The Affectivities of (Mis)Recognition in the Global Anglophone Novel

by

Devina Kaur Sindhu

A dissertation accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Comparative Literature

Dissertation Committee:

Sangita Gopal, Chair

Michael Allan, Core Member

Leah Middlebrook, Core Member

Mary E. Wood, Institutional Representative

University of Oregon

Summer 2024

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores the intersection of affect studies and decolonial reading methodologies through an examination of three post-1945 Global Anglophone novels written by women from diverse contexts in the English-speaking world: Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2005), Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990). By focusing on the emotional dynamics within these texts, the project demonstrates how affective experiences foster a self-interrogative process in readers that aligns with the transformative goals of decolonial scholarship. Through close readings, the dissertation reveals that these novels engage in decolonial pedagogical practices, utilizing narrative perspectives and emotional intensity to respond critically to Ameri Eurocentric cultural legacies. By uniting texts under the Global Anglophone framework, this analysis shifts away from traditional, historically rooted, and disciplinary-focused analyses that can often rely on formulaic reading practices. Instead, it highlights the archival and methodological potential of the Global Anglophone to facilitate self-interrogation essential for envisioning a reformed future. The dissertation aims to elucidate how specific texts from the Global Anglophone highlight and pedagogically address the tensions and strained intersubjective dynamics influenced by white supremacy, illustrating how these politicized encounters generate an excess of emotionality that remains largely unrecognized by dominant groups within these interactions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank God for guiding me through every part of this journey. I deeply appreciate the incredible support, love, and encouragement from the many people God has brought into my life who have made this project possible. Most of all, I would like to thank my Chair, Sangita Gopal who gave me her unwavering support through the dissertation writing process and allowed me to trust my intuition with this project. Sangita has stood by me since I came to her with my dissertation idea and took me in as her student with the true dedication I never could have imagined. I feel absolutely honored to have experienced Sangita's generosity, care, and support that kept me focused on finishing my project through otherwise dismal circumstances during the pandemic. Her sharp and quick mind, sense of humor, and wisdom gave me a clear direction through every step of the way. Thank you.

Michael Allan's mentorship and guidance throughout the dissertation phase of my graduate study began much sooner than my project. Michael has been a supportive presence through my years in graduate school, and he never failed to generously give me his time and expertise, and his knowledge in postcolonial theory and literature, as well as in the art of being a comparatist never failed to leave me in awe. He took great care in providing me with thoughtful insight into this project in its early stages. I am so thankful to have had his methodical guidance and enthusiastic support through this journey.

Leah Middlebrook has been a dedicated mentor through my graduate studies, especially in her gifts for feedback that made my writing stronger. Her questions always pushed my thinking further, and she never failed to ask me to take myself seriously as a scholar. Her dedication to her students is unmatched, and I keep her encouragement and kindness in my heart as I move forward. Also, her many insights in creating systems and rituals for success through

the writing process are what brought my dissertation to fruition and are now methods that will stay with me forever. I am so grateful.

I would like to thank Mary E. Wood, who gave me immediate encouragement, warmth, and support from our very first meeting; she allowed me space to blossom by believing in me. She is not only a joy to work with, but she has been profoundly instrumental in helping me think through the gaps in my thought process as I crafted each chapter. I also thank Bonnie Mann, who, as a member of my qualifying exams committee, inspired my project early in its infancy through our one-on-one meetings, and through the many classes I have taken with her on feminist philosophy. She has been a ray of sunshine in my life and has generously shaped my thinking and scholarship in profound ways. I carry her knowledge forward in my writing and teaching with a grateful heart.

The Comparative Literature department at the University of Oregon offers the opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary manner and has allowed me the privilege to work with many brilliant scholars. Furthermore, I believe that my scholarship cannot progress effectively without the students who fill my classroom. The Comparative Literature department's encouragement of utilizing our classrooms as a springboard for the creative enrichment of our own research has been abundantly useful to me. Thus, I would like to thank my students at the University of Oregon for providing me with the conversations, materials, and rich insight that animates each chapter of this dissertation.

Although my dissertation concludes my doctoral studies at the University of Oregon, my transition into becoming a scholar and a teacher began much sooner first at the University of California, Irvine, then at Cal Poly Pomona, and finally at San Diego State University. My professors at UC Irvine made me fall in love with both literature and theory, including Andrzej

Warminski, Jayne Lewis, Rei Terada, Victoria Silver, and countless others who shaped me without knowing me, such as Eliza Tamarkin, Linda Georgianna, Annette Schlichter, and Steven Mailloux; then at Cal Poly Pomona, my teaching mentor, Susan Ford Irons, who gave me her complete love and support; and finally at SDSU, I grew to deepen my literary interests and build new ones through the guidance of Harry Polkinhorn, Joseph Thomas, Yetta Howard, Quentin Bailey, Lynda Koolish, and Suzanne Bordelon. I have also many friendships I have made through my educational journey since high school, and ideas and energies exchanged over the years with kindred spirits must have inadvertently blossomed into some part of this project. I appreciate Stephanie Lischke, Lila Tolouian, Kristen Lucero, Sarah Yu, Amelia Acker, Steffanie Peevers, Albert Wang, Jessica Numsuwankijkul, Tiffany Tse, William/Willow Tanner, Yijia Wang, Erica Curtis, Dahlia Guajardo, and Jason Lester. Without their encouragement of me and my work, I would not be here today.

My love of literature came from my parents reading to me every night and sharing their love of learning. My father was dedicated to taking us on weekly trips to the Temple City and Arcadia Public Libraries. I cherish my memories in those spaces, as well as skipping away with the bundle of books that I would later gobble up while sitting on the hallway steps or later, in my bed, while the rest of the family was sleeping, and even while getting carsick on road trips across the United States. I began reading my mother's favorite books from her youth in the Christian colonial education she received in India. By the age of fifteen, I had read all her favorites—and all books by women—*Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Gone with the Wind*, and *Little Women* and however flawed these roots, this began my investment in reading writing by women. I am grateful to all the female authors in this dissertation that taught me more about myself and the world, as well as the writers and professors who helped decolonize my reading archives and

practices.

My journey here would also not be possible without my parents' financial support through my undergraduate studies, especially their support in allowing me to study English literature—which they knew would not yield lucrative results or the stability I might need in rocky economic times. My parents' emotional and intellectual support, and that of both my sisters, Nimrita and Sahiba, and the encouragement from my brother, Arjan, and brother-in-law, Travis, has been indispensable throughout my journey. I especially feel grateful for the many engrossing conversations I had with my younger sister, Sahiba. I feel the smiles of my wonderful niece and nephew, Kareena and Zarek in my project, and I feel so very grateful for all the hugs, warmth, and love from my son, Ishaan, who kept me joyful in the present moment, and steadfast in moving toward my future.

I feel so lucky. Despite all the odds, here I am. I hope this project makes you all proud.

DEDICATION

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God is One

Dear Waheguru—My Wondrous Lord and Guide

To my parents, Nuri Singh and Shivinder Singh Sindhu, and my siblings, Nimrita, Sahiba, and Arjan, who have provided me with a devoted love and unwavering support through my life.

To my son, Ishaan L. Singh, my pride and joy, who took this prolonged journey with me.

And to the women who inspired me and stood beside me in my imagination as I wrote: my grandmothers—my Nani, Harbhajan Kaur and my Amiji, Satwant Kaur; the single mothers that inhabit this dissertation, Toni Morrison and Helen Vendler; and last, but not least, the mentors who believed in me when I could not, Sangita Gopal and Susan Ford Irons

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1993 "Afterword" to her novel *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison speaks of a childhood experience when a friend confided in her and told her that "she wanted blue eyes" (209). She describes her feeling of revulsion when her friend disclosed this secret: "I looked around to picture her with them and was violently repelled by what I imagined she would look like if she had her wish. The sorrow in her voice seemed to call for sympathy, and I faked it for her, but astonished by the desecration she proposed, I "got mad" at her instead" (209). It is the memory of this anger that propels Morrison to imagine and write the story of a young, marginalized Black girl who struggles to exist in white supremacist culture and who learns racial self-loathing as a result of it.

Morrison tasks herself with revisiting this emotionally fraught episode in order to understand and sympathize with her friend's secret wish. At its core, her friend's desire came from a particular feeling—the feeling of shame. Morrison's text reveals the process of how a feeling arises and becomes permanently lodged within the individual. Most importantly, Morrison shows that a feeling like shame isn't something that arises solely out of the individual that is feeling it, but how the feeling is transmitted through a social field of collective actors, and their subjective affects and responses to particular bodies. As particular actions are repeated, specific affects attached to those actions are communicated as well. For example, in the case of Pecola from *The Bluest Eye*, the lack of care through parental and social support, the scarcity of material resources available to her, and society's disdain for her physical appearance and Blackness make her an abject figure because each time those actions are repeated, she is told that she deserves disrespect, until the ultimate act of disrespect occurs when her father rapes her, and she can no longer mentally cope with the world if she must physically exist in it. Because there

are no forms of protection, love, material support, and care for Pecola, she must imagine a world where little girls have better and more secure lives—like for Shirley Temple and Judy Garland.

Morrison's "Afterword" conveys how the critical element of her portrayal of Pecola's experience is not so much plot-driven—or about the actual events of the experience, but the emotions relayed through the events. Morrison's self-described purpose of her project in *The Bluest Eye* reveals how Morrison tries to construct a narrative that could help herself, as much as her audience, understand how someone comes to have a particular embodied feeling—the desire to have blue eyes. Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* can be read as a "autoethnographic text," a term from Mary Louise Pratt's "Arts of the Contact Zone" that refers to "a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them" (35). The unique characteristic when engaging with an autoethnographic text, I claim, is the mode of analysis—one that is not focused on narrative alone (what happens) or how the story is narrated (the narrative voice), but rather, the narrative serves as a scaffolding device to educate the reader how to understand the world through a different lens than the one given through being indoctrinated by the dominant discourse. This strategy is utilized in order to convey how it feels to be or experience the world through the lens of the narrator—in this case, how it feels to be a young Black girl in America. *The Bluest Eye* can be read as an autoethnographic fictional text, a story that is told in the voice and imagination of the minority group it is representing.

My investigation is rooted in three novels from the post-1945 Global Anglophone written by women from different contexts. This project bridges together affect studies with decolonial reading methodologies to instantiate how the emotionality conveyed through the intersubjective encounter within the literary texts becomes a powerful activating mechanism for the reader's self-interrogative process that is essential to aims of the changed future imagined by decolonial

scholarship. Close readings of these texts reveal how each of these texts engages in decolonial *pedagogical* practices that are ingrained within the narrative construction itself through the narrative perspectives and the focus on affect animates their respective responses to Ameri Eurocentric cultural relics. Furthermore, my dissertation will showcase how strategically uniting texts under the umbrella of the Global Anglophone allows for the focus to shift away from *only* historically-rooted or disciplinary-focused analysis that rely heavily on suspicious reading practices—practices that have become tiresome and formulaic in the academy. Instead, the power of the Global Anglophone is in its archival possibilities and methodological practices that can promote the self-interrogation necessary for a changed world, and that can most effectively be done through the focus of not only the affectivities embedded in the text, but also the affective response the reader has to episodes in the text. The dissertation's primary goal will be to investigate how particular texts highlight the specific tensions and strained relations in intersubjective dynamics, and to show how these are politicized encounters. Intersubjective relationships, when ordered by the unequal dynamics created by white supremacy, create particularly strenuous situations for minorities, and create an excess of emotionality that goes largely unnoticed by the dominant group within that interaction.

Texts of the Global Anglophone often consciously communicate the affects that white supremacy generates on the non-white subject and the results of these affects, so while these texts are fictional, the autoethnographic representation is rooted in reality and phenomenological experience. I seek to understand how these pedagogical counter-narratives then re-school the reader on the deleterious effects of institutionalized forms of white supremacist agendas on non-white audiences. These novels demonstrate how the psychological imprint of cultural artifacts then gets subsumed into the social domain with their attentiveness to affective responses

illustrated through the narrative perspective. Through my close scrutiny of these texts, I reveal how these texts lay a foundational pattern for readers to track how literary studies in the global anglophone can be organized through texts and methodologies that function as a vehicle for social justice in the literature classroom through critiques that are invested in revelatory practices of histories of oppression, and particularly, how the hierarchies created in our Ameri Eurocentric educational foundations organize social relations through the affective domain of intersubjective power relations.

In the example of *The Bluest Eye*, through Morrison's scaffolding process of telling her story, she deconstructs the unquestioned norms of American society, one that uncovers the structure of white supremacy as the natural order and how it is embedded into even the most innocuous of things—in children's media, toys, and candy—but in the most toxic forms for one's psyche. However, despite the excessive scaffolding, Morrison considers herself unsuccessful in her literary project. Even through her revelation of Pecola's world, she cannot incite her audience towards change. Morrison reflects: "it didn't work: many readers remain touched but not moved" (211). In other words, readers felt pity for Pecola's situation, but cannot "feel with" the pain of her experiences. Her text seems to have done nothing to change the world even with Morrison's exposure of the dysfunctional structures that she shows are normalized within the dominant cultural consciousness, and how these are the cause of the injustices Pecola faces. Morrison's goal is to "move" the reader towards change (to break away from white supremacist structures), and that being "touched" isn't good enough (by simply feeling sorry for Pecola). So, considering Morrison's own perception of her failure, I want to consider: First, how does Morrison situate the reader to "feel with" Pecola so that her pain becomes the reader's pain? Second, how does the position of "feeling with" then necessitate that the reader be moved into an active response—

that is, becoming an activist invested in changing the system that induced the pain? And finally, what cognitive leaps must occur when readers choose not to be "moved"?

The novelty of my approach in the dissertation, which I argue is also the possibility space for archiving texts within the framework of the Global Anglophone, lies in the fact that the texts I read will not be organized by a historical methodology (although the historical definitely holds significance within the narrative framing of the text) or a postcolonial lens, which looks at the legacy of colonial rule on national and regional sites. Instead, the object of investigation will be to read these autoethnographic texts as "contact zones" that are addressed to both the metropolitan *English-speaking* audience and the speaker's own community. Each text is "a marginalized group's point of entry into the dominant circuits of print culture." In the post-1945 world, this means that the "dominant circuits of print culture" it is not only patriarchal, and male-dominated, but also white supremacist, capitalistic, and Americentric. The main feature of these texts is that they force the reader into symbolically making eye contact with and recognizing the marginalized other. The politics of transculturation that is revealed through these texts is always symbolically mirrored through the intimate interpersonal relationships portrayed in the texts.

Each of the novels that I study in this dissertation is interested in an investigation into how seemingly innocuous forms of media became used as tools for what J.A. Mangan terms the "imperial curriculum." We see this in the *Dick and Jane* reading primer in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the scientific and educational magazine *National Geographic* in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, and finally the William Wordsworth's classic romantic poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" in Kincaid's *Lucy*. These texts have been made into cultural relics by becoming part of the network of meanings attached to certain identities, what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined communities." Each of the novels I study delves into the invisible ways in which subjects

become indoctrinated through ideologies passed down through education. These texts explore how the ideology embedded within these educational texts carry within them dictums of how society is organized by those that have epistemic authority and those who don't—those who hold power over the "truth" of the world, over the greatest tool of all—that of perception. By questioning the dominant perspectival mode that has been transmitted through globalized educational tools, these novels explore the ways in which formal education is the primary manner in which harmful ideologies are passed down and internalized as what Aníbal Quijano terms as the world-wide "colonial matrix of power."

The Global Anglophone: A Possibility Space that Diverges from its Historical Roots

The Global Anglophone opens the possibility to disavow the insistence on national boundaries and territoriality and instead focus on the evolution of the systematic problems and dilemmas set forth through the colonial project—including essentialist ideas of race, cultural inferiority, displacement, fragmented identities, and assimilation. The Global Anglophone has the potential to insist on bringing constellations of texts together for a strategic and comparative purpose, one that moves forward with the times, so that postcoloniality can more appropriately be tied to a specific historical tradition, in the same way that Black American studies draw from another tradition. What happens, for example, when ethnic studies, migration studies, and African American studies meet, and certain identity boundaries are collapsed? When conceptualized together, it allows us to think about the way in which the "one world" has been created and continues to create the white supremacist perspective. In *Globalization and Culture*, John Tomlinson is hopeful that in the face of globalization, even with the "one world," that there continue to be multiple ways of being—even if these identities are fragmented, dislocated, or mellifluous. Literature of the Global Anglophone—like the three texts I interpret—offer us

alternative perspectives on how to negotiate individuality and identity within this context—and offer the reader a newfound awareness that might force them to consider their own positionality within hegemonic networks of meaning-making and thereby interrogate their own allegiances within the power relations.

Scholars of Anglophone literature of South Asia and those in related disciplines like postcolonial studies have called attention to the political problems that lie in understanding literature by minority groups as "auto-ethnography." For instance, in an article from *Interventions*, "Introduction: South Asia from Postcolonial to World Anglophone," Rajini Tharoor Srinivasan argues that Anglophone scholars continuously "have to mediate between the field imaginaries of area and literary studies, without rendering the literatures in question auto-ethnographic testimonies, sociological artefacts or species of native intelligence" (311). Within postcolonial studies and area studies scholarship, looking at minority literature as "auto-ethnographic testimonies" is regarded as damaging to the status of the text because it does not hold the same repute as being a work of fiction without that denomination; these scholars argues that the fictional status is a privilege that is only given to white writers. However, my dissertation interrogates this idea and seeks to reconceptualize how organizing these fictional texts as autoethnographic testimonies opens up a new terrain. The goal of these texts is to "talk back," to use bell hooks' term. Hooks points out that when she was a young girl, "talking back" was seen as negative since it was the child's assertion of equality against an authority figure (5) but asks us to reevaluate this as negative and think of it as revolutionary. Talking back, as hooks points out, can be seen as "a courageous act" or a "threat" to the order of society (8). It signals the silenced group's "movement from object to subject" to "the liberated voice" (9) while it "highlights both [their] presence and absence" (8) in the dominant discourse. So, another layer of

the literature of the Global Anglophone is that it entrusts itself with the revolutionary act of "talking back," but also often gives full expression to those voices and groups have been largely ignored and held captive from voicing their perspectives.

The Global Anglophone is a relatively new category in literary studies that captures the concerns and continues the conversation that began in postcolonial studies through theorists including Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Homi Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Chandra Talpede Mohanty, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Aníbal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, Robert Young, Aamir Mufti, Neil Lazarus, María Lugones, Benedict Anderson, Anne McClintock, among many others. Edward Said's *Orientalism* is seen to be the core foundational text of postcolonial studies and traces the study of the Orient as a racist disciplinary method of creating the binary between "the East" and "the West." Said argues how "The Orient was a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic being, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences. Now it was disappearing; in a sense it had happened, its time was over" (1). There are three ways to think about "Orientalism," first with its roots in the academy as a form of area studies for studying Middle-Eastern, North African, and Asian cultures; second as an imaginative force that "poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, imperial administrators" have created distinctions between the East and the West, and used this distinction as the "starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts about the Orient" (2); and finally, as a "corporate institution" in the Foucauldian sense whereupon a whole discourse is built for "dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (2). According to Said, Orientalism ultimately has allowed the West to have intellectual authority over the Orient by creating a "systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically,

sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively in the post-Enlightenment period" (3). Said's foundational studies of Orientalism thought, methodologies, and scholarship must be remembered as its legacy continues on in the study of the Global Anglophone, which contextualizes the aftermath of this history and binary logic that continues to structure our world but through new mechanisms of recreating these binary-based hierarchies through increasingly complex networks that have formed through globalization, capitalism, neocolonialism—and the by-product of these systems—which is the supremacy of the English language.

Moreover, Said's post-structuralist paradigm is helpful in that it draws attention to a form of world-making that has been constructed by a Eurocentric logic that comes out of Enlightenment-era epistemology that lays claim to only one perception of the world as the universal one. Said's work denaturalizes and demystifies the imperial structures that have created an epistemic schema that is "the Orient,"—that is, the concept that defines Europe (the West) by being a "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (2). The Orient is simply a representation created by the West to justify their own claims to being culturally superior. Said's critical work on Western representations of the East led to important repercussions in the academy. The "Orientalist" scholar now had more responsibility to justify the kind of knowledge about the East that was being produced and had to self-consciously be critical of his own methodology and subject matter. By exposing the Orientalist project as a project of Western imperialism, Said's seminal work shifted the entire field of literary scholarship and cultural studies by putting the question of representation on the table. Today, it is seen as one of the core foundational works for postcolonial theory through its exposure of the constructed nature of the East-West binary.

The other two foundational figures that follow Said's line of thought are Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Interestingly, Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?: Speculations on Widow Sacrifice" (1985) and Bhabha's "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" (1985) both were published almost seven years later. Spivak's five-part essay carries forward Said's project by drawing attention to the repercussions of Western representations of the subaltern subject. She concludes that the "subaltern cannot speak" because the Western liberal subject has misread the desires of the subaltern subject. French thinkers such as Deleuze and Foucault cannot be trusted to "read" non-European texts and situations through their European liberal perspective particularly because they end up constructing a "homogenous Other" that always begins with a referral to the Self (84). Spivak is pointing to how many Western thinkers continue to perpetuate the mythic binary of the Self/Other through their paradigmatic thought, and in doing so, continue to perpetuate an "epistemic violence" (76) upon the subaltern subject. A critical exploration of epistemic authority and how it is granted in our current historical and cultural climate is a core element of this project. The socio-political and psychological violence that results from the colonial project of Euro American and White cultural supremacy is a theme that is aesthetically represented in each of the texts studied.

On this line of thought, Spivak encourages her readers to be careful to consider the European imperial project, and how this project has had deep repercussions for how we read the "Third World" and the "Subaltern subject." Through the proclamation of "scientific" reason, Western abstractions have been applied to a completely different social order, without an understanding of the particular and nuanced interests of non-European social groups. She reveals that the application of Western scientific logic within the context of divergent regional norms in India created "many ambiguities and contradictions in attitudes and alliances" especially for

those in the lowest strata of Indian society (80). She exemplifies what a "work does not say" through a close examination of epistemic violence that is done specifically onto the subaltern subject she casts as specifically as female through the example of the widow-sacrifice ritual where the "Hindu woman [the sati] ascends the pyre of the dead husband and immolates herself on it" (93). As a post-colonial theorist, Spivak seeks to "question the unquestioned muting of the subaltern woman" (91), to go on an "unlearning project" (92) to "articulate the ideological formation" of the subaltern consciousness through the measuring of silences.

Like Said, Spivak draws attention to the politics of representation, but instead of dissecting what is being stated by the European subject about the non-European other, or how the subaltern subject is simply "misread," she questions what is being left out of the narrative through the misreading and erasure of the subaltern voice and consciousness. Spivak's work adds an important layer of understanding of the kind of epistemic violence done through imperialism. Unlike Said, who exposes the myth of the East-West binary by uncovering the origins of the Orientalist framework within the Western imagination, Spivak reasserts the binary of the European Self and subaltern Other in order to demonstrate the limitations of Western ethnocentric knowledge across other cultures. Spivak's work, which might seems previously unrelated to a work such as Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, which may have been more appropriately represented within the canon of Black American literary studies can find new life within the framework of the Global Anglophone, which now will investigate the ways in which pedagogical tools in educational institutions propagate the correct forms of "Englishness" the support white supremacist cultures so that cultural power across the globe persists and is sedimented if it remains unquestioned. Distinct from world literature, which is a coded term for cosmopolitan elitism that unifies those from a certain kind of education—regardless of race, the Global

Anglophone is keen on looking at the outsider's imagination, that is, the "other" that actively seeks not to uphold the interests of white supremacy.

As a more recent echo of Spivak's concerns within a different context, in *Black Cultural Life in South Africa: Reception, Apartheid, and Ethics* (2018), Lily Saint discusses how postcolonial studies "positions imaginative explorations of otherness as an essential prerequisite of ethical action…[it] promotes ways of knowing for responding to otherness that work against the failures of colonial ethical philosophy to disrupt its unethical ideological and practical instantiations" (20). Thus, she pointedly highlights the importance of "ethics" as the guiding principle for the imperialist project—one that decolonial writers unmasked as hypocritical and problematic. Saint writes,

> But concerns with ethical philosophy undergird the origins of postcolonial theory in its earlier incarnations as anticolonial and decolonizing writing and thought. These articulations countered the professed ethical aims of imperial rule (up light, modernization, religious conversion, etc.) by exposing the contradictions and hypocrisies underlying such discourses. And inversely, European Enlightenment philosophy's emphatic obsession with moral life emerged contemporaneously with the unethicality of imperial doctrine and rule. The coincident rise of British and French imperialism with the sudden explosion in British and French theories of responsibility, interrelation, and sympathy suggests deep anxieties about the colonial project that put, at least imaginatively, so many French and English in contact with unfamiliar peoples from all over the globe. (Saint 19)

Saint reminds us of the importance of how "oppressed subjectivities be understood as complex and mobile, determined by contingencies, accidents, and contradictions, as well as by shared sets

of political, cultural, and social affinities" (18). Moreover, even if "[p]art of these shared oppressions are, of course, those of oppression, alienation, racism, dispossession, sexism, prejudice, and marginalization." Saint, much like Spivak, prompts us to consider how oppressed subjectivities "are not only, and should not only be, understood through the lens of victimization" (18).

Another noteworthy postcolonial critique that is embedded in my project is Bhabha's "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," which offers a perspective on how the colonized subject empowers herself through her ambivalent orientation toward the colonizer's rules and practices. Withing relationships between the colonizer and colonized, Bhabha reveals how "mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (126). According to Bhabha, the colonial mimicry of the colonizer's customs, traditions, language, and infrastructure represents an "ironic compromise" (126), and demonstrates the colonizer's "desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (126). The colonized subject's mimicry is ironic because the "discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence" which is seen through "its slippage, its excess, and its difference." Most importantly, this mimicry is a "disavowal" because the colonized person can use the colonizer's tools against him. In its disavowal, mimicry is a "double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power" (126). The result is a "flawed colonial mimesis" that the colonized subject has been "Anglicized" but cannot be properly, or "authentically" English (128). The "not quite" English reveals itself through the colonized subject's erratic tendencies and eccentricities—through his slippages, excess, and difference in manners (128).

Bhabha, referring to Lacan, writes that mimicry is a "camouflage not a harmonization or repression of difference" (131), and through resemblance of the Other, yet simultaneously always not quite white, not quite the same, bring a threat through what Bhabha calls the "metonymy of presence" (130), which is what we see in colonized discourse—what is between the lines and not stated because it is "both against the rules and within them." These instances of difference in the colonial encounter are powerful instances of demonstrating the collective aggressiveness, that which is otherwise repressed in "civil discourse" (132). Through the menace of mimicry, the demonstration of ambivalence, the "not quite/ not white," within the margins that we see this interdictory desire, and "the [white] body and the book lose their representational authority" (132). Again, like Spivak and Said, Bhabha also focuses on the problem of representation, particularly in postcolonial Indian society. However, he is specifically interested in how colonized subjects free themselves from the authority of British rules and customs, and what he develops further is a theory of resistance. He observes the ways in which colonized subjects empower themselves through interdictory acts that are "not quite white" and are thus emancipated from complete identification with the colonizer. Bhabha also works within the logic of binary opposition, the White/not White paradigm, but reveals how this framework is dismantled through the colonized subject's partial appropriation of the colonizer's rules and customs because of the double vision that comes from his ambivalence. This breaks down the divide and creates an ambiguity, the "almost but not quite white" rather than a complete enforcement of the binary structure of White/ not White.

Bhabha's masterful exploration of the ambivalent postcolonial identity and how the White/Not White paradigm gets complicated is further explored in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994). Even as Bhabha is impressively rigorous in his critique, the abstractions and

linguistic complexity within its pages are modeled on texts that emerged during the heyday of high theory. I see it as a classic example which demonstrates the ambivalent struggle of postcolonial studies assertion of a respectable position within the academy. Bhabha's writing is the perfect execution of the "menace of mimicry" through its representation of academic writing in its excess, so that, as quoted before, "the [white] body and the book lose their representational authority." The legacy left by the predecessors of postcolonial theory are among the last remnants of "high theory" in contemporary critical discourse. Postcolonial scholarship relies on this excess for their authority so that even in contemporary academic discourse, postcolonial theory is seen as among the most rigorous and difficult fields of literary studies. Perhaps this is because in marked contrast to Eurocentric discourses that continue to assert the need for objectivity and universality, postcolonial critique resides in the uncomfortable political terrain that sheds light on the importance of historical situatedness—and thus lays bare the idea of cultural relativism in contrast to Western scientific logic.

What remains elusive is that Bhabha's own critical work exemplifies how "mimicry as menace" is a form of resistance that can only take us so far against colonial discourses of power. Postcolonial theory is an intellectual inquiry into the problems that arise through the structures of colonialism, but it cannot stay there; there must be more work done in praxis. This is simply why Walter Mignolo and Aníbal Quijano, who come from the Latin American tradition, cannot completely align themselves to postcolonial studies. They call for something different: decoloniality. In "Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-Coloniality," Walter Mignolo points out how the universal global process creates the constant "reproduction of coloniality" (450). Mignolo writes: "In order to uncover the perverse logic that Fanon pointed out underlying the philosophical conundrum of

modernity/coloniality and the political and economic structure of imperialism/colonialism, we must consider how to decolonize the 'mind' (Thiongo) and the 'imaginary' (Gruzinski) that is, knowledge and being" (450). In line with Quijano, he elaborates on the claim that has come about in different disciplines and parts of the world since the 1970s—that of how "knowledge is colonized" (450). The dominance of Western epistemology has created an idea of Totality that negates, excludes, occludes other forms of knowledge. For example, Mignolo observes how since the 1500s, many other empires and countries "had to 'recognize' that Western languages and categories of thoughts, and therefore, political philosophy and political economy, were marching an expanding without 'recognizing' them as equal players in the game" (451). Moreover, the Western conception of Totality also included ideas of modernity and rationality, and it did not observe other kinds of worldviews.

What Quijano has opened up in his discussion on "coloniality," according to Mignolo, is the project of a "re-construction and the restitution of silenced histories, repressed subjectivities, subalternized knowledges and languages performed by the Totality depicted under the names of modernity and rationality" (451). However, in Mignolo's point of view, he believes that some of the theorists doing work in post-colonial theory are also limited because they have been dependent on poststructuralist thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan. These include, of course, those seen as laying the groundwork in postcolonial thought, including Said, Spivak and Bhabha, of whom Mignolo is critical because they continue to work within the logic of Western coloniality, and "Decoloniality starts from other sources" (452). To draw clear lines, he makes a distinction between decoloniality and post-colonial thought. Mignolo writes, "[t]he de-colonial shift, in other words, is a project of de-linking while postcolonial criticism and theory is a project of scholarly transformation within the academy" (452).

Taking Quijano's idea of *desprenderse*, or "delinking," Mignolo elaborates on how this delinking can occur. He writes: "delinking leads to de-colonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economy, other politics, other ethics" (453). This epistemic shift can move us away from universality of thought and start to think in terms of "pluri-versality as a universal project" (453). From the tradition of South Asian postcolonial scholarship more recently, Dipesh Chakrabarty offers a similar perspective that is in line with Mignolo and Quijano's agenda. In *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), Chakrabarty focuses not only on Western desire for a universal epistemology, but particularly the way history has been written, especially in the construction of a universal temporality and myth of progress. Chakrabarty reveals how Western historicism as we know it today has been defined by the European Enlightenment. According to Chakrabarty, European universalizing systems of thought that were propagated through Western imperialism and colonization erected "socially unjust practices" (4) in colonized nations. Chakrabarty addresses the question of political modernity in non-Western societies by examining the intellectual legacy that comes from thinkers such as Hegel and Marx, and others who promoted Enlightenment humanism. These thinkers created a framework where the colonized non-Western nations were seen as "lacking" in their narratives of evolutionary progress and modernity.

