UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Generosity and Belonging in Post-colonial Ireland and South Africa

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in English

by

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September 2017

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is a continuation of my service in the Peace Corps, where I worked in the town of Paja de Sombrero, Panamá, from 2008 to 2010. In order to foster friendship and promote world peace, Peace Corps asks its volunteers to encourage a better understanding of Americans "on the part of the peoples served"; similarly, volunteers are asked to promote a better understanding of these peoples when they return to the United States. Like most volunteers I continue my service with a capacious understanding of who these "peoples" are—and who they should be.

I first believed through sheer naïveté and narcissism that "my" Peace Corps story began when I arrived in Panamá. I came to the gradual and uncomfortable realization that this narrative was never mine, that it was set in motion hundreds of years even before a European stumbled onto the isthmus and declared that arbitrary moment as the beginning of everything that ever mattered. Peace Corps was a decentering experience, and this dissertation has allowed me to place "my" experience within its greater context, to unpack and recognize the various historical, economic, political, and social forces that shaped it. Living with other people revealed the degree to which I tend to be blinded by false —and, as I eventually realized, self-serving — notions of universal humanism. Abandoning these has opened me to a greater awareness of how communities respond to difference, and the ethical and political urgency of recognizing how seemingly inclusive communities— even those we deem sacrosanct and exempt from the degrading forces of oppression and injustice— are constructed through the exercise of power and privilege

It became apparent very quickly that some of the things that differentiated me from my Panamanian friends and neighbors were markers of both my foreignness and privilege: my blue eyes and whiteness, mobility, educational background, financial stability, and of course, my American nationality and all of its advantages. I was a "gringa" who had to learn how to navigate a new community in a way that was mindful of my privilege. One of the biggest challenges of being a volunteer was coming to terms with the ambivalence of my position: I considered myself autonomous in many respects, but I was also a guest who was greatly dependent on the generosity and kindness of Others. The ability to serve in the Peace Corps was itself a privilege and it raised questions about who should be responsible for the sacrifice and risks that must be taken in the name of fostering friendships and building more inclusive communities. I found my voice while writing this dissertation but my conclusions are all works in progress.

Quisiera decirles gracias a mi familia Panamania, a la gente de Paja de Sombrero, y a las voluntarias de Cuerpo de Paz que me ensenaron tanto sobre communidad. La cosa maravillosa es que todavia estoy apprendiendo, y este proceso nunca va terminar.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my committee, Professor Enda Duffy, Professor Maurizia Boscagli, and Professor Russell Samolsky, who helped me take an inchoate and diffuse idea and shape it into a meaningful narrative. And of course, I am thankful for my friends from graduate school who supported me over the seven-year process.

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ABSTRACT

Generosity and Belonging in Post-colonial Ireland and South Africa

By Elizabeth C. Allen

This project explores why gestures of generosity, so prevalent in Irish and South African writing from 1980 to 2002, repeatedly fail to generate cross-cultural understanding and social cohesion. It uses gift exchanges, particularly monetary gifts and acts of hospitality, as vehicles for better understanding how post-colonial communities recognize and respond to difference, and how this often limits the possibilities of more inclusive communities. The overall impetus of "Generosity and Belonging" is to examine how dominant models of community in contemporary Ireland and South Africa construct the privilege of inclusion through the exclusion of ethnic, racial, gendered, and national Others. While these communities operate by exclusion, they present a facade of inclusivity; as such this project focuses on models of belonging that take on the form of exceptionalism, or the belief that a particular national community is distinct and extraordinary from others. While the emphasis is on national community this project uses friendship, specifically Derrida's examination of the hegemonic Western model of friendship explored in *The Politics of Friendship*, as a concrete point of entry. The microcosm of friendship illustrates how individuals respond to each other's differences, and illuminates how otherness is then understood at the macrocosmic level of community. Ultimately "Generosity and Belonging" is invested in exploring how representations of generosity in Irish and South African texts not only reveal the limits of community, but push against them in order to imagine more capacious forms of

belonging. The case examples investigated in this project are ethnic difference in James Joyce's early twentieth-century Ireland (Joyce's *Ulysses*); racial difference in Apartheid South Africa (J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron*, Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*, and photos by David Goldblatt and Rosalind Solomon); gender difference in the Irish Republic during the Troubles (Edna O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation* and Pat Murphy's *Maeve*); and finally, racial, class, and national difference in neoliberal, globalized South Africa (K. Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* and Gordimer's *The Pickup*).

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Introduction

In post-colonial Irish and South African literature, the gift is often is often met with suspicion and misunderstanding. When Leopold Bloom, the Jewish protagonist of Joyce's *Ulysses,* gives a sizeable monetary donation to a widow, his fellow Irishmen warily question his motives by comparing him to Shylock with the remark that "there is much kindness in the jew" (*Ulysses* 164). The black South African protagonist of *Thirteen Cents* (2000), a novel written by post-Apartheid writer K. Sello Duiker, becomes distrustful of generous gestures when he discovers that his white South African friend has been stealing his savings rather than guarding them on his behalf. Hospitality is not exempt from this conflict surrounding the gift: when a black employee offers his white employers shelter in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (1981) it is revealed that while the white family interprets this as an act of hospitality, the black employee considers it part of his job and expects payment. The Irish author Edna O'Brien offers a critical view of hospitality in Ireland during The Troubles in her novel *The House of Splendid Isolation* (1994) when an old woman is forced to shelter an escaped IRA operative. This project will explore the problem concerning generosity in modern Irish and South African texts. Specifically, I will investigate why gestures of generosity, so prevalent in Irish and South African writing from 1980 to 2002, repeatedly fail to generate cross-cultural understanding and social cohesion.

Generosity, in these texts, is both an ethical and political matter that is intimately tied to larger questions about who can claim to belong to a community, whether this be in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, or nationality. My project uses gift exchanges, particularly monetary gifts and acts of hospitality, as vehicles for better understanding how post-colonial

communities recognize and respond to difference, and how this often limits the possibilities of more inclusive communities. In *Imagined Communities*, perhaps the most canonical modern work of scholarship on nationalism, Benedict Anderson claims that literature plays a key role in constructing nations and peoples: literature imagines the possible forms of a national community, and in doing so, establishes limits to belonging. "Generosity and Belonging" is invested in exploring how representations of generosity in Irish and South African texts not only reveal such limits, but push against them in order to imagine more capacious forms of community.

I. The Intersection of Ethics and Politics in Post-colonial Generosity

While the political dimension of gift-giving has garnered recent interest from post-colonial scholars in such fields as black studies or political philosophy, the discussion is typically situated within sociological or philosophical frameworks, and it remains very underdeveloped in literary studies. On the other hand, literature scholars who use a deconstructive ethical framework to explore gift-giving in a post-colonial context, as Derek Attridge does in his examinations of South African writer J.M Coetzee, tend to use philosophical frameworks that abstract the discussion from the power dynamics and political, economic, and historical conditions of a lived, material experience. This project is aligned with the work of such post-colonial literary scholars as Mirelle Rosello, author of *Post-colonial Hospitality*, Stanford UP 2001, and Leela Ghandi, author of *Affective Communities*, Duke UP 2005, but it departs from their research by focusing specifically on generosity and in a comparative, transnational context. This project puts the otherwise separate fields of Irish and South African studies into conversation with one another— a necessary move given

the growing recognition among post-colonial scholars that the field needs to develop more transnational frameworks that recognize the interconnectedness of post-colonial narratives.

My intervention is situated within a shift in race and post-colonial scholarship that seeks to address how the work of European deconstructive ethical theorists such as Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida are blind to crucial forms of difference like race and class. The interpersonal, ethical relations of two individuals is central to any discussion of national belonging because these intimate relations, and the friendships they may produce are, according to Derrida, the foundation of national community (*Politics of Friendship*).[1] Post-colonial scholars like John Drabinski (*Levinas and the Post-colonial,* Edinburgh UP 2013) have made strides in examining how the work of Levinas can be enriched and broadened by reading them alongside post-colonial theories of difference.[2] These scholars challenge the central premise of Levinas' "ethics as a first philosophy" in *Totality and Infinity*: that an individual's ethical relation to the Other, or the face-to-face relation, is precognitive and precedes the formation of ideas or the realization of self-interest. The premise that "the face of the Other exceeds all categories, pre-delineations, and anticipations" is only possible if the ethical relation between two individuals occurs outside history in a

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[1] Throughout this project I examine the interpersonal, ethical relation between Self (or same) and Other. Specifically, I am interested in understanding how privilege is constructed through the refusal to acknowledge and respect an individual's Otherness. This failure is an act of violence that projects sameness on others—that is, you presume to know or understand the person, and with that knowledge, assert power over him or her. This knowledge is your understanding of him or her as an extension of your Self, and therefore the individual is obligated to share and fulfill your needs and desires. In contrast, acknowledging an individual's otherness/difference, and being open to Others, means recognizing how he or she is autonomous, completely beyond your comprehension or knowledge, and beyond your control.

[2] Other texts that explore the intersections of deconstructive ethics and postcolonial theory include Michael Syrontinski's *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial* (Liverpool UP, 2007), Peter Atterton and Marco Calarco's *Radicalizing Levinas* (State University of NY Press, 2010), and Jane Hiddleston's *Derrida: Colonialism, Philosophy, and Biography* (Liverpool UP, 2003).

social, political, economic, and cultural vacuum (Drabinksi 2); as such it is an ideal that must be reconciled with the un-ideal and imperfect conditions of lived experience.

The intervention here aims to explore the possibilities of ethical relations within political space, and to account for the fact that every individual is embedded within historical, political, economic, and social narratives that precede and inform her relations with Others. We can't have productive discussions about difference as if it were solely a question of ethics, that it somehow exists apart from or transcends politics; rather, we have to address the ways in which discourse, through policy and practice, creates difference in the first place. Yes, in an abstract sense, difference is an inherent part of our lives as social human beings, where every individual is beyond my knowledge and comprehension, and therefore wholly "Other." But difference isn't just a quality that is inherent— it is constructed through policy and practice, and as such it is constructed through the exercise of power and privilege. National difference, such as who can claim to be Irish or South African, is established through legal discourse as well as other cultural constructs. Gender difference isn't essential or biological, and patriarchal discourse controls our understanding of masculinity and femininity; similarly, racial difference is a social construct that in the context of South Africa is defined by centuries of white supremacist discourse and colonial policy.

The ability to recognize and respect an individual's otherness requires a greater awareness of how difference is constructed and how power and privilege play a role in the process. In concrete terms this depends on whether an individual can see beyond the stereotypes and discursively produced forms of identity that serve to totalize, or master the Other through presumed knowledge of him or her. It is irresponsible if not dangerous to

refuse to acknowledge forms of difference in discussions of ethical relations, because to do so elides the various narratives that shape power differentials between individuals. Jacques Derrida's later works tease out the intersections of ethics and politics, particularly in the *Politics of Friendship* and *Of Hospitality*, but like his earlier works *The Gift of Death* and *Given Time*, these discussions point to abstract ethical ideals that must be reconciled with the constraints of lived experience. Scholars such as Drabinski are now making significant interventions in the field of deconstructive ethics, but the conversation remains at the abstract level of theory and philosophy, and does not venture far into literary and cultural studies.

I use literature to examine the ways in which ethical relations are impacted, if not distorted from their ideal form (as theorized by philosophers such as Derrida and Levinas), within the political space of lived, material experience — space that determines one's power, one's privilege, and one's vulnerability. The ability to recognize and respect difference can pose a threat to both the privileged and marginalized. Refusing to acknowledge otherness is an essential mechanism for naturalizing and safeguarding one's privilege, as will be illustrated with liberal white South Africans during Apartheid; by refusing to acknowledge the otherness of their black counterparts, white South Africans elided the exploitation of black labor that made their privilege possible and ostensibly justifiable. Conversely, the vulnerability that is requisite for being open to Others is an immense risk for the politically marginalized, as will be explored in the context of sectarian conflict known as The Troubles in Ireland; here Irish women occupy a precarious position within the patriarchal, quasi-militarized state of the Irish Republic, and being open to their male Irish counterparts entails the threat of violence and bodily harm.

"Generosity and Belonging" uses representations of generosity to unpack a fundamental tension within the concept of national community: how can the uniqueness of an individual be reconciled with the fact that he or she is embedded in greater social, political, and historical narratives, and entrenched within categories of identity such as race, gender, and class? I will explore this tension using a literary and post-colonial framework, and a feminist intersectional lens for examining how Irish and South African communities respond to difference. I am particularly invested in the ambiguity and ambivalence of literary representations of community —as opposed to sociological, historical, or political accounts— as productive spaces to work though these tensions and contradictions. Each chapter is centered around close readings and formal analyses of novels, and in some cases, images from photography and film that explore the gap between the ideal conditions of gift-giving and community formation. I consider this gap as it is theorized in deconstructive ethics; I consider too the singular historical, political, sociological, and cultural conditions that inform these exchanges, hindering the formation of more inclusive communities. I read literary texts in order to draw connections between the political, an impersonal realm that operates at an institutional or systemic level, and the ethical, an intimate space that operates at the level of individuals. Literature is never disinterested; for Nadine Gordimer, for example, it is "a political and professional and artistic responsibility" (*Conversations* 313). In making the intensely personal realm of ethics accessible to the public, literature allows us to investigate how individual examples of generosity, in failing to generate cross-cultural understanding, are connected to larger political questions about belonging and community.

II. Constructing Community and Privilege in South Africa and Ireland

The comparative nature of this project is an attempt to wrestle with the problematically broad category of 'post-colonial,' a term which often collapses distinct cultural experiences into a single all-encompassing story. As such, the chapters put different historicized case examples from Irish and South African literature into conversation with one another. While overarching narratives may emerge, they do not seek to homogenize the different experiences, nor do the chapters try to establish a genealogy of generosity throughout these historical periods. Ireland and South Africa are in some ways ideal for comparison because of the conditions of the post-colonial experiences of each. Both were colonized by Britain, but the great disparity in the histories of this colonialism, and in the manner in which Britain has colonized these two countries, presents two very different legacies of colonization. The periphery-metropole relations in which these two countries found themselves are also distinct, and Ireland's proximity to England has meant that even after its decolonization Ireland is continuously interacting with its former colonizer through emigration and more indirectly through the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. While South Africa is farther from London, the continued residence of its former British and Dutch colonizers long after decolonization offers a different angle for addressing the relationship between the formerly colonized and the colonizers. Although Ireland, as an island, is more geographically isolated than South Africa, which is embedded within a network of other post-colonial African nations, both possess cosmopolitan urban centers, and recent increases in immigration have forced both countries to come to terms with their increasingly multicultural populations. The diversity of Ireland and South Africa, which is in part a legacy of colonization, offers many permutations of the concept of the Same/Self and Other,

and the subsequent construction of privilege, such as gender in a patriarchal Irish Republic, or nationality in a globalized post-Apartheid South Africa. Both of these post-colonial narratives involve conflicts that arise from a demand for national homogeneity which cannot be reconciled with the reality of highly multicultural and transnational communities. As such, both are ideal settings in which to explore what role generosity may play in reconciling these opposing demands.

Ireland and South Africa offer strikingly similar narratives of modern states that have been internally divided, in Ireland's case along sectarian lines, which led to The Troubles, and in South Africa along racial lines, as codified by Apartheid. The resulting struggle has in each country garnered worldwide attention. The 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty, while granting the Republic of Ireland its autonomy from Britain, created a partitioned Irish State that was riven by internal sectarian conflict. This conflict culminated in the period of violence known as The Troubles of the 1960s-1990s. By 1934 South Africa was fully independent of Great Britain, only to become a state divided by the ruling National Party's white supremacist policies of Apartheid; internal dissent was so forceful that in 1960's and later in the 1980's the Apartheid government was forced to declare a State of Emergency in order to quell ongoing revolt. Both the Irish and South African conflicts were ostensibly resolved in the nineties by peace-making agreements: the Good Friday Agreement in Ireland (1998) and a series of negotiations in South Africa ultimately leading to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996). These resolutions generated a great deal of optimism as they suggested that cross-cultural understanding and more inclusive forms of national community were achievable.

The overall impetus of "Generosity and Belonging" is to examine how dominant models of community in contemporary Ireland and South Africa construct the privilege of inclusion through the exclusion of ethnic, racial, gendered, and national Others; moreover, this project looks to literature to understand how more inclusive forms of belonging might be possible. It begins with James Joyce's Dublin at the turn of the twentieth century as an example of a text about a colonial nation imagining what form(s) its post-colonial identity make take. This frames the central concerns explored in the subsequent chapters on Apartheid, The Troubles, and post-Apartheid South Africa. In these various contexts the nation state is a false community of privilege that sustains itself by refusing to acknowledge difference, or as it manifests in practice, by excluding and marginalizing internal Others — Others such as Irish women in the patriarchal Republic of Ireland or immigrants in a xenophobic post-Apartheid South Africa. Internal Others may be the difference that is always present in a national community, in the case of gender difference, or they may embody diversity introduced by the movement of peoples, whether this be the influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Joyce's Ireland or the movement of international economic refugees searching for work in a globalized South Africa. The falseness of these national communities stems from the fact that while they operate by exclusion, they present a facade of inclusivity. This artifice of inclusivity often takes on the form of exceptionalism, or the belief that a particular national community is distinct and extraordinary from others. My investigation begins with the case of bourgeois nationalisms in Joyce's Dublin, where the anti-Semitic character of Deasy humorously asserts Ireland's fabled hospitality (and implicitly, acceptance of Others) by stating that she has the "honour of being the only country which never persecuted the jews" (*Ulysses* 196); it ends with the exceptionalist

metaphor of South Africa as a "rainbow nation" accepting of all nationalities, races, and cultures. Both claims of distinction are how the modern states wish to present themselves to the world, and both attempt to mask the exclusion that makes these claims to exceptionalism possible. Although my project is invested in the idea of national community, I use friendship, specifically Derrida's examination of the hegemonic Western model of friendship explored in *The Politics of Friendship*, as a concrete point of entry. The microcosm of friendship illustrates how individuals respond to each other's differences, and illuminates how otherness is then understood at the macrocosmic level of community. The limitations and inevitable failure of the liberal white South African's vision of a more inclusive national community, for example, are made evident by the fact that liberal white Africans fail to recognize and respect difference in interracial friendships.

One of the central goals of my project is to tease out the connection between privilege, work, and generosity. False communities of privilege naturalize themselves by eliding or masking the nation-building work of Others, and the refusal to recognize this work is ultimately a refusal to recognize and respect difference. In practice this manifests as a refusal to acknowledge generosity as such: to not understand it as an excess, work that is not owed or entitled to anyone, a gift that is given freely and by choice. In the context of male privilege in the patriarchal Republic of Ireland, this manifests as a refusal to recognize the care labor that women perform in maintaining and building relationships and communities; in the specific case of Edna O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation*, this is the refusal to acknowledge a woman's authority and autonomy as a host who can offer or deny hospitality. In other cases, such as with liberal white South Africa during Apartheid, this manifests as a denial of the exploited black labor that makes white privilege possible. This is apparent in

Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* when a white South African family interprets their black servant's act of hospitality as a generous gesture of friendship, rather than as an employee acting as host (who is therefore entitled to compensation). In both of these cases, whether or not the Other's work as host is labeled as "generous" or not, it is not perceived as such: both illustrate a refusal to recognize the Other's autonomy and agency, and an entitlement to the work of Others that ensures political, social, and economic privilege. The final chapter on a globalized South Africa expands the scale of this discussion that of a world-wide false community of privilege, where nation-states of the Global North deny the degree to which their prosperity and power is sustained by exploiting laborers of the Global South.

Nation or community building is performed through both compensated (paid) work and (uncompensated) acts of generosity, but communities built upon the elision of this work, and the marginalization of those who perform this work, are sustained by exploitation and parasitism. In false communities of privilege, internal Others can never be recognized as contributing to the community, or as truly generous. That is, internal Others can't give freely and in excess of what privileged members feel entitled to— because their autonomy and difference —which makes generosity even possible— is never acknowledged in the first place. The test of privilege in each chapter case study is how members of a false community of privilege interpret the work performed by internal Others: whether they understand it as compensated/paid labor, acts of generosity, or not even as "work" at all. In all of the case examples members of false communities of privilege interpret the labor of internal Others as anything other than what it truly is — exploited labor that sustains privilege. This act of interpretation marks the collapse of the ethical and political, or the politics of being open to and respectful of Others. I define work as capaciously as possible throughout this project: it

can be the cheap, precarious labor that makes first-world privilege possible, it can be the care labor that goes into building and maintaining relationships, or the incredible amount of psychic and emotional effort that is demanded in order to make yourself vulnerable and open to Others.

