

Cosmopolitan Potential in Woolf, Desai, Rushdie, and Mitchell

by

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Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the accompanying thesis by Sarah Marie Robinson has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Honors in English.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which modern and contemporary literature engage with and rehearse various turns in cosmopolitan theory. I analyze Immanuel Kant's writings on perpetual peace, Karl Jaspers' different concepts of guilt, and Jacques Derrida's discussions of hospitality in relation to Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay*, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*. I argue that these novels explore various sources of potential for sympathy and for the formation of cosmopolitan connections and that in their rehearsal of various cosmopolitan theories, they emphasize the role of new and unexpected combinations as a means of cultivating sympathy and acknowledging the various factors influencing present and future relations. Literature offers explorations of the various possibilities of these combinations, resisting static or prescribed modes of understanding national or global conditions.

Introduction

In *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism*, Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen point out that there are many different ways of understanding cosmopolitanism. For example, some approach it from a primarily political perspective, focusing on the potential for a future global democracy or advocating transnational frameworks for social movements, while others discuss it in terms of overlapping or heterogeneous identities and interests which “challenge conventional notions of belonging,” or demonstrate “a capacity to engage cultural multiplicity” (1). While acknowledging frequent combinations of and interactions between critical approaches in conceptions of cosmopolitanism, they identify six main frameworks of understanding, which are “(a) a socio-cultural condition; (b) a kind of philosophy or world-view; (c) a political project toward building transnational institutions; (d) a political project for recognizing multiple identities; (e) an attitudinal or dispositional orientation; and/or (f) a mode of practice or competence” (9). They suggest that cosmopolitanism exists on multiple levels, sometimes as an existing condition and sometimes as a project for the future, as a philosophy of universal humanity and as a set of political institutions, as a recognition of sameness and as an assertion of difference. While some of these frameworks seem contradictory, various theorists have engaged with their overlapping and interacting characteristics, showing that these different approaches necessarily support and nuance one another. Three theorizations, all of which engage with a combination of approaches, and all of which produce a distinct understanding of cosmopolitanism, will shape my discussion of cosmopolitanism in modern and contemporary literature:

Immanuel Kant's discussion of perpetual peace, Karl Jasper's concepts of metaphysical and political guilt, and Jacques Derrida's analysis of hospitality and forgiveness.

Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace combines a philosophical and historical model of nature and change with a plan for political action, emphasizing the power of reason to bring agreement. Aligning the natural and logical progression of history with the eventual goal of a cosmopolitan community, he posits the full potential of humanity as peaceful correspondence between humanity's interest and the endpoint defined by nature and reason. In "Toward Perpetual Peace," he writes that, "after many revolutions, with all their transforming effects, the highest purpose of nature, a universal *cosmopolitan existence*, will at last be realised as the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop" (51; italics Kant's). He argues human capacities will experience no tension with their cosmopolitan context, as they are both dictated by the logic and intentions of nature. The consistency he describes between the *telos* of human development and this "highest purpose of nature" presents nature as corresponding benignly with human interest.

The movement of history toward this peaceful existence, then, suggests that history's progression is itself consistent with a natural order, as Kant creates a framework of understanding historical continuity in which even apparently illogical and unenlightened human traits contribute to the natural framework of progress toward enlightenment. He argues that, on an individual level, reason takes training and practice in order to develop, and therefore, since individuals lead short lives, on the scale of humanity as a whole "it will require a long, perhaps incalculable series of generations, each passing on its enlightenment to the next, before the germs implanted by nature in

our species can be developed to that degree which corresponds to nature's original intention" (43). His statement gives humanity little agency relative to nature, whose seeds and intent establish natural order and progress as the primary agent of historical progress. He also creates a sense of historical continuity, as each generation hands down its "enlightenment" to the next, which shows that the understanding of the current generation comes from the slow accumulation of knowledge across the history of humanity. Even human qualities that seem antithetical to this slow march toward enlightenment play a role, as he argues, "Nature should be thus thanked for fostering social incompatibility, enviously competitive vanity, and insatiable desires for possession or even power. Without these desires, all man's excellent natural capacities would never be roused to develop" (45). By pointing to the faults that his notion of an enlightened state would eliminate as a means of historical progress, Kant establishes all human actions within the teleological progression of nature. However, he also paradoxically suggests that in order to realize nature's ideal, human beings must overcome the traits that nature has established within them as primary motivators for their actions.

His portrayal of the cosmopolitan future that he predicts eliminates conflict by evoking reason to effectively remove the possibility of disagreement. In "Perpetual Peace," he offers a more concrete discussion of the possibility of a peaceful existence, and makes suggestions for progress towards a total elimination of conflict. He argues that no state may be permitted to engage in "such acts of hostility as would make mutual confidence impossible during a future time of peace" (96). This suggestion shows that he acknowledges the lingering effects of historical events and their power to

shape international relations, but simultaneously posits that political regulations have the power to foreclose even the possibility of conflict arising. Fine and Cohen argue that this is a key problem with Kantian cosmopolitanism, writing that Kant's understanding of history together with his metaphysics of justice produce, "the conviction that the idea of a cosmopolitan order is a resolution of all prior antagonisms" (160). This process seems to work in part through the assumption that refined reason will inevitably produce agreement, an assumption which eliminates the possibility of productive difference. However, in this more practical discussion of political steps toward a cosmopolitan existence, he does offer certain avenues of dissent. In describing "the transcendental principle of publicness," he suggests that certain forms of rebellion or conflict would be permissible, and that if the rebellion were successful, the head of state would "revert to the position of a subject," and therefore not be able to justifiably attempt to reclaim power or be held accountable for his previous administration (127). He further emphasizes the importance of transparency when he argues that "All maxims which *require* publicity if they are not to fail in their purpose can be reconciled both with right and with politics" because "if they can only attain their end by being publicized, they must conform to the universal aim of the public (which is happiness) and it is the particular task of politics to remain in harmony with the aim of the public through making it satisfied with its condition" (130). His emphasis on public will in a government which forms a part of a peaceful cosmopolitan community suggests that, while antagonisms may exist in certain cases, the public at large inevitably works toward its own good, and that individual or small-scale collective attempts at dissent must make their efforts correspond to the larger

framework that defines the community. This emphasis on the logic of the collective further emphasizes the powers of an enlightened humanity to make their society function in a manner that corresponds to a natural state of peace.

Karl Jaspers gestures to the possibility of a similarly peaceful cosmopolitan future, though his version of it is countered by the also-present possibility of destruction. According to Jaspers, hope for the future lies in the potential of communication to allow humankind to make progress toward truth through a process of questioning and discussion. He writes, “Truth does not exist as merchandise ready-made for delivery: it exists only in methodical movement, in the thoughtfulness of reason” (10). He establishes truth as something which people must work to achieve rather than something easily grasped through perception or assumption, and emphasizes that humanity must follow a trajectory, driven by reason, in order to arrive at that truth. He emphasizes a process of discussion and communication as the means by which humanity can improve their understanding, writing, “We must learn to talk with each other, and we mutually must understand and accept one another in our extraordinary differences. These differences are so great that in borderline cases we appear to each other like people of a different nation” (11). His call for people to talk with one another, despite differences, points to the possibility of his concept of improved understanding and responsibility within a nation to extend internationally, across humanity.

He describes the period following the Second World War as pivot point for humanity with respect to this development, a time which could lead toward a cosmopolitan future or to further violence and destruction. The focus of his discussion

of the potential of the future is on the Nuremberg trials and his definitions of criminal, political, moral, and metaphysical guilt. He writes, “The essential point is whether the Nuremberg trial comes to be a link in a chain of meaningful, constructive political acts (however often these may be frustrated by error, unreason, heartlessness and hate) or whether, by the yardstick there applied to mankind, the very powers now erecting it will in the end be found wanting” (59). The image of a link in the chain suggests that human actions take part in movement toward a future, along a line, though in an undetermined direction. He emphasizes that, “The world order is not at hand by any means—rather, there are still huge conflicts and incalculable perils of war ahead of its realization—but it has come to seem possible to thinking humanity; it has appeared on the horizon as a barely perceptible dawn, while the case of failure the self-destruction of mankind looms as a fearful menace before our eyes” (60). Here, humanity finds itself in the position of having great potential, either for good or evil, and of necessarily taking the next steps down one path or another, which puts contemporary political structures and actions in a position of utmost importance in determining the future of humankind.

Over the course of the Nuremberg trials and the later trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem, Jaspers and Hannah Arendt’s discussions suggest that these proceedings did not fully live up to their cosmopolitan potential, which leads to a portrayal of a “a vision beset by lost opportunities, tarnished by competition between national memories, degraded by ideological servitude to particular powers” (Fine and Cohen 154). Jaspers writes of the importance of his discussion of guilt that, “Clarification of guilt is at the same time clarification of our new life and its possibilities. From it spring

seriousness and resolution” (Jaspers 119). His description of the multiple kinds of guilt and his call to discuss and understand these forms of guilt become a way of taking responsibility in actively improving human relations. However, the trials do not succeed in clarifying guilt for the crimes of the Second World War in a way that helps humanity toward a cosmopolitan future. Arendt writes, “At no point, however, either in the proceedings or in the judgement, did the Jerusalem trial ever mention even the possibility that the extermination of whole ethnic groups...might be more than a crime against the Jewish or the Polish or the Gypsy people, that the international order, and mankind in its entirety, might have been grievously hurt and endangered” (*Eichmann in Jerusalem* 252). According to Arendt, the failure of the trial was its lack of acknowledgement of the metaphysical guilt involved in a crime against humanity. In this respect, she suggests that the trial did not fulfil its role in clarifying guilt, which Jaspers emphasized as such an important part of moving in the right direction for the future, because it was too narrow in the scope of its definition of the crime and in its definition of the responsibility for that crime. The possibility of a cosmopolitan future is in some way frustrated or limited by the inability of the trial to move toward a more universal conception of guilt and justice, one that functions on both a philosophical and political level.

Jacques Derrida’s discussion of hospitality addresses the ways in which political action and policies can respond to ethical dilemmas posed by the formation of cosmopolitan communities. In *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, he presents an understanding of hospitality, and by extension ethics, which takes two forms, conditional and unconditional, and points to the need to understand the interaction of

these two versions as a way of improving cosmopolitanism. In the section of the book titled “Cosmopolitanism,” he writes,

It is a question of knowing how to transform and improve the law, and of knowing if this improvement is possible within an historical space which takes place *between* the Law of unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to every other, to all newcomers, *whoever they may be*, and *the* conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which *The* unconditional Law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire (22-23; italics Derrida’s).

While he rejects a conditional sense of hospitality regulated by sovereign nations, he cautions against a purely unconditional law that would potentially threaten the possibility of hospitality. While neither senses of hospitality are desirable in their fully-extended forms, a conditional hospitality influenced by the extension of sympathy and assumption of a metaphysical concept of collective humanity implied by unconditional hospitality allow for an improved cosmopolitanism rather than a perfect one. In, “Forgiveness,” he uses the concept of crimes against humanity in part to historicize supposedly transcendental concepts. He writes, “Even if words like ‘crime against humanity’ now circulate in everyday language. That event itself was *produced* and authorized by an international community on a date and according to a figure determined by its history” (29). While he does not totally reject the idea of a crime against humanity, an idea which implies a universalizing connection across humankind, he does connect it to certain historical conditions, showing that even concepts that purport to establish an unchanging and all-inclusive way of

understanding humanity cannot be understood unproblematically as such; these metaphysical ideals have a history. He also acknowledges the violence in their histories, as “[s]ometimes these vents, these massive, organised, cruel murders, which may have been revolutions, great canonic and ‘legitimate’ Revolutions, were the very ones which permitted the emergence of concepts like those of human rights, or the crime against humanity” (29-30). By pointing out that historical violence produces notions of metaphysical imperatives for peace, he suggests that any concept of humanity or of cosmopolitanism must take into consideration the history of its principles in order to question and modify them.

Historical memory plays an important part in his understanding of cosmopolitanism, and in this historical memory lies the possibility for changing conceptions of the world and of the global community. In “Forgiveness,” he argues that states are founded on violence, and that that foundation tends to produce amnesia about that violence, but points to an ongoing historical shift:

However, what appears singular and new today is the *project* of making States, or at least of heads of state... appear before universal authorities. It has to do only with projects or hypotheses, but this possibility suffices to announce a transformation: it constitutes itself a major event. The sovereignty of the State, the immunity of a head of state are no longer in principle, in law, untouchable”
(Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness 57, italics Derrida’s)

While state and the foundation of the state may have been viewed as carrying some transcendental authority, he suggests that new understandings of history and violence play a role in the new possibility to question and modify concepts of sovereignty and

the responsibilities of individuals within a nation. He also discusses the importance of history in “Globalization, Peace, and Cosmopolitanism,” where he distinguishes between *globalization* or *Globalisierung* and *mondialisation*, or between the globe and the world. The key difference is that globe suggests only the physical existence of the planet, while, Derrida argues, the concept of a world implies a greater importance of history and memory: “For the world begins by designating, and tends to remain, in an Abrahamic tradition... a particular space-time, a certain oriented history of human brotherhood, of what in a Pauline language... one calls *citizens of the world*” (374-375, italics Derrida’s). He gestures to the importance of history in defining the relationships across humankind, and points out that our ways of understanding these relationships is influenced by particular intellectual and ideological traditions that come to dominate discourses of cosmopolitanism.

I will examine the ways in which four novels, Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, Anita Desai’s *Baumgartner’s Bombay*, Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, and David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas*, rehearse these three theorizations of cosmopolitanism, navigating various ways of understanding global or communities and the roles of the individual within those communities. These novels reflect various turns in the theorization of cosmopolitanism, relating their narratives to the differing concepts of present cosmopolitan realities and of potential for future communities and relations. In my first chapter, I discuss Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* in relation to Kant’s writings on the concept of perpetual peace. I argue that Woolf’s utopian vision of personal development follows a similar teleological trajectory to that of Kant’s understanding of history, but that *Orlando*’s experiences show the importance of intimacy rather than

reason in producing an international community. However, I also discuss the limitations to cross-cultural bonds that the novel implies through its emphasis on the individual benefits of exposure to difference. My second chapter explores Karl Jaspers's work on crimes against humanity and guilt in relation to Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay*. I discuss the correspondences between Jaspers concepts of guilt and the novel's corresponding depictions of various forms of sympathy and their capacities to produce engagement. While these sympathies remain largely frustrated and unrealized in situations when external signs of difference are taken as metaphysical identifiers, I argue that the novel's apparently cynical perspective on the state of cosmopolitan in the wake of the Second World War and the partition of India does not point to an elimination of cosmopolitan potential. Rather, it portrays a traumatized global community, in which the development of personal and political ties is stalled, but not foreclosed. In my third chapter, I continue my discussion of physical and metaphysical grounds for human relations in my analysis of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*. Derrida's discussion of conditional and unconditional hospitality emphasizes the role of historical conditions in producing apparently universal, unchanging concepts such as that of crimes against humanity, and the importance he attaches to the physical conditions of history shapes my discussion of the metaphysical in *The Satanic Verses*, where I argue that Rushdie gives material explanations for certain modes of understanding nationality and identity, showing that apparently unchanging or authoritative definitions rely on elision and suppression. In *Cloud Atlas*, I discuss the role of reconstitution and renewal, showing that these transformations rely both on a metaphysical understanding of humanity and on that

humanity's interaction with concrete historical conditions, which points to the importance of resisting both an overly homogenized or universalized understanding of human connection or a violently conditional one.