Chakrabarty notes how this legacy from the European Enlightenment is deeply ingrained in the university system and "alive" in both the social sciences and human sciences and produces an "asymmetric ignorance" (28). Chakrabarty describes how concepts such as "citizenship, the state, civil society, public sphere, human rights, equality before the law, the individual, distinctions between the public and private, the idea of the subject, democracy, popular

sovereignty, social justice, scientific rationality, and so on all bear the burden of European thought and history" (4), and are used to justify not the non-Western nations "lack" these qualities of modernity. According to Chakrabarty, European historicism promotes a type of temporality, an idea of "first in the West, and then elsewhere" (6), that is deeply problematic, and is what has allowed Europe to dominate much of the world in the nineteenth century. Chakrabarty writes, "Historicism is what made modernity or capitalism look not simply global but rather as something that became global over time, by originating in one place (Europe) and then spreading outside of it" (7). Chakrabarty notes how this process was replicated by the colonized nations, as "non-Western nationalities would later produce local version of the same narrative, replacing "Europe" by some locally constructed center" (7). As a result, Western historicism was a way to say, "not yet" to the non-Western societies development of political modernity, the definition of which was used "as a measuring rod for social progress" (8). Chakrabarty asks us to consider how Western scholarship has propagated the idea of "historicism as a transition narrative" or how third-world histories are introduced through teleological terms, through themes of "development, modernization, and capitalism" (31), where their histories are seen as "incomplete"—as lacking, inadequate, or as failures. Chakrabarty is interested in the nuances and contradictions that appear in Indian subject-hood through ideas of "history"—the projects of modernization and nationalism after colonialism. He writes, that "institutional practices that invoke the nation-state" are joined together by the metanarrative of history through the "imaginary Europe" (43). The project of provincializing Europe is the idea "to write into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, use of force, and the tragedies and ironies that attend it" (43). He writes that the "project of provincializing Europe must realize itself its

own impossibility" and instead should focus on a history that "makes visible... its own repressive strategies and practices" (45).

To carry out the project of "provincializing Europe," Chakrabarty proposes that we make clear distinctions between "good history" and "bad history," where good histories are "supposed to enrich the subject matter of history and make it more representative of society as a whole" (97), something which minority history, working in an "oppositional mode" seeks to do. He asks us to consider how histories, or stories about a community of people, are told. Chakrabarty writes that the "investment in a certain kind of rationality and in a particular understanding of the "real" means that history's—the discipline's—exclusions are ultimately epistemological" (98). As such, he questions whether one way of understanding knowledge (i.e. history) should be the only way—that perhaps there is more than one way, or a "multiplicity of narratives" to question any idea of truth or facts" (99). He questions ideas of minority and majority (100) and how the majority has taken charge of those seen as "minors"—those seen as having "lesser importance," "inferior," "marginal" to the norms created by the majority—shepherding them into adulthood. In Chakrabarty's estimation, "History writing assumes plural ways of being in the world" (101). However, plural ways of being aren't represented in explanations and descriptions of events; "Subaltern pasts" or pasts that allow the subaltern to speak as a "sovereign subject of history (102) cannot exist in the academic landscape. In Chakrabarty's estimation, History isn't allowed to speak for itself as it must be translated through the "positivist impulses of modern bureaucracies" (107) which limit our "historical consciousness" by imposing the rule that "everything can" and should be historicized. The concerns of Chakrabarty's theory are made aesthetically manifest through the way stories are told in the texts I explore, particularly by

asking readers to question the ways in which perspective plays a crucial role in any given "history," or what is presented to us as historical facts.

Chakrabarty's idea of "good history" is in fact a promotion of thinking of not only alternative stories, but alternate methods in which to tell stories, through other ways of knowing that aren't rooted in Western logic and temporality. Similarly, Mignolo's project of de-linking, "leads to de-colonial epistemic shift" as it "brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economy, other politics, other ethics" (453). By focusing on forms of alternative epistemologies, these theories give a form of praxis that removes Europe from the center through Chakrabarty's "oppositional mode" of telling plural histories, it opens up the possibility of multiplicity instead of the superior/inferior binary logic and temporality of "first in the West and then elsewhere." Though Mignolo does not cite Chakrabarty, it would be interesting to see what political possibilities would be if sectarian politics were removed from postcolonial scholarship. What kinds of political possibilities, literature, art, and academic scholarship would open up if postcolonial scholars working within the South Asian/ Middle Eastern tradition and those from the Latin American tradition came together to think in solidarity?

In *interventions*, Nasia Anam discusses texts that represent the "the global anglophone" through their "portrayal of the decadence and failure of universalism in content and form alike" (638), as these novels artistically and "self-reflexively draw upon the European literary canon and reference the institution that disseminated the Enlightenment-borne values and class hierarchies of "western civilization" across the globe" (638). In light of Anam's claims, my dissertation that studies the three representative texts within this category reveals how—within this globalized world-order with an increasingly complex set of networks of meanings—one's

consciousness of the history of global Englishness and white supremacy can critically be exposed through one's allegiances and through varied affective exchanges of knower and one who is in the dark, one who lacks a certain kind of double consciousness. The power of affect in characterizing the ethics of our intersubjective encounters with those around us that position the reader to interrogate their own consciousness by creating a double consciousness through the act of witnessing the protagonist's affective encounters with those seen to hold power.

If the concerns of world literature are to reveal how universal life experiences are, the goals of those texts we might archive as the global anglophone are precisely to do the opposite—to reveal how the way in which we experience the world is quite particular and different. Some might even argue that it becomes the literary site, a disciplinary standpoint, in which the realm of identity politics gets worked out. The texts archived within the global anglophone share one thing in common: they are contesting the idea of the "one world" propagated through the English language—and thus, Ameri European culture—getting universalized, and instead reveal how the internalization of English and all that culturally entails on one's sense of self is actually varied. There may be a number of reasons for that that variegation that are attended to in the various texts that might be archived in a course labeled as the global anglophone—there might be tropes that focus on globalization, postcoloniality, decolonial thinking, race and class politics, etc.—however, the thematic paradigm will focus on the realm of perspectival differences that are primarily seen through the ways in which Englishness is internalized and positively and negatively experienced as an affect through one's experience of the world.

Paul Jay's *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (2000) is a helpful elucidation on how scholarship in literary studies began to change in the 1960s as the "representation of difference in literature began to systematically complicate scholarship in

modern languages and literatures and to transform what it meant to get a "literary" education" (20). Jay critically examines how globalization has been a long historical process that began in the 1600s and is "central to the whole arc of imperialism, colonization, decolonization, and postcoloniality" (7). The turn to transnationalism in literary studies, Jay argues, has "resulted in whole remapping of the locations we study. This remapping has grown out of a focus on migration and cross-cultural experience, generally, and a particular interest in tracing the complicated histories of displacement" (8), and the back-and-forth movement between peoples from colonial and colonized nations. The idea of the universal human experience was impossible to hold on to in the face of the increasing concerns of globalization and the disparities between those who benefitted from advanced capitalism and those who did not. Jay writes,

> The imperative to historicize the texts we study, to pay attention to the material circumstances of both their production and consumption, and to recognize the differences historical and material circumstances make in what we think of as literature and how we engage with it as students and scholars, became central to the enterprise of literary studies." (Jay 20)

Citing Kwame Apiah, Paul Jay points out how there is no such thing as a pure, coherent, autonomous, uncontaminated culture that has not been influenced by points of contact with other cultures. Jay writes, "We tend to link agency to cultural autonomy and to measure cultural autonomy in terms of society's ability to protect its cultural identity from being watered down or erased by alien cultural forms; but every culture is always shaped by other cultures, and agency has more to do with the intelligent and imaginative negotiation of cross-cultural contact than with avoided such contact" (3). On the one hand, as Jay points out, transnational writers working in English are interested in "transforming scope of the national literatures to which they belong

and pushing beyond national boundaries to imagine the global character of modern experience, contemporary culture, and identities they produce" (9). On the other hand, the global anglophone is not interested in thinking about borders, nationalism, and historicism at all. What the global anglophone offers us, I argue, is a disciplinary framework that opens up an alternative possibility in literary studies, to re-imagine the particular and local situatedness of texts from various historical situations as interconnected through the attention and attunement to affective experiences portrayed.

A Shift Away from Historicity: "Englishness" as a Site of Power

By looking specifically at Englishness as a site of power—one that is fundamentally understood to have been produced through the global histories, economic conditions, and cultural negotiations that place Ameri Eurocentricism and White Supremacy as dominant and center—the scope of the Global Anglophone allows the comparative study of texts that portray the intersubjective power dynamics that have been produced as a result of the current global landscape where power flows to those who identify as being closer in proximity to paradigms of Englishness. The focus on varying negative affects—despair, anger, grief, loss, irritation, condemnation—that are attended to in these texts, arise from the social exchanges and intersubjective encounters that reveal how deviations from Englishness create divides in who is not only socially recognized, who is seen as a privileged "knower," but also in who has access to self-actualization. The characters in these texts suffer because of the impediments—conscious or unconscious—that prevent them from self-actualization. In short, these texts explore how the proximity to Englishness has created an affective forcefield of identity politics that are illuminated in these texts. Although sometimes the protagonists in the texts can see it, and sometimes they can't, the key factor that connects these texts is the relationship between the

reader and the text. The portrayal of the fraught social relations in the text are primarily illuminated through the attention to cultural artifacts that inform the toxic worldview that the protagonist suffers from, however, often, the protagonist might not see the hold this has over them.

The Global Anglophone specifically activates a space to bring these concerns together. It creates a space to categorically organize and critically archive texts that have a complicated relationship to the English language and the concept of "Englishness." These texts originate from varying sites—nations, cultures, and identities—that are localized in their exploration of a particular experience, but nevertheless can be cohesively held together through their exposition of the intersubjective encounters that characterize the affective undercurrents of the global modern experience of life. The primary coordinate of meaning these texts share is that they are invested in politicizing cultural relics of "Englishness" that are seen as innocuous, but even more importantly, through the pedagogical unmasking of these cultural artifacts, they attempt to create a "double-consciousness" in the reader towards a decolonial orientation of the world that overturns the anti-ethics of the white supremacist world order. The subcategory of novels I analyze in this dissertation are concerned with the effects of intersubjective relations that have arisen through global encounters of those who—through their proximity to the English language, Englishness, and white-ness—hold power relative to those that are seen as cultural "others" but who are nonetheless perceived through the lens of what has come to be seen as a white supremacist discourse that organizes a world system of power relations. By reading this set of novels side by side, I critically expose how the category of the global anglophone is extending the concerns of postcoloniality to a more expansive set of concerns that allows seemingly particular and divergent conversations to converge. Instead of a focus on historicity (which of

course can't be ignored, and might be crucial to a particular kind of argument for the text in itself), the Global Anglophone asks us to uncover the repressed shadows within us, and face our affective relationship to the non-white or non-Christian or non-English speaking subject—yes, perhaps the minority, the stranger, the provincial, the Muslim, the abject—but most importantly, the one who has chosen to condemn rather than embrace the one-world paradigm. How are these very precognitive responses and our phenomenological experiences of people and objects that surround us shaped by the history of power—of White supremacy and Western cultural dominance that is now being spread on a vastly global scale? The stakes of the global anglophone are in the future.

Therefore, I introduce how the act of reading in today's globalized world itself has become an act of double-consciousness—one in which the novel can be seen to portray a particular, individualized experience rooted in local concerns while also reading for the larger meaning of how the ideological concerns that come from the "anglophony" or the English language have a universal, large-scale impact through a shared global cultural consciousness that has left a psychological imprint on all of us. This interrelatedness of experience is seen through the ways in which cultural relics associated with Englishness are disseminated through post-Enlightenment imperial and white supremacist projects and then individually internalized by those from disparate cultural experiences. The "unmasking" of how—under the current conditions of globalization—cultural relics of "Englishness" create social and hierarchical divisions that have become so globalized in scope from which none of us are exempt undergird the political motivations of these literary representations.

Reading for Affect in the Intersubjective Encounter: The Emotional Landscape of the Global Anglophone

In the current cultural conditions, it does seem like the only way to read any text is by becoming a "suspicious" reader. Rita Felski calls this mode of reading as the "'hermeneutics of suspicion" and explains as "the name usually bestowed on [a] technique of reading texts against the grain and between the lines, of cataloging their omissions and laying bare their contradictions, of rubbing in what they fail to know and cannot represent." it is important to note that suspicious reading, or what Eve Sedgwick terms as "paranoid reading," is a mode of close reading that has been strongly encouraged through postcolonial studies and scholarship, as well as in psychoanalytic and Marxist critiques. What needs to be emphasized is that certain texts—like the ones I have archived here in my project—directly ask their readers to read suspiciously through their narrative structure or perspective. The readers are immediately given signals that reading "between the lines" will be essential to understanding the meaning of the text. In fact, through the various narrative techniques and literary representation of the diverse affective experiences of the characters' orientation towards the different cultural objects, these texts do not assume that the reader is capable of being a suspicious reader on their own. The writers use specific pedagogical tools that disorient the reader so that a straight-forward, linear experience of reading is actively turned on its head. Embedded within these texts are artistic methods that train the reader to become suspiciously oriented and create a double consciousness through the witnessing of various affective modalities in the text that reveal the ethics of living under the current dictates of the world order.

What is interesting is that Felski's school of "postcritique" isn't necessarily apolitical, though it might seem to be on the surface. What Felski and others call for is to go beyond the suspicious reading that has become the norm in literary studies and has essentially become so

formulaic so as to render itself almost meaningless. For example, an alternative mode of reading that I propose could be a heightened and self-reflexive attentiveness in the reader to acknowledge their own affective relationship to episodes in the text. This could offer new insights for the reader and might be a way for the reader to perform a kind of "resistant reading" that Judith Fetterley espouses in feminist scholarship. I find that the texts I have chosen here are particularly powerful because they make transparent the reader's task to orient themselves as a suspicious reader, while also asking them to check in with their affective responses to episodes in the text, as Felski encourages. This double-mode of analysis is where the power of the text lies because without the second kind of reading, the danger lies in the reader being distanced from the characters in the text, and therefore, free to make judgments that would not allow them the kind of self-reflection necessary to encounter their own shadows. The leap that Felski asks of readers mobilizes the text into a politicized site by asking its readers to do the kind of reflection that can position the reader towards social action and change. This cognitive practice occurs as the reader witnesses the intersubjective encounters in the text that are often extremely uncomfortable, and then interrogates their own immediate affective responses, and later their emotional allegiances. The attunement to the reader's response lends itself to them potentially seeing the affective and emotional as two different coordinates, and thereby, the reader must find their own points on that graph and the distance between the two. This practice would lead to the kind of critical analysis that I believe is so necessary in today's world.

Going back to Lily Saint, she reminds us how "ethical relation has to be understood as a form of engagement with others that is precognitive and affective, bound to the body as much as to any form of relational subjectivity" (16) In other words, an ethical response (to cultural artifacts as well as people), is bound up in affective networks that are not merely part of a

rational or moral regime of doing good acts. Saint's claims offer some useful insights into my study, as she highlights the importance exchanges of affect as being precognitive and located in the body. The way in which these social relations play out is more thoroughly elucidated by Sara Ahmed in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2014). Ahmed discusses how an emotional "stickiness" results from the emotional contagion that occurs between bodies so that these sites of contact become politicized. Ahmed writes, "emotions 'matter' for politics; emotions show us how power shapes the very surface of bodies as well as worlds" so that emotions become a "cultural politics or world-making" (12). What is at play here is an exploration of the "emotionality of texts… [in which] the sticking is dependent on past histories of association that often 'work' through concealment" (13). By tracking the emotionality within these texts, and looking at these as both a witnessing of contact zones between characters, I hope also to consider how the text itself is a contact zone between the reader and fictional world, through the writer's deliberate world-making, the construction of the text which then demands something of the reader.

Along with the Sara Ahmed, affect studies scholars such as Sianne Ngai, Lauren Berlant, and Eve Sedgwick have done significant work in transmuting ideas that come from the fields of psychology and philosophy into literary studies. In that line of thought, I will marry scholarship on intersubjectivity and recognition by the psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin and her work on emotional attunement, and also on the same topics but on a different vein, by philosopher Sonia Kruks' whose work explores subjectivity and recognition in feminist politics. Both these scholars add important layers to my argument by illuminating the importance of self-reflection practices that arise from studying affectual responses. Studying affect allows me to investigate how intersubjective encounters of *mis*recognition (to borrow Charles Taylor's term) have lasting

effects on one's psychological wellness and feelings of social connection. Moreover, it helps us to once again see that reading is not only an act of pleasure and/or critique, but also an ethical practice that involves us being "moved" by a text by confronting our shadowy affectual responses. Therefore, my argument will reveal how the autoethnographic novel investigates the relationship between experience and emotion (by way of affect), and how divergent historical and social experiences produce strained intersubjective encounters based on the power dynamics of the people within a social field. Often, these texts disclose the fraught relationships through the dominant group's inability to "see eye to eye," to "feel with" the perspective of the minority group because of the unconscious objectification or lack of recognition with the minority. These texts ask the reader to consider: what kinds of feelings are generated in an intersubjective encounter where there is an unequal power dynamic where either party has consciousness or recognizes this dynamic playing out in the social field? Particularly, how does the minority group consciously or unconsciously experience the affectivities inherent in these relations? Feelings are not rational, and cannot be seen through the narrative of reason, but rather, through the narrative of experience. Therefore, these texts privilege the emotional life of the characters so that the reader can witness the experience even if they have not had a similar experience.

The writer of the Global Anglophone novel is doing the work of translating feelings by creating a fictional world that attempts to reconstruct particular kinds of experiences. These novels are less concerned with relating to a particular, local audience and is more interested in translating the type of emotional experiences that are produced as a result of this globalized network—one that is itself produced through the power, control, and hegemony that came from Western imperialism in the modernist era. While these texts can often be categorized as both postmodern and postcolonial, the global Anglophone is concerned not only with the fragmented

consciousness that emerges from this history, but also the translation of the emotional lives of those who must consciously navigate through these types of contact zones within their daily lives. Therefore, these texts are often deeply political not only because of the focus on how history is shaped by power, but the more meaningful politics comes from capturing the emotional lives of the characters through the perspectives they animate.

Ironically, texts that do this kind of translation work can sometimes be accused of pandering to the white gaze as they often demand a global, English-speaking audience to witness the emotional lives of their characters, to reveal how the "postcolonial" subjectivity continues to grapple with the problems of such an identity even long after the era of colonialism has come and gone. These autoethnographic novels function as "contact zones" for those outside of that world to witness the kinds of feelings that certain interactions produce because of the psychological internalization process of histories that are produced upon bodies. Moreover, witnessing these intersubjective experiences, from the point of view of the non-dominant group, allows for a different vantage point. Because the dominant group often classifies, names, and defines the meaning of a world, this re-orientation from another point of view occurs by turning the globe on its axis so that the AmeriEuropean perspective is no longer at the center of these interactions. These texts call attention to the fact that these experiences are intersubjective, but how in the imagination of the dominant group, and for those who have internalized the logic of the dominant group, the interactions are centered around the dominant group's emotions, ideologies, and perceptions, and are often not "shared" experiences, but "shared" in how Ahmed conceptualizes these contact zones as sites of emotional contagion.

Mobilized in this way, the literature of the Global Anglophone, organized in the manner I propose above, interrogates the neocolonial and capitalist frameworks that are the underpinnings

of world literature today, drawing attention to ideas of the 'world' that aren't associated with the *Weltliteratur* conceived through a Eurocentric, cosmopolitan, and Orientalist model, as Aamir Mufti describes in *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literature* (2016). Mufti's idea of the "one-world" thinking extends Chakrabarty's main contestation against historicism since the European Enlightenment era—that all humans exist in a single framework of historical time, of "first in the West, and then elsewhere." Mufti explores how the "one world" of globalized culture is defined through predominance of ideals that sprung forth from the European Enlightenment and then have been spread through the dominance of English as a globalized language of power and capitalist venture, and specifically, through the global embracing of white supremacist projects. The Global Anglophone novel specifically presents us with the problem of mediation in our globalized culture, revealing how our world is mediated through the white perspective.

The following chapters will highlight how authors within the tradition of the Global Anglophone come together through a unique archive that is necessary in today's climate through their focus not only on the history of power, but how that history of power affects the mental health of both the minority subject as well as the delusions of the collective. By highlighting the specific tensions and strained relations in the intersubjective dynamics they present, they draw our close attention to how much the mundane, microscopic actions we take often can become politicized encounters that the dominant groups might not understand or even purposefully ignore. Intersubjective relationships, when ordered by the unequal dynamics created by white supremacy, create particularly strenuous situations for minorities, and create an excess of emotionality that goes largely unnoticed by the dominant group within that interaction.

Each chapter will focus on intersubjective relationships that are formed and how these relationships bring to light the imbalances of power relations, but more importantly, the inequality of labor, love or hate, and proof of epistemic authority that goes into creating these bonds. Thus, this dissertation is invested in the politics of reading what Ahmed calls the "emotionality of texts." This emotionality is at the front and center of what binds the autoethnographic literature of the Global Anglophone, which opens up a reading practice that self-interrogates one's position in an increasingly globalized world. While most cosmopolitan world literature might highlight or subjugate the qualities of difference in order to create an illusion of sameness, these texts do the opposite; they break down the illusion of sameness in order to focus on the differences, particularly through the recurring portrayal of strained intersubjective dynamics. As opposed to world literature, which focuses on creating a grand narrative based on similarities between the cosmopolitan subject, these narratives give epistemic authority to ordinarily marginalized subjects, and moves them from the periphery to the center so that a different perspective and way of knowing is unveiled. Through their attentiveness to the exchanges of affect and their effects on the emotional life of the characters, the texts interweave a narrative that draws attention to the negative consciousness produced through a worldview that psychologically harms the protagonist. In a sense, the texts then become pedagogical and revelatory, so that they are teaching the audience what those in the fictional world cannot see and understand.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, which is the focal text for Chapter One, I argue that Kiran Desai utilizes the symbol of the magazine the *National Geographic* and I explore how it becomes increasingly layered with different meanings as the novel progresses. Though theoretically *National Geographic* seeks to "push the limits of human understanding" (*National*

Geographic online) through its "captivating photography" by bringing remote cultures and spaces into the hands of forty million people in forty different languages, Desai elucidates that the globalized symbol of *National Geographic* becomes ripe with meaning as it is interpreted and processed in a multidimensional manner across time and space. In this chapter, I will argue that the *National Geographic* magazine and what it connotes is also differentiated by the phenomenological experience of the magazine's meaning for each of the main characters. Desai's preoccupation with these networks of meaning-making within different contexts of a globalized world is one example of what I take to be the main point of departure and the "classic" example text that serves the purposes of Global Anglophone literary studies.

There are multiple narratives that run through the book that already expose the variety of perspectives that come from one localized space within a globalized network. In Chapter One, I show how Desai intricately juxtaposes the lives of the three protagonists: the seventeen-year-old orphan Sai, who lives with her uncle—or the "Judge," and finally Biju, the nineteen-year-old young man who has moved to New York City in an attempt to try his luck at a better future than his father, who is the servant in the Kalimpong household. The novel also weaves the story of the Judge in his youth, told in flashback, as he is reminded of his past through small encounters and questions from Sai. These three narratives serve to dismantle the myth of "one world" and cosmopolitan vision of a common human experience that comes from idealistic notions of a global culture. I will explore how the symbolism in Desai's novel of the *National Geographic* magazine not only serves as a critique of this "scientific" publication as ethnography, with its history of capturing in visual and textual splendor the romantic ideas the West had about its exoticized cultural Others, but how the *National Geographic* metaphor also becomes the recurring site that reveals how postcolonial subjectivities have internalized white supremacist

culture in divergent ways. With the juxtaposition of these three narratives, *The Inheritance of Loss* considers the unique situation of each of the characters and the function of the "globe" in their imaginations. Desai's exploration of the intersubjective relations that are produced in relationship to this imagining showcases the fraught relations that are inherent in the idea of the romantic idea of the "global citizen."

Chapter Two focuses on Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and its exploration of the affects that generate shame and self-loathing to reveal how Black lives are destroyed through the ubiquity and toxic indoctrination of white supremacist discourse. Told from the perspective of the MacTeer sisters, Claudia and Frieda, two young Black girls in the 1940s, Morrison invites us to witness the events that led up to Pecola's psychological demise through the socially untarnished perspective of children. Morrison strategically begins with The *Dick and Jane* metanarrative to draw attention to the social constructions of whiteness as the norm on the macro level—how whiteness is normalized and idealized in American media on every level—from Hollywood to our educational tools, and even the toys children are given. The foundation of this chapter explores the concept of decolonial aesthetics through Frantz Fanon, Walter Mignolo and Rolondo Vazquez, as well as Charles Taylor. I also identify how Wolfgang Iser's idea of "interpretative gaps" as narrative technique is useful in understanding how Morrison invites readers to become active participants in the text; the reader must decipher the meaning between the Dick and Jane white normative family structure and the ways it governs the lives of the Black community in 1940s Lorain, Ohio. Through her Iserian narrative technique, Morrison pedagogically teaches us how to read the world through a decolonial lens in an attempt to unmask how the normative ideals created by white supremacist culture encroaches into the micro

level of the Black community, within the scope of one's family life and community relations, creating hierarchies that erode the social fabric of the community.

Also in Chapter Two, beyond looking at the aesthetics of the text, I also turn to feminist philosophers from the decolonial tradition to shed light on the way in which Morrison's ethical stance and impetus for writing the book—based on her own judgments of others in her Black community—are illuminated through the idea of "witnessing." Marilyn Frye's idea of "arrogant perception" in feminist praxis and both María Lugones and Mariana Ortega's individual reconceptualization of her proposed idea of seeing through a "loving perception," by utilizing her paradigm through an intersectional approach. "Loving perception" is a way of seeing that opposes the dominant "arrogant perception" and I find this to be useful in demonstrating Morrison's goal in telling Pecola's story through an eyewitness account. By tracing the narrative scaffolding technique used by Morrison, she teaches her reader how to look at Pecola with new eyes, through the "loving perception," by inhabiting a different position than what has been normalized so that they may "feel with" Pecola instead of passing judgment on her. "Feeling with" someone is an exercise proposed by the philosopher Sonia Kruks as an essential component to break barriers of "us" and "them" and empathetically have solidarity with others, while understanding that you come from different positionalities through your bodily, lived experiences. Thus, the reader is able to look at Pecola from the angle of a nine-year old girl who cares about her friend and is trying to make sense of the tragedy that has occurred. This desire, to give Pecola a voice, comes from investigating her emotional life, and breathes humanity into the most abject of figures in American society.

In Chapter Three, I turn to Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*, to closely study the way in which cultural power is institutionalized through the educational system—both in colonized Antigua,

but also in the cosmopolitan centers of the Western world, as is showcased through Lucy's experiences in New York City—and how that creates psychological trauma through its assertion of its own superiority above other kinds of knowledge. To illustrate how cultural power becomes institutionalized through the guise of "loving benevolence," I begin with Helen Vendler's speech from the 1980 MLA Convention, "What I Have Loved, Others Will Love," an inspirational, seemingly innocuous speech about the merits of passing down the canon of Great Books as professors of literature. I then turn to Kincaid's *Lucy* which is about the titular character, Lucy Potter and her migration to New York City to work as an au pair for a wealthy white family that begins her search for and assertion of her own identity. The importance of the relationship of history and lived experience to cultural objects is played out through the perspectival differences and affectual relations to artifacts and objects that are fetishized globally as representative of idealized relics of Western culture—including the iconic symbols of Manhattan, Wordsworth's "I Wandered as Lonely as a Cloud," and Paul Gaughin's travel paintings. Kincaid's attentiveness to the intersubjective dynamics between Lucy and the other characters in the novel, namely, Mariah, unveils how white supremacist logic trickles down to and shapes the power dynamics in our relations to one another by considering the visceral, affectual relationship an "outsider" might have to these celebrated relics.

Also in Chapter Three, in order to substantiate my claims about creating authentic and ethical intersubjective bonds, I attend to scholarship by María Lugones and Mariana Ortega, as well as Gayatri Spivak and Chandra Talpede Mohanty, along with Simone de Beauvoir, and marry this unique constellation of theorists from various schools of feminism in order to underscore Mariah's pattern and continual inability to be considerate of Lucy's past experiences and feelings tied to those experiences. Through this discussion, I highlight how Kincaid reveals

that Mariah's interest is one-sided, and how she seeks a "love" without reciprocity as her actions show that she cannot recognize Lucy as a full subject. Moreover, Lucy continues to take actions that refuse to give into the forms of logic that validate what Mignolo terms as the "colonial matrix of power"; Lucy does not hide her emotional life as a way to protect Mariah, but continuously forces Mariah to face the truth of her experiences in the world. By utilizing Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Life of Emotions,* I will highlight how Kincaid's portrayal of the effects of anger and confrontation through Lucy's experiences with Mariah highlight how minority experiences are denied and written over, and by giving Lucy a voice that doesn't succumb to the pressures to white supremacy. Thereby, Kincaid teaches the minority reader to own their emotional experiences instead of coddling and giving excessive importance to the dominant perspective and white fragility, while also revealing the ways unconscious "loving benevolence" keeps all of us from having authentic bonds of reciprocal recognition.

Each of these texts engages in decolonial practices that re-school the reader on the deleterious effects of institutionalized forms of white supremacist agendas on non-white audiences. These novels demonstrate how the psychological imprint of these "facts" then get subsumed into the social domain—how the hierarchies created in our educational foundations organize social relations through the affective domain. Therefore, the main connection in these novels is not only the ways in which globalized forms of dominant cultures that are propagated in the metropole come to us through our educational systems that work to co-create these social hierarchies. Specifically, these texts focus on the emotional experiences of how historical structures of racism, colonialism, capitalism, and the patriarchy, or to use María Lugones' term, "the colonial matrix of power" have left a legacy of oppression and subjugation that haunts every interaction, no matter how well-meaning each party may be as a participant. Because of the focus

on the emotional lives of their characters, and by being written in a shared linguistic tradition, these texts open up the possibility of conversing with each other through a transnational feminist praxis, to see those shared encounters and emotional experiences very specific to certain power dynamics. The focus on the interplay of the affects between characters in close intersubjective encounters allows these texts to reveal how the idea of who is the "knower," who is "correct," what is "right," are turned on their head as these categories are not only called into question, but made to be seen as both harmful and ludicrous.

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CHAPTER I

Narrative Explorations in the Global Anglophone Novel: Affectivities of Disconnection in Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

It is February of 1986, and the Gorkhaland movement spreading through Kalimpong in West Bengal. Sai, the teenage protagonist, is sitting on the veranda in a reverie as she thinks about Gyan, her Nepalese math tutor. She ponders the meaning of love and loss, melancholy thoughts that spring from "reading an article about a giant squid in an old *National Geographic*" (1). She feels a sudden loneliness when thinking of the sea creature, who resides in solitude within the ocean's darkness, and will "never encounter another of their tribe" (2). Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is at its root a narrative experimentation that tries to capture the feelings of loneliness that have arisen through the dissemination of global English on the postmodern subject. The English language as a global and ideological phenomenon, and by proxy, ideas of Englishness has created a deeper divide on the individual consciousness, so much so that the loss of human connection is at stake. Rather than creating the possibility for empathy between people, Desai shows how increased connectivity—primarily made through the expansion of the English-speaking world and consciousness—has limited our capacity for connection through imagined and real hierarchies that become communicated affectively through social relationality.

Kalimpong, where the story takes place, is surrounded by Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and Bangladesh, with the famous Mount Kanchenjunga in the distance. The reader is transported to a world where there is a hyper-awareness of the histories tied to the borders in Kalimpong, but also the confusion related to the boundaries:

> Here, where India blurred into Bhutan and Sikkim, and the army did pull-ups and push-ups, maintaining their tanks with khaki paint in case the Chinese grew hungry for more territory than Tibet, it had always been a messy map. A great amount of warring,

> betraying, bartering had occurred; between Nepal, England, Tibet, India, Sikkim, Bhutan; Darjeeling stolen from here, Kalimpong plucked from there—despite, ah, despite the mist charging down like a dragon, dissolving, undoing, making ridiculous the drawing of borders. (Desai 9)

The Gorkha migrant ethnic group from Nepal that had been brought in as tea workers during the colonial regime, and now make up a large portion of the population, is now demanding their own separate state in what is termed as the Gorkhaland movement, reflecting various such movements taking place across India. Within this confused landscape with a "messy map" and complicated history, Sai contemplates the meaning of her existence. The main stage of the story takes place within the large "cavernous" house, Cho Oyo, a decaying property built by a Scotsman that is reminiscent of the colonial wealth from times past, strategically built to overlook the majestic Mount Kanchenjunga, the sublimity of which would capture the hearts of the British Romantics.

