying nature' (*OC* 197). The materialisation of three parachutists

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[42] Kesselring's use of the term is adapted from Beck's theory of a 'world risk society' ('World Risk' 2).

falling to earth serve as a clear analogy to the unprecedented events of 9/11: '[b]all games stopped, chatter became loud, and many arms pointed upward' (*OC* 194). Although Julius judges the 'spectacle' of men coming 'closer to earth, falling faster' to be a 'harmless and beautiful stunt', he acknowledges the necessity of the police patrol to counter the potential threats of contemporary Western society (*OC* 195, 194, 200). The incidents illustrate that Julius perceives himself as culturally-ingrained in the U.S., elucidating why he finds it so difficult to empathise with transnational others of African heritage who consider him a 'brother'.

In order to reconnect with his roots, Julius travels to Belgium, ostensibly to track down his grandmother who resides there. On arriving in Brussels, however, he immediately forgets his purpose in the capital, reverting to his aesthetic flâneurism. His characteristic remoteness is transported to the city and he merely replicates his usual solitary day-to-day activities: 'days went by slowly, and my sense of being entirely alone in the city intensified' (*OC* 108). By Cole's positioning of Brussels as yet another site of displacement for Julius, Claire Messud therefore perceives the capital to function as 'a microcosmic reconfiguration of his relation to New York' (n.pag.). Moreover, in effortlessly transporting Julius to Belgium without any narratorial detail of the journey, Cole places further emphasis on the ways in which elite subjects pass through national borders in a very different fashion to the non-elite migrants Julius encounters, reflecting John Urry's identification of the contrast in contemporary society between 'the speed of the global and the slowness of the ontologically grounded' (123). Although cosmopolitanism is not a synonym for transnational mobility, Weert Canzler, Vincent Kaufmann and Sven Kesselring identify that '[d]iscourses on globalization, transnationalisation and cosmopolitanism more and more refer quite directly to mobility issues', often with regards to this dichotomy between elite and non-elite mobility (181). In

comparison to the transnational displacement suffered by some of his interlocutors, Julius merely exhibits an existential restlessness. He is a transnational subject who suffers neither asylum nor exile; an internal migrant with legal citizenship freely crossing the border controls his African 'brothers' are constantly detained by.

Arguably, due to the narrative emphasis on cultural relations in the Belgian capital, Brussels (rather than New York) may serve as the 'open city' of the title, referring to the capital's decision during the Second World War to open its borders in order to escape German aggression: '[h]ad Brussels's rulers not opted to declare it an open city and thereby exempt it from bombardment [...] it might have been reduced to rubble' (*OC* 97). That being said, it is difficult to draw too close an analogy between the two cities. Rather than implying that closing the borders of the U.S. will result in a more damaging atrocity to New York, the importance of open borders in Brussels merely suggests that cosmopolitan citizenries can eventually be established despite destructive pasts. The cosmopolitanisation of Brussels, however, complicates the cosmopolitan ideal of cultural openness in the process. Julius acknowledges that the ethnic make-up and subsequent socio-cultural transformations of the capital has resulted in 'a palpable psychological pressure' and widespread hate crimes across the capital (*OC* 98). He is forced to accept that 'this was the European reality now, in which borders were flexible', and countless women may be 'swaddled in black cloth' despite Belgium failing to enjoy 'a strong colonial relationship with any country in North Africa' (*OC* 98). As a result of extensive multiculturalism, he understands why the country is 'in the grip of uncertainties' and observes a visible political shift in voter discontent regarding immigration (*OC* 100). In directly attributing 'the tension experienced by nonwhites living in the country' to an increase in transnational communities, Julius once more fails to identify or empathise with the role of cultural

others, extending his lack of cosmopolitan empathy to global lives outside the U.S. (*OC* 99).

Dropping into an internet cafe to check his email while in Brussels, Julius meets Farouq, a Masters student working in the café while he finishes his degree. Interestingly, he hails Farouq as his 'brother', and quickly questions why he did so: '[a] false note, I decided' (*OC* 102). The incident once again betrays Julius's sporadic emotional duality with regards to cultural affiliation. By reasoning that he would be 'going into the shop for a few weeks, and it was best to make friends', the show of solidarity can be interpreted as a practical necessity, rather than a genuine attempt at mutuality and affinity (*OC* 102). Although cosmopolitanism involves an engagement with cultural others, Julius often exploits his ethnic heritage for tactical or strategic means, possessing ulterior motives when assuming his inauthentic ethnic demeanour. Julius serves as a discordant note against the multilingual harmony of Farouq, who 'slipped seamlessly into French, and back again into English', demonstrating the value of transnational exchanges in fostering commonality (*OC* 103). Berman argues that acts of translation reflect an ability and competence in engaging with transnational difference: 'in translating one seeks not to represent in one's own language the ideas of another but to expand one's own language so as to be able to speak the other's thoughts' (19). The limits of Julius's linguistic diversity is therefore suggestive of his failure to engage with transnational others in general. On first meeting Farouq, Julius attempts to converse in French, but soon has to either resort to his native English in order to socialise, or have Farouq act as a translator between himself and others, enabling him to engage in communication with those of differing ideologies. Further, by reading Walter Benjamin's *On The Concept of History*, Farouq not only reveals that contemporary migrants possess transnational literacies, but indicates that literature offers the potential for identification with cultural others: 'it was books that made me aware of

the variety of the world. This is why I don't view America as monolithic [...] I know that there are different people there, with different ideas' (*OC* 125-26).[43] Farouq consequently expects a form of reciprocity from Western nations – an acknowledgement that his cultural experiences are equally valid: 'what is important to me is that the world realizes that we are not monolithic either, in what they call the Arab world, that we are all individuals. We disagree with each other' (*OC* 124).

Admittedly, migration and subsequent transnational connections are hardly new developments in global society. Through the internet café, however, *Open City* emphasises the facilitation of technological transformations that contribute to novel forms of cultural engagement, namely the interconnection of transnational communities through digital communication: 'a log of the calls ongoing in all twelve booths: Colombia, Egypt, Senegal, Brazil, France, Germany. It looked like fiction, that such a small group of people really could be making calls to such a wide spectrum of places' (*OC* 112). The cosmopolitan dialogues forged in Farouq's internet café not only enable cultural and political agency to come to the fore, but reflect a communal process in which transnational subjects negotiate cultural positions and mutually reconstruct contemporary forms of global connectivity through both physical and virtual domains. Farouq claims the cosmopolitan composition of the internet cafe is 'a test case of what I believe; people can live together but still keep their own values intact. Seeing this crowd of individuals from different places, it appeals to the human side of me' (*OC* 112). Although the internet café reflects that transnational

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[43] Benjamin has written at length on the idea of the flâneur, of which Julius is a contemporary urban manifestation (Cole having tweeted and blogged on the subject of Walter Benjamin outside of the novel). Benjamin's figure of the flâneur 'did not know where his thought should alight or what end he should serve, [so] his detached strolling, sitting, and reflecting, itself a type of intellectual consumption, yielded no identity […] he was allied entirely neither with the middle class nor yet with the metropolis' (Amato 174). In this sense, Cole adds a racial dimension to the cosmopolitan flâneur's aesthetic spectatorship.

connectivity is determined by forms of physical and virtual forms of mobility (seemingly limiting the potential for engagement), it is nevertheless largely frequented by non-elite migrants from outside Europe, allowing them to sustain and create links across national borders. This linking of marginalised subjects to a wider global circuit in the narrative offers an escape from delimiting localities and an engagement with cosmopolitical and cultural flows from which they have been excluded. Technology thereby engenders a new migrant condition to confront the contemporary global environment.[44] By incorporating themselves (and by extension their culture) into networks of technological connectivity, non-Western communities may utilise Farouq's café to pass for members of an elite global community. Farouq's openness and sociability, coupled with his role as a transnational entrepreneur, facilitates his participation in the acceleration of global flows and connections. His cosmopolitan disposition and development of transnational networks is equally apparent in his private life as he graciously invites Julius to dinner at Casa Botelho. Even the mundane and banal activity of sharing food suggests that acts of individual ethical agency are conducive to the formation of more tolerant transnational communities and foster intercultural commensality.

A Deeper Project?

'I believe in the brotherhood of man, but I don't believe in brotherhood with anybody who doesn't want brotherhood with me' (Malcolm X n.pag.).

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[44] The use of digital communicative technology for transnational engagement is equally apparent in Cole's earlier work, *Every Day Is for the Thief*. Although digital communication suggests a form of cultural domination in this novel, even in remote global spaces, the technology paradoxically liberates the youths from their local culture and the restrictions of their nation-state.

Farouq initially supplies the ethical engagement which has been lacking in the narrative; his passionate defence of the realisable possibilities of transnational interaction provides a pragmatic approach to Julius's abstract aestheticism. According to Carool Kersten, both 'cosmopolitanism and cultural hybridity' are 'useful heuristic tools' for analysing how 'contemporary Muslim intellectuals [...] come to terms with globalization' (92). Farouq's cosmopolitan outlook is evident in his 'two projects': the practical aim of becoming a translator, and the 'deeper project' regarding 'the difference thing', which entertains the idealised belief 'that people can live together, and I want to understand how that can happen. It happens here, on this small scale, in this shop, and I want to understand how it can happen on a bigger scale' (*OC* 113). Farouq's 'deeper project' has echoes of Sandercock's proposed development of a '*cosmopolis*: cities in which there is acceptance of, connection with, and respect and space for "the stranger," the possibility of working together on matters of common destiny and forging new hybrid cultures and urban projects and ways of living' (*Mongrel Cities* 127). In striving for a vision of cosmopolitan urbanism, Farouq displays the ways in which migrants may assume new allegiances and subjectivities to reflect their diverse cultural heritage. As Timothy C. Earle and George T. Cvetkovich point out, cosmopolitanism is 'a useful strategy for managing cultural conflicts because it takes culture to be an open, future-oriented process' (96). In confronting the challenges of cultural liminality and exclusionary politics, Farouq performs a progressive inclusionary discourse which accommodates alternative modes of cultural creativity to create a cosmopolitan vision of transnational association. Hallemeier perceives in Farouq's multilingual skills, bolstered by his study for a Masters in translation, the 'promising means of pursuing his deeper project of cosmopolitan community' (245). By forging conversations 'outside the purview of Anglophone liberal literary culture', she claims their dialogue creates a 'literary cosmopolitanism that bridges linguistically diverse audiences'

(245, 246). Farouq's subsequent criticism of collective terms for cultural assimilation: 'melting pot, salad bowl, multiculturalism [...] I reject all these terms, I believe foremost in difference', therefore reflects a desire to interrogate and improve social structures beyond merely racial divisions (*OC* 114).

Farouq's ethical nature, however, is called into question during a political discussion in which he favours the radical philosophy and fundamentalist aggression of Malcolm X over the liberal goodwill of Martin Luther King. He claims that while Malcolm X 'recognized that difference contains its own value, and that the struggle must be to advance that value', Martin Luther King's calls for empathy, tolerance and integration are too passive: '[t]his is not an idea I can accept. There's always the expectation that the victimized Other is the one that covers the distance, that has the noble ideas; I disagree with this expectation' (*OC* 105). For Farouq, attack is sometimes the best line of defence in protecting marginalised perspectives. His argument regarding integration has its merits, identifying that the receiving society often determines the form integration takes. A more cosmopolitan approach would be for immigrants to determine the cultural attachment to which they feel allegiance. As Hannerz notes, cosmopolitanism entails that individuals should enjoy a 'greater involvement with a plurality of contrasting cultures to some degree on their own terms', as difficult as that may be (*Transnational* 103). Julius perceives in Farouq's political rhetoric 'a cancerous violence' that can only be avoided by 'having no causes', and momentarily questions whether this solution was 'not an ethical lapse graver than rage itself?' (*OC* 107). However, he ultimately retains his original suspicion of those who 'wished to rally people around a cause', determining that the 'cause itself, whatever it was, hardly mattered. Partisanship was all' (*OC* 28).

Farouq nonetheless struggles in 'maintaining his uniqueness, his difference' in Brussels, attempting to avoid being subsumed by multicultural group aesthetics (*OC* 143).

Unlike Julius, he possesses 'no desire to visit America', fearful of the trappings of

'monolithic identity', racial persecution, and the politics of assimilation (*OC* 126, 106). As

Julius acknowledges: 'I, too, would not have wanted to visit the United States as a solitary

North African Muslim with leftist beliefs', briefly perceiving himself through Farouq's

eyes and recognising his own position as 'the dark, unsmiling, solitary stranger' (*OC* 126,

106). Subsequently, he later re-evaluates his cultural position as an 'other' in the racially

charged cityscape of Brussels, deciding to restrict his late-night walks. And yet, Julius's

conversation with an acquaintance, Dr Maillotte, questions the relevance and necessity of

difference to the construction of transnational communities, suggesting that perhaps a form

of homogeneity is not antithetical to cosmopolitan connection: '[w]hy would you want to

move somewhere only to prove how different you are? And why would a society like that

want to welcome you?' (*OC* 143). The narrative therefore struggles against Farouq's

idealised 'deeper project', resisting the notion that a non-exclusionary cosmopolitan vision

can materialise from within systems of global inequality and cultural marginality. Further,

the encounter with Farouq introduces a marginalised Muslim discourse to the cultural

flows of transnational assimilation. In coming to Europe, Farouq hoped to find a sense of

belonging and a form of intellectual freedom but was soon disillusioned by what he

perceived to be warning signs of political oppression and Islamophobia: 'Europe only

looks free. The dream was an apparition' (*OC* 122). That being said, not even Farouq's

initial disillusionment results in the emergence of a reactionary stance – arising from an

opposition to Western globalisation and reflecting exclusionary positions and

emancipatory rhetoric – that perspective emerges through his best friend, Khalil. While

resistance to this underlying oppression manifests itself in Khalil as a form of radical anti-

American endorsement, Farouq chooses to convert his disillusionment into a renewed faith

for religious and socio-cultural tolerance, evident in his 'deeper project'. Farouq thus

incorporates his religious ideology into his ethnic identity. This repositioning of Islam in the narrative supports Karen Leonard's argument that cosmopolitanism 'features religious engagements and interactions that are more open to reconfigurations in new contexts' (177). Rather than formulating an oppositional stance to the Western cultural discourses of exclusion and marginalisation, from which he himself has suffered in Belgium, Farouq's religious beliefs point towards a cosmopolitan reformulation of Islamic ideology itself, via the positioning of Sharia as 'the harmonious functioning of a society' and Islam in general as a worldly reflection of 'the way we live in the world, with day-to-day life' (*OC* 127).

Khalil, on the other hand, tends towards Appiah's notion of 'counter-cosmopolitans', who value religious fundamentalism and universal truths over tolerance for cultural difference and pluralism (*Ethics* 137). Through his counter-hegemonic discourse, Khalil emphasises to Julius and Farouq that transnational citizens often bring with themselves transnational politics. Julius's detachment during the conversation is evident, maintaining his resistance to political dogma. During a discussion of Palestinian rights, however, he definitively identifies with his American citizenship over his Nigerian origins: 'there's also the perception that we share elements of our culture and government with Israel' (*OC* 118). Julius's polarised and mercurial stance throughout the conversation creates a dichotomy between East and West that is antithetical to the requirements of cosmopolitan paradigms. The trio move onto a discussion of the events of 9/11, a cultural event which raised cosmopolitical questions of cultural inclusion across local, national and global scales. Khalil reveals: 'it was a terrible day, the twin towers. Terrible. What they did was very bad. But I understand why they did it', leading Julius to immediately label Khalil 'an extremist' who fulfils the very role of 'how Americans think Arabs think' (*OC* 120). Yet Julius recognises his own indignation to this extreme declaration to be in itself manufactured, the effect of playing a cultural role he fails to identify with: 'I was

pretending to an outrage greater than I actually felt [...] it was a game, I was meant to be

the outraged American' (*OC* 120). Unsurprisingly, following the events of 9/11,

nationalistic discourses gained traction, while race became a primary articulation for

practices of both solidarity and exclusion. Khalil's dialogue enables the mobilisation of a

symbolic repertoire which both defines his transnational status of difference and operates

in opposition to (what he believes to be) the hegemonic fold of America. Even Farouq, the

more progressive of the pair, is angry at the cultural inequalities which he admits have

affected his personal life. His previous MA thesis, on Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space,*

was accused of plagiarism due to 'world events in which I had played no role. My thesis

committee had met on September 20, 2001, and to them, with everything happening in the

headlines, here was this Moroccan writing about difference [...] That was the year I lost all

my illusions about Europe' (*OC* 128). Julius determines that Farouq is destined to remain

'one of the thwarted ones', subject to gross cultural inequalities in the wake of 9/11 (*OC*

129). Despite his progressive political ideology, Julius reasons that Farouq is 'still just a

man in a shop', just 'another Arab, subject to a quick suspicious glance on the tram'; by

remaining embittered by his own failings and misfortune: 'the stranger had remained

strange, and had become a foil for new discontents' (*OC* 106).

Although Donna Rifkind argues that Cole, through Julius, 'transplants the

European flâneur tradition to the post-colonial world', *Open City* clearly moves beyond

postcolonial paradigms to anticipate both the banal aesthetics and actually existing realities

of the cosmopolitan condition (n.pag.). The merits of such an aesthetic cosmopolitanism,

however, are constantly under scrutiny. Following his conversations with Farouq, Julius

decides to send him a copy of Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism*, a cultural text

espousing ethical ideals which Julius does not himself repeat in practice. Appiah's text

underscores the necessity of obligations to others in a contemporary environment,

demonstrated by an everyday participation with other individuals' practices and an engaged dialogue concerning cultural beliefs. His cosmopolitan ethics therefore promote the idiosyncrasies of local cultural differences over any homogenisation of the global community (inherent in traditional cosmopolitan paradigms) in confronting ethno-political realities. That being said, Robbins criticises conceptions of cosmopolitanism which rest upon a romanticised and 'aesthetic spectatorship rather than political engagement' – a superficial posturing of which Julius himself is constantly guilty (*Feeling Global* 17). A cultural text, for Julius, 'suggests conversation' in a way social engagement does not (*OC* 5). In his mind, the literary text is integral to the envisioning of cosmopolitan discourse and circumvents the need for actual engagement. Julius and Farouq thus embody two competing ideologies of cosmopolitanism; on the one hand, a liberal aesthetic ideology that fails to necessitate interaction, and on the other, the challenge of cultural engagement. While posting the book to Farouq, Julius is once again forced into conversation, this time by an African postal worker who tries to engage him on issues of racial identity and suffering, initiating a cosmopolitan discourse centred on the concerns integral to Appiah's text. Ironically, Julius merely makes 'a mental note to avoid that particular post office in the future', demonstrating an indifference to the ideals of aesthetic cosmopolitanism he advocates (*OC* 188).

Ethics, Trauma and Gender

'The nation is a specter that always returns, haunting the global with images of bounded space and historical ties of origins and becoming, unsettling the desire to imagine a world only of flow' (Dalley 32).

The return of a female acquaintance from Nigeria, Moji, is the sole event which forces

Julius to question his ethical engagement with others. Moji claims that years previously

Julius raped her at a party and refused to acknowledge her presence in the aftermath.

Disturbingly, the accusation fails to register in Julius's memory: he 'knew nothing about it,

had even forgotten her, to the point of not recognizing her when [they] met again'; Moji's

painful recollections reveal that Julius has remained 'ever-present in her life, like a stain or

a scar' and caused her 'extended agonies, for almost every day of her adult life' (*OC* 244).

Rather than demonstrating any remorse, Julius merely contemplates an old anecdote

regarding Nietzsche, retaining an affective distance from the accusation of rape. The

question of rape serves to accentuate the absence of Julius's empathetic subjectivity

throughout the narrative and validates Moji's claim that Julius 'had lost none of [his]

callousness' (*OC* 245). Following the revelation, it is possible to position Julius's

psychological detachment and cultural dissociation as merely a tactical resistance to deny

his abuse of Moji. This denial has led to a wider rejection of the cultural and racial

formations with which he is supposed to identify, reflecting what Hamish Dalley terms 'the

ethical flaw of his attitude toward the *un*connectedness of place and person' (31). Moji's

reappearance in his life is the catalyst to tie Julius back to his African heritage and forges a

strong relation between the ostensibly antithetical concepts of trauma and

cosmopolitanism. Julius's personal alienation is not simply explained by a sense of cultural

dislocation within the U.S., but is rooted in a repression of his Nigerian past: '[t]hings

don't go away just because you choose to forget them' (*OC* 245).

Despite Moji's accusation, Julius reasons that an individual has the innate capacity

for good and evil, and that, 'without claiming any especially heightened sense of ethics',

he has predominantly 'hewed close to the good' (*OC* 243). The self-affirmation of his

supposed virtuousness demonstrates a refusal to accept responsibility for inducing the

effects of trauma in another. By determining that: '[e]ach person must, on some level, take himself as the calibration point for normalcy', he fails to demonstrate a clear sense of ethical accountability (*OC* 243). Julius's subsequent meditation on his own ethical nature reflects the difficulties in judging one's own subjectivity in relation to otherness, problematising any implementation of cosmopolitan ethics: 'we are not the villains of our own stories [...] we play, and only play, the hero, and in the swirl of other people's stories [...] we are never less than heroic' (*OC* 243). Moji's revelation in the closing section of the novel throws into question Julius's subjectivity throughout the narrative. Thus far, Cole has only permitted the reader to view cultural encounters from Julius's fragile, narrow psyche – a psyche now proven to be both unreliable and mercurial. The confrontation with Moji partly relates to his grandmother's life, who is suggested to have been raped in Berlin by Russian soldiers. More importantly, the accusation forces the reader to reinterpret previous events in the narrative and enforces a reframing of narrative perspectives, most specifically regarding the subject of gender. Accordingly, although Julius consistently rejects any engagement in communal activities or activist movements, an anti-rape march through the city at the beginning of the novel reveals his peculiar blindness to women in general: '[a] single voice, a woman's voice, shouted, and a crowd responded' but 'the words did not resolve into meaning' (*OC* 22). The indifference to both the march and its meaning, merely determining to 'shut the window' on gender inequalities (specifically women's right to move through urban space without being attacked), foreshadows his psychological block regarding the question of rape (*OC* 23). Notably, rather like the migrating birds of the opening passages, Moji's presence suffers from Julius's psychological failings: 'I couldn't trust my memory when they weren't there' (*OC* 4). Further, while in Brussels Julius sleeps with an older woman he meets in a café. He not only forgets the woman's name, and the encounter, but provides a false identity to remove himself from the intimate experience.

Open City's critical perspective on cosmopolitanism, then, interrogates the relevance of gender as well as race and class (a perspective often neglected in cosmopolitan paradigms). Due to his protean and secretive nature with regards to women, Julius emerges as an archetypal unreliable narrator, forcing the reader to retrace their steps through the narrative and retrospectively 'trace out a story from what was omitted' (*OC* 9). His own assessment of psychiatry's merits, 'what we knew [...] was so much less than what remained in darkness, and in this great limitation lay the appeal and frustration', could equally serve to define both Julius and the narrative at large (*OC* 239).

The novel's subdued denouement preserves this notable absence of personal involvement with the protagonist and suppresses any sense of an ethical trajectory emerging in the narrative. By attending a performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony at Carnegie Hall, where '[a]lmost everyone, as almost always at such concerts, was white', Julius resumes his preference for an aesthetic spectatorship that fails to result in direct cultural engagement (*OC* 251). Julius's love of Mahler suggests that a denial of his African heritage has manifested itself in the subconscious acceptance of his German roots. His fondness for classical European music suggests that he fits more comfortably into German stereotypes. In comparison to his discomfort at being associated with, or assimilated into, African culture, he notes how 'easy it is to leave the hybridity of the city, and enter into all-white spaces, the homogeneity of which, as far as I can tell, causes no discomfort to the whites in them' (*OC* 251-52). Following the concert, however, he finds himself locked out of the hall on a 'flimsy fire escape', detached once more from the white audience with whom he subconsciously seems to identify (*OC* 255). The incident forces a re-evaluation of Julius's earlier interpretation of an 'elaborate fire escape' on an old building as 'a transparent mask to the world' (*OC* 190). The fire escape of Carnegie Hall thus reveals his own cultural mask – he places himself 'outside' and makes himself the 'other'. The

sustained attempt to deny his ethnicity and racial origins leads to a renewed state of physical isolation from the multitude, exposed and alone in the rain. By not coming to terms with his origins and attempting to disregard the actions of his past, both Julius and his narrative in general therefore remain in a form of cyclical stasis. The text's final passage supports this reading, mirroring the opening scene of the novel in which Julius's act of 'taking auspices' serves as an analogy for the fates of immigrants themselves (*OC* 4).[45] Innumerable flocks of birds lose 'their bearings when faced with a single monumental flame' of the Statue of Liberty – the iconic embodiment of place in New York (*OC* 258). The presence of the birds suggest that the homogenising power of the U.S. is responsible for both generating and arresting the mobility of transnational migrants. By situating border control and national boundaries as the systems restricting cultural engagement, *Open City* supports Daniel Hiebert's assertion that 'national borders are "spaces of possibility" as well as spaces of control' (211). More importantly, the analogy ultimately shifts the responsibility of transnational interaction from the individual level to the institutional level, implying that Julius's own disjuncture from others serves as a wider critique for the ethical failures of global society to accommodate the lives of non-elite others.

The Limits of Openness

'Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore' (Lazarus 270).

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[45] An augury (or 'auspice') is a prophecy made on the basis of the patterns of birds in flight, reflecting the transnational movement that has led to Julius's engagement with cultural others.

The narrative of *Open City* reveals how an individual's ethnic and ethical identity is shaped and defined by the cosmopolitics of the wider world. Critiquing the socio-cultural engagement of New York through the eyes of a transnational subject, the novel problematises Moraru's claim that twenty-first century fiction involves a 'drama of with-ness', providing the 'rationale and vehicle for a new togetherness, for a solidarity across political, ethnic, racial, religious and other boundaries' (75, 5). By establishing a critical cosmopolitanism which deconstructs the progressive nature of transnational engagement (questioning whether cosmopolitan ideals are practical and achievable given the vast inequality and processes of inclusion and exclusion still existing even in Western global cities), *Open City* interrogates the effort required in establishing cultural connections. In doing so, the novel critiques idealised cultural connectivity, deviates from multicultural paradigms of integration, and reveals cosmopolitanism to be a fragile project easily destabilised by individual agency. The narrative consequently echoes the sentiments of *NW* in acknowledging the limitations of intercultural tolerance and integration to cosmopolitanism. By positioning cosmopolitan practices to operate on an individual level, subject to personal idiosyncrasies and reliant on active agency, *Open City* argues against the contention that individuals subject to transnational processes are subsequently 'cosmopolitan'.