As the novels engage with these theorizations, they explore not only present global relations, but the various possibilities for future communities that those relations create or limit. They interrogate the political, social, and philosophical assumptions of such forms of cosmopolitanism, depicting and even celebrating unanticipated challenges to various forms of order within social or political bodies or within fixed patterns of thought. In the ensuing chapters, my arguments will engage with the ways which difference and even overt tensions produce sympathies and help to constitute a dynamic cosmopolitanism.

Chapter 1: Intimate Cosmopolitanism in Virginia Woolf's

Orlando

In Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, a biographer follows the life of the eponymous character across multiple centuries, countries, and genders, and explores potential models of the self and of global relations. Orlando's personal development, and her experience with other communities across various countries, reflect a model of history that shares several commonalities with Kant's notion of historical progression toward a state of perpetual peace within a cosmopolitan community. I will attempt to examine the potential forms of a cosmopolitan community within *Orlando* and to identify the ways in which they modify a Kantian perspective. Woolf transforms Kantian cosmopolitanism by grounding the possibility of a global community in social relations that form on an individual level and, by emphasizing the importance of personal intimacy, she reduces the importance of absolute reason as the primary agent of community-formation. However, by introducing the possibility of new forms of community based in social relations, she reveals limitations to human capacities for sympathy as an obstacle to an idealized international social group, and suggests that cosmopolitan perspectives function more as a means to achieving individual transcendence.

Nels C. Pearson argues that Woolf and other Modernist writers construct an understanding of the global community in which, "Rather than simply promoting an idea 'planetary detachment,' [they] assume a more grounded cosmopolitan 'stance,' resisting the consensus-building narratives of realism and nationalism and promoting

new ‘communal aspirations’” (Pearson 321). While Pearson does not extensively examine the form of these “communal aspirations,” he does suggest that resistance to normative conceptions of community and country forms an important part of Woolf’s cosmopolitanism. This resistance to fixed, externally defined modes of understanding is evident in *Orlando*’s gestures to and modifications of Kant’s theorization of cosmopolitanism, which point to instability and individual intimacy as indispensable to communal and personal development. Kant argues that history moves toward an eventual cessation of violence as a political structure develops that makes conflict between states impossible, and in *Orlando*, a similar process of harmonization occurs on an individual level, as multiple selves seem to move toward an absolute correspondence in which a “Captain self” controls and synchronizes the others. Orlando’s movement toward harmony and the presence of this “Captain self,” suggests that both Kant and Woolf describe a teleological model of development, and both apparently create a system in which harmony between disparate parts relies on the control of a regulatory body. However, the novel questions the authority of the “Captain self,” and rejects the stability it provides, which provides one important qualification of its connection with a Kantian historical model. It depicts a further correspondence and qualification by situating its historical movement toward harmony on the level of an individual rather than society at large. This personal focus does point to a certain relationship between individual and societal changes, as Orlando’s increasing inner harmony retains close ties to her experiences abroad and growing capacity for sympathy and connection across national and cultural boundaries, which suggests that the potential for and development of peaceful, cosmopolitan communities

corresponds to her internal movement towards a fully-realized self. However, while Kant identifies reason and an idealized version of nature as the primary source of a future harmony between individuals and their government, and between governments, Orlando's development suggests that receptivity to sensation and pleasure, and a capacity for expression allow the individual to form intimate ties with other people. It is this intimacy, rather than reason or a deterministic vision of nature, that provides the possibility for cosmopolitan communities to develop, though to develop in shifting and unstable conditions.

The ending of *Orlando* seems to gesture toward a kind of internal perpetual peace, which takes the form of a final state of compatibility between disparate selves. However, this version of the utopian self suggests that such developmental *telos* in fact involves silencing and a form of imposed order and bounded definition. Orlando becomes "what is called, rightly or wrongly, a single self, a real self. And she fell silent. For it is probable that when people talk aloud, the selves (of which there may be more than two thousand) are conscious of dis severment, and are trying to communicate but when communication is established there is nothing more to be said" (230).

Cristina Nicolae explains this passage as the moment when "all the selves having fallen silent once communication between them is established, once the boundaries between the disappear" (214). Her description of universal communication and understanding between selves evokes an idea of absolute compatibility of selves as an ending at the point of personal development, a resolution of difference that reflects Kant's perpetual peace, but which associates its absolute resolution of conflict with an absolute lack of communication. While this compatibility of multiple selves exists on the level of a

single person rather than on a national or global scale, its presence gestures toward a similar model of history, one which moves toward the end of variation and conflict. Not long after this moment occurs, Orlando and *Orlando* also arrive at an ending. She calls to Shelmerdine and refers to the wild goose flying overhead, and just as she finishes speaking, the novel ends with the statement, “And the twelfth stroke of midnight sounded; the twelfth stroke of midnight, Thursday, the eleventh of October, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-eight” (241). By attaching a definite endpoint to what has until this last chapter been a frequently imprecise and indefinite narrative, the novel suggests that such endings impose a degree of order and finality on complex, multifaceted subject. This kind of ending evokes a model of history similar to the one that Kant proposes, where history moves in the direction of a cosmopolitan ideal, after which it remains fixed in a state of perpetual peace. Orlando, as a character whose presence creates continuity across varied historical periods, seems to correspond to the full, if individually unattainable, theoretical extension of cosmopolitanism as a resolution of differences, but the need for silence and imposed calls into question the validity of such a model of the self.

While the novel qualifies the desirability of such a fixed and imposed sense of self, presents alternative ways of understanding an ideal or utopian self. Perry Meisel presents one such alternative model of the self in *The Absent Father*, in which he discusses the relationship between the definition of a self in Walter Pater’s work on aesthetics and in Woolf’s work at length and argues that Woolf’s notion of selfhood represents her attempts to overcome Pater’s influence. He points to a utopian definition of the self in which receptivity and self-expression, rather than internal harmony and

resolution of differences, form key aspects of the idealized self. Meisel argues that Pater portrays his notion of *ascesis*, a disciplined means of strengthening one's powers of sensitivity and receptivity, as a conquest of nature, while also creating "a covering language of organicism and natural growth," which suggests that his "rhetoric wishes to ground its originating principle of expressiveness in the soil of a nature that is itself subdued or repressed by the very exercise of the powers it is supposed to signify" (69-70). Pater strangely produces a similar problem to Kant's, which is that his understanding of self requires that one subdue nature in order to achieve a natural perfection of perception, and where the residue he seeks to shake off in order to have more perfect art and a more perfect ability to experience art may be the same residue that forms that so vitally shapes the self and influences perception. However, while Meisel emphasizes the opposition Pater creates between nature and culture, he also suggests that the Pater's frequent use of language implying cultivation and development in nature implicitly shows that "[w]here nature is, there nurture already was" (71). Pater further breaks down the apparent binary he creates between nature and artifice through an image he describes in the epilogue of *The Renaissance*, where he examines the processes by which impression modifies the self. He writes that the self is in constant flux, and that, "It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off—that continual vanishing a way, that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves" (60). In positing a self that changes moment to moment, constantly influenced by environment and perception, he suggests that the interior self and the exterior world exist inseparably.

His model resists any notion of an essential, natural self, uninfluenced by cultivation or experience.

Meisel later discusses *A Room of One's Own*, where he uses Woolf's discussion of women and art to argue that her version of "a utopian state of sensibility...represents so perfect a fitness or fusion that no *ascesis* will ever be required... since the mental instrument will work so cleanly, like a machine in space, that no residue will be produced at all. Hence the ideal of 'the androgynous mind'...is 'resonant and porous' capable of transmitting 'emotion without impediment,' 'naturally creative, incandescent and undivided'" (102). This description of a utopian self seems to correspond to Orlando at the end of the novel, where in her final moments she achieves a state in which everything is partly something else, but all parts communicate and function with one another. However, while this notion of perfect transmission and reception suggest a utopian model, or the full extension of Pater's prioritization of sensitivity and capacity for self-expression, Paterian aesthetics also complicate a purely teleological understanding of Orlando's development, as his influence also highlights the importance of sensation and impression in the development of the self. In the moments before the end of the novel and the end of Orlando's life, the apparent realization of a Kantian idea, she thinks, "everything was partly something else, as if her mind had become a forest with glades branching here and there; things came nearer, and further, and mingled and separated and made the strangest alliances and combinations in an incessant chequer of light and shade" (qtd. in Ellis 95). This sense of a multiplied consciousness that evokes Pater's description of the way impressions modify the self. Both indicate that the self is in a state of continual flux as various

impressions modify and multiply consciousness in ways that are impossible to anticipate. The connection between these two passages indicates that the achievement of an endpoint, an ideal of perfect harmony between disparate parts, functions here by a different logic than Kant's universal history leading toward perpetual peace. Rather than being motivated by objective reason, dictated by nature and confirmed by an enlightened collective, it is sensation and impression that shapes the self, leading not to a fixed ideal but to a state of continuing receptivity to even unpredictable change. This kind of development can be seen throughout Orlando's shifting modes of understanding herself.

Even after Orlando changes from a man to a woman, her sense of self relies on fixed categories and definitions. However, her focus on pleasure and sensation challenges her attempts to fit herself into one category or another, which suggests that, rather than promoting the development of reason, nature resists the suppression of multiplied modes of perception. As she adjusts to life as a woman, she struggles to compare the two sexes, framing her conflict in terms of the potential for pleasure in each role. She recalls her past relationship as a man with the Russian princess and thinks, "Then she had pursued, now she fled. Which is the greater ecstasy? The man's or the woman's? And are they not perhaps the same? No, she thought, this was the most delicious...to refuse and see him frown" (114). She focuses on the different ways in which relationships can produce the excess of pleasure and sensation implied by a state of ecstasy. In forcing a choice between male and female pleasure, she accentuates the divide between them, suggesting that the two pleasures cannot be conflated. However, her attempt to align herself exclusively with female pleasure proves to be

unsustainable as she considers her new sex's limitations and the role that men play in creating and enforcing certain standards of behavior. The biographer writes, "And here it would seem from some ambiguity in her terms that she was censuring both sexes equally, as if she belonged to neither, and indeed, for the time being she seemed to vacillate; she was a man; she was a woman; she knew the secrets, shared the weakness of each" (117). Given her initial question of who has access to the greater pleasure, that drive for heightened sensation and ecstasy seems in part to motivate this vacillation, as she fails to adequately compare the two perspectives. Her need to choose between the two means that her multiplied perspective therefore leads to censure rather than acceptance, as she can see the problems and inadequacies with each side. While Orlando's uncertain considerations seem lead her to attempt to produce a strong allegiance with one sex, the Biographer suggests that this that a greater awareness of how both men and women experience the world in fact removes her from either perspective as she alternately attempts to suppress both perspectives, and both forms of pleasure.

The Biographer describes her resulting sense of self as a storm, which connects Orlando's interior with a version of the natural world, and suggests that her attempts to subdue possibilities of multiple perspectives and pleasures throws that self into chaos. Her vacillation between genders is "a most bewildering and whirligig state of mind to be in. The comforts of ignorance seemed utterly denied her. She was a feather blown on the gale. Thus it is no great wonder if, as she pitted one sex against the other, and found each alternately full of the most deplorable infirmities, and was not sure to which she belonged" (117). Her perspective opens to a wider array of information and

possibilities for understanding, but rather than increasing her capacity for sympathy, she is thrown into a confusion driven by the opposition she attempts to impose. This storm is driven both by the desire for pleasure that forces her to vacillate between the two incomparable gendered experiences, and by the attempt to limit pleasure that comes from her need to choose one at the expense of the other. This tension suggests that pleasure and sensuality have an important cosmopolitan purpose, as they open Orlando's perspective to apparently incompatible realities, which challenge normatively defined boundaries through their new combinations and interactions, implicitly calling into question the value of prescribed social and national divisions.

Orlando takes another step toward an apparent harmonization her multiplicity of selves with the concept of a Captain self, which acknowledges the coexistence of multiple identities, but still relies on a regulatory force and a concept of separation. She calls to mind the myriad of different identities she has occupied across time and notes, "all these selves were different and she may have called upon any one of them" (226). The Biographer then writes:

"Perhaps; but what appeared certain (for we are now in the region of 'perhaps' and 'appears') as that the one she need most kept aloof, for she was, to hear her talk, changing her selves as quickly as she drove—there was a new one at every corner—as happens when, for some unaccountable reason, the conscious self, which is the uppermost, and has the power to desire, wishes to be nothing but one self. This is what some people call the true self, and it is, they say, compact of all the selves we have it in us to be; commanded and locked up by the Captain self, the Key self, which amalgamates and controls them all" (227)

The “Captain self” evokes the idea of a need for regulation and reason to give order to the self. The image of this self that commands the other selves and directs them towards a singular desire for a singular self. In some respects, this stage of her development reflects an almost Kantian idea of harmony enforced by the interactions of individuals within a governmental structure. However, it is the role of this “Captain self” to “amalgamate and control them all,” which suggests not only domination but combination, beginning to break down the strict divisions among selves, and recognizing the possibility of intensification through the interaction of multiple perspectives.