The *National Geographic* magazine that sparks Sai's reveries is a symbol for scientific expansion and a global consciousness, yet ironically, it is while looking at the symbolic icon of interconnectedness that Sai meditates on the loneliness and divisions between human beings. However, is it so ironic? Colonialism and neocolonialism are founded on ideas of *expansion*, and yet, as Desai reveals to us, these ideas of expansion have not broadened our subjective worlds and our perspectives; in many ways, what we encounter in *The Inheritance of Loss* is how the expansion of English and Englishness into widespread regions of South Asian cultures actually maps out onto particular bodies, how it functions on the local, intersubjective level. Furthermore, as Desai shows through the metaphor of the giant squid that the expansion of English has simply created more divisions between people, rather than the idealized "one world" universal consciousness that might be imagined from having English as a shared language or culture.

Learning another language usually broadens and expands one's consciousness and perspective, however, the complexity of English is that the hierarchies created through one's proximity to English then get embedded in the intersubjective relations. Desai reveals how the South Asian subject cannot escape a postcolonial consciousness, as the internalization of Englishness is both intergenerational and globalized, and this has only created more and more barriers as the ways in which each of us individually internalizes the ideology of Englishness then shapes the way we perceive the world and ourselves in it. Additionally, Desai explores how we externalize that harmful ideology through the social realm, and even in our relationship to inanimate objects.

The *National Geographic* magazine is a symbol that becomes increasingly layered with different meanings as the novel progresses. Though theoretically *National Geographic* seeks to "push the limits of human understanding" (*National Geographic* online) through its "captivating photography" by bringing remote cultures and spaces into the hands of forty million people in forty different languages, Desai elucidates that the globalized symbol of *National Geographic* becomes ripe with meaning as it is interpreted and processed in a multidimensional manner across time and space. In the novel, the *National Geographic* magazine and what it connotes is also differentiated by the phenomenological experience of the magazine's meaning for each of the main characters. Desai's preoccupation with these networks of meaning-making within different contexts of a globalized world is one example of what I take to be the main point of departure for literature of the Global Anglophone. If the Global Anglophone—as a literary genre or disciplinary framework—can be understood as archiving narratives that critically expose the limits of the "one world" paradigm of cultural globalization, Desai's novel serves as an example of the tensions between juxtaposing the idea of the "global" in relation to the "anglophone" through the narrative threading of the experiences of the characters to reveal of the multiplicity

of meanings an iconic cultural symbols such as *The National Geographic* magazine—and such globalized symbols of Englishness—are experienced in the imagination, and how these symbolic impositions of Englishness in the collective imaginary fail to provide a coherent, universal, totalizing world order that has been propagated through Western Enlightenment thought. Desai's novel aesthetically represents the psychological violence that is created through the valorization of cultural symbols of Englishness and how such cultural hierarchies constrain, limit, suffocate the possibility for the interconnectedness they seem to promise through their universal proliferation. *The Inheritance of Loss* dismantles this "one world" narrative by illuminating the intersubjective fractures created through such idealizations, and how the internalization of the hierarchies then is externalized through affectively charged intersubjective encounters based on the evaluation of one's proximity to and affiliation with Englishness.

The Relationship between the Reader and the Global Anglophone Novel

The novel, because of its capacity to generically explore the psychological depths of its characters, has been the fictional site for realistic explorations of life. This is primarily done through narrative style and point of view, which produces psychological realism. *The Inheritance of Loss* fits within the generic category of the postmodern novel as it reveals the fragmented consciousness that characterizes the contemporary world, and particularly, within the South Asian tradition of the postcolonial novel, though it moves into the post-postcolonial dimension by demonstrating the continued and lasting effects of colonialism on those who have never known the days of colonialism, but have inherited its toxic aftermath. In *The Location of Culture* Homi K. Bhabha writes, "[Postcolonial perspectives] formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the "rationalizations" of modernity" (171). What

postcolonial literature *does* and *how* it does it, in effect, is not a matter of great debate, and evidently, as many have argued, the Global Anglophone categorically might simply be a replacement for the postcolonial (Goyal; Anam; Bilbija et. al). What is more interesting to consider is how the Global Anglophone, and by extension, the postcolonial has become a field that we as readers of English language texts cannot categorically *avoid* both methodologically, but also, as ethical readers of texts in an increasingly globalized world. What is the site of the Postcolonial/Global Anglophone novel for us as readers? Why might the shift the Postcolonial to Global Anglophone be useful to us as "global" readers? By thinking through the "Anglophone" in its specificity, how does it implicate us as readers so that we might be more engaged in the issues that these novels might present to us?

A novel such as Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* forces the reader to grapple with the question of the potentialities, limitations, and complexities of reading texts from the postcolonial perspective as related to the scope of ethics. In her essay, "From a Distance: Teju Cole, World Literature, and the Limits of Connection," Lily Saint considers the questions: "Who gets repaired, then, through readerly encounters? And what "connections" are being made?" (323), and "What are the ethical stakes of these alternative stories for those who are their readers and listeners?" (322).

Scholars such as Wayne Booth, Wolfgang Iser, and J. Hillis Miller—among others—have championed the close relationship between reading and its effect on one's ethical consciousness. Booth discusses how certain texts have the capacity to open "the reader to new experiences of otherness [through] narratives that raise questions, that are open-ended, and leave the reader unresolved" (60-61). As previously described, Iser similarly describes how "the literary text enables its readers to transcend the limitations of their own real-life situation; it is not a reflection

of any given reality, but it is an extension of broadening our own reality" (79). Perhaps, what makes the act of reading a novel distinctive from interpreting others kinds of aesthetic objects is that a novel is a medium that allows one to experience a type psychological depth that is nuanced and detailed, one that allows the audience to transcend the limitations of our bodies by the imaginative act of entering into another's mind, a way of cross-dressing that allows us to make the escape from the limitations of our bodies.

However, there are many critics who have espoused the idea that reading allows the possibility for the reader to gain empathy for those different from us, especially those suffering battles that are far greater than any we can imagine in our own worlds. It would follow then that the more books one reads—especially through reading texts from various "world" cultures and those texts translated from other languages—then more different experiences and foreign lives from her own the reader vicariously experiences, and by extension, the more understanding and compassion she will have for her fellow human beings. However, this does not seem to be the logical conclusion that always follows in reality, as Morrison aptly asked about her own text when she questioned why her readers seemed only to be "touched and not moved" by Pecola's story. It then seems to be the kind of reading the reader participates in—the idea of reading responsibly, and with an orientation of ethical self-interrogation—and the writer, or even the reader, only can somewhat control that aspect.

What is particularly compelling about the novel is that through its narrative perspective, especially if it utilizes the first-person perspective, it creates the possibility of empathy in the reader who is witnessing the seemingly unfiltered, unadulterated psychological depths of another human being. The purer the perspective is seen to be, the more the reader can get lost into "feeling with" the narrator's plights and point of view. Short of the confessional autobiography

(and even then, there is always the question of "truth"), the novel is the only genre that fully allows the audience to participate with another being, even if fictional, on such an intersubjective level, and thus, has been idealized to be the site for creating empathy and connectivity between people, and as possibility space where a new ethics can occur within the audience. Bhabha writes, "a range of contemporary critical theories suggest that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history—subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement—that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking" (172). However, Desai does not allow us to make such hasty, idealistic conclusions by the end of her text. In fact, her narration style, in effect, dismantles any such thinking through the illumination of the lack of empathy and connections between the characters of *The Inheritance of Loss*.

There are multiple narratives that run through the book that already expose the variety of perspectives that come from one localized space within a globalized network. Desai intricately juxtaposes the lives of the four protagonists: the seventeen-year-old orphan Sai; her grandfather, Jemubhai Patel, a Cambridge-educated retired Judge, known to us simply as the "Judge;" Sai's Nepalese math tutor, Gyan; and Biju, the household cook's nineteen-year-old son who has moved to New York City in an attempt to try his luck at a better future than his father. These four narratives serve to dismantle the myth of "one world" and cosmopolitan vision of a common human experience that comes from idealistic notions of a global culture.

Desai takes up this idea of the multiplicity of reading practices that populate one's orientation towards *any* object, particularly those like the *National Geographic* that seem to innocuously inhabit our spaces and minds that most of us would not think to question. However, not one of the characters in Desai's novel has any sense of responsibly questioning the ethics of the ideology that has historically been disseminated through such a powerful and far-reaching

cultural relic like the *National Geographic* magazine that has stood for seemingly positive ideals such as the expansion of education, science, and cultural connectedness. The only hope lies in the reader who is witnessing the harm—of how the "inheritance" and uncontrollable internalization process of Ameri-European cultural ideologies on each of these characters—and their own self-interrogation process through them. Although none of the characters in the novel, with the exception of Sai, might have hope of redemption from their various indoctrinations, the reader is positioned to think critically about where they might stand in relation to each of the characters, and how they might understand those from oppositional viewpoints as well.

A Question of Ethics: Affective Responses to the *National Geographic* Magazine

Desai begins the book with attention to the meaning of the "globe." A coupon for a free *National Geographic* Inflatable Globe is advertised in the local newspaper, and Sai applies to get it, mailing it "all the way to a PO box in Omaha" (18). After a long wait, it arrives with a certificate, "congratulating them for being adventure-loving members pushing the frontiers of human knowledge and daring for almost a full century" (18). When it arrives, Sai and the cook excitedly "inflated the globe" and look at it with wonder, as something both "unexpected" and "beautiful" (18). This vision of the world again repeats Sai's earlier romantic sentiment of wanting to grasp the unknown through her reading of the magazine itself, and ultimately, through the form of travel. The cook finds that the world is a confusing mystery, as he learns that it is night in India when it is day in New York, and finds this to be nonsensical, or "strange that India went first with the day, a funny back-to-front fact that didn't seem mirrored by any other circumstance involving the two nations" (18). In everything he has known, the U.S. has always been temporally ahead of India, which points to his understanding of the global narrative—that

U.S. is part of the "first world" and that India is temporally backwards, and so he is surprised by this shift in perspective, that in reality, at least in temporal terms, India comes ahead.

To come back to the recurring image of the *National Geographic* magazine in Desai's novel, the origin of this magazine is demonstrative of its imperial mindset that masquerades as founded on such ideals including ingenuity, connection, storytelling, science, and wonder. Founded in 1888, today the magazine advertises itself on its online page as this: "In every issue of our award-winning magazine, journalists and adventurers will take you around the world – and FURTHER – as we push the limits of human understanding…[through] captivating photography and legendary storytelling that explores our planet, its inhabitants, and the frontiers of science" (*National Geographic* online). The magazine prides itself on its world-renowned photography, which captures endangered species, the far reaches of space and world cultures, and distant and "untouched" locations around the world. For Sai, it represents the accumulation of a kind of knowledge she longs to have, one that allows her to escape a narrow vision that comes with living in only one place for your whole life. 'Is there more out there?' she curiously wonders. She is mesmerized by the magazine and longs to travel, like her parents and grandfather both did in their youth. She reads her grandfather's copies of the magazine on a daily basis, filling up her time, hoping to gain some knowledge of the wider world outside of her small world. In a sense, Sai does live in a fairytale world, one that is more properly a Brothers Grimms' version, rather than the Disney version. Much like a princess locked up in her high tower, both literally and metaphorically, she looks at the world from her remote dwelling in the mountains of the Indian Alps. Her dilapidated domestic space in Cho Oyo is not unlike the postcolonial mindset that her grandfather, Jemubhai, is stuck in. Its doors are open to the

vastness of nature, but not humankind. Her network of relations consists of the Cook, Judge, her tutor, and friendly, drunken neighbors.

The foggy mist that permeates these hills suffocatingly layers over the nebulous boundaries that demarcate national identities in this borderland—identities that are attached to the geopolitical history of this tourist mountain destination. The book opens with the "mist moving like a water creature across the great flanks of mountains possessed of ocean shadows and depths" (1). Immediately the reader is drawn into this dream-like setting, where reality and Sai's fantasy have converged in the narration of events. The trope of the mist pervades over the scene, which has become like the affective space like the scientific imaginary of the *National Geographic* that is Sai's reading material of the day. The mountain town becomes the darkness of the ocean. The cook, who is making tea on a stove of fire, cautiously avoids the scorpions who often hide in the woodpile, as he uses a kettle that is so old, like "something dug up by an archaeological team" (1). Desai indicates that Sai's imagination and interpretation of the world is shaped by the rationality and romantic notions of the world she finds in her reading, through the imperialist fantasies of the *National Geographic* magazines; however, she remains innocently unaware of her ideological indoctrination, and instead sees the magazine as a space of possibility. She is left with a feeling of a loss of something; through the portrayal of other life-worlds, Sai is hyper-aware that a different kind of existence or experience always looms on the horizon, ready to be grasped, which brings her a sense of loneliness that is also accompanied by a sense of dissatisfaction that she cannot yet name.

The Judge's *National Geographic* magazines hold weight over the entire household. For the judge, "as a young man, visualizing a different kind of life, he had taken [the *National Geographics*] to a shop to have bound in leather with the years in gold lettering" (7). What kind

of life does the judge imagine as a young man? At this point, Desai doesn't give us the answers, but slowly provides us with hints, as the flashback scenes serve to show how the judge's self-loathing grows over the years as he strives to negate his Indian identity in his sadly ridiculous attempts to perform whiteness in all aspects of his life. He uses a powder puff to mask his face with a pinkish-white tinge, obsessively bathes and perfumes himself to hide any "improper" Indian scent, eats only with a knife and fork, and refuses Indian sweets with his tea, preferring only European desserts that he sees as superior.

For the cook, Biju's father, the leatherbound editions signify prestige, education, and white culture, and he too wants to be associated with them. When Sai tries to take a picture of the Cook one day, while he is mincing onions, he feels very upset, "deeply betrayed" in fact, by this captured representation. On that occasion, he runs to his home, "to change into his best clothes...and then position[s] himself before the *National Geographics* bound in leather, a backdrop he found suitable" (14), rather than memorialized as part of the underclass in his laborer's clothing. Later we learn that the cook "had been disappointed" to work for the judge, because it "had been a severe comedown, he thought, from his father, who had served white men only" (63), which shows his own biases against his employer for not being white, even despite the judge's prestigious social position. The resentments that exist in the cook's mind are also based on his own ideas of hierarchies of prestige associated with whiteness and proximity to Western culture. The more artifacts of Western culture and display of Western values, the more validity of one's higher position in the social hierarchy.

Although it might seem like the characters can't see each other's perspectives at all, that doesn't seem to hold true. The associative networks of meaning such as the cook's resentment are not completely lost on each of the characters—for example, the dominance of Western life

and values on the South Asian consciousness is one that is often self-conscious. However, what does seem to be lost is the nuanced affectivities toward the West, the particular emotions that arise through their sense of their own identity in relation to Western values—a range of many emotions, but most commonly, either shame or pride—that arises from the associations to the West. The reader immediately witnesses the way each character orients themselves to Western values, and how this is left uninterrogated by the characters themselves.

In *Globalization and Culture*, John Tomlinson points out how a true understanding of globalization shouldn't be limited to thinking about the economic and technological effects of global networks. His proposal is that we extend our understanding about how such "modalities of connectivity" create a "sense of 'proximity' that comes from the networking of social relations across large tracts of time-space, causing distant events and powers to penetrate our local experience" (9) in transformative ways. While it is true that the world has become a 'single place' in the sense that almost all of us are affected by certain problems like global warming, or have been forced into the confines of networks of global capitalism, this doesn't necessarily translate to an experience of unity and uniformity (10-11), or of "one world" because of the multidimensionality of experiences. Tomlinson discusses how culture can be understood through "how human beings construct meaning through practices of symbolic representation" (18). A focus on the existential implications of globalization, or how people make sense of their existence" and how it affects the "mundane practices that directly contribute to people's ongoing life-narratives," (20) can help us to better understand how globalization is internalized individually, and by extension, in community and local cultures.

Desai is interested in the consideration of Tomlinson's idea of the "mundane practices" that make up our life-narratives, or how each character is making sense of their own existence

through the global networks that define our neocolonial world increasingly shaped by Ameri-Eurocentric ideologies. Tomlinson continues to discuss the "*complex connectivity*" that is "a condition of the modern world" (2). Complex connectivity points towards the "rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterize modern social life" (2), and these complex networks that have arisen from globalization is something that Desai is interested in exploring in *The Inheritance of Loss*—not in purely economic terms, but like Tomlinson, by looking specifically at the cultural effects and phenomenological experiences of how the idea of the "globe," specifically through the symbolism of the *National Geographic*, is interpreted by different people in different places, situations, and points in history. Tomlinson reminds us, "Connectivity means changing the nature of localities and not just occasionally lifting some people out of them" (9) and "doesn't necessarily mean global unicity or an idea of the world as "a single place" (10). The important fact to remember, Tomlinson writes,

> the linkages suggested exist in a number of different *modalities*, varying from the social-institutional relationships that proliferating between individuals and collectivities world-wide, to the idea of increasing 'flow' of goods, information, people, and practices across national borders, to the more 'concrete' modalities of connection provided by technological developments such as the international system of rapid air transport and more literal 'wiredness' of electronic communications systems. (Tomlinson 2)

Tomlinson points out how "the paradigmatic experience of global modernity for most people...is that of staying in one place but experiencing the 'dis-placement' that global modernity brings to them" (9). Though theoretically *National Geographic* claims to remove the sense of distance in time and space through its colorful photography that seeks to bring us closer in proximity to

faraway places through their aesthetic framing of them, for Sai, it only reminds her of her own desire to find her "tribe," thereby her empathy for the animal comes from her projecting her sense of loneliness onto the giant squid. Her contemplation of the squid's existence in the dark depths of the water positions her to question her own existence, and the limitations and possibilities of finding her identity and truth within a community.

Meanwhile, Gyan's perspective is one of rejecting all of Western culture, which is what leads to the dissolution of the Sai-Gyan love affair even before it properly starts. When Sai happily celebrates Christmas, Gyan is frustrated and screams at her: "Don't you have any pride? Trying to be so Westernized. They don't want you!!! Go there and see if they will welcome you with open arms. You will be trying to clean their toilets and even then they won't want you" (174). Gyan cannot understand that India has inherited this kind of cultural hybridity through colonial history, and that a rejection of this hybrid consciousness is also a rejection of the self, on some level. They cannot undo history and its effects on their consciousness, but instead of rejecting Western culture altogether, Desai instead points to a direction in which by questioning its level of impact on the self, its relics can then be re-appropriated as one's own, rather than having anxiety on how one is "properly" internalizing it, as Jemubhai seems to do.

As a foil narrative, while Sai is shunned by Gyan for her proximity to Western culture, how she "can speak no language but English and pidgin Hindi," "she could not eat with her hands," she "felt happier with so-called English vegetables, snap peas, French beans, spring onions, and feared—*feared—loki, tinda, kuthal, kaddu, patrel,* and the local *saag* in the market" (176), Jemubhai, upon his return to India, begins to loathe his wife's Indian mannerisms. What he once found beautiful, he now hates. Desai describes how he looked at her face and "searched for his hatred, found beauty, dismissed it. Once it had been a terrifying, beckoning thing that had

made his heart turn to water, but now it seemed beside the point. An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as an English one" (168). His wife, Bela, whose name is changed to Nimi Patel after their marriage, is subject to his increasing wrath towards her as he is reminded of his own abjection. He projects his self-loathing onto her body, studying her Indian mannerisms with rage. For example, one day after he sees her "footprints on the toilet seat" he is so angry at her improper use of the toilet, her preference for using it in the Indian-style to which she is accustomed that he "takes her head and pushes it into the toilet bowl" (173). These contrasting narratives serve to show the imbalanced perspective of an uninterrogated postcolonial consciousness.

Implications for the Reader: A Globalized Post-Colonial Consciousness

The judge is undoubtedly an unlikeable character; however, Desai artfully draws us into the judge's development into his despicability and complicates our perception of him as someone who is a victim of circumstance, and who passes down his oppression. In the beginning, we are presented with an old man who is Sai's grandfather—a strict, proud, authoritarian figure who we later learn more about: In 1919, "Jemubhai Popatlal Patel had, in fact, been born to a family of the peasant caste" (64). Ironically, eventually, Jemu's father works his way up to owning "a modest business procuring false witnesses to appear in court. (Who would think his son, so many years later, would become a judge?)" (64). As his business succeeds, he is able to send his son to a "mission school" (65), where upon the school's entrance each morning, he sees a "portrait of Queen Victoria in a dress like a flouncy curtain" and he becomes "deeply impressed that a woman so plain could have also been so powerful" and the "more he pondered this oddity, the more his respect for her grew" (66). Through this detail, Desai reveals Jemu's growing respect for a foreign world that does not match anything known in his lived experiences, but how he is

simply taught to revere someone external to anything that would be relatable to himself. This portrait already lays the foundation for a consciousness that is further indoctrinated into him once he moves to England.

As Jemu shows great intellectual promise at the mission school, his sisters are "promptly deprived to make sure he got the best of everything, from love to food" (66). Here, Desai includes these facts of Jemu's upbringing to add a layer of complexity to Jemu's patriarchal values and how they are shaped by his childhood experiences, and also how value is shaped by a gendered consciousness in his community so that men are often given more value than women, and especially if they show the promise for success. When Jemu matriculates at the top of his class at the age of fourteen, the school principal mentions to his father, "'Bright boy…he might end up in high court!'" (66), and it is through this passing comment that Jemu's future is decided. His father dreams big dreams for his son that become linked to his own identity, and eventually Jemu's parents dream of sending their son to England for his schooling, yet they cannot get enough money, even though Jemu is able to pass the entrance exam. They decide that a generous marriage dowry is their best option for sending their son to a good school, and that perhaps a "dark and ugly daughter of a rich man seemed the best best" (98). A local rich man from "the other side of Piphit" hears about Jemu's departure for England, and his ambition for access to "a wider world" (100)—to have access to the prestige of someone educated in England brings him to offer "Bela, his most beautiful daughter, who lay with her sisters in their big bed complaining of boredom under a crystal chandelier that provided the luxurious look of ice in the summer heat" (100). Bela's value lies in her beauty and wealth, and this is exchanged for Jemu's promise and prestige, for if "Jemu succeeded in his endeavor [to become a judge], she would be the wife of one of the most powerful men in India" (100).

This history of the circumstances of the marriage between Jemu and Bela is painful to learn about once the reader realizes how Bela's life is ruined through their union. They have an extravagant wedding paid for by Bela's family, but it is the wedding dowry that is of significance, for without it, Jemu could not have the opportunity he has to attend his school in England: the "dowry included cash, gold, emeralds from Venezuela, rubies from Burma, uncut *kundun* diamonds, a watch on a watch chain, lengths of woolen cloth from her new husband to make into suits for which to travel to England" along with his ticket to travel by ship from Bombay to Liverpool (100). In exchange, at the young age of fourteen, Bela's name is changed within hours of the wedding to "Nimi Patel," the name chosen for her by her new family, she is sent to a foreign household that is much less luxurious than what she grew up with, and her husband promptly leaves for England soon after their wedding, leaving her alone and without a real identity.

Before the judge leaves for England, he likes his wife, Bela, as much as someone who is inexperienced and committed to the customs of an arranged marriage can appreciate a spouse. He describes one moment just after their marriage, "…he remembered a moment long ago when he had indeed liked [his wife]. He was twenty, she fourteen. The place was Piphit and they were on a bicycle, traversing gloriously down a slope through cow pats" (339). Whatever kernel of possibility that existed for love and romance prior to his departure for England quickly diminishes after he returns, whereby he begins to project his own self-loathing onto her.

Upon his return, he cannot even look at her without disgust, as she reminds him of his own objection. He begins to abuse her, so that she is forced to leave his home and return to her parents' house when she is pregnant with their child. When Bela's father comes to the judge and begs that he take her back, he responds, "You are following the script of a village idiot. She is

unsuitable to be my wife" (306). Everyone is baffled by the judge's behavior upon his return from England, and his own father tells him, "It was a mistake to send you away. You have become like a stranger to us" (306). The judge remains unfeeling toward his wife, putting on a mask of English superiority because he looks upon his wife now with a racialized double-consciousness, and takes on the role of the oppressor, treating her with the contempt he felt when he was in England.

His adult life, starting with his education in Cambridge, begins with the desire to forget his identity because of the shame of being foreign. On the ship, as he watches his father on deck ask him to symbolically throw the coconut so "that his journey might be blessed by the gods" (41), and he refuses to do so. To forget his own roots and where he comes from is his life's task, and it begins with his geographical transition on the ship from India to England, and this is where his ambivalence towards his own culture and people also begins, as the narrator reflects, "Never again would he know a love for a human being that wasn't unadulterated by another, contradictory emotion. Now, his mother's act of love, of giving her son a taste of home to begin his journey brings him shame, and he associates love for himself with shame, thus projecting it onto anything he associates with himself and his past. His mother has sent him off with "a bundle of puris; onions, green chiles, and salt in a twist of newspaper…" along with a stinking, mushy banana that repulses him. (37). He realizes that his mother could not preemptively have anticipated his "humiliation" of being unable to eat with a knife and fork and feels further humiliated at her lack of awareness. This is the beginning of his double consciousness; he now perceives himself through the gaze of his cabinmate, "who had grown up in Calcutta composing Latin sonnets in Catullan hendecasyllables" (37) and can smell the package of the food. As he recalls this memory, Jemubhai becomes furious at his mother because he interprets how in "her

attempt to cancel out one humiliation she had only succeeded in adding another" (38). Jemu picks up the package and throws it over the deck, thinking about how his mother's love is an "undignified love, Indian love, stinking, unaesthetic love" (38). From this point forward, the novel reveals Jemubhai's slow evolution, his assimilation process into what he perceives to be English tastes and sensibilities.

From the moment he arrives in England, Jemubhai's experiences are marked by a sense of alienation, inadequacy, and disillusionment. His time in England, which occurs during his education and early career, profoundly affects his character and his interactions with others. Jemubhai faces significant racial prejudice and discrimination during his time in England, and his immigrant status subjects him to various forms of discrimination from both peers and the broader British society. It is hard for him to find a place to rent, and even once he finds a place with Mrs. Rice, she doesn't "want him either" (44) but she is desperate for a boarder and takes him in, and begins to call him "James," without ever asking his permission. This name change, similar to Bela's name change to Nimi, reveals how they both similarly lose their identity. Moreover, interestingly, it shows how the colonizer/colonized dynamic is similar to the power dynamics in his marriage through the patriarchal system, so that he is similarly oppressed through a process of feminizing his subjectivity and rendering Jemu voiceless. He describes his time in England as a descent into the shadows, in contrast to the ways in which he was treated like royalty at home like "the queen of England," he is not even given a proper meal for dinner. The narrator describes how, "For entire days nobody spoke to him at all, his throat jammed with words unuttered, his heart and mind turned into blunt aching things, and elderly ladies, even the hapless—blue-haired, spotted faces like collapsing pumpkins—moved over when he sat next to them on the bus" (45). No one wants to be in close proximity to him, as if he is diseased, and

even coming into contact with his body elicits responses like "'Phew, he stinks of curry'" (45). Thus, Jemubhai internalizes these social responses of racial hatred towards his body, and they later become externalized towards disdain towards others like himself.

His shame of his own body propels his every action, interpreting the world through this new double-consciousness of himself as "other." Each of Jemubhai's actions and social interactions is prompted by his desire to preemptively remove the judgmental gaze of anyone who might perceive him as being "improper"—or excluded from the social elite that comes through alignment with Englishness. Therefore, as he becomes a "judge," he metaphorically begins to embody his social position; he now begins to "judge" anything that is Indian as inferior, and all things associated with Englishness as superior. Even in his memories as he lives a lonely existence in England is now marked by a notable affective change. Any love and regard for his wife and family turn into disregard and contempt. This shift in his perception of his close intimates is marked through these experiences. Many of the interactions he describes in England seem unspectacular; there aren't repeated racialized slurs, violence, or traumas that seem to be singularly pronounced. He studies hard, "work[ing] twelve hours at a stretch, late into the night" and then "retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow" (45). Jemubhai's painful descent into invisibility and alienation is reminiscent of Ralph Ellison's "invisible man," with a mix of the madness seen in Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein's as he retreats into his studies.

Through these descriptions, Desai illustrates how Jemubhai's unfolding into his current unfeeling behavior is one that has been learned through the loathing and invisibility he feels in England as a foreigner. He feels unacceptable, improper, strange, awkward, silenced, and the more he feels that way, others pick up on this low self-esteem, so that they validate his self-

perception. Others, “even the hapless” retreated away from him, and the “young and beautiful were no kinder; girls held their noses and giggled, ‘Phew, he stinks of curry’” (45). As a result of having nearly no intersubjective connections—only seemingly negative ones—Jemubhai’s abjection becomes more and more solidified day by day. Desai writes, “Jemubhai’s mind had begun to warp; he grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him, found his own skin odd-colored, his own accent peculiar” (45). The evolution of his self-perception has become completely “warp[ed] so that he cannot see himself clearly, but only through the lens of the imagined white English subject who he seeks to satisfy in his mind but will forever fall short because he can only perform Englishness in the most horrific of ways.

No matter where he is, he is foreign. In England he is a stranger and foreigner, and when he returns to India, he also feels like an outsider. While the judge is in Cambridge, he begins to loathe himself more and more, and begins his attempts to assimilate into the culture. Desai writes, “He worked hard at being English with a passion of hatred for what he would become; he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both” (65). Upon his return from Cambridge to Piphit, he “sat up and fidgeted, looked at the winged dinosaur, purple-beaked banana tree with the eye of one seeing it for the first time. He was a foreigner—a *foreigner*—every bit of him screamed” (166). He is what Julia Kristeva describes as “a stranger to himself” and in a space of liminality through his fragmentation process of his new double-consciousness. Jemubhai’s last shred of self-esteem is taken away when he begins to change his bodily performance—his clothing, habits, food preferences, etc. to subscribe to English customs and cut off anything that reminds him of his Indian identity. Desai writes:

> He forgot how to laugh, could barely manage to lift his lips in a smile, and if he ever did, he held his hand over his mouth, because he couldn’t bear anyone to see his gums, his

> teeth. They seemed too private. In fact, he could barely let any of himself peep out of his clothes for fear of giving offence. He began to wash obsessively, concerned he would be accused of smelling, and each morning he scrubbed off the milky scent of sleep, the barnyard smell that wreathed him when he woke and impregnated the fabric of his pajamas. To the end of his life, he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light, faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight might reveal him, in his hideousness, all too clearly. (Desai 45)

When Jemubhai is treated with any semblance of affection or kindness, he is suspicious of it and feels undeserving of such connections. He removes himself further from any possibility for intimate contact, so that any chance for healing, enlightenment, or transformation is also unimaginable. In fact, Sai is the one that has opened his mind to these flashbacks, to "this revisitation of his past" (42) of the "arrivals and departures, from places far in his past" (40). Without this confrontation of his granddaughter, he might not have revisited these horrible memories, and even as his memory is "triggered" (42), he does not seek to interrogate his choices. That is only for the reader to interrogate.

Desai interweaves Jemubhai's history throughout to showcase the kind of experiences and consciousness that older generations of Indians went through in contrast to the younger generation. The judge is a character deeply affected by the legacy of colonialism and the personal struggles that came with it. His self-loathing, authoritarian behavior, and emotional isolation paint a portrait of a man caught between worlds, struggling with his identity and the expectations imposed upon him by colonial and post-colonial society. As he reflects back on his life, Jemubhai discloses how he has been unable to partake in simple joys because of the fear of social judgment and his potential shame in getting caught because of how he might be perceived

as being culturally aligned with Indian-ness through his values, tastes, and sensibilities. When he returns to India from England, Jemubhai forever lives in denial of his childhood joys.

