

ABSTRACT

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POSTCOLONIAL REFASHIONINGS:
READING FORMS, READING NOVELS

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This dissertation reads the postcolonial novel through a lens of novel theory, examining the ways in which the postcolonial novel writes a new chapter in the history of the novel. I explore how Postcolonial writers deploy—even as they remodel—the form of the British novel, which provides them a unique avenue for expressing national and individual historical positions and for imaginatively renegotiating their relationships to the canon and the Commonwealth, past and present. In doing so, they remake the forms they have inherited into the genre of the postcolonial novel. The novel, due to its connection to modernity, the nation, and the formation of the subject, holds different possibilities for postcolonial writers than other forms.

My dissertation answers readings of postcolonial texts, which, while often superb in their interpretation of the political, fail to focus on genre. In a fashion, postcolonial novels are read as anthropological works, providing glimpses into a culture, and in a peculiar way the novel comes to operate as the native informant. Given the proliferation of the Anglophone postcolonial novel, I argue that it is important that we consider how the postcolonial novel renders established genres into new forms.

I focus on a set of postcolonial novels that specifically engage with canonical British novels, calling attention to the fact that while they share much with their predecessors, they function differently than the novels that have come before them. Unlike early postcolonial arguments about empire “writing back” to the center, which position postcolonial and “English” writers in an antipodal power struggle, I

argue that the Anglophone postcolonial novel is at once a descendent of the British novel and a genre unto itself—forming a new limb from the British novel’s branch. In doing so, these novels perform new ways of writing modernity, the nation, and the subject. Working from a Bakhtinian theory of the modern novel as a form that creates newness, I demonstrate how postcolonial writers use the history and tradition of the British novel to write, revise, and refashion the novel in English.

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by

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Dedication

To Ren, who supported me every step of the way.

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Introduction

In a key moment in Salman Rushdie's recent novel, *Shalimar the Clown*, Abdullah Noman, a village pandit and director of the *bhands* of Pachigam, daringly takes his troupe to a neighboring town to perform despite the increasing political conflict between Kashmiri separatists and the Indian and Pakistani armies. Despite having lost his two best performers, Noman takes his lackluster cast to execute a final pageant for the dwindling number of tourists not yet driven away by the unrest. When his actors and musicians step in front of their meager audience, political protesters take the stage outside of his tent. Before the players are able to finish their second act, the chants of the protesters drown out the voices of the actors and the music from their instruments. As soldiers rush in to break up the demonstration, the clamor outside grows. When the performance comes to a close, the din of the skirmish silences the happy ending of the players' tale and the vigorous applause of the lone remaining spectator is rendered mute by the sounds of the Indian army killing forty demonstrators. Despite the best efforts of Abdullah Noman and his players, the art of the troupe cannot be heard for the noise of the troops.

This highly self-conscious *mise en scene* generates a literal, textual noise that turns readers back upon themselves. As in much of postcolonial criticism, the cacophony of politics silences the softer intonations of art. In the surge in academic work in the field of postcolonial studies, critical engagement with postcolonial literature largely focuses on the politics of representation, questions of authenticity, hybridity, and subaltern agency. While Frederic Jameson received quite a bit of

backlash for his argument that Third-World texts can only be read as national allegory,ⁱ readings of postcolonial texts remain rooted in, and I would argue usually limited to, the political, so much so that the literary form becomes merely a vehicle to carry content, and postcolonial literary works come to operate as native informants—valued for their ability to translate Other cultures into forms legible to a Western audience. Given the proliferation of the Anglophone postcolonial novel, I argue that it is necessary and timely to shift focus to the *modus operandi* of the novels without eschewing the political. In other words, I am arguing that we consider how the postcolonial novel renders established genres into new forms.

I do not mean to argue that we should discount the political in postcolonial literature. In fact, I agree with Jameson that Third World art forms are always, at least to a degree, “situational and materialist”;ⁱⁱ however, I begin with the premise that postcolonial literature should be read as that—*literature*. For the purposes of this project, I am focusing specifically on the postcolonial novel, a form that has become so ubiquitous, it has begun to suffer the same fate of elision—the postcolonial novel has come to stand as shorthand for postcolonial literature, and rarely if ever rates consideration of its form. Richard Lane’s 2006, *The Postcolonial Novel*, meant to serve as an introduction to the form, offers a series of close readings of texts that have come to comprise a postcolonial canon, but evidences little consideration of how these works function as novels.ⁱⁱⁱ In his treatise on contemporary British fiction, *The Novel Now*, Richard Bradford traces a trajectory of the postcolonial novel from the mid-twentieth century to the present, touching on the idea of the novel only in a brief pause to note the possible irony in the idea of

fiction being the vehicle of truth.^{iv} Similarly, work on the postcolonial novel from the perspective of novel theorists focuses little on form. Michael McKeon's section on the postcolonial novel in his 2000 anthology, *Theory of the Novel*, features two essays that address the intersections of the postcolonial and the postmodern, and one on the "boom" in publishing of Latin American novels.^v Dorothy Hale's more recent compendium of novel theory, *The Novel*, offers a four-essay section on the postcolonial novel: three selections from major postcolonial critics—Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha—none of which considers the novel form specifically, and a piece by Franco Moretti which treats the connection between the novel and the modern nation-state.^{vi} In light of the proliferation of academic work on postcolonial fiction and the dearth of critical attention to form, I want to address this gap to consider what the form of the novel offers postcolonial writers, and how those writers remake forms of the British novel for the postcolonial moment.

This work seeks to read the postcolonial novel through a lens of novel theory, examining the ways in which the postcolonial novel writes a new chapter in the history of the novel. I focus on a set of postcolonial novels that specifically engage with canonical British novels, calling attention to the fact that while they share much with their predecessors, they function differently than the novels that have come before them. I explore how postcolonial writers deploy—even as they remodel—the form of the British novel, which provides them a unique avenue for expressing national and individual historical positions and for imaginatively renegotiating their relationships to the canon and the Commonwealth, past and present. In doing so, they remake forms they have inherited into the genre of the postcolonial novel.

Unlike early postcolonial arguments about empire “writing back” to the center, which position postcolonial and “English”^{vii} writers in an antipodal power struggle, I argue that the Anglophone postcolonial novel is at once a descendent of the British novel and a genre unto itself—forming a new limb from the British novel’s branch. In doing so, these novels perform new ways of writing modernity, the nation, and the subject. Working from a Bakhtinian theory of the modern novel as a form that can create newness, I demonstrate how postcolonial writers use the history and tradition of the British novel to write, revise, and refashion the novel in English.

What I see as most important in theorizing the possibilities inherent in the form of the postcolonial novel is an idea of capaciousness. It is my overarching argument throughout this study that contemporary postcolonial writers expand the boundaries of inherited forms of the novel, and in doing so they create new, more capacious forms. As the postcolonial novel dissolves the public-private split on which the forms of English novel are constructed, it opens novelistic discourse to new ways of writing the novel subject in history. Though the English novel, especially the English novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has frequently been cited for its complicity in the spread and solidification of both empire and nationalism, I see the novel as a site of particular possibility for the postcolonial writer to rewrite those ideologies. The novel’s nature as a “developing genre”^{viii} allows its practitioners to mold it anew. As the postcolonial writer confronts the insular sort of English nationalism the novel has promulgated since its rise alongside the modern nation in the eighteenth century, he or she can reshape that nationalism through the revision of form. I argue that the malleability of the

novel form makes it an ideal tool for postcolonial writers to reimagine a vision of Britishness and a form of the British novel that makes room for the postcolonial subject.

In seeking out a working definition of the novel amongst many competing theories, I turn foremost to Bakhtin, for his historically specific understanding of the novel that, while never forgetting nation and modernity, does not limit his novel theory to one place or time.^{ix} Throughout this study I will turn to specific theorizations and histories of the English novel including its well-documented rise in the eighteenth century and consolidation of power in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But none of those formulations imagines the novel with as much breadth as Bakhtin. Bakhtin consistently figures the novel as a site of possibility, a site, to evoke a phrase used by both Rushdie and Bhabha, through which newness can enter the world. Insisting that the uniqueness of the novel lies in its place in modern history, as the sole form to develop in the full view of history,^x Bakhtin argues that the novel provides “the zone of maximal contact with the present.”^{xi} In this sense, the novel itself can be a “contact zone,” a place of transculturation in which the postcolonial writer encounters the forms that have imagined a nation in terms that divide public from private and homeland from empire.^{xii} In entering the contact zone of the novel and remaking its content and its boundaries, transculturation can occur within the form itself, as the postcolonial novel does not simply to speak for previously silenced voices, but fabricates new structures that house those voices along with those traditionally authorized by literary history.

Ever since Rushdie's famous characterization of the proliferation of postcolonial literature in the late twentieth century as the empire writing back to the center,^{xiii} subsequently used by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin as the title for their foundational *The Empire Writes Back*^{xiv}, there has been much attention paid to postcolonial works that "answer" canonical texts. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin claim "the rereading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional record is a vital and inescapable task at the heart of the post-colonial enterprise."^{xv} And to a degree, they are right. Postcolonial writers necessarily inherit a canon that has largely excluded and exoticized them. They necessarily contend with the baggage of that canon as a part of the cultural landscape from which they write. But as Genette notes, all writing is second degree writing;^{xvi} all novels are written in some sort of relation to those that have come before. The very act of writing in a particular form or genre enters a work into conversation with other works in that genre.

However, the idea of "writing back," positions postcolonial writers and their imperial forebears as entering into a monologic rather than dialogic exchange, with the canon providing an initial declaration and postcolonial revisions acting as final responses. This formulation, in which postcolonial writers reclaim texts that have excluded them, locks them into a binary relationship as part of what Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge call the "grand narrative of postcolonial regeneration and completion,"^{xvii} through which postcolonial writers may fill in the missing pieces of previous narratives, correcting the exclusionary or damning record the canon

provides. This grand counter-narrative becomes as rigid as that of the canon itself, limiting the role of the postcolonial writer to complete what has already been written. As J.M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* points out, though these novel rewritings can be productive, they are inherently limited in their looping paratizations: "Of course, fair's fair, men will have to set about reclaiming the Heathcliffs and Rochesters from romantic stereotyping too, to say nothing of poor old dusty Casaubon. It will be a grand spectacle" (14).^{xviii}

The grand spectacle of postcolonial recuperations ignores not just the varied possibilities for the postcolonial writer, but also limits the literature of the canon itself, which, as demonstrated by each of the novels I explore in this work, is a shifting, changing, heteroglossic entity. While I am interested in how the novels discussed here incorporate and in some ways respond to the canon, the questions I hope to address are not about recuperation of a story, or even a set of stories, from the margins, but rather of how postcolonial authors can work within and between forms that have been used to tell stories. Earlier in this introduction, I mentioned that I want to position the works in this study as part of British literature, as a branch within the genre. I realize that there is jeopardy in this claim, a danger of figuring postcolonial texts and writers as dependent on their former colonizers and their literatures. An oft-cited concern in postcolonial studies is the danger is inherent in the term postcolonial itself, potentially locking literatures from formerly colonized nations into their pasts as such, denoting their creative output as depending on a colonial history. However, my argument is not one of dependence; or, at least, it is one of interdependence. As much as the postcolonial writer may

need to contend with the canon, the proliferation of postcolonial literature and the attention it has drawn in recent years has insisted that the canon must also contend with the postcolonial. I argue that the canonical novels and their postcolonial counterparts I address in this dissertation can and do interanimate each other, creating a complex dialogue within the novel form. While many of the contemporary novels I consider highlight both the generic limitations of the novels that preceded them and faulty assumptions, readings, and real political consequences that such limitations have wrought, these postcolonial novels do not simply discard or ignore generic conventions. Rather, it is on and through the traditional novel's limits that the postcolonial writers ask new questions, broadcast their unheard answers, and join the British literary canon.

The first half of this study focuses on contemporary engagements with the developing form of the English eighteenth-century novel, as it helped to imagine the modern nation and its burgeoning middle class. Chapters on Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* and J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* both analyze the role of gender as it applies to form and deliberately investigate the epistemological fiction of the public-private split. The first chapter focuses on a contemporary postcolonial version of the eighteenth-century domestic novel, exploring how Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* recreates the domestic novel as a space that can accommodate the postcolonial subject. The second turns to *Foe's* engagement with the adventure tale, the picaresque, and the gothic, as Coetzee's novel transforms an assortment of Defoe texts into an unsettled narrative that moves from the space of empire to that of England then back to the New World. The second half of the project turns to the novel in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries, after the form had solidified and consolidated its power. This half is comprised of chapters on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*, as the two respond to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Social novels, often called Condition of England novels. Both Smith and Rushdie retain their precursors' engagement with class, adding questions of race, diaspora, and postcoloniality in their revisions. Their novels take up the question of who shall inherit Britain and its literature. Rushdie's novel, with its overwhelming allusiveness, considers the place the postcolonial novel should take in the canon and the ways in which the Condition of England novel may represent London's unseen residents, while Smith's explores the aesthetic concerns of the postcolonial novel, questioning the rightful inheritors of global art forms. Both work to expand the idea of the Condition of England form, Rushdie by looking deeper into the underrepresented areas of the city of London and, as Ali does in *Brick Lane*, by connecting the postimperial metropole to the spaces of empire, and Smith by taking the form across the Atlantic, transforming the Condition of England into a Condition of Postcoloniality.

I begin this dissertation with works that engage the eighteenth-century English novel for a number of reasons. In part, I seek to mirror the narrative of the novel's "rise" in the eighteenth century and its subsequent consolidation of power in the nineteenth. Also, I see a tendency for critical works that address the relationship between the novel and imperialism to focus on the more concretized forms of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century novels,^{xix} using these later

iterations to stand in for “the novel” as a whole. I find the eighteenth-century English novel a particularly productive place for postcolonial critics because of the ways in which the early form was still developing along with the structures of the modern nation and a growing middle class. Wolfgang Iser underscores Bakhtin’s argument about the novel’s unfinished nature, pointing to the eighteenth century as a time in which the novel was able to create its own rules: “From the start the novel as a ‘genre’ was virtually free from traditional constraints and so the novelists of the eighteenth century considered themselves not merely creators of their works but also the law makers.”^{xx} Iser goes on to explain that this freedom from traditional constraints combines with the private nature of novel reading led the form to be “shaped by the dialogue that the author wishes to conduct with his reader” which “gives the reader the impression that he and the author are partners in discovering the reality of the human experience.”^{xxi} This particular, individual investment increases the novel’s capability to allow its readers to imagine and reimagine the cultural structures they inhabit including those of class and nation.

Michael McKeon argues that the eighteenth-century English novel emerged in a space created by the destabilization of genres—as lines between fact and fiction came to be more clearly drawn—and the destabilization of social categories—as British imperialism created a rising mercantile class. The new form was able to flourish in a rapidly developing print culture, fed by factors such as an increasingly literate public and the rise of lending libraries. McKeon contends that by creating a permanent record of experiences, “print stabilized culture itself and the past in particular as a realm of experience henceforth susceptible to objective study.”^{xxii} It

was the ability to objectify experience, McKeon argues, that allowed for the eighteenth-century English novel's newfound realism and focus on individualism that Ian Watt cites as its defining characteristics.^{xxiii} The formal realism Watt relies upon to define the novel becomes a fundamental link between the form and the nation. The novel's mimesis of the practices of everyday life, including the social, political, and economic systems that structure the characters' lives creates what Srinivas Aravamuden calls an aura of "coherence."^{xxiv} Or, as John Thompson explains, the novel works as a modeling agent, presenting an exemplar for readers to follow.^{xxv}

As McKeon notes, the destabilization of genres was accompanied by a destabilization of class, as land and title were decoupled from status. These changing class boundaries were met by what Thompson claims was a crisis in value, resulting from the transformation of the monetary system from one based on coinage to one based on paper notes, or, as Thompson puts it "the reconceptualization of money from treasure to capital and the consequent refiguration of money from specie to paper."^{xxvi} One of the ways in which this crisis of value was answered was in the form of the domestic novel, which evolved from earlier forms of the fictional romance and the nonfiction conduct book. Nancy Armstrong links the popularity of the domestic novel in the eighteenth century to the growing middle-class's need to reconceive personal worth outside of its traditional relationship to land and title. She contends that the domestic novel allowed the middle class to imagine its value through "a new female ideal," focusing the narrative of the English subject in "the ordered space we now recognize as the

household, made that space totally functional, and used it as the context for representing normal behavior.”^{xxvii} Armstrong argues that the eighteenth-century domestic novel helped Britain’s burgeoning middle class to imagine itself as a cohesive whole, doing so primarily through offering a model for a “new kind of woman,” who can hold within her subject the values of herself, her family, and her entire class.^{xxviii}

The development of the domestic novel, which splits the world into the fictional spheres of public and private, becomes the foundational narrative upon which both the later nineteenth and twentieth century novel and the nation come to rest. Thompson demonstrates how the divisions between the narratives of the domestic novel and political economy split discourse into two, allowing the nation to separate economics and politics from the space of the home. Thompson also points to the space of the domestic as a limited one, arguing that the discourse of political economy takes up the responsibility for telling the truths of other places, notably the empire’s outlying colonized spaces.^{xxix} Hence, the division between public and private leads to a division between home and away, and the English novel comes to promote an exclusionary version of nationalism built upon separating the spaces and subjects of empire from those of the homeland. This separation, instantiated in the novels of the eighteenth century and solidified in those of the nineteenth, forms the basis of Edward Said’s reading of the novel in *Culture and Imperialism* and leads others, like Pheng Cheah, to argue against the role of nationalism in postcolonial literature.^{xxx}

However, I argue that, though the novel has been a tool used to imagine the nation as a discriminative structure, the form of the novel lends itself just as easily to inclusivity. While Said and Cheah focus on the exclusionary tactics of nationalism, Timothy Brennan depicts the linked structures of the novel and the nation as pliant enough to create room for a mix of peoples and subject positions:

It was the *novel* that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the ‘one, yet many’ of national life, and by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles. Socially, the novel joined the newspaper as the major vehicle of the national print media, helping to standardize language, encourage literacy, and remove mutual incomprehensibility. But it did much more than that. Its manner of presentation allowed people to imagine the special community that was the nation”^{xxxix}

Brennan follows Benedict Anderson, who expands his imagined community of the nation to include the idea of serial nationality.^{xxxix} Anderson explains how the idea of serial nationalities—divided into *bound* seriality with roots in governmentality, which can create the possibility for a structure like the United Nations, and *unbound* seriality, which finds its origins in the print market—demarcates a line between ethnicity and nationalism.^{xxxix} As seriality allows different nations to exist side by side and enter into collectives, the nation can create serial visions of itself, reinventing what it once was. As such, serial nationality allows for the possibility that the ways in which the novel imagined a nation in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries can be supplanted by new iterations. Postcolonial

writers can use the structures of novel and nation to reimagine themselves and redraw the boundaries of a national consciousness and national memory while they redraw the boundaries of genre.

The novel has been an effective tool for imagining a nation at the heart of an empire, and differentiating, by the ways in which its narratives construct the realms of public and private, between the space of the nation and the space of empire. However, as Patrick Parrinder notes, though there has been complicity between the genre of the novel and the expansion of empire, this connection was in no way inevitable.^{xxxiv} In fact, the relationship between the novel and empire was often one of ambivalence: “the classic novelists from Defoe onwards speak from within the imperial nation even though they themselves were often indifferent, and in some cases hostile, to empire.”^{xxxv} Though the form of the novel has been used well for imperialist purposes, its very nature makes it a valuable tool in the hands of the formerly colonized. The novel’s subversive potential which allowed a burgeoning English middle class to imagine itself into existence in the eighteenth century and to cement its cultural domination in the nineteenth, has at times concretized into a reinforcement of the status quo. While the novel is a form that continues to develop, genres within the novel—that is forms of the novel—can begin to ossify as they consolidate the power of formal conventions and the weight of literary history.

At times the novel supports empire, but this is not to assert that it *fundamentally* supports empire. I argue that the novel has an ambivalent relationship with imperialism and nationalism, that it can and does by turns both fortify and compromise their ideological effects. While a valuable tool in imagining a

nation as homogenous, the novel, through its focus on the practices of everyday life, its marginalized unlikely heroes, and its promise of novelty, can work equally to upset the status quo as to promote it. The way in which the novel helps to imagine the nation as whole demonstrates a tendency that is analogous to what Bakhtin calls the centripetal force of language that seeks to create a unified vision of the nation to stand against the heterogeneity of empire, shoring up the homeland by looking inward.^{xxxvi} However, the novel's unruly structure and tendency toward subversiveness continuously invoke opposing centrifugal forces of stratification into various socio-ideological languages that radiate out from the center. It is the processes of these conflicting centripetal and centrifugal forces that allow the novel's practitioners to create new forms and thereby new spaces within ideologies. As opposed to the state, which draws its power from legal authority, the nation and the novel are cultural institutions in which people believe and which the people make up. As the nation derives its power from its imagined community, so the novel derives its authority from the dialogue between its writers and its readers. Within the site of the novel, processes of competing centripetal and centrifugal forces never end. Through the novel, the very ideological center has already shifted, opened, and then almost concretized again.

Each of the canonical novels this study addresses bears out this pattern. *Pamela* helps to imagine a particular type of nationalism, held secure in the space of the home, against the broadening empire. *Robinson Crusoe* shows the ease with which a true-born Englishman can replicate the structures of the nation in the New World, naturalizing a kind of Englishness that can be grown on foreign soil. *Howards*

End looks to promote that same Englishness in the face of different sorts of changes, seeking to re-secure the domestic space in the face of a waning imperialism. As the postcolonial novel emerges in the space between pedagogical and performative nationalisms Homi Bhabha elaborates,^{xxxvii} it alternates between the two. The postcolonial novel underscores the imperialist leanings of the canonical novel's pedagogical past, while performing the nation in new ways.^{xxxviii} What is different, then, about the postcolonial novel, is that it does not, as Aravamuden says "create coherence" in the same way that the imperial novel attempts to. Rather, it specifically addresses the ways in which the canonical novel pretends toward coherence, but rests on division and exclusion. The postcolonial novels I read in this work, by reenvisioning what has come before them, expose the moments at which the imperial novel fails to cohere. By shedding light on the boundaries of realist fiction that Robyn Warhol terms "the unnarratable,"^{xxxix} they point out how the illusion of coherence in the realist novel rests upon narrative exclusion. The postcolonial novel's focus on aporias and multiple meanings and temporalities allows its writers and readers to dismantle an earlier kind of novel and nationalism that pretend toward such coherence, while at the same time creating a new form of both the novel and nationalism that provide space for competing worldviews and subject positions.

My first chapter, "*Brick Lane; Or, Virtue Revisited*," addresses the incompleteness of the canonical novel as it reads Monica Ali's 2003 novel

Brick Lane as a revision of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Arguing that Ali's text rewrites the form of the eighteenth-century domestic novel and its relevance to postimperial England, I consider how Ali's relocation of the domestic novel from the country estate to the council estate frames the domestic novel's relationship to nationalism in terms of both space and subjectivity. I argue that through her protagonist, Nazneen, Ali offers a new type of domestic virtue that lies in taking personal, political, and economic agency. As such, Ali rewrites the models of the domestic heroine and domestic virtue, and through them the nationalist vision that both work to disseminate. Rather than a domestic heroine who roots her virtue in constancy and virginity, in Nazneen Ali offers a model of domesticity rooted in work and economic independence. Ali splits her domestic heroine into two women: Nazneen, the protagonist of the novel, and her sister Hasina, with whom she exchanges letters. While keeping a part of the epistolary nature of *Pamela*, but placing the letters in the context of a larger narrative, Ali lightens her protagonist's load—Nazneen need not carry the burden of the narrative alone, nor does she have to represent the only model of virtue.

In Ali's revision, independence replaces virginity as the novel's supreme virtue. Though she lives in London, for most of the novel Nazneen's world is as narrowly defined as Pamela's; she is largely confined to her council house flat as her predecessor was to Mr. B's country estate. Though Nazneen is at first complicit in her husband's desire to confine her to the home, eventually, she ventures out both into the public and into the market independently. She breaks away from her lover Karim and refuses to return to Bangladesh with her husband, choosing instead

financial and domestic independence—running her household and forming part of a women’s collective garment business. In doing so, her freedom mirrors that of her sister’s; Nazneen finally enters the city of London on her own terms, as Hasina has traveled through Bangladesh. As the servant-gentry marriage plot of *Pamela* reimagines class on a vertical axis, *Brick Lane* reimagines class on a horizontal axis, offering a vision of a British middle class that is spacious enough to include postcolonial immigrants.

Chapter two, “*Foe’s* Economies of Genre,” reaches outside the space of the home and begins beyond the space of nation, as Susan Barton has been cast away and washes up on the shores of a desert island in the Caribbean. In addition to its retelling of *Robinson Crusoe’s* island tale, *Foe* incorporates *Moll Flanders*, *Roxana*, and “The Apparition of Mrs. Veal”—representing a spectrum of genres traditionally located in the margins of the domestic and the nation. Unlike *Brick Lane*, which works to expand a genre from within, *Foe* moves from form to form, trying to settle into a mode in which to tell its story. Though many read *Foe* for its rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe*, seeing Coetzee’s novel as a way to recuperate voices silenced in earlier versions of the adventure tale, I argue that these readings miss Coetzee’s broader engagement with the legacy of the eighteenth-century novel, formal realism, and Defoe’s particular brand of fiction.

This chapter explores the ways in which Coetzee employs metafiction to seek out the possibilities and limitations of realism in different novel forms. Through *Foe’s* unusual construction as an amalgam of genres and metafictional preoccupation with text-making, Coetzee uses Defoe’s oeuvre to unearth what these

works necessarily withhold, using the postcolonial novel to show the limits of earlier forms. Extending his conversation with Defoe and his legacy, Coetzee calls attention to the construction of his novel and the complex relationship between truth, fiction, and mimesis. Despite its reworkings of many hypotexts, I argue that *Foe's* primary function is not rewriting of canonical texts, but rather a consideration of text-making, reading, and circulation, as Susan and Foe struggle to find a way to faithfully represent her island story while collaborating on a narrative she can circulate. Unable to produce the story she desires for an eighteenth-century English audience, Susan and her editor turn to Friday for the novel's final voice. The novel's closing section moves beyond the domain of Defoe's moderate realism to the auspices of the gothic, and *Foe* revises Defoe's apparition narrative "The Apparition of Mrs. Veal" into a postcolonial gothic located in the chronotope of diaspora. Ultimately, the way in which the novel's final section at once amends and stands alongside the narrative that precedes it mimics the postcolonial novel's relationship to the British canon.

Chapter three, "A City Visible But Unseen: Salman Rushdie, Charles Dickens, and the Spectacle of Postcolonial London," considers *The Satanic Verses'* engagement with Dickens late work *Our Mutual Friend*. The novel presents Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* as imagined by Britain's heritage industry in the late twentieth century, with London's Victorian past nostalgically stripped of its social ills. Like its Victorian predecessor, *The Satanic Verses* is a sprawling novel of London, reaching into the corners of the city to shed light on the city's marginalized communities. Where Dickens focused on the pernicious effects of the Poor Laws and industrial

waste, Rushdie extends Dickens' Social Novel to consider the place of commonwealth immigrants in the city. As the Poor Laws threatened to remove the impoverished and send them to the poorhouse, so the Nationality Act scoops up postcolonial immigrants like Saladin Chamcha and cordons them off in detention centers.

The Satanic Verses takes up *Our Mutual Friend's* fascination the waste and detritus of industrial London and recodes it into a postmodern economy of advertising and image. Rather than the question of who shall inherit the fortunes derived from accumulating and recirculating the waste of production and distribution, the novel questions the rights of inheritance of the canon and of representation in the face of the Nationality Act, heritage industry, and the Thatcher administration's call for a return to Victorian values. In *The Satanic Verses*, Saladin Chamcha plays the role of *Our Mutual Friend's* John Harmon, returned from abroad and having to remake himself anew in London while battling the legacies of family, nation, politics, and economy. Layering temporally disparate versions of London over the city plan, Rushdie collapses the time and space of empire into his metropolitan narrative, broadening the city's borders. The novel brings the edges of empire into the center of the metropolis, while reaching back through centuries of the city's political and literary history, dissolving spatial and temporal boundaries, creating a chronotope like that of *Foe*, in which multiple realities exist at the same time. In this way, the novel makes visible the various unseen parts of the city—especially the ways in which its imperial past is both complicit and at odds with its postcolonial present.

The final chapter, "On Inheritance and a Postcolonial Aesthetic," focuses on Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*, Smith's rewriting of *Howards End*. The chapter incorporates elements of each of the previous three. This chapter returns the reader to the space of the domestic centered on the titular country house that is the site of contested inheritance in Forster's *Condition of England* novel. The exchange of bodes, culture, and labor between Boston and the suburb of Wellington reminds of the unsettled subjects of *Foe*. And like the previous chapter, it focuses on a mislaid inheritance. In her contemporary rewriting of Forster's *Condition of England* novel, Smith relocates the action *Howards End* to a university town in suburban Boston. While Forster's novel focuses on the conflict between the liberal Schlegels and conservative capitalist Wilcoxes, as their conflicting philosophies Forster's tragic clerk teetering on the edge of the abyss, Smith complicates Forster's engagement with class by putting the novel's class concerns into conversation with those of race and imperial legacy.

On Beauty projects *Howards End*'s anxieties about class mobility and land onto the realm of art. Smith draws on Elaine Scarry's monograph on aesthetics and ethics, *On Beauty and Being Just* for her title, casts the patriarchs of the Kipps and Belsey families as feuding art historians, and replaces the country house *Howards End* with a Haitian painting as the object of contested inheritance. I argue that by replacing the ancestral home at the center of the inheritance plot with a Caribbean painting, *On Beauty* asks who shall inherit colonial and postcolonial art, a question that underscores my overarching argument shifting our readings of postcolonial novels to foreground the literary, to consider aesthetic as well as political value. As

it continues the exploration of space and the cultural formations of marriage and the family, this final chapter considers these sites that figured in the imagination as exclusionary, as places of possibility. As *On Beauty* ends with a moment of deep ambivalence toward marriage, the university, and the canon of western art, it also invokes the possibilities inherent in each of these structures. The ambivalence of the ending works against a particular resolution, refusing to come down on one side or the other.

ⁱ Frederic Jameson. "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital." *Social Text*. 15 (1986): 65-88.

ⁱⁱ Jameson, 86.

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Lane. *The Postcolonial Novel*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2006.

^{iv} Richard Bradford. *The Novel Now: Contemporary British Fiction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007.

^v Michael McKeon. Ed. *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. In his introduction to the anthology's section on the postcolonial novel McKeon claims that the postcolonial novel challenges the coherence of the novel form (851), but the essays he includes do not really address form (which he admits later in his essay). He also talks about the foregrounding of "core" and "periphery" (852), which, though certainly an important part of the postcolonial discourse, falls into what I argue is a limiting reading of the postcolonial novel.

^{vi} Dorothy Hale. *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006.

^{vii} These refer to Rushdie's famous claim and Ashcroft et al's *The Empire Writes Back*, which I will address in the ensuing pages.

^{viii} M.M. Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. 7.

^{ix} Of course, this gloss of Bakhtin is perhaps a bit generous. He does implicitly position the novel as a Western form, and focus predominantly on European examples when elucidating his theories of novelistic discourse. However, his theorization of the novel is clearly designed to travel—he does not read the novel's rise and development according to national borders, but rather tries to see the breadth of the form from ancient to modern.

^x Unlike many studies that follow the novel's "rise" in eighteenth-century England, Bakhtin's elucidation of the novel depends on its comparison to the epic.

^{xi} Bakhtin, 11.

^{xii} Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 1992. 4-11.

^{xiii} "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist." *Imaginary Homelands*.

^{xiv} Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

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- ^{xv} Ashcroft et al., 196.
- ^{xvi} Girard Genette. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Paris: Seuil, 1992.
- ^{xvii} Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra. "What was Postcolonialism?" *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*. 36.3 (2005): 375-402. 375.
- ^{xviii} And Costello rightly characterizes much of what has been occurring in contemporary postcolonial and British writing. What Peter Widdowson terms "re-visionary fiction" abounds. As Widdowson notes, the mode is not limited to postcolonial writers.
- ^{xix} The exception to this rule is, of course, *Robinson Crusoe*, which alone tends to stand for the eighteenth-century form. Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, though it covers works from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, focuses primarily on novels of the nineteenth. Firdous Azim's *The Colonial Rise of the Novel* spends most of its pages on the nineteenth-century novels of the Brontes. The novels that John Thieme's *Post-Colonial Con-Texts* addresses are from the nineteenth-century (in addition to the ubiquitous *Crusoe*).
- ^{xx} Wolfgang Iser. *The Implied Reader: Patterns in Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. 764.
- ^{xxi} *ibid.*
- ^{xxii} McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel* 43
- ^{xxiii} Ian Watt. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Berkeley, California University Press, 1957. 9-34.
- ^{xxiv} Srinivas Aravamuden. "The Oriental Tale as National Allegory." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. 33.1 (1999): 5-31. 7
- ^{xxv} James Thompson. *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- ^{xxvi} Thompson, 2.
- ^{xxvii} Nancy Armstrong. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. 9 and 24
- ^{xxviii} Armstrong, 3.
- ^{xxix} Thompson, 1-23.
- ^{xxx} Pheng Cheah. "Spectral Nationality: The Living on of the Postcolonial Nation in Neocolonial Globalization." *Boundary 2*. 26:3 (1999): 225-252.
- ^{xxxi} Timothy Brennan. "The National Longing for Form." *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1990. 44-70. 49.
- ^{xxxii} Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 1983, and "Nationalism, Identity, and the World-in-Motion: On the Logics of Seriality" in *Cosmopolitics*, Eds. Bruce Robbins and Pheng Cheah.
- ^{xxxiii} Anderson, "Nationalism, Identity, and the World-in-motion," 117.
- ^{xxxiv} Patrick Parrinder. *Nation and Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 2.
- ^{xxxv} Parinder, 2.
- ^{xxxvi} Bakhtin, 270-273.
- ^{xxxvii} Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1991. 139-70.
- ^{xxxviii} I'm using the term imperial here to talk about novels written about or during British imperialism. As Patrick Parrinder uses the term English novels to discuss novels that are ultimately English in that they are about the English people spirit and whatnot (footnote and find quote), the term imperial can be used as a generalization in the same way. Some of the novels that serve as hypotexts in this study—*Pamela* and *Our Mutual Friend* to cite two examples—do not directly address Britain's imperial expansion or colonial holdings. Yet, following the argument long established in the work of Edward Said and echoed in Margaret Doody, the English novel has long been a parochial institution, with tendencies toward the familiar, an inward gaze, and a distrust of things foreign. Doody notes all of these characteristics of the novel, while Said points

out how they go so far as to put the existence of the imperial holdings of Britain under erasure—existing in the realm of what is not narrated or at best obliquely referred to in the novel.

^{xxxix} Robyn R. Warhol. "Neonarrative: or, How to Render the Unnarratable in Realist Fiction and Contemporary Film." *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan. Malden MA: Blackwell, 2005. 220-31. Warhol reaches this term through explicating Gerald Prince's idea of the disnarrated. I treat this topic in detail in chapter two.

Chapter One:
Brick Lane; Or, Virtue Revisited

In the middle of Monica Ali's 2003 *Brick Lane*, Chanu Ahmed decides he will take his family on holiday. Their destination is the center of London, a short bus ride away from the East End neighborhood the family has called home for decades. Outfitted with guidebooks, a traveler's uniform, and a diligently-researched list of the city's sights, Chanu prepares to encounter the city. After spending three decades of his life and working for years as a taxi driver in the metropolis, Chanu insists on imagining himself as a tourist, asking the bus driver his opinion on the merits of The British Museum over the National Gallery, explaining, "It would be good to take an opinion from a local" (238). Chanu's moment of estrangement registers Homi Bhabha's figuration of the unhomely. Bhabha notes that the unhomely may be found throughout fictions that address cultural difference, but he locates the unhomely as a "paradigmatic colonial and postcolonial position."^{xi} The unhomely unsettles the subject because it provides a glimpse into what should remain hidden, as "the borders between the world and the home become confused; and, uncannily, the public and the private become a part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disheartening."^{xli} Chanu shows no evidence that he sees his unhomely moment. He has no trouble envisioning himself as a tourist, for throughout his long residence in London he has considered Bangladesh as home. He registers his exclusion from the cultural structures that create the museum and gallery as an "immigrant's tragedy," which will be rewritten when he returns to Dhaka. His wife, Nazneen, however, has shifted her allegiances, constructing a new understanding of

home in her narrative. She watches the exchange between Chanu and the bus driver with discomfort, as her husband unsettles the home she imagines.

Bhabha makes clear that the moment of the unhomely is not a state of homelessness; nor can the unhomely be made equivalent with the broad notion of exile that haunts much twentieth-century fiction. Rather, the unhomely appears at the precise moment in which the separation of private and public into gendered spheres of existence that construct a division between the home and political discourse collapses, and the latter invades the former.^{xlii} This location roots the experience of the unhomely in the gendered split between public and private solidified in the eighteenth-century novel.^{xliii} Bhabha ties the unhomely to the gendered discourses of nation, noting that “the figure of the woman” provides a continuity of unhomeliness, for it is in her imagined relegation to the sphere of the private, boundary lines drawn between her subjectivity and discourses of the political and economic, on which “the ambivalent structure of the civil State” rests.^{xliv} This gendered division is fundamental to the conception of domesticity articulated in eighteenth-century fiction and codified in domestic novel.^{xlv} Bhabha argues that making the unhomely visible, laying bare the fiction of the split between public and private, uncannily doubles the system of public and private, showing the incomplete mapping of gender difference onto the spheres. The consequence of the unhomely is the subsequent “redrawing of the domestic space as the space of the normalizing, pastoralizing, and individuating techniques of modern power and police: the personal-*is*-the political; the world-*in*-the-home.”^{xlvi} I contend that *Brick Lane* performs the work of the unhomely. That is, it resituates the political *as*

personal and the home *in* the world. *Brick Lane* does not register the unhomely as a moment of traumatic ambivalence. Rather, the novel takes the foundation of the unhomely as its starting point, as it systematically denies the split between the public and private by dismantling and making new their narrative configuration—the domestic novel. It is on this ground, the world in the home, that *Brick Lane* offers a contemporary postcolonial domestic novel that revises the terms of domestic fiction and remakes the form from within.

I argue that Nazneen's story creates a specifically postcolonial domestic novel by appropriating elements of the eighteenth-century domestic novel—the epistolary mode, the marriage plot, and the country house—and refashions them into a new form of domestic novel that constructs and accommodates a postcolonial subjectivity. That is, by relegating the epistolary to a secondary plot and narrative framing device and by appropriating its ability to represent interiority; by beginning the novel with marriage; and by staging the action in an immigrant housing project in London where a clear public-private split is neither possible nor desirable, *Brick Lane* refigures the eighteenth-century domestic novel's construction of female virtue and so its version English subjectivity. Thusly, *Brick Lane* offers a model for a postcolonial domestic novel that first positions itself as an inheritor of the genre and then remakes the form from within.

Rewriting the domestic novel refigures the form's construction of female domestic virtue and the female subjectivity that that virtue engenders. In doing so, *Brick Lane* offers an alternative way to imagine the nation. Margaret Doody notes the dual meaning of the word domestic, which joins the form's concerns: "on the one

hand, we have the novel of the home, of the drawing-room, the women's domestic sphere. But the realist novel is 'domestic' in the other sense, too. Thoroughly localized whether in the capital or in the provinces, it is nationally in-turned. It does not take kindly to foreignness, either for excursion or importation."^{xlvii} *Brick Lane* broadens the parochialism of the form, offering a Bangladeshi immigrant in the heart of London's East End as a new domestic heroine, bringing foreignness to bear from within and without. As such, *Brick Lane* works against the construction of national consciousness, secured in the body of the domestic woman, bringing the empire into the borders of the domestic subject and the domestic space. I argue that Anglophone postcolonial writers inherit the form of the domestic novel, but cannot engage in the fictional split between spheres that denies the relation between the empire and the homeland. The postcolonial domestic novel demonstrates the interweaving of the public and private, refusing the possibility of separate spheres.

Near the end of the novel, as Nazneen pretends to pack her daughters' things to return to Bangladesh, she too undergoes a moment in which she imagines herself as a tourist in her adopted nation. Nazneen has already decided that she and her daughters will remain in England and make London their home, but she goes through the motions of packing to delay notifying Chanu. As she sifts through the decades of accumulated family possessions, Nazneen picks up a souvenir mug depicting a thatched-roof cottage, its doorway framed by rose bushes. Considering the image on the trinket, Nazneen imagines touring the England it offers: she "had never seen this England but now, idly, the idea formed that she would visit it" (326).

This moment looks forward to the ways in which *Brick Lane* reconsiders the idea of home as it rewrites the domestic space, replacing the country house with the council flat. Both the reader and Nazneen realize that this image, repeated on the shelves of countless kiosks throughout the city, represents more than just the quaintness of a country village or the venerableness of historic architecture. The cottage stands for England itself, a symbol of the idea of a nation. Though she has decided to remain in London, refusing her husband's decision to remove the family to Bangladesh, Nazneen does not yet imagine herself as a part of the nation the souvenir image depicts. Her idle thoughts of touring the English countryside reveal Nazneen's transformation since her arrival in the city. She has learned to read the signs of the nation and position herself in relation to them. Though she has chosen to make England her home, the image of the country cottage does not fit *her* domestic narrative. She is no longer a temporary resident biding time until her repatriation, but she cannot identify with the idea of England the trinket offers.

The estrangement Nazneen feels from this symbol of England highlights the contested relationship she has with the nation. Part of her alienation is unavoidable, characteristic of her position as a postcolonial immigrant living in the postimperial center. But though *Brick Lane* offers many of the tropes of immigrant fiction, it also reconfigures those tropes by framing them within a postcolonial version of the domestic novel, one that considers the genre's historical importance but also underlines its limitations for postcolonial writers. *Brick Lane* both appropriates and rewrites this most British of genres in order to contest its reification of the divide between public and private space by insisting on the inclusion—and intrusion—of

political and economic discourse within the home. As it sketches a new postcolonial landscape populated with working class Bangladeshi immigrants, *Brick Lane* challenges two of the genre's key undertakings by redefining the virtue of the domestic woman and reimagining the boundaries and possibilities of class. After years of struggling to remain passive in the face of her husband's decisions and the changes to her life, Nazneen comes to embody a new form of the domestic heroine whose virtue lies not in constancy but in social and economic action and independence.

This new construction of domestic virtue reorganizes the imagination of the nation through the figure of the domestic woman. As Ania Loomba notes, "If the nation is an imagined community, that imagining is profoundly gendered."^{xlvi} The way in which the English domestic novel casts wife and marriage is fundamental to the eighteenth-century conception of nation in the face of a burgeoning empire and changing class boundaries. Eighteenth-century domestic fiction turns inward, away from the edges of empire and toward a new valuation of the individual in the union of marriage that provides a space outside public discourse in which to secure national identity. Eighteenth-century readers and writers eased anxieties about the expanding British empire by reifying the idea of home—both the space of the household and the place of the nation—in domestic fiction. As she is removed from discourses of finance and politics, the domestic heroine serves to secure the space of the home against empire and capital. The imagination of the female subject as a depoliticized bearer of national virtue is problematic for the feminist writer because it suppresses female subjectivity in favor of using woman as symbol. In imagining

the political and economic as removed from the home and securing within that home the figure of woman, both the domestic space and the domestic woman become dismissed from the actualities of national discourse even as they are asked to stand for the nation.^{xlix} Yet though Nazneen's role as domestic heroine follows the common nationalist imagining of women cast as mothers and wives,^l these roles neither limit nor disempower her.^{li} On the contrary, beginning her narrative with marriage removes Nazneen from the artifice of the courtship plot, and her role as a mother provides her with grounds to create a new domestic novel with herself at the center of the household.

Brick Lane explores the parameters of the postcolonial domestic space, the ways in which the postcolonial subject can inhabit the inherited form of the domestic novel, and subsequently recode the nation. I read *Brick Lane*, with its clear echoes of Richardson's *Pamela*, squarely in the tradition of the eighteenth-century domestic novel. *Brick Lane* invites the reader to consider the applicability of the form to the postcolonial subject as well as the ways in which that subject can revise the form. Although Ali moves her domestic heroine from the country estate to the council estate, at first she offers Nazneen a life that is no less confining than that of Pamela in B's manor. Like the eponymous heroine of Richardson's novel, Nazneen is circumscribed within a domestic space after being sent from her family due to financial necessity. Ali's protagonist, like her literary predecessor, is physically separated from her family members and insists that her letters, markers of the epistolary form that the novels share, are dearer to her than anything else in the world.^{lii} Like Pamela before her, Nazneen initially attempts to break out of the

home—asking to go to the shops, suggesting that she attend English classes, once running away in a fit of emotion—but before long she resigns herself to the space of her flat, where Nazneen attempts to build, sustain, and protect her family.

Despite the similarities between the situations, in Nazneen, Ali provides the reader with a new model of the domestic heroine. As the protagonist of this domestic novel, Nazneen redefines the virtue that raises Pamela from her position as servant to that lady of a country estate. Pamela's emphasis on the importance of her virtue makes her unique, and her insistence upon this virtue turns B virtuous as well. Though both women reject their proscribed social and economic fates by insisting that they control their own lives, Pamela demonstrates her virtue through steadfastness while Nazneen redefines it as being grounded its opposite: change. With Nazneen as the model, domestic agency depends upon independence and action. Nazneen can claim virtue only by acting as an independent financial and political agent who leads her family through the world rather than merely providing refuge from it. Unlike Pamela, who establishes her virtue through her immutable commitment to the Christian narrative of the chaste woman, Nazneen becomes a domestic heroine by opening the narrative to critique the ideologies of family, culture, and nation that preclude the postcolonial subject from inhabiting the imperial space, and in turn by writing a new narrative for herself that breaks dramatically with the domestic's separation of spheres.