In her final moments, this regulation disappears to be replaced by expressive correspondence that resists absolute definitions of the self. Orlando has access to various forms of identity, which find harmony in movement rather than constancy. Dudley M. Marchi describes Orlando’s development as a search for stability. He suggests that Orlando’s multiplicity of selves resists rather than validates Pater’s notions, writing, “Whereas Pater seriously explored the problem of multiple selves, such multiplicity in *Orlando* is hyperbolic and satiric” (16). He later argues that, “Through this profusion of shifting identities Orlando always returns to her estate and seeks stability and comfort as she attempts to write herself down as a coherent unity” (Marchi 21). However, the ending resists the notion of perfect unity or coherence as a way of describing the self, preferring instead the play of movement without fixed definition. In the last moments of the novel, Orlando thinks, “It was not necessary to faint now in order to look deep into the darkness where things shape themselves and to see in the pool of the mind now Shakespeare, now a girl in Russian trousers, now a toy

boat on the Serpentine, and then the Atlantic itself, where it storms in great waves past Cape Horn” (240). Different people appear from across time, culminating in the image of Shelmerdine at risk of being shipwrecked, which suggests that these various interpersonal connections and forms of intimacy form the depths of the “pool of her mind.” At the moment of greatest tension, once again, Woolf uses natural imagery of a storm and turbulence, seeming to trouble that water. However, at the moment she sees that Shelmerdine is safe, that storm subsides. She cries out the word, “‘ecstasy!’ And then the wind sank, the waters grew calm; and she saw the waves rippling peacefully in the moonlight” (240). This moment seems to move from the chaotic, violent movement of the storm to the more peaceful harmony of rippling waves. However, Woolf calls into question this sense of peace by placing Orlando’s moment of ecstasy at the height of the storm, before the winds subside and the water calms. This time, her internal storm suggests that the heightened pleasure and sensation Orlando seeks comes in part from a degree of tension between aspects of the self and with the external world. Rather than attempting to suppress that tension, as she does in the case of her earlier conflict between gender identities, she allows herself to be transported by it. Even the apparent resolution to this moment of ecstasy is one of movement and rippling waves rather than total calm, which resists the notion that she seeks stability. This suggests that “hyperbolic and satiric” tone that Marchi argues characterizes discussions of multiple selves, rather than calling for a unified sense of self or even perfect harmony, could indicate a more playful sense of interconnectedness that resists absolute modes of definition.

This emphasis on perception leads to the possibility of intimacy as a motivating factor in community-formation as well as personal development within *Orlando*. Pater writes that the aim of the aesthetic critic is “to know one’s impression as it truly is,” and that in order to do so he must ask himself, “What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to *me*? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? and if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature modified by its presence, and under its influence?” (17-18). In addition to prioritizing the ways in which a self is influenced by its perceptions of the world, Pater also opens the field of this form of criticism to include interpersonal relationships by including “an engaging personality presented in life” in his list of art forms. Later, this inclusion becomes an imperative to engage in honest, intimate relationships when he describes the ideal way to live, stating, “For our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time.... Only be sure it is passion—that it does yield you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness” (61-62). If this quickened consciousness requires honesty with regards to one’s experience of the world, then the interpersonal relationship that it produces would involve a high degree of receptivity to the impressions and modifications to the self that are caused by interaction with others, and honesty about those impressions. In other words, it requires intimacy. A model of the development of self which is based in receptivity also shapes Woolf’s portrayal of the formation of cosmopolitan communities, where it seems to provide a partial answer to one of Fine and Cohen’s critiques of Kantian cosmopolitanism, which is that, “The translation of the cosmopolitan idea into a pure idea of reason or into the end of history takes it out of

the realm of human contestation – as if it were not a social relation at all but the embodiment of something divine here on earth” (Fine and Cohen). *Orlando*’s cosmopolitanism is grounded in social relations, where intimacy, which requires both receptivity and honest expression, is as much a requirement to move toward a utopian self as reason is for Kant in his pursuit of cosmopolitan peace. However, the notion that intimacy is a requirement for global communities means that cosmopolitanism faces the same obstacles as cross-cultural intimacy, which is that difference creates friction. As a result, intimacy becomes a means of strengthening Orlando’s receptivity and multiplied consciousness, which allows her to form strong social connections within her own nation rather than forming a cosmopolitan community.

The biographer gives examples of unproductive ways of relating to different peoples, suggesting that Orlando follows an individual developmental trajectory toward a sympathetic relationship to the Other. In the very first chapter, the biographer establishes that relationships between the very English Orlando and peoples of other nations and races forms a key concern of the history she describes. While describing his fight with a Moor’s shrunken, severed head, she writes that, “Orlando’s fathers had ridden in the fields of asphodel, and stony fields, and fields watered by strange rivers, and they had struck many heads of many colours off many shoulders, and brought them back to hang from the rafters” (11). By using “fathers” in the plural, she establishes Orlando within an extended personal and historical lineage, one which plays a significant role in international connections. The biographer starts with the suggestion of a cosmopolitanism in the wide-ranging travels of Orlando’s fathers. However, it at once becomes clear that these many fields are places of violence, and that their

interactions with the people of the world take the form of direct physical violence as well as of an objectifying impulse to collect and preserve difference rather than engaging with it. They interact with people of various nations and cultures by reducing them to objects, and asserting ownership over these objects that are stored away in their attic. Orlando attempts to participate in this tradition, and the biographer describes how, “he would steal away from his mother and the peacocks in the garden and go to his attic room and there lunge and plunge and slice the air with his blade. Sometimes he cut the cord so that the skull bumped on the floor and he had to string it up again, fastening it with some chivalry almost out of reach so that his enemy grinned through shrunk, black lips triumphantly” (11). There is tension between his apparent absolute control over the situation as he fixes the height of the head himself, and his apparent impotence as he must steal away from his mother in order slash out at the air with the sword. This tension implies that this historical model of violence and domination remains to some degree immature and fails to meaningfully engage with the world outside England.

Where Orlando’s early interactions with the world outside of England were violent, the interactions based around his role as a diplomat in Turkey become practically meaningless. While the biographer describes this time of his life as the time “when he played a most important part in the public life of his country,” the activities she describes are dull in the extreme (88). He participates daily in a routine ceremony of greeting, prescribed conversation, smoking, and drinking coffee, though the biographer emphasizes that “though the motions of smoking and drinking were gone through punctiliously there was neither tobacco in the pipe nor coffee in the glass, as,

had either smoke or drink been real, the human frame would have sunk beneath the surfeit” (91). The gap between the symbolism of drinking and smoking together as acts of communion that imply personal confidence and even intimacy, and the fact that for the purposes of the ritual, both of these actions are mere performances suggests that this kind of political relationship fails to create a community of any notable strength or importance. Even the direct conversation works within a rigid structure of politeness that prevents meaningful communication. The biographer goes on to describe how “The same ceremonies were gone through in precisely the same order six or seven times over at the houses of the other great officials... Though Orlando performed these tasks to admiration and never denied that they are, perhaps, the most important part of a diplomatist’s duties, he was undoubtedly fatigued by them” (91). By emphasizing the endless repetition involved in these rituals while simultaneously calling them “the most important part” of Orlando’s duties, the biographer calls into question the significance of this kind of international community building, suggesting that perhaps it carries little more influence than the impotent slashing of the young man’s sword at the Moor’s head.

It is with her transformation to a woman that Orlando seems to engage in a more personal and sympathetic relation to the different people she encounters, as she leaves her job as an ambassador and joins a group of “gipsies” in Turkey. However, this arrangement does not last, and while the conflict between them is the result of mutual misunderstanding and distrust, the scene of Orlando’s departure suggests that she has engaged more sincerely with a different set of beliefs than her hosts have. After viewing the landscape become suddenly barren, Orlando, “burst into a passion of tears,

and striding back to the gypsies' camp, told them she must sail for England the very next day" (112). Woolf contrasts her overtly emotional response with the response of the people around her, immediately writing, "It was happy for her that she did so. Already the young men had plotted her death. Honour, they said, demanded it, for she did not think as they did. Yet they would have been sorry to cut her throat; and welcomed the news of her departure" (112). While Orlando responds with "passion" and tears, which indicate that she is deeply and sincerely moved, the gypsies respond with ambivalence. While the act of murder would seem to suggest a similar level of passion, Woolf undermines that understanding of the gypsies by describing the somewhat noncommittal emotions of being "sorry" and of welcoming her departure. Orlando's stronger reaction suggests that she is open to the influence of the people around her to a greater degree than those she encounters in this case. At the end of the chapter, Woolf describes how "she had to content herself with embraces, which on her part were sincere" (112). The image of embracing suggests a receptivity to the people around her that seems at odds with their readiness to kill her for her different way of viewing the world. While intimacy may form a more important criterion for building a community than reason, Woolf still seems to suggest that this need for intimacy can form a barrier to cosmopolitan relations when one group of people has less access than another to the enlightened receptivity that such a community requires than another, perhaps highlighting her own prejudices.

Sonita Sarker's reading of *The London Scene* and *Three Guineas* can perhaps shed some light on Woolf's treatment of the gypsies Orlando encounters here. She argues that in *The London Scene*, Woolf attempts to challenge certain modes of

nationalism, creating a definition of Englishness influenced by her feminism, but that this definition is “inflected by an Englishness which constitutes itself as the unracialized norm against which Others are marked” (6). She describes Woolf’s process of depiction as “reflective specularity,” which is, “naming oneself implicitly in the act of naming the Other. In other words, the race of ethnicity of the self is presented only through indirection, reflected as an implicit contrast when the other is marked and named.... Woolf distinguishes Englishness only by racializing others (Negress, Jew, Scot) who are marked by appearance or behaviors” (Sarker 16). In this case, the Other works as a tool that emphasizes certain qualities within a home culture or personal identity. This model of encountering difference does not allow for a mutual relationship to form, but rather creates a power imbalance in which one party uses the other as a source of personal meaning. Sarker argues that Woolf deals most explicitly with the conflicted impulses her marginalization produces in *Three Guineas*, in which she states, “As a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world” (*Three Guineas* 109). Sarker interprets this declaration as “less a cosmopolitan statement or a projection of universal sisterhood, and more one that rejects certain kinds of English nationalism” (20). Her apparently accepting statement emphasizes women’s lack of access to certain kinds of participation within the nation rather than establishing a meaningful community beyond it. Similarly, Woolf’s emphasis on Orlando’s receptivity in her encounter with cultural difference serves to emphasize what will later become the basis of her resistance to certain forms of prescriptive mentalities and behaviors within the context

of her particular country rather than the possibility of a truly cosmopolitan relation across cultures.

Numerous critics have pointed out that Woolf's position as a woman, and therefore as an outsider in the political realm of the nation, lead her to be suspicious of certain forms of politically codified models of the nation and the world. Rebecca Walkowitz argues that Woolf's modernist mode of writing decenters the first-person perspective and sense of certainty in order to "imagine models of social critique that would resist social codification" (80). The emphasis on dissent and uncertainty Walkowitz describes suggests a profound incompatibility between Woolf's understanding of socially prescribed modes of thinking Kant's assumption that reason can completely harmonize the relations between peoples and their governments. However, Orlando's developing sense of self and changes in the way she relates to others suggests that increased correspondence between the individual and the society in which that individual lives plays the novel's portrayal of a self that follows an apparently Kantian trajectory toward an ideal state of resolved conflict. In *Orlando*, though, that correspondence must come, to a certain extent, through a process in which the individual transforms and rewrites aspects of apparently universalizing codes of behavior and understanding. Woolf uses irony to expose the performative nature of certain social practices and to create a space for characters to indirectly resist certain normative principles, as they appear to adhere to them while in fact transforming their personal and ethical implications. As a result, intimacy, specifically, becomes a simultaneously a subversive approach to gender relations and a way for Orlando participate in the expectations of her social context.

The receptiveness that Orlando develops throughout her world travels allows her to form an intimate relationship with Shelmerdine, and this intimacy modifies her relationship to the notion of a “spirit of the age” within English society, and by extension shifts the possible meanings of certain practices and expectations. Jane de Gay argues that “Woolf satirises the idea of ‘the spirit of the age’ as a regulatory ideological force,” and specifically uses Orlando’s desire to marry as an example of that spirit using “violent coercion” to influence her (De Gay 65). However, the happiness that Orlando seems to find in her relationship with Shelmerdine suggests that certain forms of modification and transformation of normative expectations nuance her claim that Woolf’s concept of the spirit of the age produces inescapable violence. The key aspect of Orlando and Shelmerdine’s relationship that does not correspond to the Victorian norms Woolf describes is their capacity for intimate understanding of one another. She defines normative gender interactions in nineteenth century when she writes, “Love, birth, and death were all swaddled in a variety of fine phrases. The sexes drew further and further apart. No open conversation was tolerated” (168). While the image of “swaddling” emotional experiences with fine language seems to point to a sense of delicacy and care in Victorian treatments of difficult subjects, Woolf ironically transforms this image of parental attentiveness and protection into a sign of the period’s oppressive lack of clarity and interpersonal understanding. While she indicates that social expectations make intimacy impossible, her own use of “fine phrases” to describe this lack of intimacy suggests that even this function of the “spirit of the age” remains hidden or obscured behind conventional language. This treatment of the morality of the era points to the possibility of resistance, as it suggests that certain

values and expectations remain ambiguous behind the more concrete pressures influencing behaviors, and that such ambiguity allows for personal interpretations and modifications. In the case of Orlando and Shelmerdine, it allows for sympathy and intimacy, even as they apparently acquiesce to the spirit of the age by marrying. The biographer describes their relationship, writing, “For each was so surprised at the quickness of the other’s sympathy, and it was to each such a revelation that a woman could be as tolerant and free-spoken as a man, and a man as strange and subtle as a woman, that they had to put the matter to proof at once” (189). Woolf points to sympathy as the key capacity that allows the two of them to form a relationship that resists certain pressures of the time period, especially given that their ability to connect in this manner comes from the multiple gender identities of past and present selves at play in both of them. This sympathy from multiplicity suggests that the possibility of intimacy comes from the capacities Orlando developed partially through her exposure to difference in the course of the travels. However, the benefit of this intimacy occurs within the context of resistance to her own culture rather than in the formation of more global communities. However, her intimacy with Shelmerdine takes a different form within the context of her own culture than the kind of intimacy she cultivated in Turkey.

In Turkey, Orlando’s open sincerity and her lack of awareness of her hosts’ suspicion and hostility suggest that she assumes a necessary and direct correspondence between intimacy and the performance of community, which contrasts the novel’s ironic portrayal of the “spirit of the age.” Their acceptance of her is based on the belief that she was one of them, taken at birth, and as a result, “they were willing to help her

become more like them,” and they become suspicious when “[t]hey began to suspect that she had beliefs other than their own” (105). For them, intimacy relies on sameness of practice and belief, and Orlando’s own actions reflect similar assumptions, as she thinks that “it was equally impossible to remain for ever where there was neither ink nor writing paper, neither reverence for the Talbots, nor respect for a multiplicity of bedrooms” (110). They both assume that certain differences in values and practices produce an insurmountable gap between them. While Orlando’s sincerity as she leaves them suggest that she associates their performance of hospitality with some degree of true intimacy, in both cases, she takes the performance of social practices as direct signifier of the emotional or interpersonal side of their relationship. By contrast, Woolf’s ironic portrayal of the limits to intimacy that the “spirit of the age” produces indicates that Orlando and Shelmerdine are capable of rewriting the significance of normative practices. This difference points to Orlando’s personal development and her increasing capacity to resolve tensions between her own self and her surroundings, but it also suggests that the primary site of such a process of negotiation and transformation is within a defined community rather than across national or cultural boundaries.