Desai highlights the lack of ethics that is inherited through neocolonial frameworks of understanding, and does not spare us any harsh details, but presents the cruel reality of it all in excruciating detail—as the fact of life, a perspective which, those living under such conditions in much of South Asia have learned to adopt. As Lily Saint writes "Anticolonial and postcolonial thought promotes ways of knowing or responding to otherness that work against the failures of colonial ethical philosophy to disrupt its unethical ideological and practical instantiations" (20), and Desai's text is a disruption of the inherited ideologies that remain unquestioned in both post-colonial and neocolonial frameworks. Though the focus is primarily on in the intersubjective encounters in Desai's text, she also brings in cultural relics like the *National Geographic*, *The Oxford English Dictionary*—a gift from his parents before he leaves for England, the Queen's portrait, and other such examples to bring in connection of objects and the historical weight they carry for their alignment with English cultural values. Desai does not shy away from exposing the" unethical ideological and practical instantiations" of colonial frameworks that haunt entire structures of remote lives that would otherwise be far removed from anything related to Ameri Eurocentrism. For example, Desai describes the back-breaking work of the local laborers to build this remote house in the hills of their village, Cho Oyo in the Indian Alps, "built long ago by a Scotsman" whose "wild and brave" spirit had "called" him to adventure. She writes,

> As always, the price for such romance had been high and paid for by others. Porters had carried boulders from the riverbed—legs growing bandy, ribs curving into caves, backs into U's, faces being bent slowly to look always at the ground—up to this site chosen for a view that could raise the human heart to spiritual heights. (Desai 13)

The price to pay for a boundless imagination and expansionist viewpoint that is without limits is that there is a cost for it. The only way to achieve this grand vision within a suitable time frame would be through the exploitation of the workforce, through the dehumanization of the laborers to create this vision. Zygmunt Bauman describes in *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts* that those deemed as "wasted humans" because of the imperial world-building endeavors of Western modernity, are in today's world seen as inhabitants of the earth, but merely as being excessive—as mattering less than those who have economic power. The point is, it is not enough for the Scotsman to enjoy the Indian Alps by assimilating into the culture and way of living of those who have inherited the geographical space through their ancestors; instead, the Scotsman's instinct is to claim ownership over the beauty and awe by possessing a piece of land and building a property that doesn't make sense within the landscape. The viewpoint that is achieved However, Desai's portrayal of this "inheritance of loss"—this demoralizing ethical system—then positions the reader to question their own place within such a political framework.

Postcolonial literature has been part of a movement to draw attention to decoloniality, and focused on creating a national consciousness that was strategically used in order to institutionally and structurally decolonize from the colonizer. Because, as Fanon reveals in the *Wretched of the Earth*, the new bourgeoisie end up replicating the old systems rather than creating new systems, they become dependent on the colonizers. This always creates a more definite and controlled center and periphery binary within the context of postcolonial literature. Often, white discourse shapes our thoughts so that we are taught that those in the periphery matter less, and that therefore, if postcolonial theory is a literary marker of the periphery, then there is a "ghettoization" of the field (even while it is arguably often the most theoretically rigorous). The novels characterized as the Global Anglophone continue to this project but do so

by investigating the complex network of meanings, intersections between disparate lives, and connections between the lived experiences from those that live in worlds that seem far apart. Through her case study of the network of meanings in characters that inhabit just one household, Desai is invested in such a project that specifically exemplifies how the "one world" perspective ideologically divides those living under one roof. However, colonial rule is not the only culprit to these ideological differences, it is also the new consciousness that can arise from living in Western countries and the additional insecurities that are brought from the racism experienced abroad. Both Jemubhai and Biju experience discrimination from their time abroad but make different conclusions about what those experiences teach them about their place in the world.

To be noted is that the judge's experience as a postcolonial subject is in direct reference to the loss and shame that is felt by the colonized subject. However, the inter-generational divide between Jemubhai and Sai reveals that Sai's experience and concerns are quite different from the judge's. The difference might lie in the *post-colonial* experience (with a hyphen), which refers directly to those who had to historically grapple with the extrication of the British empire from the national consciousness, which of course, can never fully be achieved. The judge does not feel like he can create his own identity but continues functioning within the power systems that have already been set up by the colonial regime. That translates for him as whiteness=power, and therefore, he tries his hardest to perform whiteness in every aspect of his life. Yet particular to his post-colonial experience is that he mimics the British colonizer's tastes and sensibilities. As Frantz Fanon describes in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the judge is a member of the new bourgeoisie, he simply continues functioning within the parameters of the system that the colonizing regime had set up and continues working with the Western bourgeoisie. The judge is

in the process of setting up the system of neocolonialism; however, the transition marked in *Inheritance of Loss*, is not quite as simple as that. Sai's location is not defined in relationship with the colonial regime of the old British empire, but with the culture of Englishness that is transmitted through ideas of world literature, the hegemonic and normative cultural values of whiteness, and globalization.

While Sai adjusts to life in Cho Oyo, Biju, the cook's son, moves from one job to the next in New York City, and from being a delivery person for cheap Chinese takeout, he eventually makes it to the shadows of the fancy, bourgeois restaurants—always on the bottom, never to see the top. Much like the workers in telecommunication companies that might work in customer care for corporate offices like Target and Walmart, where the workers are never fully in contact with the fruits of their labor, Biju also never sees the world above the "basement kitchens of New York" (22). Without the proper documentation, he moves from place to place, and quickly realizes that there are two worlds that inhabit a restaurant—the world above, and the world below. In the first French restaurant "Baby Bistro," he works with a Pakistani and Mexican, in the "Le Colonial" with a Colombian, Tunisian, Ecuadorian, and Gambian, and while the flag above was stars and stripes outside its window, the ones he sees below come from everywhere else. He learns that there are Indians in more places than he had imagined—"England he knew, and America, Dubai, Kuwait, but not much else" (22). He finds out from his coworkers that there are Indians everywhere who are running successful businesses in countries he never knew existed—Guyana, Guam, Trinidad, Madagascar, Chile, Kenya, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Fiji, New Zealand, Surinam, Canada, Alaska, Hong Kong, Singapore (21-22). He realizes that the world is wider than he had imagined, but that the class differences and

distinctions seemed to remain the same, the cosmopolitan identity seemed to be interchangeable almost everywhere.

Shifted Perspectives or Disillusionment?

When Biju returns to India from New York City, he realizes that he "hadn't seen such vastness in a long time" (315). The world of traveling to unknown places and territories, the one imagined by *National Geographic*—the one of adventure, daring, and knowledge, was not the kind of travel that Biju has experienced. On the one hand, he has come to realize that the world is vaster than it seems, with more possibilities of mobility in geographical location than he had thought of, but on the other hand, he realizes that in fact, his own world will always be small, limited to the basements of the "world below." Global mobility might exist, but the class differences that come from historical situatedness were a myth. The gangs of the Gorkha movement find him to be a vulnerable target as he tries to get back home from the train station. They steal everything—his newly bought American clothes, his lifesavings, and finally, his dignity, as he is forced to wear a woman's nightgown to make the rest of his trek home. He is heart-broken and left with nothing, which is exactly how he began his journey. For him, his observations and experiences in New York, and then upon his return to Kalimpong, expose that the possibility for any social or economic mobility is a myth for most of the "underclass" around the world.

As a parallel story to Biju's return, Sai decides to leave. We are left to wonder where she will go, and what her possibilities and limitations are. Will she, like her grandfather, who as a young man had "visualiz[ed] a different kind of life" (7)—end up disillusioned by the limitations imposed on her subjectivity in a white world? There is a bit more optimism than that, even as Sai's romantic interest and math tutor Gyan breaks up with her in order to join the Gorkhaland

movement. In her heartbroken state, she comes upon a scene where she witnesses the Cook being violently beaten by her grandfather. The Cook begs the Judge to punish him for losing the Judge's prized dog, and also ends up confessing all his other accumulated "wrongs" from over the years: he drinks the Judge's fine alcohol and eats the superior household rice surreptitiously; he lies in the household accounts, thus steals the Judge's money; he doesn't always take the mutt for walks, and instead sits on the stoops to smoke. These acts of rebellion make him feel guilty on the occasion of the judge's loss of his beloved pet, and he cries to the judge, "I'm a bad man. Beat me. Beat me...It's your duty to discipline me. It's as it should be" (320). Sai, who is lost in longing for Gyan, is jolted by the scene, feeling ashamed: "Shame on myself…" she said...Who was she...she with her self-importance, her demand for happiness, yelling it at fate, at deaf heavens, screaming for her joy to brought forth…?" (322). Her sadness for herself is selfish and feels like "enough for all the sadness in the world" (323). By the end of the novel, Sai's short-lived love affair with Gyan does change her perspective, and she looks at the world with an "enlightened," experienced, and mature point of view: "The five peaks of Kanchenjunga turned golden with [a] kind of luminous light" (357). Sai now understands that the "simplicity of what she'd been taught wouldn't hold. Never again could she think there was, but one narrative and that narrative belonged only to herself, that she might create her own mean little happiness and live safely within it" (355). The narrative of global connectivity has been dismantled. By encountering Gyan, whose worldview is so different from her own, she learns that love cannot overcome the deep divisions created by the post- and neo-colonial consciousness that each of them has inherited and internalized in disparate ways. However, Desai also reveals another wisdom to us—that is that those that suffer the most are the ones who insist on how these differences cannot be reconciled but must be affectively embodied and remembered.

Sai is young, and although somewhat defined by her childhood experiences and background, she herself has not yet made the conscious decisions of what she will choose or not choose to participate in. The novel ends with this newfound knowledge of her place in the world as relational, as not a "narrative that belonged only to herself." This consciousness, the audience can gather, will shape her future decisions, her consciousness of the social aspect of an identity that is shaped by history, perspective, and politics. It is a *political consciousness* and a consciousness of how the body is the site for the political—how the way one dresses, interacts, eats, etc. is representational and a site for contention and connection in the social world. Her connection with Gyan has left an important imprint on her, and she cannot continue to live with the same freedom as she once did. Sai realizes that the world is much more complex than she had imagined, and that her life narrative is deeply entangled with multiple narratives that don't "belong" to her, that it seems like an impossible task to "create" her own "tiny happiness" within these networks of understanding.

As reflected in the form of the novel itself, with its various perspectives interweaving through it, the various disparate narratives intersecting in surprising ways, Sai conclusively realizes that, "Life [isn't] single in its purpose…or even in its direction" (323). Desai's narrative style, Tessa Hadley notes in a review in the *London Review of Books*, is one of "sheer disorder of competing world-versions – ethnic, economic, cultural, fantastic – [that] spills onto the pages as an uncontrollable excess, overwhelming whatever interpretations of events the protagonists offer," and "the sheer multiplication of rationales, justifications and rights, incapacitates judgment." This is not a novel that allows the reader to have a neat interpretation of the demerits of colonialism and its neocolonial form that has arisen from globalization. Much like the disciplinary framework of the Global Anglophone, the reader is positioned to look for the shared

points and intersections of meaning between the various characters who lead very different lives and have very particular orientations towards Englishness.

The story ends with the same image from the beginning, with the *National Geographics*, and Sai's reflection on her education from them and the books she has read. She thinks of "the judge's journey, of the cook's journey, of Biju's. Of the globe twirling on its axis" (323). In *The Inheritance of Loss*, the recurring imagery of the mist in which the characters live and contemplate their lives is a verbal slippage of what is "missed" by living in the periphery of white culture. The *missed* opportunities they don't have are based on a globalized perspective of what the normative experience of the world should be—that is, the culturally dominant white perspective into which they were born in their global awareness, their "thrownness" in the world—which is their "inheritance of loss." The possibilities that are open to them are defined by the set of norms of this white perspective, and without fighting for an alternate vision of the world, they remain entrenched in that world of meaning-making.

While Desai's novel begins with ideas of "missed" opportunities that are phenomenologically experienced by the characters exemplified through the *National Geographic*'s white imperialist project. By the contrasting narratives of the various South Asian identities that Desai portrays, the reader is positioned to question *who* in actuality has access to the mobility that this globalized world has imagined for us. While the judge's method of finding his place in society meant to "become white" though he could never "quite" white enough, as Homi Bhabha writes in "Of Mimicry and Man," he cannot achieve this through his identity as being "Anglicized not English," or the colonized subject rather than the one with power. The judge is indicative of someone who has lost direction in his sense of imagining a new identity within his newfound double consciousness, and reveals this with the whitening of his face

through the powder puff as he attempts to become white, rather than to find his own personal "tiny happiness" (323) in the world. Although we see how the judge has lost his sense of self, *The Inheritance of Loss* ends on a somewhat hopeful note because Sai, with her access to mobility and privilege, has decided to leave for America. Her youth and idealism serve her to see possibility in the world for constructing an identity that is different from her past, and she continues to aspire toward something, to figure out her belonging in the world.

Conclusion

Desai focuses on the heartbreak of a postcolonial consciousness no matter where you are located around the globe. The "inheritance of loss" is the inherited loss of a concrete identity, the feelings of loss that accompany most of us who live with a fragmented identity as a result of cross-cultural identities, encounters, and mobility. Even though Desai is writing about the fragmented Indian identity across continents, the call for the double-consciousness required in today's world is meticulously encapsulated through the various kinds of intersubjective encounters and the affects that are produced through the assessment of each character's understanding of the self—of have the self-awareness of the extent of the ways in which colonialism and neocolonialism is psychologically affecting them, and often limiting them. The call for this consciousness in the modern world is a plea to the reader to interrogate the ways in which these social dynamics play out in their own lives, in the important characters from their own lives. Desai's free-form novel realistically mimics the network of connections and possibilities of meaning that are situated according to one's place in the world. If each of these characters understood their own self-imposed limits that have been inherited through their subjective internalization of culture, they could have been freed from the limitations.

Perhaps the Global Anglophone novel, as exemplified through Desai's *Inheritance of Loss*, with it hope to expand our consciousness of the social worlds we live in, makes it so that we can't live unconsciously without attentiveness to the scope of the historical forces that have shaped these politicized inter subjective encounters. With all kinds of people with divergent histories intermingling on a relational field, the Global Anglophone novel might seem idealistic in its pedagogical scope, in drawing attention to reveal the wrong ethics of the "one world" perspective and the harm it does through these affectively charged intersubjective encounters. By revealing the lack of consciousness of its four characters, Sai, Gyan, Jemubhai, and Biju, it positions the reader to choose differently, through witnessing the social costs of the intersubjective encounters—through the affects created through the uneven effects of globalization—and then reflect on such moments in their own lives. The reader might gauge when they have been either easily angered or triggered, or perhaps, alternately, have been naively unaware. Through its mode of instruction for the reader, here characterized through Sai's own psychological development and orientation towards the ideologies held as truth through the *National Geographic* magazine, the Global Anglophone novel opens reading practices that attune us to unethical perspectives, and moreover, especially to how these perspectives then manifest and externalize themselves on the social field. By positioning the reader to witness the naive perspective of Sai, a privileged seventeen-year-old, the reader can choose to develop a new consciousness alongside the protagonist—a consciousness that is attentive to how the interpersonal is affectively charged through differences in embodied experiences of globalized Englishness. In this constellation of texts, the reader is always forced to question where they stand in the current global paradigm and the best ways to orient themselves in such a world where *no one* can any longer avoid such an encounter.

In Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the protagonist concludes his story by asking: "Who knows but those on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?" (581). Ellison's call to the reader is after we experience his disillusionment with the world and is much more explicit—a plea for attention from those readers who can hear the lower frequencies. He is explicitly talking to those who exist on a different frequency—one that is aware of the kind of Duboisian sense of double-consciousness. In a similar fashion, Desai asks us to look closer at our own orientation to the globe, and like Sai, contemplate: who do we choose to center in our world? What perspective do we hold by this centering? How do we exist in relation to the current global paradigm, and how does it limit us rather than expand us as human beings? How does it shape our interactions, connections, and affects towards others? This is not a simple task, but one that requires a different orientation toward the world, a way of looking at the globe on a different axis altogether.

Fred Motten describes his belonging to the "Undercommons" of the university where he achieves a sense of community that is otherwise invisible to the public eye and comes through a look or gesture of understanding of being attuned in the same way. This attunement allows us to see the truth of how broader systems and networks connect in complex ways and try to make sense of them. The Global Anglophone speaks to those who can hear on "lower frequencies" to which much of the world is deaf or refuses to acknowledge. What if the exchange of the "Undercommons," was not as silenced and invisible? What if it was not relegated to being marginalized within the scope of literary studies as postcolonial studies? The Global Anglophone might open a wider conversation, not only to those who can hear "on a lower frequency." It might allow us to look at a constellation of texts that are speaking to an audience that understands the exclusionary practices of global white supremacy. There could be a way of

listening, and creating a community of scholars who want to engage in a political project of understanding global subjectivities that don't fit the universalized model of whiteness. To find others that care to study these alternate modalities that Tomlinson discusses, the emergent field of the Global Anglophone allows us to reconfigure texts that are read side by side, so that the subcategories such as postcolonial literature from India, world literature classics, Black-American literature—all which have merits in their own right—might be evaluated through a more politicized perspective with attention to the changing global landscape and a way of opening up to the possibilities of the future of literary studies.

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CHAPTER II

A Focus on Affect: Dismantling How We Read the World in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

"The misfortune of man is that he was once a child" (206).

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

The Bluest Eye began as an imaginative pursuit to imagine what experiences lead a little girl to feeling ashamed of her body. In the 1993 "Afterword" to her novel *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison speaks of a childhood experience when a Black friend confided in her and told her that "she wanted blue eyes" (209). She describes her feeling of revulsion when her friend disclosed this secret: "I looked around to picture her with them and was violently repelled by what I imagined she would look like if she had her wish. The sorrow in her voice seemed to call for sympathy, and I faked it for her, but astonished by the desecration she proposed, I "got mad" at her instead" (209). It is the memory of this anger that propels Morrison to imagine and author the story of a young, marginalized Black girl who struggles to exist in a white world and who learns racial self-loathing as a result of it. Morrison writes about the impact of this experience on her own self-perception. She writes: "twenty years later I was still wondering about how one learns" racial self-loathing (210).

Told from the perspective of the MacTeer sisters, Claudia, and Frieda, two young Black girls in the 1940s, Morrison invites us to witness the events that led up to Pecola's psychological demise through the socially untarnished perspective of children. Through Claudia and Frieda's intersubjective perception of Pecola as being one of their own, rather than someone seen as an outsider, their compassionate portrayal of Pecola serves as a model for readers while it uncovers the dialectical nature of understanding the self. Morrison utilizes the Zerna Sharpe "Dick and Jane" ideal of white-centered culture as a scaffolding tool to demonstrate the ways in which ideals of whiteness internalized by those who deviate most from them. The Dick and Jane

metanarrative immediately draws attention to the social constructions of whiteness as the norm on the *macro* level—how whiteness is the norm and idealized in American media on every level—from Hollywood to our educational tools, and even the toys children are given. However, Morrison exemplifies how these normative ideals then encroach on the micro level of the Black community, within the scope of one's family life and community relations, creating hierarchies that erode the social fabric of the community. *The Bluest Eye*'s strength lies in the creation of these Iserian narrative "interpretative gaps" so that the reader must decipher the meaning between the Dick and Jane white normative family structure and the ways it governs the lives of the Black community in 1940s Lorain, Ohio.

The focus on the intersubjective in *The Bluest Eye* puts the weight of meaning on the affectively charged moments that transpire in Pecola's everyday life to show how the culmination of repeated negative interactions is what causes Pecola's understanding of herself and internalized shame. Pecola's psychological demise, Morrison reveals, does not occur through one isolated incident or through structural oppression alone; she is abandoned again and again by people who refuse to *recognize* her humanity, and this is shown through the affective residue she carries on her body through the gaze of others. Morrison's focus on the affective or emotional dimension of Pecola's experience magnifies the damaging effects of racism as not only a problem of existential freedom and political possibilities, but how racist ideology chafes at one's core through everyday social interactions. Through the close examination of Pecola's strained intersubjective relations—that result from her complete deviation from ideals of whiteness—Morrison reveals the damage racist ideology has on the emotional life of the Black community—and the minute, almost microscopic ways affectivities passed between bodies has irrevocable effects on self-perception.

Decolonial Aesthesis and the Politics of Recognition

In the famous chapter "The Lived Experience of a Black Man" from *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon describes the phenomenological experience of the Black embodied existence. In trying to explore the nature of Black consciousness, and how it comes to be, Fanon recounts how no matter to which discourse he turns—to philosophy, psychology, science, art—he must confront the inferiority of his existence. Is it simply "A feeling of inferiority?" he asks in his stream of consciousness style, "No," he concludes, it is a "feeling of not existing" (118). Fanon explains, "Without a Black past, without a Black future, it was impossible for me to live my Blackness" (117). Fanon's account of being a Black man in the western world is particular to his experience as a male but can shed light on the way in which affectivities of shame, inferiority, and exclusion are internalized in the Black consciousness.

Fanon writes: "Sin is Black as virtue is white. All those white men, fingering their guns, can't be wrong. I am guilty. I don't know what of, but I know I'm a wretch" (118). When such experiences are repeated—when you accumulate a history of guns being pointed towards you, scientific findings condemning you as intellectually inferior, the media portraying you as a "grinning *Y a bon Banania"* (92)—there is little freedom left to understand your identity any differently. In other words, these messages are all part of what Sara Ahmed calls the "cultural politics of world making" (12) that produce certain emotions. Fanon paints the picture we can all imagine quite vividly—of white men "fingering their guns" ready to attack Black men; by doing so, he reveals how this particular image of guns as objects of violence that continue to be used against Black men is an image that is filled with affect. The image of watching white men "fingering their guns" instills fear and control but then transfers into the affect being a *target* of violence to the Black man. Fanon's phenomenological account discloses how these affects get

internalized and produce certain feelings that might go against one's rationality, in this case, "I am guilty…I am a wretch" (118). That is, a person may not be guilty or wretched, but by repeatedly made to feel that way. They begin to believe that as truth. (As a side note, interestingly, this is the classic example of those who are victims of abuse.) Fanon brings to fore the ways in which affectivities pass between bodies in the experience of Black men through an exploration of his own lived experiences. Like Fanon, Morrison's fiction also brings with it an attentiveness to the embodied experience of race, and how affects transfer through our social worlds. Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, explores how experiences of inferiority and social exclusion are internalized, specifically by young Black girls. "[O]ne never encounters the testimony of the women's voice-consciousness" (93) writes Gayatri Spivak in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and Morrison seeks to remedy this.

The colonial-modernity critical school of thought that comes primarily from the Latin American tradition, also known as "global systems theory," provides useful tools and frameworks to consider how certain texts—like Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*—have a decolonizing mission. For example, in Walter Mignolo and Rolondo Vazquez's dossier from *Social Text*, "Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings," they discuss the difference between aesthetics and aestheSis. According to Mignolo and Vazquez, "AestheTics become Euro centered in eighteenth-century Europe when it was taken as the key concept for a theory of sensibility, sentiment, sensations, and, briefly, emotions, in contrast with the obsession for the rational" (online). Moreover, Kant further theorized how it was associated with the beautiful and sublime, which defined what we see as modern aesthetics, as the "regulator of the global capability to "sense" the beautiful and the sublime." On the one hand, write Mignolo and Vazquez, "aestheTics colonized aestheSis in two directions: in time, it established the standards

in and from the European present. And, in space, it was projected to the entire population of the planet" (online). "Decolonial aestheSis is a confrontation with modern aesthetics" Mignolo and Vazquez proclaim, and aestheSis specifically is "the critique and artistic practices that aim to decolonize the senses, that is, to liberate them from the regulations of modern, postmodern, and altermodern aestheTics." Through this definition, from the very outset of the novel with the Dick and Jane paratext, the reader can already sense that Morrison's text is establishing itself in the latter tradition of decolonial aestheSis by its very direct confrontation of colonizing, modern aesthetics in the most basic, ubiquitously used media of reading primers.

Morrison thematically explores how Pecola's sense of herself as unworthy derives from repeated social interactions, through an intersubjective understanding of herself. The affective nature of social relations as an overarching theme has also received critical attention, especially gaining momentum post-#BlackLivesMatter. Philosophy of race scholars who investigate the politics surrounding the visibility of oppression within our social and structural institutions have used the *Bluest Eye's* Pecola as an example of the multiple factors at play that cause injustice and suffering for people of color. Most recently, *Philosophical Investigations* delved into the topic of "social visibility" as explored in various social and literary texts. Within this conversation, Anika Simpson and Paul C. Taylor discuss how Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* aestheticizes the DuBoisian idea of "looking at oneself through the eyes of others," or alternately, Hegel's master-slave dialectic and Sartre's concept of the "gaze." Simpson and Taylor write: "racialization mobilizes and intensifies the basic dialectical mechanisms of human subject formation" (47), and Morrison's text is just one example of how the "ocularcentric appeal in [such] parables moves beyond the realm of metaphor when racialized visible identities are in play" (48). Morrison's text both makes visible and visualizes "the dialectics of recognition" (48) and asks, "who is invisible

to whom, and under what conditions" (50). Simpson and Taylor's scholarship draws attention to how the politics of visibility that has come to the forefront of academic discourse after #BlackLivesMatter has important philosophical and literary roots, especially in the African American and Black diasporic traditions.

In another related vein, Farah Jasmine Griffin's recent article in *College English* discusses how Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is not only important because it attends to the problems of race and white supremacy in America, but also because it can "reveal essential truths." Griffin discusses the trope of the "outdoors" in African American discourse, and how the word captures the "history of dispossession and homelessness" that is part of the real terror that pervades over the Black community and is a physical threat as much as a "psychic scarring" or "trauma from which one never fully recovers" (675). An investigation of the novel's ethical dimensions, Griffin argues, is seen through the analogy of the "outdoors" and Claudia and Frieda MacTeer's care and concern for Pecola to feel less "outdoors" when she comes to stay in their home. The attention to the MacTeer's response as witnesses to Pecola's condition—held in stark contrast to that of the rest of the community—is important in understanding Morrison's message of the fundamental respect needed in order for a human being to have the possibility for self-actualization.

Again, like Simpson and Taylor, Griffin is interested in bringing to light how Morrison reveals not only the material effects of poverty, but also the social and existential factors that psychologically threaten Pecola, and those positioned similarly to her in our world. As Griffin notes, *The Bluest Eye* "warrants rereading" because of its concern "about the timeless questions of compassion and goodness, about the need to welcome and embrace the stranger, the vulnerable, the least of these" (676). Griffin's scholarship draws attention to the importance of

those that serve as witnesses to the most vulnerable populations, and how Claudia and Frieda serve as important role models who rise above the societal stigma against Pecola, especially in her own Black community, as those who are the biggest victims of the white supremacist culture and history only seek to ostracize her further and fear being associated with her abjection.

These scholars draw attention to the continued cultural relevance of Morrison's text—now more than ever—in what it can teach the reader, arguably, those its "decolonizing aesthethSis." However, Morrison feels unsuccessful in this regard—in the fact that *The Bluest Eye's* ability to successfully illuminate what she had hoped it might to the reader. She writes that by "centering the weight of the novel's inquiry" on Pecola, "so delicate and vulnerable a character," she believes that readers could not completely surrender their biases. In other words, perhaps, to witness the state of Pecola's abjection was too overwhelming to the reader so that, much like most characters in the text, they chose to look away rather than confront the reality of Pecola's existence and their own complicities in it. Although Pecola is just one example of the deep psychical wounds that can result from the "demonization of an entire race," perhaps, Morrison thinks, Pecola's life was altogether too "singular." In Morrison's estimation, she did not succeed in eliciting a self-interrogation from the reader of their own part in Pecola's "smashing." Instead, Morrison says, they were led "into the comfort of pitying" Pecola.

Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* was published in 1970 and written during the post-civil rights era where Black Americans continued to be frustrated that the laws didn't bring the social changes they had sought. Issues of racial representation came to the forefront. In 1968, *Vogue* magazine featured a Black model on its cover for the first time, while in 1970, the first issue of the popular magazine *Essence*, with a target audience of Black women, was published. Moreover, much like the post-#BlackLivesMatter era, student protesters at various American

universities demanded that universities hire additional Black faculty and add Black Studies programs in their curriculum. Within this zeitgeist, it might have been easy to flatten the complexities of Morrison's work by simply reading it as a text about the problems around racism, representation, and giving voice to a Black writer. But Morrison had expected more from her readers.

Morrison seems to have an idea of who her reader is, and what they should take away from the book if they are reading it correctly. Thinking through the lens of reader-response theory, Wolfgang Iser's concept of the "implied reader," who is "a hypothetical figure who is likely to get most of what the author intended." According to Iser, the implied reader will best understand and appreciate the metaphors, allusions, ironies, and symbolism within the text in order to interpret it with the author's intention in mind. The "solution" to the problem—that is, Pecola's characterization as being entirely too unrelatable to the readers—was to "break the narrative into parts that had to be reassembled by the reader." She hoped that this would guide the reader into that self-interrogation process; however, in retrospect, this aesthetic choice in the construction of the novel, or as Morrison writes, its "execution," does not "satisfy me now."

In *Toni Morrison's Secret Drive*, David S. Goldstein and Shawnree D. Campbell have explored how Reader-Response criticism can serve as a useful tool to study Morrison's texts. They write, "...the problems in *The Bluest Eye* work to engage readers in ways and to an extent that a more traditional, linear, and "complete" narrative cannot. The effect of this narrative strategy…seeks to draw readers into its project of deconstructing race and recognizing and indicting racism" (46). However, although Morrison's self-disclosed intention was to get readers on this path, she would disagree with whether or not this tactic was successful. Using Steven Mailloux's theory from *Interpretive Conventions* as a reference point for the idea of a "text

teaching a reader to read," Goldstein and Campbell hope that the "The novel guides readers not only to a realization of their role as oppressors, but also to a vision of themselves as victims of the skin-color hierarchy" (69), Morrison herself would disagree as to whether or not readers can be properly trained to be such ideal readers that Goldstein, Campbell, and she herself had imagined.

Morrison's admittance of her dissatisfaction lies in the fact that "many readers remain touched but not moved," which she sees as the novel's weakness. The imagined, hypothetical reader in Morrison's mind would have been "moved" by the *The Bluest Eye*; however, the "actual" reader was simply "touched" by her book. In other words, many readers chose to look away—to keep a distance from the facts underneath the story's surface that Morrison chose to depict. Perhaps, Morrison theorizes, because it "is a terrible story about things one would rather not know anything about" (213), but the "gaps" left by Morrison were left unfilled in the ways that she would have liked.

In "Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction," Wolfgang Iser writes: "The more texts lose their determinacy, the more the reader is shifted into the full operation of their possible intentions. If determinacy exceeds the reader's limit of tolerance, he will feel overburdened" (6). Morrison seems to think that she has overburdened the reader; however, the fault might not lie in the choice of her aesthetics, but rather the choice in the subject matter. Perhaps most readers do not want to confront the knowledge that awaits them by "filling in the gaps." If the process that is required equates to the kind of self-interrogation that Morrison seeks, "being moved" would require too great of not only self-transformation, but great social change. "Being touched," only requires enough sympathy that allows one to forget, submit to the status quo, and keep on living life as usual.