III. Trust, Responsibility, and Working Towards Inclusivity

Trust in and responsibility to the Other are essential to being open to Others and ultimately to building more inclusive communities, and as such they are guiding concepts in my project. Trusting the Other entails entering into an ethical relation where you are uncertain about how the Other will respond, and you must accept the possibility that he or she may act against your interests and even inflict harm. Acting in the absence of this certainty and knowledge demands making yourself vulnerable to the Other. Being responsible to the Other similarly demands vulnerability and accepting uncertainty: you respond to the call or request of the Other even when this may jeopardize your own well-being, and you are driven by a sense of obligation that transcends notions of reciprocity or indebtedness. I use the concepts of trust and responsibility as discussed by Jacques Derrida in *The Gift of Death*, *Of Hospitality*, and *The Politics of Friendship* to explore how these relations can provide the internal cohesion necessary for more inclusive and equitable forms of community—collectivities that aren't structured by exclusion and privilege. Trust in and responsibility to the Other can only function in this way if there is a mutual acceptance of vulnerability, and this cannot be done unless privileged individuals are willing to relinquish their security and power. In the process of imagining more inclusive communities, "Generosity and Belonging" necessarily gestures towards the possibility of an ideal ethical

relation of being open to and respectful of Otherness. The impetus, then, is to try reconcile this ideal with the realities of power and privilege.

Each chapter seeks to work through various policies and practices that construct difference and privilege and consequently act as barriers to generating greater openness to Others. In some cases privilege is naturalized by the physical separation of Self and Other, as seen in the segregatory policies of Apartheid that limited interracial interaction, often restricting interracial socialization to the strict hierarchy of boss and servant. Policing mobility is critical to this segregation of Self and Other. In a globalized world, state immigration policies and systems of citizenship have become an increasingly powerful means of restricting the movement of people from the Global South into the Global North, consequently allowing the Global North to hoard wealth, resources, and economic opportunities. Economic policy is essential to generating class privilege and, because it can be constructed to operate in tandem with forms of oppression like racism and sexism, it shapes gender and racial difference as well. As seen with the integration of post-Apartheid South Africa into a globalized, neoliberal market, this economic shift has significantly aggravated racialized disparities in wealth and power, creating a large population of impoverished and vulnerable residents who cannot afford the risks associated with being open to Others. On a more abstract level, difference and privilege are maintained through sexist nationalist discourses that seek to segregate the genders, physically, psychically, and emotionally. The rigid gender constructions of Irish Republican discourse seek to isolate men and women in ostensibly separate private and public spheres, and present barriers that hinder the expression and communication of emotions between men and women. Such barriers include a sexist construction of masculinity that denies men the ability to express

grief or vulnerability. In other cases, these barriers are produced on a representational level, such as when nation-building work is elided from national histories and cultural memory, or when nation states like post-Apartheid South Africa employ exceptionalist ideologies to distinguish themselves from neighboring African nations.

These chapters are case studies that grapple with the singular historical, political, social, economic, and cultural conditions that hinder the formation of more inclusive national communities. Each is centered around a primary form of difference: ethnic difference in early twentieth-century Ireland, racial difference in the later years of Apartheid, South Africa (1980-1990s), gender difference during the later years of The Troubles in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (1980s- 1990s), and lastly, racial and national difference in neoliberal, globalized South Africa (early twenty-first century). I frame this investigation with James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and its depiction of how colonial Dublin imagines a post-colonial Irish identity and national community as one of privilege and ethnic homogeneity. The bourgeois Irish nationalisms of the time (whether they be Republican or Unionist) cannot reconcile the demand for homogeneity with the ethnic Others that are already present in Ireland, and exclude ethnic Others like Leopold Bloom, the son of an Eastern European Jewish immigrant. My investigation of Apartheid is centered on Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (1981), J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron* (1990), and photographs of interracial domestic work relationships by the South African photographer David Goldblatt and American photographer Rosalind Solomon. These texts critique liberal white South Africa's flawed understanding of interracial friendship as being based on sameness rather than difference, and ultimately its failure to imagine a more inclusive South Africa not based on white supremacy. I use Edna O'Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation* (1994) and Pat Murphy's film

Maeve (1983) to examine how patriarchal Republican discourse fails to recognize gender difference and denies women the authority and legitimacy of claiming membership in the Republic of Ireland. A more gender-inclusive Ireland is only possible if Republican men can imagine the possibility of intergender friendship, or friendship across genders. Lastly, in my examination of post-Apartheid South Africa I use K. Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* (2000) and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2001) to investigate a global crisis of belonging due to the intersecting forces of neoliberalism, globalization, and the legacy of colonization. I trace the continued social impact of race in the ostensibly colorblind "rainbow nation," the isolating effects of the neoliberal ideologies of individualism and self-interest on community formation, and the ways in which globalization has led to a system of Apartheid between the Global North and Global South.

Chapter One

"There is much kindness in the jew:" Generosity and Re-imagining Joyce's Dublin as a Community of Otherness

According to *Ulysses*, the future of a more inclusive post-colonial Irish community may depend on an act of generosity that is easily overlooked. When Leopold Bloom, an outsider in the Dublin community, offers an extra coin along with the money he has safeguarded for Stephen Dedalus, an insider, he gestures towards a possible friendship between the two men. Bloom's prior attempts at generosity have failed to grant him entry into the Dublin community because his ambiguous ethnic background— as the son of a Jewish Hungarian immigrant— renders him unable to assimilate into the reigning model of an ethnically homogenous Irish national community, the Irish nation state. At stake in Bloom's gift to Stephen is whether his fellow Dubliners can relinquish their privilege and accept the vulnerability that would make them able to be open to, and trust in, Others.

As someone who is simultaneously excluded from and yet very present in the Dublin community, Leopold Bloom catalyzes much of *Ulysses*' exploration of what a post-colonial Ireland, and an Irish national identity, might look like. Bloom's ambiguous ethnic background is representative of the kinds of difference already present in Ireland, whether this otherness is the result of movement within the British colonial empire (such as British subjects, like Molly Bloom from Gibraltar), or from waves of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century (like the second-generation Irishman, Bloom). These ostensible Others (foreigners/outsiders) pose a threat to the ethnically homogenous concept of the nation state, a fragile construction of the bourgeois Irish that depends entirely

on the certainties of identity politics: that is, an individual's identity must be intelligible, or easily interpreted and classified by the state. Bourgeois Dubliners respond to this potential threat to their own privilege as members of the Irish nation state by denying this difference and eliding the contributions that these Others have made in building the Irish nation.

Whether it manifests as a donation to the Widow Dignam or an offer of hospitality to Stephen after his adventures in Nighttown, Bloom's generosity is a nation-building labor that attempts to generate friendships, and ultimately, a national community. Bloom's generous gestures fail to generate social cohesion or grant him entry into the Dublin community, however, because his fellow Irishmen refuse to recognize them as such: they interpret these acts through twentieth-century, anti-Semitic discourses of Jewish identity as acts of Jewish self-interest. By refusing to acknowledge Bloom's singularity as an individual who exceeds their constructions of "Irish" and "Jewish" identity, the Dubliners perform distrust in order to close themselves off from Otherness/differences. Joyce presents an Irish nation on the brink of independence and at risk of becoming a false community of privilege where the inclusion of its bourgeois members is defined by the exclusion of all Others. The other possibility, *Ulysses* argues, is to imagine more capacious forms of belonging where Otherness is recognized and respected, and social cohesion comes from within, rather than barriers imposed from without. The Dubliners will only be able to move towards a more inclusive national community if they are able to relinquish the security of their privilege and accept the uncertainty and vulnerability that comes from being open to, and trusting in, Others.

I. Nation Building, Privilege, and Internal Others

Deasey's curious claim in "Nestor," that Ireland is the only country with the honor of having never persecuted the Jews because "she never let them in," illustrates the anomalous position of Jews in Joyce's Ireland: despite being an established presence in several Irish cities, Irish Jews are not fully recognized as present members of the national Irish community (*Ulysses* 30). The absurdity of Deasey's jest is emphasized by the fact that only one episode later, Leopold Bloom appears and becomes the most substantial protagonist of *Ulysses* apart from Stephen Dedalus. During the time that *Ulysses* takes place there was a modest Jewish presence in Ireland that had grown from recent waves of immigration. In 1866, the supposed year of Bloom's birth, the Jewish population of Dublin was only about 200 people and Dublin's Jewish quarter wasn't in existence (O' Grada 1), but starting in the 1880's there was a small influx of Jewish immigration to Ireland shaped by economic woes, persecution, and discriminatory legislation in tsarist Russia. Dublin was a popular destination in these migrations because it had an existing social network that newly-arrived Jewish immigrants, the majority of which were from Lithuania, could settle themselves into. Deasey's joking assertion rewrites Irish history to elide the fact that by 1901 there were 3,000 Jews in the present territory of the Republic of Ireland, where Dublin accounted for 2,100, Cork for 400, and Limerick for 200 (O'Grada 67). As revised narrative of state hospitality, Deasey's comment undermines the legitimacy of Bloom's claim of membership in an Irish host nation that supposedly never invited him in.

Ulysses plays with Irish nationalist constructions of belonging and legitimacy when Bloom hast to break into his own house to host Stephen later in the evening. Bloom is

concerned that Stephen still inebriated from his adventures in Nighttown and is in no position to be wandering the streets of Dublin. He invites Stephen back to his house, only to realize that he has forgotten his keys and is forced to crawl through a window to get inside. While the scene is described humorously and portrays Bloom as a bit of a buffoon, it nonetheless has serious political undertones: Bloom's authority as a host, as the owner of his house, is aligned with his legitimacy as a member of the Irish community. Although Bloom owns the house and should be able to enter with the authority of a host, he finds himself in the ridiculous position of having to enter as if he were a stranger, and becomes an illegitimate (and unrecognized) presence. The comedy of this moment doesn't obscure the fact that it alludes to Deasey's representation of Ireland as a nation that never let Jewish people in. Like the intruder Bloom, any Jews who may be present in Ireland — and who possess legitimate claims of belonging and therefore authority as hosts—are not recognized as being present, let alone members of the community.

Deasey's attempt to elide the presence of a particular group of people within the national community speaks to the virulently anti-Semitic and xenophobic discourse of "Cyclops." As mouthpiece for Irish nationalism, The Citizen argues for the return to a pre-colonial Ireland, or a pure or "originary" Irish nation that is free of foreigners or those deemed "not-Irish." His speech embodies the totalitarian violence enacted by the Irish nationalist movement in its efforts to police and expel all individuals who are considered not-Irish. Constructing such a national community requires the auto-production of a desired cultural identity, and Deasey's comment accomplishes this: in an attempt to maintain a sense of national purity, he represents Ireland as a community that has closed itself off from difference by refusing to host Jewish immigrants. This revised history asserts the non-

presence of Jews in Ireland, delegitimizes their membership in the national community, and expels them as "Others." Bloom's bumbling attempt to enter his house highlights the absurdity and inevitable failure of such attempts to police the national community— a community can't be closed off from Otherness when Others, such as Irish Jews, already exist within.

The imaginary Irish nation that Deasey and The Citizen try to construct — one in which ostensible foreigners like Irish Jews simply do not exist — conceives of belonging in terms a shared commonality or essence such as race or ethnicity. This conception of belonging can be placed more broadly within the narrative of the various nineteenth and twentieth century nationalisms that promulgated the nation state as the hegemonic model of community. Deasey and The Citizen offer a state-sanctioned nationalist discourse that is "the product of a fictive ethnicity," meaning, it constructs an imaginary nation free of otherness and difference (Balibar 166). Their fictions can only exist so long as this Irish national identity is constructed in opposition to an Other— a foreigner, an enemy, or not same. Jewish people have served as the universal Other for various nations and the various official nationalisms of the "nineteenth and twentieth centuries, aiming to confer the political and cultural unity of a nation on the heterogeneity of a pluri-ethnic state, have used anti-Semitism to create a stable, homogenous sense of national identity" (Balibar 170). Deasey's comment creates an opposition between the outsiders like Jewish people, and the Irish nation that "never let them in"; The Citizen uses a similar mechanism when he states the slogan of the Irish political party Sinn Fein, "The friends we love are by our side and the foes we hate before us" (Joyce 251).3 *Ulysses* emphasizes that these fictions cannot hold: Bloom may be

3 Sinn Féin is a political organization founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith. It is premised on the belief that Ireland should be a sovereign and self-determined nation, that is, where the Irish people govern themselves

locked out of his house but makes his way back in as the rightful owner. The Citizen's language similarly unravels: any model of identity formation that relies on vague, oppositional terms like friends/foes, and pronouns with mutable referents such as we and us, is inherently unstable.

While Deasey and The Citizen represent opposing ends of the political spectrum, that is, as a Protestant Unionist and Catholic Republican, respectively, both of their versions of Irish nationalism illustrate how privilege is constructed at the intersection of class and race. As a Protestant Unionist, Deasey is a religious minority who supports the continued relationship between Ireland and Great Britain and identifies strongly with his British heritage. As a Catholic Republican, The Citizen is part of a religious majority that favors cultural and political independence from Britain; his identification as a Republican seeking complete Irish autonomy places him on the more extreme end of the ideological spectrum, beyond more moderate Home Rule nationalists. Despite these glaring differences both men are united by their middle-class status and their investment in models of belonging that affirm their privilege as Irish nationals. Their models of community are "corrupted by bourgeois self-interest" (Nolan 27), because they seek to validate their own membership by excluding others. As a member of the Anglo-Irish minority with cultural ties to Britain, Deasey is invested in a national identity that not only ensures his membership within the Irish nation, but also legitimizes his privileged Anglo status within this community. Irish Catholics like The Citizen depended on Irish nationalisms (such as Republicanism) to

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rather than being part of a political union with Great Britain. As a member of Sinn Féin, The Citizen would identify as a Republican. Republicanism (which originated in the late 1700s) was partly motivated by a love of Irish culture (language, music, folklore, etc) but it was also driven by the desire for complete Irish national autonomy. Later in the twentieth century Sinn Fein splintered several times and certain splinter groups drew distinctions between themselves and Republicans. Early twentieth century Irish nationalists in support of Home-Rule, conversely, shared the Republican's love of Irish culture but didn't necessarily desire complete autonomy from Britain.

validate their increasingly precarious claims to membership: bourgeois Catholics saw their national authenticity questioned as they became more detached from entrenched cultural markers of Irishness such as an agrarian lifestyle and use of the Irish language. The Citizen's violent and hyper-masculine performance of Republicanism evinces how Irishmen sought to compensate for years of being emasculated as subordinates within the British colonial empire by promulgating models of belonging that ensured their authority and dominance.[4]

Bloom's exclusion from these middle-class nationalisms illustrates the degree to which supposedly natural models of belonging are complex social constructs that operate on political and cultural levels. As a man born in Ireland and a stereotypically bourgeois Dubliner —his pragmatism and frugality are almost self-parodying — Bloom should benefit from the privileges of bourgeois nationalism. Despite sharing a common gender and class status with other bourgeois males he is constantly excluded because of his ambiguous Jewish heritage. The various ways in which the Dubliner's reject Bloom's assertions of membership within the Dublin community, often made through his gestures of generosity towards other Dubliners, reveal how models of belonging like the nation state are multifaceted social constructs. On one hand, an individual may possess legal claims to citizenship such as through birthright, as Bloom does when asked what his nation is: "Ireland. I was born here" (*Ulysses* 1431). On the other hand, the same individual may be denied membership on a cultural level, and Bloom navigates the gap between these two forms of membership within the Irish nation state. Both Deasey and The Citizen use Irish nationalist discourse to

4. More detailed discussion of how Britain's cultural and political domination of Irish men, particularly those of the middle class, shaped constructions of Irish nationalism can be found in the work of such Irish studies scholars as David Cairns and Shawn Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Culture* (Bolton: Manchester UP, 1985); Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: the Literature of the Modern Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP,1996), and Michael Gillespie, *James Joyce and the Fabrication of a National Identity* (Atlanta: Rodolpi Press, 2001).

delegitimize Bloom's rightful membership by representing him as a foreign presence or internal Other. This mechanism of Othering is an entrenched part of constructing an Irish national identity: Republican feminists in the both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, particularly during the second wave of feminism in the 1970's and throughout The Troubles, have argued that Irish women have always served as an internal Other to legitimize the Republican males' privilege in a patriarchal society. A critical part of validating the privilege of bourgeois males in Joyce's Dublin involves eliding the fact that the nation state is an artificial construct. In his canonical essay "What Is a Nation" (1883), French historian Ernest Renan claims that this elision is form of communal forgetting. *Ulysses* demonstrates the degree to which this process of forgetting is actively performed by those in power so as to naturalize or normalize their privilege; moreover, the novel emphasizes that this act of erasure involves controlling and curating the narrative of a nation's formation.

In order to validate their privilege, the Dubliners seek to undermine Bloom's claim of membership in the Irish community by eliding and discrediting his contributions to nation building. Bloom highlights the nexus between work and nation building when he reassures Stephen Dedalus that "you have every bit as much right to live by your pen in pursuit of your philosophy as the peasant has," and that "You both belong to Ireland, the brain and the brawn. Each is equally important" (527). Bloom's understanding of nation building is capacious and inclusive, and recognizes that in the process of representing and constructing a nation, intellectual and artistic work are just as valuable as manual labor. As an ad canvasser Bloom's professional work participates in the construction of the Irish nation. In "Aeolus," members of the Dublin community convene in the *Freeman* newspaper office and discuss the Irish dream of "home rule"; the conversation becomes an informal historiography of the Irish

nation where the men are consumed with telling Irish mythologies, performing old speeches, and reflecting on past struggles for independence. The form of the episode, with its overblown language and hyberbolic headlines as flag posts for the conversation, highlights how news and media play a critical role in constructing, or as Benedict Anderson would claim, imagining a nation. Bloom is present because he is trying to secure an ad, but is ignored, spoken over, and denied a voice in the conversation as a member of the Dublin community. The particular ad that Bloom is trying to secure illustrates how advertising plays a key role in the process of representing and giving substance to the idea of a nation. His advertisement utilizes "Innuendo of home rule" by alluding to the Isle of Man, a self-governing British crown dependency in the Irish sea (*Ulysses* 99). By linking the product to the Isle of Man, Bloom aligns the Irish desire for independent governance with the consumer's desire for a product, further re-enforcing the conception of Ireland as a (partially) autonomous nation.

In order to construct the narrative of the Irish Jew as an internal Other, the bourgeois Irish fall back on a common mechanism of exclusion within anti-Semitic discourse: they refuse to recognize Bloom's efforts towards community building, particularly his acts of generosity, and instead frame him as an unwanted parasite within the Irish host nation. One of the most revealing examples of this elision occurs in "Wandering Rocks" when John Wyse Nolan and Martin Cunningham learn that Bloom has given a sizeable monetary donation to the widow Dignam and they express disbelief at something so "Strange but true" (202). Nolan voices his distrust by quoting Antonio from *The Merchant of Venice*, a Christian who is similarly shocked by the Jewish Shylock's generous interest-free loan, with the statement

that "there is much kindness in the jew" (202).[5] These remarks of suspicion insert Bloom's gift into a twentieth century Irish anti-Semitic discourse which maintains that Jewish people are not productive working members of a community and rather are parasites making money through usury. A monetary gift with no strings or conditions attached can't be reconciled with this anti-Semitic stereotype and consequently baffles the Dubliners. Of course, this stereotype couldn't be any more false, and early twentieth-century Jewish communities were very active members of Ireland's economy. Many immigrants opted for self-employment in such things as retail, peddling, and craftwork like cabinet or shoemaking (O'Grada 84). Nonetheless, Jewish money lenders were actually quite prevalent in Joyce's Ireland because money lending was crucial to the economic survival of many immigrants: at least forty-six were registered as moneylenders with the Dublin police in 1903, with the overall Dublin Jewish community totaling two thousand (O'Grada 49). Their presence was a constant source of contention, both within the Jewish community and wider Irish population, as it was commonly assumed that moneylenders exploited the poor who couldn't afford loans elsewhere.