Julius's encounters with New York's transnational citizenry, many immigrants themselves, reveal the city to be a culturally shared site which is, nevertheless, unequally inhabited. Although Julius seemingly adopts a literary cosmopolitan stance, exhibiting a global knowledge of world history, art and literature, the global inequalities and cosmopolitan memories of suffering that exist around him expose his aesthetic elitism as mere spectatorship. Despite the definitively local scale of the interactions, the narrative is ultimately transnational in scope, combining the diverse experiences of re-situated

migrants with the intensification of transnational connectivities and forcing a re-examination of the relationship of immigrants to cosmopolitan theory. The characters of Farouq and Saidu specifically represent the significance of non-elite migrants to contemporary cosmopolitan paradigms, demonstrating the complexity of their lives in learning multiple languages, establishing roots in other nations, and adapting to new cultures, either through free will or as a result of global disjuncture. The various encounters are therefore suggestive of the cosmopolitanisation of global cityscapes, which, according to Beck and Sznaider, concerns an erosion of clear boundaries separating diverse cultures and leads to 'involuntary confrontation with the alien other' ('New' 636). Contemporary cosmopolitanism requires engagement with the unprivileged sectors of global society who account for the vast majority of transnational movements. Richard Fardon terms such individuals the 'flotsam and jetsam of globalisation', encapsulating the extent to which the lives of non-elite groups are coerced and disrupted by globalising processes, and exposing the brutal reality of transnational flows (252). To escape the charge of elitism, cosmopolitanism must separate itself from Western dispositions alone and interrogate the migratory experiences that naturally follow from the networking of globalisation and the interdependencies of transnational mobilities. It remains questionable whether Julius's encounters reveal an openness to these transnational others, or more possibly a form of fake, aesthetic flâneurism which fails to display true engagement or empathy. Through his detached subjectivity, the text serves to critique the forms of cosmopolitan connection that typify global narratives – the elitist mobilities and cosmopolitanisation of cultures that neglect an engagement with global inequalities. Cultural mobility fails to develop cosmopolitan dispositions a priori. *Open City* thereby points to the importance of Beck's 'cosmopolitan fallacy', which tempers the progressive, utopian connotations of the term and highlights 'a growing sensitivity to other unfamiliar, legitimate geographies of living

and coexistence', which 'need not necessarily stimulate a feeling of cosmopolitan responsibility' ('Enemies' 29). The novel fails to function exclusively through Western elite paradigms or accentuate only those who are incommensurable to global flows and processes. Rather, the novel interrogates the cosmopolitical realities of transnational engagement from both elite and non-elite perspectives, positioning individual agency as central to the implementation of cosmopolitan ideals.

By examining the contemporary state of cultural relations in an urban environment, *Open City* reveals how transnational interactions operate and develop, detailing the practices and dialogues that establish and sustain such relationships. Specific points of origin, cultural and personal histories determine the facilitation or impediments to the development of ethical relationality in the novel. Fostering cosmopolitanism is far more complex than merely constructing a multicultural environment where ethnically diverse individuals come together to inhabit a localised space. On the one hand, Julius's rejection of established cultural ties is reflective of cosmopolitanism's ideals, namely the development of relationships with cultural others. On the other hand, however, Julius fails to establish any ties, cultural or otherwise. The novel suggests a mediation between the two outlooks, echoing Sara Ahmed's call for an almost-paradoxical 'community of strangers' in which connectivity is formed not on the basis of commonality but instead generated through the realisable practice of intercultural engagement to understand 'what it is *they might yet have in common*' (84, 94). That being said, the engendering of such a society runs the risk that cosmopolitanism is once again unbound by ethnic or national considerations, being based on individual agency and resisting definition.

The narrative not only demonstrates how transnational engagement is articulated, grounded and spatialised in a contemporary urban environment, but acknowledges how the values of cosmopolitanism may differ in specific geographical and temporal contexts. As

Jon Binnie et al. argue, 'national imaginaries and histories are central to the realisation of cosmopolitan geographies' leading not to 'transversality, but rather local spaces of realisation' (248). Julius's New York is a product of its own specific history and the cultural processes (and transnational subjectivities) within its urban spaces cannot be generalised globally. The cosmopolitan ethos, once untethered from the particularities of place and history, merely results in an abstract universalism and cultural detachment. Accordingly, Dalley notes that Julius possesses a 'cosmopolitan persona unbounded by a proximate locale' and resists assuming 'a stable spatio-temporal location' in which he can be categorised or assimilated (26, 19). The act of walking in the text can thus be understood in various ways: the means of embedding and grounding Julius in his ever-shifting locality; exposing Julius to the transnational subjectivities shaping New York as a global city; and positioning Julius as the continuation in the history of transnational mobilities that have come to define the city. By rejecting the notion that such mobilities are reflective of an emerging cosmopolitan citizenship, *Open City* avoids polarising the national and the global. Individuals and practices remain resolutely grounded in the specificities of place and nation-state paradigms remain central to the definition and construction of transnational identities. The narrative instead indicates that through both mobility and migration individuals are caught up in the fluid social practice of reformulating and reshaping socio-cultural affiliations, and that intercultural communication should always be in a process of negotiation.

At the same time, the narrative opposes Hannerz's false dichotomy between 'cosmopolitans' and 'locals' that suggests cosmopolitanism involves citizens who occupy a state of 'in-betweenness' (*Complexity* 200). The proposed dichotomy leads to fixity in identity – a differentiation between 'us' and 'them' – sustaining postcolonial notions of otherness that neglect the diversity and hybridity of identities in contemporary urban

environments. While it is no longer sufficient to define cultural inequalities through centre-periphery paradigms as Hannerz claims, or to argue that ethnicity constitutes otherness (regardless of racialised discourses), there are prevailing signs that exclusionary practices remain subject to state and institutional infrastructures. Inclusionary practices in *Open City* are the purview of transnationalism from below, revealing the extent to which transnational relations occur without institutional involvement – the state instead being a barrier to such processes of exchange. Julius's interactions, however, often reaffirm cultural hierarchies enforced institutionally. Employing Anderson's terms, Julius mediates between a superficial 'exclusionary cosmopolitanism' which relies on an abstract universalism to cultural differentiation, and an 'inclusionary cosmopolitanism' that sporadically develops through intercultural dialogue and exchange ('Universalism' 268). By refusing to challenge or transform existing hegemonic distinctions, evident in his disregard and lack of empathy towards Saidu, he merely functions as a spectator to the transnationalism from below occurring all around him.

According to Featherstone, contemporary global culture reflects: 'aggregates of cultural particularities juxtaposed together on the same field' and occupying 'the same bounded space, in which the fact that they are different and do not fit together, or want to fit together, becomes noticeable and a source of practical problems' (70). The narrative of *Open City* engages with the intricacies and complexities of global culture in a localised urban setting, and interrogates the day-to-day experience of the globalised world, ensuring the local is effectively conditioned by the global. The title itself seems to suggest how global cities are increasingly subject to transnational mobilities across borders fostering socio-cultural and ethnic solidarities across territorial divides. New mobilities thus engender new subjectivities to reflect the circulation of global migration and memory. In an interview following the release of the novel, Cole revealed the title has a double

meaning, not only referring to a sense of openness, but an act of cultural 'invasion' (qtd. in 'Immigrant's Quest' n.pag.). On this basis, the processes of transnationalism and globalisation in the narrative have not produced an integrated culture unified by the ideals of cosmopolitanism. The novel instead demonstrates that the modern world is still in the process of coming to terms with what Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissayanake term the '*as-yet-unfigured* horizon of contemporary cultural production', and questions whether the resulting 'global/local synergy' can generate cosmopolitan dispositions (6, 2).

Certainly, *Open City* fails to support the argument for the superior value of community. The narrative, rather like Julius's wanderings, not only suffers from an absence of belonging, but an absence of destination. Episodic encounters fail to imbue the novel with a narrative trajectory or a sense of purpose, as Julius remains adrift in a global city of connectivity. While Farouq forges links to transnational networks, Julius often rejects cultural classifications when it suits his purposes, emphasising the central role of individual agency in the performance of cosmopolitan ideals or cultural engagement. By sporadically mediating between assuming a shared ethnic heritage and denying any shared allegiance to his African-American interlocutors, Julius ensures ethnic ambivalence is central to his cultural identity. Throughout the text he regularly attempts to 'pass' for African (as if putting on a mask) and adapts his linguistic repertoire accordingly. And yet, Julius's subjective fluidity with regards to heritage and ethnicity arguably reflects a cosmopolitan stance. After all, as Walkowitz argues, 'the willingness to test and change allegiances' is 'a principle of critical cosmopolitanism' (131). However, Julius refuses to afford the same privilege to others, constantly criticising his interlocutors for their cultural stance while failing to recognise his own hypocrisy. Julius seems to register his resistance to be defined and delimited by cultural and ethnic attachments, but is more than happy to place others in cultural categories that appeal to him. In hailing Farouq as 'my brother', he

contradicts his denouncement of a similar overfamiliarity offered by both the cab driver and the museum guard (*OC* 101). There is an argument that Julius considers his professional position within society, as a well-educated psychiatrist, to allow him to delimit interaction with ethnic minorities of lower standing; his detachment an insinuation that his fluid cultural assimilation allows for this privilege. Through Julius, *Open City* reveals cosmopolitanism's inherent vice – an individual may choose or reject their own cultural ties and networks. The narrative therefore exhibits a state of agential synchronicity, with all individuals having the potential to engage with global processes and assume cosmopolitan dispositions to differing degrees. As Vertovec and Cohen argue, cosmopolitanism supercedes 'the old foci of loyalty', making 'a decisive break with the celebration of "communities of descent"' by assuming 'complex, overlapping, changing and often highly individualistic choices of identity and belonging' (20, 18). *Open City*, then, suggests a more realistic system of cosmopolitan relations in which ethnic allegiances and solidarity can generate exclusionary barriers in addition to inclusionary forms of belonging.

Rather than examining the worldview of a cosmopolitan subject secure of their place in the world, Cole employs Julius to question how an individual may form a sense of belonging when they are unable to come to terms with their past. Through a critique of Julius, Cole emphasises the necessity for ethical engagement with non-elite citizens as opposed to the aesthetic stance of a cosmopolitan flâneur. In this way, *Open City* reflects a clear thematic continuation from late twentieth-century texts such as *The Satanic Verses* (1988), which suggest a form of 'disjuncture' through the 'migrant condition' and demonstrate through Julius and his interlocutors a form of displaced subjectivity at a distance (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 394). The cityscapes of Cole's New York have as much potential for alienation, atomisation and anonymity as they do for liberation, interaction

and cosmopolitan dialogue. As with Zadie Smith's *NW*, *Open City* becomes a reconstruction and reimagining of the author's own experience in a global capital, converting the cultural spaces of New York into sites where social commentary on global-cultural processes can be examined. While Natalie's walk through London mirrored Smith's own meditation on the localised spaces of her childhood and adolescence, Julius traces a more heterogeneous route through the urban sites of New York – sites which act as magnetic spaces drawing in diverse assemblages of transnational individuals and communities. While it is not clear that Cole himself claims any specific cultural identity, it remains impossible to sever the novel from its biographical context, or more specifically, to sever Cole from his emotionally detached protagonist Julius. However, although Dalley correctly identifies that Julius embodies 'a selfhood not *in place* in the world', it does not naturally follow that 'a disinterested cosmopolitan ethos is an attitude belonging to the subject who *belongs to nowhere*' (26, 29). Regardless of his psychological antipathy, Julius as a decentred subject fails to achieve a state of (un)belonging within the global multitude. Whether he is willing to acknowledge it or not, his individual movement complements larger collective patterns that contribute to the rhythms of the global city. Through the indifferent agency of Julius, Cole brings into question literature's capacity to formulate productive forms of cross-cultural dialogue. In doing so, *Open City* offers a detached and troubled perspective on cosmopolitanism's requirement of empathetic identification with the lives of others. Julius therefore remains a privileged mobile citizen who is able to traverse transnational spaces from within his own locality, transforming the local into the site for lived experience of transnational engagement and trauma.

Open City suggests that the post-millennial United States is not quite at the stage where Julia Kristeva's 'new sort' of cosmopolitanism can emerge, based on the contention that: '[t]he foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are

no foreigners' (192). The novel avoids promoting a desirable multicultural vision of the future for New York – a city anchored in its solitariness, not solidarity. In exposing the hypocrisies and inequalities of racialised structures, *Open City* instead questions how society may move beyond spaces of inclusion and exclusion in a contemporary environment, without resorting to cosmopolitanism's idealism. Despite Caren Irr's claim that the multi-layered approach to both his own history and that of others endows Julius with 'a new kind of global consciousness focused on the creative potential of the cosmopolitan African-origin subject', the interwoven histories of transnational cultures in the narrative fail to engender a sense of inclusivity (58). After all, not much holds transnational connectivities together in the narrative other than a vague togetherness of strangers. *Open City* subsequently insinuates an ironic openness, channelling the inequalities and continuing inaccessibility of globally mobile subjects. Through Julius's perspective, social encounters are experienced then swiftly forgotten, while ethnic histories and racial allegiances are destabilised by an idiosyncratic movement away from established forms of cultural belonging. In failing to demonstrate an ethical trajectory with regards to otherness, Julius remains an alienated, unsociable, and psychologically troubled individual whose attempts at transnational engagement expose the limitations of the cosmopolitan disposition: '[o]thers are not like us, I thought to myself, their forms are different to ours' (*OC* 215).

As the introduction theorised, the twenty-first century era of globalisation and transnational mobility involves the increasing interdependence of individuals, nations, and cultures. Contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism suggest that such developments necessitate the harmonisation of diverse socio-cultural and ethno-political beliefs to develop more progressive communal relations. By reflecting a realistic vision of cultural engagement in an urban cityscape, however, Cole's narrative exhibits a more critical

cosmopolitanism of openness to difference and detachment, rather than resorting to consonance and conformity. Further, Julius's specific detachment from both personal and cultural ties in the narrative rejects the notion that transnational associations naturally engender cosmopolitan dispositions. As Max Liu identifies, *Open City* consequently functions as a 'post-melting pot novel' for the twenty-first century, interrogating and emphasising the continuing prevalence of identity politics, race and global inequalities (n.pag.). Cole's novel, a narrative of unfixed positions, disjunctures and contradictions, offers a post-millennial interrogation of the concepts of nation and identity from within the entanglement of global flows and mobilities. In linking these concepts to the practice and awareness of ethical obligations and cosmopolitan dispositions, the novel demonstrates the limits of empathy and cultural connection in an unequal world. This chapter has demonstrated how Cole echoes Smith in drawing attention to the inequalities prevalent within Western cityscapes and localities. In comparison to the bleak urban realities evident in *NW* and *Open City*, the next chapter will attempt to expand the cosmopolitan framework to account for the role of digital technologies in either ameliorating or exacerbating cultural inequality. As Holton claims, the interplay between 'inter-cultural engagement and cosmopolitanism [...] connected with the mediating role of communications processes and technologies' is yet to be explored (128). The following chapter will therefore examine the relationship between digital connectivity in the twenty-first century and its corresponding fictional representation in Dave Eggers's *The Circle* and Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*. By comparing the two texts, the chapter will subsequently determine whether a relationship exists between digital networks and cosmopolitanism, and answer 'whether it is possible to be a physically immobile virtual cosmopolitan through new communication technology' (Holton 24).

Chapter 4: 'Solidarity by Connectivity': The Myth of Digital Cosmopolitanism in Dave Eggers's *The Circle* and Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*

'A version of the most realistic novel possible right now would be the one that took into account the fact that for much of each day in the west, the consciousness of many of us is projected outwards into a 14-inch lit screen' (Smith, 'John Self' n.pag.).

'We now have at hand the technological breakthroughs and economic means to bring all the communities in the world together' (Gore n.pag.).

In the last two decades, information technology has made it possible to contact almost any human being in our six-billion-strong biotic community. Early research on digital communication positioned the internet as a transformative, almost utopian force for global community-construction.[46] The internet, the premier technological manifestation of the information age, is therefore complicit in the operation and production of globalising flows, offering unparalleled levels of transnational interactivity across networks.[47] Delanty emphasises that by operating outside of nation-state paradigms the internet is central to Manuel Castells's notion of the 'network society': 'it does not have a centre but nodes and is based on the flow of information in electronic forms' (*Network* 60; *Citizenship* 61). The exchange of digital data across global networks not only indicates the decline of nation-state systems as a result of digital technology, but suggests the emancipatory separation of place from existing geographical systems due to new communicative links, forging novel forms of commonality, dialogue and exchange. Although the proliferation of network ties

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[46] See Rheingold: *Virtual Community*.
[47] Significantly, most of the current terminology for forms of connectivity and community derive from the digital domain – circuits, networks, webs, matrixes.

undoubtedly predates the internet, the unprecedented scope of digital technology marks a new moment in global communication.

By compressing spatio-temporal relations, digital technology is responsible for qualitative changes in personal and social interactions, empowering transnational individuals to transcend borders in the exchange of communication. Instantaneous access to distant others, even just through the medium of digital technology, complements cosmopolitan ideals via the sharing of common concerns and the diffusion of cultural practices, and precipitates an appreciation of diverse ways of life. Digital networks, literally existing in no locality, are beginning to replace the geographical as the domain of global connectedness and cosmopolitan associations. Although transnationalism is often erroneously employed as a synonym for cosmopolitanism, the overcoming of physical proximity – border-crossing without mobility – indicates how digital cosmopolitanism may function independently of transnational movement engendering the emergence of *non-mobile* transnationalism on a global scale. The connections created between virtually diasporic communities destabilise the experience of the real and the virtual, and problematise the established dichotomy of distance and proximity. The internet, then, holds the potential to reflect limitless subjectivities, project an awareness of planetary concerns, and develop global collaboration. According to M. Christine Boyer, this 'network of networks', establishing 'a heterotopia of discourses' between 'individuals who will probably never meet face to face', contains within its wirings the potential for the first technological cosmopolitan construct (54). Holton concurs, asserting that the internet is 'intrinsically cosmopolitan' based on its role in spawning 'the possibility of a new virtual democracy that could be world-wide and thus finally realize the philosophers' and activists' dream of a cosmopolitan world community' (133).

And yet, a utopian belief in digital communication often masks global inequalities. Google employees Eric Schmidt and Jarod Cohen recently declared that the internet is 'the world's largest ungoverned space', a borderless 'online world that is not truly bound by terrestrial laws' (3). However, their assertion neglects the actions of certain countries (such as China) who continue to pursue digital censorship and who filter the internet traffic that attempts to enter their territories, not to mention the lack of access to digital technology in general. Any call for a borderless cosmopolitan world often ignores the destructive tendencies arising from globalising practices. While it is tempting to perceive digital communication as non-hierarchical interaction, taking place on an equal platform irrespective of geography and across the established divides of language, socio-cultural belonging and class, new technologies are not independent of socio-economic contexts. Castells, a strong supporter of digital communication, acknowledges that although the internet 'is indeed a technology of freedom', it can 'free the powerful to oppress the uninformed' and subsequently leads 'to the exclusion of the devalued by the conquerors of value' (*Internet Galaxy* 275). Moreover, digital technology's intensification of mobility and connection across unbounded trans-territorial space has also begun to alienate both elite and non-elite global citizens. Idealised beliefs in the connectivity of digital communication expose what Ethan Zuckerman terms a state of 'imaginary cosmopolitanism' – the misguided belief that the connectivity of the internet enters users into a global community, as opposed to a world of networked individuals (38).

Twenty-first century literature has begun to concern itself with the *myth* of digital cosmopolitanism, interrogating the global inequalities producing and sustaining unprecedented levels of technological interconnection. Eggers's *The Circle* and Kunzru's *Transmission* reject a utopian blind-faith in communicative technology, examining the role of the digital in circumscribing both local and global forms of community. Both novels

explore the fissures and instabilities fostered in the tissue of contemporary society as it adapts to the new digital environment – a culture in transition. Technological developments may be central to twenty-first century communication patterns, but their application is often implemented in a top-down fashion through corporate conglomerates, ensuring that exposure to forms of cultural otherness fails to foster the emergence of more cosmopolitan orientations. Through an overt critique of corporate entities in the digital domain, *The Circle* examines the commodification of the digital and evaluates its import on global interaction. By parodying the online companies of Facebook and Google, the eponymous networked corporation of the novel attempts to construct a digital world without borders. Whereas *The Circle* offers a sustained critique of the dangers of privileging digital communication over corporeal engagement, *Transmission* pays greater attention to the effects of digital interconnectedness on non-elite migrant workers, venturing beneath the shimmering surface of Western digital culture. Kunzru demonstrates that the interdependence of contemporary society brings into play a networked space of unparalleled scale, easily destabilised by ethno-political realities and socio-cultural relations. The chapter will therefore demonstrate how each text responds to the rapidly changing and increasingly complex world of global digital connectivity.

Digital Monopolies

'There is no such thing as a public Internet: everything flows through private pipes' (Taylor 224).

The Circle envisions a dystopic near future when the global matrix of networked culture is finally reaching its apex in the United States. The narrative opens with Mae Holland, a twenty-something American graduate, on her first day of employment at the Circle, the

largest technology company in the world. The Circle began life as an internet search engine, before expanding into a monolithic network that subsumed all other digital companies and now manufactures its own digital technology in Silicon Valley, California. The company was founded following Ty Gospodinov's creation of the 'Unified Operating System, which combined everything online that had heretofore been separate and sloppy – users' social media profiles, their payment systems, their various passwords, their email accounts, user names, preferences, every last tool and manifestation of their interests' (*TC* 20-21). Individuals' personal details were now condensed into a unitary 'TruYou' account, '[o]ne button for the rest of your life online', to establish a singular identity for global citizens (*TC* 21).[48] The system rapidly overpowers both existing digital systems, drowning out the cries of 'free-internet' advocates concerned about the ethical and political implications of private and commercial habits now being 'eminently mappable and measureable' (*TC* 22). TruYou constitutes the first step towards implementing dangerous forms of social control, preventing the possibility of counter-discourse. The application operates against the ideals of Net Neutrality – the belief that all data on the internet should be treated equally by governments and corporations to ensure an open platform – as the Circle's elites begin to prioritise their own data over all else.[49] Further, the Unified Operating System is essentially illusory in nature, neglecting the vast majority of the world's population without access to the internet.

Initially, the company seemingly advocates cosmopolitan ideals, privileging the notions of openness, transparency and cultural engagement. This transparency is reflected

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[48] A similar tactic was recently promoted by Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, who claimed that possessing 'two identities for yourself is an example of a lack of integrity' (Kirkpatrick 199).

[49] As Tim Wu, who created the term Net Neutrality, argues: '[w]ith every sort of political, social, cultural, and economic transaction having to one degree or another now gone digital, this proposes an awesome dependence on a single network, and no less vital need to preserve its openness from imperial designs' (318).

in the 'brushed steel and glass' of their architectural campus offices and a workforce

representing 'every race and ethnicity [...] a dizzying range of national origins' (*TC* 1, 59).

The communal environment of the campus manipulates Mae into believing she is 'being

improved' by the Circle's ethical community: it 'was a place where everyone endeavoured,

constantly and passionately, to improve themselves, each other, share their knowledge,

disseminate it to the world' (*TC* 105). By becoming accustomed to the internet lingo,

techno-neologisms and digital discourse favoured by her co-workers, the company

provides Mae with the illusion of in-group community. The company mission statement

claims that a workplace should also be a '*human*place [...] that means the fostering of

community' and stresses the need for employees to establish a work environment 'where

our humanity is respected, where our opinions are dignified, where our voices are heard'

(*TC* 47). The private corporation, then, assumes the ideals of near-utopian cosmopolitan

community. Mae perceives the world outside the harmonious 'walls of the Circle' as:

'noise and struggle, failure and filth. But here, all had been perfected [...] Who else but

utopians could make utopia?' (*TC* 30). Digital technology is therefore positioned as a

possible catalyst for the realisation of an egalitarian community founded on global

interaction. Online communities in the narrative provide the opportunity for consensus-

based interaction, where everyone is able to provide a differing perspective, while global

society becomes dependent on a single digital system for personal, communal and

eventually political concerns. Indoctrinated by the company's ethos and installed into her

position like technological equipment, Mae avoids sleep so she can break into the T2K –

the top two thousand most active online employees; she undertakes a 'digital binge' to

become interconnected with people she will never really know or meet (*TC* 134). Her first

role in customer service requires a rapid response to consumer queries in order to gain a

perfect satisfaction rating. Her trainer advises her: '99 out of 100 points, that's nearly

perfect [...] But at the Circle, that missing point nags at us' (*TC* 51). Cosmopolitan ideals are exaggerated until they betray an unhealthy need for acceptance and tolerance of others. Despite this, Mae fails to be unsettled by the hyper-mediated environment of the company, and learns to appreciate the autonomous technological practices of her co-workers, resulting in 'the happy visual of a herd of heads nodding in what appeared to be unison, as if there were some common music playing in all of their minds' (*TC* 234). This bleak image of programmed beings indicates that the concentrated use of digital communication in social contexts fosters superficial connections and false proximity to others.

The company use surveys to track an individual's buying habits, consumer preferences, and the communities to which they are connected, in order to create a participatory culture of digital engagement. Society thus becomes an active collaborator in both its own surveillance and commodification. Mae fails to detect these early warning signs indicating the panoptic nature of the Circle. Covert links emerge between transparency and surveillance, as the Circle surreptitiously accumulates biometric data on a centralised electronic corporate database. The naivety, goodwill and altruistic motives of young digital natives who have grown up assimilated into digital culture are progressively derailed and manipulated by the internal workings of the company. These young prospective employees, who pitch socially progressive business ideas to the founders of the company, are unaware that their ethical agency is to be exploited for capitalistic gain; the employees blindly place their trust in the company's allegedly cosmopolitan mantra of transparency and unadulterated openness, and the forward momentum of Western technology. Despite its questionable monopolistic strategies, the Circle seems to perceive its practices to constitute a genuine cosmopolitan project, administering equality and transparency to a globally unjust world. Each action taken is defended as a normative responsibility – implementing digital global ethics. Tellingly, when a Chinese artist

designs a transparent hand for an installation on campus, which reaches out through a computer screen, the company interpret the piece as a metaphor for their digital altruism; in perceiving the hand to reach out through physical barriers and connect the global community, the company fail to understand the artist's well-publicised 'darkly sardonic tone' (*TC* 346). The installation indicates digital communication to be an oppressive and often intrusive force – the claustrophobic realisation of a cosmopolitan world without borders. Through a fetishisation of digital technology, the Circle claim to address global inequalities, tackle domestic abuse, and curb political fraudulence; yet the corporation is simply enforcing top-down regulation under the guise of a democratic structure, ensuring the spread of its own interests on a global scale. The U.S. Senate subsequently launches a task force against the Circle, claiming the company functions as an unethical monopoly but: 'every time someone started shouting about the supposed monopoly of the Circle, or the Circle's unfair monetarization of the personal data of its users [...] it was revealed that the person was a criminal or deviant of the highest order. One was connected to a terror network in Iran. One was a buyer of child porn' (*TC* 240). Although the Circle ostensibly aims to harness the digital potential of the internet, achieving the cosmopolitan virtues of openness and global participation, the company slowly becomes an autonomous force hiding behind seemingly altruistic social applications, manipulating governmental and corporate structures for its own gain.