Interpretative Gaps: Tools for Self-Interrogation

Morrison discusses how the goal of the novel is to "peck away at the gaze that condemned her [childhood friend]" (209) who told the young Morrison her secret desire for blue eyes. The young Morrison cannot sympathize with her friend, although she performs it by "fak[ing] it for her." Twenty years later, Morrison begins the novel in an attempt to understand how her friend grew to have this wish and can now recognize that "Implicit in her desire was racial self-loathing" (210). Morrison wonders: How does one learn that? Although when she is writing the text, in the 60s, there is a reclamation movement for "racial beauty," Morrison's novel is more interested in the deeper questions beyond the idea behind the self-loathing that stems from cultural conceptions of beauty. Moreover, "Why, although reviled by others, could this [racial] beauty not be taken for granted by the community? Why did it need wide public articulation to exist?" Morrison claims "These are not clever questions. But in 1962 when I began this story, and in 1965 when it began to be a book, the answers were not as obvious to me as they quickly became and are now." Morrison is less interested in giving a critique of our racist society than she is in exploring the emotional effects on certain bodies. She writes,

> The assertion of racial beauty was not a reaction to the self-mocking, humorous critique of cultural/racial foibles common in all groups, but against the damaging internalization of assumptions of immutable inferiority originating in an outside gaze. I focused, therefore, on how something as grotesque as the demonization of an entire race could take root inside the most delicate member society: a child; the most vulnerable member: a female. (Morrison 210)

Morrison says herself that the focus of her text is for the reader to investigate the "damaging internalization of assumptions of immutable inferiority originating from an outside gaze." This "outside gaze" that Pecola must continually grapple with is what leads to her psychological demise. Morrison's assertion, then, of the reader "being touched, and not moved" is perhaps that turning away from the self-interrogation that would need to occur in order to digest their own complicity in being part of this "outside gaze." In *The Bluest Eye*, the "outside gaze" is often one that refuses to look at or see Pecola. Morrison is asking us to consider what Simpson and Taylor point out, "who is invisible to whom, and under what conditions." Morrison's own proclamation of her dissatisfaction lies in her taking responsibility for the reader, however, as the text itself shows—it is the harmful reading practices that are so hard to remove from one's psyche. Because of the extremity of one's social conditioning, most readers are unable to undergo the self-interrogation process that Morrison sees as crucial to the reading process to get to the reasoning behind what happens to Pecola.

Iser's *The Implied Reader* investigates the relationship between the reader and the text, and the reader's active role in constructing the text. The generic role of the novel, according to Iser, is to have a "specific effect: namely, to involve the reader in the world of the novel and so help him to understand it—and ultimately his own world—more clearly" (xi). Central to Iser's theory is the idea of "discovery," as the "reader discovers the meaning of the text" (xiii). In "Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction," Iser writes about how literary texts,

> constitute a familiar world in an unfamiliar form. Thus, the intention of a literary text can never be completely identified with our experience. Instead, it presents reactions to and attitudes toward the world we live in, and it is these reactions and attitudes that constitute

> the reality of the literary text… [and the literary text] establishes its reality by the reader's participation and by the reader's response. (Iser 7)

According to Iser, it is the reader's responsibility to "bring the text to life" (5) because "literary texts are generated in the act of reading; they are the product of a complex interaction between the text and reader" (5). Iser claims that all literary texts have a "certain amount of indeterminacy." This indeterminacy comes from the gaps in meaning. The reader's response comes from filling in the gaps of meaning between the determinacy and indeterminacy of the text. These gaps are "basic element for the aesthetic response" (9), as "every literary text invites some form of participation on the part of the reader" (10). Iser claims that "it is only when the reader is given the chance to participate actively that he will regard the text, whose intention he himself has helped to compose, as real" (10).

One way to create indeterminacy is through the perspective of the narrator. Through the "empty spaces" of the narration, "the reader is given only as much information as will keep him oriented and interested" (19). Therefore, "the reader gets involved because he reacts to the viewpoints advanced by the narrator" (19). Through this "discovery" process, the reader generates meaning by filling in the gaps to create a possible coherent interpretation of the critical meaning behind the text. Iser's interest in the relationship between the reader and the text is that he is singularly invested in the discovery process, what I call the "self-interrogation process" that must occur in the act of reading. Iser's critical intervention in his essay begins by citing Susan Sontag's 1966 essay "Against Interpretation." In doing so, Iser is calling attention to the problem of preemptively reducing the meaning of a literary work based on the content, so that the meaning becomes comprehensible or to use Sontag's words "tamed." Iser proclaims, "The zeal of critics for classification—their passion for pigeonholing, one might almost call it—only

subsided when some special significance of the content had been discovered. (3). "Referral of the text to some already existing frame of reference," Iser continues, "became an essential aim of this method of interpretation, by means of which the sharpness of the text was inevitably dulled" (3). Iser is critical of these methods of interpretation because they leave out the "dynamic character of the text."

In the following sections, I will discuss the "interpretative gaps" within Morrison's text—or the parts of indeterminacy in *The Bluest Eye* that are left up to the reader's interpretation.

The Dick and Jane Paratextual Metanarrative: Arrogant Perception and Pedagogies of Whiteness

Morrison uses different pedagogical tools to help her reader understand how to interpret her text or "discover" the possible meanings and begin the self-interrogation process. The paratextual elements that set up the structure of *The Bluest Eye* are crucial points of indeterminacy in which the reader needs to use their imagination. Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* begins with the story of Dick and Jane, a children's reading premier about a white, middle-class American family that was a popular teaching tool made ubiquitous in American classrooms from the 1940s, all the way into the 1980s. The paragraph from the reading premier is used as a framing device with which the reader must interpret the rest of the story. Without the pictures from the children's books, the text is condensed to a short, simple paragraph:

> Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy. See Jane. She has a red dress. She wants to play. Who will play with Jane? See the cat. It goes meow-meow. Come and play. Come play with Jane. The kitten will not play. See Mother. Mother is very nice. Mother, will you play with Jane? Mother laughs. Laugh, Mother, laugh. See Father. He is big and strong. Father, will you play with Jane?

Father is smiling. Smile, Father, smile. See the dog. Bowwow goes the dog. Do you want to play with Jane? See the dog run. Run, dog, run. Look, look. Here comes a friend. The Friend will play with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play." (Morrison 1)

On the surface, the Dick and Jane premier is a pedagogical tool used to teach the American youth how to read, or how to decode symbols and make them into words. This seems innocuous enough. However, in *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison showcases that Dick and Jane is also a pedagogical tool of whiteness—a normalization of the structures and hierarchies of whiteness. By using it as a focal point, Morrison effectively decolonizes the function of the Dick and Jane text; the premier will now be used for a different way of reading the world—through the lens of young Black girls. Instead of teaching us the pedagogies of whiteness, the Dick and Jane premier will be used as a model to teach readers how these "tools," are strategies of white supremacist culture to continue racial hierarchies. The Dick and Jane premier is now reshaped as an instrument by which the reader can interpret and understand the abominable experiences in *The Bluest Eye*. Slowly, the painful realization solidifies as we get deeper into the text, the normalization of the scenes from Dick and Jane, those that seem to be harmless, have devastating consequences for all who don't fit that paradigm of whiteness.

Here, Morrison employs a hermeneutics of application. The intention of the text is unclear, but as Iser states, it is in the reader's hands to realize that intention. The novel's strange epigraph is unexplained, and then repeated as a refrain three times. The first time, the paragraph has omitted the pictures included in the original "look and say" books, so that the reader is left to imagine the world of Dick and Jane (although Morrison's readers when the book was first published were mostly well-aware of the allusion to the reading premier). In the second iteration of the Dick and Jane paragraph, the spaces between the lines slowly begin to slide together, and

the capitalization and punctuation is missing. Even so, the sentence structures can be inferred and become syntactically recognizable as one reads. In the third and final iteration of the paragraph, there is no formatting or spacing between the words at all so that the paragraph is a nonsensical block of text that is hard to decipher.

The indecipherable final paragraph prepares the reader for the story that is about to be told. The reader may be prepared now to read a story that is going to be hard to read (and in the next section fills in a piece of the puzzle, when we find out about the incest, that the story they are about to read will be psychologically difficult to contend with. Additionally, the readers are reminded of the ideals they have learned to be the societal "norm" which are Dick and Jane's world—the intact, happy family structure, the safety and luxury of the beautiful green and white house, the presence and care of parental smiling parental figures—just the idealized vision of the white suburban middle-class household. Morrison positions the reader to consider the standards of whiteness that is the picture of Dick and Jane, and how that portrayal fits in the lives of the characters that will soon be introduced. By planting a seed in the readers' mind, they will carry both the image of Dick and Jane—and everything that image represents for them—through the rest of the text.

By beginning with the story of Dick and Jane, which is a *reading* primer, the reader is also situated to think about *The Bluest Eye* as metanarrative, or a text that considers its own act of creation by commenting on the act of storytelling itself. Morrison is asking the reader to think about the function of storytelling in racist American society—to think about which stories are told and those that are silenced or rendered unworthy of being told. The structural experimentation with the classic Dick and Jane story provides a critical reexamination of something taken for granted as a norm. Morrison is representing the Breedlove family who is

regarded as the most marginalized in American society; however, by framing Pecola's story within the dominant story of the Dick and Jane family, she is also *re-presenting* it, presenting it again within a particular context. Morrison is actually revealing a simple truth: the particularity of the Black experience is *different from* idealized whiteness that is a norm in American society. The Dick and Jane narrative simply draws attention to how non-white populations must always be made aware of their contrasting difference from the white narrative, and how that is not only the "norm" (when it is not), but that it is continually represented as the "ideal." Therefore, Morrison brings to light how through the historical act of reading, we not only learn how to read or decipher language but learn how to read the world by what is being continually represented to us. As a result, a certain kind of reader is produced—that is, a reader who cannot see Pecola's subjectivity as worthy of exploration. By creating the metanarrative structure, re-presenting the story of Dick and Jane through a different racialized perspective, Morrison adeptly attempts to dismantle white normative structures.

Lest the reader forget the importance of the Dick and Jane as a framing device, Morrison does not let them. The story is broken down in two ways; the text is divided by time, into seasons—autumn, winter, spring, and summer, and then also further broken down by chapters. Each chapter title is some fragment from the Dick and Jane story—that is, the "nonsensical" unspaced version of the story. For example, the first chapter, entitled "HEREISTHEHOURSEIT ISGREENANDWHITEITAREDDOORITISVERYPRETTYITISVERYPRETTYPRETTYPRET TYP" is a detailed description of the Breedlove's house, and much like the indecipherable title of the chapter, the Breedlove household does not resemble anything that comes from the world of Dick and Jane. The narrative structure, then, reflects what we have seen with Dick and Jane in

two ways. It is both a framing device that structures the story, but also a lens by which we can understand each thematic fragment (home, school, family, friendship, love) of the story.

The three versions of the Dick and Jane story use as a scaffolding device that dictates how readers understand the rest of the story. The story reiterates itself in the three main family narratives: the Dick and Jane family, the MacTeers, and the Breedloves. The reader is set up to first imagine the home life of Dick and Jane, one version of the idealized story of suburban white middle-class America of which any reader is well-aware. This story is followed by a detailed description of Claudia and Frieda MacTeer's, "old, cold, and green," "peopled by roaches and mice," and as Claudia narrates, "Adults that do not talk to us—they give us directions" (10). However, like the Dick and Jane segment without the capitalization and punctuation, this house and its inhabitants are recognizable as a rough outline of what is presented in the Dick and Jane example; although the home doesn't have adults with spare time to play with the children, where everyone is all smiles at all times, and there are comforts and small luxuries in abundance, the MacTeer's have a sense of love that bonds them together. "Love, thick and dark as Alaga syrup, eased up into the cracked window," Claudia narrates, "I could smell it, taste it…everywhere in the house" (12). The MacTeer girls may not live in a picture-perfect house, but they do have the comfort of knowing they are loved. Both these narratives are held in a broad comparison with Pecola's home, which is described as "a box of peeling gray," (34) a sight that is so "irritating and melancholy" that passersby "simply look away where they pass it" (33). Within this description is Pecola's home life, which had "no memories to be cherished," but rather a "joylessness [that] stank, pervading everything" (36).

The attention to sensations produced by the surroundings and repeated synesthesia in these passages is particularly remarkable. In Mignolo and Vazquez's definition of "aestheSis" as

being the defining characteristic of decolonial aesthetics, one of the ways the concept is defined is "an unelaborated elementary awareness of stimulation," or "esthesis," "sensation," "sense experience," "perception," and "limen," which is the "smallest detectable sensation." Sensation, as Mignolo and Vazquez breakdown further, includes touch, sight, taste, hearing, and smell, which sometimes presents itself as "synesthesia," or "a sensation that normally occurs in one sense modality occurs when another modality is stimulated." Morrison's text explores this confusion of modalities. In her text, love has a texture in the air, and it can be smelled and tasted, like "Alaga syrup" (12), joylessness can stink (36) the air with a particular smell, and you can feel the emotional torment in a room can be personified through the couch having a violent "gash" through its body, so that it bleeds in pain (36). Mignolo and Vazquez write "if aestheTics is indeed modern/colonial aestheTics and a normativity that colonized the senses, decolonial aestheSis has become the critique and artistic practices that aim to decolonize the senses, that is, to liberate them from the regulations of modern, postmodern, and altermodern aestheTics."

Through this intricate scaffolding, Morrison positions the reader to understand that Pecola's home life is nothing like Dick and Jane's, and for the young Pecola who is so far removed from the possibility of such a life, there is a yearning to achieve what seems like an impossible and far-off dream. This set up—imagining first Dick and Jane's life, then the MacTeers' life, and finally the Breedloves' lives—employs a construction that propels the reader to comparatively assess the lives of the various families according to their material conditions. Within the intricate descriptions of the material conditions, the reader is made aware that societal and historical structures have created certain realities. The inhabitants of each house are taught what is possible for them through the materiality of the couch, the condition of the walls, the windows that do not fully close and bring in the cold air, the access to warmth and cleanliness.

To explain this concept clearly, Morrison demonstrates how unpleasant memories in the Breedlove household take away joy from what is owned. Morrison writes, “The sofa, for example. It had been purchased new, but the fabric had split straight across the back by the time it was delivered. The store would not take the responsibility” (36). Morrison reveals how everyday memories and repeated interactions have tainted the world of possibilities for the Breedloves: “If you had to pay $4.80 a month for a sofa that started off split, no good, and humiliating—you couldn’t take any joy in owning it. And the joylessness stank, pervading everything.” Moreover, the “stink of it kept you from painting the beaverboard walls; from getting a matching piece of material for the chair; even from sewing up the split, which became a gash…” (36). When the entire foundation of the house is built upon such hopelessness and disrespect, Morrison shows how the culmination and repeated awareness of such adversity makes it impossible to imagine a better world, to create a meaningful life. The material reality and the reminder of the unjust structures that rule against a family such as the Breedloves co-creates the relationships built under that house. The “house” structures cannot become homes; they are barely holding themselves up—and racist societal structures hold the power to deprive a home of the tenderness of love. Dick and Jane’s world of smiles, play, and bonding is a reality that cannot be realized in such bleak conditions. As the story continues on, the outlines of Pecola’s world become filled in and made complex by Morrison’s excavation of the intricacies of her parent’s lives and legacy of intergenerational trauma is passed down to the Breedlove children in the form of abuse and learned self-loathing.

Morrison’s attentiveness to the very simplicity of the Dick and Jane story about the stereotypical American family shows how this normative structure is not applicable to all families and might be toxic to those families who do not have any access to the privileges that

Dick and Jane's family has. Moreover, the seemingly innocuous content may not be translated with the same simplicity in the impressionable minds of the young Black children whose lives do not follow the Dick and Jane narrative that they are taught to read. By quite literally dismantling this structure of whiteness through the breakdown in the language structure, Morrison signals to the reader that their normal orientation to the world must shift in order to properly read *The Bluest Eye,* and to decipher the meaning behind it. The tools the reader has hitherto used to "read" the world will not make sense in this world.

Marilyn Frye's concept of "arrogant perception" in the male/female binary and more appropriately, María Lugones and Mariana Ortega's reconceptualization of it as applicable to communities of color very clearly manifest the picture Morrison is painting through her use of Dick and Jane as a representation of white supremacist culture. According to Frye, in her essay "In and Out of Harm's Way: Arrogance and Love" she defines the "arrogant eye" man's arrogant perception toward women as being self-centered and unrelenting. She writes,

> An arrogant perceiver's perception of the other's normalcy or defectiveness is not only dead wrong, it is coercive. It manipulates the other's perception and judgment at the root by mislabeling the unwholesome as healthy, and what is wrong as right. One judges and chooses within a framework of values—notions as to what 'good' and 'good for you' pertain to…[it] is the mis-defining of 'good' and 'healthy'. If one has the institutional power to make the misdefinition stick, one can turn the whole other person right around to oneself by this one simple trick. (Frye 70).

For Mariana Ortega, Frye concept of "arrogant perception" can be extended to include the way in which the white gaze perceives the world. The desire to see the world through the dominating male gaze that believes that his meaning of the world is the correct meaning is not so different

from the colonizing white gaze. In the essay "Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant: White Feminism and Women of Color" (2006), Ortega opens up the definition to include whiteness into the paradigm, to think through the concept with the layers of intersectionality, making it more inclusive in describing the interplay of power relations in various contexts, Aníbal Quijano terms as the "colonial-power matrix." Ortega concisely sums up how "the arrogant perceiver is guilty of seeing with arrogant eyes, eyes that skillfully organize the world and everything in it with reference to the arrogant perceiver's desires and interests" (59). Furthermore, the world is created for the comfort, supremacy, and transcendence of the arrogant perceiver: "Nature, pencils, chairs, women, and wives are all in the world to serve the purposes of the arrogant perceiver" (59). In other words, to go back to Mignolo and Vazquez, inherent in the idea of modern aesthetics is an arrogant perception because of the coercion of deciding what is a "good," "normal," and "healthy" household—that is, a white household—through what is represented.

The representational ubiquity of the white experience is a form of gaslighting on the global scale. The Black and minority experience is also the *American* experience but is not adequately represented as such in mainstream media through the arrogating gaze of white supremacy, and through that standard, these experiences are then seen as unimportant, periphery, or "wrong." The arrogant gaze, as it is expressed through American media, has the power, as Frye says, to "turn the whole other person right around to oneself by this one simple trick" of representation. Media like the Dick and Jane premier universalize a particular experience and don't see how this is wrong.

Morrison reveals how the Dick and Jane premier is processed by various audiences, particularly the marginalized, poor Black girl that lives in a world that ostracizes her, in which she is an outsider, and who cannot relate to the lives of Dick and Jane in any shape or form.

Thus, Morrison reveals the toxic effects of the Dick and Jane premier that serves as an example of how discourses become normalized and naturalized. As Foucault says, "Power is everywhere" and what is held as a truth is through the discourses of power that pervade society through "regimes of truth" in multiple forms—education, media, and social and cultural effects of exchange. Morrison's text makes an argument for how we learn and internalize white supremacy and attempts to undo those habits through the shared perspective of Claudia and Frieda who resist this metanarrative.

Morrison's Pedagogy of Plurality: Loving Perception and "Feeling With" Pecola

After the Dick and Jane epigraph, Morrison begins with a preface to further prepare us for the horrific events we are about to witness. Told from the perspective of the MacTeer sisters, Claudia and Frieda, two young Black girls in the 1940s, Morrison invites us to witness the events of a tragedy from the confused perspective of children, as they witness the tragedy of their friend, Pecola Breedlove, a poor, young Black girl and try to make sense of the events.

While much scholarship that surrounds *The Bluest Eye* centers around Pecola's character and her societal marginalization, the scholar Gema Ortega (not to be confused with Mariana Ortega from above) revisits *The Bluest Eye* with a closer look at the importance of the MacTeer sisters' point of view. Ortega argues that by looking at Claudia's narration through the lens of Bakhtinian hybridity, Morrison employs a narrative strategy that reveals how "subjects are formed and survive in dialogue" (126). Ortega's attention to Claudia's hybrid voice is helpful because it showcases how the narrative style serves as a model to the reader. According to Ortega, the Bakhtinian idea of "intentional hybridity" is one way in which Morrison's female characters can "escape madness, oppression, and objectification" (126). The "dialogic formation of Claudia's self," Ortega notes, stands in stark contrast to Pecola's internalization of the "master

narrative" of white supremacist culture and her inability to construct a self-separated from that culture.

Although told predominantly from the MacTeer sisters' point of view, *The Bluest Eye* uses multiple narrators, including Claudia McTeer as a child, Claudia as an adult, Pecola Breedlove after she has her mental break, and an omniscient narrator that gives us more details about various characters, including each of the Breedloves and Soaphead Church. However, most significantly, directly following the Dick and Jane narrative, it is Claudia's adult perspective that also guides the direction of the text. In all italics and less than a page long, this is yet another framing device used by Morrison. The trigger warning of the events that will follow in the novel are presented as follows: "*Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. We thought, at the time, that it was because Pecola was having her father's baby that the marigolds did not grow"* (6). Although the novel centers around Pecola's life experiences in the span of a year—from the autumn of 1940 to the summer of 1941—Claudia is the main narrator of these events. Claudia is nine-years old, younger than both ten-year-old Frieda and eleven-year-old Pecola. Her point of view is important because she, along with her sister, serves as a witness to the traumatic events that occurred in Pecola's life and gives us a framework in which to understand them. Moreover, the plurality of narratives serves as resistance against the idea of the "one world" narrative, and already serves to show that a multiplicity of perspectives, experiences, and histories exist.

Claudia and Frieda each blame the other for the fact that marigolds didn't grow—and we later find out that the planting of the marigold seeds were a symbolic act to "make a miracle" (191)—an intention of goodwill and prayers for Pecola's baby to live (192). When the marigolds don't grow, they transfer this real-life tragedy of death, loss and madness as symbolically

indicative of their own inability to change the course of their friend's tragic life events. We already get a summary of what will happen: "*Cholly Breedlove is dead, our innocence too. The seeds shriveled and died; her baby too*" (4). Claudia narrates, "*There is really nothing more to say—except why. But since* **why** *is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in* **how**" (4 emphasis mine). Through this admission, Morrison has already made clear that the following text isn't going to give us answers to the reasons behind the terrible events that ensue, but it will be an attempt to understand how—through what methods, actions, and manners—is Pecola's life taken away from her. It is up to the reader, then, to make sense of the "why."

Claudia's perspective is another important scaffolding device that teaches us how to read Pecola's life experiences. Claudia enters the text as an alternative voice to the arrogating perspective of the Dick and Jane narrative. Early in the novel, Claudia describes her "unsullied hatred" of Shirley Temple (20), as well as getting "white baby dolls" every Christmas (22). When Pecola comes to stay with the MacTeers, Claudia observes that Pecola, like most other girls her age in the Black community, "gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple's dimpled face" on the Shirley Temple cup she drank milk out of while eating her graham crackers. Then, when Claudia is given a "blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll" (20), instead of performing what is expected of her and treating the doll as her own child, she instead wants to destroy it, even stating that she would deliver "the same impulses to little white girls" (22). The doll represents the white standard that surrounds Claudia throughout the text. She delineates how "Adults, older girls, magazines, newspaper signs" all gravitate towards a white girl with blonde hair and blue eyes (20). Claudia is aware of what society claims is pretty, and the media that she is surrounded by reflects this by deeming the little white girl is what represents what is considered valuable.

Claudia feels anger because she realizes that she also "hated Shirley" because of the sense of unworthiness that is lodged inside of her when Shirley "danced with Bojangles," one of major African American celebrities from the first half of the century (19). She reveals how she has internalized this image of Bojangles with Shirley Temple, and she feels that she is not good enough to dance with *her* celebrity father figure. By the media as well as society, Claudia is seen as unworthy by the fact of her exclusion, unworthy to dance with Bojangles ("who was *my* friend, *my* uncle, *my* daddy, and who ought to have been soft-shoeing it and chuckling with me"), and not relevant enough to have a doll that looks like her. White supremacy surrounds her and limits her possibilities—both the spaces she can exist in and things she can experience. White supremacy surrounds her and infiltrates every aspect of her existence so that it is inescapable. Claudia's rage against little white girls stems from how the media treats them in comparison to herself.

However, Claudia understands that she is supposed to look grateful and excited when she receives the white doll. She is plagued by the desire to know "the secret of the magic [little white girls] weaved on others" (22). She asks, "What made people look at them and say, "Awwwwww," but not for me?" (22). While others idolize Shirley Temple, she cannot love her in the same way, because, as she explains, "I had not yet arrived at the turning point in the development of my psyche which would allow me to love her. What I felt was unsullied hatred" (19). Claudia's admission reveals her instinct to feel "hatred" toward the oppressor, but how some crucial realization of the structure of society forces her into a position of "love."

Homi Bhabha's "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," offers a perspective on how the colonized subject empowers herself through her ambivalent orientation toward the colonizer's rules and practices. Within relations between the colonizer and colonized,

Bhabha reveals how "mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (126). According to Bhabha, the colonial mimicry of the colonizer's customs, traditions, language, and infrastructure represents an "ironic compromise" (126). Claudia describes her ambivalent feelings that occur through the "development of her psyche," or the recognition of the fact that she will have to, as Bhabha writes, submit to an "ironic compromise." Claudia learns to "worship" the Shirley Temples of the world much later than her peers and describes how her "unsullied hatred" transferred to a "fraudulent love," which is "an adjustment without improvement" (23) because she has simply succumbed to society's expectations of her. Through this divulgence of her emotional life, Claudia discreetly reveals how she hasn't yet been indoctrinated into the dominant ideology and norms of white cultural supremacy. In this way, she offers an alternative perspective, even if eventually, she, too, is powerless to be subsumed by the dominant discourse. Claudia's perspective and sense of individuality voices itself as markedly distinct from the stories of true self-loathing that are portrayed in *The Bluest Eye*.

Furthermore, Claudia conjures up the reality of the plurality of one's identity. She narrativizes Pecola's story with the understanding of herself as a witness *with* her sister, Frieda, notably using the pronoun "we" in her narration to show this relational sense of the self. Implicit in Morrison's narrative framework is the rejection of an understanding of the self-rooted in autonomous individuality. By utilizing the "we" and the temporality of girlhood rather than adulthood, Morrison centers felt experience rather than abstract rationality as important to understanding Pecola's story. Through this narrative style, she reveals that thinking of the "I" as an autonomous subject and actor is flawed. As Claudia tells the story as a witness, she also exposes how the understanding of the self is always in relation to others, and how the "I" is

always in relationship to significant others in one's life. Therefore, the first-person *plural* "we" is more appropriate since it establishes that interconnectedness of experience. What Morrison establishes through this narrative framework is the intersubjective nature of experience.

The idea of intersubjectivity is rooted in the idea of mutual recognition, and as those who study recognition politics like Simpson and Taylor above, that kind of recognition requires an understanding of another person as a full subject in their own right, while also feeling empathy for their emotional life as being similar to their own. Robert Storolow and George Atwood define the intersubjective to mean "*any* psychological field formed by interacting worlds of experience, at whatever developmental level these worlds may be organized" (3), and these worlds of experience have a "*reciprocal mutual influence*," that is, experience is "continually and mutually shaped" (3). This understanding of one's psychic reality as reciprocal posits that "*both* the individual's world of inner experience *and* its embeddedness with other worlds in a continual flow of mutual influence" (18). Important to intersubjective thought, which diverges from traditional psychoanalytic thought, is the idea it is focused on the mutual influence and interrelations as *subjects*, rather than *objects*.

Moreover, the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern names "affective attunement" as crucial to one's early experiences—the communication of internal feeling states from the infant to its caregivers and the validation or understanding of these internal feeling states is fundamental to one's understanding of the self. In *The Bonds of Love*, Jessica Benjamin discusses the idea of "mutual recognition" in infant-mother interactions, what she says are "commonly described" as "emotional attunement, mutual influence, affective mutuality, sharing states of mind" (16). She writes, "Recognition is that response from the other which makes meaningful the feelings, intentions, and actions of the self…But such recognition can only come from another whom we,

in turn, recognize as a person in his or her own right" (12). Benjamin's idea of mutual recognition sheds light on relational experiences that extend far beyond infancy. Pecola's family, community, and society in general refuse to offer her recognition, so that she is unseen and unheard, her emotional life and experiences completely disregarded. She is abandoned not just physically and emotionally by her family, but her community also casts her off into complete abjection so that she has no chance of survival.

Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* contrasts Claudia and Frieda's perspective of Pecola's life with that of the perspective of our greater society. By doing so, Morrison reveals how the societal refusal to acknowledge or recognize Pecola's subjectivity is part of her life's tragedy. In Claudia's preface to the events of Pecola's tragic incestuous rape, she writes, "*There is really nothing more to say—except why. But since* why *is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in* how" (6). The adult Claudia's exploration of Pecola's life story is much like that of a sociocultural anthropologist who studies the social, familial, cultural, and spatial influences on Pecola's life. Claudia's attempts to understand what happened to Pecola mirror the sentiment with which Morrison herself was inspired to write her story, as she has described in her 1993 "Afterword," about her friend who "wanted blue eyes" (209).

The role of Claudia as a witness to Pecola's story is complicated. On the one hand, by telling Pecola's life story from second-hand experience and from memory (in the case of speaking from the adult-Claudia vantage point), the reader is alerted to how the retelling might be unreliable and inaccurate. Yet the re-vision of Pecola's story is radically charged. Adrienne Rich writes, "Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for women more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot

know ourselves" (30). This act of re-vision allows us to look again at Pecola's inherited story and re-interpret what happened and break away from the norms that compel us to read her from a certain perception. Through Claudia's narrative voice, Morrison is invested in such a project, with the "need to know the writing of the past and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on a tradition but to break its hold over us" as Rich states. On the other hand, Claudia makes it clear that she will not give her interpretation of the events, or answer the "why," but might come up with answers to "how," and the reader can piece the puzzle to understand the why for herself. This is another way in which Morrison gives the reader flexibility to fill in the interpretative "gaps" in the text to find her own meaning.

However, Claudia's role as a witness serves another function, which is to give voice to Pecola whose tragic experiences and resulting mental disorder prevents her from telling her story. Significant to this strategy, Morrison reminds the reader that Claudia's vantage point is not completely disassociated from Pecola's experiences, and furthermore, that she tells this story in the company of her sister who can validate the memory of the events. Thus, Morrison shows the communal nature of experience, and the role of recognition in telling another's story in the manner in which they tell it. In *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*, María Lugones writes about what it means to be a faithful witness, as opposed to a collaborator witness. She writes, "A collaborator witness stands on the side of power, while a faithful witness witnesses against the grain of power, on the side of resistance" (7). The reader finds trust in Claudia by the nature of her being a "collaborator witness," in a Black community that continues to be "faithful" witnesses to white supremacist culture. Lugones continues, "To witness faithfully, one must be able to sense resistance, to interpret behavior as resistant even when it is dangerous, when that interpretation places one psychologically against common sense,

of when one is moved to act in collision with common sense, with oppression" (7). Claudia's alternative perspective by in some sense siding with Pecola is an act of "resistance" that goes against the rules that order the world, because she is able to recognize Pecola as a subject worthy of having her story told.

"Faithful witnessing leads one away from a monosensical life," (7) Lugones proclaims, and this kind of witnessing is yet another narrative tool for Morrison to teach the reader to understand the world differently. Claudia makes a decision to be a "collaborator" in telling Pecola's story truthfully, just as the reader can decide to listen to the stories of oppressed peoples, rather than to ignore those stories in order to stay faithful to the oppressors. Claudia's acts as a witness serve as a model simply because of the weight they place on Pecola's emotional life in order to show the small ways in which social and cultural forces can destroy a person.

In *Retrieving Experience*, Sonia Kruks writes about how the more our lives diverge from others because of social and material differences, the harder it is for us to understand and enter these worlds. For this, she proposes that we need a "wider knowledge" because "...the more we make an effort to learn about women whose lives are radically different from our own, the more do bonds of affinity become possible" (152). This is Morrison's project—to make the unknown story known—to allow the "subaltern to speak" because otherwise the dominant story told by the white colonizing male gaze is the one that will speak for them.

However, Kruks acknowledges that it is true that even as it is difficult and uncomfortable to build coalitions between women across race, class, age, nations, and other differences, it is nevertheless important to find solidarity through acts of "generosity—a gratuitous giving of attention, time, effort, resources to others" or a what she calls a "respectful recognition" (154), one that we can find in Claudia's narration. Kruks proposes that "forms of recognition that are

grounded in affect are also necessary" (155). These feelings for others develop through "forms of intersubjective embodied experience," Kruks emphasizes, or those experiences that we "tacitly 'know' [...] through our bodies" (156). Morrison's exploration of the embodied experience of Pecola's suffering works through this "phenomenological vein" that Kruks describes; through Claudia's portrayal of Pecola, Morrison calls for the reader to be concerned with Pecola's life circumstances, her particular suffering and taps into what Kruks describes is the "crucial affective impetus for feminist politics" (156). Through Claudia's first-person account of Pecola, we lose the risk of complete identification with Pecola's character. The reader is constantly made aware of examining Pecola through Claudia's position, which is one with which more readers might identify, as her life experiences are closer to the standardized societal norms. This allows the reader to share and understand Pecola's experiences without claiming them as her own.