This assumption shapes how the Dubliners interpret Bloom's donation to the vulnerable widow Dignam, leading The Citizen's to claim that Bloom is a "wolf in sheep's clothing," or a predator preying on a poor, helpless widow (Ulysses 275). The Citizen's hatred towards Jewish people reflects the belief that, as Sin Fein leader Arthur Griffith claimed in 1904, the Jew "produces no wealth himself— he draws it from others" (Nadel 60). The Citizen presents a particularly economic brand of Irish nationalism in "Cyclops" that

5 In Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, the Jewish businessman and moneylender Shylock agrees to an interest-free loan to the Christian businessman Antonio, in what appears to be a gesture of good will. Shylock's treachery is revealed when Antonio defaults on the loan and Shylock demands a pound of his flesh as payment, a perverted form of usury that invokes the myth of Jewish blood libel, or the use of Christian blood in Jewish rituals.

rejects Britain's exploitation of Ireland's natural resources, and within this economic discourse Jewish people are similarly positioned as parasites in the Irish nation. An article in a 1903 publication of the *Lyceum*, a college publication at University College that Joyce regularly read, responded to the question of whether "the Jew [should] be made welcome in Ireland?" by claiming that Jewish people are welcome if they can become a productive and equally contributing member of the work force (Nadel 61). The question of whether Ireland should be hospitable to Jewish immigrants is framed (or perhaps more appropriately, disguised) as a question of work rather than ethnic purity, where the refusal to work is a refusal to participate in building the nation.

The connection between work and nation building is ultimately a question of assimilation: dominant anti-Semitic discourses of twentieth-century Ireland maintained that Jewish people were inherently treacherous and incapable of integrating into new communities. Anti-Semitic stereotypes alleged that Jewish communities closed themselves off from the greater public and acted purely out of self-interest by remaining loyal to only members of their own familial or tribal network (Nadel 64). This supposed refusal to assimilate posed a threat to the construction of a unified Irish nation state; Arthur Griffith voiced this fear when he claimed that "the Jew has at heart no country but the Promised Land. He forms a nation apart wherever he goes" (Nadel 64). The claim that the Jew "forms a nation apart wherever he goes" reveals an anxiety about a Jewish diasporic community, a global nation that exceeds the bounds of the nation state. Griffith's assertion illustrates how the Irish have been conditioned by various forms of nationalisms to understand belonging in terms of the limits of the nation state, and forms of community that exceed this rigid construction of ethnic or national boundaries are seen as a threat. The fact that the Dubliners

are suspicious of Bloom's acts of generosity —gestures which should better integrate him into the Dublin community— suggests that assimilation into this model of belonging is a lost cause for Irish Jews. Regardless of whether belonging is constructed through Unionist, Republican, or Home Rule nationalist discourse, assimilation requires that Irish Jews accept a precarious and ambiguous place in the community where their membership never secure.

Bloom's precarious position in the Dublin community makes the privilege of other bourgeois Dubliners possible by cementing their claims to belonging in the Irish nation state; as such, *Ulysses* is a representation of how early twentieth century nationalists exploited ambivalent attitudes towards Irish Jews to construct bourgeois privilege. Ireland prided itself on its promise of tolerance of other persecuted peoples (Nadel 59), and politicians used this narrative of tolerance as a means of distancing the Irish from their colonial oppressors. Sin Fein leader Arthur Griffith, for example, capitalized on the narrative of oppression shared by the Irish and Jewish people to generate solidarity among the Irish, but this identification was limited to a kind of general abstraction. Irish Jews were equally useful political tools functioning as scapegoats, as demonstrated when Griffith and the Fenian leader Oliver st. Goharty helped orchestrate the 1904 boycotts of Jewish businesses (Reizbaum 36). The anti-Semitic campaign was fueled by the Limerick community's resentment of increasing impoverishment and in comparison, the relative wealth of its very small Jewish community. Nationalists like Griffith used anti-Semitic stereotypes about usury and selfish business practices to create opposition to the Jewish community and support for the nationalist cause— the campaign was, at its core, a tool that the Catholic church and Irish politicians used to deflect attention away from underlying structural inequalities that were the cause of such widespread impoverishment.

Joyce's bourgeois Dubliners construct and consolidate their privilege by undermining Bloom's generosity and contributions towards nation building, and underpinning this mechanism of exclusion is their refusal to recognize that he is an individual that exceeds anti-Semitic stereotypes. The seeming failure of Bloom's attempted generosity can be aligned with other ambivalent gift exchanges in *Ulysses* and *Dubliners*—while they begin with optimism, these gestures are undercut by the fact that they lead to greater fragmentation and alienation. To some degree this failure reflects the ambivalence of gift exchanges, which, according to French sociologist Marcel Mauss' foundational study on archaic gift-giving societies (*The Gift*), can be antagonistic acts that further the donor's own self-interest. The failure of gift exchanges between Dubliners is attributed to corruptive influence of bourgeois self-interest, where the selfless potential of gift-giving is dismissed as archaic, and the ultimate ideal of reciprocity is lost (*Regular Swindle 15*). This being said, one of the great ironies of *Ulysses* is the fact that Bloom's seemingly selfless generosity is the one thing that truly sets him apart from his bourgeois peers, but his generosity is always interpreted through anti-Semitic stereotypes as an act of Jewish self-interest. As an individual who has been labeled "a Jew" in Joyce's Dublin, Bloom will never, and can never, be generous. Generosity is inherently an excess because it requires that an individual go beyond what might be asked or expected of him or her; Jewish people in Joyce's Ireland can never offer such an excess because they are perceived as already not contributing their fair share the greater community.

II. Singularity and the Limits of "Identity-Thinking"

When the men of Barney Kiernan's pub compare Bloom's monetary gift to the treacherous generosity of Shakespeare's Shylock, they reveal how the state's discursive production of Irish and Jewish identity limits their ability to recognize Otherness. The literary characters of Shylock and Bloom are very different individuals: they live hundreds of years apart and in different countries, moreover, Bloom isn't a money-lender and arguably isn't even a practicing Jew (much less an entrenched member of the Jewish community like Shakespeare's Shylock). Nonetheless, the two individuals are viewed as one in the same and this conflation raises fundamental ethical and political questions: how can we reconcile the uniqueness of an individual with the fact that he or she is embedded within social communities and identity categories like race, class, nationality, and gender? Leopold Bloom is embedded within two interrelated early twentieth-century Irish narratives: he is part of a growing Jewish presence that is being shaped by immigration from Eastern and Central Europe, and as a male member of the middle class and an Irish citizen by birth he is a participant in the ongoing debate about Irish nationalism and independence. As a unique individual Bloom occupies the intersection of these different narratives, and as a result he is paradoxically both Jewish and not Jewish, Irish and not Irish. *Ulysses* points to the dangers of not addressing how a unique individual like Bloom is constructed by these different social, political, and economic narratives, particularly when the hegemonic model of belonging, (that is, the nation state) relies heavily on discursively produced categories of identity such as "Irishness" or "Jewishness."

The Dubliners conflate Bloom's generosity with Shylock's treachery because they have been paralyzed by "identity thinking," or the obsessive need to define or categorize individuals (Lloyd 3), and are unable to recognize the possibility that he may exceed these categories. It is only appropriate that the desire to define and classify Bloom culminates in "Cyclops," just as a heated debate breaks out about what "Irishness" means to the men of Barney Kiernan's pub. The Dubliners are conditioned by the identity politics inherent to nationalist discourse, and conceive of identity in terms of membership within broad, clumsy categories such as ethnicity and nationality. The men debate Bloom's background and Ned asks if Bloom is "a jew or gentile or holy roman swaddler or what the hell is he?" only to then rephrase his question as "Or who is he?" (Joyce 276). Unable to reach a conclusion, another Dubliner whom the narrator refers to as "Crofton the Orangeman or Presbyterian", asserts "We don't want him" (276). The Dubliners are baffled by Bloom's ambiguous background. It doesn't fit neatly into the rigid categories that give form and substance to one's identity within nationalist discourse, and consequently he is denied any identity at all. In an instance that echo's Deasey's initial claim that Jewish people have never been let into Ireland, "the Orangeman" Crofton is granted the power and privilege to exclude Bloom from the Irish community, even though Crofton himself identifies as part of a political and religious minority within this very community (that is, he is both Protestant and anti-nationalist/anti-Home Rule). Ultimately the Dubliner's fail to impose some kind of order on Bloom's ambiguous and messy identity, and this failure threatens to destabilize their assumption that there is a normative "Irish" identity. The futility of their efforts is manifest when the unnamed narrator exerts power over Crofton by categorizing him as an "Orangeman or Protestant," and in doing so the definer (in this case Crofton trying to

articulate Bloom's identity) becomes the defined. The presence of the "or" within the narrator's label hints at the inevitable slippage and overlap with labels: these political and religious categories are both distinct and overlapping, and neither one is sufficient in and of itself. Bloom's otherness can be understood as his singularity as an individual: his identity is unique and irreducible to common categories that would be used to assign him or her to a particular group.

In contrast to these Dubliners, Bloom is aware of the inherent limitations and failures of identity politics in early twentieth century Irish nationalist discourse: his bumbling attempt to describe his wife Molly's identity in "Eumaeus" illustrates that any attempt to represent her singularity will necessarily fail. Bloom is hesitant to ascribe Molly any single nationality and evasively claims that she is "so to speak, Spanish" (520). Framing her Spanish nationality with an idiom suggests that it is an arbitrarily determined figure of speech, and Bloom's later clarification of "half that is" acts as a further disclaimer, for Molly can also be considered Irish (520). The assertion that Molly "could actually claim Spanish nationality if she wanted" emphasizes her right to choose which if any of these two nationalities she wants to identify with. Such a belief undercuts the existing terms of belonging within the Irish nation state: Bloom conceives of this membership as something one chooses to participate in, moreover it is not determined by a privileged group that seeks to consolidate its own power (such as the bourgeois Irish). Bloom concludes with the distinction that Molly was "born in (technically) Spain i.e. Gibraltar". The mention of Gibraltar reflects Bloom's need to use a specific city to ground Molly's origins while the "(technically) Spain" suggests that Gibraltar is a distinctive enough locale to distinguish it somewhat from the general term "Spain." Although it is often considered part of Spain, Gibraltar is a British territory and therefore

may be quite different from the rest of the Spanish nation. Bloom's equivocation highlights the artificiality of belonging as constructed through geopolitical boundaries—whether or not Molly would identify with Spain may depend on many factors, including the extent to which her upbringing may have been influenced by British culture.

Bloom's awkward description resists the idea that any number of identity categories can accurately define someone; moreover, it demonstrates that language will always fall short of representing an individual's singularity. While we think of the uniqueness or singularity of people in terms of the generalities or descriptors that would define them, such as religious or political affiliations, these categories are restrictive. The sum of multiple descriptors cannot possibly capture or convey the singularity of an individual— identity is always in excess of language. Even ostensibly liberating conceptions of identity like hybridity, which would allow Bloom to be understood as both Irish and Jewish, are still constraining. As much as Bloom's bumbling description tries to avoid generalities it necessarily falls back them, and his labored effort suggests that these descriptors are inadequate. His nice distinctions and minced words reflect his understanding that the category of nationality is not only an artificially constructed entity, but also an insufficient means of articulating Molly's identity. Bloom's equivocations keep in line with the various clichés, qualifiers, and disclaimers that undercut assertions about identity in "Eumaeus" (Reizbaum 218). The episode's preoccupation with authenticity illustrates the difficulty of representing essences and difference (Cheng 238) and builds on the critique of "Cyclops:" whereas the narrative of "Cyclops" questions whether ones identity can be accurately described through social constructs like nationality, "Eumaeus" asks whether an authentic identity is possible in the first place (Duffy 178).

As a novel that looks forward to what an independent Irish nation might mean, *Ulysses* is critical of how the hegemonic force of "identity thinking" has stunted the Dubliners' ability to acknowledge and respect difference within their own community; the only form of difference that the Dubliners seem to register is that of stereotypes and racist discourse. In order to recognize Bloom's Otherness, the Dubliners have to negotiate the tension between "the ineffability of the individual and the intelligibility of the universal" (Agamben 1). That is, they must grapple with the fact that Bloom's singularity is ineffable and nameless, and in attempting to overcome this obstacle, resort to stereotypes and other universal categories to render him intelligible. Bloom's gift to the Widow Dignam threatens to disrupt the Dubliner's worldview, one in which generosity and Jewishness are mutually exclusive, and this in turn threatens to destabilize their own understanding of Irishness. Their response demonstrates how racism is an internal supplement to nationalism (Balibar 171), because it is crucial to the "identity thinking" of Irish nationalist discourse: without this Othering mechanism, a normative "Irish" identity would also be unintelligible. Stereotypes are representations of "what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (Bhaba 95), and the Dubliners must assert their knowledge of what is "already known" about Jewishness in order to maintain their understanding of their own Irishness. By interpreting the gift as a Shylockian act of treachery the men stabilize their worldview and reinstate a safe distance between themselves and ostensible Others like Bloom. The racist discourse found throughout *Ulysses* is by no means limited to anti-Semitism, as demonstrated by the Dubliners' conversation about other colonized people in "Cyclops." In this discussion the bourgeois Irishmen merely replicate and mimic the racist

discourse of their English colonizers in order to maintain their own dominant positions (Duffy 115).

As an individual whose ambiguous identity can't be clearly demarcated or reduced to a label, Bloom is an emblematic figure of otherness, "The Jew." *Ulysses* suggests that this is in part due to the ambiguity inherent to Jewish cultural identity: it is difficult to prove in any conventional sense and entails so many contradictory elements that it becomes a catch-all category of identity (Reizbaum 68). The use of phrases such as "a Jew" and "the Jews" reflects the Dubliners' tendency to view ostensibly Jewish people like Bloom as a category of identity or figure of otherness rather than as a singular individual. The fact that Bloom identifies with certain cultural aspects of Judaism but doesn't actively practice the faith is irrelevant to the Dubliners because he functions as a symbol of an expansive notion of otherness. As a result Irish "Jews were in the untenable position of being always fixed in a stereotype and hence ostensibly identityless in any conventional sense" (Reizbaum 34); in the case of Bloom, his singularity, or "conventional sense" of identity, is obscured by anti-Semitic stereotypes. "The Jew" is revealed as a crude othering mechanism that sustains the identity politics of early twentieth-century nationalist discourse. The Dubliners may consider it a term for a specific group of people, but the novel argues that it is capacious symbol of foreignness that exceeds a particular cultural or religious identity.

By putting Bloom into conversation with Shakespeare's Shylock, Joyce highlights how literature— in the process of constructing a national identity— engages racist constructions of Otherness. Shakespeare's Shylock remains a powerful example of how Elizabethan authors utilized notions of Jewish ambiguity, malice, and duplicity— stereotypes that established Jewish people as foreigners or not-English— as a point of opposition for

constructing an image of pure Christian English nationhood (Shapiro 50). The Dubliners commit a similar act of representational violence when they align the treacherous figure of Shylock with Bloom in an attempt to construct their own "Irish" identity. Whether or not Joyce himself was anti-Semitic may be beside the point: the novel suggests that his interest in the ostensibly Jewish Bloom was as a literary vehicle for exploring how the Irish understand and respond to difference.[6] A similar argument has been made about Shakespeare's relationship with Shylock in that his engagement with anti-Semitism may have been limited to how "he might construct a particular kind of dramatic machine" through Shylock (Gross 147).

Although both Shylock and Bloom embody certain anti-Semitic stereotypes, they continue to resonate to this day because they are unique, developed characters that exceed such limiting abstractions. Shylock has captivated centuries of theatergoers because he possesses "his own private history, his own vivid individuality," and this unique personhood grants him a depth and fluidity that resists clear interpretation (Gross 61). In true modernist form Bloom comes to readers in a series of fragments, where even the sum of these parts can never fully illuminate the whole. Although Joyce chose to exile himself from Ireland, he possessed all the racial and cultural requirements to claim membership in the Irish community and thus wrote from a position of privilege. Whether Joyce can represent racial or ethnic Others like Bloom depends in part on how well *Ulysses* negotiates between racist constructions of otherness (like stereotypes) and representing a character's singular

6. Scholars are ambivalent as to whether Joyce himself possessed anti-Semitic beliefs, but this biographical concern distracts from the more critical question of how *Ulysses* uses these stereotypes to critique the identity politics of Irish nationalism. Jewish studies scholars such as Marilyn Reizbaum (*James Joyce's Judaic* Other, 1985), Ira Nadel (*Joyce and the Jews*, 1989), and Neil Davison (*James Joyce, Ulysses, and the Construction of Jewish Identity*, 1996) trace the origins of the stereotypes that Joyce draws upon and examine how this racist discourse is used to construct Irish and Jewish identity.

personhood. The politics of writing about a racialized Other are similarly fraught for white South African writers like Nadine Gordimer and J.M Coetzee, who write from positions of privilege in a white supremacist South Africa.

As an individual whose ambiguous identity can't be clearly demarcated or reduced to a label, Bloom poses a threat to the certainty of identity that is demanded by nationalist "identity thinking"; consequently, the Dubliners try to neutralize this threat by appealing to the certainty of anti-Semitic stereotypes. The bourgeois Irish cement their privileged positions as members of the Irish nation by asserting an absolute division between the Self and Other, or Irish and not-Irish, and anyone who destabilizes this binary threatens their privilege. Bloom's donation to the Widow Dignam poses such a threat, as does Bloom's offer of hospitality to Stephen Dedalus in "Ithaca." Anti-Semitic attitudes towards Bloom surface in the intimate space of generosity because the safe distance between social constructions of "Irishness" and "Jewishness" collapses: how can a Jewish person be capable of generosity when the dominant social construction of "Jewishness" makes this excess impossible? How can the Dubliners reconcile the certainty of their abstract constructions of Jewishness— and implicitly Irishness— with the uncertainty generated by their lived, concrete experiences of Bloom's generosity? In other words, Bloom's generous gestures force the Dubliners' to acknowledge a disconnect between their presumed knowledge of the Other —that is, abstractions and generalizations— and the fact that this so-called knowledge falls short of Bloom's actual Otherness**.** Rather than grappling with these conflicting forms of knowledge, the Dubliners of Barney Kiernan's pub use anti-Semitic stereotypes to defend their privilege and reinstate a division between Self and Other. In Levinasian terms they commit an act of totalizing violence when they reduce Bloom to the stereotype of a

treacherous Jew: they claim mastery over him by insisting he is a totality that can be fully known and comprehended rather than a singular, unknowable individual. This act of totalization seeks to neutralize the threat that Bloom poses towards the construction of bourgeois Irish privilege by denying his singularity and reducing him to an ossified artifact. While the Dubliners often resort to racist discourse to reassert the distance between Irishness and Jewishness, *Ulysses* troubles the idea that such a clear separation can exist. The novel plays with anti-Semitic stereotypes so as to challenge or undermine them, particularly through Deasey and the Citizen. Joyce imbues the most notoriously anti-Semitic characters of *Ulysses* with traits conventionally associated with Jewish stereotypes in order to satirize and undermine the validity of these stereotypes (Nadel 50).

III. Friendship, Trust, and a Community of Otherness

When internal Others like Bloom threaten to destabilize the Dubliners' privileged positions as Irishmen, they practice distrust and suspicion as a means of policing the boundary between Self and Other. This Othering mechanism is illustrated in "Ithaca" when Bloom invites a still-inebriated Stephen back to his house for a cup of cocoa and a chance to sober up. As an overture of friendship, Bloom's act of generosity tests both men's ability to be open to Others. The text playfully points out that while "neither openly allud[ed] to their racial difference" (523), their thoughts are dominated by the subject. Stephen's and Bloom's perceptions of one another are presented as a tangled stream of word play in which "He thought that he knew that he knew that he was a jew whereas he knew that he knew that he knew that he was not" (525). This may indicate Bloom's anxiety that Stephen will only ever see him as little more than a single, one-dimensional facet of his identity, or as "a Jew"

(Nadel 240). The complex syntax of the sentence suggests that these men find it difficult to think outside of stereotypes when they try to gauge each other's perceptions of one another, thus highlighting the need to become estranged from these stereotypes (Davison 232).