According to Howard Rheingold, although '[v]irtual communities could help citizens revitalize democracy', they could also 'be luring us into an attractively packaged substitute for democratic discourse' (*Virtual Community* 295). Fear of the latter alternative is envisioned in the narrative when the Circle makes digital citizenship mandatory through an individual's TruYou account, indicating a further retreat from corporeal connectivity. In order to possess democratic rights and be able to vote, U.S. citizens must now possess a

valid Circle account. The push for a mandatory online identity discourages multiplicity and restricts an individual's social agency – the digital self assumes dominance over the power of the situated corporeal self. The company name the scheme Demoxie, hoping to achieve full and complete transparency through a 'fully participatory democracy' (*TC* 385). These mandatory measures merely ensure all governmental structures and corporate firms will be subsumed within the Circle's monolithic digital interface. The cosmopolitan ideals of openness and engagement are therefore taken to their logical extremes, creating a unified system of total participation by every global citizen. Digital theorist Martin Gak argues that the internet disseminates a 'cyber-cosmopolitanism' for the digital age, emerging as both 'the ideal space for the trans-national and meta-geographic construction of communities of care' and 'the most powerful tool for the development, fostering and practice of a trans-national, meta-juridical, global and inter-demographic democracy' (n.pag.). However, this cyber-utopian vision adheres to the myth that the internet automatically fosters an egalitarian system, neglecting non-elite citizens who are denied such connectivity. Digital applications in the novel ought to serve as a prototype for digital democracy, promoting open access and participatory measures. Instead, Eggers echoes Tara Brabazon's assertion that '[d]igitisation is not a proxy for democracy' (253). The democraticising potential of the Circle's technology is misused as a means of corporate control, disguised as socially-beneficial applications. The myth of open access results in further centralisation of interests, ceded to those with the cultural power to enforce their will. Despite engaging the public in decision-making processes, Demoxie fails to engender a participatory democracy, instead strengthening e-commerce for the private sector. Society has essentially surrendered control to a governing elite who determine which issues are appropriate for public debate: under 'the guise of having every voice heard, you create mob rule, a filterless society where secrets are crimes' (*TC* 483). As a result, Demoxie leads to the

centralisation of a decentralised network, turning the online world, an ecosystem of heterogeneity, into a unitary, monolithic power-structure.

As Taylor notes, in digital culture at large, centralisation is 'a process aided by the embrace of openness as a guiding ideal'; yet the ethical values of 'openness, transparency, and participation' are not sufficient in building 'a more democratic and durable digital culture', merely amplifying 'real-world inequalities as often as it ameliorates them' (31, 10). The illusion of decentralisation in the narrative allows the founders of the Circle to exert cultural power over the borderless terrain of the digital, establishing a top-down hierarchy of control. Demoxie simply assumes the new face of American homogeneity, solidifying the belief that the internet itself remains a Western power-structure. The Circle's protocols of control certainly ignore the fact that the majority of the world's population possess no internet access, with digital technology in general remaining superfluous to their day-to-day existence. More specifically, the move exposes that the Circle's cosmopolitan ideals of global participation, openness and transparency remain the privileged purview of a Western elite who fail to change global inequalities. Although digital communication offers increased dialogue, interaction, and exchange across cultural and geographical boundaries, Eggers's novel suggests it is susceptible to corporate manipulation, leading to an enforced reduction in personal and ethical freedoms. The narrative's hyperextension of social and cultural interconnectedness thus follows idealised cosmopolitan frameworks through to their logical conclusion.

The Limitations of Digital Community

'The process of communication is in fact the process of community' (Williams 55).

Digital communities are by their very nature cosmopolitan: geographically unbound,
functioning simultaneously at multiple global sites, and permitting a fluidity of identity and
selfhood. Yet communicative technology reconfigures the definition of community,
creating a new species of interpersonal relations. Although the internet promises
connection, it does not suggest active engagement or that such mediated interaction would
be positive. As Sherry Turkle notes, '[h]uman relationships are rich; they're messy and
demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology. And the move
from conversation to connection is part of this' (n.pag.). Cosmopolitan connectivity
between members of digital networks, Sven Kesselring and Gerlinde Vogl note, results in
'solidarity by connectivity' rather than 'by origin or by shared values', distancing and
isolating individuals from active interaction in society (177). Advances in technological
communication are clearly not congruous with an increase in ethical agency or global
dialogue. The narrative continually interrogates this reorientation of social interaction by
global communicative technology. Although a co-worker emphasises to Mae that
'*community* and *communication* come from the same root word, *communis*, Latin for
common, public, shared by all or many', communal acts are expressed by writing a
message on a co-worker's virtual profile, rather than engaging with them in person: your
'devices knew who you were, and your one identity – the *TruYou*, unbendable and
unmaskable – was the person paying, signing up, responding, viewing and reviewing,
seeing and being seen' (*TC* 95, 21). The Circle's online applications create a digital eco-
system of user-generated content; Mae's online presence takes precedence over interaction
in 'the physical space' (*TC* 97). Such virtual mobility increasingly enables new modes of
social interaction and solidarity defined by instantaneous co-presence and convenience.
Although, as Hannerz emphasises, cosmopolitanism directly concerns this 'willingness to
engage with the Other', digital connections suggest a superficial experience of intercultural

engagement (*Transnational* 103). The Circle's anti-humanist applications spread like a

virus and relegate individuals to mere consumers or 'users' of their technology,

impoverishing their sense of self. Employees are even designated a 'Participation Rank'

which takes into account 'comments on other Circlers' profiles, your photos posted,

attendance at Circle events' (*TC* 100).[50] The obvious authorial critique of the Circle

suggests that digital communication is unlikely to provide the sense of community or

empathetic connection required for cosmopolitan values to flourish, merely promoting a

commercialised cosmopolitanism founded on capitalistic interests.

Social interactions in the novel are flattened by the ubiquitous gaze of technological

connectivity, as digital networks effectively mimic communal relations without the

complications or burdens of physical engagement. Digital communication in *The Circle* is

suggestive of an unfilled void at the heart of contemporary globalised culture, signalling

the decline of personal intimacies, cosmopolitan ideals and emotional attachments in the

face of dominant techno-capitalism. According to Alexander Nazaryan, the narrative

purposefully charts the emergence of the contemporary species 'homo digitus, whose

plight is to be always connected yet always alone' (n.pag.). Western elites in the narrative

quickly become socially accessible only via digital communication and suffer from a form

of nomophobia – feeling detached and experiencing a form of cultural isolation when

disconnected from their digital technology. In a newspaper interview following the release

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[50] As Zadie Smith warns, when a human being is reduced to 'a set of data [...] our denuded networked selves don't look more free, they just look more owned' ('Generation' n.pag.). This commodification of community is equally apparent in Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* (2010)*,* a bleak vision of the near-future in the U.S. where individuals use digital devices to constantly rank others around them. The middle-aged Luddite protagonist, Lenny Abramov, laments that strangers can use a program called 'RateMe' to assess his 'MALE HOTNESS as 120 out of 800, PERSONALITY 450' while simultaneously browsing his financial records, consumer purchases and social contacts (Shteyngart 90). Lenny's friend Vishnu informs him that these digital applications allow individuals to 'Form A Community [...] It's, like, a way to judge people. And let them judge you' (88).

of the novel, Eggers emphasised that this constant connectivity 'is the perfect recipe for permanent interpersonal catastrophes' (qtd. in Wünsch n.pag.). Mae's progressive decline into comfortable digital isolation manifests itself as a metaphorical 'black rip' in her chest; her nightmare in which she can hear 'the screams of millions of invisible souls' represents the global lives disrupted by the Circle's activities (*TC* 195, 196). Mae becomes so absorbed in her digital life that she neglects the wishes of her family and friends, unable to process their viewpoints or needs, as her human attachments begin to require digital validation. By prioritising her job, rather than playing a role in the family unit, Mercer is left to support Mae's father in his battle against multiple sclerosis. Rather than showing appreciation for Mercer's efforts, Mae begins to resent his limitless empathy towards her family, while she is unable to extricate herself from superficial global connections. Mercer criticises her choices, claiming Mae has 'willingly become utterly socially autistic [...] You're at a table with three humans, all of whom are looking at you and trying to talk to you, and you're staring at a screen, searching for strangers in Dubai' (*TC* 260). Mae comes to perceive other people not as individuals with whom to engage, but nodes on her own personal network, there to be exploited to strengthen her own sense of imagined connectedness.

The Circle manipulate Mae into broadcasting her every movement to millions of Circle devotees purely for commodified global consumption, as the narrative explores the limits of technological intrusion. Mae experiences a veiled and deluded sense of belonging within this digital community, constructing emotional bonds to its members and offering empathy and support (despite being unaware of them personally). Due to her ubiquitous surveillance, however, social interaction is predominantly conducted online in the form of superficial affectations and exaggerated posturing, resulting in 'semiperformative dialogue' (*TC* 351). The ties generated in her digital networks are often impersonal and

transitory, simply offering a simulacrum of physical society, free of commitment, devoid of tangible engagement, and defined by fleeting connection. The digital viewers validate the apparent superficiality of participatory comment-culture, failing to engage fully with real-world issues and supplying sarcastic jibes towards those with whom Mae disagrees. Eggers's narrative adheres to Holton's assessment that the internet's capacity to be utilised for 'the transmission of hate as well as cosmopolitan love of others' ensures digital technology 'is very far from being a necessary enhancement to the building of a cosmopolitan world [...] Inter-personal networks still seem to matter more than electronic ones' (203). By offering a direct critique of how individual agency is constantly destabilised by the digital, the narrative suggests a dangerous displacement of contemporary identity and communal relations in a fluid world of digital connections.

Digital Surveillance

'We know where you are. We know where you've been. We can more or less know what you're thinking about' (D. Thompson n.pag.).

As Josh Cohen identifies, the company's 'tacitly imposed, pseudo-benign mutual monitoring' serves as an analogy of the ways in which 'social media culture' in general threatens 'our interiority' and ensures 'we can never be fully transparent, to others or to ourselves' (n.pag.). The Circle's calls for transparency become less an issue of cosmopolitan openness than of totalitarian corporate surveillance. The move towards transparency is spear-headed by co-founder Eamon Bailey, the Circle's foremost cyberlibertarian and evangelist for digital media, who subscribes to the deceptive mantra: 'sharing is caring' (*TC* 301). Bailey holds a strong humanist belief in the power of technology to connect global citizens, likening the deletion of digital information to

'killing babies' (*TC* 204). Through his leadership, the company tirelessly stresses its apparent motive of working for the greater good rather than corporate gain, positioning the corporation's digital applications as a panacea to society's ills.[51] The Circle's trajectory towards 'Completion', achieving complete digital dominance on a global scale, is advocated as the natural progression of society, with digital technology providing the key to the perfectibility of humankind: a 'circle is the strongest shape in the universe [...] nothing can be more perfect. And that's what we want to be: perfect' (*TC* 311, 287). The company's logo, a small 'c' on a knitted grid, therefore suggests the fork-in-the-road moment at which contemporary society finds itself before 'the circle' is closed around all global citizens. Bailey is unwilling to accept that his digital applications represent a form of enforced cultural homogeneity, arguing that the Circle's digital omnipotence will simply ensure 'ALL THAT HAPPENS MUST BE KNOWN' at 'the dawn of the Second Enlightenment' (*TC* 67). Progressive surveillance ensures the inevitability and irreversibility of this movement: 'Completion was imminent, and it would bring peace, and it would bring unity' and escape 'the messiness of humanity' (*TC* 491). Despite Bailey's rhetoric, the Circle's influence fails to result in cultural harmony, instead leading to increased cosmopolitical tensions between governmental and corporate forces.

The company strengthens its global surveillance by introducing a program called 'SeeChange', promoted as an effort to make its users feel 'part of an open and welcoming world' (*TC* 241). SeeChange involves the development of a series of miniature high-resolution cameras that provide continual access to global locations. By ensuring that the world may watch any activity through hidden devices, Bailey claims the move ostensibly

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[51] The Circle's public mission statements echo those issued by Facebook in its formative years. Barry Schnitt, director of corporate communications for Facebook, stated in an interview: '[b]y making the world more open and connected, we're expanding understanding between people and making the world a more empathetic place' (qtd. in van Dijck 45).

administers radical implications for human rights, delivering 'instant accountability' as no-one will 'know for sure where they are' and 'the not-knowing will prevent abuses of power' (*TC* 66). However, in striving to achieve cosmopolitan openness through digital surveillance, Bailey fails to acknowledge that the surveillance is an abuse of the jurisdiction of nation-states themselves, even positioning their implementation as an ethical necessity: '[e]qual access to all possible human experiences is a basic human right' (*TC* 301). In this way, national security measures quickly become compromised to satisfy the unrealistic cosmopolitan demands of a borderless world. SeeChange therefore embodies the potential for imaginative access to other cultures, with very few global locations 'we won't be able to access from the screen in our hands' (*TC* 69). The more users who join the Circle's network, the easier it is for the company to disseminate their cyber-utopic applications and extend control. Global citizens willingly accept this acceleration of digital surveillance apparatus as a result of the company's aggressive propaganda, which asserts that surveillance offers subsequent protection from crime or terrorism. While the unparalleled contact and exchange offered by digital technology in the narrative should suggest the creation of a new system for achieving human commonality and socio-cultural interdependence, citizens increasingly find themselves subject to unprecedented surveillance and corporate control. Once the Circle is able to assert its dominance over all sectors of global society, the company's founders relinquish their original espousal of cosmopolitan openness and global participation, manipulating these ideals for personal and capital gain.

As Barry N. Hague and Brian D. Loader note, advocates for 'the emancipatory potential of the internet' in general neglect that it 'remains the domain of a relatively elite association of mainly white, male, professional people from advanced societies' (9). A select group exists in the narrative of those employees privy to the founders' plans, who

are themselves white, male, middle-class Westerners. Although Ty intends for his Unified

Operating System to ensure the spread rather than the dissolution of wider ethical values,

the expansion of the company to include his fellow co-founders, Eamon Bailey and Tom

Stenton, gears the Circle towards neo-liberal capitalist interests and the espousal of a

hyper-corporate ideology: a 'gateway to all the world's information, but […] supported by

advertisers' (*TC* 248). A portrait of the founders, referred to as the 'Three Wise Men',

insinuates both the hierarchical nature of their company and the unfeasibility of their

designs for global connectivity (*TC* 24). The triumvirate of digital gatekeepers are

positioned in a pyramid arrangement, their arms connecting one another in a way that

'made no sense and defied the way arms could bend or stretch' (*TC* 25). The unrealistic

utopian connectivity is questioned further when an aquarium is installed on campus, filled

with sea creatures discovered on the company-funded exploration of the Marianas Trench

(the deepest spot of the world's oceans, indicating the Circle's global reach). The separate

creatures inhabiting the tank encapsulate the divided belief-systems of the three co-

founders as they begin to disagree on the future of the Circle. The octopus, 'malleable and

infinitely adaptable', traces 'the contours of the glass […] wanting to know all, touch all'

(*TC* 471, 472). In this sense, the octopus mirrors the belief-system of Bailey, who

perceives in unfettered open access the means by which to help every global citizen. The

seahorses embody Ty's increasing invisibility within his own company, attempting to hide

in their environment but lacking the defences to protect themselves. The tentative nature of

the seahorses also signifies the passive technophobes of society, unaware of the current

levels of global surveillance: 'showing no sign that they knew anything' and offering 'no

protestation' (*TC* 470). Tom Stenton, with his integration of '[i]nfocommunism […] with

ruthless capitalistic ambition', decides to disrupt the harmonious habitat by introducing a

shark to the aquarium (*TC* 484). The shark, rather like the Circle's digital technology, is a

'new species, omnivorous and blind' (*TC* 307). Stenton studies the shark like a proud parent, as it carnivorously devours any creature placed into its tank: 'wholly sentient, the embodiment of the predatory instinct' (*TC* 314). Mae and the other founders are forced to watch helplessly as the octopus and seahorses are torn apart in a brutal allegory of the dystopian subversion of their company to capitalist interests.

Ty subsequently attempts to dismantle the Circle from within, reversing its pervasive surveillance of the global world and monopolisation of the internet. His menace to the company stems from his invisibility from within a system that desires social and political transparency. In order to subvert corporate control, Ty releases a timely and cogent missive entitled: 'The Rights of Humans in a Digital Age' (*TC* 485). The manifesto insists that global citizens should be allowed to retain their anonymity before the Circle closes around them and enforces a totalitarian participation. His original attempt to make the internet 'more civil' through TruYou has failed; he claims Stenton has 'professionalized our idealism, monetized our utopia': '[p]ublic-private leads to private-private, and soon [...] Everyone becomes a citizen of the Circle' (*TC* 484). Through the indoctrination of their employees, however, the Circle is able to limit the damage caused when Ty decides to expose its secrets and vulnerabilities, labelling him an unethical threat to cooperative achievement, social trust and communal openness. Through his brutal failure, Ty serves as the authorial mouthpiece for Eggers's own fears regarding global digital surveillance, positioning the centralisation and homogenised control of digital data through mass surveillance to be responsible for nullifying basic and unalienable human rights in the narrative. The triumph of corporate ideology, overriding ethical values and cultural empathy, conveys an authorial critique of the application of cosmopolitan ideals to

disguise neoliberal dogma: there 'are a thousand more Wise Men out there, people with ever-more radical ideas about the criminality of privacy' (*TC* 432).[52]

Digital Casualties

'A flawless, perfectly, digitally ethical society [...] would not be good for individuals. A little noise [...] is needed if there is to be creativity or individuality' (Lanier 201).

Eggers's critique of the digital age in general is further channelled through Mae's ex-boyfriend, Mercer Medeiros, who earns his living fashioning chandeliers from deer antlers. By directly engaging with the natural world, Mercer functions as a throwback to pre-digital times and holds a technophobic aversion to the Circle's activities, accurately perceiving their technology to foster disconnection, rather than increased socio-cultural connectivity. The ubiquitous nature of digital communication results in Mercer's free time being wasted on unsubscribing from participatory online groups, arguing that individuals should be allowed to opt out of a totalitarian state founded on forced social attachments. However, although Mercer avoids playing a role in the global digital community that is not to say he neglects cultural exchange or disrupts cosmopolitan conviviality. Instead, he assumes the role of the narrative's ethical subject, attempting to direct humanity back towards physical

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[52] In 2013, Eggers joined a group of international writers, Writers Against Mass Surveillance, to criticise the progressive spread of governmental surveillance and call for the creation of a digital bill of rights for citizens across the globe. The petition, signed by 562 writers of different nationalities, states that: '[a] person under surveillance is no longer free; a society under surveillance is no longer a democracy. To maintain any validity, our democratic rights must apply in virtual as in real space' (Taylor and Hopkins n.pag.). *The Circle* can therefore be positioned as Eggers own revision of democracy for a digital age. Eggers has also called for tighter regulation on governmental surveillance by the NSA fearing that control on freedom of expression would lead to 'an intellectual ice age' – the brutal reality of the Circle's 'completion' ('US Writers' n.pag.). In this sense, the Circle's location-awareness applications offer a corporate parody of the NSA's digital surveillance program.

engagement and communal bonding. Mercer wishes to speak to Mae face-to-face, rather than through the invasive filter of digital social media, urging her to escape from the claustrophobic network of commodified images and the surveillance of digital flows: '[y]ou don't just want *your* data, you need *mine*. You're not complete without it. It's a sickness' (*TC* 432). He dismisses the supposed emancipatory potential of the company's digital tools, claiming they merely manufacture 'unnaturally extreme social needs. No one needs the level of contact you're purveying. It improves nothing. It's not nourishing. It's like snack food', leaving individuals and communities devoid of personality and dependent on technology (*TC* 133-34). Mae fails to appreciate this ethical appeal to her better nature, merely realising that he 'was still talking' and musing over an online petition she'd signed 'to demand more job opportunities for immigrants living in the suburbs of Paris' (*TC* 134). By idealistically perceiving the Circle's applications to possess the ability to 'influence global events, to save lives even, halfway across the world' (even though they are often vanity projects, like the decision to map the Marianas Trench), Mae avoids demonstrating cultural agency in her everyday life (*TC* 242). Digital actions in the narrative become indistinguishable from physical engagement and rely on the bare minimum of social interaction: '[y]ou look at pictures of Nepal, push a smile button, and you think that's the same as going there' (*TC* 261). The narcissistic tendencies of digital communication, connecting people at a more superficial level, act as a buffer to true human and cultural connection, becoming the path of least resistance to the formation of cosmopolitan ties.

A burgeoning resistance to the Circle's practices in the narrative comes to reflect Bart Barendregt's assessment that: 'the very dominance of idealized digital futures has always led to at least a marginal dissident fringe in both the digital hinterlands and in the very heart of the information society' (203). Mercer, sensitive to the rapid descent of the Circle's plans from techno-utopianism to digital dystopia, reaches the same conclusion as

Ty, perceiving the participatory ideals of SeeChange as the first step towards a technophobic surveillance society. Current levels of global connectivity become unsustainable and reflect the 'usual utopian vision' which 'sounds perfect, sounds progressive' but merely leads to 'more control, more central tracking of everything we do' (*TC* 259). The company's latest scheme, 'ChildTrack', inserts chips into children's bones to prevent abductions, rapes and murders, but Mercer discerns that this seemingly ethical procedure will leave a digital echo of individuals' movements for the rest of their lives: citizens 'will be tracked, cradle to grave, with no possibility of escape' (*TC* 86, 481). Richard K. Moore claims that any surveillance society's 'corporate domination of societal information flows' functions as 'an inherent part of the seemingly unstoppable globalisation process' (50). As people's actions become part of the collective global record, the Circle can therefore construct a memory-system of personal and communal histories; the conception of digital locatability results in domination of corporeal global space. Techno-capitalism has led to an enforced regulation of individual rights and the move signals a clear resistance to corporate control. Through his critique of digital communication, Eggers avoids simply espousing an anti-technological ethos, or doubting the merits of digital technological progress; instead, he resists the logic that techno-capitalism proffers a valuable form of global connectivity or is conducive to the spread of ethical values.

In an attempt to escape the progressive location-surveillance, Mercer decides to remove himself from society. He warns Mae of a digital divide emerging whereby 'two humanities will live apart, but parallel', those under the 'surveillance dome' and those 'who live, or try to live, apart from it' (*TC* 433). But not even a reclusive, insular lifestyle provides an escape from the forced connectedness the Circle espouses. The company's surveillance ensures no global citizen is safe from the coercion of the technological

control. The digital has seeped into the physical world with tangible consequences; neither domain can be perceived as distinct spheres of life or extrapolated from one another. In order to operate effectively, the Circle cannot allow any 'fringe character […] to impede the unimpeachable improvement of the world' (*TC* 240). The digital panopticon ridicules those who shun digital connections and manoeuvres them into a state of compliance. In a demonstration of the Circle's omnipotence, Mae sends drones to track down Mercer in a tiny Oregon town. Due to his lack of digital presence, the Circle must verify his 'corporeal identity'; if an individual is not locatable online, then their very existence is questioned (*TC* 459). The drones are assisted by global users of the company's technology, now functioning as one digital organism. By using their digital devices for coordinated surveillance on the streets, citizens can locate individuals who wish to remain anonymous. The potential progressive power of this hive-mind descends to a mob mentality as invasive digital technology subsequently becomes integrated into every aspect of day-to-day life. The Circle encourages society to pinpoint Mercer's location, hounding him from his home and self-enforced isolation, proving how futile it is to 'hide in a world as interconnected as ours' (*TC* 446).

Rheingold terms individuals who utilise communication technology to work 'in concert even if they don't know each other' as 'smart mobs' (*Smart* xii). Despite these individuals benefiting from new forms of social and global connectivity, Rheingold claims that the 'metatechnologies that could constrain the dangers of smart mob technology and channel their power to beneficial ends are not fully formed yet' (214). Accordingly, he argues that the same digital technologies that open 'new vistas of cooperation' and connectedness also ensure the potential for 'a universal surveillance economy' that 'empowers the bloodthirsty as well as the altruistic' (xviii). The global digital audience in the narrative fail to display any signs of cosmopolitan empathy for Mercer's fate,

validating his prior accusation that: '*[i]ndividually* you don't know what you're doing *collectively*' (*TC* 259). Global citizens who reject the Circle's technology are perceived as cultural dinosaurs holding back the progression of society (and who therefore must be made extinct). Rather than digital communication amplifying positive cultural cooperation, the Circle's power structure is dependent upon the submission of its own subjects. The events signal the dystopian logical endpoint of the company's ubiquitous digital surveillance, in which global citizens are complicit in their own compliance to corporate policy; even dissent is suppressed through technological means. In attempting to flee from both the drones and the Circle's supporters who mock and ridicule his lifestyle, Mercer resolves to drive off a bridge, aware that he will never be free from digital surveillance, becoming one of the first casualties in the war against technological centralisation. The global community watch Mercer's death through the digital video-feed of the drones, robbing him of his physical corporeality, and reducing his life to an online narrative and a digital death.

As Holton argues, the issue of whether media 'representations of others evoke pity, compassion, identification or active solidarity […] are very salient to questions of the scope and limits of cosmopolitanism' (128). Yet Mae merely exaggerates a mediated grief for her millions of viewers and irrationally interprets the event as further evidence of the Circle's inherent ethicality: the 'pain experienced in public, in view of loving millions, was no longer pain. It was communion' (*TC* 441). By echoing Bailey in perceiving Mercer's death as an attempt to escape a harmonious, unified world, Mae mistakenly determines that Mercer was acting in opposition to the cosmopolitan values of openness and exposure to difference. The tragic event, coupled with the company's rejection of Ty's digital bill of rights, signals the termination of a progressive global future and the corruption of ethical ideals to neoliberal corporate ideology. In a recent lecture at Stanford University, Eggers

emphasised his faith in the future of a society beset by digital threats, stating: 'I have every confidence [this] generation will figure out [how to solve this problem]' ('Digital Ethics' n.pag.).[53] His remarks suggest an optimism absent from the narrative, as the corporate force of the Circle employs digital communication to project the horrors of a borderless world and the apathetic annihilation of cosmopolitan ideals. That said, Eggers is no Luddite. *The Circle* becomes more than simply a technophobic lament against an artificial world, emerging as a pro-humanist text that longs for society to escape the more destructive forms of digital dogma. The narrative is not criticising technology itself, but the elite sectors of global society who control it. By charting Mae's ethical struggle, Eggers is questioning whether digital ubiquity results in a loss of humanity, or whether contemporary society will succeed in developing a global digital ethics. Indeed, Eggers's novel bears several similarities with Jaron Lanier's pro-human manifesto *You Are Not A Gadget*, most notably the theoretical digital expansion of the 'circle of empathy'; expanding the circle 'indefinitely can lead to oppression, because the rights of potential entities' (in this case, the digital community) often exist in conflict 'with the rights of indisputably real people' (36, 37). Localised engagement is therefore neglected in favour of an abstract and superficial connectivity with global others. As Taylor identifies, although 'networked power' in contemporary society has 'dismantled and distributed

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[53] Kunzru concurs with Eggers in perceiving the removal of privacy and advent of unprecedented surveillance through digital technology to be features of an authoritarian state. He claims that by enforcing 'extraordinary levels of surveillance and control', technology limits ethical freedoms and becomes 'intrinsically oppressive' ('Rewiring' n.pag.). He goes on to argue that digital technologies which allow: 'vast quantities of data to be collected and analysed', involving the 'tracking of people and materials through physical and data space', and a 'prosthetic for projects of direction and control', are the 'most powerful tools for the auto-reproduction of centralised power yet seen on earth' (n.pag.). Although Kunzru considers this centralisation of digital culture to be the cause of 'our technocultural ills', like Eggers he remains optimistic that the future of digital technology offers 'immensely positive, liberating effects, not just for some angelic info-elite, but throughout societies at all economic levels' (n.pag.).

power in more egalitarian ways, it has also extended and obscured power, making it less visible and, arguably, harder to resist' (30). Accordingly, *The Circle* depicts the decline of an idealistic but ultimately opaque corporation, whose practices become all-invasive rather than liberatory. The narrative suggests that technology alone remains insufficient to create an open cosmopolitan society of ethical ideals. Instead, Eggers indicates that an emergent digital cosmopolitanism, founded on active ethical agency, is required to combat the increasing obsolescence of the human species and confront a digital age of accelerating and unprecedented change.

Digital Imperialism

'The politics, structures and inequalities of the physical world are part of the very essence of the digital domain; a domain built by human beings with histories, standpoints, interests, morals and biases' (Jurgenson 85-86).