While Woolf effectively nuances a version of cosmopolitanism based solely in reason and political structures and obligations by grounding the development of ties in personal receptivity to intimacy and pleasure, that same nuance effectively prevents her cosmopolitanism from carrying much weight beyond its role in personal development. The effect is one of a more self-centered form of cosmopolitanism, where the individual can benefit from access to difference and exposure to diverse experiences

and perspectives, but the possibilities of a larger community are severely limited by unequal capacities for sympathy. While Woolf explores the possibility of intimacy as a form of connection between people that might transcend national ties, she also suggests that a privileged degree of sophistication and openness are necessary in order for this community to be realized.

Chapter 2: Stalled Cosmopolitanism in Anita Desai's

Baumgartner's Bombay

Hugo Baumgartner of Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay* presents a less obvious cosmopolitan figure than Woolf's Orlando, as he is both lonely and resistant to engaging with those around him. However, his personal and political interactions give insight into stalled and impeded concepts of a global community. The novel alternates between chapters set in the present of Baumgartner's last day alive, and chapters that trace his life as he flees from Germany to India during the Second World War and builds himself an uneasy life there. He lives through the violence in Europe, and through the violence in India during the partition, but finds himself isolated and traumatized, living alone with no living family and few social connections. Through his experiences, the novel presents various forms of personal and political sympathy as means of accessing and developing human potential for responsibility and engagement, but repeatedly shows that these sympathies are blocked and unrealized when external factors such as religion and political climates are taken as metaphysical signs of difference. However, the novel does not take an entirely cynical view of the traumatized cosmopolitan sympathies existing in the postwar period, suggesting that the frustrated development of human sympathy is not the same as the elimination of its potential.

Hugo Baumgartner's experiences as he relocates to India point to the possibility for new perspectives and connections, which presents this exposure to difference as a means of developing new modes of communication and understanding. However, these

too are frustrated by the pervasive presence of violence and prejudice from several directions. Desai's depiction of the language Baumgartner builds in India suggests that exposure to difference produces innovation, and that the human potential lies in part in people's ability to create new avenues of communication. She writes:

He found he had to build a new language to suit these new conditions – German no longer sufficed, and English was elusive. Languages sprouted around him like tropical foliage and he picked words from it without knowing if they were English or Hindi or Bengali – they were simply words he needed... what was this language he was wrestling out of the air, wrenching around to his own purposes? He suspected it was not Indian, but India's, the India he was marking out for himself (92).

Desai's description of languages as foliage points to change and development as a necessary aspect of language, as it functions as a living thing, rather than a something to be fixed and defined. For Baumgartner, it is the process of picking out the words he needs that allows him to communicate, which suggests that this flexibility of language is a manifestation of human potential in that it works productively to accommodate unanticipated situations and interactions. The process of "wrestling" his new language "out of the air," however, is not entirely comfortable, and Baumgartner's relationship to India in this passage involves some tension as the result of a process of mutual influence. While the language belongs to India, which suggests he has little control over it, that India is "the India he was marking out for himself," which indicates that he can also shape his experience to his needs. Language becomes a site of change and development through a process of navigating differences. By describing Baumgartner's

early days in Bombay in terms of this form of innovation, Desai suggests that his later difficulties in engaging sympathetically with those around him are a limits imposed on this potential rather inevitable misunderstandings and hostilities.

Karl Jaspers' concepts of metaphysical and political guilt provide useful ways of understanding the violence and hostilities that produce impediments to global understandings of community. Desai's novel reflects these hostilities, but also provides certain possibilities to counteract them in various kinds of sympathy. I will discuss the novel's portrayal of interpersonal and cross-cultural engagement through two of Jaspers' forms of guilt and their corresponding forms of sympathy.

Metaphysical Guilt and Metaphysical Sympathy

Jaspers describes a "solidarity among men as human being that makes each co-responsible for every wrong and every injustice in the world, especially for crimes committed in his presence and with his knowledge" (32). For Jaspers, in order for mutual responsibility to exist, there must be the idea of humanity as a whole, some tie linking people across national and social boundaries, giving even people from completely different backgrounds some commonality. He elaborates on the kind of guilt this produces:

That somewhere among men the unconditional prevails—the capacity to live only together or not at all, if crimes are committed against the one or the other, or if physical living requirements have to be shared—therein consists the substance of their being. But that this does not extend to the solidarity of all

men, nor to that of fellow-citizens or even of smaller groups, but remains confined to the closest human ties—therein lies this guilt of us all (32).

The existence of a kind of guilt that all humans share for their inability to extend solidarity to all other humans implicitly suggests that human beings also share the potential for a metaphysical sympathy that could extend to any other person. However, Desai points to various obstacles to the formation of ties based in metaphysical sympathy, suggesting that a desire for stability pushes people to externalize their relationships, basing them in something concrete.

Baumgartner's relationship with his business partner, Chimanlal, points to the possibility of close personal sympathy despite dramatically different backgrounds, but also suggests that, without qualities that lead to external recognition, such relationships fail to be meaningful in the long-term. Desai describes the development of the two's relationship, writing, "It was only with his son, the youngest child, that Chimanlal became entirely human in Baumgartner's eyes – by which he meant vulnerable" (192). He buys a gift for the child, which strengthens his relationship with Chimanlal: "'Hugo *bhai*', [Chimanlal] called him thereafter, 'Hugo brother', and invited him to join him in his one weakness, his sole vice, making Baumgartner feel as if he were peeling off layer after layer of a large and shining onion to arrive at its sweet yellow heart" (192). The image of peeling back layers of an onion suggests that the vulnerability he finds at the center is a kind of interior core that permits sympathy and understanding between the two of them. However, the process Baumgartner imagines is ongoing, as he never quite arrives at the center, which indicates that their sympathy is based in a continuing process, moving towards a more and more intimate relationship. This sense of change

and movement reflects Jaspers' notion of movement toward truth through increased communication, which suggests that the process of strengthening metaphysical sympathy is a step in the direction of a cosmopolitan future.

However, with Chimanlal's death, external signs of difference lead to the termination of this apparently metaphysical relationship, which points to the notion that such a relationship can have little influence on human relations without some process of externalization and formalization. The first external threat to this relationship comes at the funeral, when physical signs of difference prevent Baumgartner's relationship to Chimanlal from being recognized by others who were close to him. Baumgartner goes to the cremation, "standing at the edge of the crowd, all of whom shrank away from him, horrified by the presence of a foreigner, a *firanghi*, at such an intensely private rite" (206). By associating their dislike of his presence explicitly with the fact that the cremation is "an intensely private rite," Desai creates tension between her portrayal of intimate relationship that Baumgartner and Chimanlal shared and the apparent sense of incongruity of a European man attending the cremation of an Indian man. This tension suggests that their mutual sympathy cannot quite overcome the expectations that their external differences produce. After Chimanlal's death, his son responds with hostility to Baumgartner's inquiry about the racehorse they had owned together, and demands to see a signed document proving their co-ownership. Baumgartner responds, "No, no, there are no papers...Your father and I – we were friends – we didn't draw up any legal papers – it was just an understanding, a friendship –" (206). However, despite his protests, he realizes that his relationship to the firm, "formal or friendly, had ceased" (206). He both gestures to the relationship as something existing only in terms of the

confidence the two men had in each other, and recognizes that without a material existence, that relationship is vulnerable to the various legal and social structures in existence in order to provide security. The lack of physical signs of a relationship takes precedent over the personal sympathy the two shared in determining Baumgartner's status, which points to a drive to define and fix personal relationships in order to produce stability.

Baumgartner's relationship to Lotte suggests that he too wishes to find stability in his relationship by grounding them in the physical signifiers of similarity. Leo Bersani describes the concept of "impersonal narcissism" as a mode of relating to the world outside the ego that permits for relating to nonviolence. He uses the example of the Socratic lover, who attempts to create a sameness in which both the lover and the beloved become more like an idealized divine figure. In Plato's *Symposium*, during "The Speech of Diotima," Socrates describes the progression through which lovers arrive at a greater understanding of beauty and love. Diotima says, "This is what it is to go aright, or be led by another, into the mystery of Love: one goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: ...and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty so that in the end he comes to know just what it means to be beautiful" (Plato 59). Lovers both lead and follow this path of development, apparently mutually influencing one another in order to achieve a greater understanding of beauty, which Diotima defines, saying, "The love of the gods belongs to anyone who has given birth to true virtue and nourished it, and if any human being could become immortal, it would be he" (Plato 60). Diotima's model of absolute virtue, the full extension of the

lover's "lesson," blurs the lines between human beings and gods, suggesting that the lover who understands beauty becomes as near a god as possible. Bersani argues that "[f]ar from suppressing the other, the Socratic lover's narcissism suppresses accidents of personality so that the loved one may more adequately mirror the universal singularity mythified in the figure of the god they both served" (82). While this kind of love seeks sameness, it is a sameness that does not necessarily completely deny difference. Rather, he argues that,

Virtual being is unmappable as a distinct identity; it *is* only in becoming more like itself. In the generous narcissism of the exchange between Socratic lovers, each partner demands of the other...that he reflect the lover's type of being, his universal singularity (and not his psychological particularities, his personal difference), by recognizing and cultivating that singularity as his own most pervasive, most pressing potentiality (86).

Similar to Jasper's concept of a humanity bound by metaphysical responsibility, this model of personal intimacy focuses on the possibility of a commonality that transcends external differences of every sort, and meaning that love of the self could be extended to love of others without violence. Unlike Jaspers, who focuses on the possibility of communication despite differences, Bersani focuses on the ways in which sympathy resulting from impersonal narcissism is in fact a love of sameness and a highly eroticized attachment. Where Jaspers seeks to communicate despite the obstacles that difference poses, Bersani seeks to strip difference of its importance in human relations. The process he describes, by which people can experience intimacy based in impersonal narcissism, however, is also one based in communication and conversation.

He writes, “Socratic ideality (which I am equating with universal virtualities) is more cultivated than it is contemplated. Cultivated through dialogue—intrinsically unending dialogue, for we are always either moving toward or falling away from the being it is our greatest happiness to ‘re-find’ in other” (87). Baumgartner and Lotte both seek an intimacy that they create through a similar form of dialogue that communicates different desires and motivations, but their process of forging a sometimes uneasy intimacy blurs the lines between metaphysical and physical identification, suggesting that forms of relationality that require the separation of the two carry the risk of transforming physical identifiers of belonging into apparently metaphysical qualities.

As Baumgartner thinks about Lotte, he fits her into multiple roles within his life, creating a kind of internal dialogue through which he defines and redefines their intimacy, grounding their intimacy or lack of intimacy in terms of similarities between their cultural and personal histories. After his initial encounter with Kurt, the young German in Farrokh’s café who will later kill him, he thinks, “Why not drop in on Lotte and so retrieve something of the day? She was the only one he could tell about the odd encounter with the fair-haired boy, about the flood of memories of old Berlin it had let loose. Not that Lotte knew *his* Berlin” (65). As he associates their relationship with his ability to share memories of the city with her, but reminds himself that this common ground is not, in fact, common, Baumgartner simultaneously creates a sense of intimacy and distance between himself and Lotte, both of which are based in their ties to Berlin. His addition, that Lotte does not know “*his* Berlin,” has the appearance of a self-correction that creates more distance between them as he reminds himself that their backgrounds are more different than his desire to see her and share his experience

implies. Later that day he considers that, “It was only Lotte who kept in touch with the German tongue – but that was not why he went to see her. He saw Lotte not because she was from Germany but because she belonged to the India of his own experience; hers was different in many ways but still shared enough to be comfortable with each other” (150). This instance points to shifts in the way Baumgartner perceives Lotte, even from moment to moment. While earlier that same day he had sought out her company as someone who could understand his memories of Germany, he now changes his focus to their shared experience of India and seems to repress the aspects of their relationship that are grounded in their shared language and experience of Germany. This shifting identification suggests that the apparently very concrete and stable differences between them do not create a stable understanding of their relationship. This suggests that their mutual sympathy is in excess to their similarities or differences, closely connected to their ability to navigate what Bersani might call each other’s “psychological particularities” or “personal difference,” but also tied to a more metaphysical desire for human intimacy (86).

Despite the possibility of metaphysical sympathy, both Baumgartner and Lotte use the more concrete similarities of language or shared cultural memories as a way of accessing intimacy, which suggests that they are incapable of understanding their relationship independently from physical identifiers. When Baumgartner meets Lotte, he teases her about the name she is currently using, and she responds angrily. However, he is, “willing to forgive her her little outburst for the sake of her friendliness, her German tongue” (96). Despite his later denial of their shared language’s significance to their relationship, this encounter shows that it was in part that language that made later

intimacy possible by predisposing him toward sympathy in his interactions with her. At the same time, it is also “friendliness,” or openness to personal connection that attracts him, suggesting that their relationship also forms in terms other than those of cultural identity. At another point he wonders, “Could she ever have lived in Berlin as she claimed when she was feeling particularly intimate with Baumgartner?” (66). While Lotte’s claim suggests that she views a shared national or cultural identity and memories of a shared space as the basis for an intimate relationship, in this instance, that claim is the product rather the source of the feelings of intimacy that she experiences. She uses Berlin as a tool to reinforce their relationship, which indicates that she understands sympathy to be closely related to external definitions of nationality or locality. Her desire to use such physical modes of definition only once a more personal sympathy exists, however, suggests that this process is in part based in a conflation of the physical and metaphysical; because they find themselves tied by a more abstract sympathy, they must give that link a sense of stability by associating it with concrete conditions. However, in doing so, they invest metaphysical significance in the external qualities of having lived in a particular place and speaking a particular language.