The legitimacy of Bloom's position as host is (albeit, humorously) questioned when he is forced to enter his house through a window, but once inside he assumes the role of the host and takes on its risks: by making himself open to and responsible for the Other, Bloom becomes vulnerable to whatever harm his guest may bring (*Hospitality* 59). Bloom's gesture illustrates an element of faith that underscores all acts of hospitality because the host cannot foresee the actions of the guest (or "hostis" in Latin), who is a "stranger" and potentially an "enemy" (*Hospitality* 43). This potential danger becomes manifest when Stephen sings an anti-Semitic ballad in response to Bloom's performance of "The Hope", a song that was the anthem of the Zionist movement (Gifford 579). Bloom's bold decision to openly reference his Jewish heritage may have been attempt to find common ground with Stephen, since the desire for a homeland linked the Irish in a kind of symbolic solidarity with diasporic Jews. Stephen responds ambivalently to this gesture by performing a rendition of the ballad of Harry Hughes, an anti-Semitic story that undermines the notion of solidarity based on a shared desire for belonging. The popular song (which dates from 1255) is a story of violated hospitality: the unnamed figure of "the Jew's daughter" invites a young English boy named Harry Hughes into her house only to murder him for being a Christian. Even Bloom cannot help but be aware of the striking parallel that Stephen may be drawing between his own potentially precarious position as Bloom's guest and that of the young Christian martyr. The ballad of Harry Hughes calls upon the myth of blood libel, the superstitious belief that Jewish people would ritually kill Christians and use their blood in

passover ceremonies. This very same blood libel is invoked with the Dubliners' allusion to Shylock because Shylock loans Antonio money not out of kindness, but out of a desire for a pound of Antonio's flesh (and implicitly, his blood).

Stephen casts suspicion on Bloom's gesture of solidarity by drawing on anti-Semitic beliefs that Jews are treacherous and unable to belong to a national community. Their supposed selfishness and penchant for tribalism is evident in that the antagonist is referred to only as "the Jew's daughter": she is denied the name and unique identity that is granted to the Christian Harry Hughes, and her identity and interests cannot be separated from that of her family's. The act of singing this ballad suggests that Stephen is performing distrust of Bloom in order to reinscribe the division between Self and Other. Just earlier in the day Stephen had defended the Jewish people in "Nestor" when Deasey had claimed that Jews are sinners, and Stephen countered with the assertion that by such logic everyone should be considered sinners, for every merchant "buys cheap and sells dear" (Joyce 34). While his antagonistic response to Bloom may be surprising in light of his earlier behavior, Stephen's ambivalence is to be expected: like other Dubliners, he becomes uncomfortable in intimate situations that undermine the security of his own understanding of Jewishness, or of Otherness as an external abstraction. Stephen performs distrust and stabilizes his worldview by re-inscribing a safe distance between himself and Bloom, thereby reasserting his privileged identity as an Irishman.

The other possible interpretation of Stephen's response is that the anti-Semitic ballad isn't a rejection of Bloom's hospitality, but Stephen's tone-deaf projection of sameness on Bloom. After Stephen sings the ballad he offers a very convoluted commentary on it, stating:

One of all, the least of all, is the victim predestined. Once by inadvertence twice by design he challenges his destiny. It comes when he is abandoned and challenges him reluctant and, as an apparition of hope and youth, holds him unresisting. It leads him to a strange habitation, to a secret infidel apartment, and there implacable, immolates him, consenting. (167)

This commentary may suggest that both Stephen and Bloom are the "victim predestined" as members of oppressed people. This interpretation is reinforced later in the passage by parenthetical descriptions of the host (in this case, Bloom) as this very "reluctant" and "unresisting" "victim predestined." In making such a parallel Stephen could be affirming a shared desire for belonging by suggesting that because he and Bloom have refused the Catholic church, they are outcasts if not scapegoats in the greater Irish community (Davison 234). As a typical example of Stephen's philosophical musings, the passage operates at the level of abstraction and its ambiguous metaphors resist explicit explanation. Bloom's hospitality towards Stephen marks the intersection of what have been their parallel positions throughout much of the narrative. Both men are outsiders in the Dublin community and their marginalized status manifests in their both being keyless and locked out from their homes (Stephen had relinquished his key to Buck Mulligan earlier in the day). Their parallel stories of marginalization diverge at this point, however, because Stephen's exclusion stems from the self-imposed exile of an individual and is not, as with Bloom, constructed at the community-level by his fellow Dubliners. Regardless of whether Stephen claims belonging in the Irish community, his ability to reject this membership is a marker of privilege that Bloom doesn't enjoy and this self-pronounced exile doesn't equate to equal socioeconomic,

social, and political standing. While Bloom isn't a subaltern as defined by Gayatri Spivak (he is not economically disenfranchised, to start with), his position in the community is precarious and subject to change depending on the political climate (for example, the flaring up of anti-Semitic Limerick riots in 1904). There are significant power differentials between Stephen and Bloom, differences which Stephen's choice of song have brought to the forefront. The fact that he chose an anti-Semitic ballad to (possibly) establish a connection between himself and Bloom would suggest that he needs to be more aware of the social and political frameworks and histories that inform his interaction with Bloom.

If Stephen's response is a gesture of friendship towards Bloom, it remains a problematic move because it indicates that Stephen understands friendship in terms of sameness, not difference. Such a friendship would fall in line with the prevailing model of friendship that dominates Greek, Roman, Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures. This form of friendship, according to French philosopher Jacques Derrida, always involves "two young men, mortals, who have a contract according to which one will survive the other, one will be the heir of the other, and they will agree politically" (*Friendship* 145). While this model of belonging can ultimately lead to political justice, it doesn't allow for difference and requires sameness between the two individuals. In the context of Stephen and Bloom, a developing friendship would be based on a unity conferred by the shared experience of colonial oppression and marginalization (Cheng 248). The promise of such a bond is undermined by the fact that it is narcissistic and exists solely because Stephen recognizes his own struggles in another; this fragile connection also depends on a sameness of gender and class.[7]

7. The political implications of friendship inform other canonical readings of Bloom and Stephen's relationship, such as the Freudian interpretation of the two men brought together by a desire for a lost father-son relationship. Their bond is thus conceived of as familial and filial, and keeps in line with the dominant nationalist discourses of filiation and fraternity (where both are premised on sameness).

The significance of whether Stephen and Bloom can forge a friendship based on difference speaks to the greater concern of whether Ireland can move beyond the nation state as a national community based on sameness. Friendship is the building block of nationhood, and fraternity and filiation are the guiding paradigms for belonging to a national community (*Friendship* 104). This is apparent in the Sinn Fein slogan, "The friends we love are by our side and the foes we hate before us" (Joyce 251), where Irish identity is conceived of as a brotherhood or kinship among friends, and this communal body is clearly demarcated by its opposition to an enemy or Other. The limits of "similarities-in-difference" as a model of community are clearly manifest in post-colonial nations where coexisting members don't necessarily share similar experiences of marginalization, such as with black and white South Africans. Moreover, friendship based on the shared experience of marginalization may not be capacious enough to accommodate intersecting forms of oppression such as racism and sexism. Intersectional feminist critiques of Irish Republicanism from the 1970's onward highlight how gender shapes ones experience of oppression, and in sexist societies like the Republic of Ireland, women's experiences of oppression are disregarded and undervalued. The struggle to recognize inter-gender friendship in Irish nationalist discourse stems in part from the fact the hegemonic Western model of friendship doesn't recognize friendship between men and women. Whether it is during The Troubles of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, or Joyce's early twentieth-century Irish Republic-in-the-making, "within this culture, this society, by which this prevalent canon was considered legitimate, accredited, then there was no voice, no discourse, no possibility of acknowledging these excluded possibilities" (*Political* 79). False communities of privilege like the bourgeois model of the

Irish nation state are built from friendships based on gender sameness, and the exclusion of women is crucial to constructing this privilege.

The Dubliners police the boundaries of Self and Other— or of Irish and not-Irish— by performing distrust, and *Ulysses* claims that a more inclusive Irish national community is only possible if the Irish are willing to accept the risks that come with trusting Others. Friendships based on sameness offer a sense of security and certainty that doesn't trouble the Self- Other division and consequently they don't demand trust in the Other. If these friendships demand anything it is a false trust predicated upon control and power, where each individual is certain of his knowledge about the Other, and this certainty stabilizes positions of privilege. Such a form of trust falls in direct opposition to the ideal outlined by Jacques Derrida in *Given Time*. An ideal or absolute trust is based on risk and vulnerability because being open to the Other means accepting the uncertainty of not knowing his or her intentions. Receiving an act of generosity demands this faith in the Other: is Bloom's gift to the Widow Dignam benevolence or treachery? Is his offer to host Stephen a gesture of kindness or potential ill will? Trust is essential to being open to Otherss, and is the cornerstone of friendship based on difference rather than sameness.

Ulysses offers an example of such a gesture of trust when Bloom returns the money he has been safekeeping for Stephen since their adventures in Nighttown— an act that reverses the anti-Semitic state narrative of the Jew as parasitic guest. The interaction is described as an "exchange of money between the host and guest" such that "The former returned to the latter, without interest, a sum of money (1-7-0), one pound seven shillings sterling, advanced by the latter to the former" (571). This action is also recorded in the episode's ledger entry of Bloom's daily accounts as a credit and debit. Bloom actually gives

an extra penny to Stephen, and this is often interpreted as an act of self-interest, whereby Bloom generates a sense of indebtedness and capitalizes on any relationship he may build with Stephen. Such a literal interpretation of this act would have to take into account the fact that Stephen was quite inebriated when he surrendered his money and would not have realized that he had been given an extra coin— as such it is likelier a symbolic gesture. It doesn't appear to be a gift in the sense that the money has more or less circulated between the two men, but it is an asymmetrical exchange [8]. Representing it as a ledger entry would imply that it is an interaction that could be reduced to something finite and impersonal like a number; it suggests a business transaction between creditor and debtor, the kind of interaction that could be expected from the bourgeois figure of Deasey. The mysterious coin, however, is a surplus that comes inexplicably from without. It is an excess that isn't accounted for within the circular economy of a loan and an indication that, contrary to what the form may suggest, this interaction can't be reduced to a business engagement. The emphasis placed on the fact that this loan was "without interest" conjures the specter of the usurious Shylock and places Bloom once again in dialogue with the discourse of "the Jew." Bloom's generosity acquires greater literary and cultural weight when it is juxtaposed with Shylock's treachery: the monetary gift acquires symbolic value as a gesture of goodwill and trust. Whether or not Stephen realizes that he has been overpaid, he would at least recognize that Bloom acted in good faith and not out of self-interest.

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8 In *Given Time* Derrida critiques Marcel Mauss's (*The Gift*) discussion of gift-giving as an economic social system based on reciprocity. Within these societies gift-giving is often an antagonistic and calculated effort, but over time exchanges are theoretically supposed to achieve a balance. Derrida argues that true generosity is an asymmetrical relation where the gift is an excess that resists or defies any act of calculation; moreover, the gift disrupts a system of exchange. On the surface the exchange of money between Bloom and Stephen appears to be such a circular economy, not a disruption.

Learning to trust others is necessary if Ireland is to reconfigure its paradigm of national belonging from the nation state as a false community of privilege to a more inclusive community of otherness. This transformation would demand that the Dubliners trade the security and certainties of "identity-thinking" for the vulnerability and uncertainty of being open to others. *Ulysses* is adamant that this exchange would open up new forms of community that "identity-thinking" has rendered impossible because it "saturates the discursive field, drowning out other social and cultural possibilities" (Lloyd 3). Stephen unknowingly intimates at such a foundational shift when, in a cantankerous attempt to shut Bloom down at the cabman's shelter, he states, "We can't change the country. Let's change the subject" (*Ulysses* 527). If a nation arises out of the discourse of nationalism, it stands to reason that one can play with the malleable concept of a national community by changing the terms of the discussion. The only paradigm of belonging afforded by the "identity-thinking" of the dominant nationalist discourses of early twentieth-century Ireland is that of the closed set of the nation state: inclusion is established through exclusion, and distrust towards others polices and maintains the boundaries dividing "insiders" and "outsiders."

Ulysses, conversely, bypasses this "identity-thinking" with a vision of post-colonial Ireland as an open set— a community where friendship and fraternity aren't delineated by an opposition to external figure (such as an enemy or Other), nor based on the demand for sameness.[9] The form and substance of such a community is generated by trust in the Other—

9 *Ulysses* is a forerunner in a debate about community that has preoccupied twentieth-century scholars and theorists, particularly those post-WWII who, grappling with the threat of rising socialist, fascist and Nazi states, have sought new paradigms of belonging that aren't dependent on an oppositional binary of friend (or sameness) and enemy. Italian political theorist Giorgio Agamben grapples with this question in his manifesto *The Coming Community* (1993) when, following French philosopher Jean Luc-Nancy's line of thought in *The Inoperative Community* (1986), he asks whether it is possible to form a community that isn't mediated by any condition of belonging or commonality. The overarching impetus of Agamben's manifesto "is to propose a radical shift from a model of community based on the affirmation of a particular identity towards a "new planetary humanity" governed by a "politics of singularity." The vision presented in *Ulysses* of post-colonial

a more capacious, flexible form of social cohesion that comes from within, rather than from barriers imposed from without. Imagining Ireland as an open set acknowledges the permeability of its communal borders, a porousness that was already starkly manifest in the massive levels of Irish emigration since the potato famine of the mid-nineteenth century. It recognizes the Otherness that is already inherent to the Irish community and doesn't depend on fragile illusions of sameness, such as Deasy's state-sanctioned narrative that supposed outsiders like Jewish people are not present in Ireland because she "never let them in."

Ulysses doesn't offer any concrete or tangible examples of what this imagined community of otherness might look like, and this absence speaks to the impossibility of representing such an entity. Any attempt to represent a community of singular individuals is doomed to fail because the act of representation is a totalizing force that robs it of its singularities, resulting in fragile illusions of sameness that elide difference. The transitory community of the cabman's shelter in "Eumaeus" illustrates not only the inherent failure of such representations, but the fact that they must call attention to their own failure. The diverse assortment of individuals in the shelter are almost immediately reduced to a group of "nondescript specimens of the genus homo" (503), and further abstracted by the "dominant cultural voice" of the episode, a style that mimics the "hegemony of middle-class ideology and bourgeois common sense" (Lawrence 356). The heavily labored style of "Eumaeus" projects a false sense of homogeneity on the individuals of the cabman's chapter and calls attention to the homogenizing and totalizing power of all representations. *Ulysses* does, however, intimate at how a community of otherness might be possible through the potential friendship between Bloom and Stephen, and importance of trust as a unifying commonality.

Ireland as a community of otherness anticipates Agamben's later proposal for a heterogeneous community not stifled by a demand for sameness.

It emphasizes the crucial role that literature plays in imagining such community, where the ambiguity and suggestive power of the literary opens up new possibilities that other social discourses would potentially foreclose. Take, for example, the potential bond generated between Bloom and Stephen that is so indirectly and opaquely gestured to with a symbolic extra coin. Stephen, Bloom, and the reader must read the singularity of this gesture in light of its literary and historical resonances— it is a gift embedded within, and consequently interpreted through, many intersecting histories and narratives.

Chapter Two

"Their servant, their host:" Work and Interracial Friendship in South Africa

This chapter will examine how white South Africa under Apartheid is a false community of privilege sustained by the exclusion of racial Others, or as it manifests in practice, the disenfranchisement and exploitation of black South Africans. White privilege in South Africa is constructed through similar means to how male, bourgeois privilege is sustained in Joyce's colonial Dublin: the nation-building labor of this internal Other is elided from white consciousness through policies like racial segregation, racist discourses on work originating from the colonial period, and through literary and artistic representations of white domestic life, such as the genre of the white pastoral. In addition to novels, this case study interweaves photographs of interracial domestic work relationships for new perspectives of how race and privilege are represented in difference mediums, including how they are spatialized— physically, emotionally, and psychically. The chapter focuses on hospitality as a vehicle for understanding the limits of white South Africans' openness to Others. It critiques how, much like Joyce's bourgeois male Dubliners, liberal white South Africans naturalize their privilege with a narcissistic understanding of friendship as a bond based on sameness rather than difference. Liberal white South Africa's ostensibly progressive vision of a more equitable, Apartheid-free nation repackages white supremacy with a façade of racial inclusivity, and anticipates the later colorblind rhetoric of the newly-democratic "rainbow nation," that is, neoliberal, globalized South Africa.

Introduction

Nadine Gordimer's 1981 novel *July's People* argues that hope for a unified post-Apartheid South Africa may depend on an act of interpretation. When a violent revolution forces the liberal white South African Smales family to flee Johannesburg they are invited by July, their long-time black South African employee, to stay in his village. The novel —and indeed the future of white South Africa— hinges upon how July's gesture is interpreted: is he offering hospitality as a friend? Or is he acting out of his obligation as a servant? In other words, how are we to interpret the seemingly contradictory introduction of July as "their servant, their host" (1)? At stake in this question is whether white South Africans can move beyond the social conditioning of hierarchical work relationships, and the white supremacist discourse underlying these relations, allowing for the possibility of interracial friendship and community.

Both *July's People* and J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron* (1990) explore how individual acts of generosity illuminate the socio-political problems facing a post-Apartheid South Africa, in particular how liberal white South Africans fail to recognize and respond to difference. An entrenched colonial discourse on work and long history of interaction limited to work contexts has shaped how South Africans imagine and understand interracial relationships, particularly friendship. The future of South Africa will depend on a radical new understanding of friendship, one which Gordimer claims will require "our finding our way there out of the perceptual clutter of curled photographs of master and servant relationships, the 78 rpms of history repeating the conditioning of the past" (*Essential* 270).

The topics of work and community tend to be treated as separate entities in South African studies, and much can be gained from exploring the ways in which they intersect and consequently impact one another.

The emphasis of this discussion will be on *July's People* and its depiction of Maureen Smales' (the family matriarch) relationship with July; with *Age of Iron*, I will focus on Mrs. Curren's relationship with Vercueil, a potentially mixed race homeless man, and to a lesser degree, her increasingly fraught relationship with her black female housemaid, Florence. It will also include photographs by the South African photographer David Goldblatt and American photographer Rosalind Solomon as visual representations of the physical, emotional, and psychic segregation present in interracial domestic work relationships. The photos offer critiques of liberal white South Africa's utopic imagining of interracial relations within the intimate space of the domestic sphere. Moreover, as visual representations of white consciousness, the photos work in tandem with the novels to explore how the construction of white privilege depends on carefully curated memories and histories.

As works set in the interregnum — the turbulent and violent transition period leading to the toppling of Apartheid— *July's People* and *Age of Iron* reveal the precariousness of white South Africa's privileged position in the national community. Liberal white South Africa must recognize that its ostensibly progressive vision of a more racially-inclusive nation is little more than a white fantasy that seeks to naturalize its own privilege, and mask the disenfranchisement and exploitation of black laborers that make this privilege possible. A crucial part of naturalizing this fantasy is the white South African understanding of interracial friendship. Within this model of friendship liberal white South Africans like Maureen Smales understand black South Africans merely as extensions of themselves, and

never as autonomous beings with their own desires and beliefs— in other words, never as wholly Other. This flawed and narcissistic conception of interracial friendship refuses to acknowledge racial difference, and allows white South Africans the security and comfort of understanding racial Others as the same, rather than as different. *July's People* and *Age of Iron* argue that the liberal white South African model of interracial friendship is premised on sameness rather than difference and seeks to maintain white privilege; moreover, interracial friendship will only possible if the white community develops a greater openness to Otherness and accepts the vulnerability that comes with trusting their fellow black South Africans.