In comparison to *The Circle*, *Transmission* addresses the more global effects of digital communication, capturing the shifting technological, financial, and ethno-political developments of the contemporary moment. As in David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten*, the novel engages with the ethical responsibilities of cosmopolitics across national borders, through which the reflexivity of socio-cultural interdependence coupled with technological advancement generate unparalleled global crises. Kunzru examines the iniquitous nature of global inequality and the difficulties of transnational engagement through the eyes of both an Indian digital migrant worker, Arjun Mehta, and a British entrepreneur, Guy Swift (Kunzru himself possessing both British and Indian heritage). By widening the scope of digital technology away from merely Western elites, the chapter will now demonstrate how *Transmission* focuses on the social practices of transnational migrants and their complicity

in corporate digital culture. In doing so, the narrative will be shown to confront what Boyer terms the 'mounting digital divide' in contemporary society 'between those connected to and those disconnected from the electronic matrix' (57).[54] This technological deficit is argued to be increasingly reflective of the radical inequalities experienced by digital migrant workers.

The narrative opens with Arjun Mehta, a computer engineer from New Delhi, applying for a role in the digital sector through a corporation named Databodies. Even before his acquisition of a visa and relocation to the U.S., Arjun's rejection and strong sense of estrangement from Indian culture makes him complicit with Western ideologies. In an interview for the position, he strives to emulate his interviewer Sunny Srinivasan – the embodiment of transnational assimilation within the cultural folds of the U.S. – whose very linguistic idiosyncrasies even imply cultural aspirations: 'his dragged vowels and rolling consonants returning the listener to the source of all his other signs of affluence: *Amrika*. Residence of the Non-Resident Indian' (*T* 8). Sunny's linguistic accommodation and mimicry of North-American mannerisms are not performed to mock or disrupt existing discourses, but function as an act of reverence designed to advertise his assimilation into Western globalised culture – an attempt at cultural hybridity to which Arjun aspires. Sunny is thus a manifestation of cultural interplay as a result of enforced globalisation and commodification in India, being 'less a human being than a communications medium, a channel for the transmission of consumer lifestyle messages' (*T* 8). Digital technology makes it increasingly possible for global citizens to frame and reconceptualise their culture and locality in a global context, enabling what Harvey deems 'a new type of cross-border

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[54] By maintaining a sustained focus on networked global culture, Kunzru returns to digital concerns first raised in *Noise* (2006), a collection of short stories exploring the blurring boundaries between the digital and the human, as individual agency rallies against technological imposition.

politics' in which the digital connects distinct localities (*Freedom* 87). The presence of digital technology in Arjun's life reflects a lack of global belonging and a desperate need for wider social connectedness, yet such self-enforced digital isolation prevents him from acting compassionately or empathetically.

Kunzru explores an escape from Indian culture through Arjun's purposeful retreat into a private world of technology, until he appears as little more than an extension of his digital infrastructure. The institutional network at North Okhla first affords Arjun a private digital space: a 'secret garden, which existed not so much apart from as *in between* the legitimate areas of the college network', forming 'an interstitial world, a discreet virtuality that could efficiently mask its existence' (*T* 29). As Tomlinson notes, 'communications technologies deterritorialize', removing us from cultural connections 'with our discrete localities' and opening up 'our lifeworlds to a larger world' (180). And yet, he emphasises that digital connectivity must be mediated by an awareness and sensitivity to 'the situated lifeworld of the self. Without this, no amount of technological sophistication can make us cosmopolitans on-line' (204). The narrative quickly problematises personal complicity in the asymmetrical relationships of the global system. Arjun's emigration to the U.S. suggests a deconstruction of the family network through an undermining of cultural allegiances and suppression of localised Indian ties in favour of adherence to a Western model of globalisation. Digital communication in the narrative functions as both a destructive and emancipatory innovation which exceeds the nation-state system and destabilises the notion of cultural boundaries; global flows now operate within and beyond national space with little regard for territorial borders. When Arjun is accused of disloyalty to his nation by his Indian employer, he dispassionately muses: 'if India had wanted him for something it would probably have asked' (*T* 24). The global connections fostered by his mobility seemingly hold cosmopolitan potential but also detach geographical space

from the equation, thus depriving locality of its materiality. Through Arjun's cultural manipulation, New Delhi becomes the latest global site of vested Western interests; a small component in the larger pattern of outsourcing digital work in the private sector to countries with cheap labour.

Arjun is not the only member of his family unit subject to globalised culture's disruption of non-Western locales. His sister, Priti, is employed by a call centre that trains her to adopt an Australian accent and identity, being renamed Hayley. She is required to memorise superficial cosmopolitan knowledge of other cultures in order to 'build customer trust and empathy', ensuring elite customers feel more comfortable with her ethnicity. Priti's parents question why she needs to accommodate to white culture, neglecting her ethnic ties and becoming 'one of these cosmopolitan girls' (*T* 18, 19). As Irr argues, in the digital migrant novel these generational differences are often defined by 'media engagement', 'geographic dispersal', and 'degrees of linguistic assimilation', that indicate the extent of Western influence on the wider world (29). However, neither Arjun nor his sister attempt to resist the commodification of their culture, suggesting that non-elite citizens are complicit in their oppression and sustain commercial hierarchies. The perils of the contemporary moment are thus animated through an engagement with both local and global spheres. The practices of transnational corporations disrupt localised communities and family units, with individuals' subsequent mobility or displacement becoming a by-product of globalising processes. Databodies effectively employ Arjun on 'one of those slave visas, being paid a fraction of what it would cost [...] to hire an American engineer' (*T* 65). In an article for his former magazine *Wired*, entitled 'Rewiring Technoculture', Kunzru notes that digital workers are often manipulated by an 'ideological smokescreen' to ensure that corporate elites 'live *la dolce vita*, while [...] the majority of workers will be dehumanised technicians performing repetitive tasks to service the networked machine'

(n.pag.). Arjun's exploitation therefore exposes the extent to which digital technologies actually foster global inequalities.

Barendregt identifies that in contemporary society in general, '[w]ith the digital haves better connected than the digital have-nots, gated communities have found their online equivalents', exploiting 'vulnerable groups such as immigrants' (205). On arriving in the U.S., Arjun's life is quickly defined by stagnation and immobility. Despite now being a globally mobile subject, he is dependent upon Databodies for his livelihood, with his movements determined by the transnational corporation. As in *Open City*, cultural engagement is often delimited by personal mobility. Databodies restrict their workers' wages in order to deport them once they have served their uses as disposable digital labour to other corporations. The novel consequently positions the digital as the new manifestation of the global processes of cultural imperialism, exposing the global inequalities of twenty-first century life. As Harvey argues, the internet possesses 'no liberatory potential whatsoever for the billion or so wage workers [...] struggling to eke out an existence on less than a dollar a day' (*Freedom* 109). After being offered only temporary work, Arjun remains captive and unable to return home to New Delhi. The corporation thrives on these dislocated foreigners whose identity can be shaped and defined by Western forces. The migration of social actors through digital corporations is a direct consequence of neoliberal globalisation. The economic exploitation of transnational migrants suggests that digital technology brings a reformulation, rather than reconstruction, of the global system as digital empires of corporate forces replace government structures. By remaining a dominant Western system of control, the digital produces new forms of cultural exclusion in the narrative.

Corporate regulation comes to undermine Arjun's economic and cultural mobility, as Databodies neglect non-elite migrant workers who sustain their digital infrastructure.

The living arrangements provided to Arjun prevent him from acquiring the socio-cultural capital he requires to assimilate into his new culture. He is housed with other Indian computer engineers whose only access to American life is through the internet or television. The digital sector therefore engenders a perpetuation, rather than reduction, of racial disparities as non-Western actors are reduced to the human-circuitry of the wired world. Non-elite migrants essentially become mere 'databodies' themselves, stripped of their humanity and cultural idiosyncrasies in order to satisfy and sustain Western digital networks. Arjun's situation is no better than back in India; he remains in a liminal state, gaining nothing except 'a new and harder picture of the world' (*T* 47). In this sense, *Transmission* points towards the need for a 'vernacular cosmopolitanism', espoused by Bhabha and Werbner, concerning an awareness of localised, non-elite subjects to global practices.[55] More specifically, vernacular cosmopolitanism emphasises the role of migrant workers or displaced subjects to the processes of global interconnection and interdependence. Arjun's experiences of the U.S. are consequently restricted and limited at best, and he becomes emblematic of those migrant workers who function on the margins of the global economy (even within U.S. borders). Arjun commits to a daily walk in an attempt to forge some intercultural connection with his environment. His alienated meanderings mirror those of Julius in *Open City*, as he is limited to walking 'a not-quite-sidewalk' of the highway over the course of a year (*T* 38). His marginalisation contrasts sharply with the geographical freedom of the highway. The cars appear as '[m]ythical chariots', a symbol of elite mobility from which he is excluded (*T* 41). To passing Americans he appears as 'a blur of dark skin, a minor danger signal flashing past on their periphery', as 'alien and different as stars' (*T* 38). The socio-cultural liberation of exploring a new culture subsequently jostles against personal isolation and communal

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[55] See Bhabha 'Unsatisfied'; Werbner 'Introduction'.

fragmentation. Although Arjun aspires to achieve assimilation and cultural belonging within the U.S., he fades into the background of the corporation, his ethnicity marking him as a disposable component of the global system. With no social networks to rely on, living in entropic closed-off housing with other digital migrant workers, he falls deeper into cultural marginalisation.

Eventually, Arjun is saved from stagnation by Virugenix, a global computer-security firm heroically defending 'the walls of the internet against the viral dark hordes', who offer him a position in the digital sector (*T* 55). Arjun is relocated to Redmond in Washington State to work as a security specialist in the 'Global Security Perimeter': 'security controls seemed to underscore his elite status' (*T* 54). However, on arriving at his new position, he soon finds himself unable to imitate Sunny by appropriating American mannerisms successfully; his failed attempts at assimilation mark him as a disempowered and detached outsider, who is now socially *and* professionally excluded from all sectors of U.S. life. Arjun's co-workers mirror the employees of the Circle, retreating into their digital realms to avoid face-to-face communication: '[i]nteraction was via email, even if the participants occupied neighbouring cubicles' (*T* 57). The digital once again provides an escape from the social contract of interaction and civility. Engaging with others is simply perceived as a way of overriding an individual's 'access controls' and lessening their 'functionality', reducing humans to an extension of their technological tools (*T* 57). The digital security specialists subscribe to the Virugenix ethos: '[s]ometimes it is noble to sleep in the crawlspace of your desk', and many 'had not ventured into a public space for years' (*T* 57, 93). By attempting to invade people's personal space at work, Arjun is accused of breaching a 'private sonic space that was [...] violated only in an emergency' (*T* 57). Rather like the 'black rip' in Mae's chest, Arjun's desire for social interaction manifests itself as a 'hard ache inside, an alien presence which had formed in his chest like

a tumour' (*T* 110). The 'sense of being diminished by this environment had become a

suspicion of *actual physical shrinkage*' as life in the U.S. ultimately transforms Arjun into

'a non-person', marginalised from cultural connectivity (*T* 39, 159). This uncivil working

environment strengthens his belief that other people: 'were a chasm, an abyss', with human

interaction resulting in 'a nightmarish social world' (*T* 107). Due to this treatment, Arjun

fails to develop a cosmopolitan empathy to complement his new found transnational

subjectivity and he once more retreats into his own private digital world to compensate for

a lack of personal attachments.

Cosmopolitan Elites

'Even within trading cities, cosmopolitanism depends on interconnection and engagement

of some kind with other groups, rather than the simple co-presence of different cultural

groups linked only by thin ties of commerce' (Holton 101).

Arjun's absorption in digital culture sustains the corporate media lifestyle of elite

Westerners. Guy Swift, a marketing executive for a global advertising firm, serves as the

novel's elite subject – by travelling transnationally for corporate business he functions as

the Western manifestation of globalised culture (his surname itself evokes the immediacy

and acceleration of networked globalisation). Guy practises a superficial form of social

engagement, holding the world at a distance; though he admires the view from his

skyscraper building, 'he found himself thinking how much better it would be from higher

up' (*T* 119). By enjoying a privileged form of constant mobility he avoids forging an

intimate connection or emotional attachment to his girlfriend, colleagues or friends,

reflecting Holton's claim that global businessmen and internet users in contemporary

society are at best 'reluctant cosmopolitans', connecting to the wider world via a

superficial aesthetic (202). Guy consequently fails to establish personal connections, remaining estranged from intercultural or even national ties. For Johansen, he is the 'most rootless of all the characters'; his lack of a back story or origins suggest 'a complete disavowal of personal histories and all kinship connections', and even his cultural interactions are merely 'a process of consumption' ('Virus' 424). This desire to be uprooted from the particularities of geographical space suits his corporate lifestyle and marks him as a detached figure of corporate excess: 'Thailand or Mauritius or Zanzibar or Cancún or Sharm el Sheikh or Tunisia or Bali or the Gold Coast or Papeete or Gran Cayman or Malibu. So many places for Guy. All the same' (*T* 134). Guy leads a forward-thinking, global marketing agency named Tomorrow, adapted to reflect the fluidity and speed of the global city. Like the Circle, the company allegedly promotes an ethos of cultural tolerance and openness, designed to fit 'the local needs of transnational clients', yet is often incapable of doing so, relying on 'visuals' rather than acknowledging the religious and cultural specifications of its customers (*T* 180). Both Guy and his company pursue a commercialised cosmopolitanism that exploits other cultures, drawing on their tastes and experiences for personal ends, but ultimately fails to engender true intercultural engagement.

Like the founders of the Circle, Guy is an unashamedly privileged subject, immersed in the global technoscapes that encompass the contemporary moment and complicit with digital culture's dependence upon non-elite labour. Crucially, at no point in the narrative do Guy and Arjun encounter one another; his ignorance of Arjun's presence is a direct critique of the Western world's incognisance and indifference to cultural inequalities. Sitting in his airplane's 'first-class compartment', Guy fails to sense any connection to 'the boy on the bus 30,000 feet below' (*T* 12). The sense of looking down on others raises Guy 'beyond the trivial temporality of the unpersonalized masses of the

earth', and he only experiences contentment within the transitory spaces of airports due to their 'status as non-destination space' (*T* 22). Airplanes, flying far above national borders, are better equipped to transport 'the message of himself from one point on the earth's surface to another' (*T* 13). By seamlessly shrinking the globe, linking nation-states and drawing them into a global network of movement, airports act as nodes in this mobile system, responsible for connecting citizens across trans-territorial space. According to Beck, networks of mobility such as the internet and airports 'build the backbone of the cosmopolitan society and the process of globalization' ('Mobility' 33).[56] These networks undoubtedly serve as a form of elite cosmopolitan transfer in the narrative, allowing Kunzru to parody the systems sustaining Western corporate lifestyles. Guy's lifestyle suggests that transnational mobility predominantly remains the fortunate terrain of affluent Westerners alone. Business elites and exponents of global capitalism in the novel may operate across borders but their presence in diverse geographical settings is for monetary gain, not cultural engagement, and in Guy's case results in the entrenchment of negative parochialism. His presence in the narrative therefore serves as a critique of monetary inequalities in the contemporary global system, which remain unacknowledged by so-called Western 'cosmopolitans'. However, although cosmopolitanism has long been tied to the notion of elite mobility, technological advancement also transforms the framework of cosmopolitanism, allowing individuals to form intercultural relations without physically crossing borders at all. Regardless of differences in nationality, wealth or social class, both Arjun and Guy's contrapuntal movements converge on the same global path, synthesised in a convergence culture without their knowledge. As a cosmopolitan elite, Guy experiences the 'sublime mobility of those who travel without ever touching the ground',

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[56] As Zuckerman notes, in 2009 'about 663 million passengers departed from U.S. airports. Only 62.3 million disembarked in other countries' (68).

whereas Arjun, through his role as a digital migrant, glimpses 'what lies below, the other mobility, the forced motion' of the globally displaced (*T* 47). Kunzru therefore disrupts the dichotomy between elite and non-elite experiences, questioning how geographically and culturally separate life-worlds infringe upon one another through the interdependence of global networks.

Guy's major advertising contract involves working with 'PEBA, the new Pan European Border Authority', to rebrand Europe as a fortressed Western state of exclusivity of elite cultural capital, harmonising 'the immigration and customs regimes of all the member states' (*T* 130). The organisation protects the role of the nation-state as a dominant presence in the global system, limiting and dictating mobilities, data regulation, and border-crossing. The corporeality of physical geographical space acts in opposition to the imposition of digital flows, maintaining a top-down process of cultural regulation. Guy's marketing pitch for his European border policy further encapsulates the tenets of superficial cosmopolitanism, seeking to provide hospitality and openness to a select group: 'we have to promote Europe as somewhere you want to go, but somewhere that's not for everyone. A continent that wants people, but only the best. An exclusive continent' (*T* 257). In his pitch, he claims that 'in the twenty-first century the border is not just a line on the earth any more'; the border is both 'everywhere' and 'in your mind' (*T* 252). In marketing an anti-cosmopolitan 'mental border' as 'a value […] we can promote', Guy exploits cultural fears of immigration and terrorism (*T* 253). The act of transnational border-crossing itself becomes commercialised and condemned in the process: 'the physical has been ruthlessly subordinated to the immaterial' (*T* 249). Such border planning not only directly rejects the notion of a cosmopolitan borderless world, but advocates the exclusion of non-elite others, reinforcing rather than removing the borders of nation-states. PEBA, like the eponymous company of *The Circle*, hides behind a false rhetoric of

political transparency and social harmony. The organisation is dependent on surveillance and the collection of personal data in order to operate efficiently and exclude unwelcome others. PEBA manipulates the understanding that while privileged nation-states embrace the economic benefits of globalisation through the transfer of capital and digital technology, they often resist the human side of globalisation, policing their borders to limit immigration. The proposed 'common European border authority' advocates the need for 'the centrality of information technology' to enforce its 'modern customs and immigration regime', combining their database with 'biometrics' in order to police transnational citizens (*T* 252). *Transmission* consequently echoes *The Circle* in warning against the centralisation of electronic data, which places cultural and political power in the hands of the cultural elite.

Digital Alterity

'The internet is at least partly *us*; we write it as well as read it, perform for it as well as watch it, create it as well as consume it' (L. Miller n.pag.).

The precarious nature of Arjun's U.S. tenancy is exacerbated by a crash in Virugenix's stock prices, leading to redundancies across the company. In a desperate attempt to remain in the country, he develops his own digital virus that will force Virugenix to retain their viral-security staff and thereby emphasise his usefulness to Western society. The virus becomes his own alteration of the unequal world, informing the global system of his presence by writing himself into the Western narrative. And yet, despite the virus functioning as a marker of resistance and intervention, Arjun is complicit with the dominant global system. His strategy is anything but subversive, designed to demonstrate his willing obeisance to Western digitalised culture and his submissive place within its

structure. The virus is disguised as a fake emotional attachment: '[h]i. I saw this and thought of you', displaying a pixelated image of Arjun's favourite Bollywood actress, Leela Zahir, moving in 'jerky quicktime' (*T* 3). The cultural memory of the young actress, whose identity is already eroded by years of media exposure and scrutiny, is ultimately reduced to a digital image distributed 'around the world': 'the girl with the red shoes, cursed to dance on until her feet bled or the screen froze' (*T* 4). Like Arjun, Leela possesses little agency over her cultural or personal freedoms, exploited by the Bollywood film industry. For Childs and Green, both Arjun and Leela's digital reinvention therefore suggests a comparison of 'the colonized body that emerges from negated history and place and the cybernetic body that materializes from the contemporary alliance between technology and capitalism' (*Ethics* 82). Leela's digital image evokes the fuzziness and bodily noise of corporeal life as opposed to the slick operability and smooth fluidity of digital processes: '[a]s soon as there is a sender, a receiver, a transmission medium and a message, there is a chance for noise to corrupt the signal' (*T* 156). Although Western dominance and pervasiveness of the English language undoubtedly limits the accessibility and cosmopolitan potential of the internet, the immediate translatability of the image overrides language barriers across unbounded space. The virus, then, functions as a vehicle for Arjun to control his fate and prevent himself from being reduced to a racialised alien in a confusing and foreign environment. Through Leela's (and by extension, Arjun's) overt ethnicity, the digital thus renders new possibilities for the articulation of alterity.

The Leela virus instigates the beginning of the downfall in digital interaction, disrupting a globalised culture that is dependent upon uninterrupted flows of information and data. Crucially, the virus functions as a counterflow to the spread of Western globalisation through utilisation and subversion of its own technologies. Leela's dance routine 'taunts the world' by breaking through global firewalls and infecting thousands of

lives, making planetary systems inoperable through what Schoene terms an 'icon of cosmopolitan subalternity' (*Novel* 145). Johansen concurs, claiming that this projection of Arjun's frustration disrupts 'global systems of capital mobility by rerouting them through new or discrepant paths' ('Virus' 422). Such rerouting symbolises a subversion of the division between the privileged and marginalised in relation to digital culture, destabilising the centralised control of both Western and global networks. Kunzru, speaking on the centralisation of technological networks, claims that 'decentralisation, the break-up of top-down control structures and the construction of bottom-up emergent ones' are the best means of circumventing the trajectory of a dominant Western 'totalitarian Information State' ('Rewiring' n.pag.). The narrative's virus consequently functions as a form of cosmopolitanism from below to tackle the inherent threats of techno-capitalism – a viable strategy of cultural resistance with regards to the rewiring of the global community.

Irr positions *Transmission* as part of a larger movement in contemporary literature to account for the unprecedented changes wrought by technology on non-elite subjects, 'reshaping the U.S. immigration narrative for the digital environment' (29). Through his refusal to be confined to the margins of U.S. society any longer, Arjun symbolises the emergence of a new marginalised category within contemporary global society – the digital migrants: 'mobile subjects who receive and interpret cultural codes while actively transmitting and translating their own information' (29). Accordingly, the dissemination of Leela's image is a virtual projection of Arjun's repressed ethnicity and a resistance against the obscuration of his identity by Western culture. Yet the virus does not merely contain his own desperation but that of the global multitude, providing a subjective human experience of the global 'other' through digital technology. Childs and Green perceive this notion of the multitude to be in opposition to networks of global power: the 'productive, creative subjectivities of globalization whose movements [...] and processes of mixture and

hybridization express the desire for liberation' from destructive forms of hierarchical

global capitalism (*Ethics* 36). Due to techno-capitalism's neglect of marginalised subjects,

the virus emerges as a microcosmic digital manifestation of globally stifled suppression,

giving voice to these marginalised communities.

Arjun's creation of the virus itself reflects how the construction of digital

technology often occurs in non-Western markets, as the narrative forces an examination of

how Western culture can renegotiate its relationship with the global subjects it dominates.

Perceived from a Western perspective, the virus emerges as a fear of the cultural other,

with the subsequent circulation of unbounded flows and digital connectivities reflective of

the fearful discourses associated with transnational exchanges and immigration in general.

The novel's title compounds this threat of digital contact having a physical consequence.

Arjun is a foreign body, contaminating the host body of the U.S. and countering the

discourse of dominant globalisation. And yet, despite enacting 'the revenge of the

uncontrollable world', at the same time Arjun is parasitically dependent upon U.S. systems

(*T* 159). Neither he nor his virus are *intentional* threats facing Western globalised culture,

but rather symptomatic of its own failings in enforcing a dominant homogeneity across

global space. As Johansen argues, the Leela virus can therefore be positioned as a

'disrupting viral cosmopolitanism that challenges, rather than reinforces, seemingly stable

hierarchies between an elite and non-elite work force, and between local and global

knowledges' ('Virus' 427).[57] Transnational connections may result in potential dangers,

but digital culture ignores the global other at its own risk. Arjun's employer, Virugenix (a

neologism suggestive of its own viral capabilities), is consequently unable to control his

creation. By the next morning the virus infects millions of computers users around the

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[57] As argued earlier, the virus, like Arjun, is simultaneously a carrier of *vernacular* cosmopolitanism, infecting individuals and forcing them to acknowledge the global-local relations that sustain globalised digital culture.

world and is seized upon by revolutionaries as a terrorist plot to destabilise global capitalist systems. Such networked cyber-terrorism reveals Western technological dependency as a new outcome of global interconnectedness. While digital culture has the potential to reach beyond cultural borders, carrying liberatory cosmopolitan discourses in its wake, digital interconnectedness in the narrative instead engenders 'an informational disaster, a holocaust of bits' (*T* 272). Through this 'invisible contagion of ones and zeros', both the global economy and interdependent power-relations are destabilised and 'citizens started to look with suspicion at the computers on their desks' (*T* 4, 154).

That being said, the Leela virus nevertheless increases contact between nodes of the networked world with both elite and non-elite characters in the novel interlinked and equally complicit in an unprecedented globalised culture. According to Kunzru: 'it is better to think of the global economy not as a singular thing, but as an assemblage, a cluster or colony of systems. It is not a smoothly functioning efficient machine, but a vast jumble of processes, actions and decisions, which effect each other in unimaginably complex (but not in principle unknowable) ways' ('Rewiring' n.pag.). The global systems of *Transmission* therefore reflect a consolidation of Beck's 'risk society' in which 'global threats generate global communities' ('World Risk' 20). The non-corporeal presence of the Leela virus, rather like *Ghostwritten*'s non-corpum, engages with and adapts to the specificities of geographical place: it 'could take on new forms at will, never staying stable long enough to be scanned and recognized' (*T* 113). Continuing Johansen's notion of a 'viral cosmopolitanism', the virus 'constantly evolves as it moves throughout the world, becoming more heterogeneous, rather than homogenous, through its various points of global contact' ('Virus' 419). By inhabiting computer systems all over the world, the virus serves as 'a metaphor for [...] a rooted form of cosmopolitics that engages with the particularities of local cultures and spaces', and (like Guy and Arjun) 'must adapt and form

new hybrid affiliations with multiple places' ('Virus' 428). After a single day of the first Leela virus 'being identified and countered, variants were reported' leading analysts to 'classify them as entirely new organisms' (*T* 157). The virus symbolises digital technology's innate capacity for heterogeneity, generating hybrid cultural forms which resist Western homogeneity. In this way, Arjun's creation is evocative of the intensification of global flows that populate the contemporary moment, operating above geopolitical divides. By becoming 'not one thing' but 'a swarm, a horde [...] propagating at a phenomenal rate through peer-to-peer networks', the virus therefore engenders a new risk for the post-millennium that breaks 'completely with the past', being a 'step beyond' all existing digital viruses: she 'could take on new forms at will [...] Each generation produced an entirely new Leela' (*T* 113).