Though Pamela and Nazneen may appear to have little in common, both begin their narratives having been thrust into unfamiliar worlds and left to uncertain fates. Richardson's novel begins with Pamela reporting home about the

sudden death of her employer, Lady B. Since she had acted as a companion to Lady B, treated more as a surrogate daughter than a servant, Pamela finds herself ill-suited for a position in another household. On her deathbed, Lady B asks her son to “take care of my poor Pamela” (7), but she had not made clearer provisions, leaving Pamela essentially unprotected. Similarly, Nazneen’s narrative begins with the story of her inauspicious birth in a Bangladeshi village. Stillborn and not breathing, the infant Nazneen must confront her mother’s fatalistic ideology in her first hours of life. Rather than taking her to a hospital, her mother leaves her “to her fate,” insisting that fighting against her destiny will only weaken the child. Both protagonists will ultimately fight against the fate prescribed them through ideologies of class and gender. By the logic of those ideologies, Pamela should use her body for service in the B household and submit to B’s sexual desires as Nazneen should submit to the will of her father and then her husband. Though each novel articulates a very different version of virtue, both women demonstrate that virtue by refusing the fates prescribed them.

Brick Lane echoes *Pamela* most obviously in its scenes of domestic confinement. Both protagonists spend the majority of their narratives bound within the walls of the spaces they inhabit, while they dream of reuniting with family they have left behind. *Brick Lane* also rehearses a number of Pamela’s pivotal scenes. In an early moment of frustration and helplessness, Nazneen runs blindly through the streets of London as Pamela had desperately run away while lodged at B’s Lincolnshire estate. Nazneen imagines leading different sorts of lives as she tries on her husband’s pants and an ice-skater’s sequined vest in scenes that recall Pamela’s

class-related cross-dressing. And most importantly, Nazneen writes letters to her estranged sister, maintaining a link to her distant family. Through these letters, both women must reconcile the domestic spaces they have come to inhabit with the domestic paradigms they envision. Christopher Flint notes that Pamela begins her narrative “in a state of psychic ambivalence, her virtue under attack, her knowledge of self in disarray, and her sense of place disrupted.”^{liii} Wrenched from her role as companion, and without the protection of Lady B, Pamela does not know where she belongs. Nazneen, having agreed to her father’s choice of her husband and subsequently to her husband’s choice of a home, begins her domestic narrative equally lost in the Tower Hamlets. Though she is not kept imprisoned through threats or force, Nazneen’s limited understanding of English language and social customs confine her as securely to her tiny flat as her husband’s rules.

The fundamental difference between Pamela’s and Nazneen’s embodiments of domestic heroine is the nature of the change each protagonist must enact. While the reform in *Pamela* is external—Pamela’s goodness will transform the reprobate B so that his actions correlate to the honor that accompanies his status, Nazneen’s change is internal. Nazneen must reform herself into the kind of woman who takes her fate into her own hands. From the start of her narrative, Pamela insists inwardly and outwardly on the importance of her virtue. She must protect her body from B at all costs, asserting that the ideology of religion supersedes that of class, and therefore that her chastity must be valued and she valued for it. By contrast, Nazneen’s refusal of her fate does not come from a single ideology offered her. Instead, Nazneen must forge a path to virtue that derives from the multitude of

forces acting upon her. Unlike Pamela, who struggles to uphold the ideology instilled in her by her parents, Nazneen must fight not just against outside forces, but also against her family history. As *Brick Lane* must settle accounts with *Pamela*, its literary progenitor, Nazneen must square things with her biological progenitor, reconciling her mother's fatalism and suicide with her desires for herself and her family. But agency is not its own end in this novel. *Brick Lane's* rewriting of the domestic form rests in the way Nazneen acts as a political and economic agent, within the space and narrative of the personal, undermining the divisions between them.

As the inward focus of the domestic novel calls into question the absence of the British territories that lie outside England's shores, the notion of the courtship plot unencumbered by financial consideration follows the same logic. James Thompson argues that the eighteenth-century popularity of plots centered on courtship and marriage arises from a culture in crisis over value as modernizing nations reconceived money "from treasure to capital."^{liv} The nation's anxieties about its expanding borders were paired with tensions arising from unprecedented class mobility. As wealth became decoupled from land and status, aristocratic narratives of lineage were replaced by progressive narratives of virtue.^{lv} Like the nation and its colonies, "finance and romance become dialectically related, so that the presence of one calls on the palpable absence of the other."^{lvi} In Pamela's case, her repeated assertions that her worth stems not from her class position but rather from her piety allow for a transfer of value from class to quality. The domestic woman relocates the value of her family in her virtue, providing a stable place in the face of

economic flux. For *Brick Lane*, the paradox extends to the nature of the courtship plot as well. Rather than offering a marriage based on romantic love and “free from the taint of monetary coercion,”^{lvii} *Brick Lane* begins with a marriage without a courtship, chosen through a patriarchal-financial contract.

Brick Lane veers from domestic tradition by denying the amatory plot a central role in the novel. The romantic love that traditionally drives the domestic novel’s courtship plot, resolving itself into a marriage imagined as free from economic constraint, appears in *Brick Lane* in multiple forms—Nazneen’s affair with Karim, the feelings she eventually develops for Chanu, her sister’s many attachments. But it does not drive the plot, nor does the narrative find resolution in marriage. In *Brick Lane*, the amatory plots explore the construction of male desire, specifically as it relates to notions of authenticity. In a construction similar to that of the eighteenth-century English domestic narrative, Chanu and Karim both imagine Nazneen as a bearer of nation—wanting to connect to an authentic Bangladesh through their relationships with her. In addition, Hasina and Nazneen’s romantic relationships complicate the ideas of sexual purity attached to the domestic woman. And, in another turn that expands the purview of the domestic novel, *Brick Lane*’s amatory plots extend to explore female desire, presenting both Hasina and Nazneen as desiring subjects. In doing so, *Brick Lane* adds sexual agency to political and economy agency as attributes of the new domestic heroine.

In the first part of this chapter, I chart the ways in which *Brick Lane* reworks the components of the domestic novel, specifically the epistolary form, the amatory

plot, and the country house, in order to challenge the fiction of the public-private split that relegates women to the space of the home and imagines them as apolitical repositories of stability. In destabilizing the elements of the domestic novel and denying the division between public and private the form both constructs and reifies, *Brick Lane* offers a new vision of domestic virtue based on female personal, political, and economic agency. Furthermore, the novel rewrites the possibilities for the domestic narrative in an urban space, denying the ideology of the country house as it rehomes domestic virtue in the public housing of Tower Hamlets. As *Brick Lane* revises ideas about female virtue, it necessarily intervenes in the construction of desire and the female subject.

As *Pamela* allowed a readership to reconceptualize a growing and changing English middle class, offering readers a model of class mobility by rejecting the lineage of proscribed honor,^{lviii} *Brick Lane*, too, offers a way to reimagine class. I argue that *Brick Lane* follows a Pamelaic model that reimagines a contemporary British middle class that includes postcolonial immigrants. Like *Pamela*, *Brick Lane* is a story of class mobility. The novel ends with Nazneen rehearsing middle-class consumption, admiring the flower boxes she has purchased for the façade of her flat and contemplating how to spend the extra twenty-pound note in her purse. While she is clearly comfortable in her roles as mother and businesswoman, the novel falters at the end. As Nazneen's story of social mobility comes to a close, the novel cannot find a place for her in the middle-class space it has imagined. The resulting ending lacks the nuance of the narrative that precedes it, falling into an uncritical

cosmopolitan celebration of independence and possibility that undercuts many of the text's adroit readings of class race and gender.

The Amatory, the Epistolary, and the Country House

The eighteenth-century domestic novel separates the space of the home from the public narratives of politics and commerce through the amatory plot, the epistolary mode, and the country house. *Brick Lane* takes each of these components and redeploys it in terms that deny the possibility of a public-private split, insisting on the position of the home in the world. The novel retains the amatory plot, which gives women purpose in marriage and draws attention from the economics of coupling by coding male desire as constructed through female virtue, but moves it to a secondary storyline. Romantic love remains a possibility for Hasina, but Nazneen's narrative turns primarily on economic, political, and personal agency. Her affair with Karim is an aside which neither progresses nor resolves her narrative. While written primarily in the third person, the novel turns to the epistolary mode for correspondence between Nazneen and Hasina. Their letters contrast the lives the two women lead in London and Dhaka, bringing the postcolony into the metropolis. Transferring the action of the domestic novel from the country home to the council estates removes the domestic plot from the "ideology of the country estate,"^{lix} which is built on an economics of imperialism that conceals its source of income through its inward focus.^{lx}

Nancy Armstrong argues that Richardson's domestic novel is revolutionary in that it considers Pamela, the female servant, as a legitimate entrant into sexual

and marital contracts: “Richardson implies an independent party with whom the male has to negotiate, a female self who exists outside and prior to the relationships under male control.”^{lxi} However, Armstrong’s insistence that because Pamela refuses to give her body to B she implicitly asserts her right to freely enter the sexual contract offers a limited reading of the text and its sexual politics.^{lxii} Though Armstrong names Pamela as an independent party who can freely negotiate, Pamela can only assert this freedom by refusing to enter a sexual relationship with B outside a marriage contract. Choosing to yield to B would abrogate any power she has. Her only real choice is to maintain her chastity in the face of B’s repeated attacks. At one point in the novel, B offers Pamela a contract that outlines the terms of his concubinage proposition, telling her exactly what he would provide her in exchange for free use of her body. According to character, she rejects his proposal on moral grounds, countering each of B’s claims with a reason why she cannot become his mistress. Armstrong works to elide this problem, going so far as to argue that “while Mr. B offers her money in exchange for her body, she maintains that her real value does not derive from her body,” but then she quickly asserts, “Pamela insists that her identity depends on her sexual purity,”^{lxiii} collapsing Pamela’s subjectivity back into her expression of chastity. As Armstrong fails to note, Pamela’s body only has value if she does not misuse it; she must maintain her purity in order to prove herself virtuous enough to be worthy of a marriage above her station. The logic of the domestic narrative, which must lead to marriage earned through virtue, leaves her no real choice.

As *Brick Lane* rewrites the idea of virtue, it necessarily intervenes in the construction of desire. Armstrong argues that the power of the figure of the domestic woman derives from her ability to instruct men and women what the former are to desire in the latter; that is, the domestic creates a blueprint for the mechanics of desire. That desire becomes narrated as middle class love, troped by the virtue of the domestic woman attracting and reforming the wayward man, privileging romantic love and insisting that marriage should be an alliance freed from economic and political concerns. The domestic novel directs male desire toward the domestic woman and directs female desire towards marriage as the ultimate aspiration. Thusly, Armstrong argues, the domestic novel helped to create and also continually reinforces the powerful narrative of romantic love as its own ideology, untarnished by the world outside the home.^{lxiv} In this way, middle class love also comes to instruct female desire. The eighteenth-century domestic novel, especially in Richardson's iteration, has close ties with the conduct book, as it draws on the form for its instructive qualities.^{lxv} The narrative of courtship and marriage provides lessons for how young women should behave, but more importantly it teaches them what to expect. The eighteenth-century domestic stands at the beginning of what will become a long history of plots that center female desire on the particular goal of marrying under the auspices of romantic love detached from financial concerns.^{lxvi}

By commencing with marriage rather than ending in one, the narrative of *Brick Lane* charts an alternate trajectory of desire and demands a different engine to move its plot. Though the novel feints toward romance with Nazneen's affair, it

refuses find resolution through either marriage to Karim or reconciliation with Chanu. Though Karim introduces her to a brand of politics with which she otherwise might not have familiarized herself, Nazneen learns quickly enough that Karim's political rhetoric is as ineffectual as Chanu's. Perhaps most importantly, Nazneen earns neither reward nor punishment for her adultery. Though neither Chanu nor Karim invest in the idea of romantic love as a driving force in their lives, both subscribe to the domestic concept that the virtuous woman provides the foundation for the home. *Brick Lane* rewrites *Pamela's* purity by inflecting the concept with overtones of race and nation. Both men locate Nazneen's virtue in her authenticity. Despite the Ahmed household's physical location in the city of London, Nazneen's presence transforms the East End council flat into a Bangladeshi home. For both men, Nazneen's roots in the tiny village of Gouripour imbue her with an authenticity that can transport "home" to the space of England.

As she considers leaving Chanu for Karim, Nazneen realizes that the latter sees her as a fulfillment of his idea of an authentic Bangladeshi women, rather than as a subject in her own right. Karim explains, "you've got two types [...] There's your Westernized girl, wears what she likes, all the makeup going on [...] Then there's your religious girl, wears the scarf or even a burkha" (284). However, neither of these categories applies to Nazneen; she, unlike the Bangladeshi women born in England, is "the real thing" (284). Nazneen is quickly reminded of Chanu's early categorization of her as "an unspoilt girl from the village" (284)—realizing that her husband and her lover value her in the same way. With Nazneen, Karim sees the authenticity of a village girl without the uncertainty of an arranged marriage. Like

Chanu, Karim sees Nazneen as an audience for his beliefs. He looks to her for validation of his ethnicity and religion. Thusly, both Chanu and Nazneen code Nazneen as the bearer of a national authenticity through which they can access Bangladesh.

The epistolary sections of the novel complicate overlapping formulations of female and national authenticity. Nazneen's sister Hasina bursts into the Tower Hamlets flat in a series of Richardsonian letters, bringing the politics and problems of Bangladesh along with her. Hasina shares Nazneen's roots in the village, but she leaves the family home earlier than Nazneen, running off to Dhaka for a love match. Further complicating the idea of the domestic, Hasina never leaves her nation, but is frequently unhomed in the course of the novel. Nazneen, the diasporic sister, leaves the nation but remains in her domestic space. Hasina quickly learns that her marriage is not like those that resolve domestic novels. Rather than endure verbal and physical abuse from her husband, she finds her own lodgings and work in Dhaka. Like Pamela, she is female, poor, and vulnerable, and unable to return home. Unlike Pamela, Hasina must surrender her body and chastity in order to survive. Her factory work, prostitution, and inability to secure a lasting home make for an uncommon domestic narrative. However, Hasina's plot uses a domestic engine—her desire to form a conjugal household rooted in romantic love. At the novel's end Chanu reports that Hasina has left the stability of Lovely's household to run away with the cook. Though Nazneen understands Chanu's predictions that their affair will end badly, she also considers her sister's decision as a legitimate course of action. Nazneen's response—"she isn't going to give up" (367)—links Hasina's

search for happiness in her own domestic space to her sister's struggle for independence, offering the amatory as a valid route to constructing a household.

Though the epistolary mode comprises relatively few pages of *Brick Lane*, the sisters' letters form a vital part of the novel's narrative structure. The letters split the narrative into two, both in content and form, following Nazneen and Hasina as each tries to carve out a home in the domestic space allotted to her. In *Brick Lane*, the epistolary provides the sisters the space to reconcile with the ideologies of both their literary and biological progenitors. In their letters they confront the predetermined legacies of the amatory plot of the domestic novel and the fatalistic ideology of their mother. Furthering the novel's insistence on the inextricability of the public and private, the novel's epistolary sections place the political in the form of the familiar letter. The sisters' correspondence links the worlds of London and Dhaka, juxtaposing Nazneen and Hasina's struggles for economic and social freedom.

Nazneen and Hasina's familiar letters provide both intimacy and distance. The epistolary allows the reader to feel as if she has a direct window to the writer's mind; Christopher Flint argues that her missives make Pamela "legible" for "her letters are fairly accurate transcripts of her thoughts."^{lxvii} However, as Linda Kauffman notes: "letters have long functioned to defamiliarize the distance between fiction and reality by drawing attention to the fictiveness of the narrative act."^{lxviii} The letters in *Brick Lane* serve both purposes. Hasina's letters interrogate and interrupt the main narrative with both their subject matter and their tone. In contrast to the prose of the narrator and that of her sister's correspondence,

Hasina's letters appear to be written hurriedly, desperately, as she pours her thoughts and fears into a narrative. Hasina's haphazard letters burst into the carefully measured prose of Nazneen's third-person narrative. Her fused sentences and missing words impart a sense of immediacy that recalls Richardson's "to the moment" style of epistolary.^{lxix} Her reliance on simple declarative sentences adds to the effect. For Hasina, the threat to her security and sovereignty over her body and right to work is no less immediate or constant than Pamela's threat of attack from B. The sisters correspond in Bengali, but as the letters are transliterated into English for the reader; Hasina's nonstandard Bengali is rendered into broken English, retaining her awkward constructions and grammatical errors. The chaotic letters create the illusion of an authentic speaking voice, while the ungrammatical English reminds the reader that much of the novel's dialogue takes place in Bengali and is translated for the reader through the narrative.^{lxx}

While the letters in *Pamela* offer the reader entrance into Pamela's thoughts, delving deeper into the privacy of the domestic, the epistles in *Brick Lane* combine public and private in a manner inherent to the project of the book. Setting the letters within the larger context of *Brick Lane's* third-person narrative widens the scope of the domestic novel, placing the domestic narrative of the individual within a larger community. Instead of staging the conflict between a girl and her employer removed from the world outside the home, Ali shows the confluence of societal and economic forces that work against Hasina's desire for financial independence. Each time she strikes out on her own, a man appears offering his protection—a friend at the factory, her landlord, her neighbor. Each time protection turns to liability. The

factory manager fires her over her friendship with Ahmed; her landlord's paternal kindness turns to sexual predation; the neighbor who looks in on her becomes her pimp. Like Pamela, Hasina constantly finds herself in compromising positions, but unlike Pamela, the text does not guard Hasina's virtue. Despite the threat that B represents, the trajectory of *Pamela's* amatory plot keeps the danger in check. Richardson insists on a contractual arrangement between the two characters; her probity begets integrity in him. Hasina's virtue has no such effect on the men in her life; the space of the domestic narrative provides her no protection.

Richardson confines nearly all of the action of *Pamela* to the space of the country estate, and while there it moves deep into the interiors of the home. The novel follows Pamela into her bedroom and her closet, spatially representing the interiority of the subject and the individual that forms the subject matter of the modern novel.^{lxxi} The location of the novel in the country house, coupled with B's considerable social and political power, makes it easy to create a domestic space that appears to be removed from political economy.^{lxxii} *Brick Lane*, however, moves the domestic from the pastoral country estate to the urban council estates—from a place of the private recesses of the closets and back stairwells of the gentry home to public housing projects. The Tower Hamlets stand in stark contrast to Lincolnshire and the other B estates not just in their material conditions, but also in their politics of the home. As the city becomes the site of the domestic novel, the proximity of people and commerce presents a space of intermingling, where spaces cannot be easily separated out from each other. The Ahmeds' flat follows this pattern. Chanu fills the apartment with books and papers. He frames each diploma and certificate

he has earned, turning their walls into an altar of authorized discourse. Though Chanu tries to control Nazneen's access to outside information, refusing her request to take English classes and insisting that the family speak only Bengali in the home, his purchases of the sewing machine and the computer break down the final barrier between the home and the world outside of it. At times it seems as if their tiny flat is under attack from information both from inside and out. When Chanu returns to work, Karim the middleman brings stories of political and economic struggles along with his bales of jeans and sequined vests. Karim leaves magazines and brochures about the problems of the Muslim world, and the flyers that litter the courtyard are also pushed into the mail slot into the family's living room.

Moved to the public square, the battle between Pamela and Mr. B over class and the female body becomes a much larger contest, as a cultural dispute over lewd calendars and headscarves erupts into a flyer war on the estate. The struggle for authority over the space of the council houses was apparently anticipated by the architects of the meeting hall, which "had been built without concession to beauty and with the expectation of defilement" (170). Despite their expectations, or perhaps because of them, the council authority had added notices both in English and Bengali asserting, "Vandals Will Be Prosecuted" (170). In defiance of their claim, "someone had written in careful flowing silver spray over the wall *Pakis*. And someone else, in less beautiful, but confident, black letters, had added *Rule*" (170). This battle to control the representation of, indeed to speak for, the council houses becomes a metonymy of the flyer war, in which local groups of first- and second-generation Asian immigrants and working class white Britons stake their claim for

cultural control of the area. The battle, which begins over a racy calendar hung in one of the shops and devolves into a larger argument about multiculturalism in the school curriculum and dress code, itself exemplifies the struggle to represent the space of London and its subjects. The home and the council flats soon become a staging ground for the flyer war as anti-immigration agitators contend with resistance from the Bengali community in the council houses.

As the flyer war begins, the family finds itself drawn in to local and global politics. Racial tensions rise, and the family finds itself in the middle of a rhetorical battlefield. Police presence increases on the estate, and leaflets from the anti-immigrant Lionhearts and the rival Bengal Tigers are pushed through letterboxes and litter the courtyards. The domestic space lies at the center of the conflict, which plays itself out over women's bodies. A flyer warns, "HANDS OFF OUR BREASTS!" (186), in response to the removal of a lewd calendar in the community hall. The Bengal Tigers return in kind, telling non-Muslims to: "KEEP YOUR BREASTS TO YOURSELF" (187). Chanu, consistent only in his opposition to narrow-mindedness, responds sartorially. He demands his daughters wear traditional dress when the Lionhearts prevail, refusing "to be cowed by these Muslim-hating peasants" (192). When he sees women wearing the hijab, he answers the Bengal Tigers by demanding the girls wear skirts. The women seem to respond in kind, upgrading from their headscarves to Burkhas as the conflict escalates. While her daughters dutifully serve as walking symbols of their father's political contempt, Karim's political rhetoric excites Nazneen and draws her closer to him. Unlike Chanu, who

lives for his fantasy of Bangladesh as a beautiful past combined with the dream of a glorious return, Karim argues for action and change in the East End.

Though the flyers do demonstrate the racial tensions that color the lives of the Bangladeshi immigrants in the East End, their rhetoric, like that of the meetings of the Bengali Tigers, is more laughable than dangerous. The meetings that have been organized to aid the community and combat racism quickly descend into absurdity, with petty arguments over the name of the organization and power struggles amongst the group leaders. Though they can agree that they are for “protecting our local ummah and supporting the global ummah,” they have trouble deciding what they are against, finally settling on “any group that opposes us” (174). The flyer war and the Bengali Tigers meetings come to resemble Chanu’s framed certificates and library petition. The fiery rhetoric of both sides fizzles into a bit of shouting. “It’s a massacre out there,” Chanu relays as he makes his way home through one of the demonstrations; however, the slaughter in question is that of his toes trampled by people mulling around the courtyard. Months of flyers result in a cancelled Lionharts march. Karim’s protest garners a sizeable crowd, but even Nazneen, who has been close to the Tigers and its organizers since the group’s inception, has difficulty understanding the protest’s message, mishearing the chants of “Workers United!” as “Something about Gurkhas? Or Burkhas?” (346).

The letters Hasina and Nazneen send stand in stark contrast to the ineffective rhetoric of Chanu and Karim, the Lionharts, and the Tigers. The form of the familiar letter is traditionally gendered as female, and the content of the letters is ostensibly personal.^{lxxiii} Yet though the sisters’ epistles provide a private space for each to

establish her voice and reconcile with their mother's legacy, the letters also subvert the divide between the public and the private, writing the political into the novel's most private communication. Hasina's letters narrate the political and social landmines of being poor and female in Bangladesh. She writes of the stigma of being a "garment girl," of her unfair firing from the factory, and of her need to rely on prostitution in order to survive. Her letters detail the difficulties of her friend Monju, the victim of an acid burn, and Monju's struggle to pay for medical care for her injuries. Likewise, Nazneen haltingly attempts to enunciate her political thoughts in her letters to Hasina. When the flyer war begins, she recognizes its importance, but when trying to explain the events to Hasina, she is unsure of how to articulate the political narrative that unfolds around her: "She didn't know where to start, and besides, it might sound alarming" (192). She quickly realizes that the drama of the flyer war has been largely manufactured by the rhetoric of the flyers themselves: "Something is happening here in the flats. Men are writing leaflets and pushing them through the doors. She smiled. That was all that was happening. She began to giggle" (193). As with Hasina's writing about the conditions in Dhaka, Nazneen's epistolary narration of the flyer war allows her a clearer vision of the political realities of her environment. The inclusion of the flyer war in the letters encapsulates the traffic of public and private the novel stands upon. As the private space of the home is invaded by the public contest of the flyers, itself a struggle for the representation of the domestic (in the sense of the nation), the flyers are then reinscribed into the familiar letter.

Revising Domestic Virtue

As *Brick Lane* rewrites the elements of the English domestic novel and complicates notions of female virtue and ethnic authenticity, the novel offers a reimagination of domestic virtue. This domestic virtue opposes that of the eighteenth-century version by substituting steadfastness with action and change. While Pamela proves her worth by remaining chaste in the face of B's many attempts to seduce her, Nazneen enacts domestic virtue by claiming personal, political, and economic agency. In shifting the courtship narrative to a secondary plot, Nazneen's narrative reaches its climax with the loss and recovery of her daughter. It is Shahana's return that completes Nazneen's revision of female and family virtue. In this scene she confronts the specter of her mother for the last time, refusing to leave her child or her life to fate. Venturing into the midst of the riot to search for her daughter, Nazneen rewrites an earlier mother-daughter relationship and through this rewriting charts a different narrative. Nazneen's decision to remain in London to raise her daughters grounds her virtue in her motherhood and the model of independence she offers her children, choosing a matriarchal rather than conjugal or patriarchal organization of family. Nazneen's reliance on a network of female friends for assistance and opportunity provides an alternative model for her daughters even as her choice to keep them in London offers them freedoms they cannot have in Bangladesh.

Both Nazneen and Hasina model a sense of domestic virtue through work. Nazneen's matriarch model of family relies on her economic agency. Her unsupervised sewing work allows her to save money to help her sister and provides

her with a means of support so that she may remain in London. As she becomes more accustomed to earning and handling money, Nazneen proves to be both a hard worker and a keen observer of capital. She bribes her daughter to behave better with the promise to purchase earrings for her, and realizes long before Razia does that Razia's son Tariq has been stealing money to support his drug habit. Both Hasina's and Nazneen's narratives outline the manner in which each keeps her home, touching upon the domestic novel's tradition as conduct book. After establishing herself as an economic actor and accumulating a surplus of capital, Nazneen turns her attentions to the space of her flat, expressing middle class values through subscribing to a new vision of home. While Hasina has few resources to marshal, she writes of the few pieces of furniture she has, and the way in which she displays the family photos Nazneen sends. Like Pamela before her, Nazneen learns that she must reflect the changes in her life by reflecting her rising status in the adornment of her home.

As their letters intertwine news of the personal and the political, the epistolary mode offers both Hasina and Nazneen a space to narrate their own lives. For Nazneen, chronicling her life and the news of the council estates leads her to agency. Unlike Hasina, whose unruly missives flow in a near stream of consciousness, Nazneen struggles to turn her thoughts into narrative, her challenges reflecting her own gradual and difficult ownership of her life and her narrative: "the thought of writing was always pleasant, but the process was painful. However much she thought of to tell, however the words flowed in her head as she performed her chores, despite the emotion that swelled and throbbed while the storylines formed,

the telling was inevitably brief and blunt, a poor thing, stunted as a failed crop” (100). But despite her struggles, or perhaps because of them, the form of the familiar letter offers Nazneen the power to speak she does not find elsewhere. Nazneen links her act of writing to her rejection of her mother’s fatalism, extolling the ideology of the domestic novel’s progressive narrative. When she takes up the pen, she contemplates ways in which she can assert control over her life and narrative. She links her decision to take her son to the hospital, a decision that directly contradicts her mother’s position that a mother should accept her children’s fate, to her writing: “She drew a face and made it smile. I fought for him. She added a matchstick body. Not accepting. Fighting. She drew a flower and gave it a long stem. Fate! Fate business! [...] I move my pen. This way. That way. Began an elephant and turned the back legs to a horse. Nobody else here. Nobody else moving my pen” (100). In the space of their letters, Nazneen and Hasina obliquely and directly discuss their mother’s suicide; their conversations about their mother’s acceptance of fate lead each to insist on refusing the model she offers them.

Alistair Cormack argues that while Nazneen’s repudiation of her mother’s fatalistic ideology allows her to develop a subjectivity with the freedom of political engagement, her rejection of Karim marks a shift away from politics. He insists that these rejections represent “liberation, but also a move away from any potential political collectivity in which she might be able to recognize herself.”^{lxxiv} But Cormack’s definition of political engagement reduces politics to the public sphere only, ignoring the ways in which this novel codes the domestic as a site of political engagement. Though Karim does offer Nazneen an avenue into the political world,

the novel makes it clear that he would ultimately prove to be an obstacle to Nazneen developing her own political thought or actions. Karim's proclamations about Bangladeshi women in London suggest that he has no desire for her to act as an independent political agent—not only does he not want a Westernized wife who works outside the home, she also disparages the religious women because “all they want to do is *argue*” (284). Karim's comments suggest that if their affair were to become a permanent alliance, Nazneen would move into the role she fulfills for Chanu, that of the uncritical listener. Moreover, the idea that Nazneen could not access the realm of the political without Karim seems to rest in the domestic separation of spheres *Brick Lane* fights against. As Nazneen's laughter over the flyer war demonstrates, the political news she receives from Hasina carries more weight than the Bengal Tigers meetings and marches.

Cormack's reading ignores Nazneen's frequent critiques of the rhetoric she hears from Chanu, Karim, and the Bengal Tigers. Though she falls for much of Karim's rhetoric, over the course of their relationship she begins to question many of his proclamations and those made during Tigers meetings. While it may be Karim who brings her to local politics, he is not her only route to knowledge. When Chanu tries to convince Shahana and Bibi that Bangladesh is the happiest nation in the world, Nazneen tells him she does not trust the survey he cites. He points to the authority of the written word, but she insists that though “it might be written down,” she doesn't believe it (257). For evidence, she points to Hasina's unhappiness: “she started to tell him the things she had hidden from him over the years, and at first she stumbled around as if it were lies she were telling and not the

truth, and then the words began to flow and he was stiller than she had ever seen him" (258). Hasina's narrative proves more convincing to both of them than all of the novel's political rhetoric; Chanu decides that he will make a plan to help her and when he returns to Dhaka he asks Nazneen to send Hasina money. Nazneen's political awakening continues into the final pages of the novel, when she returns to the community center to ask after Karim, demonstrating a level of confidence she has rarely shown before. As she speaks with a former Bengal Tiger about the dissolution of the old group and the possibility of a new one, Nazneen's thoughts show how well she has come to understand the functioning and limitations of an association like the Bengal Tigers: "If it was his group, then he would become chairman. The Questioner was moving on. That left a vacancy" (364). Nazneen is not the same woman she was when she amazed herself by raising her hand at her first Bengal Tiger meeting. She reacts to the invitation to join his new group positively: "I'll come. I'd like to, though I only went to a few of the other meetings" (364). After these words she adds, "But that was before I knew what I could do" (365).

Nazneen's realization that she can protect and provide for her daughters through action registers as a fundamental shift in her narrative. Unlike Pamela, whose marriage and subsequent class ascent comes through exhibiting constancy, Nazneen expresses her domestic virtue through change. Even as the public space invades the private, so too does Nazneen invite the public space into her home. As she had done through her engagement of politics, Nazneen similarly rewrites the notion of the domestic heroine by taking control of her life through work. While *Pamela's* plot relies on the courtship and marriage of Pamela and B, labor offers

Nazneen fulfillment, courage, and independence. Her sewing work brings Karim into the house, permits her to leave Chanu, allows her to provide for her daughters, and ultimately cements her relationship with the other women of the council estates. Long before she is ready to take political or even personal agency, she begins to act as a financial agent, hiding money she has earned and secretly sending it to Hasina. Whereas Pamela's leisure time prepares her for her future role as the lady of a country estate, Nazneen's piecework allows her to rehearse the financial independence she will need to exhibit as the head of the household. Eventually, the women replace their piecework with a fledgling business, and Nazneen finds herself poised on the threshold of the middle class.

Before she marries B, Pamela's home doubles as her place of work. Pamela is an employee in the B household, having been put out to service when her family could not afford her upkeep. However, as a favorite of Lady B, Pamela filled a role closer to that of a daughter than a laborer. In order for her to raise her status by marrying B, Pamela needs to leave the world of work, her duties converted to those of managing the labor of others. By contrast, the work Hasina, Nazneen, and most of the Bangladeshi women in *Brick Lane* perform provides them with access to financial, personal, and political independence. While Pamela's virtue is epitomized by her chastity, the virtue Nazneen embodies issues from her willingness and desire to perform wage labor. Moreover, *Brick Lane* takes up Pamela's project of class expansion and mobility for the individual subject as a part of the family unit. Pamela's virtuous rise in status allowed eighteenth-century readers to reimagine class on a vertical axis. If a simple but honest servant can become the lady of a

country estate, then possibilities open for the mobility of the growing mercantile class.^{lxxv} *Brick Lane* works to expand conceptions of class along a horizontal axis, allowing for the possibility of envisioning—albeit falteringly—a British middle class that fully includes postcolonial subjects.

Pamela's reimagining of class boundaries reflects apprehension about a changing social structure. Christopher Flint argues that while *Pamela* “registers the exhilaration of class ascent, [it] also stresses the anxieties accompanying radical change, seeking, in the end, to forget what it first appears to celebrate by obliterating the ground upon which its class and family drama operates.”^{lxxvi} In particular, *Pamela* registers anxiety over performing labor. In her essay, “Pamela’s Work,” Laura Rosenthal notes that though Pamela often claims her willingness to labor manually rather than submit to B’s wishes, in the text “this willingness, unlike the heroine’s sexual confidence, is never tested.”^{lxxvii} Rosenthal argues that the critical focus on tensions between middle-class and aristocratic ideologies obscures Pamela’s status as a worker in the B household. Though Pamela’s position is technically that of a salaried employee, her role as companion to Lady B has offered her “the education of a daughter rather than the tasks of a servant.”^{lxxviii} Despite her repeated assurances that she will happily embrace honest labor to be free of B, the narrative removes such labor from her scope of possibilities. Pamela rarely reports having performed any work. Her one attempt at scullery tasks pains her delicate hands. When she is taken to the Lincolnshire estate instead of being returned to her parents, any remaining pretense of Pamela laboring is successfully eliminated. Her removal to Lincolnshire compels her into a life of leisure, filling her time with the

writing that will eventually win a marriage proposal from B. *Pamela* must keep its protagonist from work in order to allow her to perform the class role she will marry into.

In *Brick Lane* wage labor liberates rather than confines. Both in Dhaka and London, the women in the novel find friendship through work, broadening their circles outside the home and offering a sense of community that Pamela does not have. More importantly, wage labor allows Nazneen economic agency, both in terms of earning and spending. Nazneen's labor offers her access to the world outside their flat and eventually leads her to possibilities of economic and political agency. When Chanu's dictum and her limited English vocabulary restrict her to her home, Nazneen is overwhelmed by her boredom and the repetition of her daily labors. Her unhappiness turns to resentment of the trappings of home: "she hated the socks as she rubbed them with soap, and dropped the pottery tiger and elephant as she dusted them and was disappointed when they did not break" (24). Before long, her hatred leads to acts of sedition. She hides chilies in Chanu's sandwiches, pairs dirty socks with clean ones, and mixes up his files: "All her chores, peasants in his princely kingdom, rebelled in turn. Small insurrections, designed to destroy the state from within" (40). The arrival of the sewing machine, however, is greeted with jubilation: the family gathers with palpable excitement, exhilarated as Nazneen stitches together old dishrags and underpants. With the sewing machine, Nazneen may turn purposeless rebellions into an economic defiance of her role in the conjugal family. Even before the machine arrives Nazneen understands that Chanu

will never know how many zippers or buttonholes she can sew each day, and that she may freely divert funds to send to Hasina.

Like her sister, Hasina demonstrates her virtue through a willingness to work. Hasina's first job at a garment factory in Dhaka also provides her with independence and community. "Working is like cure," Hasina writes. Hasina depicts work as bringing the unfettered companionship that is supposed to define contemporary marriage, foreshadowing Nazneen's situation at the end of the novel: "Sewing pass the day and I sit with friends. As actual fact it bring true friendship and true love. Love marriage maybe is better call something else than love. In real marriage it grow slow slow slow. Habit. Sit together. Give bit here take bit there. That is how it come at work" (107). John Marx highlights the similarity in the sisters' relationship to labor, arguing that "*Brick Lane* presents the feminization of work as a family affair"; he goes on to discuss how in both its London and Dhaka plots *Brick Lane* addresses the social dangers that arise when these women enter the paid workforce.^{lxxix} Jorina's position at the factory leads the other women of the Tower Hamlets to speculate about her husband's ability to provide for the family. Hanufa's attempts to learn massage are deemed "un-Islamic." And Hasina's reputation as a garment girl begets catcalls in the street. All undergo periods of ostracization from their communities. Perhaps recognizing these dangers, Chanu warily monitors all aspects of Nazneen's labor at first, serving as her middleman, supervisor, and inspector.

As work leads to economic agency, Nazneen learns to perform consumption in order to rehearse a middle-class existence. By the end of the novel, Nazneen and

Razia are not just laboring women but entrepreneurs who have cut out middlemen and managerial positions to form a collective. Razia travels throughout the city to establish new client relationships. Nazneen asks for a role as a designer, promising to take their business to a new level. As much potential as the new business holds for all involved, however, the novel quickly reminds the reader that they have not left the council houses, and suggests that they may never do so. As the women look over the first samples of their new clothing line, they marvel at the sight of Jorina wearing the apparel they've constructed for women unlike them. When Jorina suggests that she could keep the garment, Razia snaps her back to the reality of their lives in Tower Hamlets. Though they have literally tailored the clothing to her form, making her into "Mrs. Average Shape," Jorina, like the others, does not lead the life of the middle-class customers the business will supply. "Are you going to wear it for frying onions?" Razia asks, before reminding the women and the readers that they are still struggling financially, telling them who she can pay with her cash on hand and which of the women will have to wait until more money comes in.

Pamela is read as a novel of marriage, with most critical attention focusing on the union of Pamela and her employer and the negotiations that make such a match not just possible, but desirable. However, *Pamela* does not end with marriage. Pamela and Mr. B marry nearly 200 pages before the novel concludes. Though Pamela's epistles dwell briefly on her legally wedded bliss and B's sister provides some obstacles to the acceptance as a legitimate couple, the amatory plot is effectively ended with the nuptials. Before she can assume her role as the new Lady B, Pamela needs to learn class-appropriate consumption. In the pages between

Pamela's wedding and the editorial observations at the end of the novel, Pamela learns to cast off the vestments of servant and companion and don those of household manager, a role vital to the ideology of the domestic novel. In addition to changing the way she addresses her husband and his peers, Pamela must enact a new relationship to material goods. While Pamela has demonstrated throughout her narrative that she keeps mindful account of her meager wealth and possessions, carefully considering how much she has and how she might use her funds to help her family, she has had no occasion to spend money. The clothing and linen she owns have been passed on to her by Lady B; her food and lodgings come with her position as household help. She even secures her writing supplies by asking B for them. Before her marriage to Mr. B, Pamela does not purchase goods.

After marrying B, Pamela must learn to purchase commodities that will project her value, and by the logic of domesticity, B's value. Her proper display of consumption will demonstrate outwardly what her virtue has shown B, that she can create a domestic space reflective of their position. Nazneen's domestic narrative brings her to a similar place, where she must learn to spend appropriately. Until now, most of Nazneen's earnings have gone to the basic needs of her family as dictated by her husband—repaying Chanu's debt to Mrs. Islam, contributing to the home fund. Leaving Chanu and standing up to Mrs. Islam has left Nazneen with a different set of choices. Having created a new domestic space for herself and her children, Nazneen must learn the roles of household manager and consumer adding the responsibilities of presenting the home to that of providing for the family, bridging the gap between public and private. Again, Razia leads the way. Razia pairs

her symbolic embrace of the Union Jack with a commitment to work and providing for the conjugal family that echoes the middle class Protestant work ethic endemic to the novel's rise. Before his death, Razia's husband sent money to the village mosque in Bangladesh asking that work be done in his name. Razia appeals for increased spending on local concerns. She refuses the austerity her husband wants them to practice, arguing that their children need more clothing and toys. Once on her own, Razia works as much as possible, directing all of her profits to her children and her home. When her son sells their furniture to support his drug habit, she refurnishes as soon as she can.

Nazneen learns to perform the consumption that will ground her life and her daughters' lives in their current home. Sitting in Razia's apartment, Nazneen regrets treating her home in London as a temporary space: "she should have brought plants and tended and loved them [...] she should have sewn new covers for the armchairs [...] But she had left everything undone" (250). Nazneen considers the difference in the current iteration of Razia's home, once a space filled with junk evoking "the feel of a settler camp" (261), now to a carefully-designed space living area that seems to Nazneen like a real home. Nazneen notes how Razia had saved for years to furnish with new carpets, mirrors, and a three-piece living room suite, as she considers whether to remain in London or leave for Dhaka. Razia's household offers her a possibility, an answer to her question of what she might do if she were to remain in London and not marry Karim. Once Nazneen leaves Chanu and starts her business, she begins to emulate Razia's brand of domestic consumerism: she installs and

plants window boxes, which she views from Razia's window during the meeting, taking a quick break to gaze upon the fruits of her labor.

The scene of the business meeting occurs three months after Chanu's departure from London and Nazneen's defining moment of refusal. The reader learns little about these months, other than a brief reflection on how little Nazneen knew, how much Razia helped her, and that the lean times were filled with meals of rice and dal. John Marx argues that the narrative break between Nazneen's decision to stay in London and her establishing herself as a designer and a businesswoman signifies an inability of the text to narrate Nazneen's seizure of economic agency. His reading, however, rests upon evidence drawn from early in the novel, during Nazneen's first years in London. He notes how Nazneen seemed mystified by the basic interactions of Londoners and their relations to modern capital, wondering at the movements of the people she sees, as if each "was on a private, urgent mission to execute a precise and demanding plan: to get a promotion today [or] to buy a newspaper with the right coins so that the exchange was swift and seamless."^{lxxx} Marx argues that "*Brick Lane* could not be clearer on this point: Nazneen lacks the knowledge to make the kinds of choices that economic calculability both engenders and requires."^{lxxxi}

Marx's argument rests upon his reading of Nazneen's change into an economic agent occurring at a single, unnarrated moment during the novel's break between Chanu's departure and the final scenes. However, Nazneen does not move directly from wondering over the ability to pay with exact change in pounds sterling to suggesting her role as designer in a new business in a single unnarrated moment.

As her narrative progresses she evidences increasing skill at reading the economic system of London. She often compares the economies of London and Gouripour. As the novel continues, Nazneen shows that she is comfortable as an economic agent for the household. No longer forbidden from going visiting the grocery store alone, she composes lists of household items she needs to purchase. Looking at the new restaurants on Brick Lane, she recognizes the upscale restaurants by the waiters clad in black rather than “the absence of decoration that Nazneen knew to be a style” (183). She also recognizes her daughters’ consumer desires and how to manipulate them by using the money she earns from her piece work, bribing Shahana to smile for the family photo by offering to buy her the earrings she covets. As she searches for Shahana during the riots, Nazneen shows her familiarity with local businesses, running from one branch of the café Bibi mentions to the next. No longer the girl from the village who cannot speak English, Nazneen navigates the streets of the East End with ease.

Throughout the novel, as she tries to comprehend the consumer-driven culture of London, Nazneen tends to romanticize the simplicity of Gouripour. She remembers the village as a place where people wanted for little, as opposed to what she seems to present as the manufactured desires of Londoners: “the grown-ups had grumbled, of course, from time to time. The carpenter needed a new saw. The shoemaker needed more customers. (All those children running around barefoot!) The sweetmaker complained about the price of pistachios. But if they had a chair and a table and food to eat every day, then God be praised” (66). Her romantic notions of always having enough are undercut by the “begging letters” from Chanu’s

relatives and the squalid conditions in which Hasina lives. Though she may gloss the problems of the village, Nazneen resists similar inclinations toward the council estates. After the demonstrates and the rioting, local officials “came and walked around the estate with their hands behind their backs to show they were not responsible, leaning forward slightly to indicate that they were looking forward to the future” clearly hoping to find exotic squalor, oppressed women, and dangerous men. When they speak to the residents, none offers them the sensationalism they seek, insisting quietly on their ordinariness. When Razia’s son Tariq explains that he does not belong to a gang, a reporter enjoins, “Fundamentalist, then. Are you one of those?” (364). A councilor interviews Nazneen, though her answers—no, she is not finding it hard to cope, two her number of children—are met with disappointment. Television crews come searching for a similar story, hoping to find immigrant poverty that becomes radicalized into religious zealotry or criminality. But they find themselves with nothing to film. The poverty of the Tower Hamlets proves neither exciting nor exotic enough for the government or the press.

Skating in a Sari

While I disagree with John Marx that the problem of the novel’s final section rests upon the unnarrated moment in which Nazneen takes economic agency, I share his unease with the final chapter of the novel. Until this point, I have argued that the novel consistently charts a new path for the postcolonial domestic heroine, one that depends upon her bringing the possibilities of political and economic agency into the domestic space. As Nazneen’s narrative endeavors to restore the

connection between public and private through the terms of the domestic novel, the narrative offers a complex treatment of the obstacles faced by working class immigrants in London and poor women in Bangladesh. Though Nazneen mentions the economic hardship she and her daughters endured in the months immediately following Chanu's return home, by the novel's final chapter she has achieved a degree of security with an extra twenty-pound note in her purse and the investments she has made in her flat.