I. From Host to Guest: Navigating the New Hierarchies of Post-Apartheid South Africa

Both *July's People* and *Age of Iron* envision a South Africa that is grappling with the upheaval and reversal of the entrenched power dynamics of Apartheid. The novels dramatize these shifting hierarchies, and the undoing of such segregational policies as the Homeland system, through the concept of hospitality. Although it was published thirteen years before the end of Apartheid, *July's People* (1981) anticipates the demise of the oppressive system: the novel begins when a violent, widespread revolt has lead to the toppling of the ruling National Party and white South Africa is trapped in South Africa, at the mercy of the black South African population. The threat of violence forces the Smales family to flee Johannesburg with their longtime employee, a black South African man named July. The narrative begins as July assumes his role as host to the Smales in his village, several hundred miles outside the city in one of the former black South African Homelands. This vision of the post-Apartheid nation imagines a South Africa without the Homeland or "Bantustan"

System, a policy that politically and economically disenfranchised black South Africans, making them undesired guests in their own country. Established in 1959 by the Bantu Self-Government Act, the Homeland System entailed the creation of eight (later expanded to ten) Bantu Homelands, where black South Africans were forcibly relocated to their respective Homelands based on their supposed ethnicity (these ethnic categories were determined by white officials). Black South Africans were robbed of their South African citizenship when they were made nationals of their respective homelands. Moreover, because viable land and employment were scarce in the Bantus the black community was dependent on white employers, and were treated as a cheap and exploitable pool of excess migrant labor (Worden 11-112). Prior to the action of *July's People* July is a guest in the Smales household because he is a servant, and a guest in South Africa because he is a black man. When the novel begins this system is undone, and the power structure is inverted such that July has the authority to host, and the Smales must come to terms with their new positions as his guests. *Age of Iron* uses a different angle on the metaphor of hospitality to raise similar questions about the white South African's authority as host. Mrs. Curren's Cape Town residence is symbolic of the South African nation and her black employee, Florence, is a guest much like Gordimer's July. The novel does indicate, however, that Florence does not necessarily view herself as a guest in the Cape Town house, despite the fact that she has no legal claim. Florence occasionally contests Mrs. Curren's decisions about who should be allowed as a guest in the house, and they clash about whether Florence's son's friend, John, or the stranger, Vercueil, should be allowed to stay. In these instances Florence asserts the authority of a host who decides whether or not to offer hospitality to visitors. Although she eventually accepts Mrs. Curren's final decisions, Florence's behavior implies that she

considers herself a rightful member of the household, and her claims ultimately undermine Mrs. Curren's authority as host. The arrival of a new (ostensibly) mixed-race stranger, Vercueil, raises even greater questions about Mrs. Curren's authority as host, or her right to claim ownership of the house and by extension, South Africa.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty of navigating this inchoate post-Apartheid landscape is the fact that the ostensibly clear-cut communal divisions generated by racial segregation are now blurred and subject to re-interpretation. The title *July's People* essentially sets up the novel's driving question: who are July's "people"? Or perhaps more so, who *could* his people be? The obvious answer is of course July's village, whom he introduces "with a collective sweep in terms of kinship and not by name" (*July's* 16). Another possibility is raised, however, when the Smales are referred to as "his white people" (23). This may be an ironic jab at the Smales, who presume to have some sort of claim on July's social life, but dismissing it as such would be too simplistic an interpretation. When July welcomes the Smales to his village he raises the possibility that friendship and community, or one's "people," may not be solely defined by blood or filiation (and implicitly, sameness). Whether or not the Smales may legitimately be considered July's people is tied up in the question of whether he is "their servant, their host" (1). The parallel structure and equal syntactic weight of this opposition suggests that July's relationship with the Smales will be difficult if not impossible to fully break down. July's "people" ultimately depends on whether the Smales have a strictly professional relationship with July or whether they are friends as well, and whether the two are mutually exclusive. This question is all the more complex given that July has had to traverse between essentially two different worlds, or the highly insulated black and white communities created by such policies as the Homeland

system. The text suggests that individuals who haven't had to navigate these divisions, such as his wife, find it difficult to imagine a more broadly defined community. July's wife cannot fathom why he welcomes the Smales into their home as one would family and friends, and attributes this questionable action to some aspect of "his other life, his other self" that she cannot access (23).

Both novels delve into how the intersection of race and gender complicates the shifting power dynamics of a post-Apartheid transition. The novels shy from a more hegemonic narrative of a white male oppressor and black subaltern in favor of the more complex colonial relationship between white women and black men.[10] As such they focus on white female protagonists, Maureen Smales and Mrs. Curren, respectively. In one of the first indications of impending conflict in *July's People*, the narrator notes that Maureen struggles with "her inability to enter into a relation of subservience with him [July] that she had never had with [her husband] Bam" (101). Maureen is willing to be subservient to Bam, her white husband, but cannot do the same with July, the black man who has a newfound authority as a host. As a colonial (or neocolonial) woman, Maureen occupies an ambiguous position in the South African colonial hierarchy in that she is both an oppressor and one of the oppressed: she is subject to colonial patriarchy but also participates in the subjugation of the local black population (Driver 189). This would suggest that she, as a woman subjugated by patriarchy, might have on some level identified with July, a man subjugated by racism. It also sheds light on why Maureen is unable to be subservient to July: she enjoyed the security

[10] A subaltern, as defined by Gayatri Spivak in her canonical essay "Can the Subaltern Speak? (1985), is a politically, economically, socially, marginalized individual whose voice is denied a place in hegemonic discourse. The intersecting systems of racism and sexism complicate July's position as a subaltern: while he is oppressed by racism he still enjoys the privileges of being a man in a sexist society.

and superiority granted to her by her privileged position as a white South African woman who was his boss. Her relationship with July has always been shaped by the racist and sexist discourse operating in South Africa, but when the clear hierarchy of a business relationship is lost and she becomes his guest, she struggles to assert her identity and privilege. The intersecting systems of racism and sexism complicate July's position as a subaltern: while he is oppressed by racism he still enjoys male privilege, and Maureen is wary of his claim to authority. Maureen and July's inability to find some shared space of solidarity illustrate the degree to which the oppressive systems of sexism and racism foster interracial competition and interpersonal conflict.

Despite being a self-professed liberal white South African, Maureen often resorts to racist ideologies to compensate for her newfound sense of powerlessness and to justify her presence in July's village. When she finds herself unsure as to whether she has enough authority to approach July's hut, she reasons that "She was a white woman, someone who had employed him, theirs was a working relationship; surely that was her claim" (66). Maureen falls back on the logic of white supremacy and the power dynamics of their prior business relationship in order to reclaim certain privileges; to some degree she also reverts to the role that she played as a girl as the shift boss's daughter (Smith 142). The text's ambivalent— if not highly critical —portrayal of Maureen is representative of several white female characters in Gordimer's other novels. Critics note that Gordimer isn't wholly sympathetic towards white women who are complicit with racial oppression (Driver 196). While her writing tends to affirm the common trope of the woman as a sign of racial oppression, some of her texts suggest that that the metaphorical relation between white women and the colonial other is based on a common ground of dependency rather than

oppression (Driver 200). *July's People* substantiates this reading, as Maureen is most anxious about being dependent on July in a way that she has never had to experience (or rather, acknowledge) before. Gordimer's use of free indirect discourse offers readers glimpses into Maureen's psyche and her fears about her new relationship with July, but the narrative is always relayed through a detached, third-person perspective. Coetzee, on the other hand, inhabits the mind of liberal white South Africa in *Age of Iron* by using a white female first-person narrator. This is a risky choice because it raises concerns as to whether a male author can speak for a female Other, but it is a strategic narrative move. Coetzee often utilizes white female narrators such as *In the Heart of the Country*, *Foe*, and *Elizabeth Costello*. As a politically subversive author he identifies with the white female subject position in South Africa: this voice signifies a narrative middle-ground that gives the author liberty to be self-consciously critical of themselves and their peers, and it is only granted a minimal amount of authority (Wright 24).

Both *Age of Iron* and *July's People* argue that navigating the post-Apartheid landscape will require both the overturning of entrenched hierarchies and the reinterpretation of interracial relationships; *July's People* further suggests that this process will demand greater interracial openness and communication. When Maureen and July disagree about whether he should be in charge of the Smales' family vehicle, their most valuable possession, the two fall silent and Maureen notes that "people who are in the relation they had been in are used to having to interpret what is never said between them" (69). It would appear that the two cannot move beyond the various hierarchies that restricted their communication back in Johannesburg. Even though the novel begins with a radical break from the space of

Apartheid they still occupy the same ambiguous "relation" as in the past, and have yet to define and articulate it.

Gordimer was very aware of the politics underlying her call for greater interracial communication, and faced a great deal of criticism from black scholars for writing about the black South African community. There are two facets of this critique. Firstly, there is concern whether Gordimer can, as a politically privileged white woman, represent black South Africans without speaking for them—and consequently marginalizing their voices. Secondly, critics question whether Gordimer can ever escape a dominant white consciousness and create complex representations of black South Africans that are granted the same psychological depth as white characters, and aren't reduced to superficial, racist stereotypes. African studies and post-colonial scholars are sharply divided on whether her insight comes from a single racial perspective or whether she is able to transcend this limitation. Critics arguing the former claim that her novels represent the dominant bourgeois ideology of the educated elite of white South Africa, and that they either marginalize or efface subaltern discourse (Uraizee 14). Her inability to escape a solely white consciousness is commonly attributed to the fact that either South African political conditions trapped her within her own world, or that she was unable to break free of the hegemonic western consciousness. When asked whether a white writer such as herself should write about black South Africans Gordimer argued that:

> There are whole areas of the human experience, in work situations […..] where blacks and whites have been observing one another and interacting for nearly 305 years. I challenge my challenger to deny that there are things we know about

each other that are never spoken, but are to be written- and received with such amazement and consternation, on both sides, of having been found out. (*Essential* 279)

Gordimer maintains that her responsibility as a writer is to share her insights about interracial relationships. The friction from July and Maureen's attempts to navigate their new relationship sheds light on the hierarchies and barriers that ensure these observations "are never spoken" about. It illustrates how this silence has lead to, particularly among white South Africans, a blindness to difference and false assumptions about racial Others. Gordimer is aware of the difficulty that she faces as a white writer and knowledge-producer, and recognizes inherent limitations in her perspective due to the fact that "we [whites] actually see blacks differently, which includes not seeing" (*Interregnum* 21).

As the concerns about racial perspective in Gordimer's texts would suggest, one of the greatest dangers of "having to interpret what is never said" is that this act of interpretation is necessarily subjective. Indeed, this problem of perspective fuels the question of whether July is providing hospitality to the Smales as a friend or as an employee. The central conflict of the novel is triggered when, several days into their stay with July, Maureen realizes that she and July may understand their current relationship in very different terms. When July calls attention to her behavior as his employer in Johannesburg she attributes her shortcomings to just "how people are" and claims that "That's got nothing to do with now. That's over" (71). July "flickered his eyes" and interjects:

—How you say its over—You not going to pay me, this month?—

> Pay you!—She glowed and flashed. He continued a kind of fastidious pretence of insensitivity to a coarse and boring assault.—You know we can pay you what you used to get, but we can't pay you for—
>
> —African people like money.—The insult of refusing to meet her on any but the lowest category of understanding.
>
> —You know quite well what I mean…For what's happened. It's different here. You're not a servant.—
>
> —I'm the good boy for your house, itsn't it? —He made a show of claiming a due — (71)

Maureen claims that July is no longer an employee, and implies that they are outside the hierarchy of a boss/employee relationship. She could pay him for his work but, without stating outright, she insinuates that they can't pay him for hospitality he is offering as a friend. Earlier she had mused that the Smales might have properly "visited him [July] as a friend" (38), and this moment indicates that she assumes July similarly considers her a friend. The unspoken thoughts in this dialogue — indicated by the ellipses and, at times, dashes suggesting interjections — build up to what should be a climactic act of articulation, but neither Maureen nor July explicitly define their current relationship.

The most glaring omission or unspoken component in this conversation is July's perspective, and while this has fueled criticism of the novel it can be considered a strategic move on Gordimer's part. One of the most poignant examples of the backlash against *July's People* occurred in 2001 in the Gautentag province of South Africa, when a commission of civil servants was established to evaluate whether texts in the twelfth grade curriculum

adequately embodied post-Apartheid values of egalitarianism and tolerance. The committee recommended that the book be removed from the curriculum because it was "deeply racist, superior and patronizing" (Swarns). Widespread outcry from South African scholars, artists, and government officials meant that this ban never was put into effect, but the committee's logic is evidence that the nuances of the novel's complex narrative style are not accessible to all readers. One of the most difficult and perhaps inaccessible narrative elements of *July's People* is Gordimer's use of free indirect discourse, a form of third-person narration that allows the thoughts of certain characters to filter into the narrative commentary. The fact that the third-person narrator of *July's People* slips in and out of Maureen's consciousness but never makes July's thoughts accessible, may reflect Gordimer's fear of speaking for July, the Spivakean subaltern.[11] This narrative style may also be an attempt to expose readers to Maureen's limited perspective so that they may recognize her blindness and ignorance. Superficial interpretations of this moment might conflate Maureen's racist and narcissistic thoughts with the third-person narrator, and assume that it is the narrator, and not Maureen, that condemns July's "coarse and boring assault" and refusal to engage with others on anything but a "lowest category of understanding." Perhaps the Gautentag education commission came to such a reading when they claimed that the novel didn't offer positive representations of a black man. Yet, it is precisely these moments where there is a dissonance between what is said and left unsaid, both by the narrator and the characters in conversation with one another, that readers must unpack the omissions and silences. These

[11] Though Coetzee's writing is criticized for being evasive and less overtly political than Gordimer's, his texts are clearly preoccupied with the question of whether he (a white male author) is speaking for the racial other. This anxiety is present in *Foe*, where the white female protagonist Susan Barton obsessively tries to give voice to the mute black character, Friday. It also manifests in the reticent characters of Vercueil in *Age of Iron* and the barbarian girl of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, both of which occupy the position of the unknowable Other.

interactions illustrate Maureen's limited perspective and offer a glimpse of the nuance of July's character. This depth is hinted at when July "flickered his eyes": he appears to be reacting to Maureen's claims and planning his next move. His assertion that "African people like money," isn't necessarily a vulgar representation of a black man because such a simplistic reading doesn't acknowledge the many ways that July cleverly plays into and subverts Maureen's racist beliefs and sense of superiority.

Whether or not July really expects payment for his hospitality depends on whether his demand is made in earnest or whether it is actually an attempt to assert himself. His self-disparaging comment about being a "good boy" aligns with his consistent use of the term "master," a title that the Smales loathed to hear. Despite the fact that "Maureen and Bam tried to get him to drop the Simon Legree term", July "wouldn't, couldn't, as if there were no term to replace it, none that would express exactly what the relationship between Bam and him was, for him" (111). The Smales are aware of the cultural weight of the term "master," and associate it with Simon Legree, the reviled slave owner of the great American anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Yet, they see no connection between slave ownership and their relationship with July. The Smales condescendingly attribute his insistence on using the term to his childish stubbornness, and they remain oblivious to the fact that he is drawing a connection between his present situation and South Africa's colonial past. July's use of the emasculating label "good boy" harkens to colonial stereotypes about African men and calls attention to the ways that the Smales tend to infantilize him.

July often plays the role of the servant to remind his employers of the hierarchies that exist between them, differences that the Smales are completely ignorant of. Maureen is

angry that July reduces their supposed friendship to the "lowest category of understanding," or a business contract based on obligation for services rendered.

She fails to realize that she has gone too far in insisting that she and July are no longer bound as boss and employee, and that July falls back into his performance of being a "good boy" in order to create distance between them. He may also struggle to perceive his relationship with the family as more than one of business, and tries to foreclose the possibility that it is more personal or ambiguous by asserting the opposite (Smith 151). The text suggests that from July's perspective there has been no definite break from the white supremacy of Apartheid. Even when they are relocated to a space ostensibly apart from the system like July's village, both July and the Smales seem to fall back on the same hierarchies. Rather than marking a rupture from the past, this representation of the interregnum illustrates how South Africa's colonial history has a firm hold on the present. More specifically, it reveals how a rich colonial discourse on work informs why Maureen and July interpret their relationship in such radically different terms.

II. Race, work, and belonging in the discourse of the Cape

It may be tempting to dismiss July and Maureen's disagreement as a personal conflict, but it is a politically charged encounter that locates them within a long-established discourse on work and colonial power. Indeed, the history informing this moment goes back to the "discourse of the Cape," a body of proto-anthropological writing produced by seventeenth-century travelers who visited the Cape colony. In *White Writing* (1988), a collection of essays that explores certain problematic components of South African literature, Coetzee argues that white South Africans have justified their supremacy by appealing to

stereotypes that date back to the first colonial encounters between Europeans explorers and African tribes. These stereotypes positioned the native African as idle and lazy and the European as productive and industrious; white settlers appealed to the Protestant work ethic, and its privileging of industry and hard work, as a justification for their domination. White supremacy was cemented by the assertion that only those who could work and make the land productive deserved to reside in, or claim belonging in, South Africa. Gordimer's novel *The Conservationist (1974)* illustrates how these beliefs continued to function as instruments of neocolonial power within the Afrikaner nationalist discourse that underpinned Apartheid. The novel's protagonist, a white South African businessman named Mehring, justifies his control over a rural farm and its black laborers with the belief that only he can properly steward the land —and by metaphoric extension, all of South Africa— so as to make it as productive as possible. This productivity can only be achieved, according to white supremacists like Mehring, by forcing otherwise "lazy" or "idle" natives to work, and accordingly the discourse of the Cape justified forcing black South Africans into a system of wage labor.

Some of the very material consequences of the discourse of the Cape include the Apartheid policies of the Homeland and pass systems, both of which were created to exploit the black labor force and further delegitimize black South African claims of citizenship and belonging. The pass laws were a form of internal passport system that sought to monitor and control the movement of black South Africans. Under the pass system black South Africans could only reside in white areas if they obtained documentation demonstrating that they were currently employed by a white person. [12] The pass and Homeland systems worked in

[12] The pass system extended as far back as 1797 with the British Cape Colony. The 1923 Natives (or Urban Areas) Act (later renamed the 1952 Black Laws Amendment Act) deemed metropolitan areas white and

conjunction with one another to deny black Africans the right or authority to legally reside in South Africa, and created an artificial and precarious right to "belong" through work. Although Gordimer's and Coetzee's texts were written at different historical moments —the pass laws were abolished five years after *July's People* and four years before *Age of Iron* were published — they grapple with the politics of the system and its enduring impact on how South Africans understand belonging and community. The figure of Vercueil in *Age of Iron* tests the boundaries of the Cape Town community because he is a transient whose ambiguous racial identity makes it difficult to categorize him within a particular racial group. His homelessness initially aligns him with the thousands of homeless black laborers who wandered from the Homelands in search of work. It is only when Mrs. Curren assures a nosey neighbor that he is allowed on her property because he is an employee that his presence in the neighborhood is considered legitimate. Mrs. Curren's Cape Town residence is a microcosmic representation of White South Africa as a false community of privilege, and Florence and Vercueil are the internal Others who can only reside within this community so long as they work for Mrs. Curren. White South Africans like Mrs. Curren legitimize their privilege and status as members— while justifying the exclusion and exploitation of black South Africans— by appealing to the racist colonial ideology that Europeans are better workers than black South Africans, and therefore more entitled to the land. Although the contexts are very different, the racist colonial discourse of nation building and work in white South Africa echoes the anti-Semitic nationalist discourse of Joyce's early twentieth-century Ireland. In both discourses, privilege is constructed by subjecting internal Others to an

required black South Africans to have passes in order to enter and reside in them. Pass laws stipulated where and for how long black South Africans were legally able to reside in a designated white area, and exceptions were only made for individuals who either were born in or resided in a white area their entire life, or for individuals who had worked for employers in that area for ten years or more (Worden 73-5).

artificial and precarious right to "belong" through work. For Jewish people like Leopold Bloom in Joyce's Ireland, assimilation into such a community of privilege meant accepting the precarious position of being an internal Other, someone who is simultaneously a member of, and outsider in, the community. Internal Others like Bloom oscillate between being hosts and guests, and are only welcome in Ireland so long as they are perceived as productive and equally contributing members of the work force (Nadel 61). For black South Africans under Apartheid, assimilation meant accepting the vulnerability and precarity of being an internal Other in white South Africa, and only residing so long as they can work and validate their presence.