Through the dissemination of his virus, Arjun unwittingly pursues a course of action that disrupts Guy's plans for the development of definitive national borders and boundaries, demonstrating the interdependence and interconnection of networked global society. His role as a non-elite social actor points to the democratic potential of global civil networks in destabilising the hierarchical structures of transnational corporate organisations and highlighting the necessity for ethical and cultural accountability. Appropriately, the Leela virus finds Guy 'at 35,000 feet as he was travelling back to London from New York' (*T* 115). The innumerable strains of the viral transmission, dispersed and multiplying in virtual space, prevents him from continuing to deny the existence and suppression of the multitude of migrant workers who maintain the digital networks of his corporate world. Therefore, through a cosmopolitical struggle for cultural agency and equality, the novel forces an acknowledgement that the fates of global marginalised subjects are now inextricably entwined with our own. Experts name the digital disaster 'Greyday': the name capturing 'a certain cybernetic gloom that hung about

the time' as global citizens dealt with the chaotic cosmopolitical fallout (*T* 272). The far-reaching effects of the virus demonstrate the extent to which world society is being moulded by the new digital environment. In a succinct form of poetic justice, the Leela virus disrupts PEBA's own databases and Guy is mistaken for an illegal immigrant in an organised raid. Due to the 'Variant Eight Leela', responsible for 'the destruction of a huge number of EU immigration records', he is mistakenly suspected to be 'Gjergi Ruli, Albanian national, suspected pyramid fraudster and failed asylum seeker' (*T* 283). Guy consequently suffers first-hand experience of the indignities of deportation, being sent first to a detention centre and then Albania. This ironic displacement to Europe's periphery subjects Guy to the harsh reality of the Western gaze and forces him to experience the role of the marginalised 'other'. By unsuccessfully attempting to return to Europe, he is confronted with the reality and corporeality of national borders, which he previously asserted only exist 'in your mind' (*T* 252). The multiple variants of the virus act in direct opposition to PEBA's enforcement of a unitary and monolithic identity, which can be policed by borders. Through an irrational fear of 'what is lurking outside our perimeter', organisations like PEBA (and the Circle) drench 'the world in information in the hope that the unknown will finally and definitively go away' (*T* 271). However, the coda section's title, 'Noise', exploring the events of Greyday, supplants the first section, 'Signal', suggesting that the chaotic multiplicity of Arjun's creation both dominates and disrupts not only the privileged 'signal' of PEBA's elite nation-state system, but the narrative structure itself. The effects of the virus therefore restrict the trajectories of global mobility and reverses cultural positionality, countering the discourses of superficial cosmopolitanism.

The virus has such a profound effect on the narrative, thematically and structurally, that the characters are forced to compare their lives before and after the events of Greyday: '[d]o you know anyone whom Leela did not touch in some way?' (*T* 272). During his

ordeal, Guy is shown kindness and empathy by a Liberian migrant who helps him sell his watch in order to return home. Greyday directly contributes to Guy's ethical paradigm-shift, in which he determines to leave his corporate lifestyle and lead a parochial life. His subsequent retreat to a new home in the North Pennines, working as a potter, complements his new-found belief in deglobalisation and active ethical agency. Guy interprets his previous life of global mobility and commodification to have been 'an immense distortion of the earth's natural energy field, a distortion which inflicts physical and psychological suffering on the people forced to live inside it' (*T* 277). The digital virus functions as the catalyst for Guy to recognise the frameworks and systems that facilitate his global elitism, connecting him to the fate of Arjun. This forced engagement with the threat of global crises results in Guy's transformation from a detached cosmopolitan elite to an ethical global subject who acknowledges the significance of global accountability and cultural interdependence. Correspondingly, following his release of the virus, Arjun attempts to flee the country and avoid the consequences of his role in the global fallout. His subsequent surveillance by governmental organisations reflects the intercultural tension raised through his unwitting act of networked terrorism. From initially seeking a way into the U.S., Arjun is now searching for a border to escape across. However, because Arjun has metaphorically embedded himself into his viral creation, he becomes physically untraceable. His identity is uprooted by the digital and dispersed in a globally infective virus, reflective of his cultural dislocation and marginality throughout the narrative. This erosion of the self – the dissolution of identity in the face of dominant techno-capitalism – indicates that what remains of Arjun is his digital memory. It becomes impossible to extricate his physical presence from the technological. By pondering '[h]ow is it possible, in a world of electronic trails, log files, biometrics and physical traces of every kind to slip

so completely away', Kunzru is questioning whether active individual agency holds the potential to escape from the worst effects of the digitally-globalised world (*T* 291).

The coda positions citizenship to exceed the limits of the nation-state paradigm and be dependent on more global responsibilities. Through the virus's metaphorical multitude of voices, Kunzru channels an anti-globalist discourse to tackle and interrogate the inequalities of the contemporary global system. *Transmission* therefore follows *Ghostwritten* and *Cloud Atlas* in acting as an example of what Aris Mousoutzanis terms 'network fictions', which 'interweave multiple interlocking narratives set in different times and spaces around the globe and involve many characters, often in a state of mobility and travel, who get involved in or affected by incidents from another storylines' (n.pag.). By demonstrating an interpenetration of local, national, and global processes, the novel creates a glocal narrative environment of intercultural engagement and tension at multiple scales. *Transmission* indicates that the digital age has led to this rapid interconnection of citizens and nation-states into one heterogeneous global system, leaving more marginalised societies and communities open to risk and disjuncture. Global issues are consequently susceptible to transformation by participatory factions and cooperative transnational affiliations, effectively initiating the emergence of a global consciousness to combat planetary threats.

Digital Futures

'The Internet will not magically turn us into digital cosmopolitans; if we want to maximize the benefits and minimize the harms of connection, we have to take responsibility for shaping the tools we use to encounter the world' (Zuckerman 27).

A discussion of digital connectivity is vital to appreciating neoteric forms of global participation emerging in contemporary literature. Although virtual presence is an ineffectual proxy for physical engagement in both *The Circle* and *Transmission*, it nonetheless increases global awareness, allowing for new configurations of socio-cultural connectivity and transnational cooperation. The internet in particular undoubtedly possesses an unparalleled techno-cultural means of investing ourselves in the ethical troubles of distant 'others' and fostering an appreciation of mutual interdependency. As Gilroy argues, this 'mobilizing power of the Internet' can foster a '[c]osmopolitan solidarity from below' (*Empire* 89). Thomas Friedman concurs, claiming that the digital revolution ensures 'hierarchies are being challenged from below or are transforming themselves from top-down structures into more horizontal and collaborative ones' (48). But digital forms of cultural connectivity generate profound changes to human interaction, with corporeal engagement overlooked in favour of a more protean and fluid space of communal exchange, and notions of locality subsumed by a global networked space of homogenous flows. And yet, Taylor emphasises that digital transformation, that 'great cultural leveler', has the potential to both 'liberate humanity' and 'tether us with virtual chains' (2, 6). The notion of the network, operating outside of nation-state frameworks, is not merely a *technological* reconceptualization of society, but constitutes a rewiring of existing cultural connections and relations.

As John Gray identifies, with regards to the utopian potential of virtual communities, 'new technologies never create new societies, solve immemorial problems or conjure away existing scarcities. They simply change the terms in which social and political conflicts are played out. The uses to which new technologies are put depend on […] the level of cultural and moral development in society' (120). Although *The Circle* is overtly pro-privacy, the narrative resists the contention that the U.S. should opt out of an

interconnected global community, instead simply offering a cautionary tale of the blind faith placed in digital technology as a substitute to communal attachments. The Circle's digital network is merely 'playing' at being a global community – there is no real engagement of contemporary concerns and the company manipulates commercialised data to drown out the banalities of everyday life. The digital permeates and envelops human interactions in every way acting as both the catalyst for, and solution to, social isolation in the novel. Rather than the sharing of data serving as an indicator of positive social change, enforced participation ironically establishes the antithesis of an ethically-open cosmopolitan network. Norris and Inglehart define 'cosmopolitan communications' as cross-border systems that offer 'potentially beneficial consequences', improving cultural understanding and ensuring 'universal human rights and democratic governance are disseminated around the world' (197). However, they acknowledge that digital communications 'are not and have not become *global*' but are rather 'in the process of becoming increasingly networked' (6). The Circle's social networking in the narrative provides every global citizen a voice, as long as they inhabit a privileged nation-state. The company's digital infrastructure has the potential to foster and strengthen the cosmopolitan values that sustain existing corporeal networks – such as cultural exchange, openness and reciprocity – but by exploiting such ideals for corporate gain, the digital engenders a false cosmopolitanism devoid of true connection. *The Circle* therefore imagines two digital futures for a world balancing on the brink of irreversible change. On the one hand, digital communication offers an unparalleled opportunity for true planetary engagement, raising consciousness of humanitarian needs and global inequalities through its cosmopolitan networking capabilities. On the other, the company's electronic surveillance of citizens and homogenising force of their technology results in even greater cultural marginalisation and destabilises corporeal human connections. Although the Circle's digital applications

seemingly point towards the capacity for technology to reorganise societies around cosmopolitan ideals, ensuring more accountability and cooperation between global peoples, plans for technological democratisation merely suggest the triumph of homogeneity over heterogeneity.

According to Boyer, the internet must address inequalities inherited from physical space, concerning 'the future of democratic public space', the 'increasing privatization, commercialization, and hierarchical control that create a new periphery', and an emerging 'digital divide' (75). The Circle's founders fail to address these concerns and ignore the fact that the cosmopolitan potential of networks relies on the absence of a governing centralised authority. By imposing a novel form of social control under the guise of democratic reasoning, alongside the illusion of a people's network that flattens hierarchies, the company negates the internet's capacity for promoting cultural difference. Despite the narrative's interrogation of the digital, Eggers is not predominantly concerned with technological software or virtual worlds. The novel remains firmly focused on humanity's capacity for ethical subjectivity in the face of technological transformation. Eggers's forward-thinking narrative therefore reflects Zuckerman's distinction between 'cyberutopianism' and 'digital cosmopolitanism'; whereas cyberutopianism suggests that 'technological innovations will lead to social progress, to positive connections between people with different perceptions and beliefs', digital cosmopolitanism is more pragmatic in requiring society 'to take responsibility for making these potential connections real' (31, 30). *The Circle* therefore yearns for the liberation of humanity from the more controlling impositions of technology while appreciating the permeability of global boundaries to creating a shared future.

While *The Circle* offers a sustained critique of the digital age, the narrative fails to widen its scope beyond the localised corporate interests of the U.S., and thereby neglects

the geographically and economically marginalised subjects whose lives are becoming increasingly shaped by their digital products. Consequently, whereas in *The Circle* digital communication is an efficient means of social mobilisation for corporate advantage, in *Transmission* it becomes a catalyst for revising geographical inequalities or human rights concerns. It may be, as Hardt and Negri suggest, that to live in 'the age of globalisation' is to live in the 'age of universal contagion', but it is also to live in the age of burden-sharing (*Empire* 136). *Transmission* demonstrates that although digital technology allegedly transfers power from the centre to the peripheries, fostering a horizontal network of cultural collaboration, cultural levelling only occurs through acts of subversion or desperate defiance. Power is merely redistributed rather than elite hierarchies being dismantled, ensuring that vast global inequalities persist in the digital domain. The novel therefore reflects what Schoene terms 'humanity's hitherto unprecedented glocal entanglement', examining both the effects of unbounded connectivity generated by digital technology and the dissonance which global crises bring to globalisation's discontents (much of the narrative's drive derives from this dynamic interplay, permeation, and tension between the global and the local) (*Novel* 127). For Schoene, *Transmission* interrogates the distinction and interdependence between 'the processes of globalisation and cosmopolitanisation'; whereas globalisation 'requires individuals to give up their local affiliation' for a homogenised 'globalised dream', the heterogenising force of cosmopolitanisation suggests that 'one can only make a worthwhile contribution to world culture by drawing on the local specificity of one's origin' (*Novel* 149). Undoubtedly, the nostalgic longing for forms of localised community works alongside the imposition of digital technologies in the novel. Kunzru tethers digital culture to social experience in order to question how cultural identities are dislocated and geographical spaces deterritorialised by the digital. Through this incongruity of digital and physical flows,

Transmission suggests an intensification of transnational identities and histories within a global system, which are finally forced to acknowledge the presence of one another and contemplate a shared future. Arjun's disappearance at the conclusion of the narrative points towards the liberation of the global diaspora from the imposition of globalised culture – remaining free of surveillance and suppression, exploring the spaces of the world unchecked and crossing boundaries untroubled. The presence of digital technology in the novel is therefore not responsible for redefining the nation-state system, nor rendering it defunct, but acts as a form of cultural transmission and reformulates the conception of global space through novel forms of planetary connectivity.

Both novels avoid the early idealistic faith that digital technology holds the potential for a utopian future of cosmopolitan connections. As Lee Komito notes, '[n]ew technologies have enabled a vast diversity of new worlds for individuals to dip into; whether this constitutes a cosmopolitan experience must remain a matter of debate' (147). Kunzru especially emphasises that a more achievable and viable solution is to maintain both social and digital communication and transform our technologies to meet the unparalleled interdependence and vast inequalities of the contemporary moment. Digital communication fails to rewire characters in either novel into ethically cosmopolitan subjects; instead, digital technology is exploited for personal gain and divorces individuals from their communal attachments. Guy and Arjun are representative of this estrangement, becoming more digital than human, alienated from both their environment and themselves, and submitting to the dominance of the global over the local. According to Nicholas Carr, '[w]hat makes us most human' is that which 'is least computable about us', including 'our capacity for emotion and empathy' (207). In spite of the narrative's constant movement across global space, any mobility is tempered by the personal stasis in which Kunzru places his protagonists. While cosmopolitanism should not ignore processes which are

non-dependent on direct intercultural engagement, digital propinquity proves to be a poor substitute for face-to-face interaction.

Despite *Transmission*'s focus on digital migrants, the novel ultimately emulates *The Circle* in reflecting a decidedly Western insight into the digital age. Although digital communication offers almost unlimited potential for intercultural dialogue and exchange, both novels suggest that corporate technology functions as the new elite form of socio-cultural and ethno-political dominance, bestowing planetary omnipotence to globally oppressive forces. There continues to be an inherent control, rather than freedom, in networks of communication, with transnational corporations identified as the driving force behind this digital divide. Whereas *The Circle* highlights the benefits and dangers of horizontal, decentralised civil networks, *Transmission* suggests that active individual agency can function as a form of emancipation against top-down, hierarchical structures. Transnational corporations, represented by Databodies in the narrative, possess more power than some nation-states, and manipulate labour laws to exploit non-Western migrants. This Westernisation of the global landscape, a digital form of cultural imperialism intensified by globalisation, washes over global space, rendering every locality a glocality. As Irr argues, by positioning 'media systems as figures for transnational cultural exchanges', *Transmission* depicts a transformation of literary focus from 'the discrete geography of nations to the overlapping and virtual spaces of communication technologies', and reformulates the migration narrative for the twenty-first century (26). For Kunzru and other contemporary authors addressing digital migration, '"roots" become "routes," and then "routes" become "routers"' (28). Kunzru therefore marks the rise of the transnational digital migrant within a global network of mobility and exchange by transforming Arjun into a 'router' for Western digitalisation of the global system. A struggle subsequently emerges between cosmopolitanism from above, defined by

transnational corporate control, and cosmopolitanism from below, arising from the new-found cultural mobility and agency of digital migrant workers.

As *Transmission* and *The Circle* demonstrate, the digital revolution has not instigated a corresponding revolution in cosmopolitan engagement. In *The Net Delusion*, Evgeny Morozov concludes that the 'cyber-utopian belief that the Internet would turn us into uber-tolerant citizens of the world [...] has proven to be unfounded' (247). He argues that such cyber-utopianism stems from 'the starry-eyed digital fervour of the 1990s' during which a 'naive belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside', has resulted in 'significant global consequences that may risk undermining the very project of promoting democracy' (xiii, xvii). The virtues of digital communication have proven to be inherent vices. Openness invites cultural cohesion, but it also permits participation without permission. Surveillance may reduce criminal activity, yet it can be subverted as an autocratic means of tracking dissenters. The borderless nature of the digital fails to transcend the corporeal, for while geographical borders are dismantled, personal borders are erected in their place. To perceive digital technology as inherently cosmopolitan is to ignore the vicious and detrimental effects to which it can be put to use, as evidenced in the novels' focus on homogenous control and viral transmission, respectively. A realistic approach to the possibilities of digital communication is required, warning of the danger in treating the internet as, what Morozov terms, 'a deterministic one-directional force for either global liberation or oppression, for cosmopolitanism or xenophobia' (29). These twenty-first century texts therefore demonstrate a purposeful retreat from the polarisation of technological determinism to the potent role of active individual agency in shaping globalising processes and exploring the limitations of an emergent digital cosmopolitanism. In the next chapter, the study continues to extend the cosmopolitan

framework, but in a very different way. Drawing on literature's capacity to imagine fictional worlds, the chapter will explore radical forms of otherness by analysing the trans-species communities of Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. However, by maintaining a dialogue with the realities of the contemporary moment, the fantastical events of the trilogy will be argued to offer clear analogies to fears of cultural homogenisation and racial inequality evident in the fiction of Eggers and Kunzru.

Chapter 5: 'The Republic of Heaven': Fantastical Cosmopolitanism and Trans-Species Community-Building in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*

'The unity of a world is not one: it is made of a diversity, and even disparity and opposition [...] The unity of a world is nothing other than its diversity, and this, in turn, is a diversity of worlds […] the world is a multiplicity of worlds, and its unity is the mutual sharing and exposition of all its worlds – with this world' (Nancy 185).

'Thinking beyond the established forms of borders is an essential dimension of the cosmopolitan imagination' (Delanty, *Imagination* 7).

According to Delanty, community is a paradoxical notion: '[o]n the one hand, it expresses locality and particularness [...] and, on the other, it refers to the universal community in which all human beings participate' (*Community* 12). Although cosmopolitan communities are often examined with regards to local, national, transnational and global connectivity, Philip Pullman's fantastical trilogy, *His Dark Materials*, offers an extension of the cosmopolitan framework through the exploration of communal relations between and across 'worlds' (offering a trans-*universal* scope). Etymologically, the term 'cosmopolitan' encompasses the cosmos – the universe as a whole, and the polis – an individualised experience of life. *His Dark Materials* examines this dialectic and dualism, exploring the tension between these domains to depict the emergence of a cosmopolitan community on a much grander scale than those explored in the previous chapters. Thus far, this study has often positioned cosmopolitanism as the prerogative of the individual, but as Hall questions, could it not also be 'a collective phenomenon? [...] [A] coming together from many different places potentially to create something new. Maybe even a new culture' (353). At this macro-level, cosmopolitanism is a form of world-making powered by ideals of commonality and openness, confronting the reality of living without borders in an

increasingly interdependent world. Through an interrogation of the trans-species communities in the trilogy, this chapter will argue that *His Dark Materials* displays a *fantastical* cosmopolitanism, indicating literature's innate capacity to reach beyond the limits of realism and imagine both idealistic and realistic cosmopolitan futures. It will also be demonstrated that Pullman employs (what he terms) 'the apparatus of fantasy' to serve as an analogy of the contemporary present ('Create a System' n.pag.). As a result, cosmopolitan community-building becomes a social project in the narrative, as opposed to philosophical daydreaming. Trans-universal communities attempt to build a free republic and establish cosmopolitical democracy as the means of confronting trans-species inequalities. Pullman has spoken at length on the notion of a republic of heaven and the cultural and moral codes central to *His Dark Materials* in general. By integrating Pullman's own statements regarding engagement with other cultures, the chapter will demonstrate how the trilogy provides contemporary relevance to the abstract concept of fantastical cosmopolitanism.

 His Dark Materials follows the story of Lyra Belacqua and Will Parry, children from two separate universes, who become involved in a war over the fate of the cosmos and the future of all conscious beings. The pair travel trans-universally, interacting with communities from multiple environments, aiming to prevent the loss of the substance 'Dust', counteract the oppression of the ruling 'Authority', and ultimately construct a cosmopolitan republic. In *Northern Lights*, the first instalment of the trilogy, Pullman initially establishes Lyra's world as 'a universe like ours, but different in many ways' (*NL* n.pag.). In this universe, cosmopolitan relationality is inherent even at the individual level. Due to each human possessing an irrevocable connection with their personal 'daemon', every 'I' is simultaneously a 'we', allowing each individual to enjoy access to dual perspectives within a single individuality through an overlapping, inextricably-linked

consciousness. Lyra, despite the fantastical nature of the narrative, is (as her father Lord Asriel admits) an ordinary young girl with no remarkable qualities, emphasising humanity's realisable potential in facing contemporary threats. The transnational associations between communities in *Northern Lights* are merely the result of trans-universal developments, which become increasingly significant in the following instalments of the trilogy, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*. While the term 'trans-universal' comes closest to describing the interconnected, all-inclusive relationship between individuals and communities in the narrative, transnational relationships are of equal importance in the early stages of the trilogy. Before Lyra's world is opened up to the vastness of the cosmos there is complex cultural connectivity and an exploration of radical forms of otherness at the transnational level alone.

There exists an overwhelming desire amongst the communities in the trilogy for a dismantling of the Authority's rule, spearheaded by Lord Asriel, a powerful member of the aristocracy in Lyra's world, who secretly aims to ensure the self-government of conscious beings through a cosmopolitical democracy. The Authority enforces his tyranny through an arm of the Catholic Church called the Magisterium, responsible for the protection and maintenance of the dominant power-structure. The Magisterium assumes an anti-cosmopolitan stance, rejecting the potential for a shared space of trans-universal attachments. Initially, the organisation rejects the possibility of other universes even existing, before fastidiously seeking their destruction. As the witch Ruta Skadi argues, they aim 'to suppress and control every natural impulse' (*TSK* 52). This religious office has roots in all aspects of Lyra's universe, be they military, political or educational organisations: '[e]very philosophical research establishment [...] had to include on its staff a representative of the Magisterium, to act as a censor and suppress the news of any heretical discoveries' (*TSK* 130). The Magisterium is primarily portrayed more as a

regulative agency on morality rather than a religious organisation alone, whose judicial reviews form the basis of repression. It exists as 'a tangle of courts, colleges and councils' including the Consistorial Court of Discipline, which is responsible for enforcing 'the Church's power over every aspect of life' and functions as 'the most active and the most feared of all the Church's bodies' (*NL* 31). Although the Authority assumes the role of God in the narrative, Pullman is not merely providing a stance against organised religion but offering an analogy of any oppressive regime. For the recent film version of *His Dark Materials*, director Chris Weitz (following a conversation with Pullman) asserted that Pullman considers the Authority to 'represent any arbitrary establishment that curtails the freedom of the individual', providing an alternative interpretation of the trilogy by mitigating and subduing the religious connotations ('God Cut' n.pag.).

This chapter therefore grounds the thematic content of *His Dark Materials* in reality. The imaginary spaces of Pullman's narrative equate to the potential cultivation of alternative paradigms for cultural engagement and community-building – encouraging the reader to reimagine how reality could be. The fantastical events of the trilogy act as allegories for various concerns of the contemporary moment, most notably the construction of cross-cultural communities, questions of ecological sustainability, and the unprecedented movement of individuals and peoples. The trans-universal communities of the narrative encounter increasingly oppressive threats that cannot be resolved by one universe alone, and which require interdependent solutions to be conceived. As in Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* and Kunzru's *Transmission*, local concerns become progressively global in scope. Through an interrelationality that employs a cosmological perspective to expand upon cultural interdependence, the narrative imagines a macro-risk society determined by, and reliant on, cosmopolitan empathy and openness. Indeed, the notion of the cosmos is useful for exaggerating the highly diverse and widely divergent cultural

heterogeneity of the contemporary world. As Appiah emphasises, according to the 'Cynics of the fourth century BC, who first coined the expression cosmopolitan', the cosmos 'referred to the world, not in the sense of the earth, but in the sense of the universe' (*Ethics* xii). Further, Marina Calloni notes that the term 'cosmos' is derived from the Greek meaning a 'well ordered whole' and is a macrocosmic extension of the global; a structured system which is 'ad infinitum and has no geo-physical boundary' (154). Pullman explores this borderless concept through the removal of boundaries (or geo-physical restrictions) between separate universes throughout the trilogy, indicating cosmopolitanism's capacity to overcome borders in the process.

Trans-Universal Mobilities

'Cosmopolitanism, in short, is empty without its cosmos' (Harvey, 'Banality' 554).

Asriel's investigations into trans-universal occurrences, concerning the nature of the mysterious substance Dust and the possibility of multiple universes, lead to his imprisonment and exile by the Magisterium, which perceives these developments to be threatening to its rule. As Lyra's protector, the Master of Jordan College quickly recognises her role in affecting change in the cosmos, perceptive of the burgeoning interconnection between the newly-emerging multiple-worlds: '[m]en and women are moved by tides much fiercer than you can imagine, and they sweep us all up into the current' (*NL* 74). The Master, however, fails in his attempts to shelter Lyra from her mother, Mrs Coulter, who secretly oversees the General Oblation Board (also known as the Gobblers), a second arm of the Magisterium hiding behind the mask of a transnational corporation. The Gobblers experimentation on children and their daemons, in order to discover the true nature of Dust, not only results in a resource extraction project that

disrupts the fragile ecological balance of the cosmos, but the destruction of local families. By spreading discord and instilling fear, the Gobblers prevent any cooperation between transnational communities, segregating and disrupting familiarity between social groups. In escaping from her mother's clutches in London, Lyra is almost immediately rescued by the hospitality of the Gyptians, a nomadic riverboat community of the Fens. Through a newfound mobility within her adopted community in *Northern Lights*, Lyra begins a transnational journey of trans-species connectivity, experiencing a sense of belonging in the community of gypsies, the witch clans, and the stronghold of the bears, respectively.

According to Henrietta Moore, 'imagined worlds are constituted through our relations with others and are the result of interaction' (101). The significance of cultural belonging, interdependence and cooperation are central to the construction of cosmopolitan community in the imaginary worlds of Pullman's trilogy. Lyra's transnational mobility directly involves an opening of her social horizons, an appreciation of ethnic diversity, and an overcoming of delimiting cultural boundaries through active engagement. Anthropologically-diverse groups not only provide Lyra with more varied worldviews and perspectives (leading to empathy and understanding of their interrelated plight), but open their communities up to her in an act of cosmopolitan acceptance, indicating the first tentative signs of a cosmopolitan society in the trilogy. From the very beginning, then, Lyra learns that her locality is subject to more universal forces and demonstrates an openness to heterogeneous otherness integral to the cosmopolitan disposition. As Hannerz notes, cosmopolitanism involves a 'willingness to become involved with the Other, and the concern with achieving competence in cultures which are initially alien' (*Transnational* 103). Lyra's transnational wanderings lead to association with, and participation in, diverse cultures, suggesting that cultural mobility is not only integral to transcending local loyalties, but concerns the ethical agency of the cosmopolitan subject: 'you cannot change

what you are, only what you do' (*NL* 315). By opening Lyra's eyes to the intrinsic benefits of cultural engagement, she may return home with a fresh awareness of the diversity of her own world and recognition of the otherness that can reside within.

The Gyptian leader John Faa acknowledges that fighting the immoral forces of the Magisterium alone is a futile venture. His community must depend on the empathy and cooperation of the witch clans to rescue the children. Although the witches constitute a divided community, their queen Serefina Pekkala recognises the trans-universal risk in which 'all of us, humans, witches, bears, are engaged [...] already, although not all of us know it' (*NL* 308). The socio-cultural and ethno-political concerns of each disparate culture come to the fore as these communities begin to comprehend the importance of social interdependence: 'it may be that what's happening here is part of all that's happening elsewhere' (*NL* 263). The democratic community of witches therefore resolves to join together in resisting the oppression of the Authority's rule. Pullman emphasises that such collective practice is integral to the narrative, stating that: 'we're connected in a moral way to one another, to other human beings. We have responsibilities to them, and they to us. We're not isolated units of self-interest in a world where there is no such thing as society; we cannot live so' ('Republic' n.pag.). *His Dark Materials* transposes these morals to a fantastical setting, opening a dialogue concerning societal obligation and ethical accountability for trans-species beings. This formation of a trans-species cosmopolitanism from below acts as an analogy to cosmopolitical processes threatening the rights of minority social groups, and resists dominant discourses of cultural oppression. As Lydia Morris notes, the 'driving force of a cosmopolitan movement' rests 'heavily on demands for change from below' (63). Trans-species rights in the narrative are contested through a bottom-up struggle of active individual and group agency, rather than relying on the administering of top-down institutional regulations.