But despite the family's success, the text evidences a discomfort narrating the family's rise to the middle class. As the novel struggles to find its close, the text presents the reader with a series of symbols representing Nazneen's newfound freedom. Speaking to The Questioner about the possibility of joining his reformed community group, she tells him that she had not been especially active in the Bengal Tigers, but as she watches a plane take off in the background, noting its steady ascent, she points out, "but that was before I knew what I could do" (407), suggesting a greater commitment to activism in the future. In the next scene, Nazneen tries to sketch out her first clothing designs for the business. She stares at her blank page, at first unsure of how to transition from her labors at the needle to her role as designer. But instead of working through her block as she did in writing to Hasina, Nazneen puts the work aside, compelled to movement by a song on the radio: "the music broke in waves over her entire body [...] She sang along, filling her lungs from the bottom, letting it all go loose, feeling her hair shake out down her neck and around her shoulders, abandoning her feet to the rhythm, threading her hips through the air" (367). Though her ecstatic revels are interrupted by a call from

Chanu, those of the novel do not end, for the text returns to ice skating, “a visceral metaphor for freedom and escape from the very real physical and emotional constraints of everyday life in a pocket of English-Bangladeshi society.”^{lxxxii} Razia and her daughters surprise Nazneen with a trip to the skating rink. Once she realizes where she is, Nazneen protests, “but you can’t skate in a sari,” to which Razia rebuts, “this is England. You can do whatever you like” (415).

These symbols of freedom combine with Razia’s claim about the unbridled possibilities of England to present an ending that seems in discord with the rest of the novel. Though Nazneen and Razia have come a long way from their opening positions in the text, they still have substantial obstacles to surmount. Notwithstanding the changes in her life, Nazneen still labels parts of the city, even those with substantial immigrant populations, as “distant lands” (360), demonstrating that despite her ease at traversing the city, her life remains circumscribed to a small portion of the East End. The racial tensions at the Tower Hamlets may have eased temporarily, but undoubtedly they will return. As he writes of the contemporary portrayals of London as a multicultural city, Paul Gilroy warns of that the recent critical tendency to portray cosmopolitanism as a triumph of tolerance and possibility can elide the complexities of race and empire that color the city and its subjects.^{lxxxiii} In his essay “Cosmo-theory,” Tim Brennan offers a similar admonition. He outlines how recent theorizations of cosmopolitanism have collapsed complexities of local and global economics under a celebratory banner. This celebratory cosmopolitanism lacks the necessary critique of the material realities implied and enacted by global flows of capital and labor.^{lxxxiv} While both

Brennan and Gilroy argue for the value of cosmopolitanism as it compares to parochial forms of nationalism and patriotism, they demonstrate how cosmopolitanism as celebration can be a tempting and problematic formulation. I believe that the repetition of images of imaginative freedom in the novel's final chapter yields to "the temptation to evaluate and assess contemporary London as though it could be a simpler, more homogenous and less irreducibly diverse place,"^{lxxxv} as each moment suggests Nazneen's decision to remain in London leaves her with limitless possibilities.

The final scenes of the novel succumb to myopic wonder at the prospect of this easy cosmopolitanism. Each offers a symbol of Nazneen's newfound freedom, a freedom that seems, as Brennan argues, decoupled from her material conditions. Until this point, the promise of possibility England offers has been tempered with the real social and material problems the Bangladeshi council house residents face. But as the novel comes to a close, these impediments dissipate into the plane's ascent, the uninhibited dancing, and the trip to the skating rink. On the surface, it appears as if the reader is asked to believe that because Nazneen has transformed from a woman who cannot say the words "ice skating" to a woman who only needs to imagine herself on the rink (or participating in community organization or designing new fashions) in order to achieve freedom, that England bars no possibilities. In England, as Razia insists, "you can do whatever you like" (369).

But while Razia may serve as a model for Nazneen, Nazneen does not follow Razia into her performance of nation. From the beginning of the novel, Razia has worked to develop a British identity. Once Razia's husband dies, she severs her ties

to Bangladesh. She pairs her Union Jack sweatshirt with short hair and trousers, applying for and earning British citizenship. Though she complains of her children's British habit of calling her "ma" and their requests for spending money, she ultimately allows them greater freedom than Nazneen and Chanu do their children. Nazneen's protest, "you can't skate in a sari" (369), reminds the reader that she has not embraced the nation as Razia has. Her remaining ties to Bangladesh are more complex than these last lines suggest. She remains married to Chanu, corresponding with him regularly through phone calls and letters. Though it seems clear that each of the two will remain in the spaces they have chosen, the novel gives no indication that the marriage will end. When Chanu proposes that Nazneen and the children visit him in Dhaka, she answers ambiguously, reminding him that the children have school, but that perhaps they'll arrange a visit when the academic year ends.

In addition to writing to Chanu, Nazneen continues to send letters to her Hasina, though she does not receive responses. Chanu reports that Hasina has run away with another man, seeking romance yet again. The novel ends without word of her success or final address.^{lxxxvi} As Hasina falls silent, Chanu's correspondence comes to represent the voice of Bangladesh in the novel, and Nazneen's link to her former home. Hasina's departure from the text signifies another problem of the novel's closure. Though her narrative has been instrumental in creating a counterpoint and complement to Nazneen's domestic plot, her Bangladeshi voice disappears at the end of the novel, her missives replaced with letters and phone calls from Chanu. Chanu's letters stand in stark contrast to Hasina's personal and political correspondence. He offers detailed reports of the weather, his meals, and

his exercise routine: “it was as if the censor’s pen hovered over them, ready to strike out any material fact” (410). Chanu has returned the letter to the grounds of the familiar and private, offering an apolitical voice from Bangladesh. Similarly, the matriarchal model that allows Nazneen to recode the domestic space does not seem to be able to accommodate the Bangladeshi men. Chanu declares himself unable to stay in London, despite his wife’s refusal to return to Dhaka. Razia’s husband is killed in a freak accident at work, and her son battles a heroin addiction throughout the novel. Though Nazneen and Razia oversee his detoxification and recovery, Tariq has sold Razia’s furniture again, suggesting that his struggles are far from over. Even Dr. Azad, who has found professional and financial success in the city, remains dreadfully unhappy with his family and his home. The question arises as to whether the material success and public-private performance of domesticity and nation Nazneen and Razia achieve can only come with the removal of the men in their lives, or possibly even at their expense.

The disappearance of the Bangladeshi men, coupled with the departure of Hasina, leads me to Bruce Robbins’ work on soul making and upward mobility stories. Robbins addresses Spivak’s argument about soul making and the problem of Euro-centric migration in her famous reading of *Jane Eyre*. Robbins challenges Spivak’s formulation of the “international division of labor,” noting that Spivak makes the claim (though with circumspection) that metropolitan laborers “occupy and ambiguous class position; as partial beneficiaries of the core/periphery divide.”^{lxxxvii} Before Chanu’s repatriation and the start of her new business, Nazneen’s life in the Tower Hamlet’s flat sewing piecework, though within London,

has allowed her to straddle Spivak's "international line of labor," aligning herself through her work with the garment girls in Dhaka. However, as the women become entrepreneurs and Nazneen begins the transition from the manual labor of sewing to the creative labor of designing, she moves further toward one side of that line. In choosing to spend her extra earnings on making their council flat into a middle-class image of home, she chooses against saving for a trip to Dhaka and possible reunions (even temporary ones) with her husband and sister. Her new roles as designer and domestic manager move her further into the other side of international divides of class, labor, and culture.

In the failures of Chanu, the loss of Hasina, and the exclusion of the other Bangladeshi men from the novel's conclusion, *Brick Lane* addresses the complicity of upwardly mobile migration with the structures that prevent the same mobility on the other side of the divisions of class and culture. Robbins is careful to note that while we must acknowledge that the structures of global power are dependent upon the Third World labor, we should not resolve the idea of dirty-handedness as a "zero sum necessity" that offers the individual postcolonial subject upward mobility only at the expense of someone she may know.^{lxxxviii} Rather, he claims that "Upward mobility stories as well are about inhabiting, intimately, and dirty-handedly, a structure that one also critiques."^{lxxxix} I see one possible reading of this disjuncture between the easy resolution of the ending and the complex narrative that precedes it provides an acknowledgement of Robbins' "dirty-handed" inhabitation of the structures of nation and economy. Razia's easy answer instead presents a set of rhetorical questions for the reader. Is it England that allows Nazneen to do whatever

she'd like? If so, does she create this new domestic narrative because of the space of Englishness, or in spite of it? Does skating in a sari suggest possibilities for women through hybrid identities that white working-class women, other inheritors of Pamela's narrative, do not have access to? And finally, does the "you" to whom Razia speaks preclude others? That is, can Razia and Nazneen do whatever they'd like because of those who are not in England?

As the final moment of the novel replaces the icon of the country house Nazneen encounters on her daughter's mug with that of Nazneen gliding across the ice rink in her sari, the idea of skating in a sari provides an image of the nation that is accessible to Nazneen in a way the country house could never be. Skating in a sari stands alongside and against Razia's ever-present Union Jack sweatshirt. While Razia takes the symbol of nation in the form of her flag and wears it as a daily reminder of her British citizenship, marking herself with the official, political symbol of nation, the venture to the ice skating rink proves a vision of Bhabha's "opening out," as the novel redraws the boundaries of the domestic novel to end in a place outside the home.^{xc} Bhabha sees this opening out in the hybrid hyphenations that crop up as enunciations of the "stubborn chunks" of culture that can not be resolved into the nation or culture that lies on either side of the hyphen. Following Bhabha's suggestion of motion in his formulation of "opening out," the image of Nazneen skating in a sari is dynamic and contemporary, as opposed to the static country house designed to signify an enduring pastoral history. The image allows a moment of access to the nation, but Razia's platitude destabilizes it.

It remains important to note that while the final scene represents an outing to the ice skating rink, the reader does not see Nazneen skate, nor does Nazneen say that she will. As with her marriage to Chanu and her correspondence with her sister, Nazneen's ice skating venture concludes with ambivalence. Instead, Nazneen insists that stepping on to the ice doesn't actually matter. The gesture of opening out into the skating rink is completed, but the performance of nation suggested by the image of skating in a sari only appears after the doubled repudiation—Nazneen says she cannot skate in a sari, while Razia insists that she can. Razia is lacing up her boots, but Nazneen does not indicate if she will follow her in this particular performance, leaving the image of skating in a sari alongside the novel's unresolved "stubborn chunks" represented in Nazneen's personal ties to Bangladesh—the continuing marriage to Chanu and the possible reunion (whether in correspondence or in person) with Hasina. Read in this way, the image of skating in a sari concludes on a note of ambivalence and ambiguity, rather than the easy cosmopolitanism that Razia's words imply.

^{xi} Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1991. 13

^{xli} Bhabha, 9.

^{xlii} Bhabha, 9-11.

^{xliii} Michael McKeon. *Secret History of Domesticity*. 621-59.

^{xliv} Bhabha, 14.

^{xlv} The domestic novel, of course, is not solely the purview of the eighteenth century. However, it is during the eighteenth century that "British literature responded to concerns about a changing English identity during a time of great international, colonial expansion by turning to domestic narratives" (Harrow 6). Harrow goes on to argue that domesticity is an ideology that becomes coded in the terms of the novel form (6-10). While many postcolonial theorists and critics address the form of the domestic novel—Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Firdous Azim come to mind—they tend to focus on the form as it has been concretized in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Once we get to Austen, the Brontes, and the like, the terms of the domestic novel have been set and the division between public and private cemented in the form of the novel. Said's explication of the oblique references to the ways in which Austen's and Dickens'

characters finance their lives rests on this novelized public and private. Of course, the domestic narrative of *Brick Lane* shares a great deal with these later iterations of the form, but I believe the eighteenth-century domestic, with *Pamela* as exemplar, provides a unique view because it was the eighteenth-century version of the form that codifies the public-private split, the stabilization of value in female virtue (Thompson) and the construction of desire through middle-class love (Armstrong).

^{xlvi} Bhabha, 11.

^{xlvii} Margaret Doody. *The True Story of the Novel*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 292.

^{xlviii} Ania Loomba. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. New York: Routledge, 2005. 180. Sangeeta Ray offers an extensive treatment of Indian women and the national imagination in *Engendering India*, while Anne McClintock addresses ways in which the woman's body figures in imperialist and postcolonial imaginations. She argues specifically against the possibility of a universal "postcolonial woman" in addition to problematizing "national literature" (1-17). I try to avoid such dangerous universalizing, arguing that the imagination of the domestic heroine in *Brick Lane* is but one type of postcolonial iteration. I do not mean to argue that this version of the postcolonial domestic novel is a universal, but that the postcolonial domestic cannot participate in the public-private split because the private is always-already politicized in the postcolonial.

^{xliv} McKeon. *Secret History of Domesticity*. 621-59.

ⁱ Loomba, 180.

^{li} Rosemary George notes "the association of home and the female has served to present them as mutual handicaps, mutually disempowering. Hence, the woman incapacitated because she is 'tied' to the home, and the home is shelter for the incapacitated" (19).

^{lii} Pamela repeatedly comments on the importance of her letters to her subjectivity, insisting that they are such honest representations of her thoughts that they are a part of her and she of them; Nancy Armstrong notes that when she is nearly raped by B, "Pamela escapes with her virtue as she becomes a creature of words (she protests) and of silence (she swoons)" (5). Pamela reinforces her union with her letters by hiding them on her body. Nazneen echoes Pamela in this respect as well, tucking her sister's letters into her clothing. B tries to control Pamela by controlling the information she sends and receives. No such attempts could be made in *Brick Lane*, where B's inability to control Pamela's letters translates into an inability to keep political rhetoric from the space of the home.

^{liii} Christopher Flint. "The Anxiety of Affluence: Family and Class (Dis)Order in Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded." *Studies in English Literature. 1500-1900*. 29.3 (1989). 490.

^{liv} James Thompson. *Models of Value*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996. 2.

^{lv} Michael McKeon. *Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. 212-223.

^{lvi} Thompson, 3.

^{lvii} *ibid.*

^{lviii} Michael McKeon. *Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

^{lix} Raymond Williams. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973. 22.

^{lx} Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Random House, 1993.

^{lxi} Nancy Armstrong. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. New York: Oxford: University Press, 1987. 113.

^{lxii} Though I am wary of the tendency to project twenty-first century freedoms back into the eighteenth century, it remains important to recognize that as she lauds Richardson for granting Pamela the power to enter into a social/sexual contract on her own terms, Armstrong glosses the

fact that Pamela couldn't enter the contract on other terms. Though Defoe raises courtesanship as a possibility in *Roxana*, as I will discuss in the next chapter, he can only do so with the repeated disclaimers that Roxana's narrative can only be offered to the reader as a cautionary tale to warn against others falling into the trap she did.

^{lxiii} Armstrong, 115.

^{lxiv} James Thompson sees the eighteenth-century novel's marriage narrative as a response to the crisis in value brought on by the modernizing nation's change in economy. He argues that the transition from "treasure to capital" (2) led to the need to imagine the home as a place of refuge from tumultuous markets, mapping out domesticity and marriage as "a private sector as a safe harbor from the public sector" (23).

^{lxv} Watt finds much of his argument about Richardson's creation of a new novel form on his weaving of conduct book material into his courtship narratives. 164-9, 213. Gilroy and Verhoeven also tie the conduct book to the domestic novel, *Pamela* in particular, in their introduction.

^{lxvi} Certainly marriage had served as a happy ending for narratives since long before the eighteenth century and in forms other than the novel. However, I would argue that this particular version of romantic love, especially as it becomes coded as not just a goal, but *the* most desired destination for women, seems to gain momentum in the eighteenth-century amatory plot so much so that by the twenty-first century it has been completely normalized in contemporary popular culture, while older ideas of arranged marriages and dowries are exoticized as simultaneously foreign and backward.

^{lxvii} Flint, 491.

^{lxviii} Linda S. Kauffman. *Special Delivery. Epistolary Modes in Modern Fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. 233.

^{lxix} Already within the sphere of the private, the letters demonstrate an intimacy with the characters that highlights the novel's grounding in the individual subject. Watt argues that Richardson's realism resides not just in his detailed descriptions, but in the words he evokes from his characters; "In the novels, Richardson's use of language is concentrated on producing what his characters might plausibly write in the circumstances" (455). Ali offers Richardsonian letters in this respect as well. Already within the sphere of the private, the letters demonstrate an intimacy with the characters that highlights the novel's grounding in the individual subject. Watt argues that Richardson's realism resides not just in his detailed descriptions, but in the words he evokes from his characters; "In the novels, Richardson's use of language is concentrated on producing what his characters might plausibly write in the circumstances" (455).

^{lxx} Alistair Cormack reads the narrative's translation of spoken and written Bengali into English (often without clear markers at the moments of translation) as "an unproblematic rendering of one culture's signifying systems in another's" (710). He bases this claim on the notion that a more fragmented narrative would be needed to accurately represent Nazneen's experiences during her first years in London, arguing that the novel's realism is not up to the task. However, I see a difference in remaining faithful to the written word each sister offers in her letters, as it seems the novel does, and providing a more fluent narrative voice for the third person narrator. Nazneen remarks on how her measured prose reflects her labors to make her letters clear and precise, while Hasina's writing style represents her impulsive nature.

^{lxxi} See Kay Young for a discussion of the use of space and architecture in *Pamela* and Karen Lipsedge for an exploration of closet culture in the eighteenth-century English novel.

^{lxxii} Raymond Williams claims that the country house serves as the location of the "neo-pastoral." He traces the shift from classical formations of the eclogue and idyll to the neo-pastoral as a way to ground value in the English countryside through the corruption of these earlier forms, which

helps imagine the nation in terms of rural Saxon roots as well as Roman thought. He argues that in modern (and modernizing) England, these modes are artificially sutured through “developing agrarian capitalism” onto the ideology of the country house. 22-34.

^{lxxiii} For more on the epistolary mode and gender see Kauffman’s *Special Delivery* and Gilroy and Verhoeven, *Epistolary Histories*. In their introduction, Gilroy and Verhoeven argue that the epistolary mode was fundamental in the construction of the feminine individualism of the eighteenth century, tied to the idea of choice of partners for women in marriage that is “predicated on the subjection of women *within* marriage” (2 emphasis mine).

^{lxxiv} Alistair Cormack. “Migration and the Politics of Narrative Form: Realism and the Postcolonial Subject in *Brick Lane*.” *Contemporary Literature*. 47.4 (2006): 695-721. 713.

^{lxxv} Armstrong argues that by resisting B’s advances, Pamela decouples virtue’s association with class position, redefining virtue in terms of action. Relocating virtue to the body of the domestic heroine allows a family’s worth to be determined in the home, rather than by name or even profession.

^{lxxvi} Flint, 389.

^{lxxvii} Laura J Rosenthal. “Pamela’s Work.” *The Eighteenth Century*. 46.3 (2005): 243-253. 247.

^{lxxviii} Rosenthal, 246

^{lxxix} John Marx. “The Feminization of Globalization.” *Cultural Critique*. 63.1 (2006): 1-32. 18-20.

^{lxxx} Marx, 35.

^{lxxxi} Marx, 20.

^{lxxxii} Chris Weedon. “Migration, Identity, and Belonging in Black British and South Asian Women’s Writing.” *Contemporary Women’s Writing*. 2.1 (2008): 17-35.18.

^{lxxxiii} Paul Gilroy. “A London sumpting dis...” *Critical Quarterly* 41.3 (1999): 57-69.

^{lxxxiv} Timothy Brennan. “Cosmo-Theory.” *South Atlantic Quarterly*. 100.3 (2001): 659-91.

^{lxxxv} Gilroy, 57.

^{lxxxvi} While she has not heard from her sister for two months, Nazneen continues to deposit money in a bank account for her sister. When she notes her intent to do so, she does not mention that Hasina has not been accessing the money she offers, or give any other indication that Hasina has truly disappeared (410). Though her ending is ambiguous, Nazneen’s response to Chanu and her deposit suggest that though the reader loses Hasina’s voice, Nazneen expects to hear from her again. At other points in the narrative Nazneen does not hear from Hasina for periods much longer than two months.

^{lxxxvii} Bruce Robbins. “Soul Making: Gayatri Spivak on Upward Mobility.” *Cultural Studies*. 17.1 (2003): 16-26. 18-19.

^{lxxxviii} Robbins, 22.

^{lxxxix} Robbins, 19.

^{xc} Bhabha, 219.

Chapter Two

Foe's Economies of Genre

Like Monica Ali's exploration of the eighteenth-century domestic narrative, J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* considers the ways in which the inherited forms of the eighteenth-century novel can influence and be influenced by the contemporary postcolonial novel. *Foe* incorporates a series of genres popular throughout the eighteenth century, including the adventure tale, the picaresque, and the gothic. While Ali's novel alternates between epistolary and third-person narration, and between the settings of Bangladesh and London, *Brick Lane* remains within the auspices of the domestic, invested in creating a home within the nation, always drawing on the eighteenth-century Richardsonian novel form. *Brick Lane* expands the domestic novel from within as the walls of Nazneen's London flat extend to the garment factories of Bangladesh, opening possibilities for the domestic heroine, working to stretch the confines of the space of the home and the space of narrative. By contrast, *Foe's* narrative mode moves restlessly from memoir to epistolary to first-person narrative to gothic, seeking a means of narration and a form in which to reside. While *Brick Lane* splits the narrative to follow both Nazneen and Hasina, juxtaposing two very different quests for domestic fulfillment, the novel's focus remains on reshaping the domestic space. Alternatively, the narrative and the characters in *Foe* are consistently unsettled.^{xci} The physical and narrative movements of Susan, Friday, and Foe stand in contrast to the domestic desires of Nazneen and Pamela, but also to Defoe's original Crusoe "a fictional character who has long been regarded as an archetypal Englishman."^{xcii} Unlike Crusoe, who spent decades making his

island nation into a home that mirrored the domestic structures of England, *Foe's* characters and their narratives are constantly in motion, suggesting the mobility of the postcolonial novel, its to remain rooted in a single place.

Foe highlights the boundaries of the eighteenth-century forms of the adventure tale and picaresque novel that often reach beyond the nation, just as *Brick Lane* underscores and revises the confines of space in the eighteenth-century domestic narrative. Coetzee's novel joins the unsettled nature of the lower-class subject, that is, the subject without the middle-class security of position and capital, bound by economic necessity to move from place to place, with the "narratives of loss, exile, and journeying" that Paul Gilroy argues characterize the cultural production of the Black Atlantic.^{xciii} These two types of subjects and narratives are paired in the figures of Susan and Friday, who journey across England from their lodgings in London to Foe's home in Stoke Newington to Bristol and back. They are unsettled subjects, seeking the substance of secure housing and a stable narrative, the latter of which Susan hopes to turn into profit. Rather than an adventure story like *Robinson Crusoe*, set in clear frames of familial rebellion, imperial conquest, and colonial expansion, or a picaresque like other hypotexts *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders*, in which the heroines follow proscribed rules of genre, *Foe* presents Susan's attempts to narrate and sell her story as "a limping sorry affair" that echoes the "backwards half embrace" Susan and Friday share after he finds her on the shores of Crusoe's island. In this respect, *Foe's* structure mimics its plot, as the novel shifts from form to form, seeking a way in which to relate its story. The result is a novel and narrative of movement. The itinerancy of the characters and the narrative

points to the novel's nature as "an unsettled mixture of ideas and styles, themselves representing previously distinct peoples now forced to create a rationale for common life,"^{xciv xcv}extricating the eighteenth-century realist novel from the unity twentieth-century memory projects back onto it.

At the forefront, *Foe* rewrites Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, offering the account of Susan Barton, a female castaway marooned with Crusoe, returned to England in hopes of selling her story. However, beyond its revision of *Crusoe*, *Foe* offers a much more complex project engaging with a broad swath of Defoe's fiction, placing *Foe* in conversation not just with the castaway story so often used as an exemplar in postcolonial theory and literature, but with a diverse array of Defoe intertexts. In doing so, *Foe* explores the legacy of Defoe's body of work, which includes *Roxana*, *Moll Flanders*, and "The Apparition of Mrs. Veal." I argue that in engaging the works of a canonical writer, Coetzee recasts various forms of the eighteenth-century novel to produce a postcolonial novel that is a meditation on the art of narrative making itself. A story about man versus the elements is recast as a battle between stories, narratives, how to relate a story, and to whom a story belongs. This undertaking by Susan, Foe, and Friday, in their alternating roles of narrator, writer, and subject, falls under the purview of an unnamed editor who assembles the pieces of their eighteenth-century tale into a twentieth-century postcolonial novel. Rather than a castaway reckoning of Crusoe with himself and his faith, *Foe* presents a struggle between Susan and Foe and the narrative each desires to present to their potential readers. Each has a different vision of the expectations for and boundaries of representation influenced by gender, genre, history, and economics. As Susan and

Foe clash over the possibilities and limitations of representing Susan's life and her island episode, the novel considers how this conflict reflects the canons to which *Robinson Crusoe*, *Foe*, Coetzee, and Defoe belong. Coetzee's use of eighteenth-century forms highlights the complexity and unevenness of the realist novel, often imagined as monolithic in its development and application, as Coetzee's postmodern novel shows the difficulty of representing truth in narrative, fictional or non. As such, *Foe* underscores the unsettled relationship between the postcolonial novel and its Anglophone novel history.

As a novel, *Foe* stands in stark contrast to the eighteenth-century texts it weaves into its narrative. The text is as unsettled as its subjects, as each section moves into a different mode in attempts to produce a complete narrative. The novel is comprised of four disparate pieces, held together by the covers of the book and the repeated attempts to relate the story of Crusoe's island. Divided into sections of varying lengths, the novel comes together as an amalgam of genres and narrative styles. *Foe* opens with the memoir of Englishwoman Susan Barton, who recounts being cast ashore by mutineers. According to her memoir, she had been returning to England after a fruitless search for her daughter in Brazil. When she arrives on the island she finds it occupied by two other castaways, an Englishman named Crusoe and a black man Crusoe calls Friday. She spends a year with this pair before all three are rescued and transported to England. Crusoe dies during their journey home. From the moment she returns to English shores, Susan labors to turn her memories of the island into a legible and profitable narrative. In hopes of adding "art" to her memories, Susan enlists the help of writer Daniel Foe; however, despite her desire

for “art,” Susan insists that she will not have any lies told, underscoring the manner in which Defoe prefaced his fiction as truth. What she wants from Foe is not a novel as a twentieth-century reader would have it, but a rendering of the events of the island as they happened to her, with rhetorical flourishes that will entice a reader while keeping her history intact. Susan writes a memoir of her island sojourn for Foe, but both perceive the text as incomplete. In the second section, Susan’s narrative shifts into the epistolary. She collaborates on the narrative production with Foe by responding to his questions and making her own demands. Frustrated by the inadequacies of their narrative, Susan locates Foe in his quarters in London. In the novel’s third section, she narrates their meeting and one more joint attempt to create a saleable story of the island. Susan’s narration closes with her frustrated desires to produce a narrative that will satisfy a reader, Foe, or herself.

In the final section of *Foe*, Coetzee turns to the intertext of “Mrs. Veal” and the register of the novel switches from a metafictional engagement with realism to a gothic narration that attempts to fill in the narrative gaps Susan has been unable to address. Though *Foe*’s final section is gothic, despite its supernatural subject, the Defoe intertext on which it depends is not. As an “apparition narrative,”^{xcvi} “Mrs. Veal” demonstrates the “reality of the spiritual world in a materialistic age that has come to doubt it,” using the authentication techniques of the eighteenth-century “true history”—narrative frames attesting to the honesty and respectability of the tale’s subjects and the mimesis of realist narration.^{xcvii} As such, the apparition narrative stands at a moment of collision between the Christian supernatural and a relatively newer scientific epistemology based on sensory observation: “like Bacon’s new method of empirical investigation, these

documentary narratives of supernatural apparitions are fueled by exhilarating faith in the powers of material phenomena to mediate the truths of divine creation.”^{xcviii} In addition to these contending forces, the glut of new printed materials creates what Lisa Zunshine calls “a culture-wide ‘cognitive uncertainty’” in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries “when English readers [...] were faced with a challenge of orienting themselves amidst the sudden flood of printed texts.”^{xcix} Zunshine argues that “revolutionary and widespread introduction of new media into culture creates a space where authors can experiment with readers’ expectations concerning the ‘truth’ of their stories.”^c She notes the contemporary spread of information over the internet as creating a similar revolutionary atmosphere. I would extend Zunshine’s figuration not just to the introduction of new media, but to times in which old media—in this case the novel—have been redeployed in new ways. That is, I see a similarity between the ways in which the novel worked to make sense of the changing boundaries of class and nationality in eighteenth-century England and the ways in which the postcolonial novel of the late twentieth century endeavors to create a unique postcolonial voice within the form. *Foe* seeks to negotiate between the inheritance of the English novel form and that form’s possibility for relating a colonial history and a postcolonial future.

Foe’s turn to the apparition narrative and the gothic comes after Susan and Foe have exhausted their efforts to recount her island tale in more traditional realist modes. As the novel moves through each attempt to tell the story, the narrative frequently collides with the boundaries of realist fiction that Robyn Warhol terms the unnarratable. *Foe* expands the limits of the unnarratable within the tradition of

the English novel and formal realism.^{ci} Susan's desire to keep her narrative to the confines of the island rests in the unnarratability of female transgression without subsequent penitence. But in many ways the novel finds its way around some of these problems, returning to the story in different modes, offering more information each time. By the end of the novel, the reader knows much of what Susan tries to withhold. Foe's questions to Susan about her past and business in the New World and her refusal to answer them show the limits of narration and her attempts to negotiate them. As she comes to realize that her castaway tale must extend beyond the shores of the island, she reaches toward another unnarratable aspect of their story, the loss of Friday's tongue and the circumstances that have brought him to the island. In a last attempt to approach this particular unnarratable, the novel turns in its final pages from its consistent engagement with the foundations of Defoe's moderate realism and the tradition it established, and moves to the late eighteenth-century form of the gothic.

The gothic, a mode which rose in popularity at the end of the eighteenth century that does not tend to figure in the rise of the novel formulations of critics like Watt and McKeon, offers another path to narrate the unnarratable. Here *Foe* abandons the realist narration which it has alternately embraced, mimicked, and struggled with. The gothic allows the novel to form another bridge between eighteenth-century concerns of nation and empire and twentieth-century concerns of postcolonial text-making that must take into account the anxieties of the present and the past: "By forging continual connections between preternatural horrors and current focal points of anxiety, the Gothic captures the *Zeitgeist* of cultural

tension.”^{cii} While the imperial gothic addresses “degeneration of British institutions, the threat of going native and the invasion of Britain by demonic colonial forces,”^{ciii} Andrew Smith and William Hughes find particular affinities between the postcolonial and the gothic: “Postcolonialism helps to isolate images of Self and Other in such a way that they identify how a particular brand of colonial politics works towards constructing difference, whilst at the same time indicating the presence of the inherently unstable version of the subject on which such a politics rest. In other words, postcolonialism explains the Gothic’s instabilities.”^{civ} While realism offers a vision of the world as truth, in order to imagine the world in the rational terms of Enlightenment freedoms underwritten by the practices of empire and the colonial slave trade, realism must draw perplexing boundaries of narration. In realist terms, much of the empire becomes the space of the unnarratable, but the gothic provides a means for expressing the cultural anxieties the empire produces, “covering them up in figures” as Susan would say.

The gothic allows for past and present to coexist in the same chronotope, as common gothic tropes of “Ruins, labyrinths, castles, romantic fragments” serve as “heterotopias occupying the gaps of cultural history as points of continuity or discontinuity with the past.”^{cv} Fred Botting notes that the gothic mode of discontinuity stands in opposition to ideas of continuity espoused by the Enlightenment, which roots itself in “classical precepts of order.”^{cvi} The past-in-present mode of the gothic represented for the eighteenth-century reader what *Foe* does for the postcolonial reader, a multivalent chronotope in which the historical specificities of the past show through to the present narrative: “In eighteenth-

century criticism the chain of signifiers producing the unconscious was meshed together from Gothic metaphors, reconstructed from literary leftovers and physical remnants of a past, medieval cultural lingering like shadows in the light of neoclassical present.”^{cvii} There are two settings for the novel’s final gothic section, Foe’s London quarters and the ship wrecked off the coast of Brazil. This dual setting conjoins the space of the home—coded here as a space of masculine work, in the city of London, at the beginnings of the English novel—with the space of imperial adventure and trade. The multiple chronotope of the gothic is echoed in Gerald Prince’s work on developing a postcolonial narratology as he suggests, “maybe the postcolonial is (always already) everywhere but maybe it is never (yet) anywhere.”^{cviii} This space of everywhere and nowhere, appropriate to postcoloniality as well as the gothic, is also the chronotope from which the novel is written. The novel seems to come from the place of literature itself, a chronotope of literary history that allows its writers and readers to move between modes, genres, and intertexts.

Rewriting, Defoe, and the Canon

Most readings of *Foe* center on the novel’s revision of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, focusing on the gender implications of Coetzee’s retelling of the island story through a female narrator and the racial politics of a silenced Friday. However, I argue that *Foe* is involved in a much larger project in which rewriting *Crusoe* is just part of the story. The novel’s broad engagement with Defoe’s work combined with its attention to form asks the reader to consider the ways in which Defoe’s fictions

have shaped the history and form of the English novel. Certainly, Coetzee's addition of a female castaway calls attention to the absence of women in the *Crusoe* narrative. Susan's musing to Foe, "perhaps you will think it better without the woman" (72), seems to the reader a retroactively-fulfilled prophecy. Susan's suggestion confirms what the reader knows of Defoe's finished *Crusoe*, that the novelist thought it best to keep the space of adventure coded as masculine. Similarly, Coetzee's changes to Friday's character, most notably his absent tongue and his transformation from a Native American to a sub-Saharan African, emphasize *Foe's* relationship to *Crusoe* as the twentieth-century Friday's inability to speak comments on his predecessor's limited language skills. Coetzee's refusal to represent the speech of the racial Other becomes a literary atonement for Defoe's racist portrayal of the native in relation to his colonizer. As such, *Foe* is imagined as the white South African writer's restitution of a founding text of the patriarchal imperial English novel. However, though *Foe* is an obvious rewriting of the *Crusoe's* island story, *Robinson Crusoe* is just one of Defoe's fictions that *Foe* engages.

Though the relationship between *Foe* and *Crusoe* garners the most attention, more complex readings of the novel consider *Foe's* intertextual relationship with *Roxana* as well. In her reading of *Foe* in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Gayatri Spivak positions the connection between *Foe* and *Roxana* as a secondary project of revision, noting, "Coetzee makes the final episode of Defoe's novel *Roxana* flow into this citation of *Robinson Crusoe*. Coetzee's Susan Barton is also Defoe's Roxana, whose first name is also Susan."^{cix} Spivak goes on to note "other incidental similarities" between the two.^{cx} Similarly, Derek Attridge argues that Susan's story,

“the one she does not want to be told—becomes Defoe’s novel *Roxana*.”^{cxii} For evidence, Attridge cites the younger Susan who claims to be Susan Barton’s daughter in *Foe* as reenacting Defoe’s *Roxana*’s daughter’s quest to find her mother at the end of Defoe’s novel, and observes that “her account of her mother’s desertion by a husband who was a brewer (76) tallies with the events of *Roxana*.”^{cxiii} Spivak and Attridge rehearse the argument that in *Foe* gender determines narrative. Susan cannot function in the castaway tale “of capitalism and colony,”^{cxiiii} so Foe writes her off of the island and into a more appropriate genre, specifically “narrative forms that allow for women heroines in certain roles (the entrepreneur in larceny and marriage exemplified by *Moll Flanders* for instance).”^{cxv} Identifying Susan’s displacement proves another method of giving voice to women silenced by a patriarchal canon.

However, framing *Foe* as a recuperation of raced and gendered voices excluded from the original *Robinson Crusoe* limits the novel’s scope. Though *Crusoe* and *Roxana* are the most easily recognizable intertexts, *Foe* alludes to a broad range of Defoe’s texts, including nonfiction and shorter works. In addition to the details from *Roxana* that the younger Susan offers, she gives her own history as that of Moll Flanders, having been raised by gypsies and desiring to be a “gentlewoman.” Susan often references Defoe’s cast of characters, imagining him laboring over “thieves and courtesans and grenadiers” (52), and wondering if he has other subjects on payroll scattered throughout the city. She imagines his letterbox filled with documentary resources for narratives we know from Defoe’s oeuvre including “bills of mortality from the time of the great plague, accounts of travels in the border country, [and]

reports of strange and surprising apparitions” (50). A young Colonel Jack attends to Susan and Foe in Foe’s quarters in London, and the most famous of those reports of apparitions, Defoe’s “The Apparition of Mrs. Veal,” appears in various forms throughout the novel, and may actually prove to be the most fundamental Defoe intertext in *Foe*. While the references to *Robinson Crusoe* and *Roxana* are the most developed, the direct rewriting of the island tale and the implication that Susan’s story will be written into Roxana’s novel are just two examples of *Foe*’s broad engagement with Defoe.

Spivak argues that Coetzee writes “a historically implausible but politically evocative revision. He attempts to represent the bourgeois individualist woman in early capitalism as the *agent of other-directed ethics* rather than as a combatant in the preferential ethics of self-interest.”^{cxv} However, Spivak’s “other-directed ethics” formulation privileges the relationship between Susan and Friday, reading it as the novel’s enunciation of the ethico-political. That reading separates Susan and Friday from the rest of the characters in *Foe* and in Defoe’s work. In England, Susan and Friday live much as they did as castaways on the island. The unsettled Susan and Friday spend most of their English travels without adequate clothing and food, and Susan repeatedly remarks about her uncertainty as to whether she will be returned to what she terms “substance.” As Defoe’s Crusoe did before her, Susan seeks to provide for both herself and Friday, using Friday’s labor as one of her resources. In this way, their relationship comes to mirror that of Defoe’s Crusoe and Friday. However, in Susan’s quest to have their story told, she and Friday inhabit a world of networks rather than relating only to each other on the isolation of the island.

Susan's gender and Friday's race do not merely revise Defoe's novel, but their difference influences the ways in which they travel to and through England. Once rescued from the island, Susan's narrative leaves the castaway chronotope and enters the picaresque existence of *Roxana* or *Moll Flanders*. Retrieved from the geographical margins of empire, Susan's existence in the socioeconomic margins of England necessitates her movement in and out of a variety of networks, like most of Defoe's protagonists.

In considering the competing visions of narrative produced by Susan and Foe, Spivak claims that "the island is the central story of both the real *Robinson Crusoe* and this fictive projected *Female Castaway*."^{cxvi} Though the island tale may be pivotal to both *Crusoe* and *The Female Castaway*, the island is not the focal point of *Foe*. Rather, the central story of *Foe* is the *relation* of the island tale, the process of negotiating a narrative that will satisfy the overlapping demands (and positions) of the novel's writers, readers, and markets. Furthermore, the metafictional relation of this story—that is, the narration of Susan's attempts to narrate—interrogates the relating of the other Defoe works that appear, and, by extension, the relation of these imaginary tales to each other. *Foe* is a constellation drawn between points in overlapping canons of English literature, the eighteenth-century novel, colonial narratives, and postcolonial responses. Susan's vigilance about the way in which her story is told reflects her hopes and fears about how her story will be received. Though she claims to know little of the art of writing, Susan shares a writer's concern for her reader:

Every writer who desires to be read (and that is perhaps part of what it means to write) has to seek admittance to the canon—or, more precisely, *a* canon, since any group approval of a text is an instance of canonization; like languages, canons are not monolithic entities but complex, interrelated, and constantly changing systems that can be subdivided all the way down to individual preferences—“ideocanons,” we might call them.^{cxvii}

Foe reconsiders the island tale as it figures in various canons. In the process of doing so, the text interrogates the processes of canonization from the perspectives of writers and readers.

Indeed, the chronotope from which Susan appears to be writing is that of the canon itself. While Linda Hutcheon uses *Foe* to illustrate her theory of historiographic metafiction, claiming that “Coetzee offers the teasing fiction that Defoe did not write *Robinson Crusoe* from information from the male historical castaway, Alexander Selkirk, or from other travel accounts, but from information given him by a subsequently ‘silenced’ woman, Susan Barton,”^{cxviii} the novel contradicts Hutcheon’s alternative history. A close reading of the Defoe references shows the historic impossibility of *Foe*’s plot; the timeline of the novel cannot be aligned with any chronology of Defoe’s work. *Robinson Crusoe* was Defoe’s first published novel, *Roxana* his last. By the time Susan seeks Defoe’s assistance with her story, he has already cultivated a reputation for fiction writing. Ruminating over *Foe*’s writing habits, Susan repeatedly mentions grenadiers, presumably referring to

Memoirs of a Cavalier, published after *Crusoe*. Imagining Foe penning her castaway story she sees her narrative “with a heap of other papers,” her descriptions of which refer to works that span Defoe’s lifetime. When she writes to Foe, Susan notes that she has read Friday the story of Mrs. Veal from a book pulled from a shelf in Foe’s library. Near the end of the novel, Susan tells Foe of an author’s figuration of death as “a bath-house on a hot afternoon, with spiders dozing in the corners” (114), an allusion to Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*. Though these details may seem incidental, as Spivak calls them, they create an ahistorical time frame for the events of *Foe*.^{cxix} The novel presents not an alternative history of Defoe’s writing, but a metafictional place of the literary universe (albeit one that is heavily invested in Defoe’s work). Nonhistory and history align with the exploration of the interworkings of metafiction and realism that offers a subtext of the novel.

While *Foe* does work to underscore the restrictions of gender on form, highlighting the eighteenth-century possibilities for adventure at home and abroad, reading the novel through this specific lens of historic metafiction forces the narrative into a binary between *Crusoe* and *Roxana*. Examining its broader engagement with the novel’s many Defoe intertexts, *Foe* becomes a larger correspondence with Defoe as a writer, and as such, necessarily considers not just the novel’s specific hypotexts, but the legacy of Defoe’s works and the eighteenth-century canon they help to build. In doing so, *Foe* explores the constraints of realism as inherited by writers in the Anglophone tradition. Likewise, at one level the novel can work as an allegory for Apartheid-era South Africa; Friday’s silence evokes the nation’s voiceless majority. However, these readings seem far too narrow and static

to explain the whole of *Foe*. The novel's engagement with Defoe, like its narrative and its protagonists, is unsettled and mobile.

Narrative circulation

Defoe's protagonists are known for their pursuit of wealth and skill at accumulating money. Crusoe leaves home in search of his fortunes and, despite his decades-long sojourn on the island, manages to become a wealthy plantation owner. Moll and Roxana both begin their narratives in states of near destitution, but use their wiles and carefully crafted reputations to amass considerable fortunes. Susan desires to follow a similar path, hoping to trade her narrative for financial security. Wolfram Schmidgen argues that while Defoe's subjects appear focused on accumulation, Defoe's economic imagination should not be confused with an anachronistic projection of industrial production and commodity fetishism.^{cxx} Rather, Schmidgen argues, Defoe's economic ideas are shaped by the mercantilism of the eighteenth century in which "the circulation of goods itself is productive of wealth."^{cxxi} In order to produce wealth, Moll and Roxana circulate representations of themselves—Roxana as a woman of means, Moll as a master thief who by turns uses and conceals her "true identity"—in order to keep from returning to the privation that characterizes the opening pages of their novels.^{cxxii}

Though Crusoe shares the financial acumen of his fellow protagonists, his island economy is removed from circulation.^{cxxiii} His frame may be capital and colony, as Spivak notes, but his island represents a pre-capitalistic economy. Spivak classifies both Roxana and Robinson Crusoe as examples of eighteenth-century

marginals: “the male marginal in the early eighteenth-century imagination can be the solitary contemplative Christian [...]. The female marginal is the *exceptional* entrepreneurial woman for whom the marriage contract is an inconvenience when the man is a fool.”^{cxxiv} While both characters exist in the margins, they inhabit those margins in fundamentally different ways. Crusoe is marginalized because he is physically and economically removed from circulation for most of his narrative; he must stay in his margins. Both Roxana and Moll must leave their margins in order to survive. Unlike Crusoe, Roxana and Moll live in societies built on capitalist exchange, and in order to sustain themselves financially both women enter into circulation, frequently leaving their marginalized spaces to enter the centers of public places and societies. In a sense, *Foe's* island economy is similar to that of Crusoe's—Crusoe and Friday spend their days laboring in a precapitalistic economy. The addition of Susan to the island complicates this economy, however. And when Susan returns to England, she seeks to enter into the speculative economy of circulation in which Roxana and Moll function.

Stripped of capital on his island, Robinson Crusoe stands apart from other Defoe protagonists. More than once he castigates the gold he has with him, noting how useless capital is when it cannot circulate. Though it appears Crusoe's economy is entirely built on use-value, there is a point at which work becomes valuable within itself. Crusoe's labor and invention drives much of the novel's plot. He reports not just on his personal and spiritual progress, but about each of his mechanical and agricultural feats. Between his bouts of self-reprobatation and self-affirmation, Crusoe plans, constructs, sows, farms, and even ferments to make his

own ale and bread. His plot derives from his labor, offering that labor a narrative value of its own. In *Foe*, Coetzee offers an island economy that is neither accumulative nor circulatory. While Defoe's Crusoe grows corn and barley to make bread, imposing European agriculture on the Caribbean island, Coetzee's Cruso adapts his diet to the island's indigenous resources, dining on fish, birds' eggs, and wild lettuces. *Foe's* Cruso spends his days engaged in the Sisyphean task of building terraces he will not plant.

In creating *Foe's* island economy, Coetzee removes purpose from Cruso's labors. Susan notes that Cruso's labor directive does not apply to her. Excluded from the "we" who must work, Susan's labor has no value on Cruso's island. When she crafts her own sandals, Cruso admonishes her for impatience rather than offering gratitude for saving him the work. She does not participate in the leveling of the terraces because she finds the activity "a fruitless kind of agriculture" (34). Instead of a castaway story filled with the miracles of ingenuity of the English adventurer, Coetzee offers a Cruso who builds terrace after terrace he will never tend. Susan asks Cruso to give up his terrace-building in favor of story-making, begging him to record his island narrative using the bile of seabirds and gulls' quills, but he refuses, insisting that the terraces will be "enough" (18). She grows frustrated at Cruso's failure to produce an accurate record of his time on the island as she does with his barren terraces. Barring the possibility of production, Susan seeks reproduction. She wonders why Cruso, lacking seeds to plant, does not turn to her in hopes of producing a child. For Susan, labor should produce or reproduce, as will be reflected in her narrative quest.