While their process of creating intimacy through shifting associations and desires is similar to the kind of conversation both Jaspers and Bersani identify as an important part of developing productive relationships and personal potential, Desai associates Baumgartner’s and Lotte’s relationship with the drive for stability without tension or conflict, which connects the inability to distinguish between the physical and metaphysical with a the stalling of human potential rather than with change and

development. Bersani describes concepts of love that involve, “the idea of union with the loved object, this distinction does not imply a permanent separation between the lover and the beloved. Two different beings may be thought of as merging in the happy fulfillment of a personal love;...the practitioner of ‘pure love’ aspires to an absorption into God’s will in which his own subject-being is annihilated” (75). Baumgartner’s and Lotte’s reliance on physical identifiers over the possibility of sympathy that exceeds external similarities in order to construct their intimacy result in a similar kind of union. When they fall asleep together in her apartment the afternoon of the day of Baumgartner’s death, Desai describes how they lay themselves down together, “finding concavities into which to press their convexities, and convexities into which to fit their concavities, till at last they made one comfortable whole, two halves of a large misshapen bag of flesh, and then they were still and slept the heavy noontime sleep of the tropics, sighing and snoring less and less till they became totally immobile, silent” (82). The process of finding points of physical contact, of concavities to fit into convexities, suggests a form of navigation, which results in a motionless union that apparently resolves the tensions and conflicts of individual personality. However, this union, or resolution of difference also dehumanizes them, as they become “two halves of a large misshapen bag of flesh.” Adam Philips counters Bersani’s arguments about narcissistic love by pointing out certain dangers in his perspective. He addresses one such problem by arguing that, “What Bersani calls here the ‘narcissistic extravagance’ of love, its militant nostalgia, is an attempt to abolish the possibility of new experience. What we call love is our hatred of the future; and it is because other people represent our future as objects of desire, what might happen next to us, we fear them” (103). In

this moment, Baumgartner and Lotte create a sense of stillness that apparently reduces the threat of future potential. The sameness they achieve in this moment of intimacy is not one that can coexist with distinctions between individual subjects, cultivating a sameness that even allows for difference. The sameness they seek creates a sense of stability only when it resolves difference to the point of them being totally indistinguishable.

Political Guilt and Political Sympathy

The implications of a connection across humanity that renders sympathy possible between even extremely different people also has implications for political participation. In the context of *Baumgartner's Bombay*, Jaspers' concept of political guilt suggests that individuals are complicit in the ways in which a political climate cancels or limits sympathies by defining a national identity. For him, political guilt is based in the notion that "Every human being is fated to be enmeshed in the power relations he lives by. This is the inevitable guilt of all, the guilt of human existence" (34). In addition to connection of shared humanity, he points to the fact that simply living together in the same world means that people are inevitably effected by the actions of others, and argues that it is necessary to be aware of this fact. This interconnectedness, "results in my having to bear the consequences of the deeds of the state whose power governs me and under whose orders I live. Everybody is co-responsible for the way he is governed" (31). While he acknowledges that a person may be free from criminal or moral guilt in relation to the actions of the state, he points

out that everyone is politically liable to some degree, because even apparently apolitical people live in the state, and therefore participate to some degree (62).

With mutual responsibility in mind, Jaspers presents two models of political participation. In the first, “all participate with their consciousness, their knowledge, their opinions, and their wills. This is the life of political liberty as a continuous flow of decay and improvement. It is made possible by the task and the opportunity provided by a responsibility shared by all,” while in the second, an individual, “has an easy conscience in obeying and an easy conscience about his nonparticipation in the decisions and acts of those in power. He tolerates the political reality as an alien fact; he seeks to turn it cunningly to his personal advantage or lives with it in the blind ardor of self-sacrifice” (35). Given his definition of political guilt, this second model does not allow a person to escape responsibility for his own actions or the actions of political leaders, but rather creates the illusion of innocents. By prioritizing individual engagement on a political level, Jaspers suggests that it is the role of the individual to help shape the political climate, extending the metaphysical sympathy that is necessary for a peaceful cosmopolitan future.

In *Baumgartner's Bombay*, the political climate works on multiple occasions to cancel sympathies, first splitting the German population between Jews and non-Jews, and later in India during the partition, when the Muslim population is effectively forced out of India. The metaphysical connection that human beings share is effectively cancelled by political action. Desai's portrayal of the resulting violence suggests that a form of political sympathy exists when people question actions that result in the blanket division and separation between groups, effectively attempting to cultivate

metaphysical potential within a political climate. The novel suggests that individuals have a responsibility to resist understandings of people, within their own nation or from other nations, that turn external differences such as race or religion into signifiers of a metaphysical difference that make sympathy impossible.

Desai portrays a pervasive inability to grasp similarities between the violence in Europe during the Second World War, and the violence in India surrounding partition, which points both to the need for greater cross-cultural understanding, and to the strangeness of political actions that can so effectively remove sympathies between people who apparently belong to the same national group. Isabelle Hesse discusses Baumgartner's lack of sensitivity to the situation in India that forces his Muslim friend Habibullah to flee and results in the death of one of his close neighbors, and argues that, "the self-centered view of [Desai's] protagonist, together with his reluctance to be involved in 'their' war, equally serves as a way of criticizing the European view that these wars are separate and have nothing in common" (Hesse 891). While her comment usefully points the dangers of a perspective that cannot take into consideration similarities across national and cultural boundaries, she herself fails to acknowledge the similarities between Baumgartner's inability to understand the realities of the political situation in India and the difficulties that many Indian characters face in understanding distinctions made between Jewish Germans and Nazis during the Second World War.

Baumgartner's conversation with Habibullah as the latter prepares to flee the city demonstrates that tendencies to neglect the complexity of personal danger due to political persecution exist on both sides. Habibullah tells him that, "For us – India is

finished. Don't you know, every night they come and threaten us in our house? Every night they set some Muslim house on fire, stab some Muslim in the street, rob him too. Don't you know, *sahib*, they are driving us out?" (168). He creates a clear division between an 'us' and a 'them,' but it is only after asking who 'they' are that Baumgartner understands that the conflict is between religious groups. He demonstrates a profound lack of understanding of the current political situation of India, one which Habibullah matches when he suggests that Baumgartner use his connections in Europe in order to find work in Bombay: "Europe has had a war, Habibullah," Baumgartner reminded him. "My country is – finished. What business can I do?" (169). In calling his country 'finished,' Baumgartner almost directly echoes his friend's description of India for Muslims. However, just as Baumgartner fails to understand the distinction between 'us' and 'them' that Habibullah draws, "Habibullah had no more conception of Baumgartner's war, of Europe's war than Baumgartner had of affairs in Bengal, in India" (169). While Baumgartner's inability to understand Habibullah's problem may seem like a one-sided issue of a European failing to understand the political climate in India, Desai shows that the obstacles to cross-cultural understanding exist both ways. Just as a political climate can suddenly remove long-standing sympathy between neighbors just because one is Hindu and the other Muslim, so can national divisions allow people to justify a lack of engagement with other conflicts that may resemble their own, limiting their perspective.

While the inability to complexly understand the conflicts affecting different countries and different people suggest a failure on the part of the characters to extend sympathy beyond the confines of certain political definitions, they also point to the

arbitrary nature of the divisions that these political conflicts create within a nation. If Baumgartner fails to grasp the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ Habibullah describes because, “to him they were Indians seen in a mass,” it may be due to his inability to see the similarities between this situation and his own, or due to his obliviousness to fact that the country is not comprised of a homogenous people, but it also suggests that the sudden increase in the importance of religion as an indicator of who deserves sympathy is not the result of any obvious or natural cause (180). Similarly, the pervasive misunderstandings surrounding the status of Jewish people in Germany call into question the process by which a nation might divide itself into antagonistic groups. Baumgartner’s Marxist neighbor Sushil provides an example of this implicit questioning of Nazi ideology. Upon learning that Baumgartner is German, “he lit up with admiration as if in the presence of a war hero. ‘But a Jew, a Jew not a Nazi,’ Baumgartner tried to deflect his misplaced ardour, but this meant nothing to Sushil who had renounced religion for politics and had no interest in Judaism” (177). Despite the religiously-motivated violence in India during this pre-partition period, Sushil fails to take into account the ways in which religion is a political issue, thereby creating his own determined model of how to define a nation. However, by forcibly separating the two issues, he also suggests that Judaism, and perhaps religion in general, is not essential to a person’s self in a way that justifiably marks them out for violence. Both Baumgartner and Sushil have incomplete understandings of the political situations between countries. Baumgartner fails to differentiate, while Sushil fails to see understand that complex interactions of faith, race, and politics. However, their misunderstandings point to the notion that a national identity can be defined in multiple

ways, with multiple sets of criteria, and that systems calling for the sudden and absolute cancelation of sympathy between people who were previously friends and neighbors do not necessarily have their basis in some absolute or metaphysical difference.

In a letter to Jaspers, Arendt suggests that crimes against humanity are, in fact, crimes that threaten the human condition. She writes, “Perhaps what is behind it all is only that individual human beings did not kill other individual human beings for human reasons, but that an organized attempt was made to eradicate the concept of the human being” (*Correspondence* 69). She suggests that the violence that is the result the political cancelation of sympathies threatens humanity in that it threatens the possibility of a continuing notion of humanity and human obligation. Later, in her account of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, she criticizes both the Nuremberg trials for their hesitancy to use the idea of a crime against humanity, and the Eichmann trial because, “At no point...either in the proceedings or in the judgement, did the Jerusalem trial ever mention even the possibility that the extermination of whole ethnic groups...might be more than a crime against the Jewish or the Polish or the Gypsy people, that the international order, and mankind in its entirety, might have been grievously hurt and endangered” (*Eichmann in Jerusalem* 252). Arendt suggests that the failure of the trial was to acknowledge the metaphysical guilt of a crime against humanity. In this respect, she suggests that the trial did not fulfil its role in clarifying guilt, which Jaspers emphasized as such an important part of moving in the right direction for the future, because it was too narrow in the scope of its definition of the

crime and in its definition of the responsibility for that crime. The possibility of a cosmopolitan future is in some way frustrated or limited by the inability of the trial to move toward a more universal conception of guilt and justice. By extension, an inability to access universal sympathy based in the concept of humanity at large forms a similar frustration of cosmopolitan potential, and exists as a danger to a peaceful human condition.

Baumgartner's perspective suggests that the human condition is already one of violence, one which no longer encompasses the potential for positive change. However, the novel also associates this understanding with the limitations to his powers of perception, which suggests that violence stalls the development of sympathies by forcing people to seek stability at the expense of productive personal or political engagement.

“Baumgartner felt himself overtaken by yet another war of yet another people. Done with the global war, the colonial war, only to be plunged into a religious war. Endless war. Eternal war. Twenty thousand people, the newspapers informed him, were killed in three days of violence in Calcutta. Muslims killed Hindus, Hindus killed Muslims. Baumgartner could not fathom it – to him they were Indians seen in a mass and, individually, Sushil the Marxist, Habibullah the trader” (180).

By associating Baumgartner's assertion that human relations are characterized by endless war with his usual questionable inability to distinguish between different portions of the Indian population, Desai gestures to his sense of hopelessness without totally endorsing this perspective. The repetitions in this passage, of the word 'war' and

of the phrase 'yet another,' create the sense of being trapped in a feeling of traumatic repetition. She connects this trauma and the overwhelming violence that surrounds him with a deadening of perception that prevents him from attempting to arrive at a meaningful understanding of the conflict, thereby suggesting that his understanding of a universalized state and experience of violence cannot be taken as authoritative.

Baumgartner's attempts to find stability by recreating a version of the past, then, associate a lack of movement and lack of development with an attempt to cope with the violence he has experienced, which suggests that violence perpetuates an inability to develop cosmopolitan sympathies. When Baumgartner is overwhelmed by the experience of the city, he thinks that, "The city made the internment camp seem privileged, and area of order and comfort. In a panic, he wished he could flee, return to that enclosed world, the neat barracks, the vegetable fields, the fixed hours for baths, meals, lectures, drill, the release from the pressures of the outer world" (62). The camps provide a life separated from the conflicts of the world, in which there is no need for personal agency. This creates an association between Baumgartner's desire for stability, and a lack of the kinds of engagement that seem to be necessary in order to cultivate productive sympathies. While in the camps, part of him resists engaging with the information the prisoners receive about the state of Europe: "It was as if his mind were trying to construct a wall against history, a wall behind which he could crouch and hide, holding him to a desperate wish that Germany were still what he had known as a child and that dream-country his mother continued to live the life they had lived there together" (118). Childhood innocence provides an excuse not to engage, but even that childhood innocence is not rooted in reality, but in an idealized construction that

forms what he thinks of as a physical boundary between himself and the outside world. Desai calls into question this kind of abdication of responsibility by associating his desire for the camps and his desire for the simplicity of childhood with its own kind of violence. Axel Stähler discusses the ways in which seemingly innocent childhood nursery rhymes take on violent meaning through images associated with the Holocaust. He argues that, “Baumgartner’s regression into the false security of an imagined childhood coincides with his mother’s death and the harsh realities of the Holocaust in Germany. In addition, in his ‘real’ childhood, children’s songs, confronted with the bitter reality of the emerging persecution, exhibit the same terrible ambiguity that is embodied by “*Backe, backe Kuchen*” (Stähler 84). While failures to acknowledge complexity and ambiguity work as justifications for violence based in racial and religious identifications, and directly form a key part of the cultural misunderstandings that appear throughout the book, here that simplification becomes the only way Baumgartner knows to deal with his personal traumas and losses. The connection between violence and this kind of paralyzed development suggests that both violence and trauma frustrate cosmopolitan development by preventing communication and engagement.

Aamir Mufti cautions against a defeatist reading of Baumgartner’s traumatized, stalled development and eventual death at the hands of the young German tourist. He argues, “The manner of Hugo’s demise thus provides a seemingly pessimistic ending to Desai’s novel, but, as this ending is also the beginning of the narrative, the overall effect is that of circular motion, a condition that has not yet been worked through and therefore has not yet been overcome, rather than a linear one fated inexorably toward

decline” (Mufti 251). He provides a useful nuance to Jaspers’ portrayal of the postwar period as a turning point from which humanity could move either toward peace or greater violence by suggesting that the work that needs to be done may not necessarily be directional.