To unite more trans-universal beings in rebellion against the Authority, Asriel determines to break open a cosmological barrier to another universe through the northern lights. Asriel's construction of a bridge between two universes actualises cosmopolitanism's focus on border-crossing through the literal penetration of other worlds. In order to create enough energy for a 'window' to another universe, however, Asriel must commit an incontrovertible act – the separation of an innocent child from his daemon. The subsequent ripping of the dimensional fabric is responsible for more Dust leaking from his universe, the effects of which ripple outwards into the cosmos, disrupting the natural ecological balance. His actions have drastic consequences for the bear community specifically, with the subsequent melting of the polar ice-caps producing 'flooded lowland forests' and a 'swollen sea', mirroring twenty-first century fears of global warming as a result of globalising practices (*TAS* 39). The vast upheaval of the environmental and climatic balance in the north forces the bears to hunt for a new living space within the southern mountains of the Himalayas – one that soon proves inhospitable to their requirements. Although Asriel considers himself to be working for the greater good, the altruism of his cosmopolitan project is therefore debatable. By breaking the barrier between two universes (in order to heal the rifts to the cosmos as a whole and bringing them together in a cosmological unity), his actions destabilise environmental systems and affect parochial cultures. Despite his questionable objectives, Lyra and her daemon elect to follow Asriel in becoming trans-universal immigrants, turning 'away from the world they were born in' and walking 'into the sky' of borderless possibilities (*NL* 399). Due to this focus on trans-universal mobility, Paul Simpson argues that, for Pullman, 'travelling between worlds was more important […] than circumnavigating the globe' (223). The trilogy consequently neglects much of the world's geography in favour of English-speaking communities – a common criticism of cosmopolitan paradigms. An initial focus

on Lyra and Asriel, as elite, white subjects, compounds this criticism by emphasising a privileged perspective of trans-universal events and inequalities. That being said, Lyra and Asriel counter any charge of elitism by aligning themselves with non-elite and marginalised factions of a trans-species society. Rather than allowing Lyra to simply explore the familiar spaces of her own locality, she is continually confronted with the new and unfamiliar, giving the narrative room to interrogate and celebrate the subversive otherness of the cosmos.

While Lyra's universe envisions a more fantastical version of our own, the introduction of Will Parry's world in the second instalment of the trilogy, *The Subtle Knife*, is a perfect mirror to our own secular reality. Will is hunted by governmental and corporate agents due to his father, Stanislaus Grumman, possessing knowledge of a window to a parallel universe in the Arctic Circle. Following Asriel's ripping of the cosmic barrier, every nation is 'turning to its scientists urgently to discover what's going on. Because they know that *something* is happening. And they suspect it has to do with other worlds' (*TSK* 210). Will's discovery of a separate window in Oxford leads to the same universe, Citagazze, which Asriel and Lyra have emerged into. John Houghton argues that Citagazze functions as 'the central world, the hub for the multitude of interconnecting windows that unites this cosmological honeycomb', acting as a cultural crossroads for all other universes (50). By stepping 'through the hole in the fabric of this world and into another', Will immediately identifies this new environment as 'something profoundly alien', but feels curiously safe, sensing a familiarity in this 'other' space (*TSK* 16). Notably, after encountering Will in Citagazze, Lyra is the first to comprehend the inherent interconnection between trans-universal communities and how separate universes operate as a cosmological palimpsest: 'in my world there's an Oxford too. We're both speaking English, en't we? Stands to reason there's other things the same' (*TSK* 27). The

cosmopolitan mingling of real and fantastical environments in the narrative supports Hugh

Rayment-Pickard's claim that Pullman 'does not simply want to delight us with his

fictional cosmos, he wants us to take the map of the universe and roll it out over the

surface of our own world' (31). The notion that Will's Oxford functions as a counterpart of

Lyra's world, filled with near-identical situations and individuals, strengthens the narrative

emphasis on the recognition of the self in another and the act of commonality – crucial

components in forging a cosmopolitan sensibility. Moreover, Will and Lyra's mobility

intimates that individuals may exist, and live comfortably in relation to others, in many

worlds regardless of cultural difference.

Despite the advanced technological capability of Citagazze, Will and Lyra soon

discover that its citizens are the antithesis of an ethical society, devoid of communal

relations, empathy or moral rectitude. By using a unique piece of technology in the novel

named the subtle knife to cut windows into other universes, the citizens of Citagazze

become trans-universal thieves and avoid building a respectable locality of their own. Will

and Lyra recognise that by providing access to other spaces, the knife introduces the

possibility for heterogeneous (and hitherto detached) trans-species cultures to work

together in a cosmopolitan unity. The knife's properties ensure the final instalment in the

trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*, moves 'between several universes' completing a narrative

trajectory from the local to the transnational to the trans-universal (*TAS* n.pag.). The

creation of these border-crossing windows address the problems of cultural connectivity by

examining the effects of the removal of spatial boundaries on trans-universal beings. The

windows appear as a 'square patch of difference' in various worlds, acting as a signifier of

cosmopolitan otherness and forcing a confrontation with uncanny trans-species cultures

(*TAS* 85). The sharing of any space requires accommodation of socio-cultural and ethico-

political belief systems, reflecting Harvey's assertion that as 'spatial barriers diminish so

we become much more sensitized to what the world's spaces contain' (*Condition* 294).

Will's subsequent discovery of a 'smoke-laden' world comprised of 'an industrial city,

with a line of chained and sullen workers trudging into a factory', indicates the extent of

the Authority's oppression across the cosmos as a whole and emphasises the importance of

Asriel's cosmopolitan project (*TAS* 20). According to Bernard Schweizer, the

'multicultural agenda' of *His Dark Materials* 'is reinforced by this elaboration of multiple

worlds' and by the 'anti-imperialism' sentiment throughout the trilogy (171). The multiple

spaces of the narrative provide a vast cosmological and geographical framework through

which to explore the anthropological diversity required to imagine the construction of

trans-universal, rather than merely transnational, communities. Although Lyra and Asriel

embody what Inda and Rosaldo consider to be required attributes for the transnational

individual, operating as 'mobile subjects who draw on diverse assemblages of meanings

and locate themselves in different geographies simultaneously', the pair's world-crossing

mobility positons them as trans-universal subjects (22). Trans-universal mobility in the

narrative can therefore be interpreted as transnationalism on a greater scale. In this sense,

there is a fundamental restructuring of the transnational as localised communities

progressively recognise their role in, and commitment to, the emerging trans-universal

order which is being established. The cosmos of *His Dark Materials* forms a

multidimensional construct of heterogenic diversity, concerning the interdependence of

individuals and communities across spatial boundaries. The very act of confrontation

between trans-universal communities interrogates the boundaries that restrict possible

cultural interaction.

The multidimensionality of the narrative makes it tempting to equate Pullman's

cosmos with Michel Foucault's notion of a 'heterotopia' in which 'fragments of a large

number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension'; however, Foucault specifies

that in heterotopias the worlds are 'so very different from one another that it is impossible to [...] define a *common locus* beneath them all', conflicting with Pullman's interdependent universes (xix). The trans-universal spaces of possibility more accurately reflect Mary Watkins concept of 'a heterocosm – a world other than this one – which, once alive imaginally, can inspire action' (74-75). The utilisation of the fantasy genre seems especially pertinent in this respect, as fantasy (and literature at large) offers infinite worlds of emancipatory potential. Moreover, the plurality of the cosmos in the narrative also reflects the multiple offshoots of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's 'rhizome' in demonstrating the connectivity of micro- and macro-spaces: 'any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be' (7). Pullman's cosmos, like the rhizome, is subject to 'multiple entryways' that can be 'reworked by an individual, group, or social formation' (Deleuze and Guattari 14). Contiguous rather than purely heterogeneous spaces create the cosmological structure. The trans-universal groups of *His Dark Materials* are therefore nomadic in their attempts to establish a republic, making use of such entryways. The rhizomatic nature of Pullman's cosmological spatiality suggests that multiple universes present diverse subjectivities and relationalities that are conducive to socio-cultural or political change.

Environmental Cosmopolitanism

'A productive cosmopolitanism must assume responsibility for the ecological survival of the planet' (Challakere 229).

The substance of Dust is the essential element for the interconnection of universes in *His Dark Materials*, serving as the manifestation of the 'dark materials' around which the

trilogy revolves.[58] Lauren Shohet argues that this Dust 'both expresses and constitutes the interrelation of all beings, the participation of all mind and all matter in a cosmic ecology of consciousness', accentuating the holistic nature of Pullman's interdependent cosmos (29). By treating the cosmos as a living, breathing organism based on the movement of Dust, Pullman achieves an eco-philosophical form of cosmopolitanism, formulating a novel sense of cosmological interrelation. In opposition to natural forces, the forces of the Authority instead choose to perceive Dust as a form of original sin that provides living beings with a more empathetic multi-perspectival consciousness, thus threatening their oppressive rule. Asriel's aim to topple the Authority emerges, in part, from a desire to reverse the Dust-deficit, responsible for disrupting the ecological balance across the cosmos. Pullman emphasises the reciprocal relationship between Dust and conscious beings in the narrative, responsible for ensuring communal well-being: the 'relationship we have with Dust is mutually beneficial. Instead of being the dependent children of an all-powerful king, we are partners and equals with Dust in the great project of keeping the universe alive. It's a republican relationship, if you like, not a monarchical one' ('Online Chat' n.pag.). The threat of diminishing Dust (rather like the threat of the Authority's rule) requires an increasingly trans-universal solution, necessitating the establishment of Asriel's movement to secure universal decision-making. Dust therefore functions as both the fabric of the cosmos and a cosmopolitan catalyst, responsible for uniting every individual in a heterogenic web of interconnection and influencing the spread of cultural engagement and openness.

No community in the trilogy promotes a sense of interdependent relationality more than the mulefa: a tribe of sentient beings discovered by scientist Mary Malone who 'were

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[58] The significance of Dust to every conscious being is illustrated by the multifarious selection of names that the substance assumes in disparate universes. As Lyra explains to Will, 'my Dust and your Shadows are the same' (*TSK* 100).

about the size of deer' with legs that 'grew in diamond formation' (*TAS* 88). By

conscientiously protecting and managing their environment, the mulefa contrast sharply

with the unethical nature of the Authority's rule and the social practices of the citizens of

Citagazze. The mulefa's close-knit community depends on the scientific theory of

ecological symbiosis – involving 'an association between two or more different species of

organisms' – and serves as a microcosmic example of the interconnected construction of

Pullman's cosmos in general (Paracer and Ahmadjian 3). As a result of this ecological and

cultural interrelation, every biological organism in their community is 'linked together, and

all of it, seemingly, managed by the mulefa', who are acquainted with 'every individual

within the herds, and every separate tree, and they discussed their well-being and their fate'

(*TAS* 133). Through such symbiosis, both flora and fauna in the mulefa's world exist in

cosmopolitan cohabitation; as Shohet identifies, their environment exhibits 'ideally

adapted ecological synergies' due to the protection which each species offers the other

(31). Trees produce the seed pods which, due to their hard shells, are extremely difficult to

germinate. The mulefa only manage to break open the shells by utilising and adapting the

pods as wheels. These wheels are the perfect complement to the 'natural highways' which

run in 'ribbon-like lines over the vast savannah' (*TAS* 133). The roads of the mulefa are

'part of the landscape, not an imposition on it', and naturally embedded in their

environment – even their huts are grouped in inclusive circles (*TAS* 448). The mulefa

community came into existence due to their evolution and environment all coming together

in fortuitous ecological harmony. The wheels possess a secondary function, enabling the

mulefa to escape the attacks of the oppressive tualapi, gigantic-winged birds from outside

the community, who spoil the mulefa's food stores and attempt to disrupt the

environmental equilibrium and symbiosis by the destruction of the seed pods. The tualapi's

destructive presence in this utopian world demonstrates that ethical agency towards others

and environmental consciousness are often advocated in the narrative as recommended behaviour for the cosmopolitan subject. The tualapi are not the only threat to the mulefa's pastoral environment. The ecological balance is further complicated by the loss of Dust from their universe preventing the production of seed pods and pollination of flowers. The very nature of the mulefa's symbiotic existence is founded on an important misconception. The mulefa mistakenly believe that the use of the wheel pods is a direct catalyst for the production of Dust, and are confused once their trees begin to die. Instead, the seed-trees begin to die at the same moment as the creation of the subtle knife, with the newly-created windows between universes responsible for the deficit of Dust. Carole Scott interprets Dust to be 'the central life force of an intelligent and caring universe, affecting not only humankind but the entire natural world as well' (101). Rather than this catalyst serving as a criticism of wider cultural engagement, it emphasises the necessity for sustainable interaction between peoples in a trans-universal risk society.

The open windows force the Dust to flow in a steady stream from the mulefa's world, rather than falling into the upturned flowers of the trees themselves and continuing a cycle of sustainable development. As a result, when Mary first encounters the tribe, the mulefa face an entropic degeneration as the seedpod trees continue to die and the tualapi threat grows greater. The 'feedback system' existing between the mulefa and Dust ultimately affects all trans-universal beings in the cosmos; the Dust-deficit stimulates the consciousness of the cosmos as a whole due to an increasing awareness of the necessity for environmental sustainability (*TAS* 476). The empathetic inclusiveness and cosmopolitan openness of the mulefa is specifically emphasised, involving an unequivocal embrace and acceptance of beings from other cultures. By 'riding among them', Mary recognises the self in the other: 'they had language, and they had fire, and they had society. And about then she found an adjustment being made in her mind, as the word *creatures* became the

word *people*. These beings weren't human, but they were *people*, she told herself; it's not

them, they're *us*' (*TAS* 95, 129). Mary's integration into the mulefa's community allows

her to rediscover that 'sense of being connected to the whole of the universe' following her

existential crisis (*TAS* 471). In this world, 'everything was throbbing with meaning and

purpose' and 'everything was connected to everything else by threads of meaning' (*TAS*

473). The proposed conservation of Dust demonstrates the necessity for ethical

accountability in maintaining an ecological equilibrium. Further, the environmental crises

of the narrative require a cosmopolitical response via the co-ordination of trans-universal

communities, projecting a clear parallel with the environmental challenges facing the

contemporary world – challenges that cannot be resolved or tackled by nation-states alone

and require transnational involvement.

    Rather than promoting an anthropocentric approach to trans-universal engagement,

His Dark Materials suggests a form of biocentrism or eco-centrism over anthropocentric

hierarchy; Robin Attfield argues that biocentrism recognises 'the moral standing of *all*

living creatures' while eco-centrism acknowledges that ecosystems possess a 'moral

significance independent of that of their members' (27). Individuals are subject to both the

sustainability of their local environments and the single universal environment which

connects them – no community is promoted above another in maintaining the biodiversity

of ecosystems. Trans-universal accountability and environmental sustainability are

connected in a symbiotic relationship of their own creating an ethico-political discourse

integral to Pullman's trilogy. Eduardo Mendieta assumes a similar stance through his

theory of 'interspecies cosmopolitanism' (relating specifically to actually existing flora and

fauna), which entails 'a distinct form of wording, of making worlds', by acknowledging

that: '[w]e are part of a community of living beings, with whom we are entangled in

irreducible and uncircumventable relationships of co-dependence. An ethics of co-

habitation requires a politics of life, not in the sense of a biopolitics of biocapitalist exploitation, but a politics of flourishing companion species' (279). Following this reasoning, the destruction of the mulefa's fragile ecosystem, combined with the melting of the bear's arctic ice caps earlier in the narrative, offer direct analogies for the environmental threats facing contemporary society. The diametrically-opposed communities of the mulefa and the tualapi indicate the gulf between cosmopolitan and anti-cosmopolitan engagement, respectively. Despite Pullman's admission that: 'I feel optimistic about very little. I think we're nearly at the end of human civilization, since quite clearly nothing is going to stop us from devastating the earth and reducing the place to ash and rubble', the trilogy's optimistic portrayal of mutually beneficial engagement hints at the potential for change from the exploitative tualapi mindset of humanity to the ecological awareness of the mulefa (qtd. in Harper 187-88). The narrative's endorsement of ecological sustainability echoes Masao Miyoshi's claim that: '[l]iterature and literary studies now have one basis and goal: to nurture our common bonds to the planet [...] Once we accept this planet-based totality, we might [...] devise a way to share with all the rest our only true public space and resources' (295).

During the short harmonious period Mary spends integrating herself into the community of the mulefa, the 'slow sky-wide drift' of Dust 'had become a flood' (*TAS* 386). Unless the deficit is reversed then that: 'brief period when life was conscious of itself would flicker out like a candle in every one of the billions of worlds where it had burned brightly' (*TAS* 476). The titular amber spyglass, created by Mary to discover the reason for the loss of Dust, serves as a catalyst for more active engagement with this trans-universal threat of resource maintenance. Mary's presence and effect on the community envisions Braidotti's imaginative notion of 'trans-species solidarity', by which nomadic subjects recognise their connection with others to be 'environmentally based, embodied, and

embedded and in symbiosis', marking a movement away from anthropocentricism ('Becoming' 23). The mulefa can now regulate their communal activity in order to ensure the ecological balance is preserved once the openings between universes are reclosed. Mary physically geo-engineers a means by which to monitor the ecological well-being of the cosmos and ensure an environmental balance is maintained. She recognises the importance of locally relational engagement in affecting universal issues, claiming that: '[i]f you wanted to divert a mighty river into a different course, and all you had was a single pebble, you could do it [...] to send the first trickle of water *that* way instead of *this*' (*TAS* 506).[59] Although the Dust seemingly 'drifted randomly', Mary gradually perceives that '[u]nderlying the random drifting was a deeper, slower, universal movement' of purpose (*TAS* 288). By interpreting this movement, she finally comprehends that: '[p]art of her was subject to this tide that was moving through the cosmos. And so were the mulefa, and so were human beings in every world, and every kind of conscious creature, wherever they were' (*TAS* 386-87). However, to interpret *His Dark Materials* as espousing the wonders of a borderless cosmopolitan world is not only to neglect the territorial belonging and localised ecological engagement of the mulefa, but also the closing passages of the narrative which advocate the separation of multiple universes in order for heterogeneous republics to be established universally.

Cosmopolitan Republics

'The notion of a cosmological perspective that would organize geography and anthropology in advance [...] would have to be put to one side to make room for a

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[59] Mary's claim echoes Adam Ewing's assertion in *Cloud Atlas* that active ethical agency is integral to global change: 'what is any ocean but a multitude of drops?' (*CA* 529).

cosmopolitical perspective with a programmatic value, in which the world is envisaged more as a republic to be built than a cosmos given in advance' (Foucault qtd. in Harvey, *Freedom* 21).

Although the figure of the Authority is effectively a fictional representation of God, this chapter has argued that the Catholic Church can be indicative of any oppressive power. Millennia before the fictional events of *His Dark Materials*, the first rebel angels were banished and victimised for attempting to bring such freedom and enlightenment to all conscious beings. Xaphania, a commander of the rebel angels, claims that 'all the history of human life has been a struggle' between angels striving to 'open minds' and the forces of the Authority which 'have always tried to keep them closed' (*TAS* 506). Asriel perceives the imposition of the Authority and his forces to necessitate the establishment of a republic founded on the principles of cosmopolitan democracy. His subsequent rebellion concerns the implementation of an institutional, trans-universally-composed solution to trans-species inequalities. Asriel opposes the present theocratic government that assumes a divinely guided God to be the theoretical head of state and allows unelected clergy members to determine the lives of those in the cosmos. Such a political structure imposes order through acute domination rather than implementing progressive forms of social justice. The struggle for this republic to take shape echoes Pullman's own secular resistance to theological rule: 'we are not subservient creatures dependent on the whim of some celestial monarch, but free citizens of the republic of Heaven' ('Republic' n.pag.). The unilateral power-play of the Authority in the narrative, exercising force over weaker communities through religious dogma, highlights the necessity for a form of universal ethical agreement between states. Calls for a horizontal form of collaboration between states (as opposed to the Authority's theocratic, hierarchical power-structure) reflect Nussbaum's conception of a universal cosmopolitanism, proposing an idealised global residency: 'we should give our

first allegiance to no mere form of government [...] but to the moral community made up by the humanity of all human beings' ('Patriotism' 7). By enforcing a homogenous rule upon innumerable universes, the Authority's forces are ultimately responsible for defining the ethics and morality of communities that should be constructing their own open and tolerant futures.

Accordingly, Asriel is not merely content with instigating a crusade against the localised power of the Magisterium in his own universe, but with the tyrant who is responsible for trans-universal domination: 'he's aiming a rebellion against the highest power of all [...] the Authority Himself, and he's a-going to destroy Him' (*TSK* 48). In a sense, he is abandoning his national interest in order to establish universal laws which will benefit all trans-species beings, regardless of status. As Pullman acknowledges, trans-universal interconnection must naturally involve an engagement 'with everything that is *not* human as well' ('Republic' n.pag.). On the one hand, Asriel's claim to Mrs Coulter that: '[y]ou and I could take the universe to pieces and put it together again' could demonstrate a purely altruistic desire to heal the wounds of a broken and disconnected cosmos drifting into further oppression and darkness (*NL* 396). Such a perspective echoes McCulloch's claim that the 'infinite cosmos, uncharted and without territorial borders, serves as an ideal trope for cosmopolitanism's capacity to dismantle divisions' (2). On the other hand, Asriel could be unintentionally replicating the original crimes of the Authority himself, promoting his own egotistical, megalomaniacal desires for advancement into a position of supreme tyranny. As Danilo Zolo pessimistically questions, can 'any cosmopolitan project ever be anything other than an inherently hegemonic and violent undertaking?' (15). In this sense, Zolo perceives the cosmopolitan project itself to result in a form of homogeneity, enforcing cultural values onto the lives of others.

Several of Asriel's supporters appear more intent on wrenching power away from the Authority and Magisterium than in building a viable cosmopolitan future. However, Tialys, a Gallivespian, informs Lyra that his world suffers from the same threats, indicating the correlations running between universes. The Gallivespians are a race of miniscule beings, sharing a world with their human counterparts who attempt 'to exterminate the small people since the earliest time anyone can remember' (*TAS* 220). And yet, despite being victimised and oppressed themselves, the Gallivespians support Asriel and wish to exact revenge rather than working with their human adversaries to achieve a democratic equilibrium. Similarly, the witch Ruta Skadi is mesmerised by Asriel's rhetoric, crediting him with opening her eyes to 'cruelties and horrors all committed in the name of the Authority, all designed to destroy the joys and the truthfulness of life' (*TSK* 283). By deciding that rebellion is an ethical reaction, however, she becomes enamoured with Asriel's resistance of authority in the face of acute social, political and cultural transformation, rather than contributing to a transformative republic. Despite the seemingly clear-cut oppositional philosophies between the unilateral implementation of theocratic will on one hand, and the multi-lateral normative potential of the cosmopolitan outlook on the other, the narrative resists a simple binarism between the forces of resistance and oppression. Rather, *His Dark Materials* exhibits a plurality of perspectives that ultimately combine to construct an expansive heterogeneity of trans-universal subjectivity and relationality. As Mary explains to Will, the world does not exist in effortless binaries: 'good and evil are names for what people do, not for what they are [...] People are too complicated to have simple labels' (*TAS* 471). In this way, the narrative avoids seeking a utopian consensus on socio-cultural or political issues. Multi-perspectival forms of individual agency, democratic decision-making and often antagonistic outlooks on progress instead inform how a cosmopolitan project should be realised.

According to Holton, cultural transformations are dependent upon 'an accumulation of micro-level pressure to create macro-level change' (101-02). Micro-level pressure in *His Dark Materials* is initially created by the interdependent transnational communities of the gypsies and the witch clans, who only unite under the banner of Asriel's republic in an act of cosmopolitan solidarity via their support of Lyra. Following Asriel's rebellion, however, there emerges a visible progressive movement by trans-universal beings operating as a unified mechanism at multiple and diverse geographical sites. Social synchronisation in the narrative is the catalyst for the empowerment of oppressed minorities with social unities fostered through cultural engagement and institutional reform. In this sense, Asriel's rebellion functions as a fantastical version of Hardt and Negri's notion of the 'multitude', whereby disenfranchised and disenchanted cultures converge to revolt against the established hegemonic power-structures of the Authority (*Multitude* xiv). The resulting trans-universal solidarity movement, traversing established boundaries, forms new configurations of community and resistance to combat gross cultural inequalities and liberate trans-species beings from imperialistic subjugation. Through the emergence of this movement, the environment is created for Lyra's republic of heaven to achieve real potential, creating an engaged trans-species community of horizontal, non-hierarchical collaboration that operates on multiple levels for the first time: '[n]ever before have humans and angels, and beings from all the worlds, made a common cause' (*TAS* 222). Joint commitment to this communal task initially fosters self-determination amongst trans-species beings, yet the republic soon suffers from conflicting ideals and diametrically-opposed belief systems. As Amit argues, although joint commitment can often fail to guarantee 'consensus' and is difficult to sustain, at the very least it 'shifts the emphasis away from sameness [...] as the basis for community and puts the onus more squarely on interdependence' ('Community' 8). The trans-species movement thus demonstrates a move

away from anthropocentric paradigms centred on the values of humanity, towards a more biocentric approach to confronting both ecological and social threats.

Asriel leads his cosmopolitan army to a new universe which is '[e]mpty of conscious life', leading King Ogunwe, a member of Asriel's war council, to claim '[w]e are not colonialists [...] We haven't come to conquer, but to build' (*TAS* 222). Laurie Frost argues that within Asriel's new universe: '[a]ll are immigrants; it is no conscious being's world of origin' (133). Members of the rebellion must populate this terra nullius in order to construct their utopian republic. Dave Hodgson, focusing on the sustained emphasis towards sustainability in the trilogy, recognises the importance of cosmopolitan empathy and ecological accountability to the establishment of such territory, asserting that: 'altruistic behaviour and sustainable resource use would clearly lengthen the life span of new colonies' (160). In this untainted universe, Asriel constructs a fortress that has 'wide roads coming from every direction' and 'coming to this fortress are warriors of every kind, from every world. Men and women, yes, and fighting spirits too, and armed creatures such as I had never seen' (*TSK* 282). Such cosmological participation stresses the shared fate of all trans-universal beings in the narrative, positioning the republic as an alliance for repressed minorities. Through Asriel's project of enacting universal distributive justice regarding trans-species equality and rights, Pullman forges a clear link between the moral ideals of cosmopolitanism and democratic processes of institutional rule. Before the rebellion, the closed nature of the bordered universe lacked any institutional structures which could address the imbalance of universal inequality and proceduralise the means by which interdependence, cooperation or solidarity could be achieved between heterogeneous beings. By interrogating the means by which institutional structures can be established through a dynamic interplay between universal and local levels of participation,

His Dark Materials envisions a cosmopolitan future built upon ethical solidarity and progressive interconnectivity.