Throughout the novel, Susan makes it clear that her interests lie not in fabrication but in reproduction. Her narrative goal is to reproduce the island tale as accurately as possible so that she may bill herself as a credible recovered castaway. Doing so will allow her to reproduce herself, creating a reputation on which she may trade. Unlike Crusoe, Moll and Roxana must circulate in order to survive. Both women fear poverty above all else, and each quickly comes to realize that she is willing to transgress societal propriety so that she may do so. Because of their transgressions, they must publish their narratives pseudonymically. As David Trotter explains:

It is in the two novels narrated by women, *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, that an economy of trade articulates most comprehensively and most directly a technique of the self. Both women, because they are women, must discipline themselves to circulate, body and soul. An economy of trade enters their lives at every point to convert meaning into event, signified into signifier, asset into cash. Rather, they attempt to discipline themselves to gain authority over their own bodies and souls, but find it is too late, they are already caught up in the spiral of limit and transgression.^{cxxv}

Both Roxana and Moll enter circulation under desperate circumstances. The former agrees to be her landlord's mistress after she has sold most of her belongings and is in danger of losing her house. The latter submits to the will of the older brother in her surrogate family, duped by his promises to eventually marry her. Though Moll

claims to enter into the relationship for emotional reasons, she obsesses over the guineas he offers her as a part of their concubinage contract.

These guineas represent Moll's first real taste of the power of circulation and exchange. Until this point, Moll's goal of becoming "a gentlewoman" went no further than that claim and her fear of entering service. It is after this point that she, like Roxana, realizes that she can and eventually must, circulate: "Roxana's story, like Moll's, turns on the market, on the opportunity for exchange. Her criminal career, like Moll's, takes her further and further out of circulation: at no point more than when it is no longer prompted by necessity."^{cxxvi} Both Moll and Roxana grow their fortunes through speculation. Each survives by projecting a self into the world for others to believe. After their earlier days where they falter due to lack of poor speculating—Moll loses her leverage with the family's older son by entering her contract with him, believing that he will make good on his promise of marriage and Roxana marrying the brewer who, despite more than one chance at financial security wastes and gambles everything they have—both Moll and Roxana realize the power of perception when it comes to their own circulation. Each builds her fortune by cultivating an image that asks those around her to speculate as to her wealth and then building a reputation that will first secure gifts and finally a promising marriage.

Susan must do the same. Upon her return from the island, she must find a way to reenter the English economy. Having been told by the ship's captain that she should shop her story to publishers and assured that the "booksellers will hire a

man to set [her] story to rights, and put in a dash of colour too, here and there" (40), Susan decides she will pursue fame through publication of her castaway tale. Here Susan echoes her earlier concerns about relaying the story of the island with veracity. She insists that she will not "have any lies told" (40). Susan's desire and need here is twofold: she wants to be able to control how her story is written, to be "the author of my own story" (40), and she needs to be able to stand up and publicly claim the narrative as an account of actual events that happened to her once the story is published. These two conditions are dependent upon each other. The verisimilitude offers her the position not as fiction-writer, but as celebrity. She will trade on the fame gained by the narrative; she imagines that her celebrity will cause heads to turn and "folk [to] whisper, 'there goes Susan Barton the castaway'" (125). Like Moll and Roxana, she seeks to build a reputation that will position her to make favorable acquaintances. Unlike Moll and Roxana, whose stories derive their novelty from their transgressive acts, Susan wants to offer a tale that stays within the bounds of accepted morality. If the story she offers the world is one of transgression, Susan may profit from its publication, but may not do so publicly. More importantly, that narrative can only profit once; she would need to, as Foe says "give reckoning of [herself] to the world, and then forever after be content to hold [her] peace" (124). Susan realizes that if her narrative falls into the confessional model of Roxana and Moll, she will not be able to circulate along with it. The criminal narrative depends upon the penitence of its subject. Understanding that she may profit publicly from her story only if her narrative remains silent about her less virtuous moments, Susan insists that Foe writes her tale as it begins on the island. She refuses his

repeated attempts to account for her voyage to and stay in Bahia, insisting that her story be bound between the chronological markers of her shipwreck and rescue. Susan takes the position she accuses Crusoe of in her memoir: “It was as though he wished his story to begin with his arrival on the island, and mine to begin with my arrival” (34).

But while Crusoe’s desire is for “the story of us together to end on the island too” (34), Susan wants her castaway tale to be a beginning rather than an ending, to build up social capital, as Moll does in her language: “language, in fact, functions as a resource for Moll [...] indeed, language *becomes* capital for Moll: as narrator and character, she withholds and spends information as both actions suit and profit her.”^{cxxvii} Susan attempts to do the same, but Foe demands a framework to place her island tale within. When she insists, “the story I desire to be known by is the story of the island” (121), Susan tries to take control of the resource that is her narrative. Susan claims that her island tale is made complete by the description of their daily castaway activities and the accounts of their arrivals and departures from that place: “You call it an episode, but I call it a story in its own right. It commences with my being cast away there and concludes with the death of Crusoe and the return of Friday and myself to England, full of new hope. Within the larger story are inset the stories of how I came to be marooned (told by myself to Crusoe) and of Crusoe’s shipwreck and early years on the island (told by Crusoe to myself), as well as the story of Friday” (121). Susan does not see the need for a frame narrative for the set of individual tales—she sees them bound by the geography of the island and the circumstances of being a castaway. For Susan, the veracity of the narrative creates

interest for the writer and the reader and is the avenue to publication and perhaps even to canonization. Foe seems to have a better grasp on the requirements of both. Foe's understanding of the burgeoning form of the novel leads him to realize that there must be something outside of the island to provide the reader with context. Susan understands that if she publishes her narrative in Foe's terms, she will be prevented from circulating. Admitting her past transgressions will only be acceptable if she is appropriately repentant, and because her transgressions are those that break down the expectations of gender, she cannot repent and continue to profit from her misdeeds:

Susan's problem, then, is not primarily a lack of voice or a lack of art, of representation in its aesthetic and semiotic sense; it is a problem of representation in its political sense, a sense that foreground issues of appropriation and totality, of complicity, privilege, and usurpation—a problem, in brief, that considers the accountability of representatives to their total constituencies.^{cxxviii}

But who are Susan's constituencies? To whom and for what must she account?

Spivak suggests that Susan's gender marks a point of her overdetermination and forces a split in the text between the imperialist project of *Crusoe* and the problem of the daughter's return in *Roxana*. She argues that "from the point of view of an other-directed ethico-politics, in this mother-daughter subplot, Coetzee marks an aporia."^{cxxix} At first she identifies this aporia as the problem of Susan's misrecognition of the daughter sent to her by Foe. Spivak attributes the aporia to

the idea that “everyday common sense” would have the reader call Susan’s credibility or sanity into account when she claims the girl to be Foe’s creation. She quickly admits, of course, that Foe’s metafictional world is not a place where everyday common sense can be evenly applied. She eases off from the assertion about Susan’s credibility, trying to leave *Foe* some of the indeterminate space it demands: “I am suggesting that here the book may be gesturing toward the impossibility of restoring the history of empire and recovering the lost text of mothering *in the same register of language.*”^{cxxx} She calls Susan’s attempt to rid herself of the girl claiming to be her daughter a “mysterious expulsion” as another aporia in the middle of the novel:

In the frame of this particular aporia, the decision to keep or reject that mother-daughter story is presented in terms of the making of narrative. First, Susan is imagined as imagining Foe imagining the history of *The Female Castaway*. In my reading, these imaginings may signify no more than Defoe’s idea of a woman’s dilemma, here thematized as Foe’s problem in writing the story.^{cxxxi}

Spivak is not clear here in her use of the phrase “a woman’s dilemma”; I cannot know if she means to present what Defoe would see as a dilemma of a woman or if she presents the dilemma of this woman. However, the way in which she reads Susan’s gender throughout the piece suggests the former. She then lays out Susan’s self-fulfilling musing—that Defoe may believe the island story to be better without the woman and thus write her out of the text.

In her attempts to read Coetzee's gender politics, Spivak offers assumptions about Defoe's texts that project back a monolithic gender standard of the eighteenth-century novel, but that doesn't entirely bear out in *Roxana* and *Moll*. What Spivak sees as an argument over gender and genre glosses some of the complexities of Defoe and the changing subject in the eighteenth-century novel. Though she makes gestures toward complexity, she does so only toward the twentieth-century text, noting the difficulties that Coetzee has with inhabiting the narrative position of a woman while not allowing Defoe the same difficulties. While Coetzee acknowledges his discomfort in inhabiting the female subject position, Defoe can only "make his Roxana utter her passion for woman's freedom except as a ruse for her real desire to own, control, and manage money."^{cxxxii} In her reading of *Foe*, Spivak privileges *Crusoe* as intertext, positioning *Roxana* as a gender-appropriate afterthought; the parts of the novel that align with *Roxana* represent what happens to the woman when the author decides that his island tale would be better without her. While she is correct in noting that Roxana is "a social marginal finally centralizing herself through marriage"^{cxxxiii} (and Moll does the same), Roxana's original problems came about as the result of a bad marriage. What Spivak presents as "the representation of the affective value of mothering when contrasted with the destiny of female individualism" (181) is quickly reduced to the problem of producing children outside of marriage: "sexuality used as labor power outside of the institution of marriage [...] produces children as commodities that cannot be legitimately exchanged and may produce an affective value that cannot be fully

coded."^{cxxxiv} What Spivak says here is true, but it has little to do with *Roxana* or Defoe's "woman's dilemma."

Though children born outside the cultural sanction of marriage do present problems for both Moll and Roxana, in Defoe's fiction children often cause problems for their parents when the relationship of parent to child represents a threat to the primacy of the individual upon which Defoe's brand of eighteenth-century novel rests. This problem threatens Roxana; however, the child who creates the biggest problem for her, the daughter who shares her name, was a product of her marriage to the brewer. Moll also presents a similar threat to her own mother, when her unknowingly incestuous marriage threatens the latter's life in Virginia. As Robert ter Horst notes, Defoe's characters are especially fertile, making reproduction "a major theme in Defoe's work."^{cxxxv} But other than recursive narrative phrases that appear throughout the text, there is little reproduction in *Foe*. Susan wonders why, since his terraces are barren, Cruso did not attempt to reproduce with her, creating subjects in order to establish a colony. Despite Cruso's resistance to recording the island's events and assurances that the terraces will be enough, the only products in *Foe* are texts—Susan's memoirs, her letters, Foe's published books, the narrative of the third section. Susan takes Foe's books and sells them for necessities. Even the characters in the novel are all, save Foe himself, produced through writing; essentially they are walking texts.

Susan insists that she is not a story, that she is a substantial being, but the reader knows that this is not the case. The closest Susan can get to substance is for her to be a story in her own right, to not be Roxana. At the furthest distance, she is

merely a narratological construct, a character who has been misplaced and needs to be renarrated into a more appropriate tale. But while the novel's characters do not reproduce, the narrative does. Each section represents another attempt to reproduce the narrative of the island. Through Susan and Foe's efforts to produce a single, publishable narrative that will satisfy both his desires for a novel that can grace booksellers' shelves and her desire to represent the truth that happened on the island, the narrative keeps reproducing itself as it repeats its own lines and retells the island tale. The remainder, the irreproducible and unnarratable, is Friday. Susan and Foe do not feel they can represent him without providing an answer to the question of his missing tongue, and Friday will not provide the answer they need. He cannot or will not produce his narrative or reproduce those of others. He cannot function in the novel's economies of language or narrative. He can and will labor if instructed, but his labor does not produce value for either Susan or Foe. Though Friday will circulate with Susan, travelling across the country, following her instructions, he will not produce a narrative she can use. His labor, what drove and sustained empire, is not valued in this postcolonial text. The reader and the characters want a different kind of labor from Friday—the production of a narrative that answers the question of his missing tongue—and he is not going to provide it.

Two shoes, not fellows

Throughout *Foe*, Susan reflects on the difficulties in writing a mimetic narrative, noting the details necessary to render a story believable and to consider the needs of both the reader and the writer. Despite Susan's insistence to the

contrary, Coetzee's text reminds the reader that there is no such thing as "a free woman who asserts her freedom by telling her story according to her own desire" (131). *Foe* emphasizes how textual desires are never entirely one's own and that despite desiring to tell freely, narratives are always mediated. The postcolonial critical desires for *Foe* tend to align with postcolonial readings of *Robinson Crusoe*, presenting the latter as colonial allegory. While *Crusoe* seems to serve as a tidy example for postcolonial readings of both Defoe and the form, the work itself isn't so easy to place. Certainly Crusoe's naming practices—of his castle and his country house, and of Friday—reflect a burgeoning English imperialism, and his construction of an English society on his own Caribbean island smacks of colonial allegory. However, the practices of imperialism cannot be instituted and sustained by a single man. Though Friday may be representative of the perfect colonial subject, their relationship is one of master and servant.^{cxxxvi} Imperialism works through larger networks of culture, not through the extreme individualism of the isolated man on a desert isle. Similarly, *Foe* exists within a larger network of texts. Despite claims that *Foe* "calls up Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* precisely in order to banish it" and to "banish the species of novelistic realism (fiction passing itself off as fact) for which it serves as a privileged sign,"^{cxxxvii} *Foe* demonstrates no desire to rid the novel of realism. To do so would be to take itself out of circulation, the equivalent of exiling its own text to a desert island. In its revision of *Crusoe*, *Foe* replaces *Crusoe* within these larger contexts.

Lewis MacLeod sharply notes that the novel is "a metafictional critique of narrative practices itself,"^{cxxxviii} but he reduces the scope and power of the critique of

narrative to its relation to a political self. In his figuration, the purpose of the text is a practical one—his question can easily be reduced to one of representation of silenced voices. During their struggle for control over the island tale, Susan insists that she cannot be reduced to narrative: “I am not a story, Mr. Foe. I may impress you as a story because I began my account of myself without preamble, slipping overboard into the water and striking out for the shore” (131). But the reader knows that she is a story, moreover, that she is a story who retells an earlier story. Susan’s preamble does not begin with, as she suggests, “so on back to the day I was born” (131). Rather, it begins with the rise of the form of the novel in eighteenth-century England. Her preamble derives from the body of fiction the canon holds up as a set of narratives constructed according to readers’ expectations in eighteenth-century England, narratives that continue to inform the Anglophone novel of Britain and the postcolony. It is her position as a story, or a set of stories, that intrigues readers of *Foe*. Castaway tales do not populate the booksellers’ shelves in the late twentieth century, but canonical rewritings promising contemporary perspectives that reopen earlier texts do.

Coetzee’s intertextuality with Defoe continues unexpectedly in his novel *Elizabeth Costello*, a novel about a writer who herself is famous for rewriting a quintessential postcolonial novel, *Ulysses*. For my purposes here I want to focus on the appearance of *Crusoe* in *Elizabeth Costello* as Coetzee’s return to the question of realism and Defoe’s particular influence on the form. *Elizabeth Costello* revisits a number of *Foe*’s key themes, including rewriting, gender constraints on narrative, and narrative control. Both *Foe* and *Elizabeth Costello* feature female authors trying

to navigate the reception of their work. The first chapter of *Elizabeth Costello*, “Realism,” is itself a revision. Before positioning it as *Costello*’s opening, Coetzee presented the episode (which is about a writer giving a speech on realism at a college in the Northeastern U.S.) as a speech entitled “What is Realism?”. This revision and re-placement echoes the themes of narrative circulation and the boundaries of mimetic representation that *Foe* addresses. Coetzee’s fictional writer Elizabeth Costello is being celebrated for her body of work, but is most famous for her early novel *The House on Eccles Street*, a revision of *Ulysses* told from the perspective of Molly Bloom. As she reflects on her position in the canon throughout the episode, the narrator (who is not Costello) demonstrates the necessities of narrative construction—how he must offer details about the persons whom he sets into motion and conversation, how even the verisimilitude of realism demands that narrative time skips to important moments, and the possibilities for realism to guide the complexities of contemporary readers and texts.

The narrator reflexively figures his description of Elizabeth Costello as adhering to a form of realism inherited from the eighteenth-century novel: “The blue costume, the greasy hair, these are details, signs of a moderate realism. Supply the particulars, allow the significations to emerge of themselves. A procedure pioneered by Daniel Defoe” (62). For evidence of Defoe’s brand of realism he turns to the scene in *Crusoe* in which Crusoe is washed ashore after surviving the shipwreck. Alongside him lie pieces of apparel the sea has stripped from his now-drowned shipmates, the only signs he sees of the missing men are these: “three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes that were not fellows.’ Two shoes, not fellows: by

not being fellows, the shoes have ceased to be the footwear and become proofs of death, torn by the foaming seas off the feet of drowning men and tossed ashore” (4). The essay figures realism as a structuralist description of language itself—realism uses the presence of one thing to signify the absence of something else. The deaths of the men, their absence from the world of the living on the island, is signified by the presence of their shoes and the fact that their feet are no longer in them, nor are their hands holding them. When Susan finally arrives at Foe’s quarters after corresponding him for so long, she bumps up against her belief in a realism that functions similarly. While writing her memoir and her letters to Foe, even after she stopped sending them to him Susan says that she “continued to trust my own authorship” (133). But Susan believes that her authorship was only necessary when she had something to relate that could not be shared in another way. Susan believed she would no longer need to narrate once she met Foe: “yet, in the same room with you at last, where I need surely not relate to you my every action – you have me under your eyes and you are not blind – I continue to describe and explain” (133). This moment marks yet another narrative realization for Susan, that speech or writing need not solely be pressed into the need of describing the absent, that the present sometimes needs narrating as well.

Addressing her choice of Kafka to discuss realism, Elizabeth Costello separates realism from mimesis. She justifies her use of a surrealist Kafka story to illustrate the power of realism by offering the concept of *embeddedness*, a way in which the presence of certain concerns of the text speaks to the absence of others. Costello argues that Kafka’s consideration of the ape, in his reflection on his desire

for a mate and his reaction to her, “and what it was going to be like when he was left in the dark with the bewildered, half-tamed female that his keepers eventually produced for his use” (32), operates like the formal realism of the eighteenth century English novel. Kafka’s story does not pretend to offer the verisimilitude of realism, nor explain the terms that govern the textual possibilities of an ape giving a report, but as the narrative follows the ape home, it demonstrates the ape’s embeddedness: “Kafka’s ape is embedded in life. It is the embeddedness that is important, not the life itself. [...] That ape is followed through to the end, to the bitter, unsayable end, whether or not there are traces left on the page. Kafka stays awake during the gaps when we are sleeping” (32). The embeddedness that Costello explicates describes the way that *Foe* places Susan’s realist narrative within the novel’s larger metafictional construction of a rewriting of Defoe’s work. While Susan insists that her story’s worth comes from her being able to vouch for having written it, and for its factual accuracy, or else “I might as well have dreamed it in a snug bed in Chichester” (40), *Foe* quietly insists that modes of storytelling provide the truth of narrative, and that by examining not the accuracy of events, but the way in which they are related, the reader and writer can access more possibilities for truth.

Susan’s insistence that a story’s value derives from its claim to represent events as they actually happened echoes the structural premise of Defoe’s novels. The texts that *Foe* rewrites each begin with prefatory remarks offered by a fictional editor. These editors attest to the reputations of the writers—lauding those of Crusoe and Mrs. Bargrave and admitting the impropriety following Roxana and Moll—and vouch for the truthfulness of the narrators’ claims. In short, they assure

the reader that the fiction he or she is about to consume is history rather than novel. These prefaces work to control the ways in which the novels are read. First, they ask that the reader see them as relations of autobiography. Second, they ask that the reader see the more transgressive moments in the novels as cautionary tales, to use them only for means of spiritual improvement. Defoe's editors insist that the truth of their stories, by which they mean the factual accuracy, their insistence on the fiction that the events of the narrative happened as a matter of fact, not the invention of a writer, is what sets them apart from similar contemporary tales. The editor who writes the preface to *Roxana* claims that the following text is unlike "most of the Modern Performances of this Kind, for the work is not a Story, but a History" (1). *Moll's* editor acknowledges that "the World is so taken up of late with Novels and Romances, that it will be hard for a private history to be taken for Genuine, where the Names and other Circumstances of the Person are concealed" he concedes that he must "be content to leave the Reader to pass his own Opinion upon the ensuing Sheets" (3), but his message is clear. As Susan tells Foe—"it is the truth that makes your story yours alone" (40).

The editorial insistence on the truth of their narratives extends the scope of the novels' realism, which they use to affect the moral authority of the true history, setting the works apart from the entertainment-driven romance. The assertions of truth cloak the narratives of *Moll* and *Roxana* in garments of moral application as the art of the editors and writers make their language fit for respectable readers. Despite their claims of veracity, the editors of *Roxana* and *Moll*, however, both claim to have altered the histories the subjects presented in order to make them palatable

to the reader. The title page of *Moll* entices the reader with the transgressions that will be found within the following pages—a Newgate birth, prostitution, theft, a transported felon, incest—and then relieves the agitated reader with her death as “a Penitent” (7). These fortunes and misfortunes, the editor relates, have been written “from her own memorandums” (1), but that “the original of this Story is put into new Words” (3). The words the editor uses to transform the memorandums into a suitable narrative “had not little difficulty to put it into a new dress fit to be seen, and to make it speak Language fit to be read” (1). *Roxana*’s editor offers a similar sartorial metaphor, noting that he has had to speak the protagonist’s words for her, “dressing up the Story” to that it is “prepar’d for the World” (1).

The existence of these prefaces also demonstrates the difficulties, if not impossibilities, of controlling narrative. Due to public questioning as to the veracity of the events of *Crusoe*, Defoe felt it necessary to write a longer preface four months after the original publication, offering stronger claims to the truth of Crusoe’s journeys. The fourth edition of *Crusoe* and the first edition of *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* also included a map on which Crusoe’s travels had been detailed in dotted lines, allowing the reader to place Crusoe’s island and his journeys into a global context. But the problems with *Crusoe* were those of the public—the editors of both *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* demonstrate the problems with the transgressive narratives of their female subjects. *Crusoe*’s tale is offered as his own. Though Crusoe’s editor acknowledges having a role in presenting the text, he does not note having to make any changes to the “History of Fact” presented to him. He compliments the way in which the story is told “with Modesty, with Seriousness,

and with a religious Application of Events to the Uses to which wise Men always apply them” (3). He insists on the text’s usefulness “to the Instruction of others by this Example” (3). Defoe’s editors offer what Susan wants when she asks Defoe to offer her narrative art; they manage the narratives offered by the protagonists and send them into circulation.

While Susan seems to understand the need to establish authority as the editors do, from the earliest pages of her memoir, Susan shows her difficulty in maintaining narrative order. As she attempts to provide an account of her time on the island, she begins as if writing for a reader who has no familiarity with the story. She narrates her first meeting with Friday: “The man squatted down beside me. He was black: a Negro with a head of fuzzy wool, naked save for a pair of rough drawers” (6). But once she describes his assisting her up the hillside, she gets ahead of her narrative, naming her assistant before she has introduced him as she fills the reader in on the hostile ants of the island: “even Friday’s hard skin was not proof against it: there were bleeding cracks in his feet” (7). She then switches back, as Friday brings her to meet Cruso the latter is “a European” and the former again “the Negro” (8). As she offers her description of the European whom she initially terms a stranger, she breaks her narrative continuity with an aside to Foe about the stranger “(who was of course the Cruso I told you of)” (9). In the next sentence she steps outside of her narration again, offering her reader a signpost: “I have told you how Cruso was dressed; now let me tell you of his habitation” (9), after which she returns to the point of present in her narrative, describing how she removes the thorn from her foot and her arrival on the island after being set adrift.

Susan's first attempt to narrate her arrival on the island ends where it began. Presented by Friday to Cruso, she recounts the mutiny and returns to her starting point: "then at last I could row no further" (11). This repetition, which will be the first of many in the text, offers the reader a number of clues about Susan's narrative problems and the project of the novel. Susan understands that she must meet the reader's expectations and provide what she terms "art," which she endeavors to do with the rhetorical flourish of her *in media res* opening. But her work at narrating falters as she seems unsure of her audience—she oscillates between writing for a new reader and for someone familiar with her story already. *Foe*, as it rewrites Daniel Defoe's iconic island narrative, must do the same. Though Coetzee presents an almost entirely different cast of characters, the reader cannot read this Cruso without the eighteenth-century version lurking in the background: "despite the homophone that links the castaways' names, Coetzee's Cruso is by an absence orthographically marked as different from Defoe's Crusoe; indeed, Cruso exists in the text sometimes as an almost-absent presence, sometimes as an almost-present absence."^{xxxix} Nor is he meant to, for *Foe* deliberately and specifically rewrites *Robinson Crusoe*. Coetzee's novel speaks to those who do not know Susan Barton's story, but are familiar with Crusoe's.

The problem of narrative control proves extremely difficult for Moll, Roxana, and their editors, as it will for Susan. *Roxana*, with its sudden and bizarre ending, like *Crusoe* previously, proved so unmanageable that various editions were written which either replace the novel's final paragraph, or write a continuation of the novel to either explain Roxana's abruptly mentioned final misfortunes or offer her a

revised and explained happy ending.^{cxl} Moll's happy ending, as she is returned to the New World prosperous and penitent, proves no less troublesome for her editor and readers. Readings differ as to whether the editor's claim of Moll's penitence is to be read as sincere or ironic.^{cxli} The difficulty of relaying transgressive tales like those of Moll and Roxana to eighteenth-century audiences is clear in the struggles their editors claim to have with the texts presented them. Thomas Grant Olsen argues that in order to present Moll's tale in a palatable form, its original must be destroyed: "when read together, the editor's act of making Moll 'tell her own Tale in modester Words than she told it at first' (3) obliterates the notion that the narrative is Moll's at all; instead, the narrative reveals itself as a tale of figurative and recuperative paternalism over an unruly narrative child."^{cxlii} *Foe's* construction acknowledges the paternalistic narrative mediation of Defoe's female protagonists and complicates our reading of them.

Like the Defoe works it rewrites, *Foe* features an editor who endeavors to tailor Susan's narrative into a form fit for public consumption. Unlike Defoe's fictional editors, *Foe's* editor does not announce him- or herself in a prefatory statement, but rather arrives in the fourth section of the novel. The editor assembles the novel from its distinct parts—the memoir Susan presents to Foe for him to lend his art, the letters she sends Foe about his progress in writing her story and Susan and Friday's travels in England, an account of Susan arriving at Foe's London flat with Friday in tow, seeking shelter and information on the status of the work, and finally a brief narration of two attempts by the editor to retrieve Susan's physical text and the truth behind her words. The editor narrates the fourth section of the

novel, entering Foe's flat, finding Susan's memoir and letters, and finally diving into the shipwreck near Crusoe's island. *Foe* opens with two signs for the reader: the Roman numeral I and a set of quotation marks. These two signs are the first that indicate the presence of an editor who has taken Susan's texts and organized them to construct the novel. The opening punctuation is a space-clearing gesture in which the editor simultaneously alludes to and sweeps away the pages of prefatory material that begin Defoe's novels. Unlike the editors of *Roxana*, *Crusoe*, *Moll* and "Mrs. Veal," Coetzee's editor is not willing to vouch for the truthfulness of the narrative he or she offers or the reputation of its subject and original author. The only testimony this editor provides at the opening of the narrative is that she has faithfully reproduced Susan's words in the memoir that comprises the first section of the novel. This editor refuses the "quasi-omniscient purview"^{cxliii} Defoe's realist editors gladly accept; with the quotation marks Coetzee's editor insists upon the limitations of knowledge offered by this text. The editor's quotation marks quietly insist that she has not dressed up Susan's narrative, nor has she skipped over parts of her tale as *Moll's* editor claims to. Refusing to account for Susan's truthfulness, this narrator will only assure the accurate reporting of Susan's words, which we see her discover in the final scene of the novel.

Between the opening punctuation and her appearance in the closing section, the narrator leaves more clues for the careful reader. In the third section of the novel Susan's first-person narration is no longer enclosed in quotation marks, suggesting that unlike the memoir and letters that precede it, this narrative is not a word-for-word reproduction of what Susan has penned. It is also in this third

section that the editor shows she has modernized Susan's eighteenth-century prose for twentieth-century publication. During Friday's writing lesson Susan explains, "I drew a picture of a house and the letters h-o-u-s" (145). She asks Friday to mimic her actions and he complies, writing the four letters she has modeled for him. The absence of the *e* at the end of the word Susan writes, coupled with the presence of the *e* the reporting of what she has done—"drew a house"—marks a presence of the editor. Susan spells house without an *e* at the end, as she spells Cruso. Similarly, though there are occasional reminders that the text is supposed to have been written centuries ago, like the superscript capital H's sprinkled throughout the novel, *Foe* does not bear out eighteenth-century spelling, syntax, or capitalization. The texts that comprise the novel offer standardized contemporary spellings. Not only has the editor assembled and ordered the four sections of *Foe*, she has modernized them as well.

The clearest evidence of the editor, however, is the finished product that is *Foe*. Despite the novel's battle over what comprises a complete narrative and what this narrative needs to be complete, neither author's vision of the finished text comes to fruition. Susan and Foe present competing versions of Susan's tale. Foe sees a five-part structure based on the loss and recovery of a daughter: "the loss of the daughter; the quest for the daughter in Brazil, abandonment of the quest, and the adventure of the island; assumption of the quest by the daughter; And reunion of the daughter with the mother" (117). He does not argue that this is the best way for Susan's tale to be related, but rather the only way: "it is thus that we make up a book: loss, then quest, then recovery; beginning, then middle, then end" (117).

Books, Foe contends, are written according to a specific structure and turned into art by the addition of novelty. The island and the reversal of the search provide the novelty in Foe's version of *The Female Castaway*. While Susan insists that her story is that of the island, Foe assures her as fervently that the island cannot be a story in itself, that the island episode may only be read in a larger framework. She answers his five-part structure with one of her own, bound by her island arrival and rescue. *The Female Castaway* is never written. What the reader sees, instead, is *Foe*—a memoir of a year spent as a castaway, a set of letters about the possible publication of the memoir, a first-person narration of the author of the memoir meeting with the writer she has enlisted to turn her drafted memoir into a marketable castaway tale, and a gothic dreamscape in which a new narrator twice revisits the characters from the first three sections. The shift in time, tone, and narrator change the first three sections into a fundamentally different text, as the move away from the boundaries of realism further highlights the unnarratable.

The House of Friday

The final section of the novel, much shorter than the other three, marks fundamental changes in narration, tone, and mood from the narrative that precedes it. In this section, the intertexts of *Roxana* and *Robinson Crusoe* all but disappear, as the final lines reveal the bodies of Susan and Friday at the bottom of the sea, having sunk with the ship that carried them. In this rendering, the Susan and Friday who arrived on Foe's doorstep after walking to Bristol and taking in laundry on Clock Lane are ghosts, appearing to Defoe and the reader after their deaths. In the space of

the novel's ending, the prevailing Defoe intertext is "The Apparition of Mrs. Veal," a work Susan mentions repeatedly in her narrative.^{cxliv} "Mrs. Veal" relates the story of the respectable Mrs. Bargrave from Canterbury (her good name and honesty are established and reaffirmed by a series of narrative frames like those in *Crusoe*, *Moll*, and *Roxana*), who receives a visit from an old friend. After her friend's departure, Mrs. Bargrave learns that Mrs. Veal had died days before the visit. Upon reading the last section of *Foe*, the novel becomes a rewriting of "Mrs. Veal," with Susan and Friday sharing the title role. *Foe*, then, is not the story of castaways who dazzle their readers with ingenuity, resolve, and redemption on a desert island. Rather, it is the tale of unexpected visitors from another time, a rational impossibility rendered fictively possible. In the novel's final act of metafiction, the reader becomes Mrs. Bargrave, and the apparition narrative, castaway tale, and picaresque are all subsumed into the gothic mode.

Here the novel takes the apparition narrative of "Mrs. Veal," which assures the reader of its truth through the mechanisms of realism, employing a series of narrative frames attesting to certainty of Mrs. Bargrave's narration, and transforms it into the gothic mode, in which narrative truth rests outside the realms of ratiocination and mimesis that characterize formal realism. In this section a new narrator emerges. As determined as Susan to elicit voice from Friday, the new narrator makes two separate attempts to do so, first prying Friday's lips apart as he sleeps in Foe's alcove, then diving to the sunken ship off the waters of Brazil and finding his body buried deep in the wreck. In addition to a change in narrators, the novel's fourth section skips ahead to a contemporary chronotope in which a blue plaque

distinguishes the building as once having housed Daniel Defoe. David Marshall reduces the status of this terminal section to that of a “coda,”^{cxlv} suggesting that the novel essentially ends with Friday’s writing lesson, but I would argue that this gothic ending is fundamental to the finished project that is *Foe*. The metafictional aspects of the first three sections call attention to the eighteenth-century construction of realism as practiced by Defoe and inherited by writers of the English novel. Though the text continually references its constructed nature, it does so within the certain boundaries of the moderate realism Coetzee outlines. Susan’s memoir, her letters, her travel—all could be read as plausible events reinscribed by Susan’s hand in three different forms and assembled by an editor. In other words, the first three sections of the novel stand as an approximation of a Defoe novel.^{cxlvi} But as the final attempt to narrate the story of Susan and Friday transforms *Foe* into a retelling of “Mrs. Veal,” the formal realism with which the first three sections contends becomes subsumed into this new register. The ghostly status of Susan and Friday rewrites not just Defoe’s apparition narrative, but also everything in *Foe* that precedes its final lines.

By locating Friday’s body in the sunken wreck, showing Friday to have died not just in transport but in bondage, Coetzee locates his gothic tale neither in the colony nor on the continent, nor in the place of nation. Rather, Coetzee sets the gothic in the unsettled making of the African diaspora that was the transatlantic slave trade. Jack Shear argues that the terror the reader finds in the gothic comes not in the alterity of the “lurking monsters endemic to the genre” but rather it is their sameness;^{cxlvii} the gothic holds up a mirror to the known and reflects what

Rushdie terms “the visible but unseen,” the history and present of imperialism always extant in the postimperial and postcolonial nation, but often falling outside the scope of its representation in literature. With the addition of this fourth section, *Foe* holds in tension the diasporic gothic of a ghostly Friday, whose utterance floods from his pried-open lips and envelops the globe without the reader ever actually hearing it. Though the novel jumps ahead in time, the editor still narrates from the ahistorical space of text making; she is transported to the wreck through the opening lines of Susan’s memoir, as she continues Susan’s habit of repeating phrases from her narrative. Just as the text is haunted by imperial Britain and postcolonial South Africa, it is also haunted by the ghost of Friday, who will not give up his story even when he ‘speaks’. The “terrible story” that Susan sees in the loss of Friday’s tongue is synecdoche for the narrative of horrors of the slave trade and the middle passage. The turn to the gothic in this final section of the novel allows for a narrative that speaks to a postcolonial present infused with the memory of the “ineffable terror” of the historical realities of the Black Atlantic.^{cxlviii}

In addition to its evocation of the ghosts of the Black Atlantic, the turn to the gothic at the novel’s end gestures toward the idea of spectral nationality espoused by Pheng Cheah. Cheah considers the problem of postcolonial nationalism as he reads the “vitalist ontology, which conceives of the future in terms of eternal present life” that underwrites all figurations of nationalism.^{cxlix} Cheah argues that the nation is tied to death even more closely than it is tied to life, seeing the structures of nationalism as haunting and hindering the postcolonial project.^{cl} The specter of nation haunts South African fiction uniquely. Vilishini Cooppan argues that reading

South African literature in postcolonial and nationalist terms problematizes both. South Africa does not fit neatly into postcolonial paradigms because of the fraught relationship between the South African nation and postcoloniality: “South Africa has been postcolonial many times over: with the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 in the wake of the Anglo-Boer war; with the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism and the birth of the apartheid state in 1948; and of course, with the historic elections of 1994,” which did not occur until more than a decade after *Foe’s* publication.^{cli} Cooppan notes that due to this series of postcolonial and national moments, “part of the burden of a literary-critical engagement with the South African literature of transition must thus be the learning of a kind of methodological oscillation, in which the parsing of newness goes hand in hand with the mapping of the transnational circuits that inform the nation.”^{clii} Reducing the island story to an allegory of South Africa and Friday to the silenced black majority allows for none of this oscillation.

Susan and Friday’s multivalent existences—castaways in the first section, vagabonds in the second, ghosts in the fourth—do not resolve into neatly into the realist terms by which Susan would like them to be represented. The final section of the novel ensures that none of the previous sections can pretend to the certainty of Defoe’s realism. However, Susan cannot see beyond the confines of realism. She believes that in order for her story to respect the boundaries she has set, yet still offer enough of a frame or history for her readers, Friday must speak of the horrors of the slave trade and the middle passage. To satisfy her narrative desires, Friday must speak to the origins of his lack of speech, and in a sense to his origins as well.

In a final attempt to offer Foe a story he will accept that also meets her standards, Susan tries to teach Friday to write so that he may fill in the blank space of his story and account for his missing tongue. Friday's silence holds them together in the "strange backwards embrace" they form as he helps her from the beach where she has been washed ashore to the care of Crusoe. Susan's characterization of their story as "a sorry limping affair" echoes their initial joined ascent to the shelter, Susan "part-way skipping on one leg, part-way riding on his back" (6). It is in this connection that Spivak finds her other-directed ethics. However, despite her nominally ethical behavior towards him, the relationship between Susan and Friday is fraught. Susan complains frequently of being tethered to Friday and often wishes beyond all else to be free of him. Her calls for a return to substance are nearly always followed by the claim that such substance will allow her to be rid of Friday. After she realizes that she will not be able to shed herself of her obligation to Friday, Susan takes him to Foe. One might argue that the canon bears out that Foe ultimately grants Susan her desire by taking Friday off her hands. In order to do so, however, he must separate their narratives. Friday has no place in the narratives of Moll or Roxana. If we read the story forward rather than backward, Foe makes Friday more pliable and palatable for the reader. He removes the disturbing mutilation while keeping the expected horror—Defoe's Friday is a cannibal after all—better aligning the character with the reader's expectations.

But what about the critical expectations for Coetzee and his novel? The fact that Coetzee used South Africa for the setting of only two of his novels written during Apartheid led to the charge that his work failed to address the contemporary

politics of nation.^{cliii} Yet *Foe's* overt connection to *Robinson Crusoe* leads to a critical eagerness to read Coetzee's island as an allegory of South Africa with Friday representing the silenced black majority. However, the text is deliberately unclear as to whether Cruso's account of Friday's inability to speak is accurate. Susan first reports that Friday has no tongue in the memoir she sends to Foe. She writes that when she asked Cruso why he never taught Friday English so that he might enjoy the pleasures of conversation, or that he, like Defoe's *Crusoe* "might have brought home to him some of the blessings of civilization and made him a better man" (22). In answer to Susan's admonition, Cruso asks Friday to sing, and Friday begins to hum. Uncertain of Cruso's meaning, Susan asks if Friday is capable of speech. Cruso commands Friday to open his mouth and Susan to look. Both appear to comply, but Susan's response offers little description: "I looked, but saw nothing in the dark save the glint of teeth white as ivory" (22). He asks Friday to mimic the syllables "*la-la-la*" and Friday responds "*ha-ha-ha*"; Cruso explains that Friday has no tongue, that the slavers cut it out. Susan immediately asks why, as she will for the rest of the novel. Cruso offers a number of possibilities, assuring Susan that they can never know the truth. Susan reduces Friday from subject to narrative: "It is a terrible story [...]" Where is the justice in it? First a slave and now a castaway too. Robbed of his childhood and consigned to a life of silence. Was Providence sleeping?" (23). After this exchange, Susan consistently repeats Cruso's claim that Friday has no tongue and thus cannot speak.

But Susan undermines her own description with her confession that she could not verify the visual evidence Cruso offers of Friday's injury, unable to secure

Friday's mutilation in realist narration. She speculates as to the exact nature of his disfigurement, wondering if Friday's tongue had been cleft rather than removed or if the sinews controlling the organ had been severed. "I guess merely," she admits to Friday. "I have not looked in your mouth. When your master asked me to look, I would not" (85). When she writes to Foe of Friday's dancing, Susan suggests that his severed tongue may be a metaphor for another amputation: "I confess I wondered whether he might not be employing a figure, for the sake of delicacy: whether the lost tongue might stand not only for itself but for a more atrocious mutilation; whether by a dumb slave I was to understand a slave unmanned" (119). Her narration of what she sees when Friday spins in his dance—"in the dance nothing was still and yet everything was still"—and her reaction to the visible evidence—"I saw and believed I had seen, though afterwards I remembered Thomas, who also saw, but could not be brought to believe till he had put his hand in the wound" (119-20)—renders Friday's mutilation completely ambiguous. The "moderate realism" formula Coetzee attributes to Defoe and employs in *Elizabeth Costello* again fails to account for what has been done to Friday.^{cliv} Susan's narration of Friday's dance, like Friday's "ha-ha-ha" response to Cruso's command to repeat "la-la-la," does not narrate the particulars needed to allow clear significations to appear for the reader. The 'ha-ha-ha' response, with the *h* sound appearing where the *l* should be, exemplifies the moderate realism Coetzee outlines in *Elizabeth Costello*; the aspirated *h* sound demonstrates the absence of a tongue to create an *l* sound—like an empty shoe that should signify the absence of a man. But the particular it provides neither confirms nor discredits Cruso's claim. While Cruso's explanation

appears to be supported by Friday's silence, Friday's resistance to Susan's commands seems to offer as much evidence to the contrary.

Most critical readings of *Foe* ignore the ambiguity surrounding Friday's lack of speech and accept, as Susan does in her narrative, Cruso's explanation that his tongue has been removed and that he has been subsequently silenced (despite the clear evidence that he can approximate sounds and he sings and hums). A silenced Friday fits neatly into postcolonial arguments about the possibilities of subaltern speech and readings of the novel as an allegory of South African Apartheid. Both Robert Post and Marni Gauthier limit their readings of Friday's silence to an unquestioning acceptance of Cruso's explanation. Gauthier considers the inability of those around him to read Friday as deriving directly from his alleged disfiguration: "Friday's mutilation prevents him from being known,"^{clv} while Post sees the failure on the part of Friday's inability to make himself known: "His mutilated mouth is a major cause of his remaining a slave. He is further imprisoned by his inability to understand English, responding only to the few words Cruso taught him."^{clvi} Post, like Susan, accepts Cruso's assessment that Friday has learned no words beyond those Cruso imparted to him. In effect, he reads Coetzee's Friday like Defoe's Friday—a man with limited language skills who cannot learn without the teachings of his colonial master. But the desire to place Friday in the position of "the native" who stands as "curious guardian of the margin who will not inform"^{clvii} seems to overshadow the actualities of the text. Coetzee's Friday is not the native. As Spivak herself notes, Coetzee has transformed Foe's Native American cannibal into a character with distinctly sub-Saharan African features. Transported from *Crusoe* to

Foe and from Africa to the Caribbean, Friday is diasporic. Upon first seeing him on the beach Susan notes Friday's woolly hair, broad nose, and black skin. Neither the reader nor Susan knows how Friday has come to the island or where he was coming from when he was shipwrecked. Though at times Crusoe says that he and Friday were shipwrecked together, Crusoe is unreliable when providing information about his past, frustrating Susan's demand to know the history of the island and Friday's passage there. Whether Friday had been purchased or kidnapped in Africa and was being brought to the Caribbean or Latin America, or if he had been born in the New World and was being transported from one colony to another, the reader can never know. Defoe gives *his* Friday a clear origin—a neighboring island—and Crusoe offers him an opportunity of repatriation. Friday chooses to retain his new Christian identity and master, embracing his role as colonial subject.

Coetzee's Friday is not only stripped of this voice, but of his colonial compliance. Upon their rescue, Susan insists that Friday be brought on board the ship and that Friday prefers to sleep outside Crusoe's door. Friday sleeps where Susan instructs and follows her directions for the rest of the novel. But despite his acquiescence, he never follows his predecessor in professing his allegiance to Crusoe, Susan, or their ideologies. He does not convert to Christianity and swear off human flesh. And he most certainly does not act for their entertainment, as Defoe's Friday does during an adventure in the Alps. In fact, Coetzee's Friday declines to rehearse any of the positions Defoe's Friday willingly accepts. He refuses to engage with Susan, thereby refusing to reenact the earlier Friday's portrayal of the happy colonial subject. Susan tries to interact with Friday at various points during their

adventures in England—through conversation, through pictures, and through art. Each time, Friday refuses. He works for his bread—the requirement set down by Crusoe on the island. He will launder and garden according to Susan’s dictum of “watch” and “do,” but he will go no further. He will not engage in conversation in any language, and he will not assist Susan in her narrative building. When he dances he ignores Susan. When she tries to join him in creating music, he will not alter his tune and the two only produce cacophony. Though it is possible that Friday intentionally creates art (for he writes, plays music, dances, and scatters flower petals), neither the reader nor Susan can read what he produces. The reader cannot know if, like Susan suggests, Friday whirls in Foe’s robes because it is an efficient way to dry himself in England’s damp climate, if he is but fouling Foe’s papers with his writing, and if his petal scattering is a ritual of remembrance, or rather a mode of artistic expression. Attridge would like to read Friday as a symbol of art and its power, but I don’t think the novel allows for such a reading. Friday is too impenetrable to be a single thing. To reduce him to an aesthetic is as limiting as to reduce him to an allegory, or to a single action that may account for his silence. Instead, the possible readings of Friday, like the possible truths the postcolonial novel offers, must remain multiple.