In light of María Lugones idea of "world-travelling," similar to Claudia and Morrison, the reader "travels" to Pecola's world to understand what it might be like to be in her subject position. Upon finishing the book, as readers, we have the possibility of returning to our own world, but we have the choice about what to do as witnesses to the experiences of the Pecolas we might encounter in our own lives. However, Morrison does not allow us to look upon Pecola simply as an "object of study" or to examine her like a "research object" (Kruks 158). The multiple narrations—Claudia-and-Frieda joint narrative, combined with omniscient narrative, and even the first-person point of view from Pecola's perspective—all come together to humanize Pecola's experiences by bringing us closer to them by highlighting *affect*.

Morrison's exploration of Pecola's affective experiences—and to encounter Pecola's suffering through Claudia's eyes—serve to make the readers also witness Pecola's experiences through the eyes of friendship, rather than a distanced anthropologist or ethnographer trying to

make sense of them. We find through Claudia a model of Kruks' description of "feeling with" another. Kruks writes "In attempting to feel-with those who suffer, we must not reduce them to passive victim status nor to mere objects of sympathy, or even pity" (160). Furthermore, "Feeling-with is *sui generis*," Kruks reminds us, "in the sense that it is not reducible to any other form of experience. It is immediate, and it is not indirectly built up by extrapolation from our own memories or by otherwise deliberately projecting from our own experiences" (160). Kruks proposes that we might not need to have directly experienced a feeling such as mortal terror in order to understand it or imagine it. However, she adds that "we can increase our capacity to feel-with another woman by choosing to learn as much as we can about her world. For the more sense we have of her world, the more easily may we feel-with her" (161). The way to "feel-with" another is through an understanding of her emotional life. Morrison creates the space in which we can "feel-with" Pecola, because of Claudia's own "feeling-with" her friend.

The Affective Charge of Whiteness

As Morrison sheds light on Pecola's affective embodied experiences, and as readers witness her suffering through Claudia's eyes, readers are positioned to "temporarily suspend our social differences" (161) through Claudia's narration. Moreover, although Morrison emphasizes the role of formal education and media in learned white supremacy, Morrison's particular consideration of the relational—the familial and social—nature of our identities also makes an argument for the importance of the affective sphere of experience. White supremacy is not only learned through the intellectual or political domain—in what we consume, how we learn, and what political rights we are granted—but also through the interpersonal encounters we have with others. Morrison writes,

> In exploring the social and domestic aggression that could cause a child to literally fall apart, I mounted a series of rejections, some routine, some exceptional, some monstrous, all the while trying hard to avoid complicity in the demonization process Pecola was subjected to. That is, I did not want to dehumanize the characters who trashed Pecola and contributed to her collapse. (Morrison 161)

Through the attentiveness to Pecola's social interactions in her world, Morrison constructs her narrative around "episodes" that are affectively charged with disdain, shame, disgust, condemnation so that we can witness how Pecola is continually dehumanized. Pecola is not only internalizing white supremacy through the cultural images that surround her, but she learns her self-loathing through the way that people treat her *in relation* to others. Her understanding of herself as "less than" comes from the added layer of the affective internalization of shame.

The key component for Morrison in conveying the experience, is not so much the events of the experience, but the emotions relayed through the events. Morrison tries to construct a narrative that could help herself, as much as her audience, understand how someone comes to have a particular embodied feeling—the desire to have blue eyes. Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* can be read as an autoethnographic fictional text that is rooted in the reality and experiences of the Black community in the U.S. This strategy is utilized in order to convey how it feels to be or experience the world through the lens of the narrator—in this case, how it feels to be a young Black girl in 1940s America bombarded with images of white as not only beautiful, but worthy. The experience portrayed in *The Bluest Eye* has sadly gained in its relevance because it is shared not only by young Black girls in contemporary American society, but by WOC in much of the globalized West. While Claudia—like the young Morrison—does not submit to this type of

indoctrination, Morrison provides us with an explanation of how the dominant discourse on white beauty is learned and internalized in toxic ways.

Again, to turn back to Mignolo and Vazquez's concept of "decolonial aestheSis," the attentiveness to "sense perception" is extremely crucial to Morrison's narrative style. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed centers "bodily sensations" as crucial to the understanding the relationship between emotions and cognition. In other words, emotions are not simply reason-based judgements. Ahmed discusses the relationship between language, emotion, and bodies to magnify the significance of reading the "emotionality of texts" (7). She offers "an analysis of affective economies, where feelings do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation. The circulation of objects allows us to think about the 'sociality' of emotion" (8). Her book highlights how "Emotions are not simply located in the individual but move between bodies" (10). Ahmed writes: "Emotions are relational: they involve (re)actions or relations of 'towardness' or 'awayness' in relation to such objects" (8). In other words, "Feelings may stick to some objects, and slide over others" (8) and "Such objects become sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension" (11).

The "stickiness" of emotions and how they get lodged into certain objects is something that is a repeated trope in *The Bluest Eye*, where the connection between sensation and emotions is portrayed again and again in relation to each of the five senses. For example, this can clearly be seen in the above analysis of the presence of love in Claudia and Frieda's home in contrast to the absence of love in Pecola's home. In Claudia's home, "Love, thick and dark as Alaga syrup, eased up into the cracked window," Claudia narrates, "I could smell it, taste it…everywhere in the house" (12). By evoking the image of Alaga syrup, Morrison is creating a certain mood since the "Alabama-Georgia-Syrup Company worked meticulously to brand itself as the kind of

product that evokes warmth, family, and community, as well as being a harbinger of a past that was a better, simpler time for everyone that can be revisited simply by buying and consuming the product" that specifically targeted the Black community by the mid-twentieth century (Bell 3). The particular emotions that Claudia is reminded of when she thinks of home, then, are "warmth, family, and community."

Despite her mother's harsh admonitions and complaints when Claudia gets sick, at the end of the day, she *knows* that she is loved. Claudia narrates how, "in the night, when my coughing was dry and tough, feet padded into the room, hands re-pinned the flannel, readjusted the quilt, and rested a moment on my forehead" (12). When Claudia thinks of home, and of autumn, "I think of somebody with hands who does not want me to die" (12). Through sense perception, by sensing the various little ways her mother shows her care—the sound of her hurrying to check on her, worrying about, checking her forehead, fixing the covers—Claudia then feels cared for. Ahmed writes, "Emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices" (9). As Claudia's narrative demonstrates, love is felt through actions. Her memory of her mother's "hands" represents the acts of care she felt as she grew up.

The lens of reading the "emotionality" of Morrison's text also illustrates how emotion is "a social form, rather than individual self-expression" (9). This means that Claudia has not simply used reason to rationalize her mother's love and care for her (i.e. she is my mother, and therefore, I know she loves me). It is the combination of the bodily sensations with such reason-based logic that allow her to conclude: 'My mother cares for me. I am worthy of love.' In other words, Claudia has used inductive reasoning (thinking "bottom-up" or from specific instances to the general) rather than deductive reasoning (thinking top-down, from the general to specific) to make her conclusion about her mother's love. Ahmed writes, "The 'inside out' model has

become an ‘outside in’ model. Rather than emotions being understood as coming from within and moving outwards, emotions are assumed to come from without and move inward” (9).

Notably, Morrison’s novel does not claim that the Breedloves are objectively ugly; instead, “they believed they were ugly” (38). Their “ugliness was unique” because they “wore their ugliness, put it on, so to speak, although it did not belong to them” (38). When you looked at them, “you wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source” (39). Their ugliness, in other words, does not lie in their physical attributes, but rather, “it came from [their] conviction” that they were ugly. “They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance” (39) Morrison describes, and they agreed with this assessment.

Eyes—and what they can see or not see—serve as an extended metaphor. After a scene of cruel domestic violence between her parents, one that seems to be a daily occurrence in the Breedlove household, Morrison describes how Pecola has learned to wish for “blue eyes”:

> It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights—if those eyes were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different…If she looked different, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they’d say, ‘Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn’t do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.’ (Morrison 46)

However, deep down, Pecola knows such a miracle is impossible, and that she is doomed to witness terrible things, like her parents’ ugly domestic brawls. While on the surface, when Morrison’s friend expressed the desire to have blue eyes, it might seem like a simple wish to emulate the images of whiteness that are overladen in the media and are demarcated as

"beautiful" through their perpetuity. A closer look at this passage shows a deeper desire—which is the desire to change her environment. Studies in child psychology alert us to how often, children cannot see the social complexities that might cause stress in one's home life, and often, when things go wrong, they see themselves as the objects of blame. Pecola sees her own life in contrast to the happy lives of Dick and Jane and does not understand the material conditions that have created this life. Instead, she blames her self-perceived ugliness as the cause for existing in a world that is filled with so much cruelty, pain, and unhappiness.

And yet, it is not only the ugly "pictures" of daily life that she is forced to see in her home; Pecola is also cursed with also seeing "the eyes of other people" (47). Pecola's social interactions also add a layer of this self-perception of ugliness because she is consistently dehumanized. One of the crucial ways in which Pecola learns her unworthiness is through the lack of eye contact, the "glance suspended" or the "vacuum." In the essay, "When Eyes Touch," James Liang writes, "When we make eye contact, we experience a form of interpersonal connection that plays a central role in human social life, communication, and interpersonal understanding" (1). The repeated experiences Pecola has of feeling invisible—being unseen and unheard—is what creates the feelings of shame in her. She is taught to feel these emotions. Liang continues, "The avoidance of eye contact, moreover, plays a salient role in the phenomenology of shame, guilt, and humiliation" (2). Pecola is "ignored or despised" (45), avoided, unaddressed, silenced—utterly and completely unrecognized. At school, "she was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk…Her teachers had always treated her this way. They never tried to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond" (45). When people want to insult a boy from school, they would chant something like "Bobby loves Pecola" to degrade him.

Morrison gives an intricate example of how the lack of contact with Pecola serves to dehumanize her and leads to feelings of shame. In the scene at the corner store with Mr. Yacobowski, the Polish owner, Pecola is often confronted instead with "a vacuum where curiosity ought to lodge" and "The total absence of human recognition—the glazed separateness" (48). Pecola does not understand what prevents him from looking at her, but only that he cannot, he will not. Morrison writes,

> She does not know what keeps his glance suspended. Perhaps because he is grown, or a man, and she is a little girl. But she has seen interest, disgust, and even anger in grown male eyes. Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge; somewhere in the bottom lid is distaste. She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. So. The distaste must be for her, her Blackness. All things in her are flux and anticipation. But her Blackness is static and dreadful. And it is the Blackness that accounts for, that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste in white eyes. (Morrison 49).

This is another passage in which Morrison conveys Ahmed's idea of the emotions being an "outside-in" experience. Inductive reasoning, the adding up of such particular experiences, force Pecola into her feelings of unworthiness.

The sensations of sight, sound, and touch all add up together to create the feelings of shame. She *sees* that Mr. Yacobowski does not want to look at her, or acknowledge her existence, and in response, Pecola makes herself smaller by taking up as little space as possible, by being silent. Pecola instinctively knows that she is unworthy of a voice, and acts "quietly inoffensive," as she silently points out the candy she wants. The shopkeeper is annoyed by her shameful presence and addresses her with "phlegm and impatience" as he barks at her "Christ. Kantcha talk?" (49). Again, through what she *hears*—his rough voice that signifies disrespect—

she is made to understand her deficiency. And finally, she feels the lack of human connection in Mr. Yacobowski's refusal to touch her: "She holds the money toward him. He hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand" (49). These sensations result in creating a certain effect: shame. Therefore, Morrison effectively shows how self-loathing is a learned experience that comes not from within, but without.

Morrison does not stop there. We have seen that Pecola sees ugly things in the world, is made to feel ugly by the way people treat her, and then, finally, how it then shapes her perception. Immediately preceding and following the scene with Mr. Yacobowski, Pecola remarks on the dandelions she sees outside. Prior to her experience at the store, she notices the dandelions and wonders, "why…do people call them weeds?" (47). In fact, "she thought they were pretty" (47). But she continues to ponder how people point out a neighbor's yard is beautiful because it is free of dandelions. People in the community will use the dandelion greens to make soup and wine, but "nobody loves the head of a [yellow] dandelion" (47). She concludes, "maybe because they are so many, strong, and soon" (47).

After the experience with Mr. Yacabowski, Morrison artfully shows how the feelings Pecola has in the store are transferred to her surroundings and perception of the world. Morrison describes, "Outside, Pecola feels the inexplicable shame ebb" (50). Immediately, she sees the familiar dandelions again: "Dandelions. A dart of affection leaps out from her to them. But they do not look at her and do not send her love back. She thinks, 'They *are* ugly. They *are* weeds.'" (50). While her natural inclination was one of love towards the dandelions, and seeing their beauty, the experience she has with Mr. Yacabowski permeates her experience of how she sees the dandelions. Morrison tracks the ways in which feelings and perceptions get lodged in people through such sensations. As Ahmed writes, "words for feelings, and objects of feeling, circulate

and generate effects…they move, stick, and slide. We move, stick and slide with them" (14). Therefore, Pecola's feelings of shame, the pain she holds because of them, transform into hate for the dandelions, who cannot help her or love her.

We learn that Pecola's parents both cannot love her because of their own feelings of self-loathing. Her mother, Pauline (Polly) Breedlove is incapable of loving her daughter because of her own miserable life experiences. Much like Pecola escapes into fantasizing about her life as Shirley Temple and Mary Jane, Morrison shows how Mrs. Breedlove's own obsession with Jean Harlow films at a young age was a type of intoxication—a way to transport her from the grim reality of her everyday life. One day, Pecola, along with Claudia and Frieda, visit Mrs. Breedlove when she is working at the Fisher household. The Fishers are an affluent white family, and they treat Mrs. Breedlove as if she is part of their own family, and comment on how she is indispensable to them. Mrs. Breedlove spends most of her time at the Fishers, keeping their house orderly and clean, with "white porcelain, white woodwork, polished cabinets, and brilliant copperware" (108) while neglecting her own. Moreover, she loves the "corn yellow" haired, blue-eyed, "pretty" Fisher daughter in a way that she cannot love her own daughter Pecola, whose ugliness she sees to be a reflection of her own lack of beauty.

While the girls wait in the kitchen for Mrs. Breedlove, the Fisher daughter encounters them in the kitchen and screams in fright. Pecola, who is staring at a freshly baked berry pie on the counter, out of nervousness, then accidentally knocks it over the counter. Mrs. Breedlove comes back to the kitchen, angry, pushing away and screaming at Pecola for scaring the Fisher daughter, who she rushes to comfort with a soothing voice, and extreme gentleness. Pecola is burned by the hot berry juice from the pie, and she starts "hopping about" in pain, and Mrs. Breedlove simply responds by hitting her so that she "is knocked to the floor" and burned even

more in the juice. Claudia narrates, “Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abused Pecola directly and Freida and me by implication” (109).

Claudia notices how the young Fisher girl calls “Mrs. Breedlove Polly, when even Pecola called her mother Mrs. Breedlove” (108). Moreover, while Mrs. Breedlove abuses her own daughter and her two friends, she comforts the “pink-and-yellow girl” by “hushing and soothing [her] tears” (109). When the little white Fisher girl interrogates Mrs. Breedlove by repeatedly asking “Who were they, Polly?” Mrs. Breedlove simply says, “Don’t worry none, baby” (109). The Fisher girl is not only treated with the kindness of a loving mother, but her own child is unacknowledged. The lack of acknowledgement is painful to witness. Mrs. Breedlove fails to love her own child because of her own self-hate, but she is able to love something that she does not. She transfers a mother’s love—one Pecola herself has never experienced—to the blonde Fisher daughter who she would rather imagine as her own.

Her mother’s self-loathing transfers onto the psyche of her child. Moreover, Pecola’s unstable and abusive family life makes her want to vanish from existence, and she prays to God: “‘Please, God...Please make me disappear’” (45). Yet, even if she wills her body into invisibility, she cannot get rid of her eyes, which “were everything...all of those pictures, all of those faces” (45). Her self-perception, and the internalized vision of how others perceive her, cannot be escaped. She decides:

> As long as she looked the way she did, as long as she was ugly, she would have to stay with these people [her family]. Somehow, she belonged to them. Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. (Morrison 45)

Pecola comes to the conclusion that if her eyes were different, "that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different" (46). This realization begins her desire to pray for a miracle: "she prayed for blue eyes." Pecola resorts to routinely buying "Mary Jane" candies when she can, looking admiringly at the wrapper with the little Mary Jane with her "blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort" (50). Much like her mother's consumption of the picture-shows in Hollywood that depict the beautiful lives of white people, eating Mary Jane candies allows Pecola to feel closer to possessing blue eyes. Morrison writes, "To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane" (50), so that for Pecola, eating the candy is a temporary ritualized transubstantiation of whiteness—in the form of the body of a little white girl.

Ultimately, for Pecola to wish for blue eyes is not simply a wish to be white. The wish for blue eyes is a desire to have the possibility of a life where she is seen as worthy of self-actualization. However, Ahmed's analysis illuminates how a closer examination of the "emotionality of texts" offers us a more layered understanding of what is occurring in Pecola's lived experience. To fully understand Pecola's desire, we must understand the feeling behind the statement to see what is concealed behind the statement. Ahmed shows us that words generate certain effects. On a certain level, the wish for blue eyes is shocking because it feels profane, almost sacrilegious. One's existence, or "thrownness" into the world is completely out of human control. To wish away your body is to wish that your entire experience of the world be different because, for better or worse, the experiences we have are shaped by the bodies we inhabit. Pecola's wish for blue eyes encapsulates her longing to be seen for her humanity—to be given the compassion, safety, and recognition that she sees is freely given to little white girls, and that she has no possibility of holding as long as she exists in her Black body. Morrison does not allow us to look away from Pecola as an experiencing subject.

Conclusion: The Miracle of Perception

Morrison discusses the predominance of white beauty in the dominant culture and how it translates into power and privilege. Referring again to her 1993 "Afterword," Morrison writes that "Beauty was not simply something to behold; it was something one could do" (209). What Morrison's childhood friend wanted was to feel empowered, to be recognized for her individuality, which for a little girl in the 1940s meant to be a replica of the blonde hair, blue-eyed Jane that happily frolicked on the covers of the Dick and Jane premiers—or the countless other examples in mainstream American media—like the little girl pictured on the Mary Jane candy, or the idealized cuteness of Shirley Temple from television. Morrison's project is to imagine what it is to "be so small a weight," to feel so unworthy in the world as a result of being in every way the opposite of these popular images. Though on the surface, Morrison's childhood friend speaks of a desire to be considered physically beautiful through her wish for blue eyes, her desire reveals a deeper truth: recognition from others as a worthy subject could only be attained by getting closer to whiteness. Morrison's project is to reveal how such an emotion gets lodged in a person—how this "racial self-loathing" comes about because of the social, internalized white "gaze that has condemned her [friend]" (211) through such an arrogant perception.

Morrison tasks herself with revisiting this emotionally fraught episode in order to understand and sympathize with her friend's secret wish. At its core, her friend's desire came from a particular feeling—the feeling of shame. Morrison's text reveals the process of how a feeling arises and becomes permanently lodged within the individual. Most importantly, Morrison shows that a feeling like shame isn't something that arises solely out of the individual that is feeling it, but how the feeling is transmitted through a social field of collective actors, and their subjective affects and responses to particular bodies. As particular actions are repeated,

specific affects attached to those actions are communicated as well. For example, in the case of Pecola from *The Bluest Eye*, the lack of care through parental and social support, the scarcity of material resources available to her, and society's disdain for her physical appearance and Blackness make her an abject figure because each time those actions are repeated, she is told that she deserves disrespect, until the ultimate act of disrespect occurs when her father rapes her, and she can no longer mentally cope with the world if she must physically exist in it. Because there are no forms of protection, love, material support, and care for Pecola, she must imagine a world where little girls have better and more secure lives—like for Shirley Temple and Judy Garland.

To repeat again what Simpson and Taylor claim, *The Bluest Eye* is a story that visualizes and makes visible the dialectics of recognition. Pecola's wish for blue eyes goes beyond the desire for what she considers to be beautiful. For Pecola, having "the bluest eye" is a metonymy for something she doesn't know how to name: white supremacy. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed writes that "figures of speech are crucial to the emotionality of texts…different figures get stuck together" and "the sticking is dependent on past histories of association that often 'work' through concealment" (13). In Morrison's text, the "bluest eye" is a figure of speech that generates an effect, an ugly stickiness that the reader must sit with, just like Morrison herself had to for decades after her childhood friend confessed her desire for blue eyes that caused her such anger and revulsion.

The anthropologist Cheryl Mattingly argues that the "careful attention to the intricacies of everyday life" is vital because of how it is the "unmasking of the ordinary as not merely as a darker and less promising place than we had thought but also a more transcendent place" (259). This observation by Mattingly is especially true in Morrison's argument, where she reveals that it is in our everyday interactions that we can see the "darker and less promising" vision of the

world, one that in witnessing Pecola's life, we see can be laden with hopelessness at human decency. However, Morrison gives us a glimpse of the transcendent through her narrative point of view, through Claudia and Frieda's desire for "magic" to see Pecola's baby live. In seeing through the innocent eyes of Claudia and Frieda, who are not yet indoctrinated in white supremacist ideology, and truly see the humanity of Pecola because they know her as a friend.

For Morrison, the "acquisition of knowledge" and putting that "knowledge on display in the language of moral clarity—of goodness" is a crucial element of her writing. In Toni Morrison's 2012 Ingersoll lecture, "Goodness: Altruism and the Literary Imagination," she states "Expressions of goodness are never trivial or incidental in my writing. In fact, I want them to have life-changing properties and to illuminate decisively the moral questions embedded in the narrative." (18). The alternative perception of praying for the baby to live, to see it not as an abomination is perhaps too radical for the reader to think of as "good." Yet, through the innocent eyes of Claudia and Frieda, we are propelled to think: why should Pecola's baby *not* live? Why are Pecola and her baby being punished for the "sins "of society? This radical perception allows the possibility to conceive of something different, even for a moment, even if it is quite naive in its innocence—the idea that the baby could be a new beginning. In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt writes about

> It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before. This character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings and in all origins… The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes amounts to certainty; the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be

> expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable… (Arendt 177)

Claudia and Frieda's desire for Pecola's baby to live is radical given that Pecola is a victim of incest. But, as Arendt reminds us, "The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, 'natural' ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted" (247). By the end of the book, we are left with the answer to Claudia and Pecola's seeds of thought from the inception of the novel—the question that "why should Pecola's baby *not* live?" In the "Goodness" lecture, Morrison proclaims, "A satisfactory or good ending for me is when the protagonist learns something vital and morally insightful that she or he did not know at the beginning" (19). It is true that we can cite evidence from the Breedlove family of the passing down of intergenerational trauma and give examples of the ways in which the body holds onto traumatic histories that seem impossible to break away from. However, Morrison does plant some small seeds of hope—that only through thinking through an alternative perspective can we break the chains of history. "It is, in other words," Arendt writes, "the birth of new [people] and the new beginning, the action they are capable of by virtue of being born. Only the full experience of this capacity can bestow upon human affairs faith and hope" (247).

In the beginning, Claudia and Frieda cannot see according to the dictums of society, nor can they see the fault in either Pecola or her baby. And they are right, after all. Pecola and her baby are both innocents, and would not a birth signify a new beginning, the possibility of something altogether different, of a new beginning? The hope that Claudia and Frieda have for the baby to live is symbolically the hope for a miracle, for things to be different for Pecola and others like her. However, Morrison reveals that hope is not enough; we must act. In Morrison's

words, being “touched” is not enough, we must be “moved” to do things differently by a shift in our perceptions. Unlike Claudia and Frieda who are children, as adults, we must act differently on the intersubjective level, in our social interactions and how we choose to treat others. Claudia and Frieda’s recognition of Pecola’s humanity should *not* feel so radical; Pecola’s life should matter to all of us.

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CHAPTER III

"What We Have Loved Others Will Love": Pedagogical Allegiances in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*

In Helen Vendler's famous inaugural address in the Modern Language Association Convention in 1980, she quotes William Wordsworth's final lines from the *Prelude*, "...What we have loved / Others will love, and we will teach them how." This line is not only the title of the address, but is repeated as a refrain throughout the essay, which discusses the role of the university professor in the first-year writing classroom and beyond. She writes, "The divorce of composition from the reading of powerful imaginative writing is our greatest barrier in creating an American public who understands what we love" (344). Although Vendler's speech is quite enticing in its ideals to "teach what we love," it requires a closer investigation of the logical underpinnings and assumptions made about what constitutes as the literary canon of great works, and why she believes those works in particular must be passed down. As the "first step to teaching people how to love what we have loved," Vendler believes it is of crucial importance to "awaken in our beginning students, in their first year, the response that they can all feel to the human story told in compelling ways" (346). By the changing curriculum to one that no longer prioritizes what she calls the "great tales" (349), students are "so unjustly deprived of a knowledge of cultural riches, a sense of how many great authors there are to know" (346).

I begin this chapter with Vendler's speech to consider how imperialist desires can be hidden through the guise of benevolence and love. Vendler's logic rings of the imperial agenda to bring Western "civilization," European languages, and Christianity to the colonized countries and ignores the ways in which epistemic authority is granted to Western cultural values through institutional forces, primarily through our educational system. This rhetoric of "love" is dangerous because it automatically assumes that what is not loved by the US hegemonic literary culture must be in some oppositional category, rather than a responsive category to systemized

oppression and erasure of diverse voices and experiences within what we consider to be properly "English" literature, which must include those who have forcibly been indoctrinated into linguistic and cultural "Englishness" through a heritage of national, settler, and internal colonialism. Moreover, as Sara Ahmed describes in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, it is perhaps a diluted form of the ideology of nationalist hate groups that weaponize the rhetoric of love as demonstrating their "active identification with the nation" and "with a core set of values" (122). In her chapter, "In the Name of Love," Ahmed writes,

> …acting in the name of love can work to enforce a particular ideal onto others by requiring that they live up to an ideal to enter the community. The idea of where we all love each other, a world of lovers, is a humanist fantasy that informs much of the multicultural discourse of love, which I have formulated as the hope: *If only we got closer we would be as one*. The multicultural fantasy works as a form of conditional love, in which the conditions of love work to associate 'others' with the failure to return the national ideal. (Ahmed 139)

In the example of Vendler's speech, her hope is to create an ideal of what it means to enter the literary community, and to have her students, her progeny, if you will, continue on in the tradition that she loved. She writes "If we succeed at all in teaching others, from freshmen to graduate students, to love what we have loved, we hope that some of them will become the teachers who will replace us-and that they will teach out of love, and write out of love" (346). The sentimentality towards "teaching what we love" is a beautiful fantasy—before we are confronted with the uncomfortable reality of what happens when students don't relate to "what we love." The goal is to teach them *how* to love the text—which is through affirmation of its aesthetics outside of its politics. To have "teachers who will replace us" is the dream of

upholding the status quo and traditions of the past, to control the future of literary studies through creating a sense of shared values and goals, as is illustrated from Vendler's comment that "We must, I think, come to some consensus about what we do love and what we wish to teach others to love" (346). Ahmed describes how in a multicultural society, "integration" becomes "a national ideal," (138) where love for each other and love for difference is a way to "gain consensus" on becoming the ideal national subject that fulfills the "ideal image of the nation." The way to being an aligned collective as true Humanities scholars, in Vendler's words, is "to come to some consensus about what we do love and what we wish to teach others to love" (346), but the question remains: Can this love be inclusive of difference? How does one begin that conversation?

I begin with a close reading of Vendler's speech because it exemplifies the type of fallacy inherent in arguments that consider taste, or aesthetics, as an altogether separate or superior consideration that is absent of politics, which I argue is one of criticisms that is elaborated upon in Kincaid's *Lucy*. In *Lucy*, the importance of the relationship of history and lived experience to cultural objects is played out through the perspectival differences and affectual relations to artifacts and objects that are fetishized globally as representative of idealized relics of Western culture. Kincaid's attentiveness to the intersubjective dynamics between Lucy and the other characters in the novel, namely, Mariah, unveils how white supremacist logic trickles down to and shapes the power dynamics in our relations to one another by considering the visceral, affectual relationship an "outsider" might have to these celebrated relics.

However, it is important to trace back to imperialist forms of thinking on the individual level that are first indoctrinated into the collective through our institutions. In her speech, Vendler simply highlights the common belief held by most in literature departments that there

are “great books” that are cultural relics that showcase the superiority of aesthetics and values exclusive to the Western world that must be passed down. Those who know, love, and teach these texts will then transmit this knowledge—one that is important because of the superiority of its cultural values that Vendler sees as “indispensable.” However, because epistemic authority is mostly only granted to one kind of voice, this exclusivity hinders others from voicing themselves through this kind of self-perpetuating cultural gatekeeping. Vendler only fleetingly alludes to “local texts” when she iterates that, “I do not mean, by emphasizing the great tales of our inherited culture, to minimize the local and the ethnic. Literary imagination is incurably local. But it is against the indispensable background of the general literary culture that native authors assert their local imagination” (349). Vendler misses a crucial point: what constitutes as the “great tales” of “our inherited culture” is up for interpretation. Who is the “our” with whom Vendler hopes to create solidarity here? What gets overlooked by Vendler in her speech is that the norms and values are dictated through an invisible White supremacist agenda. For example, Vendler makes it clear who the “great” writers and texts are based on her examples and who she chooses to cite. This list includes William Wordsworth, Northrup Frye, Marianne Moore, Emily Dickinson, and the idea of ubiquitous literary “first loves” (345) as represented by Whitman, Keats, and Yeats. For Vendler, the key to reaching first year students results from the texts we teach, rather than what she calls deplorable “pattern drills” (346), “‘model essays,’” or “examples of student writing” (345). Instead, she offers that “If our students, in their first acquaintance with departments of English and foreign languages, experience too little of that delight at the access of knowledge, it is because the best delights we have to offer-those of literature-have somehow not been included in our first courses for students” (345). Vendler believes that it is the responsibility of the first-year English composition professor to give

students "that rich web of associations, lodged in the tales of majority and minority culture alike, by which they could begin to understand themselves as individuals and as social beings" (350). In addition to the authors and texts listed above, the second half of Vendler's speech goes on to trace these "rich web of associations" to include Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Dostoevsky, Stevens, Dickens, Homer, Proust, Chaucer, Faulkner, Keats, Lawrence, Austen, Hawthorne, Ovid, and *The Bible.* The problem with this list is its limited scope. Not only are there are only two women mentioned in her speech, but moreover, nowhere in it is there mention of *any* minority writers or texts.

It might seem that what is at stake here is *what* texts we teach, but there is more: *how* we choose to teach the texts we bring into the classroom is a whole separate debate. In *Beyond the Culture Wars* (1992), Gerald Graff intervenes in the Vendlerian line of thinking by reflecting on his own teaching, and how by reading Chinhua Achebe's essay "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,*" his own teaching of the text changed as he realized the inherent and close relationship between art and politics—a topic which Vendler completely ignores. Through his anecdote about the impact of Achebe's essay on his own teaching, Graff explicates how the essay revolutionized his thinking about *The Heart of Darkness*, and any text for that matter—how a literary work couldn't simply be a "disinterested work of art" as many like Vendler, might like to believe, that they are "not simply neutral aesthetic descriptions but interventions that act upon the world they describe" (29). Graff reveals how the way in which we teach is not as objective as we might believe, but implicit in our teaching is a theoretical apparatus, or a way of understanding the world of the text, through our focus on what was "worth noticing and emphasizing in [the] classroom" (30). Furthermore, I would argue that the theoretical apparatus in which politics—inherent in every classroom—is made explicit is only

usually done formally in a classroom that topically explores post-colonial theory and literature and the like. Vendler's renowned, detailed close readings of the aesthetic value of language, form, and the biographical details of the writers are often astute and interesting, but the absence of thinking through the socio-political context of any work of literature is misleading, as it excludes the obvious impact of historical experiences on the aesthetics and chosen formal elements of language.