Baumgartner’s fascination with the Venice he experienced as a child provides a way of reading motionlessness in the text that does not cast its role as impediment to cosmopolitan development of sympathies as hopeless break in Jaspers’ chain toward the future, but as a state that neither develops nor permanently forecloses human potential. Baumgartner describes Venice: “Once I was there – for seven days. I caught the boat to India from there. It was so strange – it was both East and West, both Europe and Asia. I thought – maybe, in such a place I could be at home” (81). Baumgartner’s perception of Venice is tied not only to its physical and cultural characteristics, but to the role it plays within his own history. By describing the brevity of his visit and emphasizing its role as a point of departure in his journey to India, Baumgartner casts Venice as a liminal space whose embodiment of both East and West is closely associated with this period of transition between his life in Germany and his life in Europe. At the same time, he associates it with the idea a permanent home. This tension between permanent and transitory natures evokes both Baumgartner’s later sense of pessimism about human potential and the novels indications that his attempts to create stability are fragile and transitory. Desai describes his experience there, writing, “Venice *was* the East, and yet it was Europe too; it was that magic boundary where the two met and blended, and for those seven days Hugo had been a part of their union. He realized it only now: that during his constant wandering, his ceaseless

walking, he had been drawing closer and closer to this discovery of that bewitched point where they became one land of which he felt himself the natural citizen” (63). Baumgartner offers somewhat contradictory understandings of his time in Venice, as he presents himself as briefly a part of the union between East and West that implies a resolution of conflict, and describes his experience as a process of “drawing closer” to the possibility of a home that never quite reaches its conclusion. The fact that his realization occurs only much later, after having experienced the East, suggests that this notion of union between the two imposes a particular understanding on his experience, and that he attempts to give order to his confused wandering by giving it direction and placing it within the grander scheme of an idealized notion of union between two different places.

While Venice becomes a site of cosmopolitan potential, the novel suggests that this hope relies in part on a repression of the particulars in Baumgartner’s life, and a refusal to engage with more immediate forms of cosmopolitan connection in favor of reflections on abstracted notions of unity. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud discusses two forms of love, and their role in maintaining human civilizations and communities. The first, its original form, is founded on sexual satisfaction, where the second comes from the desire of people “to protect themselves against the loss of the object by directing their love, not to single objects but to all men alike; and they avoid the uncertainties and disappointments of genital love by turning away from its sexual aims and transforming the instinct into an impulse with an *inhibited aim*” (90; italics Freud’s). He argues that these two forms of love both persist within civilization, and that “[i]n each, it continues to carry on its function of binding together considerable

numbers of people, and it does so in a more intensive fashion than can be effected through the interest of work in common” (91). While both play an important role in the formation of a community, they do not coexist without tension, and Freud argues that too much of one kind of love prevents one from engaging with the other. He writes, “The more closely the members of a family are attached to one another, the more often do they tend to cut themselves off from others, and the more difficult it is for them to enter into the wider circle of life” (92). In this example, an extreme focus on the particular and personal prevents a broader form of love for all humankind. In *Baumgartner’s Bombay*, Baumgartner’s desire for Venice suggests the inverse of this conflict, as his fascination with the city, or an abstract form of cosmopolitanism, points to an inability to engage with more immediate situations and people. After Lotte laughs at his idea, he tells her to leave him alone and “shut his eyes and after an initial swirl of giddiness, felt himself falling through layers of oblivion, grey upon grey, each darker than the last, thicker, blocking out colour and sound” (81). In stark contrast to the vivid colors and sounds of his arrival in India, the site of a more direct cosmopolitanism, his imagined vision of Venice has an anesthetic quality. Ironically, his response to a discussion of the location of all his expectations of belongings and of a union between east and west suggests a loss of the lively potential present in his personal experience of difference. The escapist qualities of his fantasy suggest a suppressed and inhibited cosmopolitanism, where his focus on an overly abstract vision of the city prevents him from engaging in present realities. Lotte’s laughter and mention of the financial obstacles to the life he proposes forms a critique of his escapist vision of cosmopolitics

by suggesting that this hesitantly hopeful outlook relies on the repression of certain, more immediate conditions.

Despite the denial that plays an important role in his idealization of Venice, the city remains a location of a kind of cosmopolitan love of humanity, and this qualified hope suggests that the potential for further change and development remains. Efraim Sicher and Linda Weinhouse argue that, “the Orientalist view of India and the Indian view of Europe are equally false images that come together in the construction of ‘Venice’ as an illusory site of strangeness and not belonging... Thus, we see that Desai’s postcolonial ‘postmemory’ of the relationship between German and Jew refigures the historical memory and the metaphorical construction linking the two in a ‘Venice’ to which they have not yet arrived and will never arrive” (83). While it remains a somewhat idealized dream, his fascination with the city does not only indicate the implausibility of his dreams of “arriving” at a sense of belonging and the resolution of political and social conflict. As a site of imagined peace outside of falsely constructed vision of childhood, it also suggests that Baumgartner retains some hope for human potential. In the wake of violence, human development of sympathy may stall, but humanity can remain on that threshold of potential.

Desai’s cosmopolitanism both recognizes the importance of change and communication, and portrays an unwillingly cosmopolitan character who seems to do his best to remain motionless. Despite the fact that the novel repeatedly shows engagement as necessary in producing both personal and political sympathy, Baumgartner attempts to cut himself off. While his story may seem to represent a failed or illusory cosmopolitanism, Desai suggests that marching in the direction of continual

violence and destruction of humankind and moving towards truth and peace in a utopian future are not the only two options. Rather she presents a traumatized, stalled cosmopolitanism, which maintains the possibility of sympathy across religious, racial, and national boundaries even as individuals attempt to resist engagement and development.

Chapter 3: Critical Cosmopolitanism in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*

The stalled cosmopolitanism in Desai's story has a vivid contrast in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, which both present a dynamic understanding of global conditions. However, neither of their cosmopolitanisms move in such an easily definable direction as Jaspers suggests with his notion of humanity's pivot-point between progress toward a cosmopolitan future and descent into more violence and destruction. Rushdie, especially, creates an understanding of cosmopolitanism that exists as a present reality of the interactions between people and cultures. Rather than looking forward toward a resolution of tensions, his novel accepts and celebrates those tensions as a vehicle of innovation and resistance to the pressures of normative power structures. Mitchell's rejection of a cosmopolitanism that resolves conflict is less radical, but he still resists the notion of a cessation of violence, suggesting that human tendencies toward good and evil cannot resolve one way or another, but instead exist in an eternal negotiation that repeats itself across time. Unlike Rushdie, though, whose cosmopolitanism remains inextricable from the material conditions of history, Mitchell's concept of recurrence gestures toward the possibility of renewal and revival linked to humanity's universalized connection as well as to individual encounters, seemingly gesturing to the possible amelioration of humanity's collective suffering in different contexts and times. Both novels' cosmopolitanisms navigate the relationship between the material and the

metaphysical, both suggesting that the two cannot be taken as completely separate, but each prioritizing a different way of understanding humanity's place within that relationship.

The role of Derrida's concepts of the contingent and the universal and his understanding of the importance of history in defining cosmopolitanism play an important role in *The Satanic Verses* and *Cloud Atlas*, with both novels taking a different approach to defining the relationship between the physical and metaphysical. While *The Satanic Verses* traces material and historical realities in order to question supposedly universal or unchanging realities by showing that they are often grounded in repression or elision, *Cloud Atlas* creates metaphysical connection across time and across humanity which provides an explanation for the material conditions of the novel. However, the novel still prioritizes individual experiences and encounters as a way of understanding aspects of history and individual experience, which suggests that it seeks an intermediary space between a potentially homogenizing metaphysical sense of humanity and the potential violence of a humanity grounded exclusively in the material.

In *The Satanic Verses*, Saladin Chamcha's idealized notions of England gradually breaks down as he experiences the realities of life there, demonstrating that the versions of English identity that he encounters create various criteria of belonging to which it is impossible to adhere. Chamcha's initial dreams of England are based around childhood stories, and a desire to escape his present reality, as "The promise of the magic lamp infected Master Salahuddin with the notion that one day his troubles would end and his innermost desires would be gratified, and all he had to do was wait

it out” (37). He imagines a future in which passivity is rewarded in an unqualified acceptance of his desires. However, his actual experiences quickly challenge this fairy tale, first in India, and then in England. In one of his first experiences at his new school, he struggles to correctly eat a kipper, and after suffering great humiliation, “the thought occurred to him that he had been taught an important lesson. England was a peculiar-tasting smoked fish full of spikes and bones, and nobody would ever tell him how to eat it. He discovered that he was a bloody-minded person. ‘I’ll show them all,’ he swore” (44). By associating England with a challenge he must learn to navigate, he begins to be aware that his acceptance there is contingent upon adherence to certain standards of behavior. Rather than existing and an idealized place where possibility comes from passivity, he realizes that he must work to shape himself those standards. However, he still retains some notion of universal opportunity, in that his decision to “show them all” suggests that it remains possible for him and other immigrants to attain a normative kind of Englishness. Nonetheless, his arrest makes it clear that his acceptance within a society remains violently contingent on factors outside his control: “you’ve got to believe me, I’m a British, he was saying, with right of abode, too, but when he couldn’t produce a passport or any other identifying document they began to weep with mirth” (144). After failing to convince them on his own authority, he tells them to call his “lovely, white, English wife” (145). He acknowledges the full extent of his precarious and contingent position as an immigrant in England, as he believes his wife, by virtue of her race, will carry greater power in the eyes of the authorities to determine that he has a right to be in the country. In contrast to his earlier assumption that personal will can overcome the challenges of immigration and integration, he

indicates here that his body betrays him, keeping him from having the power to define himself as he wishes. This betrayal becomes even more evident as he apparently transforms into a monstrous figure, and it is ambiguous whether the police officers' treatment of him is due to this animalistic shape, or due to his arrest as an apparent illegal immigrant: "'Animal,' Stein cursed him as he administered a series of kicks, and Bruno joined in: 'You're all the same. Can't expect animals to observe civilized standard'" (164). While the names of the policemen show that their heritage is no more Anglo-Saxon than Chamcha's, they find themselves in places of authority, where they can make judgements on behalf of a collective white, English identity. That authority suggests that the contingencies involved in the acceptance of immigrants create enormous discursive obstacles, as certain, seemingly arbitrary definitions shape a collective sense of identity.

The film producer Mr. Sisodia's complaints about, "The Trouble With The English," suggests that English identity depends not only on the exclusion of certain individuals, but on an understanding of history that elides certain forms of violence. He says, "'The trouble with the Engenglish is that their hiss hiss history happened overseas, so they dodo don't know what it means'" (353). Rebecca Walkowitz makes two important points about this moment. First, she describes modernist writers' use of stutters to "represent discrepancies within collective assertion" and argues that, "Sisodia's stutter...serves to dislodge 'the English' from one place and from one historical perspective; the stutter helps to remind readers that Sisodia is in some ways foreign to the language of generalization and in other ways entangled with the culture and language he distains" (136). She argues that his comment points to a less

homogenous version of “The English,” than they or he seem to be aware of (136). His speech seems to work through disorientation as it defamiliarizes certain set concepts in order to critique them. Walkowitz’s second main argument is that Sisodia’s use of “English” rather than “British” emphasizes an extremely closed way of understanding English identity, one which implies a definition that limits “English” to those who are “white, native to England and culturally homogenous,” and that Sisodia, “is using an exclusive name to send up exclusivity: he is suggesting that exclusivity no longer exists in contemporary London and that exclusivity was, in the past, a function of political idiom rather than genuine distinction (137). The fact that Sisodia claims in this moment that English history happens overseas further suggests that their mode of definition comes from the repression of certain elements of its people and history. As discussed above, Derrida argues that the foundation of a nation works to create a sense of amnesia, in which the violence of that nation’s history, or the violence inherent in its establishment, are forgotten. Here, Sisodia’s statement that the English fail to understand their history because it happened overseas simultaneously acknowledges and participates in this amnesia. He suggests that English identity is built on a failure to acknowledge its own heterogeneity, but simultaneously elides the violence present within the country itself. The exclusive version of identity contained in the phrase “the English” is inextricable from these forms of forgetting and repression.

Rushdie’s portrayal of the city suggests that such historical amnesia is not limited to Britain’s colonial history abroad, but to the violence and tensions that exist within the city itself, and though that history, too, may remain hidden or forget, these repressed tensions reproduce themselves, forming as they do the possibility for creation

and innovation. Otto Cone informs his family that, “The modern city...is the locus classicus of incompatible realities...It’s uranium and plutonium, each makes the other decompose, boom” (325). His description of the city as a place of convergence for many varied groups of people makes the city into something threatening, but at the same time, these uneasy or menacing tensions become a source of creation rather than of disaster, as the novel shows London itself is built on the presence of contradictory forces. While Gibreel roams London as the archangel Gabriel, Rushdie describes how “[h]e no longer seemed to need food or rest, but only to move constantly through that tortured metropolis whose fabric was now utterly transformed, the houses in rich quarters being built of solidified fear, the government buildings partly of vainglory and partly of scorn, and the residences of the poor of confusion and material dreams” (331). History, in the form of the conflicting feelings of the people who have inhabited a space, remains just visible under the present structures of the city. The violent tensions across classes and races become an inescapable part of the city itself, yet that violence becomes a site of productivity, as a whole city is built from those conflicts, and Gibreel seems to be able to live on them rather than on food or sleep. The amalgamation of rich and poor people, of misery and greed, allow the city to exist in the first place. However, this history remains repressed, and its sudden visibility turns the city into something unfamiliar and threatening by suggesting that violence was always present, but unseen. Its apparent transformation in the eyes of Gibreel reveals rather than creates that aspect of the city.

While helping Chamcha hide after his transformation, Muhammad Sufyan describes two different modes of transformation, which relate Chamcha’s condition

and migrant experiences more generally to the kind of history that Gibreel's view of the city reveals. He begins by describing Lucretian transformation, in which, "Whatever by its changing goes out of its frontiers,' – that is, bursts its banks, -- or, maybe, breaks out of its limitations, -- so to speak, disregards its own rules, but that is too free, I am thinking ... 'that thing', at any rate, Lucretius holds, 'by doing so brings immediate death to its old self'" (285). He suggests that this model of change produces a kind of violent order, where every transgression of boundaries means death, and so there exists no possibility of partial transformation or hybridity. This rigidity contrasts his discussion of Ovidian transformation: "'As yielding wax' – heated, you see, possibly for the sealing of documents or such, -- 'is stamped with new designs And changes shape and seems not still the same, Yet is indeed the same, even so our souls,' – you hear, good sir? Our spirits! Our immortal essences! – 'Are still the same forever, but adopt in their migrations ever-varying forms'" (285). While the image of heated wax being stamped is not without its own violence, this model of transformation resists absolutes, allowing for identities to be shaped context and history rather than being discontinuously defined as a present self in a present moment. These models of transformation provide a challenge for Chamcha in his new monstrous form, as he says, "Either I accept Lucretius and conclude that some demonic and irreversible mutation is taking place in my most inmost depths, or I go with Ovid and concede that everything now emerging is no more than a manifestation of what was already there" (285-286). His description of Ovidian change, in which what was previously hidden but always present becomes visible, is similar to Gibreel's experience of the city,

where the urban setting becomes defamiliarized as its willfully ignored history of violence is revealed.