In her final attempt to elicit Friday’s narrative so that she may present a story that begins with her arrival on the island, Susan agrees to attempt to teach Friday to write. She needs to learn Friday’s origin story—how he has come to the island and how he has lost his tongue. For the first lesson she chooses four words

that she hopes will speak to Friday's past: house, ship, Africa, and mother. She begins teaching each word with a pictorial representation and the word underneath, attempting to connect sign to signifier, but she quickly loses faith that her project can provide the answers she seeks. When she comes to her third word, Africa, she represents the place as "a row of palm trees with a lion roaming among them" (146). It is with this word that Susan's belief in the project breaks down, as she wonders, "Was my Africa the Africa whose memory Friday bore within him? I doubted it. Nevertheless, I wrote A-f-r-i-c-a and guided him in forming the letters. So at least he knew now that all words were not four letters long" (146). Whether or not he understands these concepts, Friday gives no hint. Susan wonders if he can possibly be as dumb if she believes him to be, and again considers the possibility that Friday may be withholding from her: "Could it be that somewhere within him he was laughing at my efforts to bring him nearer to a state of speech? [...] Somewhere in the deepest recesses of those black pupils was there a spark of mockery? I could not see it" (146). She concludes that even if such a spark were there, that she might not be able to culturally translate the "African spark" with her "English eye" (146). For his writing lesson, Friday continues his duties of "watch" and "do." He allows Susan to take his hand and trace the letters she has written. When asked to write the word house, he mimics the four letters, *h-o-u-s*, that she asks him to reproduce. Though initially he follows Susan's orders, Friday reduces the word ship to s-h-s-h (or, Susan wonders, to f-h-f-h). The lesson ends fruitlessly in Susan's eyes. While Susan and Foe discuss the proceedings of the lesson, Friday removes himself to his mat and fills his writing slate with symbols—"open eyes, each set upon a human food: row upon row

of eyes upon feet" (147). Friday's writing is like his flute playing and his dancing; he repeats a unique pattern that Susan does not appreciate and cannot penetrate. Though Friday allows Susan to join him in his music making, when she demands that he return the slate, he refuses to allow her to access to his writing. Moistening his fingers with his speechless mouth, he wipes the slate clean.

In Friday's writing lesson he will mimic Susan's letters, but he will not reproduce her words or meaning. The writing lesson literally and figuratively leads the reader to the final gothic figuration, in which the novel will be insistently multivalent and Friday's narration will not provide answers. Friday cannot and will not be translated into either Foe or Susan's narrative economy. Though the novel's first three sections dwell on lacunae—missing and concealed information, questions of narrative and personal withholding—each offers the reader a legible, recuperable story. Though it is not clear how long Susan spent in Bahia or if her motivation for traveling there was indeed to search for a lost daughter, the reader can be fairly sure that she journeyed to Brazil and was shipwrecked on her return. The missing information, like the loss of Friday's tongue or Susan's past, offers the novelty Foe suggests is necessary to text-building. The first three narratives withhold as a part of larger narratives that offer up clearer information. Though trafficking in metafiction, they are, to borrow Coetzee's phrase, embedded in reality. The final section of the novel does not offer a narrative that can be reasoned out. The two narratives it does offer appear to contradict each other, and more importantly, the final section of the novel effectively undoes all that has come before it.

As our narrator dives the wreck searching for answers she finds that nothing is as it has appeared. The section is comprised of two narratives. In the first, the narrator enters Foe's quarters and sees the characters from the novel staged throughout the house either asleep or dead. She lies by Friday in his alcove and tests his hair to find that it is like wool, as Susan had described. The narrator tries to part his teeth to retrieve Friday's narrative. Her reward is not exactly speech, but neither is it silence: "From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island" (154). Though Friday is often called silent, he is not completely mute. At various points in the novel he hums, grunts, and makes other noises consistent with a man who has no tongue, but has the capacity to make noise. A break in the text sets apart a second attempt. The narrator enters the house again, offering a clearer marker of time by noting the blue heritage plaque denoting the space as once having housed "*Daniel Defoe, Author*" (155). This time, the narrator makes her way through the house and finds herself at Foe's writing desk. Picking up a paper from the dispatch box she reads the words "Dear Mr. Foe" at the top of the page, this salutation followed by the opening words to Susan's memoir that comprises the first section of the novel. Whereas the editor has not previously been willing to vouch for Susan's accuracy, the lack of quotation marks at the beginning of this section and the use of Susan's exact words serve as an authentication of her account. Like Crusoe's island journal, this narrative depends upon the intervention of an editor, perhaps the narrator who finds Susan's original memoir in Foe's inbox.^{clviii}

The fourth part of the novel begins by echoing the opening lines of the section that precedes it, a technique of repetition that Coetzee uses earlier in the

novel when Susan's oral recounting of her tale of mutiny and being cast away (or possibly retelling of that tale to Foe) when she repeats the line of ending with physical exhaustion that marks the beginning of her island memoir, "at last I could row no further" (11). As with the gothic mode, this threshold of beginning and ending allows both to coexist in the same space. The narrative recursion from one section to another reflects the repeated attempts to tell the story and the multiple narratives that exist in the same space. The final section, in which the narrator reaches "the house of Friday" begins with the narrator arriving at Foe's London quarters, repeating Susan's description of the place: "The staircase was dark and mean" (153). The unnamed narrator traces Susan's steps through Foe's door and inside the house, but this narrator meets a drastically changed scene. As she enters the house, the speaker notes a blue heritage plaque outside the door, fixing this section in the historical present and transforming the place where the financially struggling Foe hides from his creditors into the historic home of the canonized Daniel Defoe.

In addition to allowing a kind of access to Friday's voice, the ambiguity retained by the gothic section of *Foe* creates new possibilities for the contemporary reader, similar to those that I will explore in the next chapter, in which I address the ways Rushdie uses magical realism to allow for a dualism of the postcolonial immigrant experience in London. Rushdie, too, returns to the Crusoe myth—invoking the allegory of the colonizer in a "Crusoe-city" with its "Man-Friday underclass" (*TSV* 453) in a metaphor that brings the adventure of the New World into the contemporary space of the metropolitan postcolony. As with the unsettled,

text-in-motion that is *Foe*, Rushdie presents a novel of transformation, in which characters, recursive phrases and places, and narratives constantly transform, in which each of the novel's protagonists seeks to find a comfortable place in the postcolony and in his own skin. The multiplicity Coetzee offers with the four versions of the island tale is echoed in the multiple narratives Rushdie uses in *The Satanic Verses*, as Rushdie's text takes the narratively expansive, but geographically limited nineteenth-century realism of Dickens, and extends the narrative of the city to its imperial past and postcolonial present.

^{xc} I take this term from Patricia Fumerton, who traces semi-nomadic English subjects in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Fumerton argues that "low" subjectivity develops as subjects shift "from place to place, relationship to relationship, and job to job, such a subject apprenticed in a range of different identities, or 'role speculations,' without ever attaining the 'freedom' of a whole and stable identity." Fumerton, Patricia. *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

^{xcii} Patrick Parrinder. *Nation and Novel: The English Novel From its Origins to the Present Day*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. 63

^{xciii} Paul Gilroy. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and the Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. 198.

^{xciv} Timothy Brennan. "The National Longing for Form." *Nation and Narration*. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1990. 44-70. 50.

^{xcv}

^{xcvi} Michael McKeon discusses apparition narratives in *The Origins of the English Novel* (83-89), as do E.J. Clery and Robert Miles in *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook*.

^{xcvii} Michael McKeon. *Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. 83-90.

^{xcviii} McKeon, 87.

^{xcix} Lisa Zunshine. "Eighteenth-Century Print Culture and the 'Truth' of Fictional Narrative." *Philosophy and Literature*. 25.2 (2001): 215-32. 217.

^c *ibid.*

^{ci} Warhol argues that unnarratability is a variable factor that may change according to "nation, period, and audience as well as genre" (221). Warhol, Robyn R. "Neonarrative: or,

How to Render the Unnarratable in Realist Fiction and Contemporary Film." *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan. Malden MA: Blackwell, 2005. 220-31.

^{cii} Jack Shear. "Haunted House, Haunted Nation: *Triomf* and the South African Postcolonial Gothic." *JLS/TLW*. 22.1/2 (2006): 70-83. 73.

^{ciii} Carol Margaret Davison. "Burning Down the Master's (Prison-)House: Revolution and Revelation in Colonial and Postcolonial Female Gothic." *Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of Genre*. Ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 136-54. 138

^{civ} Andrew Smith and William Hughes, Eds. *Empire and the Gothic*. 4.

^{cv} Fred Botting. "The Gothic Production of the Unconscious." *Spectral Readings*. Eds. Glennis Byron and David Punter. New York: St. Martins, 1999. 22.

^{cvi} *ibid.*

^{cvi} *ibid.*

^{cvi} Gerald Prince. "On a Postcolonial Narratology." *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 372-81. 372.

^{cix} Gayatri Spivak. *A Critique of Postcolonial Realism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. 180.

^{cx} *ibid*

^{cx} Derek Attridge. "Oppressive Silence: J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* and the Politics of the Canon." *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth Century "British" Literary Canons*. Ed. Karen R. Lawrence. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991. 212-38. 223.

^{cxii} Attridge, 234.

^{cxiii} Spivak, 186.

^{cxiv} Attridge, 222.

^{cxv} Spivak, 182.

^{cxvi} Spivak, 186.

^{cxvii} Attridge, 220.

^{cxviii} Linda Hutcheon. *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 1988. 107.

^{cxix} Attridge offers a similar reading, noting the range of Defoe allusions "from the familiar to the scholarly," but relegating his discussion of the novel's span of allusiveness to a footnote. He mentions that the novel's ideal reader is probably well-versed in Defoe, but that catching most of the allusions is not necessary to understanding the novel's plot (233).

^{cxix} Wolfram Schmidgen. "Robinson Crusoe, Enumeration, and the Mercantile Fetish." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 35.1 (2001): 19-39.

^{cxxi} Schmidgen, 23.

^{cxvii} For more on the circulation of reputation and language as it pertains to the economies of the novels and characters of Moll and Roxana, see Michael "Thinking Parables," Griffin "The Text in Motion," and James Thompson's *Models of Value*.

^{cxviii} Schmidgen actually includes Crusoe's island stay in his mercantile economy, fitting Crusoe's frequent trips to the wreck to retrieve supplies into his figuration of circulation.

^{cxvii} Spivak, 180.

^{cxv} David Trotter. *Circulation: Defoe, Dickens, and the Economics of the Novel*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988. 41-2.

^{cxvii} Trotter, 55.

^{cxvii} Stephen C. Michael. "Thinking Parables: What *Moll Flanders* Does Not Say." *ELH*. 62.3 (1996): 367-395. 366-7.

^{cxviii} Brian Macaskill and Jeanne Colleran. "Reading History, Writing Heresy: The Resistance of Representation of Resistance in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*." *Contemporary Literature*. 33.3 (1992): 432-457. 444

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- ^{cxxix} Spivak 183
- ^{cxxx} Spivak, 183.
- ^{cxxxi} Spivak, 185.
- ^{cxxxii} Spivak, 181.
- ^{cxxxiii} *ibid.*
- ^{cxxxiv} Spivak, 182.
- ^{cxxxv} Robert ter Horst. *The Fortunes of the Novel: A Study in the Transportation of Genre*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003. 141.
- ^{cxxxvi} Spivak discusses Friday as both the “domesticated antitype” as termed by John Richetti (56) and the “prototype of the successful colonial subject” (187).
- ^{cxxxvii} Vilashini Cooppan. “National Literature in Transnational Times: Writing Transition in the ‘New’ South Africa. *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*. Eds. Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. 346-69. 352.
- ^{cxxxviii} Lewis MacLeod. “Do We of Necessity Become Puppets in a Story? Or Narrating the World: On Speech, Silence, and Discourse in J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe*. *Modern Fiction Studies*. 52.1 (2006): 1-18.
- ^{cxxxix} Macaskill and Colleran, 439
- ^{cxl} See Robert J Griffin “The Text in Motion: Eighteenth-Century *Roxanas*” here.
- ^{cxli} See Michael, pp 370-371 for elaboration.
- ^{cxlii} Thomas Grant Olsen. “Reading and Righting ‘Moll Flanders.’ *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 41.2 (2001): 467-81. 468.
- ^{cxliii} Coykendall, 1.
- ^{cxliv} Attridge and others also note the stylistic resonances of *The Tempest* and Adrienne Rich’s “Diving the Wreck” in this section.
- ^{cxlv} David Marshall. “Friday’s Writing Lesson: Reading *Foe*”. *Historical Boundaries, Narrative Forms*. Eds. Lorna Clymer and Robert Mayer. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007. 225-51.
- ^{cxlvi} The appearance of a young woman claiming to be Susan’s daughter is difficult to fit into this reading, but not impossible. Susan herself insists that the girl must have been sent by Foe, in order to convince her of his version of her story, to force her into the narrative he desires for her. Spivak notes that we should assume Susan to be a rational, sane actor, but her increasingly desperate demands that Foe return her to substance seem to reach beyond her need for remuneration and suggest that she has become so invested in her narrative that she can no longer draw clear boundaries between the story of her life and the ‘actual’ events that have happened to her. Like most points in the novel, Susan’s relationship to her narrative and the daughter called Susan is ambiguous, and I do argue that she is necessarily sane or insane. My point is that until the final section of the novel, all events *could* exist according to the logic of a realist narrative. In this final section, that possibility is removed.
- ^{cxlvii} Jack Shear. “Haunted House, Haunted Nation: *Triomf* and the South African Postcolonial Gothic.” *JLS/TLW*. 22.1/2 (2006): 70-83. 73.
- ^{cxlviii} Gilroy, 213-23.
- ^{cxlix} Pheng Cheah. “Spectral Nationality: The Living on of the Postcolonial Nation in Neocolonial Globalization.” *Boundary 2*. 26:3 1999. 225-252. 227
- ^{cl} Anderson, too, links nationalism to death as he outlines the tomb of the unknown soldier as a key to understanding the modern nation.
- ^{cli} Cooppan, 348.
- ^{clii} Cooppan, 348-9.
- ^{cliii} Attridge, 214-7.

^{cliv} If anything has been done at all, that is. If it remains possible that Friday simply refuses to speak (as I maintain it does), it also remains possible that Friday's lack of speech is due to an accident or a birth defect. The reader is left with no real means to evaluate whether Cruso is telling the truth when he claims that slavers have mutilated Friday. His claim could be based on assumption, he could be lying, or he could be misremembering. Susan frequently complains that Cruso's account of his shipwreck and time on the island varied so often that she could not tell fiction from fact.

^{clv} Marni Gauthier. "The Intersection of the Postmodern and the Postcolonial in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*." 34.3 (1997): 52-71. 66.

^{clvi} Robert M Post. "The Noise of Freedom: J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*." *Critique*. 30.3 (1989): 143-54. 147

^{clvii} Spivak, 190.

^{clviii} The narrator of this section must be familiar with Susan's story. She names Friday in her narration—"I find the man Friday stretched at full length" (154)—and her examination of his hair is phrased as if another confirmation of Susan's account: "I tug lightly at his hair. It is indeed like lambswool" (154). In addition to the knowledge this narrator has of Susan's extent narration, that is, in addition to what is represented in the first three sections of *Foe*, the narrator seems to be familiar with the Cruso's island, for when she puts her ear to Friday's mouth she notes that first she hears what Susan did: "as she said, the roar of waves in a seashell." When the narrator presses closer, the noise is no longer figured as what she hears, but rather with Friday as agent, or at least interlocutor as "from his mouth, without a breath. issue the sounds of the island" (154).

Chapter Three

A City Visible But Unseen: Salman Rushdie, Charles Dickens, and the Spectacle of Postcolonial London

In his 1988 novel, *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie terms Brickhall, the novel's fictional amalgam of London's immigrant enclaves, "A City Visible But Unseen." Like Nazneen Ahmed and her friends in the Tower Hamlets, the postcolonial immigrants in Rushdie's novel contribute to the London's economy and complexion, but they often remain unseen in the city and nation's self-conception. As with Susan and Friday (and Roxana and Moll before them), the residents of Brickhall exist in the margins of London's imagination, excluded from narratives of the city. "A city visible but unseen" could also apply to the vision of nineteenth-century London that Rushdie offers his reader through his allusions to Charles Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, a novel that turns out to be one of *The Satanic Verses*' primary intertexts. The remnants of Dickens' London are extant throughout the city, in physical and social structures, but more importantly in images. The idea of a Dickensian London conjures a romanticized Victorian heritage, often camouflaging the social and political complexities of the canonical author's work. In a pivotal scene in Rushdie's text, the novel's dual protagonists, Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, reunite after a long separation on a film set designed to stage *Our Mutual Friend*'s nineteenth-century London. In Rushdie's novel, the studio reproduction of London has been altered to meet the needs of adaptation, as the film transforms Dickens' work into a musical version entitled *Friend!*, a heritage version of the novel metamorphosed from a stage musical.

At first glance, *The Satanic Verses* and *Our Mutual Friend* may seem to have little in common. The plot of *Our Mutual Friend* coheres loosely around the fates of the Harmon estate, as its heir, John Harmon, was believed to have died on his return to London, leaving the massive Harmon fortunes to fall to Noddy Boffin, Dickens' Golden Dustman. The story of the Harmon fortune reaches into nearly every corner of the city, from the gossip over the events at the society parties the Boffins end up attending, to the community of river scavengers who, through the discovery of what is believed to be Harmon's body, become entwined with Harmon's circle in a number of ways. All the while, Dickens' archetypal industrial novel follows the products of London's belching factories through the city to their final destination in the dustmounds of Harmony Jail, where they are sorted by the poorest of the city's residents and returned to circulation. This circulation depends upon the river, one of the novel's central symbols that joins its disparate storylines by acting as a structural analogy. As the divergent parts of the city are brought together within the pages of the novel, Dickens asks the reader to consider the interdependent nature of London and the character of the visible but unseen parts of the metropolis.

The Satanic Verses picks up in a London over a century later, focusing on the city's postcolonial immigrant communities. Rushdie's novel features no factories or dustmen, and its realism is most commonly termed magical. Its diverse storylines follow Gibreel's dreams as they lead the reader to seventh-century Saudi Arabia, contemporary India, and through the streets of London, where Saladin has sought to make his home. The novel brings two South Asian men, both actors by trade, to the city after they miraculously survive an act of separatist terrorism. As the two work

to make their way through the modern postimperial metropolis, Saladin struggles with his ideas about nation and belonging, while Gibreel takes readers through a series of dream-visions in which he plays his namesake, the archangel Gabriel. As the two protagonists journey throughout London, they explore territories that, though visible on the city's plan, remain unseen by most of its residents and most of the novel's readers. In this respect they follow a path traced by Dickens, who explores the neighborhoods of some of the city's most disenfranchised residents.

Despite their apparent differences, Rushdie forges thematic and narrative intersections that ask us to read the *Our Mutual Friend* and *The Satanic Verses* in tandem. With their multiple plots and casts of thousands, both are sprawling novels of London, designed to represent the expanse and diversity of the city. As urban fictions, both novels endeavor to unveil the connections between seemingly disparate groups from geographically and economically distant sectors of the city, rendering the unseen visible for their readers. Tapping into the authority of the Victorian novel, and deploying the form of the Condition of England novel, Rushdie positions himself as inheritor of the English canon, while mobilizing that canon to write a new vision of contemporary Britain that makes visible the parts of the city the discourses of literature, history, and politics often exclude. Evolving Dickens in the guise of the heritage film, Rushdie counters the heritage industry's visual construction of Englishness that looks back to an image of Victorian London that glosses Dickens' social concerns and romanticizes an English past that excludes traces of empire from the city's streets.

At the same time, the novel's economy of advertising and image, writing the industrial novel into a postindustrial economy, explores the ways in which representations of London and its citizens travel through the city, the canon, and the nation. In rewriting a realist Victorian novel of London in the form of a postmodern text, Rushdie plays with the idea and limits of representation itself. By literalizing the alien aspects of immigrants in the postimperial city in the appearance of Saladin and by examining in the space of the novel various urban places including those of Brickhall its riots, Rushdie opens up the Condition of England novel to actually meditate on those very conditions. He not only collapses the lines between fact and fiction but by providing a metacommentary on the possibilities and limitations of representation of postcolonial immigrants in London and their representation in fiction he brings to the forefront certain key aspects of postcolonial fiction and fictionality.

Attending to the problem of representation, Rushdie emphasizes visual media in the cultural construction of British identity in the late twentieth century, as well as underscoring the performative identities of London's immigrant population, and how British identity is performed in image and advertising. Indeed, Saladin Chamcha could be said to play a postcolonial immigrant John Harmon, the wayward son returning from afar to reclaim his inheritance.^{clix} Like old man Harmon, Saladin's father has built an empire of waste, rising to the top of Bombay's society as a fertilizer magnate. Following Harmon, Saladin experiences a harrowing return to London, nearly losing his life upon repatriation to Britain after traveling abroad. John Harmon returns to the city in the guise of John Rokesmith, infiltrating the lives

of the Boffins and Bella Wilfer, the bride his father has chosen for him. Harmon bides his time while observing the Boffins and Ms. Wilfer, trying to determine who among them exhibits a character worthy of the inheritance.^{clx} Saladin, too, arrives in the city in disguise, unrecognized by those who know him, ultimately lying in wait in a foreign section of the metropolis until he can reclaim his inheritance in the form of his old life. After having his physical and national identity returned to him, but before he can reconcile his competing selves, Saladin follows in the path of Eugene Wrayburn, who in *OMF* turns his frustration at being rejected by Lizzie Hexam into torment of another of her suitors, Bradley Headstone. As Wrayburn spends his nights leading Headstone through London, using sexual and class jealousy to drive his tortured foe through the city streets, Saladin taunts Gibreel with insinuations of Allie Cone's infidelity, using sexual jealousy to destroy him. Like its predecessor, *The Satanic Verses* is filled with unusual pairings and uncertain partnerships. As the true character of John Harmon, Bella Wilfer, Noddy Boffin, and many others are held in question for most of Dickens' novel, so the narrator of *The Satanic Verses* repeatedly asks of its inhabitants, settings, and intertexts, "*What kind of idea are you?*"

This question, serving as a refrain that appears in each of the novel's storylines, goes to the heart of the questions within the novel. *The Satanic Verses* takes on the institutions of nation, religion, character, and, perhaps most importantly for this chapter's purposes, the canon of British literature and the city of London in the 1980s, and asks, "*What kind of idea are you?*" The question can also be applied to *Our Mutual Friend* at a number of levels. It recalls the various character tests featured in the novel, as the worthiness of Noddy Boffin to inherit, John

Harmon to serve him, and Bella Wilfer to be Harmon's bride comprise much of the novel's plot. It also applies, I would argue, to Dickens' text and its legacy in the nation's perception of its past. As *Foe's* engagement with Defoe was as much about the latter's position in the canon as with the actual fiction he left behind, so *The Satanic Verses'* turn to Dickens contends not just with *Our Mutual Friend*, but with the way in which Dickens comes to represent a particular vision of London. As the novel's fascination with visual image and media demonstrates how broad swaths of the city's populace are rendered unseen in the projected image of the nation, so Rushdie's engagement with the canon itself highlights the way in which the idea of Dickens signifies in Thatcherite Britain. In addition to shedding light on what Dickens fails to make visible, *The Satanic Verses* uses its engagement with *Our Mutual Friend* to suggest the call for a return to "Victorian Values" leaves unseen and unrepresented. The refrain, "*What kind of idea are you?*" serves to highlight the differences between material, historical, and political realities, and the representation of subject positions within those realities.

Beyond the similarities in character and urban configuration, the two novels share a number of narrative correspondences. Like Rushdie's postmodern narration in *The Satanic Verses*, the narrative world of *Our Mutual Friend* is intricate and multifaceted. Both novels feature omniscient narrators who withhold information from the reader and frequently recede from view for long stretches of text, leaving the reader to contend with discrepant plots and characters, none holding narrative focus for long. *Our Mutual Friend*, though highly mimetic, is one of Dickens' most narratively experimental works. John Reed argues that in the novel "Dickens was

extending his quarrel with that has come to be known as realism,"^{clxi} through his use of self-referential language and an elaborate narrative structure in which there is no redundancy to create a Barthesian reality effect.^{clxii} Frederick Luis Aldama goes a step further, seeing *Our Mutual Friend* as a clear precursor to the experimental styles of Rushdie and others: "*Our Mutual Friend* is the trace marker of the beginnings of a transformation of the realist novel into something more fluid and global: Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Burrough's *Naked Lunch*, Jorge Luis Borges' *Labyrinth of Solitude*, Salman Rushdie's *Mightnight's Children*, to name a few."^{clxiii} In choosing a more unconventional Dickens novel, Rushdie traces a path from Dickens' realist vision of London to his postmodern rendering. Furthermore, in linking the two novels through the remodeled *Friend!*, which removes Dickens' industrial novel from its historical context and transforms it into a sanitized commodification of English nostalgia designed for the flourishing heritage industry, Rushdie interrogates the cultural memory of Dickens. What seems like an invocation of the cultural authority of nineteenth-century British imperial fiction actually reopens the earlier text as a site of possibility for the postcolonial author. In other words, by choosing to engage with Dickens' most experimental novel and by satirizing it in the form of a heritage musical, Rushdie rewrites *Our Mutual Friend* for a postcolonial moment, simultaneously critiquing canonical Victorian fiction used to enshrine imperialism and opening that fiction up as a site of possibility for representing a postimperial, postcolonial city and subject.

The allusiveness of *The Satanic Verses* is by no means limited to Dickens, the Victorian novel, or even to British literature. Much of the novel's central project lies

in the incorporation of an abundance of heterogeneous intertexts, building this text with materials harvested from all of literary history. I want to highlight Rushdie's use of *Our Mutual Friend* as an intertext employed to harness and subvert the authority of Dickens and the Victorian novel, using it to claim a place in the canon for the postcolonial novel, and to carve out a space for representation of postcolonial immigrants in what was previously an exclusionary structure. I argue that one of the many guises *The Satanic Verses* takes on is that of Condition of England novel, specifically, the condition of social, legal, and representational rights of belonging for the nation's postcolonial immigrants. Following the Nationality Act of 1981, which separated classifications of *subject* and *citizen*, and the race riots that erupted throughout Britain in the early 1980s, *The Satanic Verses* addresses the political and historical concerns of postcolonial immigrants in London. But its subject matter, narrative technique, and its nonmimetic form suggest different methods for writing the condition of *this* England. Considering the possibilities of alternative narrative modes, Rushdie turns to this specific Dickens novel in part because of its unorthodox narrative strategies, suggesting that despite their apparent stylistic differences, readers can draw clear lines of filiation between the postmodern postcolonial novel and the loose baggy monsters of the nineteenth century. By doing so, Rushdie challenges the calls of the Thatcher administration and the heritage industry for a return to Victorian values. At the site of the heritage film, Rushdie recasts the industrial novel in a postindustrial economy.

The Satanic Verses suggests, in part, that the crisis to be addressed in its Condition of England novel is one of representation. Its allusiveness, I argue, is

neither countermeasure nor corrective to the ways in which British power was consistently “elaborated and articulated in the novel.”^{clxiv} Rather, *The Satanic Verses*, despite its metafictional tendencies, is a social novel that locates itself squarely in the tradition of Dickens, looking specifically to *Our Mutual Friend* as literary ancestor. My argument is not to read Rushdie’s novel in this tradition *as opposed to* other traditions. Clearly, Rushdie’s pretexts and allusions are as much Eastern as Western.^{clxv} Beginning with his demand that the reader simultaneously face both the impossibility and the truth of the protagonists’ magical, musical fall to earth, the narrator of *The Satanic Verses* establishes the text’s authority to offer multiple meanings, its refusal to be bound by the laws of nature or mimesis. Though the allusiveness of *The Satanic Verses* is often couched in terms of postmodern pastiche, attributing the layers of reference merely to narrative mode ignores a vital project of the novel—reconsidering how the people of empire—colonial and postcolonial subjects—can be represented. The novel’s engagement with the canon acknowledges the canon’s authority while exploring ways in which to authorize it anew. Rushdie stakes a claim for his novel as a part of the canon of British literature as soundly as he makes a claim for the place that postcolonial immigrants have in the world of London, while also insisting upon the interconnectedness of the former commonwealth and the current postimperial nation. The novel counters the legal symbolism of The Nationality Act by representing postcolonial immigrants and spaces as a fundamental part of the literary, historical, and political imagination of the nation, co-opting the authority of the canon and its forms.

The Voice of Society—Narrative Authority and the Victorian Social Novel

After the last chapter of *Our Mutual Friend* in which the “Voice of Society” has its final say about the Harmon plot, Charles Dickens adds a postscript redressing readers’ complaints about his narrative choices. He assures readers and critics that those who figured out the Harmon switch quickly did so because he worked to suggest, rather than hide, the connection between the two characters. Dickens seems to admonish those who question his narrative judgment, noting that though it may be difficult for readers to follow the finer strands of plot through the novel’s serial form, he sees the novel as a tapestry, “the whole pattern which is always before the eyes of the story-weaver at his loom” (821). Dickens also defends the *Our Mutual Friend*’s convoluted inheritance plot that relies upon a series of wills being amended, concealed, and subsequently discovered. “There is sometimes an odd disposition in this country,” he notes, “to dispute as improbable in fiction, what are the commonest experiences in fact” (821). Dickens assures his readers that John Harmon’s series of wills written, rewritten, and hidden would not be unusual among the hundreds of contemporary Will Cases more elaborate than that he has imagined for the fortunes of dust amassed by John Harmon. Having made the claim that his fictions, though perhaps elaborate, are no more absurd than fact, Dickens turns to the novel’s engagement with the Poor Laws in the figure of Betty Higden, the character who works herself to death for fear of being sent to the poor house. He argues that the Poor Laws are illegal and inhumane, driving many to the end Betty Higden meets. If Betty Higden’s story seems improbable, it is no more so than the regulations of which “known language could say no more of their lawlessness”

(822). Dickens links the implausibility of the inheritance plot to that of the very real but seemingly incredible conditions of London's poor and their institutional threats. Narrative improbability echoes legal incomprehensibility.

The events that open *The Satanic Verses* reach beyond the improbable to the fantastic. The novel begins with two men plummeting from an exploded aircraft, talking, laughing, singing, and arguing during their fall. They survive the event through actions that defy reality: Saladin Chamcha commands Gibreel Farishta to flap his arms and sing, and the latter does so, effectively slowing their descent until they land safely on the waters of the English Channel. They then walk on the water to the sands of Dover Beach. In detailing the events that occur during their fall to earth, the narrator sets the novel's terms in magical realism: "Let's face it: it was impossible for them to have heard one another, much less conversed and also competed thus in song. Accelerating towards the planet, the atmosphere roaring around them, how could they? But let's face this, too: they did" (6). The impossible yet undeniable facts of the men's conversation sets up the in-flight mutations that begin that will haunt them throughout most of the novel. Gibreel gains a halo and loses his chronic halitosis; Saladin turns into a fire-breathing satyr. But the most absurd event of the novel's opening sequence lies at the hands of the British state in the form of the police. After he survives a hijacking and subsequent midflight destruction of his airplane and finds his way safely to earth, fifty-seven uniformed constables, accompanied by thirteen dogs and seven floodlights, arrive to arrest British citizen Saladin Chamcha for illegal immigration. The surrealism of Saladin's arrest echoes the argument Dickens offers in his postscript to *OMF*, that any

implausibility in his narrative pales in comparison to the absurdity of the treatment of many Londoners under the law. Despite their vastly different styles, I would suggest that *The Satanic Verses* follows a narrative logic analogous to that of *Our Mutual Friend*. By claiming that the midflight conversation between Gibreel and Saladin is both impossible and factual, the narrator argues that the truths of fiction are as real as those of the actual, that fictional representation may offer a more honest picture than other sources of information.

When the transmogrified Saladin finally finds refuge at the Shaandaar Café and boarding house, the proprietors and residents gather to assess his goat-like state. After a series of possibilities from science, literature, and present-day horror films are considered, host Sufyan lays out the evidence: “Wrongful arrest, intimidation, violence. Two: illegal detention, unknown medical experimentation in hospital” (263). These facts, coupled with the suggestion of “psychological breakdown, loss of sense of self, inability to cope” (263), end discussion about Saladin and his condition because, “there were some truths from which it was impossible to dissent” (261). For the first- and second-generation immigrants at the Shaandaar, the mistreatment of Third World bodies at the hands of state authority provides an understandable explanation for Saladin’s surreal transformation. The facts of illegal detention and medical experimentation are so real, they sufficiently explain the impossibility of Saladin’s current situation, “because what you believe depends upon what you’ve seen, -- not only what is visible, but what you are prepared to look in the face” (261). In his postscript, Dickens argues for the purpose of *Our Mutual Friend* and similar Social Novels: to render visible the conditions of

the poor and the effects of industrial capital throughout all levels of London's population, and to ask readers to look Betty Higden in the face while acknowledging the social, political, and legal forces responsible for her situation. He notes that those who disagree with his position on the Poor Laws fall into two camps: those who do not see the Betty Higdens around them, and those who will not look them in the face. To the "one party contending that there are no deserving Poor who prefer death by slow starvation and bitter weather, to the mercies of some Relieving Officers and some Union Houses" and "the other admitting that there are such Poor, but denying that they have any cause or reason for what they do" (822), Dickens holds up *The Lancet* for evidence to support the reality of Betty's fate in the novel. The evidence published there, he suggests, supports the reality of his fiction.

Dickens' postscript to *Our Mutual Friend* ties the work of his fiction to the prospect of social change he hopes to enact, binding narrative possibility to social understanding. Beginning by chiding the readers who thought the Rokesmith/Harmon plot too obvious, Dickens insists that he never loses narrative control. The importance of that control is underscored by the postscript's oscillation between evidence drawn from the fictional life of Betty Higden, who undergoes the novel's worst fate at the hands of industrial capital, and evidence drawn from journals of science and social science. Eleanor Courtemanche, writing of the "moral science" of Victorian realism, explains Dickens' need for his novel to be read as a fiction that is true: "The industrial novel is thus the site of a double polemic: an urgency about the pressing political needs of the nation combined with a claim that fiction is a legitimate way of discovering social truth."^{clxvi} Even the postscript, which

is designed to ensure that the reader sees the novel's engagement with the city's poor makes "the gesture of shucking off an outworn didacticism in favor of a freshly viewed social truth."^{clxvii} Dickens briefly slips into this didacticism in the postscript. Not willing to rest his case on *The Lancet*, Dickens states his position on the Poor Laws' lawlessness; then he slides back into the fiction of *Our Mutual Friend* without signaling for his reader a shift from political argument to fictional description, claiming that the Boffins, the caretakers of the Harmon fortunes in the novel, were with the author in a railroad accident earlier in the year.^{clxviii} Turning back to the Boffins, Dickens erases the lines between his social polemic and his relationship with his characters, suggesting that the latter is as real as the former. Though Dickens blurs the line between fact and fiction, he must step outside of the narrative to do so. Rushdie's novel, on the other hand, further obfuscates the distinction where the fabulous is taken as truth given the reality of migrant existence in London. The narrative takes the dehumanization of immigrants to its logical extreme, depicting the animal-like existence of temporary persons in the legal underworld of London. The novel's use of the fantastic needs no metacommentary.

The Satanic Verses turns specifically to *Our Mutual Friend* at a crucial moment when the narratives of Saladin and Gibreel reconnect. The Victorian London of *Our Mutual Friend* becomes a palimpsest over which to write their pageant of a postmodern, postcolonial, spectacular London. The two protagonists reunite at a party held at Shepperton Studios on the set of a filmic adaptation of a musical production of Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*. The production, a mutation of a mutation, has promised to be the hit of the upcoming film season, and its producers have

offered to accommodate powerful partygoers from in and out of the industry in order to gain free publicity.^{clxix} The event takes place in the “huge re-creation of Dickensian London” (436), replete with dry ice fog and simulated river winds, and extras in period costume who, joined with actors from the film, periodically break into songs from the score. The set of *Friend!* offers a simulacrum of nineteenth-century London—the city imagined through the eyes of literary history. The attention to detail of surfaces—Gaffer Hexam’s boat floating upon the recreated Thames crossing under London Bridge, the cobbled riverbanks, a curiosity shop—asks the reader to consider how this “counterfeit city” displaces the real one. The heritage production focuses on mimetic simulation in contrast to the lived realities Dickens and Rushdie seek to portray in their fictions, realistic representation being too unpalatable for the film’s audience. The inventions of this musical/theatrical/filmic hybrid of a Dickens novel evokes the trend of adaptation and popularization that the author’s work enjoyed in the late twentieth century.

In creating *Friend!*, Rushdie both comments on the idea of Dickens in the popular imagination, and demonstrates the facility of appropriating the canon for heteroclitic purposes. *Friend!* evinces the power of Dickens and his legacy for an audience much broader than the novel’s actual readership. During the growth of the heritage industry, in the late twentieth century, audiences proved eager for “a nostalgic repackaging of the history of post-imperial England”^{clxx} in both fiction and film.^{clxxi} Peter Childs argues that the heritage acts of 1980 and 1983 offered “archivists, filmmakers, politicians, and novelists” a new philosophy. The heritage films, miniseries, and museums that resulted thrived by “tapping into a Thatcherite

agenda that advocated the sharp return to hierarchical Victorian/Edwardian values and a reverse of the radical social changes associated with the 1960s and 1970s.”^{clxxii} With *Friend!*, Rushdie evokes the heritage trend as a cultural bookend to the Nationality Act’s legal reclassification of commonwealth subjects. The popularity of the heritage film evidences a desire for a representation of England along the lines that Said notes in *Culture and Imperialism*, one that uses Britain’s empire as a source of plot device—to move characters in and out of the main action and provide them with wealth—but that leaves the visible consequences of empire unseen.

While few of the partygoers, Londoners, and possibly even readers of Rushdie’s text would have actually read *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens and his particular brand of novel have come to exist in the popular imagination as a spectacle of a particular English heritage. Edward Barnaby explains that because “images and representations typically outlive (or are perpetuated beyond) the socio-historical context in which they originated,”^{clxxiii} the once experimental and socially progressive nature of *Our Mutual Friend* can devolve from a dialogic interaction of narrative and historicity into a whitewashed vision of the past:

even the most revolutionary works of art and literature seem doomed, if only by the passing of the years, to be regarded eventually with antiquarian devotion as specimens of a genre or an author’s oeuvre, the consciousness they once produced having ultimately been exchanged for iconicity. Debord locates one aspect of the spectacle in the process whereby representations of lived experience become detached from their origins in myth or history and are then

reconstituted as commodities in the form of a class-defining cultural literacy.^{clxxiv}

The late twentieth-century readership of *Our Mutual Friend* and even the more accessible *Oliver Twist* remains small. However, productions like *Friend!* (and its real-life counterpart *Oliver!*) reintroduce the idea of Dickens and social fiction through the spectacle of the image—the film set, theatrical songs, and costumed extras make visible the Dickensian London of *Our Mutual Friend* without asking the observer to see the social realities that Dickens' novel presents.^{clxxv} The resulting heritage production of *Friend!* obscures the economic tensions Dickens' text works to reveal. At the same time, it uses the cultural authority of this newly aestheticized Dickensian London to re-present the city as a place of pure Englishness, unencumbered by socioeconomic or racial tensions.

In highlighting the extrapolated heritage aspects of a Dickensian London, *The Satanic Verses* challenges the cultural authority of the Victorian novel, “whose literary hegemony is achieved precisely in the nineteenth century.”^{clxxvi} Conjuring the nineteenth-century novel, Rushdie acknowledges how the form of the twentieth-century novel has been shaped in part by its Victorian ancestors. As my first and second chapters address, eighteenth-century novel writers were still establishing the conventions of the genre. A century later, the novel had consolidated its power as a dominant genre easily recognizable to a wide audience and writers working within its parameters. In *The Novel and the Police*, D. A. Miller lays out the paradox by which the Victorian novel utilizes frameworks of power while simultaneously disavowing them: “Though power thus encompasses everything in the world of the

novel, it is never embraced by the novel itself. On the contrary, the novel systematically gives power an unfavorable press.”^{clxxvii} Miller and others have noted that the majority of nineteenth-century novels ultimately reinscribe the power structures in which they are written. While *Our Mutual Friend* ridicules the jingoistic Podsnap, the text considers little beyond its own borders. While his devotion to nationalism and dismissal of all things foreign is clearly made to seem foolish, the novel does not mobilize cosmopolitanism against his parochialism. Despite the conniving Lammles who end up penniless, and the deserving Lizzie who marries Eugene, the river-dwelling community remains impoverished and endangered. Though many of the novel’s “worthy poor” find themselves in improved circumstances, the social and economic mechanisms that have impoverished them have not been seriously challenged. Many of the novel’s poor characters prove honorable, but none is raised above his circumstances through work alone; the Boffins receive their wealth through inheritance, and Lizzie her security through marriage. Dickens suggests in his postscript that his depiction of London’s poor should draw attention to their situation and reform the poor laws. However, within the novel’s plot, he does not offer justice to the powerless. Though the novel reveals the plight of the poor, the narrative structure ultimately reinforces the status quo.

Edward Said devotes the majority of his seminal work *Culture and Imperialism* to the authority established and executed through the Victorian novel. Though Said’s work covers literature before and after the period, he stresses the use of the novel, specifically the Victorian novel, “to keep empire more or less in place.”^{clxxviii} As it replicates the structures of British society by normalizing them in

fiction, the novel provides a model for its readers.^{clxxix} Said argues that the authority of the novel rests not just in representation, but in its narrative structure. He divides the power of the novel's narrative framework into three separate levels, arguing that the finished form compounds all three into one network of authority:

There is first the authority of the author—someone writing out the processes of society in an acceptable institutionalized manner, observing conventions, following patterns, and so forth. Then there is the authority of the narrator, whose discourse anchors the narrative in recognizable, and hence existentially referential, circumstances. Lastly there is what might be called the authority of community, whose representative is most often the family but also is the nation, the specific locality, and the concrete historical moment.^{clxxx}

I argue that Rushdie's novel works both structurally and thematically to subvert each of these authorities, but each only partially and temporarily. Rather than simply undermining the authority of the novel, the text destabilizes the form's authority to harness and reinscribe it at every level, using that authority to create an opening for a new kind of novel. The novel subverts the authority of the author in a scene in which God, whose physical description matches that of the photograph of Rushdie on the back cover of the novel, speaks directly to Gibreel Farishta, playing into his paranoid delusions and offering him particularly bad advice. The narrator who speaks directly to the reader and at times to Gibreel offers frequent hints that he is the devil, perhaps providing Gibreel and the reader with false truths. The authority of the community does not allow the consolidation that Said speaks of, but

instead remains, like the narrator and the novel's allusions and storylines, impossibly multiple.

The subversion of consolidated authority and the reinscription of power as scattered, multiple, and dialogic, stands at the core of *The Satanic Verses'* structure and theme. Tapping into the authority of the canon and the Victorian novel, Rushdie adopts from Dickens a multiplot structure that by its construction cannot be reduced to uncomplicated or teleological readings. Unlike the single-plot novel, which organizes itself around the biographical progression of a protagonist, the multiplot novel asks that the reader see connections between people and events that are not necessarily tied through traditional organizing systems of kinship, nation, or religion. Peter Garrett argues that in the multiplot novel, "separated, analogous lines of action" replace the biographical organization of the "classical" nineteenth-century novel.^{clxxxi} To tie together these disparate lines of action, the multiplot novel relies on structural analogies that "can function as an alternative to causal connections within and between narrative lines."^{clxxxii} The strands of the novel find affiliation through analogy and theme, through which the resulting multiplot novel uses structural analogies to create a product that is more than the sum of its parts:

[structural analogies] become not only a means of connection but of expansion; the multiplication of figures and situations related by similarities or contrasts does not simply produce repetitive illustrations of a general theme but large and variegated clusters,

groupings linked by family resemblance rather than a single common denominator. Recognizing such interconnections can enable us to consider each moment in the narrative as the intersection of analogies radiating outward in several directions.^{clxxxiii}

The multiple plots of *The Satanic Verses* coalesce through the serial dreams and schizophrenic visions of Gibreel Farishta. He dreams himself in various scenes from the life of his stage name, the archangel Gabriel, taking part in the epic battle between good and evil. Standing in opposition to Gibreel's angelic visions are Saladin and the narrator, both of whom take on devilish properties. This most canonical of stories underscores the novel's fascination with representation, as Thatcher administration, evening news, and the novel's epigraph present the nation's immigrants as belonging to the devil's camp. All of these battles are overlaid onto the city of London, as Saladin and Gibreel make their way along with the metropolis' underground migrant population.

Garrett suggests that Dickens found the multiplot structure necessary to write his later novels of London, arguing that Dickens' earlier single-focus narratives were not able to fully articulate the city's "multiplicity" and "hidden coherence."^{clxxxiv} Rushdie retains from Dickens a vision of the city as a complex system in which parties who do not interact directly are tied the cycles of production and waste; however, whereas Dickens presents the London of *Our Mutual Friend* as an essentially closed system, Rushdie's novel insists that the contemporary narratives of the city are fundamentally tied to historical and political narratives far from London's medieval walls; that is, the city's stories are always

transnational. The narrative itself becomes both dustmound and river, circulating names, images, phrases, and events from plotline to plotline.^{clxxxv} I argue that Rushdie uses not just the Victorian novel, but specifically employs the multiplot structure to on the one hand emphasize the novel's connections to the literary history within which the multiplot novel came to exist while also thematically extending the landscape of the city to bring *The Satanic Verses'* sequences that are temporally and geographically distant from London to bear on the character development of the city and the nation. It is in this way that Rushdie brings newness to the Condition of England novel, structurally and thematically insisting that the Condition of England cannot be separated from its political or literary history.^{clxxxvi}

By Garrett's definition, the multiplot novel functions like postmodern fiction in its creation of incompatible meanings that, because they are held in competing tension throughout the novel, can never be resolved into a single logic or reading. Garrett makes a clear connection between the Victorian multiplot structure and self-referential postmodern fictions, arguing that these novels address the relationship of the individual to society, while exploring the way in which knowledge is created through both ontology and epistemology.^{clxxxvii} Rushdie predicates this meditation on knowledge through the ideas of *belonging* and *home* introduced by the narrator in the first few pages of the novel. By using migrancy as a structural analogy Rushdie simultaneously makes an argument for the inclusion of postcolonial writers, characters, and spaces in the canon while marking their absence from most canonical novels. His multiplot London is a place where meditations of knowledge depend on a long history of empire and migrancy.