Although most of us who love and derive pleasure from studying words and language as much as Vendler does might not completely disagree with what she canonizes as the "great works"—what the real issue is the lack of transparency of how the canon itself can be used as a disciplining force. There is always a politics behind how and what we teach that must be questioned and brought to the fore in our teaching. This interrogative process is something that past scholars were hard-pressed to confront, and today—forty years after Vendler's speech, and thirty years after Graff's revelations about the history of literature as a "discipline"—if you walk into any first-year writing or literature course, it seems as if Graff "won" the debate.

Even so, outside of writing departments, there continues to be resistance within the academy itself, and the debates that began the culture wars in the 1980s have only seemed to become increasingly divisive; today these broadly become manifest in the greater public debates that continue to widen the gap between conservatives and liberals as these labels solidify in U.S. society as the culture wars of our contemporary day. In light of issues such as #metoo and #BLM, and other issues that gained traction on a vast scale in national politics through social media, there have been protests led by liberal organizations, and minorities, women, and those from the LGBTQ+ community have more space to amplify their voices. As a reaction to these moments, the "conservatives" have pushed back with their own slogans such as "All Lives

Matter," while anti-feminist and misogynistic attitudes have grown and gained momentum, and women lost rights over their bodies that were painstakingly gained over the past fifty years. In the college and university classroom, the hard-won progress made to diversify the curriculum and teaching methodologies that bring awareness of the politics embedded in texts is being challenged. Conservative groups are increasingly voicing their disputes against Humanities departments and the topics they choose to teach, particularly against Critical Race Theory and any texts that emphasize minority experiences and socio-political issue—basically anything that can pejoratively be referred to as "identity politics." As instructors who were schooled in PhD programs in the 90s have stepped into the classroom, the turn toward teaching the relationship between art and politics has become normalized and more commonplace as this new generation of scholars generally agrees on the importance of teaching texts that are consciously more politically oriented and speak to a wide diversity of experiences. The backlash against these topics mostly comes out of fear of the unknown, and of breaking down the White supremacist cultural hegemony.

Given the role of her English education and its influence in Lucy's life, I have begun with Vendler's speech to highlight how these invisible institutionalized practices continue to condition those in the system to hierarchically decide what texts hold epistemic authority through the value placed on white supremacist agendas of reinstating their power through ideas of benevolent love. I mobilize Ahmed's ideas from *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* about the strategic uses of love by right-wing fascist groups in order to make transparent how seemingly innocuous forms of passing down what is considered to be "good" is a value assessment based on a history of power relations. In Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*, we see the way in which cultural power is institutionalized through the educational system—both in colonized Antigua, but also in

the cosmopolitan centers of the Western world, as is showcased through Lucy's experiences in New York City—and how that creates psychological trauma through its assertion of its own superiority above other kinds of knowledge. More importantly, Kincaid reveals how these institutionalized forms of cultural superiority then play out in intersubjective power dynamics where other kinds of narratives and perspectives are kept at a distance, unable to be accepted as legitimate voices and ways of being. The relationship between Mariah and Lucy will showcase how Mariah's "love" for Lucy can be seen as an act of humanistic benevolence in her choice to ignore obvious differences between them, but how this backfires is Lucy refuses to accept this benevolence in name of the truth of her lived experience. Lucy's continued refusal of Mariah's attempts at demonstrating their "sameness" is a demand for recognition as a subject because essentially this moves towards sameness with objectify her into the accommodating role of the global cosmopolitan subject. Mariah's idea that there is a universal experience that they both share is both an illusion and a humanistic myth that refuses to face the traumatic histories that have shaped the power dynamics that have created the material realities for each of them.

Lucy's Ambivalence in Kincaid's Novella

In *Lucy*, Kincaid explores the issue of inherited culture and the desire to rebel and form one's own definition of self. Kincaid's *Lucy* is about the titular character, Lucy Potter and her migration to New York City to work as an au pair for a wealthy white family that begins her search for and assertion of her own identity. At its core, Kincaid's *Lucy* is a novel that shows the how decoloniality works in action through its surrealist narrative structure in Lucy's stream-of-consciousness that reverts between memories, dreams, and present-day interactions to unveil how Lucy's perception of the world is resistant to the dominant Western hegemonic ideals. Moreover, primarily characterized through Lucy's interactions with her employer, Mariah,

Kincaid doubly re-enforces how decoloniality works in action as Lucy's beliefs are made manifest in her repeated choices to unveil the toxic effects of colonial systems to Mariah. Kincaid explores how Lucy and Mariah are unable to sustain a loving, intersubjective relationship because of Mariah's lack of recognition of Lucy's history and lived experience, as Mariah continually refuses to accept Lucy's perspective and attempts to erase differences between them.

Decoloniality, according to Walter Mignolo in the "Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De)coloniality, Border Thinking and Epistemic Disobedience" is a political and epistemic term that has been around since the Bandung Conference in 1955, made more mainstream when Frantz Fanon introduced it in *Wretched of the Earth* in 1961. Mignolo writes that "the decolonial opens up a way of thinking that delinks from the chronologies of new epistemes or new paradigms (modern, postmodern, alter modern, Newtonian science, quantum theory, the theory of relativity, etc.)" (131). In other words, the decolonial doesn't count these as having epistemic legitimacy since these epistemes and paradigms have created categories that limit and control our life experiences, memories, and language. Instead, "thinking decoloniality," Mignolo states, "is concerned with global equality and economic justice, but it also asserts that Western democracy and socialism are not the only two models to orient our thinking and our doing" (131). The main decolonial act is that of delinking from Western modes of knowledge-production and rationality. One of the main goals of Kincaid's *Lucy* is to pedagogically showcase the ways in which the protagonist must consistently untangle herself from her inherited colonial culture in Antigua, as those reveal those same dominant structures from her British education are encountered in her life in the US as the continued dominant rationale. She cannot escape them. Moreover, Kincaid portrays how Western civilization has created an episteme of "Englishness" that makes the

fundamental assumption that Western values and ways of being are superior to all other forms, and this rationale is behind every attempt to colonize other countries and the minds of its people, particularly through the education system (which has also been the logic of teaching the literary "canon" in literature departments). Lucy's indoctrination into British culture within the colonial education system is something she has come to resent. The institutionalized colonial values in the school and the church had been upheld and solidified in her childhood home through her mother (who is often read as metaphorically representative of Antigua's inherited colonial values).

Many scholars have read Lucy's decolonial perspective as indicative of her "outsider" status which is seen through her refusal to assimilate into dominant paradigms by accommodating those around her—even if it might benefit her to do so, and at the very least, make her life easier. For example, in "Poor Visitor": Mobility as/of Voice in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*" (2009), Jenifer J. Nichols writes about how Kincaid portrays Lucy's interactions with various groups of the American Left "illustrate how each employs a variation on the theme of purity to reproduce the nationalist, homogenizing current of the US's hegemonic culture; one by one, they each attempt to forcibly assimilate, absorb, dominate, or delegitimate Lucy's outsider position" (188). In "Postcolonial Fiction and the Outsider Within—Towards a Literary Practice of Feminist Standpoint Theory" (2005), Brooke Lenz contends that Lucy's "privileged standpoint as an outsider within…allows the reader to see particular truths or realities that are not apparent to someone more fully assimilated into dominant ideologies" (102). Lenz develops a Black feminist standpoint about Kincaid's novel, addressing "larger questions of identity and authority" that arise from Lucy's position as an "'outsider within'" (98). Both of these scholars focus on Lucy's resistance to dominant ideologies as also a fear of being absorbed by cultural norms that

do not serve her. If she accepted the dominant narrative, it would be a form of deceptiveness to herself and others and limit her freedom to forge an identity for herself. Mignolo notes, "decoloniality focuses on changing the terms of the conversation and not only its content" (133). Kincaid seeks to not only give an authoritative voice to a minority subject, as Mary Louise Pratt describes in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Trasculturation* the various interactions she has and bonds she forges in her sojourn in Manhattan are "an attempt to involve the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures" (Pratt 1992: 7). But Lucy's perspective in her first-person narration also flips the script as she sees herself as one that has a superior knowledge to the limited perspective around her.

The generic categorization of Jamaica Kincaid's semi-autobiographical novella, *Lucy*, has been a source of study within various disciplines—including diasporic, American, transnational, feminist, ethnic, postcolonial. Jennifer J. Nichols writes about how "Jamaica Kincaid crosses disciplinary borders by writing fiction that is simultaneously diasporic and national, but only half of this equation has received serious inquiry" (187)—and seeks to lay out *Lucy*'s intervention in American feminist fiction. Nichols discusses how most scholarship has been devoted to exploring the metaphoric relationship of "Antigua to its British colonial past and to the contemporary imperialism and forced diaspora of global capital" (187). Citing Jana Evans Braziel's discussion of the daffodils as an example, but of course, there are many others in how interpret *Lucy* in this vein.

About half a year into her residence, Mariah invites Lucy to see Paul Gaughin's exhibit at the local museum. By this time, Lucy has grown to love the museum, describing it as a place which had "become a passion" for her (95)—and one of the only places she especially likes to go and visit routinely. Lucy is fascinated not by the art itself, but by the painter's personal history—

of how Gaughin leaves his family and comfortable life as a banker in France to go to "an opposite part of the world" where he might find happiness. Since Lucy is from Antigua, Mariah probably imagines that Lucy would identify with the minorities depicted in the paintings, often women from the West Indies who become romanticized "others" through Gaughin's perspective. Mariah is excited for Lucy to see this exhibition because of this connection he has to Lucy's homeland. As Lucy walks through the exhibition, Lucy reflects: "I don't know if Mariah meant me to, but immediately, I identified with the yearnings of this man [Gaughin]." Once again, Lucy defies Mariah's—and even the reader's—expectations through her unique perspective. What is striking is that Lucy has the imaginative capacity and daringness to find similarities between her and a man, particularly a white man. Gaughin's maleness doesn't threaten Lucy as it might Mariah and other women. Instead, Lucy finds herself connecting to the one who is an agential being, rather than the one acted upon within this power dynamic. Lucy imagines Gaughin's feelings of "finding the place you are born in an unbearable prison and wanting something completely different from what you are familiar with, knowing it represents a haven," and connects to the sentiment of finding belonging in a space that limits the possibilities of who she might become. Lucy is in search of her own "haven," and cannot find it within the confines of her colonial past and continues to search for it in the neocolonial present of her daily life in New York.

When Mariah brings Lucy to the museum to see the Paul Gaughin paintings, although Lucy is intrigued, Mariah is unable to see how it would be offensive to Lucy. The Gaughin paintings that Kincaid is alluding to are likely from his era of depict the people from Martinique or French Polynesia. As he plays his role as a "cultural anthropologist," by depictions of the life he witnessed on these islands, he was also, in turn, objectifying the locals as the exotic other,

creating the dynamic of the colonial subject and outsider. When Lucy realizes the power dynamics inherent in the painting, and it becomes clear who has agential power in those depictions, Lucy gets angry. At this point in the novella, a pattern has already been established: Mariah's actions are "well-meaning," but oblivious and Lucy's response is angry, but without a socially acceptable mask to hide that anger. Unlike the women depicted in Gaughin's paintings, Lucy recognizes her own agential power to speak and be a dynamic human being, rather than fulfill the roles society has placed upon her. However, Kincaid does not allow the reader to point fingers so clearly at one structure (although it would be so easy to do so). Kincaid muddies the Mariah-Lucy dynamic with another existing dynamic—that between Lucy and her mother—one that dominates over all of Lucy's subsequent relationships. As we learn throughout the novella, not only is Mariah complicit in adhering to and perpetuating these power structures, but Lucy's own mother is, as well.

One of the crucial elements at play in Kincaid's *Lucy* is the interpersonal dynamic between Lucy and her employer, Mariah, and through their differences in perspective, attempts to complicate the universal category of "Woman"—a category that has sparked extensive debate in postcolonial feminist literature. In order to forge a bond with Lucy, Mariah is continually invested in finding the similarities between Lucy and her, and repeatedly ignores the pointed differences as Lucy brings them up. Instead, Mariah focuses on their shared oppression as women, and upholds the idea of "Woman" as a monolithic group. In "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," Chandra Mohanty discusses the history of Western feminist scholarship in propagating a universal idea of what it means to be a woman as "the critical assumption that all of us of the same gender, across classes and cultures, are somehow socially constituted as a homogeneous group identified prior to the process of

analysis" (337). Mohanty argues, the very notion of "'Woman'—[as] a cultural and ideological composite Other constructed through diverse representational discourses (scientific, literary, juridical, linguistic, cinematic, etc.)" stems from "assumptions of privilege and ethnocentric universality" found in Western feminist writings, which "discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/re-presenting a composite, singular 'Third World Woman'" (334). Mohanty warns against the dangers inherent in this "process of homogenization and systematization" where the focus shifts away from "uncovering the material and ideological specificities that constitute a particular group of women" (335).

Mohanty's critique of Western feminist literature for its tendency to portray women as a singular group solely on the basis of shared oppression is crucial for our understanding of not only the ideological divide between Lucy and Mariah, but how this difference in perspective creates a gap between them in forming a true intersubjective bond of reciprocal exchange. Mariah grows to develop a close pseudo-mother-daughter bond with Lucy that is complicated by the fact that Lucy and Mariah cannot see eye to eye. It is obvious to Lucy that she and Mariah are from different worlds, and don't have a shared experience of the world because of the differences in their identities in terms of race, class, citizenship, and country of origin. Lucy feels great pain, anger, grief, and loss in relation to her fractured identity that has resulted because of her country's colonized past. Even despite their differences, Mariah is painted as a sympathetic character because of her kindness, love, optimism, and generosity towards Lucy. Mariah tries to form a close intimate bond with Lucy, and even though her efforts aren't completely rejected, Lucy maintains a careful emotional distance from Mariah as repeated interactions between them reveal that Mariah is uncomfortable with acknowledging the differences between her and Lucy.

Lucy is very aware of the past's imprint on her consciousness and does not allow social niceties to impede her from sharing her postcolonial rage with Mariah. One of the prevalent reasons for Lucy sharing her emotional life with others is because she sees herself as an agent who has free will. If she is unhappy with her circumstances, she recognizes that she can make changes that aim to create different results. In other words, her past does not need to be her future. By sharing her emotional life, she is making sense of any injustices and the resulting discontentment she feels, and it allows her to recognize, and have others recognize that pain through their witnessing of her story. Therefore, she sees others who are in equal or greater circumstances as she is also able to practice full agency in their actions. To grant others recognition as full agents is a giving of respect and equal dignity to the other.

On the surface, to have "agency," means to have the capacity and power to take action. However, it is not so simple as we live in a world where there are many agential actors, all who have the freedom to act, with conflicting desires and needs. On a deeper level, agency is also a *felt* experience—that is, to *feel* like an agential being, one will feel the freedom to express their emotional life, and have their emotions recognized for the majority of the time. In the field of neuroscience, more research is being done to prove how one's experience of the world is shaped by one's emotional life—what is called "affective realism." With the novella's focus on differences in perspective through the contrasting emotional orientations towards various objects in the world, Kincaid's *Lucy* can be seen as a fictional investigation of how affective realism is at play in our relationships with others. The misunderstandings between Mariah and Lucy occur through their respective differences in perception. Mariah does not recognize how Lucy's lived experiences are different from her own, and this misrecognition is what causes the disconnect between them. Mariah's lack of acknowledgement of Lucy's past is felt as a denial of Lucy's

fundamental right to have a different emotional life of her own. By calling attention to Lucy's anger, instead of acknowledging or validating it, she continues to deny Lucy her agential power, and thereby, also disrespects Lucy's subjective experience. Mariah's insistence on orienting Lucy to a "shared" reality is actually a desire to create *her* reality (Mariah's reality) as an objective truth. To acknowledge the validity of Lucy's emotional life would be to completely dismantle her "sunny" outlook on the world, and thereby, force her to face the fragmented consciousness that is the reality of the postcolonial consciousness that Lucy inhabits. Mariah is now privy to Lucy's affective world, and as such, if they want to truly form an intersubjective bond with mutual recognition, Mariah will have to give up her "sunny" outlook.

To illuminate this, we can go back to the Gaughin example. Lucy wants to know more about the "details of Gaughin's despair" in order to take comfort in them, and perhaps be guided toward solving the mysteries of her own feelings of disillusionment and homelessness. In Kincaid's surrealist, stream-of-consciousness style, almost as quickly as Lucy feels this compassion for Gaughin's emotional plight, her imaginings are interrupted by her acceptance of reality. Lucy realizes that any details of Gaughin's life could easily be found "in the pages of a book" since "lives of men always are" (95). As it dawns on Lucy that Gaughin and her are, in fact, not the same, she has to spell it out for herself, reminding herself: "I was not a man. I was a young woman from the fringes of the world, and when I left my home, I had wrapped around my shoulders the mantle of a servant…" (95). It is at the precise moment when Lucy is having this thought that Mariah comes up to her, and is startled by the look on Lucy's face, and thus remarks with a voice filled with both "alarm and pity" that "You are a very angry person, aren't you?" Lucy responds to this in her typical forthright manner by remarking, "Of course I am. What did you expect?" This is only one scene that characterizes the recurring and episodic interactions

between Lucy and Mariah that are meant to portray the disconnect between them as a result of their differing subjective experiences of the world. Yet, Lucy's question "What did you expect?" is the question that haunts each of their interactions.

Lucy comes to epitomize the trope of the 'angry Black woman' through each of these interactions. On a purely grammatical level, the two adjectives ("angry" and "Black") added to describe the subject ("woman")—which we can translate are the archetypal imagery used to describe Lucy—are used to objectify her into a trope, and thereby are often used to discredit and delegitimize the reality of one's lived experiences. By objectifying Lucy's anger, it allows Mariah to keep herself distanced from both Lucy, and by extension, her anger. Mariah cannot hold her truth and Lucy's truth together because doing so will create a cognitive dissonance. Therefore, simply calling someone "angry" without considering why they might be angry is to uphold the status quo, to be un*moved* by it. For Mariah to uphold her "sunny" disposition in stark opposition to Lucy's "angry" one, she must continually deny reality and truth. She cannot recognize Lucy's anger because it would mean taking *in* Lucy's anger and making it her own, to justify it.

Even so, Mariah, a well-meaning white woman from the upper echelons of American society tries to develop an intersubjective bond with Lucy by sharing all those things she loves that she imagines Lucy might love, too—her favorite season, her hometown and upbringing, books on Western feminism; yet, her expectation that Lucy might feel similarly to her is always met with a surprising twist: not only does Lucy not perceive these things in the same way as her, but sometimes she actively dislikes the very things that Mariah loves. But then why does Mariah *not see* and so completely miss the mark of understanding Lucy's perspective?

Failed Love: Intersubjectivity and Unreciprocated Recognition

Mariah's inability to see from Lucy's perspective reveals the unequal footing on which their relationship exists, not just materially, or through the obvious employer-employee power relations that bind them, but also through Mariah's own capacity to *attune* herself to Lucy's experiences and fully *recognize* her as a full subject. Jessica Benjamin's "An Outline of the Intersubjectivity: The Development of Recognition" discusses how mutual recognition is a core foundation for our developmental process in early childhood and beyond. She argues that emotional attunement and the capacity to tolerate differences can only occur if one recognizes the other person's subjectivity (33). A key figure in relational psychoanalysis, Benjamin defines "intersubjective theory" to postulate that "the other must be recognized as another subject in order for the self to fully experience his or her subjectivity in the other's presence. This means, first, that we have a need for recognition and second, that we have a capacity to recognize others in return—mutual recognition" (35). Benjamin's work is crucial in understanding the way one learns *empathy* in early childhood through the intersubjective bonds that are formed with one's primary caregivers. She illustrates how the mutual exchange of recognition must be displayed through behaviors that demonstrate emotional attunement not only by the caregiver's confirming responses to the infant, but by the exchange of responses between the child and their caregiver. Benjamin explains, "Recognition between persons is essentially mutual. By our very enjoyment of the other's confirming response, we recognize her or him in return" (37). In the psychoanalytic world, Benjamin's work is especially illuminating because it decenters both subject-object relations and the infant's experiences and focuses on the significance of intersubjective relations and the mutual influence of both the mother and infant. However, what is more pertinent and important is how Benjamin's research on the intersubjective love bonds developed in our infancy then continue to be important to the way we form connections through our adult life—and how

those fundamental principles and desires for reciprocity, emotional attunement, and affective sharing are crucial when establishing a relationship of mutual recognition, one in which both subjects is genuinely recognizing the other's status as a subject.

The idea of mutual influence is crucial to the understanding of how recognition functions in a healthy intersubjective dynamic. Mariah insists on sharing her world with Lucy through well-intentioned acts that demonstrate her desire to develop a meaningful connection with her. However, her actions fall short of her kind intentions because she lacks the capacity to engage in reciprocal exchanges of understanding, precisely because she unconsciously objectifies Lucy by imagining that Lucy's perspective would be the same or similar to her own—that they would share the same view. Through her repeated actions, it seems to be unquestionable in Mariah's mind that Lucy and she would share the same view. This is a blind assumption made through the structural paradigm in which she exists, and in their interactions, the unstated assumption reveals her belief in cultural and experiential superiority of the Ameri-European perspective. Again and again, Lucy's responses to the sensory world around her do not match her own experiences, and it befuddles her. Lucy's honest display of her emotional life at the cost of her own and others' comfort in social niceties demonstrates her willful demand for mutual recognition because she refuses to be complicit in continuing a legacy that objectifies her. It would not only be disingenuous to enter into the neocolonial axis of "I will love what you love"—precisely the logic of the colonial history from which she is trying to escape—but it would also be fundamentally disrespectful to her own existence.

Because Lucy is hired as an au pair for the family, there is also the additional dynamic of the employer-employee relationship. The obvious inequality in power relations is also something that Mariah tries to pretend doesn't exist, but Lucy is very aware of it. She is told that she

"should regard them as my family and make myself at home" (7), but spatially, within the household, she is given a "small room off the kitchen—the maid's room" where the "ceiling was very high and the walls went all the way up to the ceiling, enclosing the room like a box—a box in which cargo is traveling a long way to be shipped. But I was not cargo. I was only an unhappy young woman living in a maid's room, and I was not even the maid" (7). Lucy narrates this idea, the imagery of feeling like "cargo" in her room, in the typical stream-of-consciousness style, where the initial thought to the image to the resulting conclusion aren't always explicitly explained or reflected upon, and the reader is left to absorb the shocking meaning behind the juxtaposition of the ideas. Here, in Lucy's feeling, that of being like she is cargo in a ship, alludes to the history of chattel slavery in the United States. This history of Black Africans forced into ships like cargo to become slaves in a new world is woven into different quarters of the house so that the history is always reminiscent, and people may always know their "place."

Even still, Lucy surprises the reader with her next thought. She recognizes that Mariah and Lewis are being "sincere" when they tell her to make herself at home because she logically knows that "such a thing would not be said to a member of their real family" (8). Moreover, she is happy for the distance from her actual family, and to be just a "visitor"—an employee—in their household. Lucy reflects, "After all, aren't family the people who become the millstone around your life's neck?" This is one of the first indications of Lucy's discontentment at home that has led her to her current position, from her homeland of Antigua to the upper East side of New York city to work as a nanny in a wealthy household where she "watches over the children" during the day and "goes to school at night" (7). This unhappy connection to her past, to her motherland, haunts the entirety of Lucy's existence even after physically distancing herself from her family. She laments over this as she reflects, "I wondered if ever in my whole life a day

would go by when these people I had left behind, my own family, would not appear before me in one way or another" (8). Lucy's metaphor of family being like "a millstone around your neck," tellingly reveals Lucy's relationship to her family as one that is a heavy load that grinds the life force out of her. Even as she escapes them through proximity, they will always live intimately in her mind, no matter what she does.

Lucy obviously cannot become "like" Mariah's family, and it is clear that Lucy's negative associations to her own family makes her more than happy to opt out of this obligation with anyone else's family in any shape or form. Lucy's liberation lies in her freedom as a paid employee of the family, and she does not forget this fact. As long as she is a good employee in her role as a nanny for the children, and a kind person, she is not obligated to change who she is or her beliefs for the comfort of those around her. This is perhaps the most empowering aspect of Lucy's freedom, is her mental liberation from people-pleasing, particularly pleasing those in the dominant systems of power. She refuses to continue to perpetuate the colonial-colonizer dynamics by maintaining her full dignity as a human being. By doing this, she resists *further* oppression—that is, beyond the systems that have already done great psychological and material harm to her and her ancestors. She knows she cannot undo the past, but she can exercise her full existential freedom within the constraints of the world in which she lives.

By the end "Poor Visitor"—which is the first of the five parts in the novella—Lucy has maintained this status of "Visitor" not because she is simply refusing to be part of the family, but because her refusal to be part of the family is directly disengaging from a larger power structure. If she were to participate in the dynamics in ways that would please her employers, it would reaffirm the existing colonial power dynamics. This would then allow for the comfort of her employer's family because she would be doing what is expected from her; however, not only

would this impede Lucy's own freedom and dignity, but it would also merely maintain the systemic status quo of reaffirming the dominant ideologies already in place. In fact, over the course of her year as an au pair, as Lucy builds her relationship with Mariah, she realizes the limitations in Mariah's thinking stem from her own fears. Lucy witnesses how Mariah is unable to extricate herself from the patriarchal norms placed on her, and that she inevitably perpetuates the current patriarchal dynamics even while Mariah intellectually espouses the merits of feminism. For example, towards the end of one full year with Mariah, when Mariah finally questions why Lucy does not respond to her mother's letters, why she does not forgive her mother, Lucy finally explains her story:

> I was an only child until I was nine years old, and then in the space of five years my mother had three male children; each time a new child was born, my mother and father announced to each other with great seriousness that the new child would go to university in England and study to become a doctor or lawyer or someone who would occupy an important and influential position in society. I did not mind my father saying these things about his sons, his own kind, and leaving me out. My father did not know me at all; I did not expect him to imagine a life for me filled with excitement and triumph. But my mother knew me well, as well as she knew herself: I, at the time, even thought of us as identical; and whenever I saw her eyes fill up with tears at the thought of how proud she would be at some deed her sons had accomplished, I felt a sword go through my heart, for there was no accompanying scenario in which she saw me, her only identical offspring, in a remotely similar situation. To myself I then began to call her Mrs. Judas, and I began to plan a separation from her that even then I suspected would never be complete. (Kincaid 130-31)

Through sharing this story, Lucy tries to explain to Mariah the complex dynamics between Lucy and her mother—particularly Lucy's feelings of betrayal from the lack of support as her mother's daughter, as her mother's only "identical offspring." Furthermore, not only does Mariah not understand the depth of this sense of betrayal that Lucy feels, but that Lucy does in fact deeply love her mother, and that is precisely why Lucy must separate from her. Lucy's ambivalent feelings toward her mother come from the rejection of Lucy as her child. In response to Lucy's story, Mariah shares some books with Lucy to rationalize her mother's rejection of her as a result of patriarchy as an insidious institution that shapes these toxic behaviors. Lucy describes: "Mariah wanted to rescue me. She spoke of women in history, women in culture, women everywhere. But […] I couldn't tell that my mother was my mother and that society and history and culture and other women in general were something else altogether" (132). Mariah makes a very Beauvoirian argument and wants to illuminate to Lucy that the issues between Lucy and her mother go back to structural issues within the patriarchy itself, that her mother's oppression of her own daughter comes from systemic sexism. However, Lucy feels that Mariah "completely misinterpreted my situation" (132). Lucy reflects: "My life was at once something more complicated than that [book]: for ten of my twenty years, half of my life, I had been mourning the end of a love affair, perhaps the only true love in my whole life I would ever know." (132) To Lucy, her mother's betrayal goes deeper than anything a system can explain; her mother's rejection of her own daughter's full self-actualization shows a lack of love for her daughter's well-being.

This cognitive dissonance in Mariah's thinking reveals the exact relationship within white liberalism of the difference between theory and practice. Moreover, many of the theories that Mariah espouses don't resonate with Lucy, and she tries to explain to Mariah that her

relationship is both "more simple and more complicated" than the theoretical books that Mariah believes will console Lucy through their intellectualizing of something that is so simple to Lucy: as "perhaps the only true love in my whole life I would ever know" (132). What is interesting is how Lucy's feelings of betrayal by her mother, and her descriptions of the resulting ambivalence she has felt are not unlike the many Beauvoirian descriptions and examples from *The Second Sex*; however, Mariah, and many white liberal feminists extract the theoretical and logical apparatus from the text without considering the very phenomenological and affective descriptions that are the source material for those theories. In the end, the theory does not change the lived experience, and even as it can be utilized to understand the past, Lucy must grapple with the love she feels for her mother, while also using the anger she feels from her mother's betrayal as fuel to forge a new identity so as not to become an "echo" of her.

In contrast, even as Mariah is an educated person with the liberal mindset towards societal progress, in the end, she cannot realize her full subjecthood through her own maintenance of the status quo in becoming the ideal woman. Veronica Gregg writes, "Lucy studies Mariah as a creature conditioned by history and language, blind to their power and trapped within their determinations" (38). Mariah echoes a version of the feminine that stays within the confines in the Western Judeo-Christian tradition, even as that trope is modernized to fit the cultural standards of Mariah's world. Kincaid reveals how Mariah continues to carry forward that tradition of ideal femininity, which is indicated through the naming of the characters. Mariah stems from the same root name as "Mary," symbolizing the Virgin Mary, who represents idealized femininity and mother of the Judeo-Christian world. The youngest daughter, who is also Lucy's favorite, is "Miriam" (44), which is also a variation of the same name that means, "beloved," or "exalted." Miriam will likely very much become her mother's

daughter and inherit Mariah's destiny and status as a "beautiful golden mother pouring love over growing things" (46). In contrast, Lucy sees the shadowy side of things, and is able to see at once a different perspective, how Mariah is both the "golden mother" her daughter and the rest of the world wants to see, as well as a "hollow old woman, all the blood drained from her face." It is not a pessimistic view of Mariah, but a realistic perspective, for Lucy can sense that something is unhappy about her. What might be written off as a simple mid-life crisis—as reflected through Mariah's refrain of "I am forty years old" as she looks in the mirror from time to time—is actually a lifetime of abandoning herself to fit the role of being the ideal woman.

Lucy, unlike the virginal Mary, identifies herself in opposition to this type of femininity that she finds oppressive. Jana Evans Braziel explores how "the figure of Lucifer is performatively embodied in the protagonist Lucy" (80) and this extended metaphor of Lucy's embodiment of Lucifer is directly made clear for us towards the end of the novella. Lucy recounts how as a teenage girl, she realizes that she did not like her name and wanted to change it: "I disliked the name Lucy, because it seemed slight, without substance, not at all the person I thought I would like to be even then" (149). Lucy's full name is Lucy Josephine Potter, and she knows the origin of her other two names, "I was named Josephine after my mother's uncle Mr. Joseph, because he was rich, from money he had made in sugar in Cuba, and it was thought that he would remember and honor and leave something for me in his will," while the "Potter must have come from the Englishman who owned my ancestors when they were slaves" (149). These are both names she hopes to disinherit, but her first name is the one that baffles her. Why did her mother choose this name over any other? She remembers repeatedly asking her mother why she had named her Lucy throughout those years. Finally, one day, while cleaning some fish for dinner, her mother responds in a whisper that is barely audible, "I named you after Satan himself.