Vercueil differs from his fellow black South African migrants, however, in that he refuses participate in a system of wage labor, and through this refusal to work he rejects the notion that he must justify his right to be part of the South African nation. Even though the Protestant work ethic is utilized to rationalize the exploitation of black South Africans, *Age of Iron* suggests that it is pervasive enough that it also functions within the black community as an ideological means of policing its own borders. The novel resists explicitly racializing Vercueil, and the only indication that he may be colored (an Apartheid classification for a mixed race individual) is offered when a black youth criticizes Vercueil's drunkeness and lethargy with the claim that "They are making you into a dog" (*Age* 45). The youth insinuates that Vercueil's dependency on alcohol and his refusal to be productive is an act of submission, whereby he lets himself be controlled and degraded by the white community. Refusing to be productive is construed as a sign of weakness and relinquishing of agency. This view is reiterated by Florence, who challenges Mrs. Curren's decision to offer Vercueil hospitality with the claim that such a lazy "good for nothing" should not be allowed to reside

on the property (46). Neither of these members of the black community would defend the racist work policies of Apartheid, and yet they both maintain that Vercueil's refusal to be productive is an act of submission, when it could be construed as the contrary. Much like Michael K., the protagonist of Coetzee's novel *The Life and Times of Michael K*., Vercueil refuses to participate in a system of wage labor. This stance brazenly flouts the racist discourse of the Cape and the belief that he must justify his presence in South Africa. Neither the black or white communities seem to recognize Vercueil's refusal to work as more than a sign of apathy or an act of submission— both fail to acknowledge that it is a striking form of resistance.

Vercueil's refusal to participate in the discourse of Cape angers Mrs. Curren and forces her to recognize the narcissism and entitlement underlying her understanding ostensibly selfless acts of generosity. In the beginning of Mrs. Curren's and Vercueil's relationship, she refuses to give him money unless he performs yard work, claiming that they "can't proceed on the basis of charity" because he doesn't "deserve it" (*Age* 21). While charity typically refers to institutionalized generosity, Mrs. Curren uses it more broadly to categorize gift-giving between individuals that adheres to a particular hierarchy. Charity is, in her mind, an act of generosity based on social obligation between the wealthy and poor. It is based on reciprocity, where the recipient must prove his or her merit to the doner, in Vercueil's case by demonstrating a willingness to work. Coetzee traces this understanding of generosity back to the Reformation, where the "war on social parasitism was set in train" and "even almsgiving was condemned as a 'great sin' in that it encouraged people to evade God's edict on work" (White 20). Mrs. Curren is infuriated when Vercueil challenges this logic with the question "Who deserves anything?" (*Age* 21). Vercueil makes the same kind of

critique that Jacques Derrida offers in *Given Time* in that he rejects the notion that gifts must be justified in any way, such as by demonstrating the recipient's need. Generosity that is motivated by an act of calculation or reasoning, or for that matter a sense of social obligation, inserts individuals within an economy of indebtedness. Ideally gifts should, according to Derrida, disrupt any reciprocity or economy, and while this may be an impossible ideal, all individuals should strive towards it. Vercueil's refusal to participate in such an economy creates such a disruption and puts him at odds with Mrs. Curren and her understanding of generosity. Their disagreement about whether generosity must be earned or justified demonstrates how gift-giving is far from a politically neutral act— in the context of oppressive and unjust societies, its political significance is paramount.

Mrs. Curren's liberal white South African understanding of generosity is revealed as a sham: it isn't the selfless, community-building act that she presumed it to be, but a narcissistic (and albeit unconscious) attempt to justify her white privilege. When she asks "what is the point of charity when it does not go from heart to heart?" (*Age* 22), she voices a desire for a mode of giving that offers an illusory sense of self-redemption and self-gratification. Moreover, this understanding is premised on the belief that gift exchanges occurs between two individuals and the political, social, and economic conditions informing this interaction are erased by the fact that a common humanity is established (by the connection of giving "heart to heart"). Needless to say, this mode of giving simultaneously elides the political conditions of poverty that she, the doner, may be complicit with (Tegla 93), and Mrs. Curren's potential monetary gifts are made possible by the exploitation of black South Africans like Vercueil. Mrs. Curren's heartfelt pleas of giving "heart to heart" fall flat because ultimately her logic masks systemic exploitation with a weak facade of

generosity. This brief interaction between two individuals taps into the greater narrative of colonialism by highlighting how the oppression and unjust systems of colonization were disguised as acts of generosity, wherein the colonizer bestows the gift of civilization and Christianity onto the colonized. Mrs. Curren's offer of hospitality is similarly problematized in terms of a host/parasite relationship, a metaphor that was commonly used to validate white supremacy in the cape. Mrs. Curren condemns Vercueil's idleness and asserts her right to the privilege of home ownership by claiming to have earned it (Sanchez-Vizcaino 131); in a similar manner white South Africans justified the exploitation of black South African laborers who would otherwise ostensibly behave as parasites. One of the greater ironies of *July's People* is that outside the constructed space of Apartheid the Smales become— or more appropriately, are revealed as— parasites dependent on the labor of their hosts.

In order to sustain the illusion of this host/parasite relation white South Africans had to willfully ignore the black labor that made their privilege possible; artistic representations of South Africa play an important role in this process. In *White Writing* Coetzee explores how white South African writing adopts the Western tradition of the pastoral, and modifies the genre such that white labor is made visible and black labor is occluded. *Age of Iron* addresses this generic tradition, which Coetzee calls the "white pastoral," when Mrs. Curren reflects on a photo of her family in her father's garden. She can't remember seeing her father tend to the garden, and questions whether he had the right to call it his own:

> If not he, then whose was the garden rightfully? Who are the ghosts
> and who are the presences? Who, outside the picture, leaning on their rakes,
> leaning on their spades, waiting to get back to work, lean also against the edge of the
> rectangle, bending it, bursting it in? (111)

The sense of security and pleasantness evoked by this representation of white South African domesticity is undermined by Mrs. Curren's growing realization that the black laborers have been cropped out of the image; their ghostly presence gives rise to a "new kind of negative in which we begin to see what used to lie outside the frame, occulted" (112). By participating in the tradition of the white pastoral, this photo "defends a territory where the disturbing realities of land and labor can be bracketed off, and questions of justice and power translated into questions of legal succession and personal relationships between masters and servants" (White 11). It offers a secure and utopic space in which the white South African community can disavow its dependency on black labor, and distance itself from this uncomfortable reality by containing it within hierarchies and legal systems. The tunnel vision that characterizes Mrs. Curren's photo is exemplary of the many representations of Apartheid that were produced by and complicit with the system, texts that were constructed so as to reaffirm white supremacy and validate white privilege. Mrs. Curren's childhood photo and her memories of her youth illustrate how the nation-building efforts of Others are selectively "forgotten" through the construction of artistic representations and carefully curated memories. Those who enjoy the privileges of being able to claim membership in a national community must actively forget the exploitation and nation-building work of internal Others in order to naturalize or normalize their own privilege. The black labor that went into producing the wealthy white South African nation has been selectively forgotten— cropped out of a photo and repressed in Mrs. Curren's memory—until it surfaces and forces Mrs. Curren to confront her participation in the system of oppression.

While artistic representations may naturalize privilege though a process of selective omission and forgetting, the novel suggests that these works also have the ability to

defamiliarize and question ostensibly natural social orders, reminding us that privilege is a precarious and artificial construction. Representations created by those who viewed South Africa through the eyes of an outsider, such as American photographer Rosalind Solomon, offer such contrasting viewpoints. In *July's People,* Maureen experiences an epiphany similar to Mrs. Curren's when she contemplates a photo of her as a child that was featured in a *Life* magazine issue on "white herrenvolk attitudes and life-styles" (*July's* 33). An American photographer captured a young Maureen with her black housemaid, Lydia, who would arrange her work schedule so she could accompany Maureen home from school. Although Maureen remembers a fond and affectionate relationship with Lydia, her anxiety about the uncertain terms of her relationship with July causes her to return to the photograph and reassess her assumptions. Was her memory of Lydia as a friend an accurate memory, or was it a distortion of a more harsh reality? When Lydia offered to carry her schoolbag the day that the photographer took their photo, did she make the offer as a servant or as a friend? Maureen wonders whether the photographer saw something that she was blind to, whether "the book, placing the pair in its context, [gave] the reason she and Lydia, in their affection and ignorance, didn't know" (33). That is, whether the photographer was better able to parse the nature of their relationship with one another. As a representation of interracial work relationships during Apartheid, the novel *July's People* functions much like the *Life* magazine photo: it attempts to place July and Maureen Smales into a new context that forces them to interpret and articulate their relationship. Although Maureen rather arrogantly presumes that Lydia was, in her "affection and ignorance" similarly oblivious to this concern, the image certainly blurs the lines between friend and employee.

Figure 1. "Mother, daughter, maid" © Rosalind Solomon, www.rosalindsolomon.com

The image of white domesticity presented in Rosalind Solomon's 1988 photo "Mother, daughter, maid" (Fig. 1), offers a less ambiguous reading of black and white work relations, and it isn't clouded by the "affection and ignorance" that distorts Maureen's vision. The black maid and her white employers are divided by a pronounced hierarchical division: not only do they occupy separate halves of the photographic space but the white women

enjoy an elevated position over the black woman, who occupies a servile position on the floor. While this moment marks the intimacy and affection between a white mother and daughter— and their obliviousness to those outside this small sphere of security and comfort— the black maid remains physically and emotionally detached to the point that her presence seems forced. The maid is present and yet not present, bringing new light to Mrs. Curren's anxious question of "Who are the ghosts and who are the presences" (*Age* 112). The relationship between the individuals in the foreground gains greater depth from the framed photographs of white family members and drawings of pastoral scenes adorning the furniture and walls in the background. Unlike the purely edenic memory presented by these background images, and for that matter Mrs. Curren's photo, Solomon's image taps into these idealized narratives only to call them into question. The photo seems to offer a black South African perspective of the maid's relationship with her employer, and there appears to be little "affection and ignorance" on the maid's part (*Age* 33).

Ultimately Mrs. Curren's and Maureen's epiphanies are not just about the photos themselves but rather about the ways in which their biased perspectives and highly selective memories seek to mask their dependency on black labor. When Mrs. Curren offers to drive Florence to her husband's workplace she gets a glimpse of the world of black labor just outside of the secure, white space she comfortably resides in. As she watches Florence's husband work at a slaughterhouse she is gripped by the "universe of labor" out of her sight (*Age* 44). Uncomfortable with the realization that her privilege comes at the expense of black workers like Florence and her husband, Mrs. Curren projects leisure and domestic bliss on their personal life by imagining Florence's family enjoying a lazy weekend. She asserts that "All of this happened. All of this must have happened. It was an ordinary afternoon in

Africa: lazy weather, a lazy day. Almost it is possible to say: This is how life should be" (44). The desperation and anxiety underlying this claim stems from fact that she has "witnessed" a South Africa that doesn't conform to the privileged one she has known all her life as a white woman, a South Africa that falls short of "how life should be." Mrs. Curren's fearful response to this gained knowledge sheds light on why Maureen so desperately wants to believe that July is helping them as a friend rather than as an employee. By construing July's labor as an act of generosity rather than wage labor, Maureen can continue to (albeit not consciously) mask the black work that supports her privilege. Projecting friendship on their relationship allows her to assimilate July's labor into a palatable form that fits her understanding of herself as a progressive opponent of Apartheid.

Ultimately the white supremacist insecurities underlying the discourse of the Cape distort how white South Africans view black Others. In one of her many flawed acts of interpreting what July left "unsaid," Maureen struggles with the fact that "He was not a simple man, they could not read him. They had had experience of that, back there, for fifteen years; but then they had put it down to the inevitable, distorting nature of dependency- his dependency on them" (60). This moment illustrates Gordimer's claim that "we [whites] actually *see* blacks differently, which includes *not seeing*" (*Interregnum* 21), in that it suggests that the real "distorting nature of dependency" is, contrary to Maureen's claim, the result of her own dependency on black labor. July may enjoy a newfound authority as a host but Maureen is unable to "see" him as more than a stereotype from the discourse of the Cape, and she struggles to maintain control by asserting her knowledge over him through infantilizing stereotypes. When confronted with the loss of her white privilege, Maureen appeals to the racist discourse made this privilege possible in the first place: she reinscribes

July and herself into a hierarchical division where whiteness is associated with autonomy and power, and blackness is associated with dependency and helplessness. This ideological mechanism of asserting privilege is not unlike that utilized by bourgeois Dubliners in Joyce's early twentieth-century Ireland. The middle class Irish resorted to anti-Semitic stereotypes in order to validate their privilege as Irish nationals and marginalize those who were deemed foreign or ethnically different. The bourgeois Dubliners assert their supremacy by appealing to the stereotype that Jews are parasites who survive off of the resources and work of others, and in doing so they inscribe Irish Jews into inferior positions of dependency.

In a more concrete sense Maureen's distorted perceptions of July reveal her own insecurities about occupying the uncertain and vulnerable position of a guest in July's village. In a more abstract sense they represent the fears of a white community that, when envisioning a post-Apartheid South Africa, must acknowledge its vulnerable position of guest in a majority black country. *July's People* suggests that the future of this white South African community will depend on its efforts to truly "see blacks differently," or their ability to recognize that the Other can't be read, much less understood and known. As a white writer Gordimer feels a particular responsibility to articulate her observations about interracial relationships and the knowledge that the white and black communities have about each other, things "that are never spoken, but are to be written" (*Essential* 279). A great part of her insight comes from her recognition that white South Africans too readily assume that they know or understand their black counterparts, and that these assumptions blind them to the possibility of being able to "see blacks differently."

III. Friendship as white narcissism: difference and distance

One of the reasons why Maureen blindly assumes that she and July are friends rather than just work associates is because she is unable to perceive his singularity and otherness. *July's People* suggests that this is, at least in part, due to the fact that segregation limited a great deal of interracial interaction to spaces of work, or homogenous white communities. Maureen is overwhelmed by the extreme poverty and cultural difference that she confronts when she first sees July's rural village. She concludes that "no fiction could compete with what she was finding she did not know, could not have imagined or discovered through imagination" (*July's* 29). The self-referential note on fiction may point to Gordimer's anxiety as a writer who was aware of the fact that she may never be able to transcend a solely white consciousness. On a broader level it may also reflect her fear as an activist that even as powerful a tool as fiction has a limited ability to cultivate among its readers greater awareness and responsiveness to otherness. Maureen has lead such an insular life that it seems even her imagination— perhaps the one faculty which could help her see beyond the world she knows, its sameness, and imagine even the possibility of difference— wouldn't have been able to help her recognize July's otherness.

The degree to which Maureen is trapped in an ethical imaginary of sameness is revealed by the routine gift exchanges that she would have with July's wife prior to the action of the novel. She sends the woman whom she had "never seen, never imagined," "whatever it seemed surely any woman, no matter where or how she lived, could use: a nightgown, a handbag" (16). These exchanges suggest that it is not just the act of giving but also what you give that demonstrates your openness to Others and your willingness to

understand difference. Clearly July's life outside of the Smales household was never a topic of conversation and the only July that they knew (or were interested in knowing), was the July that fit into their world. Maureen's ability to imagine another person (even without a gender divide) is limited to a person like herself: middleclass, mobile, with a similar lifestyle and cultural background. This shortcoming reduced the exchanges to an empty routine that failed to generate cross-cultural understanding, exchanges which only seem to reinforce her assumptions about a human sameness based on her own world.

Maureen's insensitivity to difference may also be a result of the liberal ideology of progressive white South Africans that is founded on "uncontested assumptions about human sameness" (Code 208). These assumptions "impede possibilities of knowing people and their situations" and "make it difficult to see how differences make a difference" (Code 208). Maureen takes great pride in being a "conscientious" white South African, but she fails to realize that she tends towards a universal conception of humanity that manifests as an impulse to totalize others and ignore difference in favor of sameness. Often "the polite terminology of tolerance" all "too readily descends into indifference- especially epistemic indifference" (Code 213). The Smales' insensitivity is exacerbated by the fact that they consider themselves fair employers, and the reciprocity of their work relationship with July masks underlying power differentials. July's insistence on using terms such as "master" and "boy" may be his way of calling attention to these differentials and demanding what Judith Butler would call "epistemic justice," or an awareness of how they inadvertently and knowingly do epistemic violence to him by eliding difference. Maureen's universal conception of humanity employs a colorblind logic that later transmutes into the structuring

concept of the ostensibly egalitarian and post-racial "new" South Africa, the notion of "free choice."

The liberal white South African model of interracial friendship presented in both *July's People* and *Age of Iron* offers greater insight into Derrida's warning that friendship based on similarity and proximity will risk egocentric appropriation. The liberal white South African conception of friendship is actually a permutation of the hegemonic model that Derrida identifies throughout western cultures. According to Derrida, these models of friendship are based on a logic of sameness and proximity, where friends resemble one another and difference is not tolerated. As the name suggests, proximity is the collapse of the distance between Self and Other (the fusion of self and other), or a sense of intimacy that is based on likeness or sameness (*Politics 205*). Friendship based on proximity positions the friend as "an impossible ideal—a reflection of oneself and perhaps even of one's own narcissism—but never a threat, never a challenge, never a genuine other" (Lynch 82). Proximity all too easy allows for totalization, or the act of reducing an individual to knowledge, something that can be known or understood. Maureen commits such an act of egocentric appropriation when she fails to recognize July's otherness and, in attempt to mask this difference, assimilates him into a familiar figure, ultimately reducing him to a non-threatening version of herself.

July's People and *Age of Iron* further Derrida's critique of the hegemonic model of friendship by arguing that proximity can also be understood as a sense of intimacy that is based on presumed knowledge of the Other (or knowledge gained through experience). The novels explore the politics of friendship in the context of a post-colonial society where race relations have been shaped by a long history of segregation and work hierarchies. Although

Gordimer maintains that black and white South Africans have learned a lot about each other from "observing one another and interacting for nearly 305 years" (*Essential* 279), *July's People* suggests that this kind of proximity cannot be considered an actual measure of intimacy or friendship. Maureen and Mrs. Curren falsely assume they know their black employees well after having lived and worked side by side for many years. It isn't until they interact with their servants outside the restricted space of white privilege that they are able to recognize the limitations of this kind of knowledge of the Other. Both women are forced to acknowledge the singularity of their black employees when they are reminded that their employees have a community and identity beyond the work sphere. Mrs. Curren reflects on her brief interaction with Florence's brother and is unsettled that he called her his sister, "not Florence. Perhaps I alone in all the world call her Florence. Called her by an alias. Now I was on ground where people were revealed in their true names" (*Age* 101). Mrs. Curren no longer considers herself one of Florence's people: their connection is not one of kinship but an ephemeral one founded on work. Mrs. Curren's alienation from Florence is revealed when she remarks that "Florence" must be a work "alias"— a false name only relevant to a small part of her identity, or her work relationship with Mrs. Curren. Mrs. Curren is similarly unsettled by her glimpse of Florence's home life, so much so that her "mind would not leave the farm, the factory, the enterprise where the husband of the woman who lived side by side with me worked" (44). The sense of detachment voiced here suggests that she has realized that the two women are strangers despite years of having "lived side by side". She is alienated by the recognition that Florence is connected and obligated to a whole community outside of her small, white world. Florence transforms from a familiar companion to the distant and abstract "woman."

Paradoxically, it is only when Maureen and Mrs. Curren become estranged from their black employees that actual friendship with those people becomes possible. Both women are trapped in an ethical imaginary of sameness—where friendship exists as a narcissistic projection— until it is disrupted by a growing recognition of difference. *July's People* and *Age of Iron* argue that interracial friendship must be based on distance rather than proximity, where distance entails "the interruption of all fusion or confusion between you and me" (Dallmayr 567). Distance lies in opposition to proximity and can be interpreted according to Derrida as the "respectful separation" that is needed to prevent totalization and egocentric appropriation (Dallmayr 560). Maureen and Mrs. Curren are anxious about entering into relationships based on distance rather than proximity because they desire the sense of security that comes from ostensibly knowing (or totalizing) the Other. They struggle with the uncertainty and vulnerability that underlie this distance, and as the novels suggest, must learn to trust the Other.