Postcolonial London A to Z

Jacqueline Bardolph notes that “the coherence [of the novel] is provided by analogy and a whole system of metamorphosis, which is for Rushdie the only way in which to render the protean identity of his narrator and subjects, the immigrants.”^{clxxxviii} While he lies in wait in a Brickhall attic, growing larger and more devilish daily, Saladin’s mutated image begins to appear in the dreams of the city’s denizens. In keeping with the novel’s “logic of oneiric vision,”^{clxxxix} Saladin and Gibreel’s dreams form one of the structural analogies around which the text coheres. Like Gibreel’s serial nightmares that begin to haunt him during the day, dreams of Saladin “begin leaking into the waking hours” (295), and much to Saladin’s dismay, the image of the devilish demi-goat becomes a symbol of resistance for the city’s immigrant population, echoing the Defoe epigraph that opens the novel. Mishal Sufyan, Saladin’s liaison to the world of Brickhall, explains the mutated Saladin’s cultural resonance: “you’re a hero. I mean, people can really identify with you. It’s an image white society has rejected for so long that we can really take it, you know, occupy it, inhabit it, reclaim it, and make it our own” (296). As Gibreel’s dreamscape brings the far reaches of history and empire to bear on the narrative of London, Saladin materializes in the minds of people throughout the city. While the city’s immigrant population sees possibility in the reclaimed image of the devil, those outside Brickhall fear the “being who had crossed the frontier, evading normal controls, and was now roaming loose about the city. Illegal migrant, outlaw king, foul criminal or race hero, Saladin Chamcha was getting to be true” (297). The

competing readings of Saladin's transformation—a site of possibility, a symbol of fear—serve as metonym for the novel's stance on immigration, the canon, and the city of London.

Once the police remove Saladin Chamcha from the cottage by the sea, his narrative remains separate from Gibreel's for the majority of the novel. The two struggle similarly with their individually held notions of purity and hybridity, Gibreel in his unorthodox dreams, and Saladin in his refugee nightmare, before being brought together by the party on the set of *Friend!* After breaking out of the detention center, Saladin runs down familiar streets, taking care to hide himself from the city that has been his home for decades. His freedom gained illegally and his present form untenable with the metropolis, Saladin finds refuge in the attic of the Shaandaar, keeping to darkness and shadows like the illegal aliens and workers denoted "temporary persons." Like the river dwellers in *Our Mutual Friend*, the residents of Brickhall inhabit the geographical and economic margins of the city. Once returned to himself, Saladin still keeps from the city, holing up in his study in Notting Hill, with only the television for company. Though his mutations permit him free passage, Gibreel, too, struggles to find his place in the metropolis. He cannot reconcile with his accommodations, the weather, and what he calls "the trouble with the English." Armed with an *A to Z*, he tries more than once to decode London, but his suspicions and visions interfere, making the city inaccessible to him, and each foray ends in a collapse. Both men see the city of London as synecdoche for Britishness; they read the nation's present, past, and future through its architecture and alleyways. In his lifelong attempt to embody Britishness, Saladin has embraced

the city, imagining his relationship with the metropole as a reenactment of a childhood game: “creeping up on it, stealthily, with mounting excitement, freezing into a statue when it looked in his direction, dreaming of being the one to possess it and so, in a sense, *become* it” (412). But Gibreel sees none of Saladin’s fascination: “Where Chamcha saw attractively faded grandeur, Gibreel saw a wreck, a Crusoe-city, marooned on the island of its past, and trying, with the help of a Man-Friday underclass to keep up appearances” (453-4).

The two protagonists, estranged since Saladin’s arrest, reunite for the first time not in London, but in a fabulous simulacrum in the city’s suburbs. On the heritage site of Dickensian London they rewrite literary history over the transmogrified plan of the city. In this studio in the outskirts of the city, Rushdie produces a fantastic vision of London in which the novel’s engagements with literature, history, and place converge. The novel’s refrain—*What kind of idea are you?*—is asked of and answered through the city and its literary history. The narrator remarks with horror at the geographical transformation wrought upon *Our Mutual Friend*’s London, meticulously recreated but geographically unrecognizable:

Here London has been altered—no, condensed—according to the imperatives of film. –Why here’s the Stucconia of the Veneerings, those bran-new spick and span new people, lying shockingly adjacent to Portman Square, and the shady angle containing various Podsnaps. – And worse: behold the dustman’s mounds of Boffin’s Bower, supposedly in the near vicinity of Holloway, looming in this abridged

metropolis over Fascination Fledgeby's rooms in the Albany, the West End's very heart. (436)

It is on the set of *Friend!* that the actions of the final movement of the novel are set into motion, when Saladin decides to embrace the devilish nature of his physical mutation, and step into the roles of the English canon's greatest villains. The revelers burst into the signature song from the film, rephrasing both novel's questions of character and destiny according to the needs of musical theater: "What kind of fellow is Our Mutual Friend? / What does he intend / Is he the kind of fellow on whom we may depend? (437). As the singers seem to pose the question of the musical's signature song to Saladin, he spies Gibreel surrounded by friends and admirers on the set's replica of London Bridge.

The image of these South Asian actors making their way through Dickensian London serves to remind the readers that as Londoners walk across the city's older imperial maps, they also traverse the literary maps that have shaped the city's image. The postcolonial immigrant or black Briton doesn't just encounter the history of Britain, but also must confront its literary history. When the novel asks, "*What kind of idea are you?*", one answer need not suffice. The detailed historic specificity of the situation—London in the 1980s, the global city, the postcolonial actors—is met with centuries of literature used to teach, at home and abroad, what kind of idea Britishness is. And what stands out is *this* city of London and its landmarks that guide the readers through geographies of texts written and read decades and centuries apart. The party's revelers belt the Podsnap solo, echoing his words to apply the same question of essence asked of the novel's characters: "And

Do You Find, Sir, Many Evidences of our British Constitution in the Streets of the World's Metropolis, London, Londres, London?" (438). Traveling through the city's streets, Saladin and Gibreel seek evidence to determine the nature of the British constitution. The novel provides one answer in its engagement with the canon. Fawzia Afzal-Khan argues that Rushdie blends multiple genres and references in *The Satanic Verses* "to mirror the state of confusion and alienation that defines postcolonial societies and individuals."^{cx} But rather than using allusiveness to demonstrate estrangement, I believe the ease with which *The Satanic Verses* moves between genres and intertexts highlights the range of sources on which postcolonial immigrants can draw, suggesting that postcolonial subjects and literary works need not be framed in terms of one literary tradition or one type of idea, but can mobilize a literary history that originally excluded them.

The novel addresses the idea of the constitution of Britishness in part through its use of allusion to and redeployment of canonical texts, mapping literary contests between good and evil onto the contest for representation of the nation's subjects. *The Satanic Verses* begins by invoking and then challenging the authority of the English canon. Prior to the opening lines of the text, in the liminal space after the dedication but before the table of contents, Rushdie offers his reader a meditation on the nature of migrancy and exile, and of good and evil, laden with literary and historical resonance. Rushdie chooses for his epigraph an excerpt from Daniel Defoe's 1725 treatise, *The Political History of the Devil*, selecting a passage in which Defoe notes Satan's confinement to "a vagabond, wandering, unsettled condition" that the author ties to both Lucifer's angelic nature and his fallen state. Defoe

contends that Satan's "kind of empire in the liquid waste or air" is not coincidental but "certainly part of his punishment, that he is [...] without any fixed place, or space, allowed him to rest the sole of his foot upon."^{cxc} The novel's epigraph prefigures the roles of Saladin and the narrator as devilish, in addition to the Thatcher administration's representation of immigration as a problem to be solved.

The novel's structural analogy of migration goes beyond the migrations of people from one nation to another. Rather, *The Satanic Verses* sets up migrancy as a condition of literature, with allusion and intertextuality as forms of migration. The four major plotlines in the novel focus on immigrants, displacements, exiles, and journeys. These storylines function together within the larger system of the novel, commenting on each other to build a larger whole while the novel's multiplot structure holds the different narratives in tension. The novel's dialogism is nowhere more evident than in its penchant for allusion. In the eight pages that narrate the protagonists' magical fall to earth, the text references at least four films (two Indian, one American, and one French), a Brecht opera (and likewise a Doors song which takes its lyrics from Brecht), a statute in Indian law, "Rule Britannia!", Ovid, and geneticist Jean Baptiste-Pierre Antoine de Lamarck. The preceding list is not exhaustive. Likewise, the fall that opens the novel recalls those of men and angels, and thereby *Genesis* and *Paradise Lost*, *Finnegan's Wake*, Icarus and Daedalus, Alice down the rabbithole, and Humpty Dumpty. From the beginning, then, *The Satanic Verses* asks its reader to consider the ideas of belonging and home and the connections between these ideas and the institutions of literature and history. Texts

migrate in and out of the novel, which becomes as polyglot as the immigrant enclaves in the city of London.

Despite the expanse of subjects and objects, the novel concerns itself with two interconnected ideas—migrancy and newness. These two, themselves joined, connect every aspect of the novel’s multiverse. Rushdie argues that “if *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is a migrant’s-eye view of the world.”^{cxcii} But more than simply providing a lens for the reader to peer through, the idea of migrancy functions as a theoretical fulcrum upon which all of the novel’s ideas balance. Mobility, which characterizes immigration, likewise is revealed to characterize the canon, as the novel presents immigration as characteristic of rather than antithetical to the canon’s nature. That is, instead of imagining the canon as a static representative of what Podsnap would call the “British constitution,” the canon, like the image of the goatman that appears in the Brickhall residents’ dreams, becomes something that the Rushdie’s narrative can occupy, inhabit, and reclaim. The text’s sheer number of allusions shores up one of the novel’s main projects, the denial of singular truths, unassailable words. The novel refers to and is composed of so many texts that have come before it—stories, theories—verses—existing alongside one another, offering competing visions of the world. From the titular satanic verses to the subtext of image and advertising that runs throughout the novel, the ideas of truth, purity, singularity are questioned at every turn. Keith Booker explains, “By challenging the authority of the ultimate monologic word, the Word of God, Rushdie (like Bakhtin) emphasizes the inherently dialogic power of words. No word can have unquestionable authority, because all words inherently contain potential echoes of

responses from opposing voices.”^{cxci} This refusal to grant authority, the denial of the very possibility of authenticity, is the fundamental tenet upon which this novel rests.

While Saladin nurses his grievances against Gibreel and the city, on the way to the party at Shepperton, he realizes “that he had been living in a state of phoney peace, that the change in him was irreversible” (433). Making his way through the actual city, he closes his eyes and chooses “the left-hand path” (433). Upon arriving in the recreation of Dickens’ London, Saladin rehearses a series of villainous roles, playing the parts of Iago and Lucifer before he settles into Dickens’ conflict. Saladin steps into the “enigma of Iago” as Rushdie offers his readers “the echo of tragedy, the full-blooded original being unavailable to modern man” (439). But he is not merely Iago. In addition to the notation of his “motiveless malignity,” the novel turns to *Paradise Lost*, itself another retelling, another interrogation on good and evil, religion and politics, individual identity and the rights of belonging. The turn to *Paradise Lost* asks the reader to consider the story of the fall that opens the novel and an imagination of good and evil that goes to the roots of the history of English literature. Upon his arrival at the party, Saladin realizes why he has come and heads straight for Gibreel. Saladin’s approach, registering intense jealousy at the happiness of the other, recalls Satan’s envy of Adam: “sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two / Imparadised in one another’s arms / The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill / Of bliss on bliss, while I to hell am thrust.”^{cxci} Saladin’s hatred is ignited by his vision of Gibreel happily joined by Allie in whom he sees, “the entirety of his loss”

(439). Having imagined himself terms of “culture, city, wife” (414), Saladin sees all of these in Allie’s presence beside Gibreel, as Saladin himself is isolated.

In Dickensian terms, Saladin fills the role of Bradley Headstone, a self-made man who has struggled to rise above society’s expectations for him. Like Headstone, Saladin believes that his social, cultural, and class transformation would be made complete through his marriage. Each sees his material and social success gained, rising in a chosen field rather than an inherited one, can only be fully actualized by denying a part of the ego necessary for survival. Cheadle writes: “For years Bradley has bottled up an essentially violent nature, and the excess of his repressed passion precipitates the intuition, recognizable only in the extreme case, and virtually un-narratable within the Victorian context, of something dangerously destructive in the ascetic denial of libidinal energies which is central to bourgeois selfhood.”^{cxcv} Saladin’s investment in his created identity that is “really British” has unraveled with his transformation and abuse at the hands of the State. Yet he regains his self, that is, transforms back into human form, through a vocalization of his hatred toward his opposite, Gibreel. His transformation, reversion, and ultimate decision to destroy Gibreel all stem from the same place—a belief that he must lose his former, Indian self in order to connect with his chosen homeland. Saladin’s devotion to this persona, a deracinated English subject whose belief in a particular vision of the individual within the nation seems an attempt to enact the Victorian values promoted by the Thatcher administration.

Though he approaches Gibreel as Headstone, his repression simmering just below the surface, he does not confront him with Headstone’s anger. Projecting his

misery onto his former adversary, he steps into the shoes of Eugene Wrayburn, taking revenge by taunting his rival night after night, using taking advantage of Gibreel's jealous nature. While Headstone's violent reaction to Lizzie's rejection is extreme, it's easy to see how Headstone conflates the denial of his marriage proposal as a repudiation of the beliefs on which he has based his self. Eugene's torment of Headstone, however, is less understandable, more akin to the motiveless malignity ascribed to Iago. Eugene's decision to taunt Headstone nightly finds no basis in rejection or retribution: "In Eugene's attempts to find a ground for being, Dickens goes further, threatening to subvert the base on which the approved self is constructed. For in Eugene he mercilessly scrutinizes the beliefs that we are free moral agents and that innate decency of feeling will prevail – the very beliefs which ground both liberal humanism and classical realism."^{cxvii} As Saladin plays the roles of both Headstone and Wrayburn, he further blurs the lines between good and evil, for neither man is the pure villain of Iago or Lucifer. Because Saladin has only the "echo of tragedy" available to him, "a burlesque for our degraded, imitative times, in which clowns re-enact what was first done by heroes and kings" (439), he can only mimic the certainty that comes with the tragic form. His novelized narrative demands the complexities of everyday life^{cxviii}: his Kensington address and privileged upbringing align him with Wrayburn, while his outsider status as a postcolonial immigrant likens him to Headstone. Like the city and the canon, and even his devilish transformation, Saladin's villainy is complex and multiple.

As home to a burgeoning immigrant population and former imperial metropole, London is a modern city, which Allie Cone's father, himself an immigrant,

calls “the locus classicus of incompatible realities. Lives that have no business mingling with one another sit side by side upon the omnibus (325). The *Verses* narrates the mingling of these lives, writing the history of migrants into the narrative and reminding the reader that London has always been a place of incompatible realities. The city has always been at once the heart of political, economic, and cultural Britishness, and the meeting place of the peoples and products of a global empire. The empire has provided the plot with a place to remove John Harmon until he was needed to reclaim his bride and fortune, but then recedes from view except for in brief mentions like the “hindoo” and African babies on display in Mr. Venus’s shop. Joseph McLaughlin argues “that metropolitan London and Londoners, far from being the antithesis of those colonial and imperial places and peoples that comprised the British Empire, were actually their curious doubles. London was just as much an imperial stage as India or Africa of any other number of exotic locales; it was an amalgam of exotic frontiers.”^{cxviii}

This tradition continues as cosmopolitan London experiences the wave of immigration from the former colonies into the city of London in the latter half of the twentieth century. Beneath the modern façade of twentieth-century London lurks the nation’s imperial history. Ashley Dawson and Brent Hayes Edwards explain, “even in decolonization, the old imperial maps still influence the circuits of culture and capital, underneath and in tension with ‘new imperialisms’ of economic globalization.”^{cxix} The number of former Commonwealth immigrants may make London a postcolonial city, but it can never be a fully postimperial one. London is not a unified place through which we can glimpse the past. Rather, like nearly

everything else in the novel, the city is exceedingly plural. The blueprint of London is a palimpsest over which a series of historical and literary narratives of the city and its inhabitants have been written. The novel adds to the accretion of narratives, with various subplots offering different visions of the city. *The Satanic Verses* offers a series of competing Londons, so that the nature of the city becomes like the Arabic version of 'once upon a time': "[I]t was and was not so, as the old stories used to say, it happened and it never did – maybe, then, or maybe not."^{cc} London, like one of the novel's migrant characters, is composed of "conflicting selves jostling and jogging within these bags of skin" (534). In the opening pages the narrator gives the city a series of appellations: "Mahagonny, Babylon, Alphaville," but defers to one of the falling men for official naming-rights: "[B]ut Gibreel has already named it [...] Proper London, capital of Vilayet" (4). The characters offer conflicting characterizations of the city, each attempting to define it on his or her own terms. Hind Sufyan calls it a "demon city in which anything could happen" (258). Yet Alicja Cone insists that London is a place of tolerance (at least of Jewish immigrants), especially when compared to the United States.

Bardoph argues that the novel's ambitious scope ties political, literary, and historical battles with the cosmic fight between good and evil, bringing the "extreme places at the edges of the human kingdom"^{cci} into the battle for representation on the contested streets of London. Allie Cone's mountain climbing, connecting the realms of the earth-bound and the liquid waste of air, brings the extreme edge of the world in the form of its highest peaks into the river where Gaffer Hexam fishes for dead bodies both in Dickens' original novel and *The Satanic Verses'* transformed

version. In a room filled with representations of Mt. Everest, Allie Cone recounts for Gibreel the effects of the brain damage she incurred by summiting without oxygen. She tells him not only of the angels and ice-city she saw while on the peak, but of her visions in London of the world's ten highest peaks floating up the river. In relocating the Himalayas to the Thames, Rushdie makes a Conradian move. The edges of empire are tied to the center as the space and time between them collapse in narrative; Marlowe's listeners and readers remain in London on the deck of the *Nellie* as they are transported from the heart of the metropole into the heart of the empire and Allie looks back to Everest located on the border between the former British and current Chinese empires, 'discovered,' and renamed during the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India and first climbed by a New Zealander as part of a British expedition.

Though the Thames does not drive London's economy in *The Satanic Verses* like it does in *Our Mutual Friend*, the symbol of the river holds an important place in Rushdie's analogical structure. The text overlays the river Thames with the "river of blood," the image that dominates the most famous speech by MP and anti-immigration activist Enoch Powell. References to Powell's 1968 "Rivers of Blood" speech are woven throughout the novel, reminding readers of a history of sanctioned anti-immigration rhetoric, while transfiguring the phrase and Powell's vision. Addressing the impending Race Relations Bill (1968), Powell declared the Conservative party's goal to halt further immigration from Commonwealth nations and to implement a plan of "re-emigration" of Commonwealth immigrants currently residing in Britain. Powell looks ahead to work against the "preventable evils" of

increasing immigration from former and current colonies. He warns of the coming tide of Commonwealth immigrants and their descendents who will transform whole areas of the nation, changing the very character of England. Like Gibreel, Powell uses the image of Robinson Crusoe in his speech, telling the story of an old-age pensioner from Wolverhampton who finds herself marooned in a sea of black faces. As the racial makeup of the neighborhood shifted away from its previous white state, “with growing fear, she saw one house after another take over [...] Regretfully, her white tenants moved out.” Refusing to let to nonwhites and finding no interested white tenants, the woman was unable to support herself. Surrounded by people of color, Powell portrays the woman as a castaway in her own home, with only the telephone to serve as “her lifeline.” Powell warns that in the coming years, this woman’s story will be typical, that there is a “sense of being a persecuted minority which is growing among ordinary English people.”

Powell warns that the impending hostile takeover by immigrants will be not only spatial, but also linguistic. In the fiery oratory, his xenophobic fervor reaches its apex when Powell cautions that the English language and its possibilities for use will also be threatened. Already, he claims, when the old-age pensioner goes out to the shops, she finds herself surrounded by the new natives, “charming wide-grinning pickaninnies. They cannot speak English, but one word they know. ‘Racialist,’ they chant.” The British streets will become a Babel of the ‘third world,’ becoming “a place of noise and confusion.” The English-speaking Britons fear to speak out against the tide of postcolonials—Powell notes the barrage of “rational and well-educated” letters he receives from those who choose to write anonymously for fear

that “they would either risk penalties or reprisals.” Near the end of his speech Powell returns to his initial argument—that he must speak about these preventable evils—to offer his now famous prediction: “As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see ‘the River Tiber foaming with much blood.’” Recalling some of Britain’s earliest roots and rhetorically working to plant the nation in the Western tradition of empire, Powell quotes book 5 of the *Aenid*, when Sybil predicts the coming wars on the home soil of the Romans.

The “rivers of blood” image becomes a structural analogy within the novel, appearing and reappearing in various storylines. The text of the novel ties the rivers of blood imagery directly to the words of two of the novel’s poets—Baal the Satirist and Jumpy Joshi. In the late twentieth century, Jumpy tries to mark a claim on the streets of London by renarrating them, his goal, to “reclaim the metaphor, Jumpy Joshi had told himself. Turn it; make it a thing we can use” (192). When talking about his book of verses, Jumpy “says the street is a river of blood, that’s the poet’s point” (192). He ties the metaphor specifically to the body of the immigrant—“also the individual human being [...] in our very bodies, does the river of blood not flow?” (192). Relocating Powell’s rivers of blood to the arteries and veins of London’s immigrant population, Jumpy’s work substantiates the physical presence of the migrant community who, though visible, remains unseen, “temporary human beings, with little hope of being declared permanent” (273). In a distant city, the Jahilia of Gibreel’s dream, over one thousand years earlier, the novel draws another corporeal connection between a poet and the rivers of blood. Baal the satirist reflects on the role of the writer and the narrator adds commentary: “A poet’s

work', he answers. 'To name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world and stop it from going to sleep.' And if the rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him. He is the satirist, Baal" (100).

The Aliens Show

Our Mutual Friend follows the circulation and detritus of production through two central symbols, the river and the dustmounds. Around both, the novel depicts communities of scavengers who return the discarded fragments of production into circulation. The Hexams gather refuse from the river, Jenny Wren assembles dolls' dresses from fabric remnants, and Mr. Venus articulates the remains of humans and animals. In Rushdie's contemporary rendition, the visual media takes the role of the river and dustmounds, circulating images through the city, depositing them in a national consciousness, then redeploying them to lay bare the workings of spectacle and reimagine the city on new terms. As the heritage film presents an altered model of Dickensian London, so the imagery of Mishal's fantastic Street, the Club Hot Wax, and the Brickhall riots all offer competing visions of the city, mediated through the characters' plotlines, the narrator, and the evening news. In *Friend!* and in Brickhall, the river becomes a symbolic reminder of London's industrial past, while the term production comes to be associated with those staged for visual consumption. Media is what moves the components of the spectacle, and the detritus is a postmodern pastiche of images. There are no industrialists in *The Satanic Verses*, only actors, producers, and advertisers. Even Allie Cone funds her mountain-climbing career

through endorsement contracts she secures with her “icequeen” image. *The Satanic Verses* also follows the detritus of this sort of production as well, taking images and putting them back into circulation, exploring the representation of Britain’s immigrants. The novel portrays the presence of postcolonial immigrants in the heart of London as spectacle. The fantastic portrayal of The Street presented by Mishal Sufyan, the evening rites performed at Brickhall’s Club Hot Wax, and the riots that erupt into rivers of blood at the end of the novel imagine the London’s immigrant community as *The Aliens Show*, mediated by television cameras.

As with the rumors and gossip that spread information within and between communities in *Our Mutual Friend*, Rushdie’s novel reminds the reader about how much of understanding and seeing relies on perception and the travel of information. The Harmon plot, the Lammles’ fortune, the search for subsequent wills and codicils, relations between people, like the economy, is fueled by speculation.^{ccii} By contrast, the economy of *The Satanic Verses* is built on representation. At the beginning of the novel, Saladin stands on the brink of stardom in his role as Maxim Alien in the increasingly popular television program *The Aliens Show*. But Saladin’s success has come at a high cost; though finally playing the lead after years of advertisement and voiceover work, he secures an on-screen role only while covered in layers of prosthetics that render him virtually unrecognizable. But this too does not last: despite the makeup that obscures his identity, the producers drop Saladin for an actor with broader appeal, because “even ethnics don’t watch ethnic shows” (273). In the words of his agent Hal Valance, Saladin’s “universe,” that is, the number of people interested in seeing nonwhite faces on their television

screens, is shrinking. Valance recounts stories of re-recording a jingle because a white singer sounded too black and re-shooting an advertisement for a major airline removing actual airline employees in favor of white actors because focus groups did not respond positively to the people of color featured in the original. Ashley Dawson explains that the perniciousness of the Nationality Act comes not just from stripping people of their rights, but in the “increasingly racist definitions of national belonging codified as Britain’s postwar economic boom wound down, emptying words such as *belonging* and *home* of meaning for meaning of the Asian diaspora in Britain.”^{cciii} As The Nationality Act and the heritage industry render a vision of Britishness that excludes Valance’s “ethnics,” the Brickhall sections of the novel refashion London, its residents, and its history, sending contrasting images into circulation.

The possibilities of representation for those diasporic Asians, in addition to the nation’s other postcolonial subjects, remains the topic for the novel’s Brickhall sections. Dawson sees the Nationality Act as an attempt by the Thatcher administration to rid itself of its responsibilities to its former colonial subjects. He argues that though “this denial of statutory rights does not legally affect the bulk of the postwar immigrant population of Britain, the tendency is for all those who do not *appear* ‘British’ or, worse still, ‘English,’ to be treated as possible aliens.”^{cciv} Saladin feels the effects of Dawson’s claim as he is detained for being unrecognizable as a citizen. Yet he reinforces the conflation of Britishness with whiteness when he admits that he does not see Mishal and Anahita Sufyan as “really British” despite their status as native Londoners. Rushdie’s novel meets a fate similar to Saladin’s, as critics complain that his representation of Brickhall is less valid or real than the

other settings in the text. Citing Saladin's short stay in Brickhall and his return to his life of middle-class privilege, they dismiss the importance of his sojourn there, conflating Saladin's reading of Britishness with that of the text itself, many readings of the fabulist visions of *The Street*, as offered up by the Sufyan children, the nightly protests at Brickhall's Club Hot Wax, and the depiction of the riots are deemed as failing to cohere with the novel's other plots.^{ccv}

Figuring the Brickhall sections of the novel as an aside relies on reading *The Satanic Verses* as a monologic novel that coheres around the narrative of Saladin Chamcha.^{ccvi} The novel's multiplot structure does not coalesce around the biography of any one or two characters, but rather turns upon the inextricable and overlapping structural analogies the migrancy, representation, the river, and the Manichean divide between good and evil. Brickhall provides a link between all of these, situating the questions they raise in the historical present of the lived space of London's postcolonial inhabitants in the 1980s. Through their nightly refashionings at the Club Hot Wax, Brickhall's youth reimagine their city and their history in direct contrast to the exclusionary tactics of the heritage industry and the Thatcher administration's call for a return to "Victorian values," the values subject to the scathing criticism of *Our Mutual Friend*. The novel turns upon the ideas of migrancy and representation, as figured over the plan of London's metropolis. With the scenes of riots on the streets and revolution in the dancehalls, the spectacle of Brickhall stands in opposition to the logic of the heritage film, revising the city and demanding inclusion and visibility, as Rushdie's novel demands inclusion in the canon. The meltdown ritual at the Club Hot Wax anticipates the scenes of the riots, as both

work to portray the struggle of Brickhall's postcolonial population to stake a claim for its belonging in the imagination of contemporary Britain.

As Saladin becomes a "temporary person" alongside the Shaadaar's other residents, Mishal Sufyan guides him through the mythical Street, making this previously unseen part of the city visible to Saladin and the reader. Her narrative of the Street argues that Saladin's mutations are not unique, but instead, a part of a larger process by which Brickhall's residents are transformed by the political and imaginative rhetoric that tries to exclude them from belonging. She tells him "the fables of the new Kurus and Pandavas, the white racists and black 'self-help' or vigilante posses starring in this modern *Maharabaharta* or, more accurately, *Mahavilayet*" (292). After offering a local history of a series of skirmishes between the authorities and the immigrant community, many resulting in the deaths of Caribbeans and Asians involved, Mishal notes the effects of the growing tension and violence in the Brickhall on its residents. She tells Saladin of a local Sikh justice of the peace who developed aphasia after being the victim of a racially-motivated attack who now "pronounced no sentences," and of a "perfectly ordinary-looking 'accountant type'" who "developed the strange need to rearrange his sitting-room furniture for half an hour each evening [...] pretending to be the conductor of a single-decker bus on its way back to Bangladesh" (292). Her sister Anahita links the changes in these men to those Saladin undergoes, suggesting the absurdity of his situation as a natural response to the unreality of life in Brickhall: "You're not the only casualty, round here freaks are two a penny, you only have to look" (292). Anahita and Mishal follow the novel's narrative logic, insisting that the unrealistic

representation of the rights and belonging of commonwealth immigrants results in fabulous transformations in the immigrant's sense of self.

In both the Street and the detention center, immigrants are transformed by their negative portrayal by the state and the media. A fellow detainee explains to Saladin, "They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct" (174). At the Club Hot Wax, Brickhall's youth refuses to succumb to those pictures, and instead renders a vision of London and its history that stands in contrast to that of *Friend!* and the heritage politics of Thatcherism. The dancers claim their place in the nation by fashioning a new rite of history, politics and art. At the Club Hot Wax, an Ovidian name that nods to the process of pressing records spun by the scene's hero, Brickhall's youth dance to a Bhangra beat as they claim the space of Brickhall and the right to re-present themselves in history. The dancers gather in a hall of images to join in evenings of revelry that climax in echoes of revolution. Rushdie offers DJ Pinkwalla, a character sketch that rivals Dickens in its humor and intricacy of detail: "a seven-foot albino, his hair the palest rose, the whites of his eyes likewise, his features unmistakably Indian, the haughty nose, long thin lips, a face from a *Hamza-nama* cloth"; Pinkwalla is another of the novel's paradoxes: "An Indian man who has never seen India, East-India-man from the West Indies, white black man, a star" (301). Pinkwalla's tangled strands of nationality and ethnicity are complicated by his contrasting features, interrogating the very possibility of classification. Proselytizing over the music of others, Pinkwalla declares the importance of colonials and immigrants to the history of Britain: "*Now-mi-feel-indignation-when-dem-talk-immigration-when-dem-make-insinuation-we-no-*

part-a-de-nation-an-me-make-proclamation-a-de-true-stuation-how-we-make-contribution-since-de-Rome-Occupation" (301).

Supplementing Pinkwalla's rhymes, the revelers on the dance floor recast a history of Britain that counters the construction of the heritage films that *Friend!* satirizes. They enact a resistance to the erasure of nonwhite immigrants from the vision of national history, while offering a new image. He surrounds the revelers with the history of empire, represented in wax figures interspersed among the dangers. These "migrants of the past" are figures from throughout Britain's history "as much the living dancers' ancestors as their own flesh and blood" (301). As with the scene on the set of the heritage film, the migrant history of Britain collapses into a single moment. The crowd grows and surges, claiming the space on the dance floor with their bodies as Pinkwalla has claimed the space in history with his rap. As the night reaches its climax, the crowd chooses a figure from among them to melt in an oversized microwave oven, alternatively known as "the hot seat" and "hell's kitchen." The call for action rises from the crowd in response to Pinkwalla's stirring rhetoric. He asks for their choice of sacrifice: "*So-it-meltdown-time-when-de-men-of-crime-gonna-get-in-line-for-some-hell-fire-fryin* [...] *Who's-it-gonna-be? Who-you-wanna-see?*" (302). The dancers and the club staff then begin their elaborate ritual, as the hot seat is wheeled out and the night's figure chosen by the crowd, "the one most often selected, if truth be told; at least three times a week [...] *Maggie-maggie-maggie*, bays the crowd. *Burn-burn-burn*" (302). But the figure does not burn; instead, it "melts from the inside out, crumpling into formlessness" (302). The change at Club Hox Wax is Ovidian rather than a Lucretian change that burning

would produce, suggesting that this new history can be fashioned from the stuff of old, the same substance taking on new forms.

As they participate in the meltdown process, the revelers at Club Hot Wax stake out a place within British tradition, transforming a ritual of nationalism into a rite of revisionary present. Every night is Guy Fawkes at Hot Wax as “the doll, — *the guy*, — is strapped into the Hot Seat” (302). In their subversive observance they choose, from the “tableau of hate figures,” Margaret Thatcher, in large part responsible for the tightening of immigration and housing laws, whose policies have designated the persons in the Shaandaar as temporary. In their version of the holiday ceremony, Brickhall’s youth calls for revolution by assuming the roles of citizens rather than insurgents. The dancers play not the role of Fawkes, who, through his contribution to the Gunpowder Plot, attempted to assassinate James I and much of the Protestant aristocracy, but instead act as ‘traditional’ British citizens, burning in effigy the figure(s) who have been labeled threats to the nation. The state of the nation is still at stake, but the question of religion has been superceded by race, as the Club Hot Wax has taken the place of the Blak-An-tan. The figures scattered amongst the dancers, named by the novel as “History” are Septimus Severus, Ignatius Sancho, Mary Seacole, Ukawsaw—“migrants of the past”—History is on the side of the dancers, standing opposite the tableau of hate figures. But both the historical migrants and the meltdown figures are made of the same substance; they are equally susceptible to the heat and equally able to be molded anew. The manner in which the meltdown is conducted—the casting of figures of history in wax and the rewriting of British tradition—suggests a larger

argument about the changes that the nation and its literature has undergone. In his engagement with tradition and his engagement of texts that have preceded his, Rushdie calls not for destruction of the old, but rather for its refashioning.

The anger of the Hot Wax crowd and the night's cathartic meltdown prefigure the scenes of the riots in which Rushdie contends with Powell's predictions of the coming race wars. The contemporary plotline of *The Satanic Verses* is set in Powell's "fifteen or twenty years' time," but it is clear that his prophecy that "the black man will have the whip hand over the white man" has not come true. However, the racial tumult Powell predicted loomed as London saw two riots in 1981 and 1985. These incidents are rewritten in the novel when the Street erupts in violence near the end of the novel. The Brickhall riots begin when the community receives word that Uruhu Simba, the radical black activist who had died under suspicious circumstances while in police custody, had been cleared of the murders pinned on him and that the perpetrator of the crimes was a white man whom the police were reluctant to arrest. When the news breaks on television, crowds begin to gather; they are met with those who spill out on the streets in waves after the pubs close then later, when "the clubs and dance-halls [were] beginning to yield up their excited, highly charged populations" (469). Their numbers are preceded by increased police presence, as the State anticipates, and perhaps precipitates, disorder in Brickhall's streets. Before long there is violence, looting, and fire: "the street has become red hot, molten, a river the colour of blood" (477). Powell's words become accurate descriptors of the novel's scene, but they are first filtered through the poets Jumpy Joshi and Baal the Satirist. With these textual

accretions in mind, Powell loses his authority to define the riots, and the reader must seek alternate readings for the rivers of blood.

John McLeod argues that the riots merely counter Powell's anger with correspondingly destructive acts. He faults the narration of the riots, claiming that Rushdie "remains uneasy with popular revolt in 1980s London."^{ccvii} According to McLeod, Rushdie portrays the rioters as "locked inside a recursive enmity" and that they, like Gibreel, cannot understand that no victory is ever absolute. McLeod claims that the link Rushdie forges between this scene and Powell's speech hints that "the riots give credence to Powell's proleptic racializing rhetoric" and furthermore that "popular violence is regarded as a misguided attempt to move from the position of the oppressed to that of the persecutor, and not as an act of creative translation."^{ccviii} McLeod reads the riots through Saladin's vantage, noting Chamcha's squeamishness over the racialized political rhetoric at the community meeting he attends after Uruhu Simba's arrest. McLeod then conflates Saladin's position with that of the novel: "In a migrant life in the metropolis, one might wonder why the transnational appropriation and popular recontextualization of the political resources from other causes is in this particular instance so problematic."^{ccix} While it is through the eyes of Saladin Chamcha that the reader sees London's lower-class immigrant community, there is no reason to assume Saladin's reactions would be deemed appropriate in the terms of the text. On the contrary, his initial days at the Shaandaar, when he tries to distance himself from the Sufyan family and "his kind," portray Saladin as a colonial apologist, blinded by loyalty to his romanticized vision of Britain to the situation of the people around him. Saladin's time at the Shaandaar

serves to show the reader just how little the protagonist has been able or willing to see before his transformation makes the city's unseen visible to him. Mishal's translation of the people and events of this Street foreshadows the narrator's depiction of the riots and the discrepancy between what happens and "what the television camera sees" (469).

Unlike the scene at Club Hot Wax, the narration does not focalize the riots through the crowd. Instead, the text moves between Gibreel's psychotic visions, the narrator's commentary, and the portrayal of the riots on the evening news. Each frame of reference offers a limited vision, preventing the reader from taking a position above the tapestry to view the upheaval in its entirety. Through the video-mediated narration, the text repeatedly reminds the reader of the limitations of both the visible and the unseen. The narrator steps in to call attention to gaps in the coverage, what the camera and the reporters are unwilling to see and comprehend. The narrator warns of the camera's fragility, necessitating cameramen to seek out safe zones in which to shoot: "A camera is a thing easily broken or purloined; its fragility makes it fastidious. A camera requires law, order, the thin blue line. Seeking to preserve itself, it remains behind the shielding wall, observing the shadow-lands from afar, and of course from above" (470). The narrative points out the necessary alignment of the television news and the police. Additionally, the narrator notes the costs involved in bringing cameras to Brickhall and providing helicopters to shoot the riots, underscoring the commercial interests of the evening news, an enterprise that promises factual observation, but is ultimately beholden to the advertisers who work with Hal Valance.

The narration of the riots through the lens of the evening news calls attention to the specific ways in which Brickhall is rendered visible but unseen on television sets across the city and the nation. Brickhall's community, like those of the river-dwellers and dust-sifters in *Our Mutual Friend*, exist on the edges of the city's economy and in the margins of representation. While Rushdie's claim to representation in the canon is an important one, as Frank Tomasulo notes, "contemporary history in the era of global media capitalism is increasingly being 'written' on film and videotape."^{ccx} The raid and the riots, indeed the characterization of Brickhall itself, for the vast majority of Britons who have no personal experience with the neighborhood, will be understood as it is rendered on the evening news. The news, like the camera itself, pretends to be a neutral enterprise, documenting the important events of the day for viewers. The novel shows the camera to be a limited, rather than equalizing or unbiased force. As the riots intensify, more cameras appear in the sky not because of the information a new angle can provide, but because "a news editor somewhere has sanctioned the use of aerial photography" (469). The text emphasizes the camera's need for illumination: less gifted than the human eye, its night vision is limited to what the klieg lights will show. While bringing the unseen into the light may seem to be aligned with the novel's goals, the text presents the light needed to represent Brickhall to the news-viewing public as negative; a helicopter hovers over the scene "urinating light in long golden streams" onto the club and the persons being led out of its doors (469). The helicopter's light stream works in conjunction with the violently named "sun-gun" that shines on the reporter's transmission.

Once the television cameras arrive in Brickhall for the raid on Club Hot Wax, the narration describes not the actions of the players, but how those actions are translated into bits of video broadcast on the that evening for public consumption, as the spectacle of the news acts as an accomplice in the policing of immigrant communities. The reporters and commentators assure the outside community that the threat that is Brickhall, while a part of their city, is successfully contained within the neighborhood's boundaries. According to the news narrative, the police, wise enough to anticipate trouble in certain sections of the city, have increased their presence, and the cameras offer an outlet to broadcast an official narrative of events. The interviews and news conference of Inspector Stephen Kinch, offering the facts of the case, are interspersed with the objective images of video, providing evidence for the officer's narrative.^{ccxi}

In the specter of the Brickhall riots, *The Satanic Verses* addresses the racial fears Powell enunciated in the 1960s as they have been reignited with race riots in the early 1980s.^{ccxii} The novel presents the riots as spectacle, as events not lived by individuals or even communities, but mediated through camera lenses and varying reports from experts, witnesses, and legal authorities. The narrator's rendering of the raid on the Club Hot Wax and the subsequent Brickhall riots demonstrate what Tomasulo calls "the prison house of video."^{ccxiii} Writing about L.A.'s Rodney King riots, Tomasulo argues that the case's two jury verdicts and the press coverage of the event showed that though film operates under a pretense of objectivity, images on the news are always subject to interpretation. Viewers fit the video of the beating into a narrative prefigured by their beliefs about the role of the police and the

relationship between minorities and the law. For those sympathetic to King, a mistrust of the police resulted in a vision of an unarmed black man being battered by a group of officers in a blatant display of excessive force. Those for whom the police represent safety from outside dangers saw officers following the procedures necessary to secure a particularly unruly drug addict. Tomasulo argues that the Rodney King video, in part due to its “noninterventionist, seemingly straightforward and objective mode of production” was “allowed to be used as a national Rorschach test of sorts, whereby each citizen reacted to the scene according to his/her own subjectivity and experience (often based on gender, class, and race).”^{ccxiv} *The Satanic Verses* suggests that the death of Uruhu Simba in police custody serves as a similar Rorschach. The people of Brickhall see the police frame and then murder Simba. Outsiders are reassured by the news that the police have contained the threat represented in Brickhall. When the streets erupt in violence after the police increase their presence, both sides see their narratives confirmed.

The voice of the law takes the form of Inspector Stephen Kinch, apparent media liaison for the police department during the force ramp up and the riots. He appears on television screens above a caption that labels him as a source of security, while “the camera sees him for what he is: a good man in an impossible job. A father, a man who likes his pint” (470). Kinch dismisses the complaints of the Brickhall community, assuring viewers that Britain’s immigrant community suffers far fewer grievances than their “kith and kin” from “Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean” where there are “real problems” of police brutality and unstable federal governments. The broadcast moves from Kinch, to reporters, to commentators who analyze the video

and the history. Kinch's explanation of the narrative stands out as a linear counterpart to the snippets of film and exegesis offered by the talking heads the narration switches between, as the narrative mimics flipping through television channels with a remote control. Kinch offers a series of possible explanations for the fires—political motivation, insurance money, sexual jealousy. He states the facts and closes the case: "That's all we have," he tells the journalists (480). "The end," translates the narrator. (480) But the narrator is not through with the riots. As Gibreel is lost in his delusions, reigning fire on the city streets from his magical trumpet and the clubs are spewing out disaffected youths to react to the untimely death of the figurehead Simba, another drama unfolds far from the view of the cameras, the rioters, and even the reader. The narrator offers a series of juxtaposed images, posed as questions, suggesting a narrative to counter that of Inspector Kinch. Insisting, "I have more," he calls out to the inspector with questions about what really happened to Pamela Chamcha and Jumpy Joshi, about men in cars with tinted windows, and the disappearance of a certain briefcase. "Inspector Kinch? Are you there?" the narrator asks; "No. He's gone. He has no answers for me." (480). The inability of the narrator to reach the inspector, to have his questions be heard by the either the police or the news, evoke a series of failures that appear in the novel's Brickhall sections. The news broadcast deems the riots a failure because its residents destroy their own neighborhood: "[the camera] cannot understand, or demonstrate, what any of this achieves. These people are burning their own streets" (471). The narrative structure of the section echoes the failure to mediate between different registers, in which viewers see what they already believe.

This mode of failure is echoed by critical readings of *The Satanic Verses* that work to resolve the narrative into a monologic reading. Though the Brickhall sections of the novel garner a great deal of critical attention, most deem Rushdie's portrayal of London's immigrant enclaves as failing at one degree or another. Peter Kalliney admits that though Saladin's time in Brickhall "structures the narrative development of race as both a local and international condition,"^{ccxv} we must see "Chamcha's time in Brickhall as one stop on a much longer journey."^{ccxvi} Pressing the novel into a monologic structure with Saladin at its center, Chamcha's decision to leave Brickhall reduces the neighborhood to a way station, and leading Kalliney to conclude that "Brickhall is not real in the logic of the novel because it is a stage through which the transmogrified Chamcha must pass in order to regain his Indianness."^{ccxvii} His argument rests in reading the novel's vision of migration solely through the lens of Saladin's subjectivity. Sabrina Hassumani offers a similar reading, in which she accuses Rushdie of "assuming that all migrant experiences may be read via a Chamcha-type" and thereby "eras[ing] the vast differences between political exiles, economic refugees, and other 'migrants' who do not share Chamcha's upper-middle-class, Western educated, metropolis-bound experience."^{ccxviii} Both of these readings depend upon privileging one mode of narrative and type of representation, a methodology which the novel's narrative structure and the Brickhall sections in particular consistently argue against. The divergent visions of Brickhall offered by Mishal and Anahita, the Hot Wax dancers, and the evening news cannot be reconciled into a single narrative order. The novel's multiplot structure holds the disparate narratives in tension, asking the reader to

see a dialogue between them. *The Satanic Verses* writes the condition of England under Thatcher, asking the reader to see the city's visible commonwealth immigrants and invisible structures of power and economy as translated into representation in the canon and on the nation's screens. The novel offers a Dickensian tapestry of London as postcolony in which competing visions of the city and the nation conjoin to rewrite literary history and contemporary representation.

^{clix} In keeping with the motif of doubling in *Our Mutual Friend*, this is a twofold role for Saladin. At the beginning of the novel, he is attempting to return to London after a failed reconciliation with his father in Bombay.

^{clx} Here we see the return of the amatory plot that I discuss in detail in my first chapter. The pairing of Bella Wilfer and John Harmon, as well as that of Lizzie Hexam and Eugene Wrayburn follow variations on the domestic plot. The Wilfer-Harmon romance reverses gender roles to a point, as Bella begins her narrative spoiled and greedy, wishing only for money. Once she comes to love Harmon (as Rokesmith) for his quality and not his station, they find happiness in a modest home based on romantic love. Once their finance-free love has been established, he reveals himself to her and takes his rightful place as heir. Lizzie, too, has to be tutored in the ways of romance outside of economics. She insists that her class and poverty preclude her from a union with Wrayburn, but once she realizes her love for him, she assents to the marriage.