In light of the concept of Ovidian change and of the novel's portrayal of an unseen and ignored local history, Saladin's transformation can be read as an instance of renewal, in which a repressed history resurfaces. Tensions and conflict once again play an important role in this renewal as they disrupt normative assumptions of order. While Saladin is in hiding, Mishal describes to him the movement of groups of ethnic minorities in London who identify with Saladin in his distorted form. She says, "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). While the source of the new identity is the definitions of an oppressive force, the groups rallying around it reappropriate that space. Mishal gestures to a new transformative process that Saladin's new form allows as people begin to occupy and influence what has so long been a solely limiting feature of living as part of a marginalized group. Rushdie emphasizes the creation involved in the transformation process as he describes Saladin's image appearing in the dreams of the city. "What was happening, although nobody admitted it or even, at first, understood, was that everyone, black brown white, had started thinking of the dream-figure as *real*, as a being who had crossed the frontier, evading the normal controls, and was now roaming loose about the city" (297 italics Rushdie's). Saladin Chamcha's body becomes the location of a conflict within and between cultures, and as a result the abstract idea of that tension become a physical being with a life of its own, embodying the clashes between people as something new and distinct. This creation also forms a resistance to the normative values that would

reject such a form. Derrida writes that in finding a mode of cosmopolitan communication, “One must...reinvent the norm itself, the very language of the norm for such a transaction. This inventiveness, this reinvention of the norm, even if it must be inaugural, different, without precedent and without prior guarantee, without available criteria every time, must not yield to relativism, empiricism, pragmatism, or opportunism” (*Negotiations* 374). He argues that it is extremely important to resist cosmopolitanism as homogenization influence by cultural and linguistic hegemony. *The Satanic Verses* responds to this need for new forms of communication and understanding with the suggestion that such forms of creation and renewal can come about through challenges to cultural norms that allow repressed and marginalized ways of thinking to resurface and clash with normative values.

While the novel points to forms of renewal that come from the eruption of the repressed into the present, it also suggests that an illusion of renewal can come from repression itself. A key example of this comes at the end when Saladin Chamcha returns to India and decides to give up on his attempts to inhabit a singular, English identity. Gillian Gane discusses different modes of understanding the migrant condition, discussing two options: “On one hand are what Radha Radhakrishnan has called “discourses of the *post* and the *trans*” (38), foregrounding mobility, migrancy, and deracination and associated with the valorization of the hybrid; on the other are discourses of origins, authenticity, indigeneity, and unitary identity” (28). She establishes a binary that resembles one that Derrida sets up between contingent and unconditional hospitality, where one form of identity relies solely on a person’s present context, while the other assumes an unchanging quality that persists, independent of

history or experience. She later argues that, in his return to India and apparent embrace of his past, “Saladin... appears to transcend the opposition between the *post* and the *trans* on the one hand, and the *re* on the other, between continuity and discontinuity, between migrancy and return: instead of either one condition or the other, he performs the impossible feat of achieving both” (37). While her understanding of an integration of the two sides of the binary suggests the possibility of peaceful resolution to historical tensions and to the issues of conflict between contingent and unchanging concepts of identity, the novel does not allow this apparent renewal to stand unquestioned, indicating instead that it relies on a possibly unsustainable repression. On the last page he thinks, “It seemed that in spite of all his wrong-doing, weakness, guilt – in spite of his humanity – he was getting another chance” (561). The novel seems to gesture to the possibility of renewal, of change that produces a break with history. However, this notion of a clean start is incompatible with the many moments throughout the text when a suppressed past shows that it is still extant and active as part of a personality or place. Just as he once viewed himself as completely anglicized, and just as mistakenly, he begins to think of himself as totally Indian, trying to move out of the cross-cultural identity which caused him so much pain. Nyla Ali Khan sees this transition as a moment where, “A reconciliation with the past and a melding of it with his present and future endows one of the novel’s protagonists, Saladin Chamcha, with the ability to develop a new world view” (95). However, this reading overlooks Saladin’s need to suppress aspects of his history in order to develop a new world view, which complicates the idea that this development is one of greater understanding. He thinks, “Childhood was over, and the view from this window was no more than an old

and sentimental echo. To the devil with it! Let the bulldozers come. If the old refused to die, the new could not be born” (561). He repeats a modified version of the song Gibreel sings as they fall through the air at the beginning, “To be born again...first you have to die” (3). Both of them evoke the concept of reincarnation, but Saladin Chamcha’s version prevents a more wilful, and violent version of it, that simplifies and erases aspects of his history in order to produce the sense of renewal. He seems to accept the possibility of a Lucretian model of transformation, in which he is able to enact a complete and uncomplicated change of selves, becoming completely something else.

The novel qualifies the effectiveness of such an erasure of the past in advance, as it implies that rejected selves and histories remain present and are capable of resurfacing. When Chamcha returns to his father’s house in the final section, the narrator notes that he “felt hourly closer to many old, rejected selves, many alternative Saladins – or rather Salahuddins – which had split off from himself as he made his various life choices, but which had apparently continued to exist, perhaps in parallel universe of quantum theory” (538). Despite his painstaking efforts to become English and to permanently disconnect himself from these past selves, he finds himself growing closer to them, almost automatically. While, by the ending, Saladin chooses to read this closeness as a return to his true identity, as he renounces his previous desires to repress his past in order to produce a sense of Englishness, the multiplicity of selves suggests that there is not a single authoritative identity, and their lingering presence shows that they do not depend on his acceptance or acknowledgement of them. Their existence qualifies his earlier claims to have erased his past in India, and so qualify his final

claim to have fully rejected the Englishness he had worked so hard to cultivate. Gaurav Majumdar argues that Chamcha “cancel[s] his intimation (or desire) of a life elsewhere” at the ending, as he accepts Zeeny Vakil’s invitation to “get the hell out of here,” and accompany her to her apartment (116). He discusses the pun in Zeeny’s statement, arguing, “Yet again, Chamcha chooses to select discontinuity, a decision the novel’s final exchange doubly implies and opens to doubt: the novel has insisted that various kinds of hell (national, international, personal) as well as past and future relations, can’t merely be wished away: earlier, the narrator wryly notes that ‘a history is not so easily shake off’” (117). The consistent doubt that the novel shows toward a model of identity that relies on erasure and suppression suggests Chamcha’s ability to construct a consistent sense of self comes more from a blindness to his “alternative Saladins” than an escape from them.

The novel associates this assumption of a simple change of identity and return to the past with a certain anaesthesia, or the numbing of one’s perception to nuance. Earlier on in the novel, Chamcha laments his transformation, thinking, “I have become embroiled, in things, in the world and its messes, and I cannot resist. The grotesque has me, as before the quotidian had me, in its thrall” (269). In associating a high degree of connection with the grotesque, Rushdie implies that the everyday is characterized by the absence of this entanglement. He suggests that routine reduces conflict, or complication, but that this simplicity comes at the cost of meaningful engagement. This mode of understanding routine or stability further calls into question Chamcha’s supposed rebirth in the last section. In her discussion of the ending, Gane points out that, “‘The Wonderful Lap’ is in one sense the novel’s most realistic section, the only

section in which there is no magic whatsoever—no metamorphoses, no dream cities of sand, no clouds of butterflies, yet it can at the same time been seen as the least realistic and most fantastic part of *The Satanic Verses*” (37). This shift toward realism in the last section suggests that Chamcha’s ability to reestablish himself in India in a stable identity is in part a fantasy, his childhood dream of a magic lamp, which depends on his own willful amnesia. He reestablishes a sense of stability, but that stability and structured way of understanding himself requires him to disengage with a more disruptive and complex world.

Anesthesia also plays in important role in *Cloud Atlas*, where it is frequently associated with violence, as the novel emphasizes the importance of alertness through its portrayals of various forms of and reactions to cannibalism. Several critics have discussed the importance of cannibalism in Mitchell’s work, usually presenting it as a violent alternative to peaceful cosmopolitan relations. Bayer points to the use of cannibalism in *Cloud Atlas* as an indication that humanity has suffered for its greed. He points to the example of Dr. Henry Goose taking teeth to sell to dentists in London as an instance of the rich eating up the poor, and argues that, “What matters in this global act of cultural and actual cannibalism is the kind of spin given to it in the domain of public discourse: the Sonmi narrative at the center of the novel, where low-class workers are literally fed into the system of global corporatism, only offers the more gruesome portrayal of such unspeakable acts” (352). For him, cannibalism is related to power dynamics within a society whose repetition across time provides evidence of humanity’s tendency toward greed, as the powerful take advantage of the weak. Shaw uses Mitchell’s later novel, *The Bone Clocks*, to argue that Mitchell’s cosmopolitanism

presents two choices for humankind. He writes that, “By envisioning a universal war between two fantastical cults, the idealistic ‘Horologists’ and rapacious ‘soul-decanter’, the novel positions the history of civilization itself as a struggle between ethical cosmopolitanism and cannibalistic self-preservation” (Shaw 120). Once again, cannibalism becomes part of a two-sided struggle, this time between a much more cleanly delineated good and evil. Both Bayer and Shaw strongly emphasize clearly divided power dynamics and binaries in their understanding of cannibalism, which does not address the ways in which the novel implicate a wider range of actions and characters in this violence and cannibalism that is apparently so antithetical to cosmopolitanism.

Other theories of cannibalism address the ways in which acts of cannibalism trouble and disrupt normative assumptions, including those of social and class power relations. In *Eating Well, Reading Well*, Nicole Simek contends that cannibalism, “represents both a claim to a particular identity—the acceptance and promotion of one’s otherness, of one’s independence from a dominating colonial discourse—and the erasure of that difference through an act of appropriation, a claim to a hybrid identity marked at once by its inclusive cosmopolitanism and its exclusive national or regional specificity” (168). She describes a practice that troubles the clear distinctions between ethical and unethical practices that Bayer and Shaw identify, as it blurs the line between an assertion of difference and a violent, homogenizing consumption. She connects this kind of cannibalism to the practice of reading and interpreting, describing a process by which a reader might navigate “the relation between assimilation and resistance to identification, between delightfully feasting on texts and knowing when to

stop eating” (170). This understanding of reading could be linked to Derrida’s comments on immigration in *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, where he suggests that eliminating it altogether would disallow difference, while completely opening borders in order to produce free movement between communities would result in homogenization. The two extremes produce the same result. Similarly, it is the middle ground between total consumption of the other and a refusal to engage with that other at all that produces ethical reading rather than a similar rejection of difference. Simek highlights the need for discernment on the part of the reader in this dilemma, and a similar need for awareness is present in Mitchell’s discussion of cannibalism and the cosmopolitan community in *Cloud Atlas*.

The novel links the experience of violence to an anesthetized illusion, as it draws an association between the extreme violence that Sonmi experiences and Timothy Cavendish’s description of a death by shark attack. He says, “A volume I once published, *True Recollections of a Northern Territories Magistrate*, claims that shark victims experience an anesthetic vision of floating away, all danger gone, into the Pacific blue, at the very moment they are being minced in that funnel of teeth” (161). Cavendish’s description also carries certain resonances with the deaths of the fabricants in Papa Song’s Ark. Sonmi describes how, in the moment after a fabricant has been killed with a helmet-like device, “the helmet rose, the server sat upright, then was lifted off her feet into the air. Her corpse seemed to dance a little; her smile of anticipation frozen in death tautened as her facial skin took some of the load” (342-342). Both the fabricant and the shark’s victim float away, anesthetized by a certain kind of vision, even as the shark’s teeth “mince” the person, and as the fabricant’s body faces, “A

slaughterhouse production line...manned by figures wielding scissors, sward saws, and various tools of cutting, stripping, and grinding” (343). However, the image of the shark’s victim also resonates with Adam Ewing’s notion of a human being’s final moment of true understanding. He writes in his journal, “He who would do battle with the many-headed hydra of human nature must pay a world of pain & his family must pay it along with him! & only as you gasp your dying breath shall you understand, your life amounted to no more than one drop in a limitless ocean!” (509). While Cavendish’s description of the shark’s victim seems to suggest that this vision of “floating away...into the Pacific blue” amounts to a kind of hallucination, Ewing’s understanding of the self as single drop in a vast ocean suggests that this sense of being dissolved into a sea is in fact a moment of final insight into the human condition, which brings peace. An important difference between the two experiences, however, is that Ewing portrays this death as a moment of understanding in which the dying person can access some kind of truth, while in the fabricants and the victim of the shark attack experience only an anesthetized vision. While this association does imply that extreme violence prevents individuals from accessing meaningful and nuanced understandings of their place in the world, it also links the two types of deaths together, suggesting both that Ewing, with his idealistic image of humanity, cannot remain completely untouched by violence,¹ and, in contrast, that even the extreme violence of the “corpocracy” cannot erase this connection between human beings.

The novel works associatively, connecting the institutionalized cannibalism of Sonmi’s section to the nature of history and the passage of time. As Bayer points out,

¹ Ewing himself is implicated in a form of cannibalism when he eats shark meat because many believe, as he points out, “sharks are known to eat men, thus to eat shark flesh is cannibalism by proxy” (495)

the corpocracy's cannibalism is a function of greed, in that it works to maximize profit through a violent form of efficiency. Sonmi says that it all comes down to economics, that "The genomics industry demands huge quantities of liquefied biomatter, for wombtanks, but most of all, for Soap. What cheaper way to supply this protein than by recycling fabricants...? Additionally, leftover, "reclaimed proteins" are used to produce Papa Song food products, eaten by consumers in the corp's dineries... It is a perfect food cycle" (343). By referring to the process as a "food cycle," Sonmi suggests that the horror she witnessed is in some way a corruption of a very natural process, which, once mobilized for profit, becomes a machine for mass-produced violence. Because of this association with a natural cycle, Timothy Cavendish seems to call forward to this kind of society when he describes his experience of nature: "Leaves turned to soil beneath my feet. Thus it is, trees eat themselves" (177). Nature engages in a similar, efficient process of "reclaiming" itself in order to continue living. Here, however, the image carries significantly less horror. The image of a tree and its leaves becomes closely associated with the passage of time, as Zachry observes when he visits the "Icon'ry," that "the gone-lifes outnumber the now-lifes like leafs outnumber trees" (245). The connection between these two images suggests that time itself involves a certain kind of cannibalism, through the resonance between Zachry and Cavendish's imagery, the "now-lifes" sustain themselves on the "gone-lifes." However, there is once again a key difference between the overtly violent consumption of humans eating others of their own species, and the image of a tree renewing itself across time by incorporating aspects of its history. While it retains traces of cannibalistic assimilation, it demonstrates a more restrained, sustainable way of absorbing the past.