IV. Radical acts of trust and a new South Africa

July's People and *Age of Iron* suggest that one of the greatest obstacles towards building a new South Africa is the lack of trust between different racial groups; in particular the novels are critical of how even the most (professedly) liberal white South Africans are unable to trust their future well being with the greater black community. Trust plays a critical role in every act of hospitality since the host and guest take great risks by being open and vulnerable to one another (*Hospitality* 27), but July's risk is all the greater because his decision could be considered treasonous by black revolutionaries. Maureen assumes that July must be ignorant of the possible consequences to have taken on such a danger to himself

and his family, and this conclusion is perhaps the most striking demonstration of her tendency to infantilize July and undermine his authority. Although she repeatedly claims that July is a loyal and trustworthy employee, Maureen's inability to accept her precarious position as a guest in his village reveals that these professions of faith are empty. The novel suggests that she has mistaken the proximity of their work relationship, and the false sense of intimacy generated by their shared knowledge of each other, as a genuine form of trust.

In contrast to Maureen's understanding of trust, which is based on certainty and knowledge of the other, genuine or ideal trust (according to Derrida) must come from the uncertainty of not knowing the intentions of the Other. When Maureen discovers a couple of Smales' household objects in July's village she concludes that "honesty is how much you know about anybody" (*July's* 36). Her faith in July's honesty is something that is weighed and calculated based on his track record, and it extends only so far as her knowledge of him does. In contrast, Derrida argues in *The Politics of Friendship* that ideally faith in the Other must come from distance rather than proximity: it "cannot be measured " nor "aligned on knowledge" gained from experience (195). Derrida's imperative that "I must trust the Other more than myself" (*Politics* 195) emphasizes the necessity of accepting the vulnerability that comes from trusting another. The Smales are unwilling to accept this risk when July requests the keys to their vehicle because they would be relinquishing what little control they still have over their fates. The car is their only means of mobility and escape, and therefore their last real means of asserting their agency. Maureen initially complies with July's request out of a sense of obligation because they "owe him everything" (58). The narrator observes that "it didn't weigh against the keys of the vehicle for them" (58). Maureen's thoughts filter in through the free indirect discourse with the response, "Oh she didn't deny that. She was

setting out the facts before herself, a currency whose value had been revised. It was not only the bits of paper money that could not supply what was missing here" (58). The prevalence of words that suggest calculation and exchange, such as "weigh", "facts", "currency", and "value", all indicate that Maureen's decision comes from a desire for repay July for his past help, and this decision was based on her knowledge. The conclusion that something is missing seems to come from the third-person narrator, who is critical of Maureen's belief that she is obligated to trust July because she owes him. Such a view reduces trust to a commodity in a reciprocal exchange much like the "bits of paper money" that she uses to repay him for supplies. What exactly is "missing" in Maureen's logic is illuminated by Gordimer's assertion that "the facts are always less than what really happened" (*Conversations* 76). Maureen makes a decision based on what she knows, facts that are as certain and palpable as the paper money or car keys that she offers July in exchange for his services, but what is missing is genuine trust— something intangible, an incalculable excess that defies the closed economy of reciprocity.

Maureen's understanding of trust opposes the Derridean ideal in that it is predicated upon control and power rather than being based on risk and vulnerability. July admonishes Maureen for being paranoid about relinquishing the car keys and points out that over his years of service "you tell everybody you trust your good boy" but "you don't say you trust for me" (70). She initially insists that July has possession of the keys as a friend and then angrily questions whether July is acting up because he is worried that she will reveal to his wife that he had a romantic partner in Johannesburg. The knowledge that Maureen possesses about July's personal and professional life gained over the past fifteen years, or the proximity of their work relationship, becomes a commodity that can be leveraged in order to assert her

power over July and to shift their current power dynamic in her favor. The reminder of this secret forces them into an intimate space and we are told "they stepped across fifteen years of no-man's land, her words shoved them and they were together, duelists who will feel each other's breath before they turn away the regulation number of spaces, or conspirators who will never escape what each knows of the other" (72). No positive bond or sense of togetherness seems to come from the fact that the two are inextricably bound by this knowledge; rather, they are transformed into antagonists, duelists facing the possibility of mutual destruction, or conspirators threatened by a shared secret. The slippage between July's personal and professional identities, and between his personal and professional relations with the Smales, becomes manifest in the untrodden space of this "no-mans land." Their antagonistic relation is the product of fifteen years of silence, fifteen years of having to "interpret what [was] never said, between them" (69).

Maureen's distorted understanding of trust is inextricably linked to the fact that she only sees July as a non-threatening projection of her own desires; the novel suggests that actual friendship will only be possible if she learns to recognize and accept his otherness. The more July asserts his otherness and deviates from being a reflection of herself, the less Maureen is able to cling to this self-serving conception of friendship. She fails the ultimate test when conflict escalates to the point that the two view each other as potential threats— as duelists and conspirators— and Maureen lashes out aggressively rather than keeping faith that July will not harm her. She fails to, following Derrida's line of thought, respect the fact that a friend must be a potential enemy, and recognize that "the enemy is then my best friend. He hates me in the name of friendship" (*Political* 72). Hatred prevents an individual from totalizing and reducing a friend to a narcissistic reflection by maintaining the distance needed

to respect an individual's otherness. *July's People* and *Age of Iron* highlight how conscientious white South Africans must move beyond a model of interracial friendship based on a logic of sameness (or whiteness) and embrace one premised on difference and distance. Any possibility of friendship on Maureen's part is dashed when she refuses to respect July's potential as an enemy, and accept the vulnerability that accompanies such an act of faith. Accepting that a friend may become an enemy "imposes distance between friends, but [….] this distances creates a separation from which relation develops" (Lynch 120).

In contrast to Maureen, who arguably never learns to trust July, Mrs. Curren is transformed by her relationship with Vercueil. When Mrs. Curren first meets Vercueil, her understanding of generosity is a narcissistic, self-serving validation of her own white privilege. Vercueil refuses to participate in this closed gift-giving economy and challenges her conception of generosity with the defiant question, "Who deserves anything?" (*Age* 21). Over time his refusal to participate forces Mrs. Curren to recognize how her understanding of generosity has been distorted by entitlement and privilege, and it pushes her to a more ethical and less self-centered relationship with Others. As Mrs. Curren succumbs to cancer she learns to accept her dependency on Vercueil and gives him total power over her future. By entrusting Vercueil with the task of mailing her final letters to her daughter when she dies, Mrs. Curren is not only relinquishing authorial control over her story, but also risking her last connection with her daughter. Whether or not Vercueil follows her instructions will be unverifiable (at least to the deceased Mrs. Curren) and will determine whether her story and legacy lives on with the daughter. Mrs. Curren recognizes that "It is a wager on trust […..] If there is the slightest breath of trust, obligation, piety left behind when I am gone he will

surely take it"(*Age* 130). She concludes that it is precisely "Because I cannot trust Vercueil I must trust him" (130). Unlike Maureen, Mrs. Curren has realized that her faith cannot be based on knowledge and certainty, and she respects the fact that Vercueil may very well refuse to comply. Coetzee scholar Derek Attridge maintains that the immense stakes of her gesture rest on the fact that she is placing her future in the hands of a man who appears to be "unaffected by the obligations of human relationship or community" (95). Moreover, his "unpredictability and unreadability, his imperviousness to the logic of an economy of labor and reward, service and indebtedness" suggest that there is little reason to assume that he will comply (Attridge 95). Like July, Vercueil is the figure of the wholly (or to some extent, racial) Other, and his unscrutability forces Mrs. Curren to "remain in the dark about his inner world" (Attridge 97). Attridge finds Mrs. Curren's remarkable gesture of faith exemplary of the fact that "There is only one kind of trust that deserves the name: trust in the other" (98). Her faith in Vercueil operates on a very literal level as well, since her rapid physical deterioration makes her completely dependent on his support and care. In the process of making herself vulnerable to Vercueil she sheds her narcissistic view of him as a parasite in her home and recognizes that their cohabitation is "mutually elected" (*Age* 170).

The friendship that develops between these two strangers gestures towards a possible partnership between the various racial communities in post-Apartheid South Africa. Coetzee's and Gordimer's novels come to a similar conclusion in that they agree that, as Gordimer herself stated, "The future of white South Africa must be put in the hands of those whose lives have been directed by them for so long. It will be an act of trust" (*Conversations* 94). Moving beyond socially conditioned hierarchical relationships will require white South Africans give up the security of their narcissistic understanding of difference, and to accept

the vulnerability of trusting in the Other. Gordimer notes that the turbulence and anxiety of South Africa's interregnum is due to the fact that "The interregnum is not only between two social orders but also between two identities, one known and discarded, the other unknown and undetermined" (*Essential* 270). The central question of whether July helps the Smales as a servant or host, and how the Smales interpret his actions, illustrates an essential part of this transition: grappling with the messy overlap between work and personal relationships, and the ambiguous identities produced by these intersections, requires interpretation, articulation, and ultimately transformation.

While Maureen arguably never transforms to the extent that Mrs. Curren does, the novel's ambiguous ending suggests that she may have learned how to trust in the Other. Maureen is distraught after an argument with July and upon hearing the whirring sound of an unidentified helicopter:

> She runs: trusting herself with all the suppressed trust of a lifetime, alert, like a solitary animal at the season when animals neither seek a mate nor take care of young, existing for their lone survival, the enemy of all that would make claims of responsibility. (159)

She is unaware of whether this helicopter contains her "saviors or murders" (158) and acts instinctively like a wild animal: her choice isn't based on reason, knowledge, or certainty. The unknown occupants of the helicopter, and their potential as either enemies or friends, represent an absolute otherness that Maureen has hitherto been unable to trust. The fact that her actions are guided by the "suppressed trust of a lifetime" suggests that at this moment the years of empty professions of faith in black South Africans like July are culminating in a very real and concrete action. Maureen's gesture of faith is great enough that it means

risking not only her life, but also that of her's and July's families. The imminent threat that Maureen faces illustrates that in politicized space, abstract concepts like trust have their limits. If white South Africa is to accept a place "in the hands of those whose lives have been directed by them for so long," as Gordimer argues that it must, its trust in the Other must accept the possibility of violence and other threats to its well-being (*Conversations* 94). The ambiguous and somewhat ominous ending of *July's People* reminds readers that trust may be an abstraction, but its consequences are very real. Nonetheless, the novel doesn't go as far as to suggest that Maureen has fundamentally changed, and leaves the possibility that she still adheres to a self-serving conception of trust. The description of her as a "solitary animal" who is "the enemy of all who would make claims of responsibility" sounds strikingly like that of Coetzee's Vercueil, a man who has no sense of communal obligation. The text remains ambivalent about whether Maureen's decision is a desperate act of self-preservation that only affirms her inability to trust others.

While the novel doesn't offer July's perspective on the potential of interracial friendship, it does hint that the he may be open to the possibility. In one of his more insightful moments Bam points out that July's "been mixed up within us for fifteen years. No one will ever be able to disentangle that" (*July's* 128). July has been an essential part of the Smales household for a long period of time, and their lives are inextricably bound by the sheer weight of this experience. This entanglement is alluded to when it is revealed that July has held on to both his pass and savings account books, the latter of which was an award from the Smales for ten years of service. Despite the fact that they are now useless "bits of paper" (136) July keeps them in his wallet, which has been "flattened and softened to its contents by the years he had carried it always against the contours of his body in hip or breast

pocket" (135). The now meaningless "bits of paper" have become a part of him, a part of his body, and bear symbolic import if only because they illustrate the impact of social conditioning—July can't seem to move beyond the need to carry his pass book despite the fact that the system is defunct. The award is particularly significant considering that he took care to spend only his own earnings, and never touched this account. On one hand this could be an assertion of autonomy, for if July never spent the money he arguable never accepted the gift in the first place. Doing so would keep his relationship with the Smales as one of service and exact repayment, guided by the strict reciprocity of a contractual exchange. On the other hand July may have never withdrawn the money precisely because he doesn't want to reduce their relationship to one of solely business. The award, while couched in the language of business as a reward for faithful service, blurs the distinction between July as a servant to the Smales, and July as a loyal friend to the Smales. Not spending the money keeps the gift from entering into a system of monetary exchange, and affirms its symbolic value as something beyond or in excess of a boss-employee relationship.

Is the latter interpretation illustrative of the hopes and desires of a white activist who views the world from a fundamentally different perspective than that of her black peers? Or is it a conclusion that Gordimer has come to after years of observation, one of the many insights that she says "are never spoken, but are to be written— and received with such

amazement and consternation, on both sides, of having been found out" (*Essential* 279)?

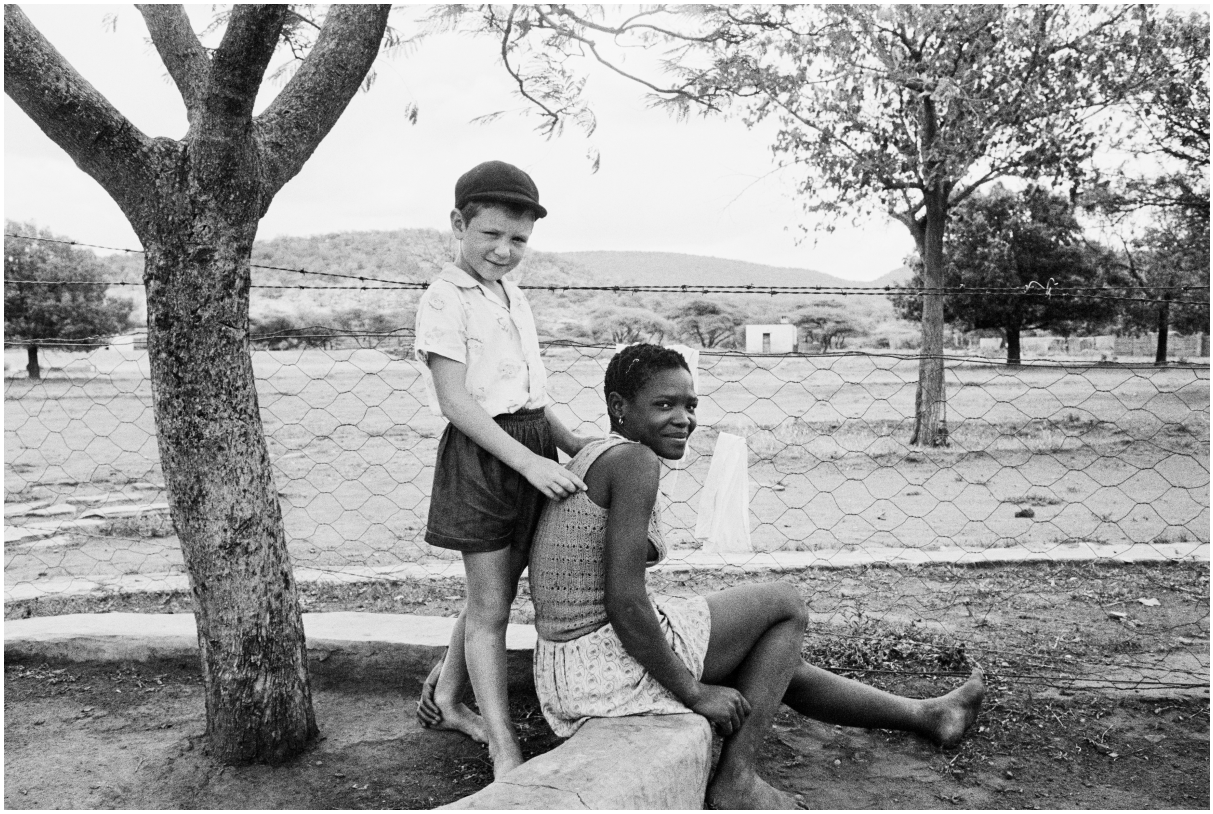

Figure 2. A farmer's son with his nursemaid, Heimweeberg, Nietverdiend, Western Transvaal. 1964

Photograph by David Goldblatt ©

David Goldblatt, a white South African photographer and collaborator with Gordimer, presents a similarly optimistic perspective in "A farmer's son with his nursemaid" (1964), an image of employer-servant relations that couldn't contrast more starkly from that of Solomon's "Mother, Daughter, Maid." "Farmer's son with his nursemaid" (Fig. 2) is found in *Lifetimes: Under Apartheid*, a photography book that weaves together Goldblatt's photos and text from Gordimer's novels. *Lifetimes* makes the black labor of Apartheid visible by juxtaposing images of white leisure and opulence with those that capture the harsh and gritty work that makes such white privilege possible. The rural setting of "Farmer's son with his nursemaid" harkens to the utopic potential of the pastoral, but it is undercut by the fence in

the background. The fence is suggestive of the various ways in which South Africa has been divided both physically and psychologically, whether through the colonial appropriation of land or the segregation and displacement of racial groups under the Homeland system. It alludes to the violence of such traditions and policies, a form of destruction that Coetzee's Michael K. refuses to participate in because "He could not imagine himself spending his life driving stakes into the ground, erecting fences, dividing up the land" (*Life and Times* 114).

Nonetheless, Goldblatt's photo can't be reduced to an image of racial division. Although the majority of images of labor in *Lifetimes* are of industrial work in mines, "Farmer's son with his nursemaid" resonates with the kind of care work that was inevitably performed by house servants. Unlike the representation of white domesticity in Solomon's photo, "Farmer's son and his nursemaid" presents a racial binary that, while still prominent, is blurred and indistinct. Although the boy's and nursemaid's body positions place them within a hierarchical relation of white supremacy, this division is softened by the sense of familiarity and affection generated by both their facial expressions and the placement of their hands. It would seem that Goldblatt is trying to, like the *Life* photographer who took the picture of a young Maureen and her maid Lydia, place "the pair in its context, give the reason" that the farmer's son and his nursemaid, "in their affection and ignorance, didn't know" (*July's* 33). The intimacy and affection of this pair, who will likely never fully untangle the bonds of their work and personal relationships, doesn't cleanly fit into the white supremacist narrative of rigidly hierarchical race relations— a narrative that is all too often reduced to the opposing figures of boss and servant. *July's People* and *Age of Iron* suggest that interracial friendship and community is only possible in a space outside of such binaries. Moving towards this indeterminate space will require black and white South Africa to

navigate their way “out of the perceptual clutter of curled photographs of master and servant relationships, the 78 rpms of history repeating the conditioning of the past” (*Essential* 270).

Chapter Three

"O! woman of the house!": Gender and Belonging in a Divided Ireland

When viewed from afar the narrative of the Troubles of Ireland would appear much like that of South Africa under Apartheid: a modern nation state violently divided into starkly opposed communities, or in the case of the Troubles, as sectarian conflict between Irish Republicans and Unionists in Northern Ireland and the border countries of the Republic. This chapter seeks to complicate this understanding by examining fragmentation within one of these ostensibly unified sides—specifically, the ways that women are marginalized within the Republican community as the internal Others that make male privilege possible. As seen with the construction of white privilege under Apartheid, male privilege in the Irish Republican community is generated by eliding women's nation-building work, whether this is accomplished by denying the political import of domestic and care labor, or by erasing women's contributions from the national history. I use both a novel and film to examine how gendered power is spatialized in the militarized zones of Northern Ireland, particularly through the violence of the male gaze. Similarly, I look to how these different narrative forms break down the divisions that are set up to maintain male privilege, or the divisions between public and private, or political and domestic space. This chapter builds on the prior examination of segregation under Apartheid to investigate other ways that these policies and practices seek to isolate the different genders in the Republican community, such as through rigid constructions of gender within sexist nationalist discourse which physically, emotionally, and psychically isolate Republican men and women. As set up in the discussion of Joyce's colonial Ireland, Irish nationalism conceives of a national community in terms of

fraternity, or friendship based on ethnic and gender sameness rather than difference. This chapter grapples with the importance of gender difference: specifically, how the formation of intergender friendship is essential to building a more inclusive Irish Republic.