Lucy, short for Lucifer. What a botheration from the moment you were conceived" (152). Rather than being sad and ashamed, Lucy embraces her name from this point forward in her life:

> Lucy, a girl's name for Lucifer. That my mother would have found me devil-like did not surprise me, for I often thought of her as god-like, and are not the children of gods devils? I did not grow to like the name Lucy—I would have much preferred to be called Lucifer—but whenever I saw my name I always reached out to give it a strong embrace." (153)

In relation to Lucy's reclamation of her name as depicting the "fallen angel," Braziel writes, "Lucy, as Lucifer, not only reclaims a fallen history and a lost world: she creates "new worlds" for her own diasporic dwelling" (80). Because of her traumatic experiences in relation to her mother's colonial Christian beliefs, Lucy perks up with this newfound knowledge about her name as associated with Lucifer, even if her mother probably only said it to hurt her feelings, as she "went from feelings burdened and old and tired to feelings light, new, and clean. I was transformed from failure to triumph. It was the moment I knew who I was" (152). This reclamation of her name comes from the fact that Lucy sees "substance" and power in her name as an allusion to Lucifer, a fallen angel set apart from the others precisely because he refused to follow the rules of an orderly world. As God's favorite angel, and the one that is brilliant and beautiful, the most luminous of all, Lucifer's desire to be seen as an individual, rather than a reflection of God is very similar to Lucy's plight to disentangle herself from her mother who she sees as "god-like" (153): "I would see her face before me, a face that was godlike, for it seemed to know its own origins, to know all the things of which it was made" (94). Therefore, Lucy delights in her own agency to be out of the clutches of her mother and her limiting domination. Braziel explains,

> When Lucy flees her mother, she also flees her motherland (both Antigua and Britain, as the two main nations implicated, for Lucy, in the colonial-colonized relation). Lucy's flight is thus diasporic, but it is also diabolic: acting of her own free will or agency, Lucy is the agent of her own hurling, or falling, from Antiguan and maternal paradise, though she also expresses feeling, at times, cast out and banished (like Lucifer, whose namesake she bears) by mother (divinelike) and from her motherland (paradise and hell all at once). Lucy's diasporic experience, even as diabolic, is also creative: it marks the birth of the young woman as an artist and as a writer, and it marks her separation from, even betrayal of, her mother and the surrogate Mariah, both of whom Lucy feels have betrayed her first, betrayals accomplished in language, words, books, and divine creation, cosmic forces. (Braziel 85)

For Lucy, the heaven and the angelic realms are associated with Mariah as the "golden mother," as representative of neoliberal white supremacist culture and her mother, Annie, the "god-like" one, who represents the oppressive colonial-Christian past Lucy has distanced herself from through creating spatiotemporal boundaries, that are reasserted every time she refuses to open her mother's many letters. Lucy refuses to follow the realm of angels and gods and instead wants to find a new way forward, as she sees herself like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, who proudly proclaims, "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" (1.263), and her disobedience is what allows her the creative license to produce a new world of her own imagining, one that may be contradictory through her ambivalence and "double vision," but nevertheless, it is her own script, and not one scripted for her. As Lucy recounts, "from time to time I had been made to memorize parts of *Paradise Lost.* The stories of the fallen were well known to me, but I had not known that my situation could even distantly be related to them" (153). But as she grows to associate herself

with Lucifer, she feels empowered and emboldened to chart her own course in life, to leave behind those predictable scripts and their presumed boundaries, those would have forced her to pursue identities that inscribe her as "slight" or "angelic." As Lucy gives her name a "strong embrace," she is both welcoming and accepting her fate as a "fallen" subject, and all the entails for her as a woman who imagines a different possibility for herself. Moreover, Lucy's ambivalent perspective on the world allows her to claim her identity as Luciferian—that which is considered wrong or bad—as something joyful precisely because it is her "double vision" that allows her to have a unique, layered perspective that seeks to complicate the binary rationale of good vs. evil that dictates the Christian logic of the West.

Mariah's process of self-idealization begins in her inauthentic relationship with her husband. Lucy observes as Lewis and Mariah interact with each other; she sees how the "whole thing has an air of untruth about it; they didn't mean to do what they were doing at all. It was a show—not for anyone else's benefit, but a show for each other. And how did I know this? I just could tell—that it was a show and not something to be trusted" (47). This type of performativity—of playing dramatized roles that follow the Dick and Jane script is so normalized in her world that it is hard for her to think outside of the box. Lucy can see clearly how it is another kind of prison, one that she rejects by the very nature of the choices she makes to extricate herself from this kind of femininity, and in the open demonstration of her anger.

Mariah's subscription to the gender norms, her femininity ascribed by the confines of society, even her feminism is dictated by what is considered acceptable for an educated liberal white woman to believe. Her love for daffodils and spring is described almost as if she is a Disney princess caricature,

> One morning in early March, Mariah said to me, "You have never seen spring, have you?" And she did not have to await an answer, for she already knew. She said the world "spring" as if spring were a close friend, a friend who had dared to go away for a long time and soon would reappear for their passionate reunion. She said, "Have you ever seen daffodils pushing their way up out of the ground? And when they're in bloom and all massed together, a breeze comes along and makes them do a curtsy to the lawn stretching out in front of them. Have you ever seen that? When I see that, I feel so glad to be alive." And I thought, So Mariah is made to feel alive by some flowers bending in the breeze. How does a person get to be that way? (Kincaid 17)

Mariah's gleefully innocent longing for spring seems almost performative, as her voice lilts into a sing-songy description of spring's many known merits. Daffodils personify the type of idealized femininity that Mariah embodies and serve as a mirror to validate her way of being as a woman. The daffodils meet Mariah in a "passionate embrace," as they do a "curtsy" to the lawn in front of them. When Lucy sees the flowers in person for the first time, before describing her feelings of intense loathing for the daffodils, she describes the "many yellow flowers the size and shape of play teacups, or fairy skirts" (29) and how they "looked like something to eat and something to wear at the same time; they looked beautiful; they looked simple, as if made to erase a complicated and unnecessary idea" (29). Mariah embodies this "beautiful," "simple" "idea" and in becoming like a daffodil, it is an erasure of her humanity, of her complex individuality. By embracing the ideal of the daffodil, "she erase[s] a complicated and unnecessary idea" of a woman being more than the ideal of what the patriarchal society around her wants her to be. Therefore, by embracing the idea of the daffodil, Mariah in unconsciously

choosing to align with the societal status quo of what it means to be a woman: to erase her individuality to become like the sea of beautiful daffodils around her.

In contrast, Lucy is resentful of the daffodils not only because they represent the colonial education system that she feels resentment towards, but also because they represent the limitations placed on her as a woman. Of course, for Lucy the colonial system also represents, by extension, the kind of idealized femininity espoused by her mother through her indoctrination of the patriarchal norms passed down through inheriting toxic colonial values. María Lugones' essay, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," can be utilized to deepen our understanding of *Lucy*, as it sheds light on how Western colonization destroyed and reshaped notions of gender and sexuality within the communities, they colonized by imposing their own Eurocentric ideals. The colonial beliefs used to dominate these communities included a strict binary regarding gender, as women were defined in relation to men. Lugones' text delves into the intricate dynamics at play that shape a woman's societal position, emphasizing the intersectional influences of race and gender that shape one's understanding of self. This framework helps us understand how Lucy's mother internalized and perpetuated these colonial beliefs beyond her control.

Linda Lang-Peralta writes about the theme of ambivalence in *Lucy* as it is seen in her orientation towards everything around her—particularly her relationship to her mother, her homeland, her employers, Manhattan, and the men she meets. Lang-Peralta notes how "ambivalence-as-resistance" is the "source of inspiration" (34) for Kincaid's writing as she refuses the "mimicry" that her mother espouses as an Antiguan colonized subject and expects Lucy to "echo." At the same time, she actively resists embracing all that Mariah loves and what others expect her to love because she does not want to betray her homeland. Lang-Peralta draws

our attention to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's definition of the colonial subject's plight as one that manifests with an "obsession with identity" and "cultural binarism" (33), and Homi Bhabha's idea of the "double vision" the colonial subject holds, much like Dubois's concept of "double-consciousness." Lang-Peralta argues that it is precisely this ambivalence that leads to a "breakdown in communications" between her and others that she supposedly loves, including Mariah, her mother, and later, her love-interest, Paul. Lucy asks, "Isn't it so that love and hate exist side by side?" (20), which, of course, is the classic definition of ambivalence in psychological terms. Because of the "double vision" that her colonial past has imprinted on her, Lucy has contradictory feelings about many things, as she cannot simplify the complexities of the world into neat boxes as others can. Lang-Peralta notes how "Lucy's history allows her to see issues from multiple perspectives, whereas Mariah, with her privileged background, has a more limited perspective" (38).

As Lucy explores Manhattan, she has opportunities to build intimate relationships with many different kinds of people—both men and women—in terms of friendship and romance. For example, when Lucy meets Paul, an older male artist for the first time, she says, "'How are you?" in a small, proper voice, the voice of the girl my mother had hoped I would be: clean, virginal, beyond reproach. But I felt the opposite of that, for when he held my hand and kissed me on the cheek, I felt instantly deliciously strange; I wanted to be naked in a bed with him" (61). Her exploration challenges conventional ideas of emotional attachment, as she diverges from the "clean" and "virginal" expectations her mother has ingrained in her. Lucy cannot escape her mother's influence, no matter how much she tries, and the choices she makes arise out of her resistance to what she perceives to be her mother's colonial—and therefore, oppressive—values. Lucy's inner conflict is frequently juxtaposed with her mother's ideals and is used to

illustrate the hierarchical power dynamics imposed on her body by her mother's internalized systems of colonial ideology—how her mother's fear of becoming the stereotype of unrestrained sexuality limits her freedom as a woman. Lugones explains that "Historically, the characterization of White European women as fragile and sexually passive opposed them to nonwhite, colonized women, including female slaves, who were characterized along a gamut of sexual aggression and perversion, and as strong enough to do any sort of labor" (19). European colonialism worked to make non-white women inferior and to construct racialized stereotypes that demarcate them as promiscuous, slutty, or improper. The hyper sexualization of non-white women as a means of control is something Lucy is very aware of, and she resists this narrative so that she may continue to claim her bodily and psychological autonomy, and her freedom for pleasure. In contrast, her mother, Annie, has internalized these constructed norms and imposes the same ideology on her daughter when she explicitly instructs her to demonstrate attributes that showcase how she is "clean" and "virginal."

Lugones' analysis further elucidates how colonialism reinforces patriarchal structures, relegating women to subservient roles and stifling their potential for success. Lucy recounts how after each birth of her three brothers her parents would discuss the boys' futures as successful doctors or lawyers, while she was never held to this standard. She explains,

> But my mother knew me well, as well as she knew herself: I, at the time, even thought of us as identical; and whenever I saw her eyes fill up with tears at the thought of how proud she would be at some deed her sons had accomplished, I felt a sword go through my heart, for there was no accompanying scenario in which she saw me, her only identical offspring, in a remotely similar situation. (Kincaid 130)

Lucy's disappointment in her mother's lack of support, contrasted with her encouragement of her brothers, highlights the pervasive impact of colonial patriarchy on familial dynamics. Lucy recounts that she wasn't bothered that her father pushed the sons while being inattentive to her because she sees it be natural that a man would encourage the offspring most like himself. However, she is deeply saddened that her mother doesn't offer any support, because she sees her as "identical" to her. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir's exploration of the complex dynamics between daughters and mothers underscores the pivotal role of the maternal figure in young women's lives. From an early age, girls are conditioned to envision their mothers as embodiments of their own future selves. The mother symbolizes their potential paths in life; a female child is destined to "be wife, mother, grandmother..." as every step of her life has already been planned and articulated to achieve this goal (Beauvoir 312). When the mother-daughter relationship becomes strained, daughters may instinctively rebel by resisting conforming to traditional roles, and instead seek autonomy by forging their own destinies. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir elucidates how young women perceive and sometimes challenge the expectations placed upon them, particularly those mirrored in their mothers: "Her affinity for play, laughter, and adventure leads her to view the maternal sphere as restrictive and stifling. She yearns to break free from maternal authority" (308). Consequently, the quality of the mother-daughter relationship significantly shapes the daughter's choices and aspirations for her future. In Lucy's case, her mother tries to shape Lucy into a woman that resembles her and as a result, Lucy feels as though her "mother's love for [her] was designed solely to make [her] into an echo" (Kincaid 36) of her mother.

When Lucy's mother is initially introduced in the novella, she appears through the letters Lucy receives from home. While the details of their relationship are still unknown to the reader,

Lucy's response to these letters foreshadows her evolving attitude throughout the story. Her mother's correspondence mentions "horrible and vicious things she had read or heard about" (21) in reference to other young girls who live in urban centers like Lucy. At first, Lucy is affected by her mother's words, but she soon recognizes her mother's attempt to exert control through fear. Consequently, Lucy decides to disregard the letters as she begins to assert her independence and autonomy.

Lucy's refusal to open the letters from her mother symbolically demonstrates not only a rejection of the patriarchal norms established in Lucy's household, but it is also a rejection of her mother's colonial values. Lugones explains how colonialism pushed the values of Western patriarchal norms onto the communities that were colonized, and thus resulted in the disregard of women's capabilities and strength,

> One tradition that was exported to Africa during this period was the exclusion of women from the newly created colonial public sphere [...] The very process by which females were categorized and reduced to "women" made them ineligible for leadership roles [...] The emergence of women as an identifiable category, defined by their anatomy and subordinated to men in all situations, resulted, in part, from the imposition of a patriarchal colonial state. (Lugones 13)

The exclusion of women from leadership roles in colonial societies underscores the gender-based subordination enforced by colonization, which influences Annie's perception of both her own and her daughter's sexuality and capabilities. Despite her efforts to resist these constraints from her colonial past, Lucy grapples with anxiety and resentment as she distances herself from her mother and confronts the legacy of the colonial ideals she has inherited and chooses to empower herself outside these restrictions.

Moving away from her childhood home to the other side of the world is Lucy's conscious decision to remove herself from being continually influenced by such values. She cannot remove the voices and influence of her past, but she can control her present moment and future. Her mother continuously writes to her, yet Lucy ignores all the letters, not opening a single envelope. However, after glancing at the unopened letters piling up in her room, she says, "...I could not trust myself to go too near them. I knew that if I read only one, I would die from longing for her" (57). Ultimately, Lucy loves her mother, but her ambivalence comes from this deep sense of betrayal. She removes herself from Antigua—from the traumatic space of colonial oppression—to form her own beliefs separate from the destructive grip of colonial ideals. Her eventual rejection of societal norms, as symbolized by burning the letters, marks her journey towards self-empowerment and liberation from colonial ideals. Her anger at her mother becomes a catalyst for empowerment, propelling her towards self-affirmation and the rejection of societal expectations.

Given the choice to respect herself or placate Mariah by hiding her true emotions, she chooses her own freedom to continuously assert her desire for mutual recognition, and in turn, respects the relationship by insisting on a framework where both are equal subjects with their own perspectives based on divergent histories. Their current intersubjective bond does not necessarily need to be built upon a shared orientation to the world—because that would be a lie—but instead, needs to be built on the mutual recognition that their different histories have led to very different perspectives. Benjamin discusses how "affective sharing," or this exchange of response and confirming response from the other is crucial in building intersubjective bonds, and so Mariah's attempts do come from what she understands as love. However, because Mariah doesn't seem to make a concerted effort to understand Lucy's perspective, whereas Lucy has spent her entire childhood learning about Mariah's perspective through her colonial past and

education, they cannot successfully co-create a relationship where they are truly sharing a world that honors them both.

Despite Mariah's demonstrations of care for Lucy, stating "clearly and sincerely" that she "loves" her (26) she actively fails to understand Lucy's experiences and perspectives about the world. Lucy makes repeated efforts to express the ways in which her colonial education and history has traumatized her, but Mariah routinely dismisses her thoughts, abruptly ending conversations when they touch on uncomfortable topics. This is one way that Lucy tries to engage in an authentic intersubjective bond—through the process of "affective sharing"—by her open demonstration of anger at the colonial and patriarchal values passed down to her. If Mariah genuinely sought to understand Lucy and offer authentic support, she would actively inquire about Lucy's perspectives, thoughts, and feelings, but that never happens.

One instance illustrating this disconnect occurs when Lucy recounts a distressing memory from her past where she was compelled to memorize a Wordsworth poem about daffodils in school, an experience she found deeply unpleasant. When recalling how she was praised for her recitation, Lucy states: "I made pleasant little noises that showed both modesty and appreciation, but inside I was making a vow to erase from my mind, line by line, every word of that poem" (18). Even while knowing this painful story and Lucy's resulting anger at "being forced to memorize" a poem about flowers she had never seen in her life, Mariah still wants Lucy to find them beautiful—like she does. Mariah decides to take Lucy to a garden with daffodils, saying: "These are daffodils. I'm sorry about the poem, but I'm hoping you'll find them lovely all the same" (29). When Lucy reacts negatively to this situation, all the while feeling "sorry" that she "cast her beloved daffodils in a scene [Mariah] had never considered," Mariah is taken aback. Where Mariah sees only lovely flowers, Lucy sees "sorrow and

bitterness," connecting the flowers to her colonial past—a scene of "conquered and conquests; a scene of brutes masquerading as angels and angels portrayed as brutes" (30). This interaction vividly illustrates the stark difference in lived experiences between the two characters and is a prime example of Mariah's recurring thoughtlessness. While Lucy does feel sorry about the interaction and states that she is at least "glad to have at last seen what a wretched daffodil looked like," she does not hesitate to let Mariah know that the experience is hurtful to her (30), even if it causes a bit of awkwardness for her.

Another notable instance where Lucy maintains her resolve occurs when Mariah brings up her purported Indigenous heritage. While sharing this information, Mariah hesitates, fearing Lucy might "take it the wrong way" (40). Lucy's response to this moment is relatable: "What way should I take this? Wrong way? Right way? What could she mean?" (40). Mariah seems to understand the act of being "so good at catching fish and hunting birds and roasting corn and doing all sorts of things" and equate that with being "Indian," as if those stereotypical activities associated with "nature" and the wilderness is what makes a person more deeply connected to their indigenous roots. In contrast, Lucy, who has Indigenous heritage through her Carib Indian grandmother, views Mariah's assertion as a boast rather than a genuine cultural identification. Reflecting on Mariah's claim, Lucy remarks, "she says it as if she were announcing her possession of a trophy" (40). Lucy does not affirm or reassure Mariah about this interaction, maintaining a firm gaze, keeping her "face and eyes hard" (40), while Mariah looks at her "in a pleading way, asking for relief" (40). This display of resolve may not overtly express anger but highlights Lucy's refusal to compromise her integrity or comfort to appease Mariah's shallow misinterpretations.

Mariah and Lewis: The Impossibility of Love in the Claim of Superiority

As Lucy learns more about Mariah and Lewis's marriage, she realizes that Mariah does not know how to express her own authenticity. The dynamic between Lewis and Mariah is phony; there is no truth there, but rather, it is a performance. Lucy describes the kind of performative routine between the couple, as they would playfully embrace in the manner that would indicate closeness. Lucy observes, "The whole thing had an air of untruth about it; they didn't mean to do what they were doing at all. It was a show—not for anyone's benefit, but a show for each other. And how did I know this? I just could tell—that it was a show and not something to be trusted" (47). Even if Mariah is aware on some level that she is playing a role in a performance, she refuses to give it up. As Lucy gets to know Mariah on a deeper level, she realizes that part of Mariah's deep-seated fear is to confront the truth—to live an authentic life if it means giving up her rosy picture of things. She would rather live in denial of the truth in front of her as a way of controlling the narrative, than to let things be as they are, which would mean confronting ugly truths and narratives that no longer match her vision of the world.

Even though Lewis is not an unfeeling man, there are moments that reveals his lack of care for Mariah's feelings. Perhaps, if the depth of loved one receives is a reflection of the kind of love that is given, it is no wonder that Mariah does not have an authentic relationship with her husband. When a rabbit family begins to eat the flowers in their garden, Mariah is dismayed. One day, as they are driving out of their driveway, Lewis hits the rabbit with the car and kills it. Lewis denies that it was an intentional act, and claims it is an accident. Mariah asks him, "But you aren't sorry that you did it?" to which he responds, "No, I am not sorry that it happened" (78). Lucy notes how "It was an important difference, but in a situation like that, how could Mariah be expected to see it?" (78). Instead of taking responsibility for his actions by being sorry that he "did it," he denies his own agency in the act by claiming that was something that

"happened," thereby removing himself as the agent in the act. Mariah does not notice, but this removal of his own accountability in the act is a foreshadowing of the way in which he handles his affair with Mariah's best friend, Dinah.

Through Mariah's dynamic with Lewis in her marriage, the reader can clearly see a parallel to the lack of ethics in the love relationships in Mariah's world. In fact, Mariah's desire to include Lucy in her world is an act of love as Mariah understands it. She cannot understand how the absence of an exchange of perspectives is crucial to maintaining a truly ethical and reciprocal bond, perhaps because she does not experience it in her own bonds. Moreover, because the structures of society have so far benefitted her, she has not seen the ill effects of the lack of recognition. However, Lucy can clearly see how the same dynamic that exists between Mariah and herself is akin to the dynamic with Mariah and her husband Lewis, who manipulates the existing power dynamics in underhanded ways that are not only similarly dismissive of Mariah's feelings as seen in the incident with the rabbit's death, but also show a lack of ethical attentiveness to her subject position through gas-lighting behaviors. For example, when Mariah finds out about Lewis's infidelity with Dinah, Lucy notes,

> And I could see the manner in which Lewis had left her. It was he who was really leaving, but he would never come right out and tell her so. He was the sort of person—a cultivated man, usually—who cannot speak his mind. It wasn't that speaking frankly had been bred out of him; it was just that a man in his position always knew exactly what he wanted, and so everything was done for him…He would leave her, but he would make her think that it was she who was leaving him. (Kincaid 119)

Instead of taking accountability for his actions, he simply acts like he is the victim. He is unable to directly apologize for any of his behaviors because then that would indicate a

responsibility that he does not want to own up to. For instance, Lucy describes how she would regularly play checker with Lewis, and even though she is good at the game, she can never beat Lewis. She describes how "His strategy was to attack in an underhanded way; and, no matter what, I would oblige him by blundering into defeat. Afterward he was kind enough to show me where I had gone wrong" (120). With the guise of kindness as a "cultivated man," he still refuses to lose. To be the loser would be to indicate a weakness, and he must always be the conqueror in a superior position. Again, here is a third instance in which Lewis gives a fake apology as he says "'Sorry…next time'; but next time was just the same. He was too clever, that man, and too used to getting his way" (120). This inability to take accountability and to always be in a superior position creates a dynamic of unequal exchange so that a true intersubjective bond of equals is rendered impossible.

Therefore, Lucy's continual assertion of her lived experiences is also an assertion of love; she wants a reciprocal, equal exchange that would be indicative of true friendship, love, and care—one that can only happen if they can "feel with" one another. Therefore, Lucy angrily refuses to succumb to sharing Mariah's perspective since it would mean denying her own experience—and even if this is something Mariah habitually has done in her position as Lewis's wife, this is something Lucy refuses to do anymore in her freedom in the United States. The two-facedness that she had when celebrating her accomplishment in reading Wordsworth's poem is something she has decided to leave behind to embrace her authenticity. Lucy's resistance occurs again and again because Mariah refuses to see Lucy's point of view and doesn't even render it as an option. Mariah's continual inability to be considerate of Lucy's past experiences and feelings tied to those experiences reveals how Mariah's interest is one-sided; she simply wants to indoctrinate Lucy into seeing and sharing her perspective without reciprocating. Kincaid

demonstrates how Mariah's optimism comes from her refusal to see the truth so that she can live in a world of denial about the harsh material and social realities around her. Lucy does not hide her emotional life to protect Mariah, but continuously forces Mariah to face the truth of her experiences in the world. Mariah refuses to acknowledge this past, or more precisely, deems it irrelevant, thereby invalidating Lucy's experiences. Kincaid's portrayal of the effects of anger and confrontation through Lucy's experiences with Mariah highlight how minority experiences are denied and written over, and by giving Lucy a voice that doesn't succumb to the pressures to white supremacy, she teaches the minority reader to own their emotional experiences instead of coddling and giving excessive importance to the dominant perspective and their white fragility. In this way, Kincaid showcases the repeated tension in the intersubjective dynamics between Lucy and Mariah in order to scrutinize the difference in how they each experience the objects in the world around them.

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CONCLUSION

At the Crossroads: Focusing on the Potential of the Global Anglophone

In conclusion, this dissertation has demonstrated the profound implications of integrating affect studies with decolonial methodologies in the analysis of post-1945 Global Anglophone novels by women. Through an exploration of the emotional dynamics and intersubjective encounters within these texts, it has become evident that literature serves as a crucial mechanism for fostering self-awareness and challenging entrenched colonial and neocolonial legacies.

Decolonization, in Frantz Fanon's conception in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), imagines the creation of a new humanity through a transformative process. "What is singularly important," Fanon proclaims, is that decolonization "starts from the very first day with the basic claims of the colonized" (1). He explains that decolonization "which sets out to change the order of the world, is clearly an agenda for total disorder," a "history-making movement" (2). The historical process begins with the moment when the colonizer introduced his systematic oppression through colonial oppression. From that moment forward, the colonist has created a whole epistemology that centers around the historical moment of colonization and has "fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject" (2). The continuation of this process can only be thwarted through decolonization. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is not only introducing a theoretical apparatus to understand the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized but is concerned with the intersection between theory and praxis as a political goal for the decolonial consciousness. Ultimately, I believe the decolonial tendencies inherent in the texts studied can only be made manifest and mobilized toward changes in our political consciousness through the attentiveness to the emotional lives of others, and how these lives come to be.

As mentioned previously, Ralph Ellison's notion of speaking for those on the "lower frequencies" resonates with the call to engage with marginalized perspectives highlighted in this dissertation. Fred Moten's concept of the "Undercommons" further enriches this discussion, suggesting that a deeper attunement to marginalized voices and alternative perspectives can reveal the hidden complexities of global networks. The Global Anglophone framework offers a pathway to engage with these underrepresented voices, advocating for a more inclusive and politicized approach to literary studies. Ultimately, this dissertation advocates for a reconfiguration of literary analysis that transcends traditional boundaries and disciplinary constraints. By focusing on the affective and ideological dimensions of Global Anglophone texts, it proposes a future for literary studies that embraces diverse global subjectivities and challenges the universalizing tendencies of whiteness. Through this expanded lens, scholars and readers alike are invited to engage in a political project that recognizes and values the multiplicity of experiences shaping our interconnected world.

Desai's narrative, alongside the broader scope of the Global Anglophone, urges readers to consider who is centered in global dialogues and how such centering affects their worldview. It challenges us to question our orientations, and the limitations imposed by prevailing global paradigms. Drawing on Desai's *Inheritance of Loss*, this study highlights the "inheritance of loss" experienced by individuals navigating fragmented identities in a globalized world. Desai's depiction of cross-cultural identity struggles underscores the necessity of double-consciousness in our contemporary context—a consciousness that requires readers to confront the psychological and social impacts of colonialism and neocolonialism on their own lives. The novel's narrative, with its complex portrayal of intersubjective tensions and affective responses,

illustrates the ways in which characters' self-awareness—or lack thereof—reflects broader socio-political dynamics.

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* serves as a profound exploration of the ways in which racial self-loathing and the quest for recognition are intricately tied to societal standards of beauty and power. Morrison's critique of the dominance of white beauty standards underscores how such ideals perpetuate power and privilege, leading individuals, particularly those marginalized, to internalize shame and seek validation through conformity to these oppressive norms. As Morrison reflects on her own childhood friend's desire for blue eyes, it becomes evident that this longing is not merely about physical appearance but symbolizes a deeper yearning for recognition and worth within a racially biased society.

Morrison's narrative demonstrates that the emotions of shame and inadequacy are not isolated experiences but are embedded within a broader social field. The treatment of Pecola Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye* illustrates how repeated acts of neglect and disdain contribute to the formation of an individual's sense of worthlessness. Pecola's tragic fate is a stark manifestation of the systemic disregard for those who deviate from accepted standards of beauty and social value. Sara Ahmed's insights into the emotional power of figures of speech highlights how Morrison's use of the "bluest eye" becomes a vehicle for exposing the ugly realities of white supremacy and its impact on Black self-perception. The "bluest eye" serves as a potent symbol of the desire to escape racial stigma and a critique of the white gaze that marginalizes and dehumanizes.

In Kincaid's text, Lucy's journey in her quest for self-empowerment and liberation from colonial ideals illustrates the profound struggle against the lingering influence of her past. Her deliberate choice to distance herself from her childhood home in Antigua represents a conscious

effort to escape the pervasive values that have shaped her identity. Although she cannot completely erase the voices of her past, Lucy exerts control over her present and future by choosing to ignore her mother's letters, symbolizing her rejection of the colonial and patriarchal ideals embedded in her upbringing. Moreover, we see how Lucy's ambivalence towards her mother—a reflection of her deep sense of betrayal—highlights the complex interplay between love and self-preservation.

In her relationship with Mariah, Lucy navigates the challenge of achieving mutual recognition despite their divergent histories. While Mariah's efforts to express love and care are genuine, they fall short due to a lack of effort to truly understand Lucy's experiences and perspectives. Benjamin's concept of "affective sharing" emphasizes the importance of mutual response and understanding in building intersubjective bonds. However, the relationship between Lucy and Mariah fails to achieve this depth because Mariah does not fully engage with Lucy's traumatic colonial past or her critical perspectives on it. Lucy's repeated attempts to communicate her feelings and experiences are met with dismissal and avoidance from Mariah, revealing a significant gap in their ability to co-create a meaningful and supportive relationship. Mariah's inability to address uncomfortable topics and truly listen to Lucy underscores the challenges of forming authentic intersubjective bonds when one party is unwilling or unable to understand the other's lived experiences.

Ultimately, Lucy's journey underscores the necessity of mutual recognition and respect in relationships shaped by differing histories and perspectives. Her story reveals that genuine intersubjective connections require more than superficial expressions of care; they demand an earnest effort to understand and validate the other's experiences. By asserting her own freedom and rejecting colonial ideals, Lucy not only seeks to empower herself but also challenges us to

consider how we engage with and support others in a world marked by historical and cultural complexities. Thus, we see the arc of how the Global Anglophone novel challenges readers to examine their own positions within the global paradigm. It encourages a critical engagement with the ways in which historical forces shape interpersonal interactions and affective experiences. By presenting characters like Sai in *The Inheritance of Loss,* the MacTeer sisters in *The Bluest Eye*, or Kincaid's character Lucy, we get a first-hand look at those who constantly grapple with their own limitations and cultural conditioning, and therefore, through these characterizations, these texts prompt readers to reflect on their own social ethics and the effects of globalization on their personal and collective identities.

My own investment in this project stems from my years of teaching at the elementary, middle, high school, and college level. That is when I realized that Americans are extremely ignorant of both history and geography, and their own location within it. In the current climate, political divisions rooted in culture wars are only becoming stronger. Because as literary scholars, we only have so much time, I wonder to myself—how can decolonial thought and praxis be taught without the weight of history? Obviously, this is not possible, as we are all bodies that exist in space and time and must grapple with the way that might shape our consciousness, or our "thrownness" in the world. I do believe that if we cannot teach our students the complexity of historical circumstances, that perhaps starting with teaching decolonial methodologies focused on affect might have better learning outcomes for our students in terms of empathy, and give them a chance to live more ethical, fulfilling lives.

At the heart of this project, I hoped to dismantle the harmful consequences of identity politics, which I believe only further creates divisions of "us" vs. "them," "the One" and "the Other." If different identity groups come to a place where they are entering a conversation in a

defensive mode, no real listening or understanding can happen. These texts are meant to open conversations and be an impetus towards healing, not only for the minority subject, but for all of us. The texts I have chosen to study focus on the local perspective, or the particular, within the global landscape not to create divisions, but to clarify and bridge the gaps in our knowledge of understanding particular experiences and how what is seen as normative, global, or universal comes to be internalized, and how certain affectivities in the social world are created through the universal, one world perspective. I hope to integrate a more spiritual meaning of the hope that these texts hold in creating a world that is filled with more understanding in how the global "one world" perspective creates effects of fear, loathing, anger, and despair in social situations that become politically charged only when this fundamental exchange of an understanding that comes to be from a shared perspective cannot be had, and the impossibility of having feels like a hopeless endeavor to ask for. Once we tend to the emotions, and really confront the shadows, only tend can there be a shift in consciousness that might allow for more steps toward ethical action as a collective healing process.