^{clxi} John R Reed. "The Riches of Redundancy: *Our Mutual Friend*." *Studies in the Novel*. 38: (2006): 15-35. 15

^{clxii} Reed argues that Dickens earlier works, which were written in true serial form (rather than being fully planned before completion and released serially), were more truly mimetic because the author was responding to the immediate necessities of the text and the readership. As a result, he contends, most of the earlier serial novels are filled with extraneous information, which Reed discusses in terms of redundancy. With *Our Mutual Friend*, Reed argues that the accretion of details that appear to be creating a Barthesian reality effect actually serve to transmit knowledge, reinscribing the novel's central themes in a manner that is both self-referential and instructive to readers.

^{clxiii} Frederick Luis Aldama. "Novel Possibilities: Fantastic and Real Fusions in *Our Mutual Friend*." *Dickens Quarterly*. 19.1 (2002): 3-16. 3.

^{clxiv} Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993. 73.

^{clxv} Sabrina Hassumani addresses the spectrum of arguments claiming Rushdie primarily for East or West in her introduction to *Salman Rushdie: A Postmodern Reading of his Major Work*.

^{clxvi} Eleanor Courtemanche. "'Naked Truth is the Best Eloquence': Martineau, Dickens, and the Moral Science of Realism." *ELH* 73 (2006): 383-407. 384

^{clxvii} Courtemanche, 386.

^{clxviii} Dickens offers no clues as to whether he's suggesting that he based the Boffins on actual people he met, or even drafted acquaintances into his story, or if he's winking at the reader as he ignores the line between fact and fiction.

^{clxix} *Friend!* clearly references *Oliver!*, which debuted on the West End stage in 1960, followed by a film version of *Oliver Twist*, which was filmed at Shepperton Studios. The BBC has created three miniseries versions, both before and after the heritage boom, of *Our Mutual Friend* in 1958,

1976, and 1998. None is a musical version. While the 1998 version glosses some of the complexities of the poverty of industrial London, some of the dvd's supplementary material addresses the difficulties of the lives of the river dwellers and dust pickers.

^{clxx} Peter Childs. "The English Heritage Industry and Other Trends in the Novel at the Millennium." *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel 1945-2000*. Ed. Brian W. Shaffer. 211

^{clxxi} Though *Friend!* seems to middlebrow to be a part of the heritage industry, *The Satanic Verses* seems to have the field in mind, as the character Whiskey Sisodia, a producer who is known to make wonderful films on small budgets, is modeled on Ismail Merchant, who, along with partner James Ivory, was responsible for no fewer than a half dozen heritage films. For more on the rise of the heritage industry see Andrew Higson's *English Heritage, English Cinema and Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism* by Lester D. Friedman.

^{clxxii} Childs, 212

^{clxxiii} Edward Barnaby. "Realism as Metaspectacle." *Journal of Narrative Theory*. 38.1 (2008): 37-58. 40.

^{clxxiv} Barnaby, 40-1.

^{clxxv} Guy Debord argues that in societies where "the modern conditions of production prevail, all life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into representation" (2). Certainly the *Friend!* party turns Dickens into spectacle along with those who attend. The spectacle, Debord argues that the spectacle is at once a production, part, and unifier of society.

^{clxxvi} D. A. Miller. *The Novel and the Police*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. 18.

^{clxxvii} Miller, 19.

^{clxxviii} Said, 74.

^{clxxix} In talking about how the nineteenth-century novel reinscribes the authority of the status quo, Said notes that, "the most frequent figure for this case is the reunification of the family, which in Dickens's case always serves as a microcosm of society. Of course, though many of the characters in *TSV* meet tragic ends, the final acts of the novel are realist, as Saladin cares for his dying father in Bombay, performing religious and cultural rituals he would have eschewed at the beginning of the text.

^{clxxx} Said, 77.

^{clxxxii} Garrett, 47-50.

^{clxxxiii} Garrett, 45.

^{clxxxiv} Garrett, 49.

^{clxxxv} In his study of Victorian multiplot novels, Peter Garrett uses Dickens' metaphor of the story-weaver at his loom to describe the structure and complexity of the multiplot novel arguing that the role of the story-weaver is that of a specific epistemology that "results from an attempt to discover a hidden pattern that both unifies the novel's form and expresses its significance." 30.

^{clxxxvi} The Ayesha pilgrimage, the satanic verses incident, and the exiled imam all unfold in Gibreel's serial dreams. There exists the simple explanation that they connect through him. However, the questions the novel poses—"What kind of an idea are you?" and "How does newness enter the world?"—do not confine themselves to Gibreel's plotline, either waking or sleeping.

^{clxxxvii} My reading stands in direct opposition to those who argue that Rushdie's figures migrancy and exile as ahistorical. The claim is often conflated with a reading of Rushdie's biography, usually with the implications that Saladin Chamcha is meant to stand in for Rushdie. Aijaz Ahmad was one of the first to level this charge against Rushdie first when writing about *Shame* in 1991. He later develops the criticism more fully in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* and many critics have aligned themselves with this position.

^{clxxxviii} Garrett, 22.

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- clxxxviii Jacqueline Bardolph. "Language is Courage." M.D. Fletcher, Ed. *Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Atlanta; Rodopi, 1994. 215
- clxxxix Bardolph, 213.
- cx^c Fawzia Afzhal-Khan. *Cultural Imperialism and the Indo-English Novel*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993. 43
- cx^{ci} Defoe, 62.
- cx^{cii} Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 394
- cx^{ciii} M. Keith Booker. "Beauty and the Beast: Dualism as Despotism in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie." M.D. Fletcher, ed. *Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*. Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995: 237-54. 262
- cx^{civ} Milton IV. 505-8
- cx^{cv} Cheadle, "Late Novels" 87
- cx^{cvi} *ibid.*
- cx^{cvi} Bakhtin.
- cx^{cvi} Joseph McLaughlin. *Writing the Urban Jungle: Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000. 5
- cx^{cix} Ashley Dawson and Brent Hayes Edwards. "Global Cities of the South." *Social Text*. 22.4 (2004): 1-7. 3.
- cc^c Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 35.
- ccⁱ Bardolph, 217.
- ccⁱⁱ For more see "The Book of Insolvent Fates: Financial Speculation in *Our Mutual Friend*" by Michael Cotsell.
- ccⁱⁱⁱ Dawson, 127.
- cc^{iv} *ibid.*
- cc^v These assumptions form the core arguments of Peter Kalliney, who sees Brickhall as "unreal", Sabrina Hassumani, who sees Saladin's perspective as *the* migrant perspective of the novel, John McLeod, who deems the riots a failure for Brickhall and the novel. I address these arguments individually throughout this section.
- cc^{vi} Taking note of the two protagonists and figuring Gibreel and Saladin as the novel's two centers, as Keith Booker does, has the same effect. Though looking at both Gibreel and Saladin offers a broader picture, it still forces the novel into a paradigm with biographical progression at its center.
- cc^{vii} John McLeod. *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis*. London: Routledge, 2004. 157.
- cc^{viii} McLeod, 156.
- cc^{ix} McLeod, 154.
- cc^x Frank Tomasulo. "'I'll See it When I Believe it.' Rodney King and the Prison House of Video." *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event*. Ed. Vivian Sobchack. New York: Routledge, 1996. 71.
- cc^{xi} Miller notes that the character of the middle class is determined by its needing to be kept free of unpleasantness such as noise and squalor, but specifically the police (6).
- cc^{xii} For more see R. Victoria Arana, "The 1980s: Retheorising and Refashioning British Identity." in *Write Black Write British*, ed. Kadija Sesay.
- cc^{xiii} Tomasulo, 69.
- cc^{xiv} Tomasulo, 75.
- cc^{xv} Peter Kalliney. "Globalization, Postcoloniality, and the Problem of Literary Studies in *The Satanic Verses*." *Modern Fiction Studies*. 48.1 (2002): 50-82. 63
- cc^{xvi} Kalliney, 66.
- cc^{xvii} *ibid.*
- cc^{xviii} Hassumani, 18.



Chapter Four:

On Beauty and the Inheritance of a Postcolonial Aesthetic

My final chapter returns to the Condition of England novel in the form of E.M. Forster's *Howards End* and Zadie Smith's 2005 rewriting, *On Beauty*. As with *Our Mutual Friend*, Forster's novel focuses on the question of inheritance. Forster's inheritance is not one of great material value, but instead takes the form of the titular *Howards End*, a country house that comes to symbolize the spirit of the nation. Forster's question over the condition of England lies in whether the home will come to rest in the hands of the progressive, cosmopolitan Schlegels or the imperialist-capitalist Wilcoxes. Smith's rewriting replaces the house at the center of the inheritance battle with a painting by Haitian folk artist Jean Hippolyte. Though the Hippolyte painting only appears a few times in the text (like *Howards End* in Forster's original), its position as the contested object of inheritance foregrounds the importance of art in Smith's novel. The patriarchs of the *On Beauty*'s Kipps and Belsey families, who replace *Howards End*'s Wilcoxes and Schlegels are rival art historians, involved in a public feud over the role of the liberal arts and the construction of the canon. In addition to the Rembrandt paintings over which the two spar and the Hippolyte the families ultimately enter a legal contest over, the novel's theme of appreciation and politics of music underscores the novel's interest in the inseparability of art from the political and from social justice. However, *On Beauty* does not eschew the importance of land and space in favor of its renewed focus on art. Rather, it picks up on *Howards End*'s anxieties over the shifting boundaries of the city and the nation and expands the geography of the original plot

across the Atlantic, interrogating the Condition of England novel while transforming it into a global form.

In “Modernism and Imperialism,” Frederic Jameson argues that the architecture of imperialism influences the structure of the literary works written within its system. This structural influence, he claims, creates a sense of displacement in those who live under it, and its effects on literary production and form are “more sweeping” than the traces empire leaves on the content of literature that would traditionally be called imperial.^{ccxix} That is, novels like *Howards End* that do not address the spaces of empire directly demonstrate the influence of the imperial system more emphatically than novels like those of Kipling, Haggard, or Wells, due to the way in which colonialism hides the production of national wealth within the homeland, all of which leads to a particular understanding of space:

colonialism means that a significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis, outside of the daily life and existential experience of the home country, in colonies over the water whose own life experience and life world—very different from that of the imperial power—remain unknown and unimaginable for the subjects of imperial power, whatever social class they may belong to. Such spatial disjunction has as its immediate consequence the inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole.”^{ccxx}

In other words, the system of imperialism demands a focus inward that necessarily excludes a complete acknowledgment of the workings of empire. Jameson continues

his discussion about modernism's cartographical response to the imperialist economic structure by turning to Forster (whom he calls a "closet modernist"). Reading the scene in which Aunt Juley travels to Hilton to sever Helen's engagement, he notes how she mentally organizes the space that surrounds her as the train carries her from the metropolis to the village, while the narration hides "pockets of philosophical complexity [...] beneath its surface" as it encourages the reader to overlook class and industrial realities.^{ccxxi}

The postcolonial novels that I address in this dissertation emerge from the intersection of imperialism—defined in major part by Jameson's "spatial disjunction"—and nationalism. Confronted by each other, imperialism and nationalism spark a paradox that each of this dissertation's novels works through: the nation, utterly dependent upon the empire, must be described as the homeland; the empire, in turn, must be portrayed as under the complete control of, but not fully a part of, the nation and so the homeland. Each of the canonical hypotexts I've addressed so far works with and through this paradox, endeavoring to imagine an England separate from its imperial possessions and influences. The three preceding chapters have focused on contemporary postcolonial novels that highlight and address the spatial disjunction Jameson explains. *Brick Lane* moves the action of the country house to the tight quarters of the council houses, forcing the home to be a part of the world. The sisters' correspondence between London and Dhaka links the two cities, but also spreads the family out—it cannot be cordoned off. *Foe* contends with the spatial disjuncture through a final turn to the gothic, allowing the reader and the characters to be in separate places at the same time. And *The Satanic Verses*

offers a multiple temporality similar to that of *Foe*, layering Rushdie's contemporary map of London over Dickens' metropolis, showing the city's imperial past and postcolonial present in the same place. None of these novels, however, stretches the formulation of postcoloniality as far as Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*. In this chapter, I consider how Smith transforms E. M. Forster's narrowly-drawn Edwardian Condition of England novel into a transatlantic Condition of Postcoloniality, working to expand both the form of the original and the boundaries of the postcolonial.

On Beauty offers a contemporary rewriting of *Howards End*, set in and around Boston. Like *Our Mutual Friend*, *Howards End* centers on a mislaid inheritance. As Ruth Wilcox's family ignores her dying wish to leave her ancestral country home to her recently displaced friend, Margaret Schlegel, so *On Beauty*'s Carlene Kipps' instructions to bequeath her Jean Hippolyte painting to her friend Kiki go unheeded. As with the Harmon fortune in *Our Mutual Friend*, in both Forster's and Smith's novels the bequests are ultimately returned to their rightful owners. Though while the ending of Forster's novel promises a spiritual future for England as the Schlegels inhabit Howards End, Smith's rewriting concludes on a much more ambivalent note. *On Beauty* retains the major components of both Forster's plot—an unlikely friendship followed by an untimely death, an uncertainty over rightful heirs—and themes—the questions of class barriers, rights, and responsibilities. While bringing Forster's story into the present, Smith also places the novel in a postcolonial context: the Schlegel sisters are replaced with the interracial, intercontinental Belsey family, with a white British father, African-American mother, and three biracial children. Standing in the roles of the old order

English Wilcoxes, Smith offers a Christian, conservative, Afro-Caribbean family. Surrounding the family are personal and professional acquaintances from throughout the globe, including groups from the Boston area's large Haitian immigrant population. In offering a truly cosmopolitan mix of characters, Smith complicates Forster's engagements with class and tradition, as well as her rewriting of those engagements, putting class, race, and the legacy of empire into conversation with the history and role of the novel form.

Howards End draws from a small group of characters, focusing on a circumscribed cluster of settings, all of which ultimately collapse into the English country house. In *Howards End*, the novel's mislaid inheritance, "emerges as a besieged domestic space positioned against the impending expansion of the city."^{ccxxii} By installing the rightful "spiritual heir" in the ancestral country home where the Wilcox-Schlegel union will begin to raise the next generation, Forster attempts to stave off the encroaching city and demands of capital. Though two houses—one in Wellington and one in North London—find their way into Smith's text, serving as reminders of Forster's novel, *On Beauty* replaces the central inheritance with a piece of Haitian folk art. But as with *Howards End*, the novel's concern over displaced inheritance stands for a larger apprehension over the future. Where Forster's novel asks "to whom does England belong?"^{ccxxiii}, *On Beauty* does not limit the question of inheritance to a specific race or place, but rather asks about the condition of postcoloniality, questioning the geographic and academic boundaries of postcolonialism. As it reflects on the inherited form of the Condition of England novel as offered by Forster, *On Beauty* also seeks to take stock of the

current state of postcolonialism. While the novel addresses the myopic image of England that Forster offers in his text, it also asks where the postcolonial condition may be shortsighted.

My argument is that Smith takes the Condition of England novel and remakes it into a more capacious form, at once highlighting the circumscribed contours of Forster's text and the limits of contemporary postcolonialism. While Forster's novel turns inward and backward, offering a parochial view of England's future as evinced through its past, Smith provides a broad interpretation of the postcolonial, presenting a heterogeneous group of characters from throughout the former empire and sets her novel in the United States, taking the Condition of England form beyond the borders of nation. This move simultaneously makes the national form a postcolonial one and challenges more conservative definitions of postcoloniality that would exclude the space of the US from its realm. In choosing to set the novel in a college town in the suburbs of Boston, Smith marries Forster's anxiety about nation and mobility with postcolonialism's anxieties about the role of the academy and its position vis-à-vis class. The move to the US reflects an opening out beyond the space of England, and beyond the places traditionally covered by postcolonial studies.

As Smith expands the geographical borders of the Condition of England novel, offering instead perhaps a Condition of Postcoloniality, she couples Forster's insistence on human connection between individuals with the postcolonial demands of exposing relations of power and capital. The Condition of England novel, anxious over the changes wrought by imperialism, overlooks empire; postcolonialism,

organized by political commitments to represent the marginalized, often neglects questions of aesthetics that have formed the traditional canon. By translating *Howards End* into the context of the postcolonial, Smith juxtaposes the limitations of Forster's nostalgic nationalism that glosses complexities of class and empire with the failings of postcolonial readings to account for aesthetic value. In demonstrating what is absent from each, Smith endeavors to create a form commodious and elastic enough to include the complexities of empire and the importance of aesthetics. In doing so, Smith explores the boundaries of the postcolonial, both geographical and theoretical. Smith reconnects the United States to the more properly postcolonial Caribbean, Africa, and postimperial Britain, with Englishmen Kipps and Belsey recolonizing Boston along with their fellow Oxonian Erskine Jegede.^{ccxxiv} The Haitian population of Boston and its suburbs bring French and Creole into play with these American and British Englishes, all of which stand beside Levi Belsey's hip-hop argot creating a polyphony that traverses national, linguistic, generational, and economic boundaries.

Smith underscores her focus on the future of art through reference to Elaine Scarry's monograph on aesthetics and ethics, *On Beauty and Being Just*, in her title, epigraph, and acknowledgements.^{ccxxv} Her engagement with Scarry's treatise highlights the conflict between the Kipps and Belsey families' philosophies on the nature of art and social justice. The tension between the conservative public intellectual Monty Kipps and the liberal iconoclast Howard Belsey, who refuses the idea of objective genius or beauty, places the question of the nature of art and aesthetics at the center of the novel. Turning to Scarry, whose central thesis is that

while beauty and justice have been positioned as opposing forces, the acknowledgement of the former may actually lead to the latter, Smith takes up the question of the role of art and culture Forster poses and ties them more directly to the economic justice his novel addresses, but does not mete out. In exchanging the country house at the center of the inheritance conflict with a Haitian folk painting, Smith severs the metonymic link between the domestic space and the future of the nation. Smith's reliance on a Haitian artifact as the contested legacy accentuates the novel's engagement with the postcolonial and its break with a narrowly-construed English past.

The overarching imperative of Forster's text is one of preservation and protection. Concerned with the modernizing changes of physical and class mobility, the text allays its anxieties by aiming to protect England's rural heart from the encroaching city and preserve the liberal, educated values of families like the Schlegels in the face of the growing capitalist classes, securing *Howards End* in Margaret's hands for the future of the English race. *On Beauty* elaborates on the anxieties of *Howards End* while treating mobility—of people, of race, of class, of national understandings—as a fact of existence. The imperative of *On Beauty* is to broaden the ideas offered by Forster's text, to place them into more complex matrices of subjects, to expand their conceptions of geography, and to expand the goals or possibilities of the postcolonial novel, in part through these complications I have already mentioned, but in larger part through a complete interweaving of politics and aesthetics in the personal, the political, and the unique space of the university. While Forster's novel is about the anxieties over changes occurring in the

demography of London and its surrounding villages, Smith's text welcomes, and even compels, physical and social mobility. Whereas *Howards End* is concerned with the nomadism of the Schlegels, who are being turned out of their childhood home, and of the Wilcoxes, who treat property as mere housing and sources of wealth, misleading others about the homes they buy, *On Beauty* acknowledges mobility in many forms—the taxis that bring Wellingtonians in and out of Boston, the immigration that brought the taxi drivers to Massachusetts in the first place, the movement of the academics from their working-class and Third World origins, the movement of groups of students in and out of classes, years, degrees. The steadfastness of the town of Wellington, based around its proximity to Boston and the constant turnover of students re-envision the nationalism of Forster's novel as it addresses the original's fears about the changing face of the nation, the possibilities (and impossibilities of class mobility) and the loss of towns like Hilton to the growing borders of London.

In both its attention to geography and its attention to art, *On Beauty* asks where the postcolonial novel can go from here.^{ccxxvi} Rather than separating the political and the aesthetic, *On Beauty* interrogates how the two interact. In addition to addressing the local concerns of Forster's novel by expanding them into a more global realm, Smith addresses the local concerns of the postcolonial novel, broadening its geographic and content boundaries. As Forster's text is limited by the necessity of keeping empire at bay in order to portray a specifically English spiritual inheritance, postcolonial studies exhibits its own prohibitions in the realm of

aesthetic value. Deepika Bahri argues that the field of postcolonial studies is experiencing a crisis of value. Outlining the ways in which postcolonial theory and literature influence each other, privileging certain types of postcolonial texts that respond to questions “authorized” by the field, Bahri notes that the novel in particular tends to be treated “either as a form predisposed to national allegory or as a purely symptomatic formal societal product of prevailing relations of production.”^{ccxxvii} I argue that Smith works to remove the postcolonial novel from its limitations of the categories of both national allegory and symptomatic societal product by showing the confines of both formulations and asking the reader to consider the intersection of beauty and social justice.

In marrying the personal, the political, and the aesthetic, Smith follows Elaine Scarry’s central thesis of *On Beauty and Being Just*, that analyses of beauty and social justice need not be positioned as antithetical to one another. Scarry insists that rather than distracting from the political and the just, beauty, in its ability to garner attention, its power over its beholder, and its subsequent demands (once having captivated) to be protected, can lead the appreciator of the beautiful to not just more beauty, but to the fair and the just.^{ccxxviii} Scarry takes to task those who suggest that by attending to beauty we fail to attend to justice, arguing that the two need not be separated, but that attention to aesthetic pleasure begets attention to social problems. In *On Beauty* this thesis is borne out positively by Levi, whose love of hip-hop leads him to political activism, and inversely by Howard, whose refusal to acknowledge beauty isolates him from his family and his students. Scarry’s axiological logic suggests that conferring value by recognizing beauty can lead to a

greater valuation of a literary work than a political valuation, since the former could lead to the latter. I do not mean to argue that aesthetic value should trump political value; nor do I suggest that Scarry makes that argument herself. I mean to show that Scarry removes political and aesthetic value from opposing corners and puts them on the same side. In doing so, Scarry hopes to rescue works of art (including imaginative literature) from the battle between the canon wielding traditionalists like Monty Kipps and the anti-canon dissenters like Howard Belsey.

Nonetheless, the marriage of politics and aesthetics renders matters of taste all the more potent. Barbara Herrnstein Smith notes that aesthetic formulations, while always influenced by the flows of power, are not as top-down as they tend to be imagined, invariably resulting in a set of canonical tastes and deviant tastes—the former delineating where there is a convergence of consensus and the latter where consensus diverges.^{ccxxix} Herrnstein Smith argues that all value is radically contingent upon not just the conditions of production, but also upon endless assumptions of producers and consumers of art, the standards and needs of communities, and the experiences and economies of the individual. Value can never be fixed; rather, it is always fundamentally dynamic. These contingencies of value depend both on institutions and the individual. Frank Kermode notes that this problem of aesthetics and class can be particularly difficult when discussing the novel for “the novel is treacherous ground because of its largely bourgeois history, its vested interest in the bourgeois shibboleth of ‘individualism.’”^{ccxxx} Yet though individualism has been placed in opposition to class interests, both Herrnstein Smith and Scarry take up the position of the individual as vital to understanding

value. Scarry sketches out how individual experience can lead a person to see (or refuse to see) beauty, while Herrnstein Smith explains that the experience of art is always dependent upon “personal economy.”^{ccxxxix} It is this personal economy that colors Howard Belsey’s theories on art, his refusal to allow himself pleasure in art working in service of his desire to dismantle the canon.

Like Bahri, Brian May argues that readings of postcolonial texts that refuse to go beyond the socioeconomic may offer political value, but fail to reach an understanding of a postcolonial justice that goes beyond a reverse reiteration of inherited power structures. When arguing that the ethical dimension of postcolonial texts has been underestimated in the “preoccup[ation] with power and the torsions of power,”^{ccxxxix} May also echoes Scarry in his claims that “at the foundation of postcolonial justice we find the affective and the aesthetic; it is an emotion, an image, rather than an idea or concept, that opens the way to the postcolonial individual’s ethical conduct at the postcolonial author’s extravagant commendation thereof.”^{ccxxxix} In the narrative of Howard and Kiki’s broken marriage—a very public playing out of what ostensibly should be relegated to the private—Smith offers the possibility of May’s extravagant postcolonialism. While I have argued that Smith works to expand *Howards End*, highlighting the narrow constraints of Forster’s novel, I believe that in joining the aesthetic and the political with the personal, she works to enact Forster’s directive to “only connect.” In the novel’s final moments, as Howard sees Kiki through the lens of May’s affective nostalgia, his wife triangulated with a Rembrandt painting he has long taught but seems to find new appreciation

for, the novel joins the personal and the aesthetic while evoking the postcolonial novel's political joining of public and private.

The Opening of *Howards End*

In rewriting Forster's Condition of England novel, Smith seeks to reach far beyond the spatial, national, and socioeconomic boundaries of *Howards End*. She broadens the cast of characters, opening up more subject positions within the two conflicting families and presenting a series of characters who exist at "the extreme edges of gentility." Forster's Leonard Bast finds many heirs in *On Beauty*, each of whom finds methods and means of mobility inaccessible to their predecessor. In addition to expanding the *Howards End*'s assemblage of subject positions, Smith elaborates the original's scale of place. While *Howards End* evidences anxiety about the detachment of families from their landed past and the encroachment of the city into the surrounding countryside, Smith sets her novel in the very suburbs Forster feared would erase the division between city and country. The novel addresses the proximity and distance between the university town of Wellington and the metropolis of Boston, highlighting the flows of workers, students, and academics between the two. In addition to the local spatial reconfiguration that considers the exchange between city and suburb, Smith's novel considers geography on a global scale. While Forster's work limits itself to a small slice of England, Smith opens the novel out across the Atlantic, relocating the action of *Howards End* to the New World, using one of England's oldest colonies to question the borders of contemporary postcolonialism.

Though *Howards End* presumes to address the Condition of England, the novel is sparsely populated, the concerns of the nation represented by two middle-class families and one clerk. The Wilcoxes stand for the demands of capitalist imperialism, while the Schlegels present the case for a more refined vision of art and culture. But there is little to either family beyond their symbolic natures. The characters that populate *Howards End* fall easily into stereotype, existing primarily to contradict each other and to guide readers toward a final scene in which England, once threatened, has been returned to security of the country house, replenished through the union of the forward-thinking Schlegels and Leonard Bast's agrarian past. Leonard, who does not live to see the final connection between art and capital at the site of Howards End, represents the only possibility of social mobility in Forster's novel. In a sense, he is asked to represent all positions less privileged than those of the Schlegels or Wilcoxes, except for the "very poor" whom the narrator denotes as "unthinkable" (38).^{ccxxxiv} Though *Howards End* presents the difficulties of Leonard Bast's life, appearing to reach out to Leonard with a sense of concern over his well-being, the novel's need to locate a remedy for the anxiety caused by class mobility and cosmopolitanism results in the exclusion of "dynamic, even if disruptive, aspects of society in favor of 'the past.'"^{ccxxxv} Though his character may be designed to represent a possibility that a clerk can raise himself into higher class circles, the structure of the novel leaves Leonard with no real chance to do so. Once Leonard Bast has provided the Schlegels with an heir who has roots in England's agricultural stock, he falls to his overdetermined death caused by many sources:

Charles Wilcox's sword, a case of books he has not time to read, and a heart too weak for the fluctuations of capital.

In place of the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes, *On Beauty* presents the Belsey and Kipps families, headed by rival art historians. Smith expands upon the putative cosmopolitanism of the Schlegels by transforming the family into an interracial, transnational group. Through the two families at the center of the action, as well many of the novel's peripheral characters, Smith offers a broad portrayal of the condition of postcoloniality, as her subjects echo the mobility of the Black Atlantic. Howard, like Smith herself, comes from North London. A butcher's son, Howard's career as an academic and his interpretive stance seem to stem from his desire to run as far away from Willesden as personally and culturally possible, while using his working-class background to strategically bolster his Marxist credentials in academic circles. His wife is African American, the daughter of a nurse, who was the daughter of a maid, who was the daughter of a house slave, tracing with each generation a distinctly female African-American class mobility. Their children each manifest a Forsterian devotion to a particular ideology—Zora apprenticing herself to the academy, Jerome having chosen evangelical Christianity, and Levi embracing the culture of hip-hop, appreciating the art form and its attendant lifestyle with a vigor that overwhelms even his father and his sister's dedication to theory. Similarly, Monty and Carlene Kipps hail from different Caribbean islands, their children born in England. Howard's best friend, Erskine Jegede is Nigerian by way of Oxford, while the crew with whom Levi works is predominantly Haitian. Smith's cast of characters explodes the easy taxonomy of *Howards End*. Smith represents a

panoply of subject positions not easily definable by relation to nation or race. The terms Black British, Caribbean, American, and African American each fail at some application.

On Beauty offers a complex depiction of postcoloniality that juxtaposes differing iterations of the postcolonial and postimperial subject hailing from the UK, the US, Africa, and the Caribbean. Malini Johar Schueller argues that “homogenized ideas of global diaspora and transnationalism, all of which are being increasingly deployed (particularly in ethnic studies) as emancipatory paradigms (often beyond race), in fact meet their limits when we introduce the question of race.”^{ccxxxvi} Schueller points out that Bhabha’s formulations on race move between Toni Morrison and Frantz Fanon without acknowledging the differences in the historical construction of blackness in the US as opposed to those in the Caribbean or the United Kingdom. Noting the pairing of “subalterns and ex slaves”^{ccxxxvii} as part of a postcolonial universalism that supplants those the field has struggled to dismantle, Schueller calls for a more specific national and historic differentiation than the dynamic of colonizer-colonized provides. Rather than working from an axis of metropole-colony, Smith figures the postcolonial condition as a global one and instead of uniting the novel’s black characters under undifferentiated signs of migrancy and diaspora, the novel highlights the fault lines where class and nationality fracture racial connections. When Carl asks Zora if her father is white, she answers in terms of nationality rather than race replying, “He’s English.” Carl rolls his eyes in response and “seeming to have taken the concept fully on board” moves on to say that he’s never travelled outside of the United States (138). The text

provides no further explanation of either Carl or Zora's distinction between being generically white and being specifically white and English, but both demarcate a difference in whiteness that is English and American. Howard's English whiteness is rendered different than an American whiteness.

It remains important to note that *On Beauty* positions whiteness as a construct that is both as performative and fissured as blackness. Race and class are by turns deployed with and against education and place. When Levi sees Carlene Kipps staring at him as he approaches his house, he accuses her of seeing him as a threat because of his race: "someone thought I was *robbin'* you again [...] looked like she was trying to work out if I was gonna kill her. [...] Black lady" (84). Howard offers a brief protest after the final piece of information, as if to negate Levi's assertion because of Carlene's race, but Levi insists that "any black lady who be white enough to live on Redwood thinks '*zactly* the same way as any old white lady" (85). When Zora sees Mrs. Kipps watching Levi enter their home, she makes the same assumption as her brother, calling out, "he *lives* here – yes, that's right – no crime is taking place" (83). Wondering, "What's *wrong* with these people exactly?" Zora seems to be making an argument in terms of race, accusing Wellingtonians, these people, of not recognizing that black people belong in their neighborhood. Yet, in her conversation with Carl, race is clearly trumped by an authorized belonging to the community. Though she first mistakes Carl for a member of the swim team, once he admits to not being a student she begins to think him a thief, tucking her wallet further into her tote. In the same conversation, Zora finds herself wondering if Carl's questions about her family are part of a plan to burglarize their home, the

disjuncture of Carl's interest in Mozart and his admission that he is not a Wellington student throwing Zora into the "cognitive failure" of which she accuses Carlene Kipps. As in her discussion with Carl when he needs to remind her that travel between Boston and Wellington is easy with a metro card, Zora fails to see the possibility for mobilization and exchange between her community and Carl's.

Despite Zora's shortsightedness, *On Beauty* picks up on *Howards End's* depiction of modernity as a cosmopolitanism inflected with nomadism, with mobility at the novel's very core. Smith sets the novel's university the suburban realm Forster feared overtaking the division between the city and the country. The suburban university offers a unique space, one that can allow for class mobility for those who are granted admission, but that simultaneously reinforces class divisions through its workforce split between academic, administrative, and manual labor, and the often tense relationship between town and gown. *On Beauty's* Wellington, with its proximity to Boston and employment of working-class African-Americans and Haitians as servers and cleaners exemplifies this labor divide. At the same time, though many characters in the novel deride both the town and the university for a monolithic whiteness, many of the faculty members the reader meets are black, as are the two families at the center of the novel. The town and university of Wellington demonstrate the irreducibility of privilege to race or class, as well as possibilities for mobility for this novel's generation of Leonard Basts.

In addition to the racial and geographic complexity *On Beauty* brings to the *Howards End* plot, Smith multiplies and fragments Leonard Bast into a number of characters. Rather than a single clerk on the extreme verge of gentility, Smith

presents a Wellington freshman unprepared for the intellectual rigors of the elite liberal arts university, a black youth from Roxbury who writes rap lyrics and spoken word poetry, and Howard Belsey, nominal heir to the Wilcox-Schlegel home. In doing so, Smith relieves the resulting Leonards of the burden of representation that leads to the death of the original. In addition, Smith takes time to portray the administrative staff at Wellington, the taxi drivers that ferry the Belseys in and out of Boston, street vendors and store clerks.

The narratives of Carl Thomas and Katie Armstrong demonstrate how the university both complicates and fixes class boundaries. Katie is a student of Howard's who finds herself overwhelmed by the academic rigor of Wellington, like Howard himself, attempts to chart a path to class mobility through education. Katie's poor preparation for the realities of academic life at Wellington and her fear of speaking in Howard's class echoes Leonard's difficulties in entering into conversation with the Schlegels about art and culture. Like Katie's parents who sacrifice to send her from her small Midwestern town to the hallowed halls of Wellington, Carl's mother leaves his Wellington-crested paychecks in sight so that visitors see Carl's authorization as a part of the community. At first defining himself as someone who does not belong at the university, Carl's position at Wellington gives him a feeling of cultural capital. While Carl is in Claire's poetry class and later working at the black music library, he feels a sense of middle-class belonging to the university community that translates into a bearing Jerome notices at the spring break party: "[Jerome] registered the pleasant change: this open, friendly demeanour, this almost *Wellingtonian* confidence" (410, emphasis in original). Yet,

when the painting is stolen from Monty's office, the university closes ranks and cuts off the accessibility Carl remarks on when he first sees Zora on campus.

As Carl explains to Zora the ease with which Bostonians can make their way to Wellington: "It ain't far – we're allowed to come into Wellington, you know. Don't need a pass" (140), he hits upon the more local anxieties of *Howards End*, the erasure of the dividing line between the city and the country that comes with the transformation of places like Hilton into suburbs that aren't quite either. The fixation on houses throughout Forster's novel, from the preoccupation with the Schlegels' impending move from their Wickham Place residence, to the national and economic values of Oniton Grange, where Helen brings the Basts for her showdown with Henry, to the ultimate legacy in the novel, the passing of Howards End from Ruth Wilcox to Margaret Schlegel, evidences Forster's anxiety over the growth of London beyond its borders as well as the extension of Englishness into the spaces of empire. Cosmopolitanism in the form of the Schlegels, who can never truly be "English to the backbone" because of their philosophic German father, is not a problem for *Howards End*. However, the idea that families like the Schlegels, who are becoming rootless due to the march of capital and the growth of London, is. The central role of houses serves to show a tangible link between families and their English histories. Though Henry Wilcox's fervent capitalism leads him to buy and sell real estate frequently, for Margaret and Ruth, and for the novel itself, Howards End is "a part of the cultural heritage of England, a work of art in its embodiment of spiritual truth that must be preserved and passed on."^{ccxxxviii}

Using the space of the university and the town that surrounds it, Smith relieves her narrative of some of the burden of national anxiety that weighs so heavily on *Howards End*. Locating the narrative in the space of the university and town of Wellington creates a cultural connection at once antithetical to that of a nation and analogous to its logic. A university creates an imagined community in which students who might never meet feel bound by a sense of belonging to the institution.^{ccxxxix} But unlike a nation, a private New England college draws faculty and staff to its gates to work or study according to knowledge and class rather than geography of birth. Wellington's institutional nature both demands and produces its own culture. In order to cement the sense of belonging, it invents traditions to help students imagine the larger university community.^{ccxli} Yet the time of the university is unlike that of nation-time, which looks perpetually forward and back, the nation's mythos insisting on its infinite future while arguing for its inevitability even before it was created. The time of the university is cyclical, relying on the traditions of the academic calendar, beginning each year with a new class, and ending with commencement. *On Beauty* attends to the yearly rituals of the academic calendar of the university, beginning in late summer as Kiki Belsey impatiently waits for her son to leave for school; the family braces for the first day of classes, and watches the snow cleared away at winter break.^{ccxli} *On Beauty* attends to the yearly rituals of the academic calendar as the novel's major movements fall during registration, Christmas, and the celebrations of spring break. It is one of these yearly Wellingtonian rituals, an effort made by Claire Malcolm to extend the boundaries of the university and the classroom, that brings Carl back into the lives of the Belseys.

Claire's annual outing to the Bus Stop marks a gesture at bridging the town and gown divide in Wellington, taking her students into the community to listen to spoken word poetry.

Levi, Carl, and the Hip-hop Imaginary

In *Howards End*, the titular house at the center of the inheritance controversy is but one of many houses that appears in the novel's fascination with real estate. While the professorial debate, the inheritance conflict, and the subject of classroom discussion focuses on the plastic arts, music plays a vital role in *On Beauty*. Though it is the performance of Mozart's Requiem that brings Carl Thomas into the Belseys' lives, mimicking the concert scene that introduces Leonard Bast to the Schlegels in *Howards End*, the most important form of music in the novel is hip-hop. Responsible for many of the novel's major plot developments, especially for characters Levi and Carl, hip-hop offers mobility between class and race positions, city and suburbs. Hip-hop provides a bridge over which Levi and Carl connect, it leads Levi to his job at the Virgin Megastore, and subsequently to his job with the street vendors, it leads Carl into a Wellington classroom, and provides him a job at the university when he is threatened with expulsion from that classroom. Perhaps most importantly, hip-hop leads Levi to social justice through his appreciation of its art. Levi's interest in Haiti and its people neatly follows the path of appreciation of beauty to the demand for social justice that Scarry sets out in *On Beauty and Being Just*.

The scene of the concert on Boston Common that introduces Carl Thomas to the reader and to the Belseys mirrors the scene in *Howards End* in which

Beethoven's Fifth symphony, termed by Forster's narrator "the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated the ear of man" (26), first brings Leonard Bast into the Schlegels' lives. After Helen accidentally lifts Leonard's umbrella when she abruptly leaves the concert, Leonard Bast and Margaret Schlegel each gain a glimpse into the life of the other. Leonard's concern over Margaret's invitation to follow her home leads her to realize that "this young man had been had in the past—badly, perhaps overwhelmingly—and now most of his energies went in defending himself against the unknown" (31). But while the Beethoven offers a chance at connection, it also demonstrates the schism between Leonard and the sisters. As they walk to the Schlegel house to retrieve Leonard's pilfered umbrella, he attempts a discussion about art that he longs for. Yet, when she offers her thoughts on the opera season, Leonard falls into silence, unsure of how to pronounce the foreign names of the operas with which he is familiar and unable to take the risk of embarrassing himself. Upon meeting the sisters again, Leonard reminds them of the umbrella-stealing the night of the Beethoven performance, a night he has pored over countless times while using Margaret's calling card as a placeholder in his books. Helen and Margaret have no specific memory of the evening, for Beethoven performances and umbrellas come in and out of their lives with a frequency that does not require special attention. The possible connection over the music they have shared is trumped by the vast material differences that shadow the ways in which they experience the concert, and though the scene brings the characters together in order to further the plot, Beethoven becomes an emblem of disparity between the Schlegels and Leonard Bast.

Beyond its use as a plot device to introduce Leonard to the Schlegels, references to Beethoven's Fifth appear throughout *Howards End*, as the piece reverberates as a thematic and structural instrument. The goblin footfall Helen hears in the piece becomes a theme "meaning Fate's blind treading over one's life, [the reference] occurs at three different points in the narrative, which are also crucial moments for Leonard's desperate attempts surfacing from the squalid depths."^{ccxlii} Unlike the Beethoven, which highlights the gulf between Leonard and the Schlegels and foreshadows the former's dismal fate, music in *On Beauty* represents a space of possibility, of connections that can be made, if only briefly, and remade. While the Mozart and Beethoven performances serve the same plot purpose of introducing Carl to Belsey family, Smith's choice of the Requiem underscores the novel's questions about genius and the individual. The Requiem, as Carl later points to Zora, was left unfinished at Mozart's death and finished by Franz Xaver Sussmayr, bolstering Howard's claim that the canon overvalues the idea of individual genius.^{ccxliii}

In Smith's version of the scene, Leonard's innocuous umbrella has been replaced by Carl's Discman, the personal CD player about to be phased out by devices like Levi's Ipod. Unlike the scene at the Schlegels' Wickham place residence in which Leonard's tattered umbrella becomes a source of embarrassment for all involved, Carl and Zora share exactly the same Discman. Instead of the object's cost and condition defining its owner, as with the umbrellas in *Howards End*, the compact disc players reflect Zora and Carl's divergent choices in listening materials. Zora, whose mother laments that she "lives her life through footnotes" (70), arms

herself with a guide to offer her a sanctioned reading of the performance so she knows how to read it properly, while Carl sees the event as an opportunity to learn from another musician, bringing a disc of music he has made and imagining how to sample bits of the *Lacrimosa* and layer beats over and under Mozart's (or perhaps Sussmayr's) notes. Unlike Leonard, who wants to acquire authorized culture in order to "better" himself, Carl does not seek mastery of Mozart or the canon, but merely seeks sources to mine for his own use. Like the postcolonial author who uses the canon to create something new, Carl is constantly on the lookout for extant music that he can incorporate into his new creations.

Though it is Mozart that brings Carl to the Belseys and echoes the Beethoven scene from Forster's novel, hip-hop is the predominant musical force in *On Beauty*.^{ccxliiv} Hip-hop, like the free concert on Boston Common, is democratic. Unlike Forster's Beethoven performance, which requires a ticket and a program, sources of expenditure that worry Leonard to the point where he has difficulty concentrating on the music, the ubiquity of inexpensive sources of hip-hop, including the bootleg CDs Levi ends up selling on the streets, allows anyone access to the music. The medium of hip-hop also underscores the novel's efforts to recognize the uneven and fluid relations between culture, nation, and identity. Though widely imagined as a specifically African-American form of music, hip-hop first emerged in the racially and ethnically mixed Bronx, cobbled together with sounds from Latinos, Caribbeans, and African-Americans, making the form as authentically American as it is authentically hybrid.^{ccxlv}

Though historically rooted in the US and often imagined by its consumers as a specifically African-American form of music, the production of hip-hop is not limited to the US. Rohan Kalyan explores how indigenous peoples at various sites use hip-hop as a method of protest and cultural bridging. Examining emergent forms of hip-hop mobilized as cultural protest in Bolivia and Hawaii, Kalyan positions hip-hop “as a mode of cultural expression that gives resistant form to marginalized existences abjected from dominant society through political and economic exclusion.”^{ccxlvii} She argues that hip-hop can work through Bhabha’s terms of “uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value, often comprised of incommensurable demands and practices produced in the act of social survival” (242).^{ccxlviii} But while for Kalyan hip-hop can easily be emptied of racial significance and applied by any marginalized group to speak in a postcolonial voice, both Paul Gilroy and Houston Baker argue that hip-hop is an inherently black form, assembled from a history of musics from the Black Atlantic. Houston Baker sees the processes of hip-hop themselves as a method of “archiving”: “Black sound (African drums, bebop melodies, James Brown shouts, jazz improves, Ellington riffs, blues innuendos, doo-wop croons, reggae words, calypso rhythms) were gathered into a reservoir of threads that DJs wove into intriguing tapestries of anxiety and influence. The word that comes to mind is hybrid.”^{ccxlviii}

While certainly a hybrid form, hip-hop finds its roots in the Western Hemisphere. Music journalist Toure presents hip-hop as a set of cultural practices that reach beyond appreciation or creation of its music. Its performers and listeners unite into a body politic:

we are a nation with no precise date of origin, no physical land, no single chief. But if you live in the Hip-hop Nation, if you are not merely a fan of the music but a daily imbiber of the culture, if you sprinkle your conversation with phrases like “off the meter” (for something that’s great) or “got me open” (for something that gives an explosive positive emotional release) [...] then you know the Hip-hop Nation is place as real as America on a pre-Columbus atlas.^{ccxlix}

Gesturing toward Columbus evokes a broad legacy of New World colonialism that suggests an inclusion of the Caribbean and Latin America in his formulation of the real Hip-hop Nation. But his use of the term nation and the suggestion of the reality of a place called America in these terms is ambiguously nationalist—either in terms of a manifest destiny that suggests the inevitability of the United States occupying the space—or anti-nationalist—as an irretrievable pre-Columbian ideal. The existence of the hip-hop community and the blackness of hip-hop are indeed referred to with the same certainty and necessary ambiguity. Hip-hop is coded as black music, creating an aegis of racial authenticity that strategically identifies itself and its consumers with an urban, ghettoized black culture, while its blatantly capitalistic aspirations chart a path to the American dream of wealth.

On Beauty offers hip-hop as an art and culture that can address issues of race, class, and geography, while transcending divisions between them. Its coding as authentically black combined with its intercultural roots and malleable enunciation allows its participants to be a part of something both inherently American and overwhelmingly global. Hip-hop creates a form of belonging and exclusion, whereby

speaking the language and knowing the history allows membership into a transnational community of appreciators and performers. Hip-hop mobilizes both Carl and Levi into unfamiliar communities. This cultural traffic works in more than one direction, as it leads Carl from Roxbury to Wellington and its Black Music Library and Levi to a group of Haitians from Roxbury whose crew of street vendors he joins. While Zora complains that Levi's use of slang equals "stealing someone else's grammar" (85), Levi's grammatical style, like his swagger, and the layers of headgear that his family frequently comment upon allow him to reach beyond the "toy town" of Wellington and imagine himself as part of a larger black community, that he reads through a hip-hop lens of the urban. Believing that "black folk were city folk" and seeing black people from the islands and the country as "obstinately historical" in the same way he imagines "farmers, anybody who wove anything and his Latin teacher" (81), Levi imagines the community as a part of a network of the "street," a connection between the nation's urban centers of blackness. Standing in direct opposition to his father who derives no pleasure in the art he consumes, "Levi treasured the urban the same way previous generations worshipped the pastoral" (79). Though his sister mocks his belief that "if you're a Negro you have some kind of mysterious holy communion with sidewalks and corners" (63), Levi's connection to what he envisions as "street" cannot be so easily dismissed. Between his teenage residence in the "toy town" of Wellington and the glorification of the urban in hip-hop, for Levi, blackness, hip-hop, and the urban are intertwined in a matrix of cultural enunciation, in which he participates through listening to, speaking, and dressing hip-hop.