Baruch, a rebel angel, reveals to Asriel that the Authority believes 'conscious beings of every kind have become dangerously independent'; the regent of heaven, Metatron, therefore begins to 'intervene much more actively in human affairs' and convert the residence of the Authority, the Clouded Mountain, 'into an engine of war' (*TAS* 63). The strength and influence of the forces of the Authority consequently increase unreservedly, with the fortress providing the capability to enforce oppression in innumerable universes from one single militarised site. Metatron's first action involves invading the world of Asriel's republic, attempting to colonise one of the last self-governing environments in the cosmos. Despite Asriel's proposed republic containing the formal ideology of a cosmopolitan democracy (with the substitution of violence for a peace that attempts to implement trans-universal rights to all citizens), open anarchic rebellion and war become the means of achieving emancipation. Asriel justifies instigating warfare, protesting that appeasement would be the greater evil. According to van Hooft, from 'the cosmopolitan perspective the principles of *jus ad bellum* focus on defending the rights of citizens', and war becomes a reasonable measure in the 'defence of human rights', integral to establishing forms of universal justice (132). King Ogunwe perceives the rebellion to hold an altruistic purpose, rather than merely functioning as an anarchic uprising: 'I am a king, but it's my proudest task to join Lord Asriel [...] This world is different. We intend to be free citizens of the republic of heaven' (*TAS* 222). Ogunwe seemingly aspires towards a more principled and ethical form of governance, involving a dynamic interaction of cultures and true representation of peoples, unaware of Asriel's egocentrism. Nevertheless, his desire for a cosmos 'where there are no kingdoms at all' is not a feasible alternative (*TAS* 222). The narrative suggests that independent states remain essential for ensuring the

maintenance of heterogeneous political, economic, and socio-cultural practices. The deficit of Dust alone requires the co-ordination of cross-border interaction to answer the threat of ecological sustainability – an issue that is cosmological in scope and necessitates the construction of cosmopolitan environmental citizenship.

Nonetheless, Asriel's desire for an overriding cosmological republic, offering universal rights for trans-universal beings regardless of their belonging to a particular territory, neglects the rights of heterogeneous beings and culturally specific issues in the process. Although, as Daniele Archibugi argues, cosmopolitical democracy can be distinguished from other ethico-political projects through this 'attempt to create institutions which enable the voice of individuals to be heard in global affairs, irrespective of their resonance at home', it still necessitates the establishment of a multi-layered system of governance to ensure a hegemonic institution is not the solitary site of power (8). Asriel's project initially has the potential to create new trans-universal institutions to cooperate and amalgamate with existing ones. By incorporating a system of diffused governance, political transparency and ethical accountability, the republic should function as a catalyst for trans-species autonomy. Asriel, however, fails to appreciate that his cosmopolitan republic must be decentralised in power and multilateral in action in order to succeed, preventing an elite minority monopolising control. After all, cosmopolitan democracy proposes that if transformative alterations are made at the global level, progressive and active change will subsequently occur at the most parochial levels, resulting in the emergence of the visible practice of cosmopolitan values. In a bid to amass an army large enough to challenge the forces of the Authority and establish a republic, Asriel enlists the support of millions of heterogeneous communities. The move marks an even greater socio-cultural and ethno-political shift in the narrative from the local to the trans-universal. The republic's composition, being inherently cosmopolitan in its diversity and open to radical

forms of otherness, encapsulates Wayne Hudson's assertion that citizenship within a proposed cosmopolitan republic should reject 'uniformitarian approaches to citizenship which model citizenship as *unified*, *single* and *homogeneous*' and advocate '*multilevel*, *heterogeneous* and *differential* citizenship instead' (92). Asriel's high-command war-council is also diversely trans-universal in structure, consisting of the black commander King Ogunwe, the angel Xaphania and the Gallivespian Lord Roke – their heterogeneity serves as a microcosmic analogy for his forces as a whole. The war council not only establishes a universal multi-level dialogue between disparate communities but adopts a more deliberative mode of participatory decision-making intrinsic to cosmopolitan democracy.

If, as Hayden argues, the 'true progress of political thought lies in the cultivation of imaginative powers', Asriel's project, by connecting the normative sensibilities of cosmopolitanism to trans-universal institution building, is undeniably utopian (153). And yet, it remains debatable whether his plan for a republic is inherently cosmopolitan. Asriel's megalomaniacal desire to redesign the cosmos, coupled with his evident hatred for certain cultures, muddies the waters of his cosmopolitan project. It is difficult to conclude the extent to which he can be positioned as a positive ethical force in the narrative, taking into consideration that he gains entry to other universes through the murder of an innocent child and the destabilisation of an ecological balance. In striving to forge a cosmopolitan republic, Asriel risks not only his own environment, but the interdependent fate of the cosmos as a whole. More importantly, he displays a distinct lack of true cross-cultural engagement, merely manipulating others for his own designs. It is therefore questionable whether the ends justify the means and if he is truly working for the greater good. Asriel's individualistic, self-serving attitude reflects Simon Gikandi's reasoning that 'routes and journeys across boundaries and encounters with others do not necessarily lead to a

cosmopolitan attitude' (24). Unlike Lyra, Asriel's mobility often merely engenders the superficial connections and cultural aestheticisation associated with cosmopolitan paradigms, validating criticisms that cosmopolitanism remains the purview of Western elites. Asriel's aim is to create a *political* republic. The notion of a republic of heaven may remain central to Ogunwe's argument but is not immediately evident in Asriel's blueprints. By simply desiring the removal of the Authority and the imposition of theocratic rule, Asriel is unlikely to have ever brought into being the culturally diverse utopia desired by Ogunwe and other factions of his rebellion.

Asriel, however, is not advocating the absence of *any* government – how could a cosmopolitan republic designate a world devoid of kingdoms entirely? Rather, the republic constructed by Asriel reformulates the ideals of cosmopolitan democracy to fit the fantastical geography of Pullman's narrative, providing the opportunity for individuals to enter into a progressive and mutually beneficial interaction with other trans-universal beings, but ultimately descending into monarchical despotism. That being said, Asriel's role in *His Dark Materials* as a proponent for a more cosmopolitan form of governance should not be dismissed; he is almost single-handedly responsible for establishing a trans-universal community in the narrative, building a cosmopolis of cooperation and solidarity between biologically diverse and culturally heterogeneous beings. As Douzinas notes, the metaphysical notion of a cosmopolis necessitates a 'coming together of multiple and singular worlds, each exposed to each other in the sharing of the cosmos', and forming an ontological interpenetration of otherness (*Human Rights* 294). Following this line, Asriel's movement, regardless of his political ambitions or militarisation of territory, opens the eyes of trans-species beings to the interrelated environmental nature of the cosmos and the cosmopolitan diversity inherent not just within universes, but across universes. The installation of cosmopolitan values through his political actions, concerning cultural

openness and equality, benefits the lives of innumerable trans-species communities and acts as a mechanism for socio-cultural and ethno-political change from a tyrannical climate of theocratic oppression to an environment of democratic progress. The movement is not simply anarchistic rebellion for the sake of rebellion, but signifies how the tenets of cosmopolitanism are central to cultural emancipation and liberatory projects. Because Asriel operates 'at the centre of so many circles of activity, and he directs them all', he emerges as the commanding figurehead of trans-universal rebellion (*TSK* 282). Due to this omnipotent position, his cosmopolitan republic often amounts to little more than incipient tyranny, failing to exhibit the symmetry, congruence and accountability required for a fair representation of universal governance. Unilateral decisions lead to an imperialistic abuse of power, thus allowing his circle of elites to decide the fates of those living under vastly different socio-cultural circumstances and weakening the validity of the rebellion's principles. Houghton concurs in definitely rejecting the notion that Asriel's republic could ever have come to epitomise the harmonious community of the mulefa on a macro-level: 'Asriel is warlike and arrogant, so his republic would be the same. He wanted to pull down the Authority's fortress, but he had already built a fortress tower of his own from which he sought to govern. It could only replace one tyranny with another' (126). He emerges as a maniacal architect intent on erecting a republic of his vision and morals, with his egotism and ravenous self-interest antithetical to the cosmopolitan project he proposes. This anti-cosmopolitan stance becomes more evident when considered against Mary Malone's ethical approach of tolerance and empathy towards others, which comes to influence both Will and Lyra's cosmopolitan worldviews.

The narrative suggests that the hegemonic political republics of Asriel's design, spear-headed by a dominant figure, are not a practicable institutional option for every universe (no matter how heterogeneous the republic's composition). Moreover, *His Dark*

Materials fails to address the exact political, ideological and cultural specifications required for the adequate construction of a republic. The narrative is exceptionally vague in expressing the system that will emerge following the Authority's demise, with no discernible execution of an institutionalised form of cosmopolitanism to replace authoritarian control. Asriel provides no blueprint for his political project or plans for cosmopolitical democratic laws to be implemented. Claire Squires concurs, arguing that the solution to how Asriel's republic 'would operate in pragmatic political terms is unclear', leaving a conspicuous 'space in which the ideology underpinning the trilogy is left open' (*Master* 60, 61). His proposed cosmopolitical republic, if not exactly governance without government, is governance without direction – which could only lead to swift dissolution and manipulation. The rebellion merely indicates a desire for change without any notion of the socio-cultural or ethno-political particularities involved for such an alternative to exist. Moreover, due to his project's focus on a lofty and abstract universalism, Asriel neglects local and familial concerns, which Squires considers to be 'secondary to his great utopian mission' (*Reader's Guide* 35). When confronted with his role in Lyra's mysterious parentage after years of absence from her life, he simply responds: '[y]es. So what?' (*NL* 367). Asriel can thus be perceived as the careerist version of Will's father, Grumman. Rather than supporting Asriel's fantastical rebellion, Grumman identifies the pragmatism required for the realistic emergence of a republic of heaven, which comes to influence Lyra's belief system. The exposure of the weaknesses in Asriel's cosmopolitical project diverts attention to the separate republics of heaven that Lyra and Will aim to establish through an actually existing practice of cosmopolitan empathy and cultural openness. The pair's cultural philosophy in the final instalment of the trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*, adheres to the logic of localised engagement in formulating cosmopolitan futures: '[w]e can travel, if there are openings into other worlds, but we can only live in

our own. Lord Asriel's great enterprise will fail in the end for the same reason: we have to

build the republic of heaven where we are, because for us there is no elsewhere' (*TAS* 382).

The Republic of Heaven

'Consonance is a great deal uglier than dissonance because consonance is the sound of

bloodless tyranny' (Beauman 172).

The final stages of *The Amber Spyglass* support this theoretical concept of a republic of

heaven, orchestrated and realised by Lyra and Will's potential futures (notably, Pullman

originally intended for this final volume in the trilogy to be called 'The Republic of

Heaven') (Boulton n.pag.). By granting Lyra 'the power to make a fateful choice, on which

the future of all the worlds depended', Pullman places the future of the cosmos in the

hands of children – those who will play a part in reshaping and redesigning Asriel's

republic on their own terms without making a subsequent power-play for control (*TAS* 69).

Lyra's desire for a cosmopolitan community, founded on the ethical ideals of empathy and

ecological sustainability, and promoting cultural solidarity and harmony, is a different

entity to Asriel's egocentric political operation. Further, in comparison to the Authority's

promises of an eternal heaven, which is essentially a utopian imaginary incapable of

fulfilment, Lyra's proposed community is more pragmatic due to its proposed realisation

of a viable future – a future that will only emerge through locally situated communities

demonstrating a practical form of ethical accountability. Although the conception of this

republic of heaven is not introduced until the final volume of the trilogy, its construction

has its roots in the ethical dispositions and cosmopolitan empathy practised by specific

characters throughout the narrative, preparing the way for this embodiment of

cosmopolitisation institutionally.

Unlike Asriel's trans-universal rebellion, a republic of heaven concerns a code of ethics rather than a political mission, requiring a form of communitarian symbiosis constituted by the embeddedness of all conscious beings in a socio-ecological web of community, cultural interaction and progress. Pullman emphasises social and ecological interdependence to be central to any republic's emergence: it is 'a sense that we're connected to the universe. This connectedness is where meaning lies'; this 'meaning' emerges from 'the moral and social relations that the republic of heaven must embody' ('Republic' n.pag.). The decline in theocratic rule and teleological belief following the defeat of the Authority opens the way for the centralisation of human agency and the development of cosmopolitan virtues with regards to actualising stability in trans-universal communities and institutions. The trilogy's hopeful denouement embraces Pullman's own humanistic belief in the significance of ethical practices: 'I don't think I will continue to live after I'm dead, so to achieve these things I must try to bring them about on Earth, in a republic in which we are all free and equal – and responsible – citizens' ('Heat' n.pag.). Lyra and Will realise the necessity for a viable and progressive future during their time in the universe of the mulefa (the universe in which the deficit of Dust is finally resolved). Will envisions the potential benefits of trans-universal citizenship, positing that he and Lyra could 'have children who would be secret citizens of two worlds; and they could bring all the learning of one world into the other, they could do all kinds of good' (*TAS* 521). However, the angel Xaphania explains that the windows to other universes must be reclosed by the subtle knife to reverse the deficit of Dust and establish a sustainable environment. Through this act of cosmological reconstruction, 'the worlds would all be restored to their proper relations with one another, and Lyra's Oxford and Will's would lie over each other again [...] although they would never truly touch' (*TAS* 532-33). The apotheosis of the narrative concerns Will's devastating realisation as to the true meaning of

his father's theoretical republic, which puts an end to trans-universal association: 'I thought he just meant Lord Asriel and his new world, but he meant us, he meant you and me. We have to live in our own worlds' (*TAS* 516). The separation of universes, and thus of Will and Lyra, is a prerequisite for the survival of the cosmos. This narratorial return from the universal to local level reflects Pullman's emphasis on the trilogy's inherent pragmatism. The final stages of the trilogy thus subscribe to a more realistic future for humanity. Although the narrative seemingly contradicts itself in initially promoting a universal society founded on trans-species connectivity, while paradoxically advocating the benefits of separate, geographically-isolated worlds, Pullman is contending that 'from now on we have to take charge of our fate […] we make a difference': 'if the republic of Heaven exists at all, it exists nowhere but on this earth, in the physical universe we know, not in some gaseous realm far away' ('Republic' n.pag.).

Only one window to another world is permitted to remain open, providing a passage from the land of the dead to the mulefa's world. The narrative suggests that the very practice of cosmopolitan ideals by trans-species beings, teaching others to 'understand about themselves and each other and the way everything works', renews enough Dust 'to replace what is lost through one window. So there could be one left open' (*TAS* 520). Will notes that the consolation of this solitary window will ensure that he and Lyra will eventually be joined in ecological symbiosis: '[e]very atom of me and every atom of you' will 'live in birds and flowers and dragonflies [...] And when they use our atoms to make new lives, they won't be able to take *one*, they'll have to take two, one of you and one of me, we'll be joined so tight' (*TAS* 526). Millicent Lenz emphasises that this cosmopolitan love and compassion, not just between Lyra and Will, but between the couple and their natural environment, is central to the narrative: the 'pure constellations' that are 'looking down [...] in their respective worlds, will connect them always, however far apart' ('Philip

Pullman' 157). For Lenz, then, *His Dark Materials* provides the morals 'to define our place in the universe' stretching 'from the infinite spaces of the macrocosm to the individual microcosms of two forever-bonded hearts' (123, 165). The incorruptible relationship between Will and Lyra proves to be crucial to the delicate balance of the cosmos, and engenders a mingling of the masculine and feminine into an egalitarian form of non-gendered symbiosis.

The Authority's persecution of trans-species beings, even after death, renders the maintenance of a single open-border an unavoidable necessity. The world of the dead is revealed to be little more than an eternal prison camp populated by every conscious being that has ever existed, perpetuating the oppression suffered during life. Passage through this window allows the atoms of the dead to disintegrate and mingle into the fabric of the cosmos in a cosmopolitan fusion. In death, trans-species beings form a unified chorus of interrelated consciousness: 'the atoms that were them, they've gone into the air and [...] the earth and all the living things. They'll never vanish. They're just part of everything [...] part of everything alive again' (*TAS* 335). The mulefa's universe is chosen for this bodily-dispersal due to its harmonious nature, coming closest to exemplifying a cosmopolitan aesthetic; when the dead see this world their faces become 'transformed with joy […] [holding] out their arms as if they were embracing the whole universe', like 'refugees returning to their homeland' (*TAS* 455, 456). Ruta Skadi acknowledges this interrelation between trans-species consciousness and planetary regeneration (corresponding to the notion of metaphysical rebirth in *Cloud Atlas*), rejoicing:

in her blood and flesh, in the rough pine bark she felt next to her skin, in the beat

of her heart and the life of all her senses [...] and in the earth below her and the

lives of every creature, plant and animal both; and she delighted in being of the

same substance as them, and in knowing that when she died her flesh would
nourish other lives as they had nourished her. (*TSK* 148)

By assimilation with natural surroundings, Pullman's cosmos exhibits an ecological cosmopolitanism formed by a self-regulating system of harmonious co-existence.

Trans-species beings are only permitted to leave the world of the dead by telling the otherworldly harpies stories of their life. Through these individual and multiperspectival narratives, individuals must demonstrate the personal and cultural connections they have formed. As Shohet argues, 'the universe depends on these individual narratives – upon the consciousness released back into the world when narrative earns a ghost the right to ascend from the underworld – to avoid a lethal deficit in the Dust that animates the cosmos' (28). The significance of these narratives also reflects Pullman's own belief that stories 'teach the world we create. They teach the morality we live by. They teach it much more effectively than moral precepts or instructions' ('Carnegie' n.pag.). The relevance of heterogeneous relationality is supported by the socio-cultural practices of the mulefa whose history is remembered and spoken orally, existing in no other form, forging a reliance on collective memory. Intersubjectivity is therefore integral to the mulefa's cosmopolitan community, involving cooperation and mutual support at the individual level, and with communal memory acting as a means by which the mulefa can interpret their lives in the cosmos. The otherworldly movement of *His Dark Materials* seemingly advocates cosmopolitanism's commitment to universal obligations, overriding localised ties and solidarities. However, the reclosing of windows between universes problematises the conflicting loyalties between perceiving oneself as either a 'citizen of the cosmos' or a subject from a specific locality. This re-emergence of provincial priorities (constituting a circular movement from the local to the trans-universal to the local) suggests a retention of heterogeneity in the face of dominant homogeneity, positioning local and universal

concerns as ethically interdependent. The narrative therefore challenges the premise of classical Stoic and Nussbaumian cosmopolitan paradigms that suggest universal forms of allegiance and belonging take precedence over localised attachments and territoriality. Rather, the narrative aligns with Jonathan Friedman's positioning of cosmopolitanism as a liminal state: 'participating in many worlds, without becoming part of them' (204). Following the reunification of boundaries between universes, other territories become inaccessible, limiting cultural connectivity or political engagement. As a result, it becomes even more crucial for cosmopolitan communities to be built in independent universes. Lyra and Will's ethical agency suggests that local territorial concerns and socio-cultural ties fail to disappear in the face of universality, and indicates the persistence of 'intricate webs of connectedness' between all beings (*TAS* 251). The reformed boundaries strengthen the possibility for the establishment of independent republics, and emphasise that the practice of cosmopolitanism must be encouraged and implemented at the micro-level, regardless of communication or interdependence with other universes. In this way, the narrative advocates an engagement with the realities and responsibilities of the contemporary world, rather than retreating into a fantasy world beyond our reach.

Lisa Hopkins argues that Pullman's revelation of multiple universes occurs too early in the narrative for this to be the trilogy's 'ultimate narrative telos [...] its real energies are focused more and more on personal relationships' and the idea of local community (55). As the mulefa's universe suggests, ensuring a cosmopolitan aesthetic is instilled in the construction of localised communities facilitates the adoption of more communal subjectivities and serves as the driving force to achieving wider cultural connectivity. The practice of community-building is therefore equated with world-building, and suggested to be best implemented as a bottom-up collective practice, rather than through a top-down imposition of hegemonic or merely institutional enforcement. The

restoration of independent universes also forces the recognition that the contemporary world is a finite space, which must make appropriate use of its limited resources for a viable future to be realised. Once back in her own universe, Lyra comprehends the significance of localised ethical engagement in building a cosmopolitan future: 'we've got to [...] work hard, all of us, in all our different worlds' in order to build the 'republic of heaven' (*TAS* 548). In doing so, Pullman highlights that Lyra 'leaves fantasy behind, and becomes a realist. (As the whole story does, you might say)' ('Writing Fantasy' n.pag.). Cultural engagement and ethical accountability are thereby positioned as catalysts for citizens of her world to progress to an idealised, yet viable, future. Nevertheless, Asriel's role in establishing a cosmopolitan movement is a prerequisite for Lyra's future to be realised. At the very least, Asriel can be said to succeed partially in his task of dismantling the Authority's dictatorial power structure. Upon returning to Oxford, Lyra learns that the influence of the Magisterium's power structures had begun to wane. If the rebellion fails to create the conditions for lasting peace, it does at the very least effect an end to existing hegemonic power through the rejection of a theocratic system. However, the Magisterium only represents the Authority's forces within Asriel and Lyra's world. Lyra's optimistic claim that 'the kingdom was over, the kingdom of heaven, it was all finished' is ultimately naive, as the innumerable arms of theocratic rule in other universes continue to see their power go unchecked (*TAS* 548). The newly separated universes are free to relapse into the pre-existing cycle of violence, predacity and hierarchy, leading to the formation of a reformulated and unchallengeable universal tyranny. As Serefina warns Mary, 'the forces of the kingdom have met a setback', but will 'regroup under a new commander and come back strongly, and we must be ready to resist' (*TAS* 507).

In asserting that *His Dark Materials* is 'not a fantasy. It's a work of stark realism', Pullman categorically dismisses J.R.R. Tolkien's notion that fantasy writing should

function as a form of escapism from contemporary life ('Talking to Philip Pullman' 131).

As Lenz notes, Pullman is suggesting that 'fantasies of escape to an alternate world are

foreclosed: we must live in this one and make it as much like "heaven" as humanly

possible' ('Introduction' 9). The development of a fantastical cosmopolitanism through

trans-universal engagement positions a republic of heaven as a clear analogy for

cosmopolitan community-building in the contemporary world. The closing passages of the

novel, in which Lyra is seen in the Botanical Gardens, indicate that if she had neglected her

own locality and community in favour of universality, dividing her time between several

worlds, then she 'wouldn't have been able to build it. No one could, if they put themselves

first' (*TAS* 548). The narrative consequently diverts from Asriel's proposed cosmopolitical

democracy and supports J. Thompson's argument that cosmopolitans 'cannot be content

with putting forward a moral position or with constructing blueprints for a cosmopolitan

society. They must turn their attention to the creation of community' (193). Lyra and

Will's cultural project, envisioning a cosmopolitan community built on ethical values,

resists the abstract escapism of fantasy fiction and fixates on a transformative future of

realisable and manageable cultural engagement.

The Fantasy of the Borderless World

'Those who seek to construct "one world" will continually face the reality of social

difference, inequality and multiple cultural yardsticks by which institutions are judged […]

A single highly integrated world in any of these senses is a sociological impossibility'

(Holton 211).

As Robbins identifies, '[d]ifficult as it may be to make a plural for "cosmos," it is now

assumed more and more that worlds, like nations, come in different sizes and styles. Like

nations, worlds too are "imagined"' ('Introduction' 2). Accordingly, an analysis of cultural

engagement in *His Dark Materials* requires a reconstruction of the cosmopolitan

framework conventionally explored at the transnational or merely national level. The

cosmopolitan project in the narrative depends upon acts of empathy and openness to

confront cultural dissolution and ecological degradation, leading to the empowerment of

marginalised communities within and across universes. The trilogy constructs an

imaginative vision of ecological interdependencies and planetary futures in which ethical

agency informs cultural responsibilities. Trans-universal interaction between the

heterogeneous communities demonstrates a form of social symbiosis at a macrocosmic

scale, as the construction of community itself emerges as a catalysing force for trans-

species cooperation. The trilogy imagines 'a nomad citizenship', which entails 'voluntarily

belonging to self-organizing groups of various kinds and at different scales. The point of

the concept is to break the state's monopoly on citizenship, and re-distribute social

belonging among other groups and other forms of group organization' (Holland 153).

Crucially, however, such nomadism in the narrative is tempered by an energised and

engaged situatedness that intimates the importance of territorial belonging. The social

mutualism and symbiotic relationships in the mulefa's universe, for example, involving an

all-encompassing unification of organisms in a cosmopolitan totality, can only truly

function as a closed system unaffected by external influence.

Following the Authority's demise in *The Amber Spyglass*, the oppressed are

liberated, border-crossing windows are resealed and innumerable universes are aligned

once more, free to create their own futures and exist in their own locality. According to

Nicolette Jones, the conclusion of this volume complicates the philosophical ideals of *His*

Dark Materials at large: '[t]he book's message is that we have only one life and it is on

earth […] But this sits awkwardly with a creation that has made us believe in several

parallel universes […] The theme of the book suddenly seems at odds with the method' (n.pag.). However, the trilogy is not advocating diametrically opposed outlooks on global engagement, but simply acknowledging the finite and realistic nature of spatial community, in the face of an abstract planetarity. The envisioning of multiple universes fails to equate to a rejection or flight from the contemporary world, as is so often the case in fantasy fiction, but rather an active attempt at positive transfiguration of existing social structures and belief-systems. In order for his work to respond to millennial life, Pullman had to 'find a way of making fantasy serve the purposes of realism' by employing diverse 'invented creatures' to say something 'true and important about us, about being human' ('Writing Fantasy' n.pag.). Pullman's categorisation as exclusively a 'fantasy' or 'children's' author should not detract from the real-world applicability of his trilogy. As Hunt argues, fantasy 'cannot be "free-floating" […] It must be understandable in terms of its relationship to, or deviance from, our known world'; on this basis, the multiple worlds of *His Dark Materials* are 'always in tension with the world [Lyra] knows, and the world we know', preserving Pullman's exploration of realisable futures through fantasy (7, 9). Understanding the cosmopolitan ideology underpinning the narrative (concerning cultural relations between heterogeneous communities), weakens Pullman's fantasy moorings and places him comfortably in the company of the other authors within this study. Moreover, the closing of openings between worlds does not merely restore individual universes to their prior states. Individuals now possess a fresh awareness that individual actions impinge on shared ecological fates trans-universally, uniting seemingly isolated communities in an ideological and mutually beneficial environmental citizenship. The transformative interconnectivity of other worlds ensures the characters remain 'citizens of the cosmos'.

As David Miller argues, universal and idealistic forms of cosmopolitanism run contrary to 'the sheer diversity of human cultures, and to the wish of people everywhere to belong to communities that are able to determine their own future paths' (378). The emphasis on local engagement in *His Dark Materials* therefore challenges the assumption of classical cosmopolitan frameworks that promote a shared universal community as the primary social aim for humanity without questioning the quality or benefits of such a community. The strengthening of local institutions at the micro-level is preferred over a hypothetical cosmological universality of structures and communities. The narrative avoids advocating the homogeneity of all cosmological matter and all trans-species beings, instead suggesting the heterogeneity of all species in spite of their homogenous origins. Rather than the envelopment of these incongruous and dissonant species in a rather weak and all-encompassing theory of universality, each species functions in the narrative as an individual variation on the theme of cultural otherness. The preservation of independent universes is a celebration of the maintenance of heterogeneity in the face of dominant homogeneity – dissonance becomes the means by which to address more pragmatic forms of cultural harmony. Trans-universal communities are undeniably interconnected, but not necessarily dependent on a mutually perspicuous arrangement of operability. With regards to the cultural connectivities and narrative spatialities of *His Dark Materials*, the whole is not greater than the sum of its parts.