Berthold Schoene frames Mitchell's understanding of history in terms of an unending struggle between good and evil. He writes, "History is shown not so much to repeat itself as to find itself in permanent oscillation between hope, joy and fear, good and evil, certain demise and thereafter inevitable regeneration" (Schoene 115). Later he writes that the novel demonstrates, "humanity's ongoing vulnerability to evil, as demonstrated by the gruesome fate of Autua's and Zachry's peoples at the hands of their enslavers, as well as the inveterate resilience of humanity's goodness, as shown in its irrepressible recurrence and, via Zachry's offspring, its hopeful perpetuation within and beyond the innermost depths of the cosmopolitan imagination" (Schoene 117). One implication of this view of history as an oscillation is that Mitchell reduces the threat of violence by showing that good will reassert itself, and that recurrence will bring back positive ideals of humanity, even when those ideals are apparently effaced by the presence of evil. However, his emphasis on reconstitution as the process by which this renewal occurs suggests that within the processes of history, this good and evil Schoene identifies cannot be neatly separated, as each play a role in producing the other.

Reconstitution, or a kind of artistic "cannibalism," becomes an important model for innovation in "Letters from Zedelghem," which links individual innovation and artistic production to the process of renewal on a cosmic scale. Robert Frobisher describes the three forms of work he does with Ayrs: "'Revisionals' – he asks me to run through the previous morning's work. I hum, sing, or play, depending on the instrument, and Ayrs modifies the score. 'Reconstitucionals' have me sifting through old scores, notebooks, and compositions, some written before I was born, to locate a

passage or cadenza Ayrs dimly remembers and wants to salvage. Great detective work” (59). The model of creativity he describes is based in past creation, as he works with Ayrs to transform or refine old pieces. Even the most original form of work, “Compositionals,” involve acts of transformation, as Frobisher either tries to keep up with Ayrs dictation of rhythms and pitches, or works from a different kind of dictations, since “if he’s felling more poetic, it might be, ‘Now Frobisher, the clarinet is the concubine, the violas are yew trees in the cemetery... so...let the east wind blow that A minor chord, sixteenth bar onwards”” (60). The associative kind of composition that Ayrs employs here involves much interpretation and choice on Frobisher’s part, which leads him to give direct input into the process. While at first he finds it, “sobering,” that Ayrs uses his suggestions form historically noteworthy music, they later come into conflict over their collaboration (60). When Ayrs asks Frobisher to write some themes for him to develop later, Frobisher reference coauthorship, Ayrs rejects the notion and says, “You gather the raw material, I refine it as I see fit...All the Greats have their apprentices do it. How else could a man like Bach turn out new masses every week” (455). He suggests that some kind of artistic cannibalism is common, and even as Frobisher rejects this kind of collaboration, he claims that the best parts of an earlier work were his, which shows that he has already participated in it. At the same time, his own innovation has come from a degree of assimilation and interpretation of Ayrs’s and Nietzsche’s influence, to which he is exposed during this period of his life. The line between violent exploitation and natural reconstitution becomes a matter of personal discernment, and Frobisher must rely on individualized ethical distinctions made in the process of consuming and producing artwork.

The novel uses art and artistic production as one way of creating connections across time, suggesting that individual perceptions and experiences reconstitute the past in new and meaningful, creating continuity across humanity, but also resisting an overly homogenized model of humanity. Bayer argues the novel prioritizes the present, and focuses on the notion of a face-to-face encounter across time, and on the role of art. He writes that the novel “emphasizes the importance of investing time and energy into the here and now. Each prayer to Sonmi, the novel intimates, engenders little more than a dialogue with yet another human being, who herself struggled with violent enemies. Progress and historical change are thus shrunk into a single moment” (Bayer 348).

While the novel’s cross-temporal encounters do create a sense of connection between the difference characters, and while the structure of the novel prevents them from being read as purely one-sided, Bayer’s notion of these prayers to Sonmi as a dialogue between human beings seems to neglect the way that she has been transformed across time to occupy a different role. While the interaction of the two characters does imply a kind of timelessness through the close connection between two very different periods, it also emphasizes the ways in which time allows for the production of new meaning. Individual encounters emphasize the difference that exists between people as much as it does their enduring, metaphysical connection. Bayer later discusses the role of art in the novel, arguing that, “the novel resorts to music, film, literature, and biography to explain how humanity manages to bridge time through the creation of timeless values....The novel so insistently emphasizes these connections, one can indeed argue that its “characters are constituted in and of literature’ (Hopf 110). Through these aesthetic encounters, *Cloud Atlas* presents art as existing outside of time” (Bayer 348).

This existence outside of time has the effect of transporting characters momentarily outside of time as well. For example, Sonmi describes her experience watching films:

Certainly: the vacant disneyarium was a haunting frame for those lost, rainy landscapes. Giants strode the screen, lit by sunlite captured thru a lens when your grandfather's grandfather, Archivist, was kicking in his natural womb. Time is the speed at which the past decays, but disneys enable a brief resurrection. Those since fallen buildings, those long-eroded faces: Your present, not we, is the true illusion, they seem to say (234).

In this instance, art provides the means for the past to irrupt into the present, for it to be seemingly resurrected. Rather than creating a sense of timelessness in which the past is brought into the present, however, art "haunts" the present, and creates a sense of estrangement. It takes Sonmi out of time for a moment, linking her to the past by breaking down the difference between the two. This moment of haunting suggests that art, as it is re-experienced across time, is reconstituted and made present for its reader, whose interpretations give it new life. This process of interpretation and experience contributes to an overarching sense of humanity in which individual experience of resonance across time play as important a role as the sense of a metaphysical connection. These individual connections help to navigate a homogenizing sense of over-identification across humanity that might erase the effects of violence across history, and an entirely individually based sense of connection that might produce violence through a lack of identification, such as in the case of the fabricants who are not recognized as human. However, these moments of connection depend on an individual's ability to perceive them.

Cloud Atlas both models history in such a way as to reduce the importance of the individual through a process of renewal in which the broad processes of history shape the course of human experience, and prioritizes individual perspectives by showing that the metaphysical concept of humanity as a whole derives meaning from individual encounter within the present and across time. While the novel's call for discernment and discrimination emphasizes the importance of individual critical faculties, this ethical demand also identifies a process of recognition and identification as the main means by which one can understand an individual's relationship to the whole of humanity, which suggests that that relationship exists to be read and interpreted rather than itself challenged or transformed.

For Rushdie, history remains grounded in violence, in forgotten memories reasserting themselves, and in the tensions that reproduce themselves across time. Yet the tensions that create violence also create in a more general sense; cities and religions are built upon contradiction, and that contradiction can never truly be erased from the self or from the world. It is this form of chaotic, sometimes random, history that produces the apparent authority of religion and other ways of defining the self. Mitchell's portrayal of history is also one driven by tensions, but tensions that the novel more clearly defines as existing between humanity's tendency toward greed and evil on the one hand, and humanity's capacity for good on the other hand. It displays a more obvious binary logic, which lends itself to a concept of renewal in which the presence of widespread evil is tempered by the notion of a metaphysical ocean of souls that will restore richness and sympathy to humanity. However, that transcendental link across humanity derives meaning from individual experiences of time and of their own

lives, and those individual lives and their cannibalistic experiences of their pasts and presents resist the possible over-homogenization present in the idea of an essential humanity. Where Rushdie's focus is on the ability of the material and conditional to call into question the authority of the metaphysical and unconditional, emphasizing constant skepticism, Mitchell portrays a set of cosmopolitan relations in which these two ways of understanding human connections must help to constitute one another, but which partially suspend the need for skepticism by suggesting that ethical individual relations rely in part on the recognition of a metaphysical human condition.

Conclusion

Each of the theorists and novels identify different arrays of possibilities for and sources of a cosmopolitan future with varying degrees of optimism certainty. While both Kant and Jaspers discuss a kind of historical trajectory leading toward a potential cosmopolitan future, Kant's version is undoubtedly the more optimistic of the two, as he assumes an ever-increasing capacity for reason that inevitably leads, at some unknown point in the future, to the resolution of conflict. Jaspers, on the other hand presents a more doubtful situation in which there are two alternatives: the peaceful establishment of a cosmopolitan community or humanity's descent into still greater violence. Similarly, while both *Orlando* and *Baumgartner's Bombay* engage with the possibility for a cosmopolitan future, it is *Orlando* that presents the qualified realization of the eponymous character's personal potential, while *Baumgartner's Bombay* resists a clear resolution into either hope or despair. While Woolf's novel begins with a failed encounter with difference, as Orlando slashes impotently at hanging heads of fallen enemies killed by now-deceased forefathers, she seems to achieve a utopian version of the self through her increased capacity for sympathy and receptivity, which allow her to form connections locally and globally while resisting codified social expectations. By contrast, Baumgartner's development points to a sense of hope as his exposure to different people and languages upon his arrival provides the opportunity for innovation and increased capacities for communication, but this hope is frustrated by his partially self-induced isolation and apparent inability to relate to those around him outside of firmly established structures of identity and belonging. While even the intimacy that Orlando experiences and then loses in Turkey increases her

receptivity to others, specifically later with Shelmerdine, Baumgartner's lost intimacies and his limited connection with Lotte produce and reinforce an intense isolation.

The difference in the two responses to intimacy lies perhaps in the relationship between interpersonal connection and alertness to difference, in which attention and engagement allows for new relations with unexpected effects. Orlando's relationship with Shelmerdine allows her to interact with the "spirit of the age," in a somewhat subversive manner, both adhering to it through marriage, and resisting it through a marriage based in love and intimacy. Her wide experience across centuries and continents allows her the necessary attention to nuance to rework her relationship to the pressures of the period, finding a space for herself. The importance of this subtle resistance in Orlando's development of sympathies and in her relations to the people around her point to a slightly different kind of cosmopolitanism than Kant, who values a resolution of tensions, since Orlando's potential as a model for a cosmopolitan being comes from her ability to create connections beyond those that are socially prescribed, navigating tensions without ever neutralizing them.

In contrast to Orlando's subversion and the resulting possibilities for pleasure and intimacy, Baumgartner seeks an imagined space in the past, where he is walled off from the present in hopes of experiencing a false sense of stability that prevents him from engaging in a meaningful manner with the people around him. Intimacy remains an important agent of community-formation, but the potential for intimacy, for new combinations of languages and ideas, remains frustrated. The novel associates Baumgartner's inability to connect with those around him with the violence of the Second World War and of partition, where a cancelation of political sympathies

manifests itself in an inability to discern shared humanity due to differences of race or religion. While the novel largely represents failed intimacies, it suggests that sympathy has the possibility to counter the forms of violence present in Jaspers' discussion of personal and political guilt. Baumgartner's disconnected, numbed state points to the need for individual sympathies and critical faculties to interact with collective actions in order to produce meaningful relations.

Alertness is crucial to the cosmopolitan combinations and potentials portrayed in *The Satanic Verses* and *Cloud Atlas*, where the interactions of conditional and unconditional understandings of hospitality and cosmopolitanism call into question authoritative or fixed accounts of identity and belonging. Both novels present various forms of change and renewal as a means of understanding history. In *The Satanic Verses*, these renewals come from tensions as what is repressed resurfaces and leads to innovation through new combinations and interactions. While these conflict-ridden irruptions of the past into the present may be painful, the novel suggests that they are necessary in order to challenge set structures of power and to render visible the inadequacies of overly bounded understandings of nationality. In *Cloud Atlas*, these renewals work through recurrence the eternal movements of history between humanity's tendencies toward greed and self-interest, and its capacities for sympathy and understanding. Critical discernment becomes a way of distinguishing between history's more and less violent forms of renewal and reconstitution, and of gaining understanding of individuals' relationship to the whole of humanity.

Cloud Atlas's image of an individual as a drop and the ocean, and the ocean as "a multitude of drops" suggests a human life holds importance primarily in its relation

to other human lives, but that, correspondingly, humanity as a whole is significant only in that it is comprised of individuals (508). This relation between the individual and the collective plays an important role in cosmopolitan theory, where various theorists approach political structures in terms of differently defined concepts of human nature, personal and collective responsibility, and ethical obligations. Woolf, Desai, Rushdie, and Mitchell explore the implications of these various models on the level of individuals living within larger political systems, and locate the cosmopolitan potential for engagement and sympathy through the development of or resistance to certain forms of communal identification in those individuals' critical capacities.

Literature finds itself well-suited to discussions of cosmopolitanism which prioritize individual critical faculties, as it can explore possible cosmopolitanisms through a rehearsal of varied and unanticipated relations, focusing tensions and incompatibilities, as well as sympathies and connections that exist at individual and communal scales. This potential for newness relies on combination and discrimination which novels depict through their depictions of multiple perspectives and through formal representations of sometimes uneasily coexisting multiplicities. As a novel, *Orlando* has the ability to trace a wide range of perspectives and understandings within a single person, and *Baumgartner's Bombay* similarly occupies multiple temporal spaces in order to interrogate different opinions and experiences. Both *The Satanic Verses* and *Cloud Atlas* provide a multiplied perspective, formally representing a multiplied global consciousness, in the interaction of extremely varied perspectives and experiences make up the world. Their use of multiple time periods and voices, and frequent allusion to many other literary forms and works also points to the possibility

of innovation as closely tied to a process of combination and reconstitution. Literature allows for many forms of uncertainty and ambiguity that invite interpretation, often forcing a literary form of the engagement and discernment they portray as a mode of understanding an individual's role in the world, and propose a more dynamic understanding of global relations, where the non-normative and the unexpected provide richer potentials for cosmopolitanism than conventional understandings of community that purport to resolve tensions.

One area that my arguments and theorizations of cosmopolitanism more generally have underexplored is the production and transmission of cosmopolitan concepts and identities. While Derrida traces a textual history of cosmopolitanism in the Hebraic tradition, in medieval cities, and in Greek stoicism and Pauline Christianity, through to Kant's writings, and explains the historical contexts for concepts such as crimes against humanity, wider considerations of how individuals come to define themselves in relation to a global community or collective concept of humanity would be worth considering (17-20). Literature's capacity to portray individual perspectives and developing understandings over time makes literary studies especially capable of exploring shifting understandings of world-citizenship and a global history and community, both on the level of a single person and larger societies. Further study might engage with the various kinds influences, be they political, textual, or social, which contribute to discursive formations of world communities.

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