It is Levi's love of hip-hop that brings him to his job at the Virgin Megastore. He imagines Virgin founder Richard Branson as "a graffiti artist, tagging the world. Planes, trains, finance, soft drinks, music, cell phones, vacations, cars, wines, publication, bridal wear – anything with a surface that would take his simple bold logo" (180). Imagining being a titan of global capital as "the kind of thing Levi wanted to do one day" (180), Levi decides to watch the operation from the inside and learn, "Machiavelli style," a conception that demonstrates both Levi's youth and inculcation into hip-hop mythologies of power. Of course, working at a retail giant does not fit Levi's imagination, and despite the fact that his job forces him to wear polyester pants that are decidedly not street, Levi stays and hopes to share with customers his musical understanding, in which "half an hour of a customer's time spent with Levi expressing his enthusiasm would be like listening to Harold Bloom wax lyrical about Falstaff" (182). Though Levi has eschewed the classrooms and books his family has embraced, in his appreciation of hip-hop culture, he shares their desire for imparting and increasing knowledge. With the comparison to Bloom, the reader is reminded that Levi's world of hip-hop shares a great deal with the halls of Wellington.

For Levi, hip-hop leads to social justice as he follows the path Scarry lays out in *On Beauty and Being Just*.^{cd} His appreciation for the art and culture of hip-hop compels him to want to protect it, and his desire to protect, leads him to political awareness and in turn to social activism. Levi's activism takes the social-political debates embarked upon by the Schlegel sisters and their liberal friends from discussion into action. Upon leaving his job at the Megastore, his attention to beauty

in the form of his appreciation of hip-hop leads him to the group of Haitians selling DVDs and handbags on the street:

One of them pressed play on a big boom-box, and summery hip-hop, out of place but welcome on this chill autumn day, blew up into the passing shoppers. Many people tutted; Levi smiled. It was a joint he knew and loved. Slipping effortlessly between the high hat and the drum or whatever machine it is that makes those noises these days, Levi began to nod his head and watch the activity of the men, itself a visual expression of the frantic bass line. (193)

Levi continues his figuration of the street vendors as an expression of hip-hop as he paints their unlicensed sales of bootleg movies and imitation designer handbags into a commandeering of the flows of global capital. Offering their pirated music and movies isn't selling, it's "hustling" in Levi's personal philosophy: "That's *street*. To hustle is to be alive – you dead if you don't know how to hustle. And you ain't a brother if you don't know how to hustle. That's what joins us together – whether we be on Wall Street or on MTV or sitting in a corner with a dime bag. It's a beautiful thing, man" (245). Though the men who work with Levi and rely on their vending jobs as their primary source of income see through Levi's naïve hip-hop imaginary, they play along, enjoying their reflection in Levi's eyes: "Who wouldn't rather be a gangsta than a street-hawker? Who wouldn't rather hustle than sell? Who would choose their own lonely, dank rooms over this Technicolor video, this outdoor community that Levi insisted they were all a part of?" (245).

For Levi, hip-hop becomes a bridge to understanding on a cultural, political, and individual basis. Spending more time with his Haitian coworkers, he becomes enamored of their culture, going so far as to venture for the first time to his school library to find “pretty much the most depressing book he had ever read” on Haiti. (355) Eschewing the academic lives of his brother and sister, Levi is not a reader. Knowing nothing of “history or economics, of philosophy or anthropology [he] had no hard ideological shell to protect him” and Levi finds himself overwhelmed by the history of Haiti, the violence of empire and corruption, finding within himself a desire to “demand that somebody do *something* about this wretched, blood-stained little island a mere hour’s boat trip from Florida” (355). His awareness of suffering leads him to visit Choo, in hopes of approximating the calls he’d seen his mother make to those in need. The visit at Choo’s barren apartment becomes perhaps the most effective site of cultural exchange in the novel. The awkwardness of the visit falls away as the two of them listen to Public Enemy’s *Fear of a Black Planet* and Choo recalls the first time he heard the groundbreaking album and the effects it had on him: “‘*Then we knew,*’ he said eagerly, bending his bony fingers back on the floor. ‘That’s when we knew, we understood! *We were not the only ghetto*. I was only thirteen but suddenly I understood: America has ghettos! And Haiti is the ghetto of America” (360). After a series of failed attempts to connect with Choo, the two bond over a shared love of a seminal rap album and the representation of American culture it provides. This moment of connection, perhaps more explicitly demonstrated than any in *Howards End*, pushes Levi further in his reach toward social justice, as he begins to circulate flyers and march with the Haitian protesters

in Wellington. While the Condition of England novels of Forster and Dickens worked (perhaps to varying degrees) to expose the difficulties of enacting class mobility, Smith's Condition of Postcoloniality novel shows how attention to art can lead to action. *On Beauty* asks the reader to see what happens after the unseen is made visible, and the role that art, here in the form of hip-hop, can play in the path to social justice.

Carl's hip-hop fueled journey mirrors Levi's in many ways. An authentic Roxbury address, combined with a history of troubles in school and a verbal artistry in both his lyrics and performance, Carl embodies Levi's notion of street. Carl also demonstrates that Levi's urban drag is not the only sort of boundary crossing between Wellington and Roxbury, as Carl crosses the river to perform at the Bus Stop and in time becomes both a student and employee at the university. Carl meets the Belsey family at the Mozart performance, brought there by a desire to seek out new forms of music to blend behind the lyrics he writes. His rap lyrics, which he alternatively refers to as spoken word poetry, bring him to the Bus Stop, where his stellar performance thrills the audience of Wellington students and earns Carl a spot in Claire's poetry workshop. Though both Carl and Levi figure the town and the university as a place of monolithic whiteness, the ease with which the two can move around the campus as nonstudents demonstrates just the opposite. When Zora sees Carl swimming at the campus pool, she naturally assumes he is a part of the university community, asking if he is a member of the swim team. When Howard believes Carl's face to be a familiar one, his first thought is that Carl must be a student. While in the context of the university, both Levi and Carl are imagined as

insiders without regard to their race. However, when not imagined as affiliated with the university or the Belsey family, Carl's race takes primacy and bestows him with outsider status. When he appears at the Belsey house for the anniversary party in workout clothes, Howard turns him away. Later in the novel, when employed at the library, Carl must translate the labor of the academy into the world outside Wellington's gates. His friends depict Carl's job as a version of Levi's hustle: "Getting paid to listen to music! [...] Everybody kept telling him what a great gig he had, getting paid for doing nothing" (373). However, Carl does not his new job figured in terms of street cache. Proud of his academic position at the library and in his contributions to the collection, Carl seeks official approval. He reads and rereads the welcome letter from the Black Studies department head Erskine Jegede, much in the way that Chanu had framed all of his certificates and correspondence in *Brick Lane*.

His introduction at the concert and the university debate over his future position Carl as the novel's most obvious version of Leonard Bast, but Carl Thomas and Leonard Bast have little in common beyond plot points and an unfashionable address. While Leonard fears speaking to Margaret about his cultural experiences for fear he will mispronounce foreign names, Carl relishes the opportunity to share his thoughts on Mozart with Zora. Rather than being stymied by the grandeur of the canon and the impossibility of self-edification, Carl sees opportunities to improve his own art. Despite his initial protestations that he does not resemble a Wellington student and the belief that "classrooms weren't for Carl," the university's conference of value on his hip-hop knowledge, first through Claire's poetry course and then with his position as archivist at the Black music library, allows Carl to see the

possibilities of identification with the university community. Through the imprimatur of Erskine's official welcome letter that names him "a part of the effort to 'make a public record of our shared aural culture for future generations'" (373), Carl begins to relish the kind of validation offered in an academic setting. As Claire pushes his spoken word poetry into more traditionally authorized forms, asking him to write a sonnet metered in syllables rather than beats, Carl feels both a pride in his work and a desire to conform to academic standards. No longer content with scribbled penciled versions of his lyrics, Carl decides to seek out a computer on which to type his rhymes.

While the university is figured by many of the novel's characters as an institution that promotes and values whiteness, it is Carl's skill as a hip-hop artist and his knowledge of black music that allow him access first to Claire's classroom and later to his job at the Black Music library. Katie and Howard, the novel's other iterations of Leonard Bast, enter the university structure on more traditional terms—as students of canonical art—and in many ways find a more difficult transition. Certainly Katie, who cannot understand the lectures or bring herself to speak in class despite her overwhelming success in high school, scores of extracurricular activities, and hours of study, finds acceptance at Wellington more difficult than Carl did. She seeks help from Howard Belsey, who was once in a similar position to Katie, but despite his role as a Belsey/Schlegel, Howard takes a Wilcoxian stance when it comes to helping students. In Howard's classroom, the condition of the university does not leave room for students like Katie.

Howard and the University's Trusteeship of Beauty

Through the novel's many Leonard Basts, Smith considers the condition of the university both as a site of possibility and a site of exclusion. Howard Belsey and Katie Armstrong, Wellingtonians of similar working-class upbringings, again underscore the complexities of race and class on local, national, and global scales. Though he has transported himself far from his roots as a butcher's son in North London, Howard Belsey—through his name and the position of his birth—stands alongside Carl as one of *On Beauty's* heirs to Leonard Bast. Having grown up in the North London that houses Howards End, Howard fled the area and his working-class roots through Oxford and a doctorate in art history. But while Leonard Bast sees the canon of Western art as a place of possibility, believing that if he studies enough he might be able to imbue himself with the culture that will keep him from falling into the abyss, Howard takes a different tack, seeking to dismantle the canon from within. By the time the action of the novel begins, Howard has already mobilized himself from the streets of Willesden through the halls of Oxford, firmly entering the middle class through his position as an art professor and their residence in his wife's Wellington ancestral home. Unlike Carl, Howard seems to have realized at an early age that classrooms indeed were for him, as he used the university, both as student and faculty member, to chart his path away from position on the extreme edge of gentility. Once ensconced in his role as a faculty member, however, Howard reinforces the exclusionary power structures the university gives him access to. Through Katie's experiences in Howard's class, we see Smith consider the condition of the university in the hands of Howard.

As an art professor, Howard Belsey acts as a gatekeeper in the university's trusteeship of beauty.^{ccli} Scarry argues that the university has banished discussion of beauty from the humanities with a series of political complaints, insisting that recent disciplinary focus on the political has left little room for aesthetic consideration.^{cclii} Certainly Howard Belsey's academic work has followed this trajectory; in Elaine Scarry's terms, Howard Belsey has been wrong about beauty. Howard makes a concerted effort to distance himself from beauty in his personal and professional lives. He sees no place for it in his research, seeming to deny its very existence. Howard's unfinished book, *Against Rembrandt*, fictionalizes Scarry's account, as it works to strip away the layers of cultural accretions that transform the Renaissance painter into a celebrated figure of genius. Seeing no value in the aesthetic pleasure to be gained from Rembrandt's paintings and eager to prove his arguments about canonical privilege, Howard reduces Rembrandt to a stenographer of economic power, insisting that the Dutchman painted as he was instructed by the city's wealthy. Howard sees no beauty in the works he teaches and writes about, just depictions of power.

While Howard could chart a clear path from Willesden through Oxford to the academic circle of Wellington, Leonard Bast does not have such access. For Leonard, who believes that he can approximate the existence of gentility by learning and understanding enough of its art, spends evenings with books and his spare funds on concert tickets in hopes that his life of the mind will somehow transform him out of his tiny rented room and clerkship. Reading Ruskin, Leonard pauses and asks himself, "Was there anything to be learned from this fine sentence? Could he adapt it

to the needs of daily life? Could he introduce it, with modifications, when he wrote a letter to his brother, the lay reader?" (42). However, as he tries to fit a description of his flat into Ruskin's style, he deems it a failure, finding that the "spirit of English Prose" can only be written in a "voice of one who had never been dirty or hungry, and had not guessed successfully what dirt and hunger are" (42). Howard echoes a similar sentiment years later, as he studies a reproduction of Rembrandt's *The Staalmeesters* in a classroom, as a working-class boy with torn clothes, not far removed from Leonard Bast. Though he does not see the mechanism by which change will come to his life, Leonard Bast has full faith in art, believing that "if he kept on with Ruskin, and the Queen's Hall concerts, and some pictures by Watts, he would one day push his head out of the gray waters and see the universe" (43). But as he walks from the Beethoven concert with Margaret, he realizes that with an hour at lunch and a few hours in the evening, he will never find enough time to acquire culture with the same fluidity as the leisured classes (34).

Like Leonard Bast before him, Howard Belsey works to crack the codes of the canon to keep himself from the abyss. While Leonard feels that listening to the voice of the canon is being "done good to" (42), Howard bases his career on mastering and then dismantling Enlightenment notions of genius. As Howard prepares the gallery talk meant to save his career, he comes upon Rembrandt's *The Staalmeesters*, around which the novel offers the most complete explanation of Howard's reading of the value of art. As he examines an image of the painting on a website, he considers his history with that particular work, which he first encountered not in his current academic incarnation, but as a working-class boy from North London. The

painting itself converges on the question of standards of commerce and art. *The Staalmeesters*, more properly known as *The Sampling Officials of the Drapers' Guild*, depicts a group of six powerful Dutchmen, appointed to judge the consistencies in Amsterdam's cloth-production. By definition, their task is to produce homogeneity, to reinforce standards. Howard rehearses for the reader the established readings of the painting that insist the men are staring in judgment of the viewer, a textual tribunal awaiting the gazer's response: "This is the moment of cogitation as shown of the problem at hand. This is what *judgment* looks like," and then he dismisses it in place of his standard argument: "iconoclastic Howard rejects all these famous assumptions" as "nonsense and sentimental tradition" (383). He rejects any suppositions as to what might exist outside the text and deems the idea that the painting depicts a specific temporal moment "an anachronistic, photographic fallacy" (384).

As he breaks down the accumulated arguments about the work, Howard comes to his own bugbears of faith and class, noting the religious tone that hangs on the idea of judgment and finally claiming that "the painting is an exercise in the depiction of economic power," featuring six men who have paid Rembrandt to portray their wealth and status, and an artist who has rendered his services (384). Howard will not consider the aesthetic qualities of the work, seeing the value attributed the *Staalmeesters* merely a transfer of power from the men depicted in the painting to the glorification of a Renaissance master. Barbara Herrnstein Smith claims that a person's interaction with any entity of value is always a function of personal economy, art is always experienced first and foremost by an individual

through the lens of personal experience. While personal valuations may be sublated into canonical (or counter-canonical) readings, valuation is always personal. As surely as Howard has determined that he will not accept the judgment of these men, nor that of those who have written about them, he recalls his inability to stare back at the men in the painting when he first viewed it in a classroom: "On that day, forty-three years ago, he was an uncultured, fiercely bright, dirty-kneed, enraged, beautiful, inspired, bloody-minded schoolboy who came from nowhere and nothing and yet was determined not to stay that way – that was the Howard Belsey whom the Staalmeesters saw and judged that day" (385). Though he has argued the inability of the Staalmeesters to judge for so long that he has forgotten his original sources of research, Howard cannot shake that schoolboy who could not meet the six men's eyes.

The distance Howard assumes from the art he teaches coupled with his dissenter's stance earns him a small but loyal following of students at Wellington. Victoria Kipps tells him that his class is a "cult classic" amongst the Wellington students. In their conversation in London, she shares with him the student body's shorthand for each professor's course: one class is "the tomato's nature versus the tomato's nurture," another asks the students to "uncover the tomato's suppressed Herstory"; the class offered by the university's postcolonialist becomes "the post-colonial tomato as eaten by Naipaul," and so on (312). Victoria and Howard's other followers treasure the way that Howard's class is "all about never ever saying *I like the tomato*" (312). Victoria channels Howard's thesis as she explains, "it's properly intellectual. The tomato is just totally revealed as this phoney construction that can't

lead you to some higher truth [...] they're just these pretty pointless tomatoes that people, for totally selfish reasons of their own, have attached cultural – I should say *nutritional* – weight to” (312). Victoria approximates Howard’s equation of aesthetic distance and disinterest with academic rigor. Thusly, Howard (and Victoria) can participate in what Arjun Appadurai calls “value free research,” imagining themselves separate from the larger canon-forming university apparatus.^{ccliii} Yet in parroting Howard’s methodology, Victoria does not see that she has precluded herself from finding the answers to the question she then highlights: “what’s so beautiful about this tomato?” (312). Once Howard has deconstructed beauty, he leaves nothing in its wake. Victoria does not offer a thesis for Howard’s class, but if she did it could be summed up as follows: Its thesis would be: “Tomatoes are nothing special. Everyone who has claimed them to be special merely uses tomatoes to forward their own agendas.”

Though Howard sighs when Victoria tells him about tomatoes, Howard’s imagination of his students is as reductive as theirs of their classes. During the first week of the year, Wellington offers a “shopping” period, where students can attend a lecture before selecting their courses. Howard concludes that few students will take his class believing that

by next Tuesday these kids would have already sifted through the academic wares on display [...] and performed comparative assessment in their own minds, drawing on multiple variables including the relative academic fame of the professor; his intellectual kudos; the uses of his class; whether his class really meant anything to

their permanent records or their grad school potential; the likelihood of the professor in question having any real-world power that might translate into an actual capacity to write that letter which would effectively place them – three years from now – on an internship at the *New Yorker* or in the Pentagon or in Clinton’s Harlem offices or at French *Vogue* – and that all this private research, all this *Googling*, would lead them rightly to conclude that taking a class on ‘Constructions of the Human’ [...] which was taught by a human being himself over the hill, in a bad jacket, with eighties hair, who was under-published, politically marginal and badly situated at the top of a building without proper heating and no elevator, was not in their best interests. There’s a reason it’s called shopping. (142)

Howard reads the students as he does *The Staalmeesters*; insisting on seeing a simple display of power. He believes that a majority will not judge him powerful enough to further their career goals, and thus will not register for his class. Though teachers of all stripes will recognize a certain American attitude toward the purchase of an education in Howard’s formulation, his reading of all student choices as transactional displays a degree of cynicism not borne out by the actual students the novel presents. What Howard does not consider for a moment is the fact of Katie Armstrong, a hardworking, underprepared student from the Midwest.

Among the many fragments of Leonard Bast’s legacy is Katie Armstrong, a Wellington freshman in Howard’s class. Katie’s experience at Wellington demonstrates a type of inaccessibility of the university. Though Katie has won an

academic scholarship to Wellington, and participates in a multitude of student activities, she finds herself unable even to follow the discussion in Howard's seminar. Katie's story is but a brief interlude in the larger plot of *On Beauty*, but she serves as yet another foil to the equation of accessibility with race. What Carl and others refer to as the whiteness of Wellington proves to be as much of a wall for Katie as it does for Carl. Despite her official access to the university as a student, she remains as much an outsider as Leonard Bast. Like Leonard, she spends her evenings poring over the canon trying to learn its language, but when presented with the opportunity to do so in class discussion, she shuts herself out because she fears that she will mispronounce terms that remain foreign to her. Unlike Zora Belsey whom Howard's graduate student terms "a text eating *machine*" who "strips the area of sentiment and goes to *work*" (144), Katie approaches the art for Howard's class *with* sentiment while she goes to work. As she assiduously studies the assigned texts, Katie carefully notes the ways in which Rembrandt uses color, movement, and allusion. Katie proves herself to be a strong reader not by stripping the artworks of their sentiment, but in recognizing how that sentiment works. She notes that she "adores the earthy colours" of *Jacob Wrestling the Angel*, after which she reads the import of the battle being depicted as "really for man's earthly soul, for his human faith in the world" (250). Similarly, Katie can see her own body in the dramatically different body of the woman in the etching, as if Rembrandt were speaking to her and all women (251). Katie's universalism—seeing all female bodies in Rembrandt's etching—and her particularism—seeing the colors of her Midwestern home in the earthy tones of the angel's wings—could make for a

productive pairing. Her willingness to work and her love of the art itself suggest the ideal qualities that could lead to success at Wellington.

But there is no room for Katie's identifications in Howard's class. Howard's efforts to dismantle the layers of power that comprise the canon suggest a goal of equality before art, allowing the individual to approach art free of the baggage of authorized value. However, rather than obliterating the power of canonical authorization, Howard takes the reins of power to distance himself from art he studies and the people he encounters. When Katie lingers after class in hopes of getting Howard's attention, he anticipates her desire for "pastoral care" and turns all of his attention to fastening his bag. What Howard refuses, in his class and after, is what Carl identifies the purpose of the university to be—an exchange of ideas and a place to connect. As Howard refuses the possibility of a Forsterian connection, he falls victim to the warning Scarry offers that "A university is among the precious things that can be destroyed."^{ccliv} Howard's attempts to divide theory and practice into mutually exclusive worlds and to explain beauty away as merely symptomatic of discursive structures proves the biggest danger to himself and the community. Ignoring Spivak's directive that "the task of the educator is to learn from below,"^{cclv} Howard creates as much distance between himself and his students as possible. Reducing the work of art to merely a function of power, Howard then uses the artworks he teaches to reify his power in the classroom and in the university. If Howard has any inkling of the irony of his classroom behavior, he does not divulge it to the reader.

Similarly, Howard seems to fail to see the irony in his description of his students during shopping week. As with his relationship to art, Howard claims to see only the workings of power and commerce in his students' scheduling decisions; however, his description of himself through the gaze of the undergraduates belies his concern with aesthetics. Though he positions most of the students choice as transactional—they want only a professor with the cache to provide them a letter of recommendation or a course that fulfills a requirement—at one point he retreats from his argument about a sort of economic value to that of aesthetic value, figuring his attractiveness and style as part of the equation: “human being himself over the hill, in a bad jacket, with eighties hair” (142). I believe Howard's subtle shift from cultural and economic valuation—the possible worth of his recommendation to a potential student—to personal aesthetic valuation—his academic power being conflated with a physical devaluation of his desire-producing abilities—demonstrates a connection between the personal and the aesthetic that Howard works to deny outwardly. Howard claims that his affair stems from seeking and responding to beauty, which he codes as specifically male. However, I believe that the roots of Howard's decision to stray lie here, as he sees himself reflected in the gaze of his students. Rather than maintaining his role as educator, Howard buys into his students' perceptions of shopping for their classes and professors, and he becomes depressed to find that he is not a popular product.

Marriage, Desire, and Beauty

On Beauty begins, as *Howards End* does, with a thwarted engagement.

Mirroring the letters from Helen Schlegel to her sister that open *Howards End*, the novel opens with a series of emails from Jerome Belsey to his father, detailing his summer internship with Howard's rival Monty Kipps, his infatuation with the Kipps family, and ultimately, his plans to marry Victoria Kipps. Like Helen before him, Jerome has fallen in love with this family that is so utterly unlike his own, and like Helen, he has channeled that familial infatuation into a desire to marry into the family. However, while the problems engendered by Helen's failed engagement are purely private. Once her engagement is called off, her embarrassment is entirely her own. Jerome's marriage proposal represents a private intrusion into a public battle. At the same time, the Belsey family is preparing to celebrate Howard and Kiki's thirtieth wedding anniversary. As many of their guests know, and the remaining will soon find out, the future of the union is in jeopardy due to Howard's adultery. As Howard prepares the speech he will deliver at the party he considers three audiences—his wife, those who know about the affair, and those who do not. This moment demonstrates the inseparability of the private and public of their relationship. Rather than presenting marriage and the domestic as a space removed from the public sphere, the speech and the way in which the Belseys' union becomes a part of the university community recodes the site of marriage as a possible union of the public and private—in yet another move to erode the novelistic division between the two.

As with Katie's and Howard's reactions to the painting, the personal comes to bear on aesthetics in *On Beauty's* final scene. Howard leaves the protected space of

the university to present his Rembrandt lecture at the public space of art gallery in the Boston. The summer of occupying the domestic space without his wife—acting as the domestic manager and coming to know the rhythms of the household—has changed Howard. He is now willing to embrace the technologies of cell phones and power point presentations, and to drive himself into the city while animatedly singing along to the Mozart he complained about in the novel's early outing.

Throughout the novel, each example of the pairing personal and aesthetics has been a binary relationship of the person and art, or the pedagogical experience of lecturing. In the last scene, however, the painting of Rembrandt's wife, made accessible at the gallery, is, fundamentally and particularly, meant to be shared. The painting triangulates the university community, the commercial public art world, and the marriage of Kiki and Howard. Rather than the competition between academics or students in the classroom, this final tableau is about shared art, shared space, and shared lives, suggesting the possibility of a Forsterian connection between the estranged couple, even though it is not necessarily one that would end in a reconciled marriage. I argue that the healing process Howard and Kiki engage in while they seek to decide between repairing and abandoning their marriage opens yet another set of possibilities in Smith's novel, as structures of desire are coded in terms of race, class, and nation, but ultimately cannot be reduced to them. After the arguments the novel presents about class, race, nation, and gender, and after Howard and Kiki have traced out the damage done by his affairs, there are two remainders that the novel will not code into the power dynamics of identity and

economic. These two remainders, love and beauty, lead Kiki and Howard to an affective nostalgia toward each other.

Forster's novel ends with what seems to be a decisiveness about the future of England. Henry, having been broken of his destructive imperialist spirit, connects with Helen, and the two have struck a tentative friendship as they watch her illegitimate son grow at Howards End. The house, now rightfully possessed by Margaret and Margaret rightfully possessed of the knowledge of her inheritance, hold the Schlegels' past in the form of their furniture, and their future in the person of Helen's son. Though the Wilcoxes will come in and out of his life, the child will grow in the practically and thoughtfully arranged home of Margaret and Helen, and as he grows into the home, they will give away the majority of their capital, leaving the house to him.^{cclvi} The last lines leave the reader with a sense of promise—Helen's boy playing with young Tom, and the coming crop of hay greater than all of those before. But everything that has come before suggests that the connection Margaret has somehow forged between her husband and her sister cannot hold. The death of the child's father reminds the reader that there is no place for him at Howards End, and Jacky, who has again been victimized by adultery, does not make another appearance in the text. Parrinder argues that the novel "concludes with a fragile and rather mawkish attempt to turn back imperial development thanks to the recovery of an England capable of restoring life of the body and holding the suburbs at bay."^{cclvii} Despite the breadth of Smith's novel, her ending looks not to the future of any nation or field of study. *On Beauty* ends with what appears to be an

entirely private moment in an entirely public place, with a connection in which two individuals cannot be reduced to representatives of race or class.

Though the plot of *Howards End* turns on an unexpected marriage and two unexpected affairs, the novel presents sexual desire as manifestation of or reaction to societal norms. Though many of the couplings may surprise the reader, each can be read as inevitable, attributed to events external to the subject. Margaret marries Henry because he presents an opportunity for marriage she does not otherwise have. Their connection serves a need, but there is no evidence of desire between them. Even Henry's proposal and Margaret's acceptance do not warrant a kiss. Conversely, neither the narrator nor Helen offer reasons for her transgression beyond the excitement of the events at Oniton and Helen's pity for Leonard and his situation. Leonard's commitment to Jacky is presented as pure responsibility. If he ever had feelings toward her other than obligation, the reader does not see them. Similarly, Helen's dalliance with Paul Wilcox is attributed to her falling in love with an entire family and his realization that her willingness might provide him with the only opportunity to kiss a (white English) woman before leaving for Nigeria. Henry positions his liaison with Jacky as an inevitable response to the isolation of his post in Cyprus, insisting that as the dictates of empire force eligible young Englishmen outside the realms of polite society in which they could find mates through proper channels, women like Jacky provide them necessary companionship. As Leonard's clerkship becomes collateral damage in Henry's speculations, Jacky's marriage possibilities do as well.

While adultery forces the climax of *Howards End*, *On Beauty* begins with Howard and Kiki working to heal their marriage after Howard has strayed, preparing to host a party for their thirtieth wedding anniversary. It is during the party and on this date that Kiki discovers that the truth she has been told about Howard's affair has been fictionalized, and that rather than a nameless one-night stand, he had transgressed repeatedly with family friend Claire Malcolm. The date of September 11th, then, becomes overdetermined both personally and politically, marking a union of political and personal in which the rupture of the national consciousness and the rupture of their marriage converge on the same date. Holding the anniversary party on September 11th is argued by some guests as a measure of convenience, "it is a Saturday" and "later in the semester everyone is so busy" and also of logic, "it *is* their actual anniversary." There are mentions from the Belseys and their partygoers about "reclaiming the day" and similar platitudes. Choosing September 11th for the date of the anniversary and the date of the party underscores the particularly American location of the novel and of the Belsey marriage. Second, it puts their marriage into a kind of recent American narrative in which everything is divided into a pre- and a post-, reflected in Kiki's sensitivity toward anti-American sentiment in the years since the attacks "after a lifetime of bad-mouthing her own country" (92). As the nation endures a healing process after its security is violently ruptured, Kiki undertakes a similar process with her marriage.

Kiki's complaint over Howard's affair reaches beyond his betrayal of marital trust to make two specific aesthetic arguments. When Howard offers his feeble defense that his indiscretion is less egregious than those committed by his

colleagues who have liaisons with their students, Kiki counters with the claim that his affair is worse because of the aesthetic symbolism his choice of Claire represents. As Kiki objects to Howard's affair on a basis of personal aesthetics that begins with a political argument—his choice of Claire Malcolm, white, freckled, and tiny—"you married a big black bitch and you run off with a fucking leprechaun" (206). Her son Levi evidences similar feelings when he sees Claire at the Bus Stop and considers his father's indiscretions with her. After weighing his own experiences with the difference between sex and love, feeling both sympathy for his mother and a understanding of his father's desire, Levi makes an aesthetic choice: "looking at Claire Malcolm now, he found himself confused. It was yet another example of his father's bizarre tastes. Where was the booty on that. Where was the rack? He felt the unfairness and the illogic of the substitution" (219-20). For both Levi and Kiki, not only has Howard been wrong about beauty, he has wronged beauty of a certain racialized type, choosing as a physical partner everything that Kiki is not. Both her size, noted in her lack of curves, and her fairness, stand in opposition to Kiki's actual person and Levi's aesthetic preferences. Intertwined with the personal pain of betrayal, Kiki, who is acutely aware of the way she is perceived in the predominantly white community of Wellington, feels that her beauty and value as a black woman has been betrayed. By choosing Claire, Howard has mired Kiki deeper into Wellington's sea of white that she entered into in order to support Howard and his career.

Yet though *On Beauty* focuses often on the always already raced and classed lived bodies of its characters, as with its treatment of art and music, it presents

some bodies whose beauty cannot be reduced to arguments over the dynamics of social and economic power. In these cases, for example Kiki's lovely face, Carl's handsomeness, and Victoria's stunning good looks, beauty is powerful in and of itself. Scarry reminds that the contemporary figuration in which the perceiver appropriates the beautiful with his or her gaze, robbing the beautiful of its power, contradicts centuries of stories of the beholder being captivated by the beautiful.^{cclviii} When Zora and Victoria first see each other in the Belseys foyer, they undergo a momentary contest of attractiveness that has nothing to do with the ways in which their bodies are always already raced and classed. For the moment, they are two teenage girls determining who will be more powerful due to physical beauty. With one "searing glimpse," of Victoria, there is "instantaneous recognition (on both sides) of her physical superiority" (112). Victoria's beauty, apparent to everyone she meets, stands as a force of power that rests outside of ideology. Jerome suggests that the power of her beauty is so great she has not learned how to handle it.

But lest power be tilted to far in the direction of the beautiful, especially when that beautiful comes in the form of women's bodies, the novel details the difficulties of the lived female body. Zora's dedication to her academic career does not spare her the need to conform to specific standards of beauty. As she tries to remake herself anew for the school year she includes daily exercise in the form of a swim, the pool being the appropriate place for "misshapen people floating around, hoping," looking up at those fit enough for the gym running on treadmills behind glass (130). The young women in Claire's class order salads and fish without rice for their meals, desiring slenderness over nourishment. Kiki sees her daughter's

discomfort in her own skin and recognizes it immediately as the default position for women, “she knew she wouldn’t be able to protect [her daughter] from self-disgust,” despite having tried banning women’s magazines, lipstick, and taking other precautionary measures (197).

Though Kiki had worked to keep her daughter from drowning in self-doubt about her body, Kiki herself is constantly aware of her appearance as a fat, middle-aged, black woman in Wellington. She considers how her “enormous spellbinding bosom” enters conversations along with her: “the size was sexual and at the same time more than sexual: sex was only one small element of its symbolic range. If she were white, maybe it would only refer to sex, but she was not. And so her chest gave off a mass of signals beyond her direct control: sassy, sisterly, predatory, motherly, threatening, comforting” (47). Kiki notes that these signals by her age and size, after gaining weight in her forties her body “directed her to a new personality” with new sets of expectations, possibilities, and limitations. It is a reference to this fleshiness, Kiki’s fat that does not keep her from being lovely, that provides the last image of beauty in the novel. In her appearance at Howard’s final lecture, however, the cultural baggage of the public imagination of a large black woman are overlaid by the fleshiness of white Renaissance beauty and the personal desire Howard feels for her.

As Howard tires to present the lecture that may well serve as the final judgment on his value and future as an art historian and professor, he finds himself unable to rehearse the readings of paintings he has offered for years. Unmoored from the space of the university and the unity of his family, he flies through the

slides that have formed the body of his career without being able to say a word. Finally, after progressing past the self-portraits that formed the basis of his battle with Monty Kipps, Howard comes to a portrait of the artist's wife, titled *Hendrickje Bathing*. As the fleshiness of the woman fills the wall, Howard spots Kiki in the audience. Echoing his confrontation with *The Staalmeesters* in his office, Howard locks into a triangulated gaze with his wife and the painting, but this time he neither rehearses the text's authorized readings nor his own disruption of them. As conclusion, the moment Howard and Kiki share excludes the other people in the room, but somehow includes the bathing woman projected onto the wall. After offering Howard a kind look Kiki, like *Hendrickje*, looks away. I argue that this tableau, offering an ambivalent gesture toward marriage, even a failed marriage, as a site of possibility, evinces the affective nostalgia May suggests as a part of his vision of extravagant postcolonialism. May argues that though Bhabha and Spivak both code nostalgia as a problem because of the gloss it gives to the nation and its history, he argues that nostalgia can be "de-coded as exploitive and re-coded as non-exploitive, as indeed a distinct mode of ethical intuition and action."^{cclix}

Ending the novel with an ambivalent intimation toward union through marriage gestures at once toward the personal and the conservative; however, I would argue that in this case, the suggestion of the novel's ending is really quite radical in its traditionalism. In her essay, "Beyond Marriage: The Couple," Anna Parvulescu traces a history of the use of the term marriage with various iterations of feminist thought coupled with other intellectual projects. Beginning with Sara Suleri's formulation of the "coupling of feminism and postcolonialism" as "the

marriage of two margins,” Parvulescu notes the series of marriage metaphors in discussions of feminism’s alliances.^{cclx} She argues that “the marriage metaphor has by now reached this point of invisible solidification such that whether it appears between quotation marks or not, we simply do not *see* the word marriage and its ideological baggage when used to stand for relation in general. Marriage becomes synonymous with relation” (4). The institution of marriage is both fundamentally private and specifically public, as a legally sanctioned and legally limited institution of the state.^{cclxi} As the culturally- and state-sanctioned route to reproducing the nation both in the form of the household and in the issuance of children, marriage is fundamentally public.

Unlike *Brick Lane*, which responds to the traditional marriage plot by removing it from the narrative, *On Beauty* uses the marriage as a site of possibility of Forsterian connection. Though *Brick Lane* works to expand the role of the domestic woman and the parameters of domestic space, it does not extend its rewriting of gender roles to the men in the novel. As I discuss at the end of my first chapter, in order for the women to recode the domestic space in which they live and work, the novel removes the men from that space in order to recreate the domestic heroine. Though the dividing lines between public and private are eroded, the gendering of the space does not change. *On Beauty* reverses this formula, and with the revelation of Howard’s second affair, Kiki finds her own apartment, leaving Howard to take full time ownership of the domestic duties he played at while preparing for their anniversary party. Though at first overwhelmed by the complexities of running the household, before long he becomes attuned to the house and its rhythms that he had

long ignored:

he knew the corner of the garden that attracted ladybugs and how many times a day Murdoch needed to relieve himself; he had identified precisely the tree in which the bastard squirrel lived and had considered cutting it down. He knew what sound the pool made when the filter needed changing, or when the air conditioning unit needed a thump on its side to quieten it down. He knew, without looking, which of his children was passing through a room – from their intimate noises, their treads. (435)

I believe that it is Howard's time in and care of the domestic that leads to his change in character in the final scene and that opens the possibility of connection between Howard and his wife.

Howard has come to settle the space of the private, understanding his family as a household manager, like Pamela and Nazneen. Though he complains of Kiki's absence, her new friends, and rehearses what sound like reactionary arguments about the money she is spending as a single woman, his rhetoric is belied by his attempts to reach out toward his children, to keep up with the apple tree in the yard, and to honor his absent wife by lavishing attention on her dog. While previously hiding in his study between trips to his classroom and his study carrel, then relegated to sleeping on the couch after the details of his first affair were revealed at the anniversary party, after Kiki's departure Howard truly comes to inhabit the house. No longer just a symbol of his achievement of class mobility, the Wellingtonian house receives Howard's care and understanding as he works fill the

domestic roles Kiki had taken on. Yet, importantly, the novel does not end with Howard in the house. Nor does it end with the family reunited—Zora is running off to work, Jerome returning to school, and all of the children remind Howard that they have contact with Kiki while he is not permitted knowledge of her new address. Nor does anything about their final moment, triangulated by the painting of Rembrandt's wife, offer any hint that the marriage will be repaired.

Instead, *On Beauty* ends with a moment more ambivalent than the final conversation between Nazneen and Chanu, in which she claims that they might visit Dhaka, but leaves her reader unconvinced. As with Rushdie's London, time of past and present, public and private collapse into one moment, and the reader is left with only ambivalence and possibility. The ending of *On Beauty* does not echo *Howards End's* trite proclamation about the coming crop of hay that pretends to look forward to the harvest, but does so in hopes of holding off the march of modernity against an English agrarian past. Nor, though it looks both forward and back, does it sound like Friday's call of mourning flooding the globe, a final speech act to end the novel. Though there is a gesture toward the possibilities held within the institution of marriage and the union of the public and the private in the realm of art, or in this case in the realm of the novel, Howard and Kiki leave the reader with a public-private moment in the present that reaches into both their history together through affective nostalgia and their future, even if that future is spent apart, as Rembrandt's painting offers his vision of Hendrickje bathing: "Though her hands were imprecise blurs, paint heaped on paint and roiled with the brush, the rest of her skin had been expertly rendered in all its variety -- chalky whites and lively pinks, the underlying

blue of her veins and the ever present human hint of yellow, intimation of what is to come" (443).

^{ccxix} Frederic Jameson. *Modernism, Imperialism, Nationalism*. Ed. Seamus Deane. 44

^{ccxx} Jameson, 50-1.

^{ccxxi} Jameson, 52-3.

^{ccxxii} Hegglund, 426.

^{ccxxiii} Patrick Parrinder. *Nation & Novel: the English Novel from its Origins to the Present Day*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 300.

^{ccxxiv} Bahri traces the separation of the US from a dynamic of European colonizer and Third World colonized back to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back* (Bahri 45-50), arguing that the seminal work names the boundaries for postcolonial studies. While Ashcroft et al do figure the US in their initial taxonomy as a settler nation alongside Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, they ultimately place the settler colonies outside standard postcolonial inquiry (131-44). Paul Gilroy's work brings the US into the picture in his figuration of the Black Atlantic, but despite the popularity of his work and terms, the US is at best only occasionally included

^{ccxxv} Smith notes that she has "borrowed a title, a chapter heading, and a good deal of inspiration" from Scarry. Smith, Zadie. *On Beauty*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

^{ccxxvi} The "here" in which *On Beauty*'s publication finds Smith weighs the author with that Mark Stein calls "the burden of representation," in which Smith (and many other postcolonial writers) plays the role of Bahri's native informant. Examining the marketing of *White Teeth*, Stein notes the prominence given to Salman Rushdie's blurb in which Rushdie includes himself amongst Smith's subjects, figuring her novel as "about how *we* all got here," Stein argues that the branding of Zadie Smith with a blurb from Rushdie demonstrates the degree to which the counter-canon of postcolonial and Black British writing has developed into an autonomous body that can authenticate its own voices, in which "post-colonial writers are no longer measured with an imperial yardstick and the post-colonial yardstick is pulled out instead." Stein goes on to argue that Smith herself has become a metric as he lists a series of Black British authors introduced in reviews and blurbs as "the new Zadie Smith." Having inherited both the canon of Forster and the counter-canon of Rushdie, and carrying the burden of representation that comes with being written by the original Zadie Smith.

^{ccxxvii} Bahri, 77.

^{ccxxviii} Scarry,

^{ccxxix} Barbara Herrnstein Smith. *Contingencies of Value*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988. 39

^{ccxxx} Frank Kermode. *History and Value: the Clarendon Lectures and the Northcliffe Lectures, 1987*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. 34.

^{ccxxx} Herrnstein Smith, 31-50.

^{ccxxxii} Coetzee, qtd in May 900.

^{ccxxxiii} May, 908-9.

^{ccxxxiv} I realize that my formulation further marginalizes Jacky Bast, one of the most thinly drawn characters in the novel. I am not arguing against Jacky's import, nor do I mean to elide her further. The text offers Jacky no interiority, no opinions in a work full of them. She is but a problem created by class and colonialism, first for Leonard, then for Henry, and finally for Leonard again. The reader learns nothing of what happens to her after Leonard's death.

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- ^{ccxxxv} Widdowson, 368.
- ^{ccxxxvi} Malini Johar Scheuller. "Articulations of African-Americanism in South Asian Postcolonial Theory." *Cultural Critique*. (2003): 55 35-62
- ^{ccxxxvii} Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994. 246
- ^{ccxxxviii} White, Leslie. "Vital Disconnection in *Howards End*." *Twentieth Century Literature*. 51.1 (2005): 43-63.
- ^{ccxxxix} Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*
- ^{ccxl} Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. 1-14.
- ^{ccxli} The Christmas holiday that splits the school year allows for Smith to replay the gift shopping scene of *Howards End* that draws the two women closer together one last time before the elder character passes suddenly. As art replaces the central object in *On Beauty*, it is not her family home, but a privately owned Hopper painting that Carlene spontaneously suggests they see together, countering their day of commerce with the invocation of art.
- ^{ccxlii} Anne Foata. "The Knocking at the Door: A Fantasy on Fate, Forster, and Beethoven's Fifth." *Cahiers Victoriens & Edourdiens*. (1996) 44:10 135-154. 138. Foata charts the trajectory of *Howards End* according to the movements of the symphony. For example, the first movement, where Helen sees shipwrecks and heroes, lines up with the knocking down of Schlegelian ideals, and Margaret's engagement to Henry comes along with what Helen calls Beethoven's "gusts of splendor."
- ^{ccxliii} There is some debate over the finishing of the work, but there is general consensus that Sussmayr finished what Mozart could not. Cite source.
- ^{ccxliv} There are other moments in which music becomes a touchstone for identity, not just for Carl and Levi. Claire's unfamiliarity with rap combines with her knowledge of French to offer a scene of cultural exchange with her class at the Bus Stop. When she is alone with the Hippolyte painting, Kiki thinks of how she has transposed a memory of listening to Leonard Cohen's "Halleluiah" during the early days of her relationship with Howard, and how she has later conflated that moment with later memories, creating a musical family history based more on nostalgia than fact. Late in the novel, when the Belsey children consider their parents' rapidly deteriorating marriage, Jerome claims that Howard's ban on representational art rid the Belsey household of most of its music collection, leaving nothing but Japanese Techno.
- ^{ccxlv} For more see Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Hanover, U of New Hampshire Press, 1997 and Houston Baker's *Black Studies, Rap, and the Academy*.
- ^{ccxlvi} Kalyan argues that hip-hop can provide a space of resistance for indigenous peoples. She write specifically of emergent hip-hop cultures in Brazil and Hawaii, outlining the malleability and polyvocality of the form. Kalyan, Rohan. "Hip-hop Imaginaries: A Genealogy of the Present." *Journal for Cultural Research* (2006) 10:3 237-257
- ^{ccxlvii} Kalyan, 242.
- ^{ccxlviii} Houston Baker. *Black Studies, Rap, and the Academy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 89.
- ^{ccxlix} Watkins, 57.
- ^{cccl} Scarry, 86-109.
- ^{cccli} Scarry, 57-60.
- ^{ccclii} Elaine Scarry. *On Beauty and Being Just*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999. 57.
- ^{cccliii} Arjun Appadurai. "Grassroots, Globalization, and the Research Imagination." *Public Culture*. 12(1): 1-19. Of course, there is no actual separation, and Howard's argument against is at once always an argument for.
- ^{cccliv} Scarry, 8.

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- ^{cclv} Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. "Righting Wrongs." *South Atlantic Quarterly*. (2004): 103 (2-3): 523-81. 551
- ^{cclvi} The Wilcoxes' decorating style is described as having too much ornament, as if they don't understand how to turn a house into a home.
- ^{cclvii} Parrinder, 302.
- ^{cclviii} Scarry, 74-81.
- ^{cclix} May, 910
- ^{cclx} Anna Parvulescu. "Beyond Marriage: The Couple." *Discourse*. 26:3 3-17 begins on p 3
- ^{cclxi} Parvelescu, 5

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