In 'What is a World?: On World Literature as World-Making Activity', Cheah identifies the links between fiction and the envisioning of viable cosmopolitan futures: 'since one cannot *see* the universe [...] the cosmopolitan optic is not one of perceptual experience but of the imagination' (26). By envisioning a world, rather than reflecting reality, Pullman interrogates how humanity would relate to and co-exist with heterogeneous others, how our existence interrelates with flora and fauna, and how we may

create better worlds for the future through the implementation of cosmopolitan virtues and dispositions. Pullman is effectively making the fantastical, human. As a result, *His Dark Materials* inadvertently constructs a literary model for fantastical cosmopolitanism, built upon existing human aspirations and desires, but extended to trans-species living in order to envision engagement with new species. The aspirational moral sentiments of the narrative suggest the urgency required in responding to the contemporary crises of ecological vulnerability and cross-cultural tension. Pullman's trilogy therefore fulfils Schoene's criteria for the contemporary cosmopolitan novel by conceiving a 'real cosmopolitics as a communal tackling of global threats beyond the requirement for perfect, enduring unanimity' (*Novel* 186). Although contemporary ecological, institutional and political issues are increasingly global in scope, the narrative indicates that the means by which we address such concerns should first and foremost be locally situated. *His Dark Materials* possesses a cosmopolitical vision which emphasises the importance of cosmopolitan dispositions in actualising forms of cultural equality. The narrative consequently examines institutional structures that best support the ethical implementation of cosmopolitan ideals. The practice of cosmopolitanism from below, involving self-determination, active ethical agency and communal cooperation, is suggested to ensure their emergence more than the institutional reforms of cosmopolitan from above. The narrative is essentially a negotiation between competing forms of cosmopolitanism – from the cosmopolitan ideals of empathy and altruism at the individual level, to the desired institutionalisation and articulation of cosmopolitical democracy at the macro-level. Despite Squires's claim that the conclusion and philosophy of the narrative is 'too vague to be of any practical use', the trans-universal environment is arguably positioned as an idealised vision in order to emphasise the relevance of *localised* cosmopolitan engagement (*Master* 185). *His Dark Materials*, then, emerges as a surprisingly cosmopolitan text,

combining the lived experience of locally relational spaces with a projection of a unified cosmos. In writing 'a book about what it means to be human', Pullman also reveals the openness required in living with trans-species difference and radical forms of otherness ('Achuka' n.pag.).

<u>Conclusion</u>

'The study of literature in the last two decades has increasingly invoked "cosmopolitanism" as a label for literature's [...] claim to continued relevance in a globalized world' (Vermeulen, *Contemporary* 83).

'In the globalized world in which we live, events in one corner of the planet can have an immense effect upon the fortunes of others far away and not at all involved in those events [...] we need a globalization of responsibility as well. Above all, that is the challenge of the next century' (Mandela 34-35).

This study on contemporary British and American fiction has identified several authors who provide unique perspectives on cosmopolitanism. Although current forms of cosmopolitanism draw their inspiration from classical and philosophical traditions, concerning the establishment of a moral community and the consideration of hospitality and intercultural dialogue, the post-millennial environment requires a more realistic framework of cosmopolitanism to address mounting human rights issues, global security threats, the radical inequalities of transnational mobility, the spread of globalisation, and the socio-political effects of digital communicative technologies. In moving away from utopian models, Beck identifies that contemporary cosmopolitanism has 'left the realm of philosophical castles in the air and has entered reality' (*Vision* 2). In spite of the term's universal connotations, this study focuses on British and American fiction, revealing that the concept predominantly remains a Western elite paradigm. As English remains the common medium of global exchange, Schoene perceives the language to be 'perfectly suited for cosmopolitan exchange' (*Novel* 86). However, Mousoutzanis argues that writing in English (or any one unitary language) problematises literary fictions which 'seek to respond to the encounter with difference and otherness during the period of globalisation

and to suggest ways for a more cosmopolitan identification with the distant other' (n.pag.).

Following this reasoning, these fictions are ideologically positioned from a Western

perspective and are limited in the truly global conversations they can inspire. The criticism

therefore remains that the cosmopolitan condition is restricted to a select number of first-

world countries able to entertain such a progressive ideal. The assessment that diverse

cosmopolitanisms are '[n]o longer conceivable as the prerogative of the West', now

manifesting 'themselves in any instance of sustained intercultural contact and exchange', is

somewhat premature (Anderson, 'Universalism' 273). In order to address these concerns,

this study has attempted to expand the framework of cosmopolitanism to acknowledge

non-elite forms of cosmopolitan engagement that pay attention to the cultural inequalities

of the globalised world. The dissatisfaction of non-elite global citizens can naturally result

in incommensurable discord, but also convergence and conversation across established

boundaries of race, class and culture. The fictions of Mitchell, Kunzru and Pullman point

towards various instances of cross-cultural and non-elite agencies – agencies which herald

the progressive emergence of a cosmopolitanism from below in resistance to existing

cultural inequalities.[60] Cosmopolitanism is not synonymous with globalisation, then,

because cosmopolitan movements from below often operate against the homogeneity of

global networks and processes.

Although it is not yet possible to speak retrospectively of the twenty-first century

novel in the same way as earlier periods of writing, we can identify current trends in the

development of the form that encapsulate a specific sensibility or cultural practice

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[60] In an interview with Kunzru in 2014, he acknowledged that the cultural
interdependencies of his fiction reflect the 'networked nature of contemporary life'
('Transmission' n.pag.). However, he emphasised that: 'what I do with interconnectedness
is not quite what David Mitchell does with it'; while Mitchell's fiction is rather 'neat', his
own fiction is rather 'messier and less resolved' (n.pag.)

associated with the era. This study has not attempted to develop a new paradigm through which to perceive all contemporary literature or to predict the future of the novel, merely to identify a valid and profound trend that requires the readaptation and reorientation of critical vocabulary. If there has indeed been an 'ethical turn' in the fiction of the twenty-first century, as Boxall theorises, then it is a fiction reflective of the emergent cosmopolitan condition, opening up a space for the possibility of reciprocity and empathetic identification with otherness (141). While it is tempting to claim that the era of cosmopolitanisation is upon us (and is being subsequently reflected in literary studies), contemporary fiction is too pluralistic and fragmentary to be contained within any single paradigm. Ethical dispositions and processes of cosmopolitanisation are intrinsic to the chosen novels, but simply as consequences of, or responses to, processes of global interconnectedness. The multidimensionality of cosmopolitanism, despite exhibiting its genuine potential as a cultural theory for the contemporary era, also reveals the concept's limits, deepening the complications and contradictions between uses of the term. The chapters have not suggested that any of the fictions demonstrate the emergence of a new genre in contemporary literary studies – the reconfiguration of themes and forms evident in earlier genres and periods of literature prevents such a proposition. And yet, the presence of cosmopolitanism within contemporary fiction is not merely the manifestation of contemporary postcolonial theory, nor the natural progeny of postmodernist thought, but a reflection of the unprecedented global terrain of complex planetarity. For example, the ethical optimism of Mitchell's fiction rejects the sense of an ending that late-twentieth century fiction adheres to, instead acknowledging the beginning of new cultural phenomena and their role in establishing ethical possibilities for cultural engagement. A sustained attempt has been made to decouple cosmopolitanism from postcolonial paradigms, often responsible for cosmopolitanism erroneously becoming a synonym for a

vague multiculturalism. Rather, the various forms of cosmopolitanism explored imply a twenty-first century model of transnational difference and relationality that challenges enduring postcolonial centre-periphery dichotomies (which prove insufficient in reflecting the socio-cultural and ethno-political transformations of the globalised world).

Boxall suggests that twenty-first century fiction at large is continuing a late-twentieth century trend of conjuring 'a kind of cosmopolitan collective from the experience of cultural and historical difference' (174). While this is partly true, it would be a mistake to suggest that globally oppositional tendencies and dichotomies are eliminated entirely or that they should be interpreted as deficiencies in Boxall's proposed identification of a 'collective'. He goes on to claim that 'literary thinking about the future requires us to imagine a different kind of world, a different kind of globality, in which such difference is *overcome*' (188 – emphasis added). In doing so, he fails to acknowledge that difference, as much as commonality, can lead to a productive form of cross-cultural dialogue. The maintenance of dissonant dialogues and differing opinions is conducive to democratic forms of public debate and cultural processes in general. Contemporary cosmopolitanism requires a *modus vivendi*, allowing respective differences between communities to be, if not put aside, then effectively tolerated and appreciated. Projects which seek to ignore social difference in favour of an abstract universalism need to acknowledge the multiple expressions of belonging and identity emerging in the contemporary moment. These chosen novels therefore contribute to a larger movement in twenty-first century fiction towards 'a new understanding of the world as a web of heterogeneous but mutually interdependent histories and geographies' which possesses the potential to shape 'an emergent cultural ethics informed by the perspective of global awareness' (Childs and Green, *Ethics* 7, 40). Local spaces, cultures and experiences remain central to the interdependence of a theoretical global community. Any claim that post-millennial society

is now a global culture risks neglecting these locally relational communities, and suggests a harmonious planetary togetherness that disregards the complexity of cosmopolitical engagement.

Mitchell's fiction in particular indicates that we cannot even conceive of the globalised world as a singular entity against which individual communities can be compared and analysed, being too vast a concept to accommodate the myriad modes of life and collective values imagined in their pages. Theories of cosmopolitanism and globalisation are often contradictory and vague, with their imprecision, rather like that of postmodernism before them, resulting in academic vulnerability. Cosmopolitanism has consequently become a portmanteau for various planetary processes defining our contemporary present. Literary critics must acknowledge both the unavailability of terminology to encompass twenty-first century fiction, and the insufficiency of existing terms to describe its recent transformation. For instance, *Cloud Atlas* and *Ghostwritten* certainly contain themes prevalent in several other genres: the imagining of utopian and dystopian futures prevalent in science fiction; the concerns of transnationalism and deterritorialisation central to postcolonial literature; and the development of experimental narrative techniques intrinsic to postmodern literature. However, by responding specifically to post-millennial cultural interdependencies and global crises, the various fictions demonstrate an attempt to engage with the contemporary moment. Literary studies should not struggle to force new works of literature under old genres or assume the logical fallacy that *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, but rather accept that these genres have evolved. Therefore, the positive etymological construction and the progressive semantic associations of cosmopolitanism become all the more essential and beneficial in offering both a fresh perspective on twenty-first century fiction, and the development of resistance and optimism in the face of a fragile and uncertain future.

This study began by identifying the major developments in global society and questioning whether a resurgence in the study of cosmopolitanism was the result of such unprecedented changes, or merely the ethical means by which to address global crises or negotiate cultural engagement. But how exactly does cosmopolitanism help us face the challenges on the horizon for the twenty-first century? This study has demonstrated how the concept manifests itself in contemporary fiction and responds to cultural and socio-political vulnerabilities that define our globalised present. The recent resurgence in cosmopolitan theory across several disciplines is a direct reflection of growing social interconnection, interdependence and interaction, which requires a global cultural theory to address such conditions. Further, the deepening threats to civilisation brought about by technology, ecological deficiencies, or even transnational movement itself, requires that the ideals of cooperation and cohabitation remain at the forefront of post-millennial life. A subsequent engagement with (or resistance to) the global flows of contemporary life will undoubtedly shape the twenty-first century. This study has also suggested that active ethical agency across cultural divides offers a means of fostering interdependence to counteract the more destructive tendencies of globalisation. And yet, ethical subjectivity fails to explain the tenets of cosmopolitanism entirely. As Ashcroft argues, if the ethical 'defines the cosmopolitan, then it is located in an empty space, a *polis* that is not "of the *cosmos*", but of nowhere, a protean term amenable to almost any meaning', and therefore the ethical dimension fails to 'solve the problem of who can be allowed into the cosmopolitan club' (76). The challenge remains to distance cosmopolitanism from the charge of abstraction. After all, active ethical agency suggests a commitment to voluntary contribution which is somewhat unrealistic and hopeful in light of the maintenance of global inequalities. For this reason, even contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism are perceived to possess the naive rhetoric of privileged elites. While *Open City* gives us valid

reasons to be cautious concerning the feasibility of implementing or practising

cosmopolitan ideals, it also tentatively indicates that increased interconnectedness and

awareness of global inequalities may be conducive to the establishment of more

cosmopolitan forms of association over time. Ethical concerns are supplemented by a

concentrated authorial critique and critical commentary on both globalisation and its

discontents, and the limits (and often dangers) of cosmopolitan philosophy. As Beck

writes, there remains 'grounds for hope in the fact that […] coerced risk-

cosmopolitanization mutates into a no less coerced emerging global public *awareness*'

(*Vision* 35). Undoubtedly, then, cosmopolitan dispositions will be vital in addressing the

cultural asymmetries, racial divides, terrorist threats and environmental challenges marking

our contemporary moment.

While this study has suggested that no singular model of cosmopolitanism exists, it

has resisted the contention that the term exists as a floating cultural signifier – there must

remain some coherence and specificity in cosmopolitanism's ideals and values for the

concept to possess a pragmatic purpose. The various situated cosmopolitanisms evident in

the novels indicate that the term should not be attached to vague universalising or

progressive ideals with no tangible expression, but instead demonstrate how

cosmopolitanism at large can be routinely negotiated and rooted *in place* in order for its

ideals to possess any contemporary relevance or demonstrate any practical application.

This study has consequently followed Holton in locating specific forms of

cosmopolitanism in time and space, and suggested that in the contemporary moment there

are divergent and 'multiple cosmopolitanisms, rather than a singular unitary free-floating

cosmopolitanism that transcends context and relations with particulars' (193). Such

specificity also distances cosmopolitanism from the charge of holding no interdisciplinary

coherence. Similarly, this study concurs with Breckenridge et al. in affirming that

cosmopolitanism should 'be considered in the plural, as cosmopolitanisms', yet disputes

the suggestion that cosmopolitanism is definitively something 'yet to come, something

awaiting realization' (8, 1). The fictions examined have constructed their own models of

cosmopolitanism and demonstrate the practice of cosmopolitan ideals and values in a range

of tempo-spatial settings – cosmopolitanism is not an abstract, non-locatable concept, nor

is it the purview of futurity alone. Further, we should definitively reject their related

contention that one should not try to define cosmopolitanism, simply because specifying

the concept 'positively and definitively is an uncosmopolitan thing to do' (1). Claiming

that cosmopolitanism defies clear designation allows the concept to revel in vague

definition and avoid essential demarcation. It is only by specifying the values of

cosmopolitanism that the term might have a pragmatic function in addressing existing

social and political realities, and prevent the term wallowing in ambiguity and utopian

idealism. This study has therefore attempted to go some way towards unpacking the term

not only for literature, but the humanities in general.

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, contemporary cosmopolitanisms have

moved away from universalist frameworks which propose a unilateral normative optimism

and prioritise abstract connectivity over localised attachments. One challenge for any

future framework of cosmopolitanism is to 're-think the ways in which the current

economies of global communication may be used to facilitate our empathetic imagination,

by encouraging more plural and dialogic encounters' (Chouliaraki 92). Following this line,

cosmopolitanism is not a furthering of Western imperialism but rather a framework of

ethical ideals to face the global challenges of the emerging century. As Braidotti theorises,

the 'yearning for sustainable futures can construct a liveable present' as the cosmopolitan

ideal evolves into 'the launching pad for sustainable becoming or qualitative

transformations' ('Becoming' 24). The values of cosmopolitanism should not be devalued

simply due to their association with Western infringement. The chosen fictions merely attest to the ethical nature of mutual obligations that contribute to an interconnected globalised community. Admittedly, the evidence that global society is capable of responding to this necessity for cosmopolitan community-building is wanting, but this in itself fails to contradict the ethical value of the concept, or devalue its imaginative function in fiction. Beck emphasises that the cosmopolitan outlook is not an overtly optimistic and naive promotion of 'the first rays of universal brotherly love among peoples, or the dawn of the world republic, or a free-floating global outlook, or compulsory xenophilia', but revolves around 'a shared space of responsibility and agency' (*Vision* 13-14, 23). Simply proposing a universal community of interconnection and unity is the domain of utopian studies, not cosmopolitanism. Nor should cosmopolitanism propose a collective movement towards harmonious relations, for harmony is not the same as unity and cosmopolitanism is founded on an examination of cultural *difference*. According to Appiah, cosmopolitanism supposes that 'all cultures have enough overlap in their vocabulary of values to begin a conversation', but avoids the suggestion that 'we could all come to agreement if only we had the same vocabulary' (*Ethics* 57). This study has also supported the argument that global connectivity fails to engender a cosmopolitan community. Rather, these twenty-first century fictions acknowledge (to differing degrees) the deficiencies of existing global networks towards achieving planetary unity. An ethical, global community remains more an ideal than a reality, echoing Holton's contention that the promise of cosmopolitanism retains its power as a pragmatic 'source of social integration for a world in which economic forms of system integration have failed to deliver social integration' (94).

The Circle and *Transmission* demonstrate the lack of concentrated effort to close the digital divide characterising contemporary society, or the adequate reformulation of global systems required to address the inequalities sustaining digital networks. Digital

communication is suggested to do little in fostering more cosmopolitan orientations or acting as an emancipatory force for cultural levelling. Both Eggers and Kunzru point to the limits of the existing globalised world, in which an emergent global ethics has not yet come to fruition. Although not all the fictions are future-oriented, they possess progressive rather than static narratives with regards to ethical ideals and responses to globalising processes. Even the retrospective historical narratives of *Cloud Atlas* contain an undeniable forward movement. Despite the utopian leanings of cosmopolitanism, *Cloud Atlas* reveals that the concept is uniquely suited to an analysis of contemporary planetary issues under globalisation. That said, the revival of cosmopolitanism fails to suggest some post-millennial ethical shift which definitively sets the scene for a cosmopolitan globalised environment. It may instead merely suggest that contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism are activated by unprecedented global threats and forms of interconnection, requiring the realisation of a more pragmatic framework to face twenty-first century challenges. Further, cosmopolitanism does not claim that every individual has a duty or moral obligation to each other but that this *should* be a legitimate goal in an increasingly interconnected world.[61] The fictions fail to promote an emerging global state in literature, but rather confirm what Morris regards as 'the most vital mediation for the realisation of a cosmopolitan vision', namely the sustained 'cultivation of cosmopolitan sympathies on the part of national citizens, and thereby the creation not of a global citizenship but rather a globally attuned citizenry' (63). Because a global unified community is still unachievable (and questionable), the authors in this study often envision and construct microcosmic examples of global communities in which lived experience provides an analogy for global human interaction at large. The fictions of Mitchell, Smith and Cole in particular

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[61] This notion (once again) betrays cosmopolitanism's elitism, endorsing a rather Western conception of individual responsibility and agency that runs contrary to communal-societies in which decisions are mutually agreed.

demonstrate how globalising processes, politics, discourses and structures impact upon localised settings, and how cultural engagement requires a constant negotiation of difference. Their fictions reveal cultural connectivities that simultaneously forge affinities and alignments, discrepancies and inequalities, yet which reveal an increased sense of global co-presence.

The core-periphery model which was once so often seen as axiomatic of world relations may not have been dismantled, but it is undoubtedly undergoing transformation. Contemporary society may be experiencing the unparalleled effects of globalisation and cosmopolitanisation, but that is not to say society is now definitely fixed in a fully globalised state, nor that cosmopolitanism entails a borderless world. Globalisation certainly makes it possible to *envision* a unified global space, but conceiving of the twenty-first century environment as a unified cultural organism is not only inaccurate but misconstrues the ideals of cosmopolitan theory itself, which operates through difference and heterogeneity rather than unity and homogeneity. Instead, this study has emphasised the relevance and importance of balancing both local and global loyalties. These loyalties prevent the envisioning of an emergent postnationalism in contemporary literature, involving the waning of nation-state paradigms. For instance, Pippa Norris (drawing on empirical data from the World Values Survey) points out that whilst 47% of respondents considered themselves 'as belonging primarily to their locality', only 15% felt a predominant relation to 'the world as a whole' (161). National identity is still upheld as the true signifier of geographical belonging. This study has therefore followed Beck in claiming that a disregard for nation-state paradigms simply projects an illusory global society which results in the cosmopolitan project 'losing itself in a philosophical never-never land' (*Vision* 49). The question remains, however, to what extent the globalised world has created the opportune conditions for the intensification and spread of

cosmopolitan ideals. Political boundaries and national borders may persist, but they fail to circumscribe the concept's limits and potential.

For all the textual evidence that individual agency becomes the domain of cosmopolitan ethics and ideals, it is undeniable that governments and state institutions are primarily responsible for the implementation of global justice, equality and economic reforms that allow a more egalitarian global community to emerge. And yet, cultural theorists remain sceptical regarding the emergence of cosmopolitan ethics at an institutional level. As Tomlinson acknowledges, cosmopolitanism may need to be implemented without institutional support: '[w]e probably have to become cosmopolitans without the prospect of a cosmopolis' (199). Cosmopolitanisation therefore requires constant implementation at both social *and* institutional levels, necessitating a transformation of existing social relations within networks that pay attention to the consolidation and maintenance of community at the micro, meso and macro scale. As these chosen fictions have demonstrated, contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism require 'specificity rather than generality, groundedness rather than abstractness, engagement rather than distance, and interaction rather than reflection' (Braidotti, Blaagaard and Hanafin 3-4). Although the transformative and progressive potential of cosmopolitanism undoubtedly remains undeniably utopian to some, a proposed abandonment of normative ideals is to be avoided, especially with regards to literary studies. After all, fiction offers the cosmopolitan imagination a means of envisioning alternative configurations by which we may modify our relations with one another, therefore possessing a progressive socio-cultural function.

This study has also aimed to emphasise that while cosmopolitanism has predominantly remained the domain of philosophy and the social sciences, literature seems particularly suited to the analysis of the term. By offering diverse insights available from

limitless subjectivities, fictional representation and construction can encapsulate cosmopolitanism's fundamental focus on heterogeneity and the value of difference. As Cheah argues, literature forges 'cosmopolitan bonds' by generating 'universal communication' (27). He goes on to argue that because one cannot literally '*see* the universe, the world, or humanity, the cosmopolitan optic is not one of perceptual experience but of the imagination', transforming literature into a 'world-making activity' (26, 29). The chosen contemporary novelists in this study demonstrate an awareness of cultural interdependencies, and thus seem especially adept in disseminating cosmopolitan values and perspectives. Although these selected fictions are what we might term 'Western', the global perspectives and environments they imagine exceed national space, exemplifying the diverse manifestations of cosmopolitanism within contemporary fiction. They give voice to the need for ethical responsibility and global awareness to combat the interdependent risks of the twenty-first century and there are tentative signs of a movement towards a decentring of the Western perspective. As Head recognises, 'the cosmopolitan identity often emerges as our single main resource of hope in combating the worst effects of globalization; and the novel is sometimes deemed to be a useful instrument in that endeavour' (96). Rather like the protean nature of philosophical cosmopolitanism itself, there is no one form or structure or style which encompasses and defines 'cosmopolitan' fiction. The previous chapters have demonstrated the necessity in recognising differing situated forms of connection and belonging to the practice of ethical ideals. An attempt has also been made to embrace the diversity of communities away from ethnic or geographic concerns, and thereby escape the delimiting scope of postcolonial cosmopolitanism espoused by Benita Parry (1991) among others, which is grounded in discourses of nationality and ethnicity alone. For instance, while *His Dark Materials* extends the limits and theory of existing cosmopolitan frameworks by exploring more fantastical trans-

species communities, *The Circle* acknowledges recent global transformations to be a direct result of technological connectivity.

While this study has attempted to contribute to the debate on cosmopolitanism by demonstrating how contemporary authors assume different attitudes to the challenges of global connectivity and cultural interdependence, it is possible to identify unifying themes in the selected fictions. By demonstrating shared approaches to new cultural forms of expression for the global condition, each work qualifies, in differing ways, as part of the literary constellation of cosmopolitanism. No matter how antagonistic these diverse models might be, the fictions unite in shying away from universal visions by emphasising a concentration on localised attachments and belongings. This study has consistently argued against the contention that greater engagement with more global communities necessarily results in (or indeed, *should* result in) a weakening of local allegiances or sense of situated belonging. Rather, the local and the global operate in a dynamic synergy, complementing one another. As Smith and Cole's novels demonstrate, on a human level, glocalisation of territory is integral to any analysis of global cities. Individuals may retain parochial outlooks and attachments, but also appreciate, and demonstrate a consciousness of, global cultural interdependencies. Following this reasoning, they suggest a larger literary movement towards a rejection of the more utopian aspects of global community in twenty-first century fiction. The contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism portrayed in the fictions may be less aspirational than the normative universalism intrinsic to earlier conceptions of the term, but for the most part reflect pragmatic realities appropriate for a global community facing unprecedented interdependent crises. Smith's *NW and* Cole's *Open City*, for instance, are representative of this pragmatic and realisable everyday cosmopolitan engagement that characterises cross-cultural urban life. For Smith, literature acts as a platform to demonstrate the possibilities of active individual agency and point

towards more realisable futures: 'the ethical realm exists nowhere if not here: in the consequences of human actions as they unfold in time, and the multiple interpretative possibility of those actions. Narrative itself is the performance of that very procedure' ('Love, Actually' n.pag.). The urban city-spaces of Smith and Cole's fictions therefore become commemorative and communal, as transnational flows inhabit and restructure a localised environment, problematising notions of national or ethnic identity. Cole's novel in particular suggests that the practice of cosmopolitan ideals is tied up with identity politics. Cosmopolitanism neither entirely accepts 'cultural identity as atomised individualism or as communally constructed selfhood', but involves a mediation of both concerns, positioning cultural identity as 'a changing, fluid and dialogic construction' (Stevenson n.pag.).

Although the chapters have attempted to expand the framework of cosmopolitanism to incorporate digital technology, non-elite connections, posthuman futures, and trans-species concerns, further work remains to be done (in literary studies especially). Future discussions of the term need to address the role of gender within cosmopolitan paradigms, specifically the cosmopolitical challenges facing women in destabilising patriarchal male structures and definitively securing global equality. Additionally, literary analysis needs to engage with the nomadic cosmopolitan relationships persisting between migrants and refugees in a globalised world, especially in non-English language fictions. This would allow future studies on cosmopolitanism to analyse (comparatively) the forms of unprivileged transnational connection that emerge in both Western and non-Western literature, as well as cosmopolitanism's evolving relationship with question of dual citizenship and sovereignty. A notable absence in this study concerns the role of neoliberal capitalism in regulating and facilitating not only cultural diversity and tolerance, but the processes of transnationalism and globalisation themselves. As Slavoj Žižek argues, the

'hybrid coexistence of diverse cultural life-worlds' is problematised by 'the massive presence of capitalism as *universal* world system: it bears witness to the unprecedented homogenization of the contemporary world' (46). Subsequent studies of cosmopolitanism must therefore interrogate how the post-millennial world comes to terms with progressive economic and political threats to socio-cultural heterogeneity.

The overarching aim of this study has been to demonstrate the relevance of cosmopolitanism to literary studies and its specific transformation as a new movement in twenty-first century fiction. Literature possesses the unique capacity to extend the concept in new and innovative directions and open up possibilities for future discussions of the concept. The diverse models of cosmopolitanism explored in the fictions interrogate how we relate to one another, from the micro-level of localised engagement to an abstract universal community. Admittedly, their responses to the question of how society may generate a form of unity or cohesion in an interdependent world of mass globalisation, widespread transnationalism, and unprecedented technological connectivity remains unclear. This study has therefore attempted to combine the philosophical nature of cosmopolitan ideology with the actually existing practice of cosmopolitan values to indicate the multiple cosmopolitan modalities intrinsic to the chosen fictions and their various benefits. As a result, cosmopolitanism does not simply emerge as an abstract ideal, but a cultural practice and an ethical disposition that can be implemented individually, communally and institutionally. In this way, the contemporary fictions achieve a vision of cosmopolitanism that is attuned to the diversity and complexity of twenty-first century globality.

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