Introduction

Edna O'Brien's 1994 novel *The House of Splendid Isolation* argues the future of the Republic of Ireland during the Troubles (1960's- 1998) may depend on an act of hospitality. In the novel, when McGreevy, an IRA gunman, seeks refuge in the country house of the elderly Josie O'Meara, he refuses to acknowledge her authority as a host, and instead holds her hostage. This initial perversion of the host/guest relation speaks to a larger feminist critique of the Republican cause: within the Irish national community women are denied the authority and autonomy of a host, and in the absence of this right to claim ownership of their property, they are relegated as guests in their own homes. By extension, these women aren't granted the authority to claim membership within the larger national community and, unlike their male counterparts, they occupy the precarious position of being guests in the Irish Republic. At the heart of this feminist critique is the idea that Republican men refuse to recognize women's autonomy as hosts because they refuse to acknowledge their otherness. A more inclusive national community is only possible if Republican men learn to recognize and respect gender difference, and Josie and McGreevy's developing friendship explores this possibility. Friendship between Josie and McGreevy, and ultimately a more inclusive Ireland, depends on whether McGreevy and Josie can enter into a new relation as host and guest, where each is bound by his or her responsibility to the other. Can McGreevy

recognize and respect Josie's otherness, or her authority as a host? Furthermore, can Josie be similarly transformed so that she can recognize her responsibility, as a host, to McGreevy?

Both *Splendid Isolation* and Pat Murphy's *Maeve* (1983) explore how the Republican struggle to unify what was considered a divided state raises questions about who can claim to belong to the Republic of Ireland, and whether the Republican vision of a unified and more inclusive nation would encompass both men and women. The Troubles are, according to *Splendid Isolation* and *Maeve*, more than a tale of sectarian strife: they are part of a greater historical narrative dating back to the Easter 1916 rebellion, of the struggle by Republican women to attain gender equality. Like the violent period of the Interregnum during Apartheid, The Troubles of Ireland exemplified philosopher Walter Benjamin's claim that "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of exception' in which we live is the rule" (267). That is, the violence towards and oppression of women in Ireland during The Troubles was not the anomalous result of exceptional circumstances such as terrorism and sectarian strife; rather, it was indicative of the normal experience of Republican women who have always been disenfranchised by a sexist national discourse. *Splendid Isolation* and *Maeve* argue that the Republican goal of achieving a unified, independent Irish state may not afford gender equality so long as the sexist nationalist discourse underpinning the Republican cause refuses to recognize how women have contributed to nation-building efforts, and denies women the right to claim belonging in the Republic of Ireland. This entrenched nationalist discourse has shaped how male Republicans imagine and understand friendship—the bonds that give form and substance to the national community— as a relation based on gender sameness, or strictly between men. The possibility of a more inclusive Irish

nationalism that respects gender difference, and recognizes the authority and legitimacy of its female members, will depend on the possibility of intergender friendship[13].

House of Splendid Isolation and *Maeve* feature female protagonists who have chosen to exile themselves from the Republican communities to which they do not believe they belong. The eponymous protagonist of *Maeve* returns briefly to her Belfast Republican community after having relocated permanently to London. *Maeve* critiques how the Northern Irish police state and sexist nationalist discourse oppress Republican women, utilizing the medium of film to explore how these violations are spatialized. It points to the need for a more inclusive Irish nationalism, which *Splendid Isolation* imagines through the developing friendship and host/guest relation of Josie and McGreevy. *Splendid Isolation* explores how rigid restrictive constructions of masculinity and femininity in Irish nationalist discourse have created gendered communities that are emotionally isolated from one another and not open to otherness. Both of the texts argue that the Irish Republican community is fragmented by a masculine nationalist discourse that fails to recognize gender difference and seeks to maintain male privilege; moreover, a more inclusive Irish nationalism will depend on a model of intergender friendship where both men and women accept the vulnerability that comes from being responsible to the Other.

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[13] "Intergender" is perhaps most often encountered as a term used to describe individuals whose gender identity falls somewhere between male and female, but I am using the term as it describes friendships between men and women. This is alternatively called "cross-sex" friendship. The term intergender friendship may sound odd precisely because the concept itself hasn't been well-developed or recognized in the way that other friendships of difference have, such as interracial friendship. Political scientist David Hart remarked that "as we try to develop the concept of intergender friendship, we find that there are virtually no historical examples to guide us, nor is there a tradition of moral discourse about the subject" (Hart 229). This chapter seeks to address the political and ethical implications of this absence in terms of how we conceptualize community.

I. A Nation Within A Nation: women's nationalism in *Maeve*

As a feminist critique of Republican aims in Northern Ireland, *Maeve* offers an ironic tale of homecoming. When the eponymous protagonist visits her family in Belfast after a long absence in London, she is reminded that it isn't a journey home because she could never claim to belong in the first place. Maeve's marginalization is two-fold: on one hand she is denied membership in the Republican community by a sexist nationalist discourse that relegates women to the position of permanent guests in the national community. Her precarious position as an outsider manifests most conspicuously when she is denied a voice in male-dominated discussions about the Republican cause: her presence in these conversations is largely symbolic as her contributions are rejected and her male peers attempt to silence her. On the other hand, as a Catholic she is treated as a second-class citizen within the conservative, Protestant-majority nation state of Northern Ireland. This marginalization is illustrated when Catholic women are sexually harassed and subject to unwarranted identification checks by the Ulster police; their right to be present in their own neighborhoods as legitimate residents —even their right to peacefully inhabit public space— is constantly questioned. As part of a Catholic and Republican minority the Sweeny family occupies a precarious and ambiguous space within a Belfast community that is sharply divided by sectarian divisions. The Sweeny's are present and yet not present, and the legitimacy of their claim of membership in even Belfast's Catholic community is constantly scrutinized and undermined. The film highlights how intimidation tactics are used to segregate the different sectarian communities, effectively ghettoizing Catholic neighborhoods; moreover, her father's business faces constant discrimination by Protestant

loyalists. The Northern Irish police state subjects residents of Catholic neighborhoods to constant surveillance and document checks, forcing citizens to justify their right to be present in their own Catholic communities: so invasive is this policing that it seems that the Sweeny family doesn't have the authority to host family in their own home. The trials of the Sweeny family illustrate the numerous sources of sectarian conflict, ranging from concerns about identity, a sense of belonging, economic and political privilege, discrimination, and religion (Kaufman 159). *Maeve* recognizes that the division between Unionist and Republican communities arose from their differing experiences of colonization. However, it emphasizes that even within ostensibly homogenous communities of Unionists and Republicans, men's and women's experiences of colonization have not been the same because they have experienced oppression differently. The film explores the ways in which Republican women have also been oppressed by their male counterparts, particularly in terms of how women's contributions to the Republican cause have been elided and ignored.

One of the major gender differences that *Maeve* highlights is that Republican women are denied authority in public spaces. This marginalization is dramatized as control over the female body. The Northern Irish police state isn't gender neutral, and in the film Republican women can rarely navigate public space without policemen and soldiers exploiting their positions of power to sexually harass and even assault the women. *Maeve* demonstrates that the greater Northern Irish male community is complicit this patriarchal form of control over the female body: it is eventually revealed that Maeve's exile was galvanized when she was raped by several non-military local men. *Maeve* focuses much of its energy, however, on critiquing what might be considered less obvious or concrete forms of sexual violence and subjugation, the primary form being the male gaze. One of the most explicit examples

occurs when Maeve and her younger sister Roisin are strolling through a park, engaged in an intimate conversation about nationalist politics, when they are interrupted by a British soldier who demands that they jump up and down for him. It is a shameless exercise of power for the mere sake of it, and a predatorial excuse to leer at the women's breasts. The camera observes the interaction from afar— their verbal exchange is overpowered by the sounds of children playing nearby— stripping it down to a scene of bodies in space, and the sexist power relation that governs these bodies. This park scene contrasts strikingly to one later in the evening when Roisin and Maeve discuss women's roles in the Republican cause as they bathe in the privacy of their room. The scene initially appears to be yet another example of the constant and invasive surveillance of the female body in Northern Ireland's police state, and because it features both women in the nude, it has potential to be the most graphic example of the male gaze in entire film. The film resists this predatorial urge, however, by denying viewers the full spectacle of the female body. Maeve and Roisin are revealed in fragments, where camera angles crop out their naked bodies and close-up shots focus on their faces as they speak. The fact that only Roisin's reflection appears in the mirror suggests that the women are alone and not being subjected to the male gaze; moreover, the camera angle is such that only Maeve's back is exposed to the viewer and her chest isn't reflected back to the gazing viewer. Director Pat Murphy's anti-spectacular approach towards the female body is a form of cinematic protest; this comes of no surprise given that she studied under the feminist theorist Laura Mulvey at the Royal College of Art in London. Irish film making didn't come into its own until the 1970s-80s and the work of "first wave" filmmakers like Pat Murphy, Joe Comerford, Cathal Black, and Bob Quinn, was known for being highly innovative and political (O'Connel 115). Murphy's work can be situated within a rich

cannon of Irish feminist art that began to come into its own in the 1960s. This art was bolstered in the 1970's by the advent of second wave of Irish feminism. Over the course of three decades, feminists such as Neil McCafferty, Mary Kenny, June Levine, and Nuala O' Faolain, worked to advance women's political, social, and economic rights; such causes included securing a woman's right to divorce, access to contraceptives, and protection from marital rape. Art during this period similarly sought to advance women's causes. The novelist Edna O'Brien's *Country Girls* trilogy, which was published in the early sixties, offered a candid focus on the emotional and sexual life of young Irish women in a rural, repressive, patriarchal culture (Wills 1126). Other feminist fiction writers such as Mary Dorcey, Leland Bardwell, Liz Mcmanus, and Mary E. O'Donnell produced works that condemned what they considered to be the patriarchal violence and misogyny of the Irish Republic's oppressive political regimes. Pat Murphy was the first notable feminist film director in artistic community and went on to produce such feminist film features as *Anne Devlin* (1984), *Nora* (2000), and more recently, *Tana Bana* (2015).

Figure 3. Roisin and Maeve discuss the role and future of Irish women in Republican politics

Figure 4. Resisting the male gaze and spectacle of the female body

The unabashed nudity of the women mirrors the openness and candor of their heated conversation as to whether supporting the Republican cause would foster a more gender-inclusive Irish national community. The sense of vulnerability underlying this scene suggests that productive dialogues about the inclusivity of the Republican community are only possible in spaces where women have the authority to speak freely about their particular experiences with, and views of, Irish Republicanism. The vulnerability and openness of this scene contrasts sharply with more hierarchical and antagonistic attempts at political dialogue between men and women, regardless of whether these take place in public spaces like the pub or in the seemingly intimate spaces of romantic relationships, such as between Maeve and her former boyfriend, Liam, a fervent supporter of the Republican cause. This dissonance suggests that patriarchal control over women's bodies in the Republican community is inextricably connected to control over women's voices.

Unlike other movies that represent relationships between men and women during The Troubles, *Maeve* emphasizes the importance of friendship over romantic relations. In such films as *Cal* (1984), *The Crying Game* (1992), or *The Shadow Dancer* (2013), platonic relationships between men and women quickly transform into romantic relations. These sexual relations are political in that the men and women identify with opposing ideological campus; in *Cal*, for example, an IRA officer becomes romantically entangled with the widow of one of his victims, a Protestant police officer. *Maeve* resists this narrative because it is critical of how sexual relations such as rape or control over the female sexual body, as in the male gaze, is often an exercise of patriarchal control. Access to or power over the female sexual body is tightly aligned with ideological control: Maeve's and Liam's romantic relationship ends when they no longer find themselves in agreement about the Republican

cause, and it is only after they resume their conversations as friends that they are able to have productive dialogues about ideological differences. Instead of falling into the trap of more conventional romantic gender relations *Maeve* emphasizes intergender friendship as an alternative. Moreover, *Maeve* features friendship between women over the more common depictions of male camaraderie during The Troubles, an example of which is Steve McQueen's *Hunger* (2009). *Hunger* depicts, among other things, the deep bonds of camaraderie shared by imprisoned members of the IRA who participated in the 1981 hunger strike in Northern Ireland's Maze prison.

Maeve argues that this silencing of women is validated by a sexist nationalist discourse that denies women control over the narrative space that would allow them to assert their right to belong within the Irish Republic, as storytellers. The film features numerous scenes where men deny women their voices in both private and public spaces. It highlights the subtle and insidious ways that even progressive Republican men effectively silence women. One example is Maeve's father. While he is sympathetic to her political grievances, Maeve's father is oblivious to how he dominates family conversations, whether it be commandeering his wife's stories at the dinner table or recounting Irish mythology to Maeve without letting her voice her own interpretations. In more politically-charged public spaces like the local Republican pub, Maeve is silenced when she tries to write women's contributions into nationalist narratives. When Liam and Maeve reluctantly join her father's friends at the local pub she remains silent as the men fade into a drunken nostalgia, reminiscing about their political exploits as youths. Her position at the end of the table, barely within the frame, mirrors her marginalization as a participant in the construction of this nationalist narrative.

Figure 5. Maeve's exclusion from Republican political discourse

The men reflected in the mirror behind her head are a reminder that she is in a male-dominated sphere and is subject to their gaze; this is reinforced by the fact that the camera is viewing her through Liam's perspective (his head being in front left of the immediate foreground). Maeve is drawn out of her silence when the men claim that her mother should be ashamed that she had never helped the Republican cause like her father, who served jail time after covering for friends involved in Sin Fein. Maeve points out that her mother supported the family in his absence, that "it was she that kept us all together" (*Maeve*). The men refuse to acknowledge the political import of her mother's sacrifice and dismiss the factual nature of her claim with the condescending remark, "oh, you and your stories."

Maeve flees the pub and is essentially expelled from the male-dominated space of public discourse.

This divisive scene highlights the ways that conventional Irish nationalist discourses often seek to inscribe a public and private dichotomy onto the work of men and women so as to elide women's contributions to the Republican community. Within this community women weren't explicitly engaged in the public sphere and "remained outside the formal political processes", but they formed an 'invisible support structure that enabled men involved in the political sphere" (Aetxaga 4). Gender difference in Republican communities manifested very concretely in terms of how labor is gendered, assigned different values, and inserted into a hierarchy. Work performed by men in formal political processes is privileged at the expense of work performed by women, in particular the care work that Maeve gestures to when she asserts that her mother supported the household and "kept us all together" (*Maeve*). As a feminist critique of Irish nationalism, *Maeve* is invested in examining how the work of women in constructing nations is forgotten and rendered invisible, and over time this reinforces the gendered labor hierarchy. Maeve's defense of her mother's contributions illustrates how Pat Murphy, as a feminist director, is "rewriting the roles of women back into the history of nationalist movements" (Dowler 55).

On a metaphorical level, the divisive pub scene demonstrates how women are denied a voice in the Irish Republic's national historiography, an omission that *Maeve* seeks to rectify through its experimental narrative form. In an argument with her ex-boyfriend, Liam, Maeve insists that Republican men inevitably create "a false memory because "the way you [Liam] remember it, the way you want to remember it, excludes me." While she doesn't advocate simply forgetting the past, Maeve stresses that the ongoing construction of national

memory is rearranged and curated to suit a particular male agenda, and in the process, "I [Maeve] get remembered out of existence, there's just no space for me." Maeve's words resonate with those of such figures as the Irish poet Eavan Boland, who in her 1982 poem "It's a Woman's World" asserts that Irish women are erased from the greater Republican historical narrative. Under this erasure, "we milestone/ our lives/ with oversights" (9-11), and "Like most historic peoples/ we are defined/ by what we forget/ and what we never will be" (18-21). The "we" identifies the speaker —and perhaps Boland herself—as women in the Republican community whose contributions register as "oversights" in historical narratives. Their identity is "defined" through a negation, or what is forgotten and "will never be" part of a constructed and sanctioned national community of Irish men.

Maeve's experimental form places her within a rich history of Irish women artists who responded to this act of erasure by challenging and disrupting the narrative of a hegemonic Irish nationalist historiography so as to allow women to participate as storytellers. *Maeve* relinquishes control over a teleological historical narrative by weaving together the past and present, or various points of Maeve's life before and after her self-exile. It punctuates public, male-dominated discussions about the Republican cause with private conversations between women about their experiences with patriarchy; this contrast illustrates how Republican men and women in Northern Ireland have had different experiences of oppression. By offering an alternative "subjective and intimate history that contrasts with the official history of the state as well as the heroic histories of Irish nationalism" (Scarlata 46), *Maeve* makes the traditionally private realm of women's experiences public and deconstructs the authoritative, male-dominated narrative of Irish history. The bathing scene with Maeve and Roisin is one of many in the film that push

against the assumption that the absence of women's stories in the hegemonic Irish nationalist historiography is evidence of their absence in the construction of the nation. On a formal level *Maeve*'s modernist and avant-garde style harkens to earlier modernist works like Joyce's *Ulysses,* and to some degree both artists use innovative narrative forms to disrupt hegemonic Irish nationalist historiographies. Both works critique the ways in which Irish nationalist discourse seeks to naturalize or normalize privilege by eliding and actively "forgetting" the nation-building work of internal Others. While Joyce emphasizes ethnic difference and gender sameness, Murphy offers a feminist intervention that illustrates how gender difference has been, and continues to be, a fundamental means of constructing the Irish male identity. Murphy's experimental narrative form rejects the controlled and heavily curated narrative that typifies the hegemonic Irish national historiography. The form reinserts women's experiences, voices, and nation-building contributions, back into a national narrative that they had previously been excluded from. Murphy's efforts are aligned with Irish women artists who have sought to rewrite and reconceptualize Irish history so as to include women's efforts and contributions. One of the more notable examples is the work of poet Eavan Boland, whose volume *Outside History* (1990) is centered on the exclusion of women from Irish history. Other feminist poets whose works have contributed in this effort include Paula Meehan, Catherine Walsh, Medbh McGuckian, and Eiléan Ní Chuilleanián.

The experimental narrative form of *Maeve* is a response to the various histories of the Troubles that present an authoritative and ostensibly objective version of the truth, such as the 2004 *Legacy of the Troubles Final Report*, produced by psychology faculty at Queens University Belfast and University College Cork. Pat Murphy claimed that she constructed *Maeve* as an alternative to the numerous documentary accounts of the Troubles. These films,

noted by Murphy in an interview Claire Johnston (1981), have "a problem inherent in a kind of documentary form which has a notion of objective truth" which is solidified by the "narrative authority of the voice-over" (Murphy 1592). Although it was published twenty-one years after *Maeve* was released, an example of such an ostensibly authoritative and objective account is *The Legacy of the Troubles Final Report.* This large-scale research project assesses the impact of the Troubles both in Northern Ireland in the border counties of the Republic. It comes to some striking conclusions about how the genders experienced the conflict differently: its main assertion was that men had more direct experience with conflict and were more likely to report personal experiences of the Troubles, particularly in terms of intimidation by police forces. As its own narrative of Irish history, the report demonstrates how women's experiences are potentially undervalued because they are seemingly absent, and how male perspectives and voices tend to dominate. This narrative is afforded validity being both a scholarly work produced by the academy and a state-endorsed project, given that it received funding from both the Irish Republic and the European Union. Moreover, it is constructed in such a way that value is assigned to certain experiences of the Troubles (such as shootings and public violence) but not to others such as domestic violence. The report never explores why women were less likely to report their experiences, and fails to recognize the ways in which this seemingly homogenous experience of oppression differed among men and women. This almost gender-blind examination of The Troubles doesn't recognize how gender difference plays a crucial role in constructing an Irish national identity, or how male identity and men's voices are privileged in this process. It illustrates how, even years after the Good Friday Agreement ended overt military and paramilitary conflict (in 1998), there is a continued need for feminist interventions like Murphy's.

Maeve goes as far as to suggest that the hegemonic nationalist narrative about a collective Irish struggle for liberation belies the fact that each gender has experienced oppression differently; moreover, the experiences are distinctive enough that as a result each gender has developed its own form of national community. Liam unwittingly makes this point when he protests Maeve's claim that the Republican cause will not benefit women, and questions why "you [Maeve] behave as if the struggle were separate. Like you're part of a different culture, a nation within a nation" (*Maeve*). The possibility that this division is so deep that it could be construed as cultural difference isn't unreasonable given that *Maeve* showcases an accumulation of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, hierarchies, and histories that are unique to women in the Republican community. Maeve shifts the idea of a "nation within a nation" into more overtly political terms by asserting that it is a class difference rather than a cultural one: the stakes of the 1916 rebellion aren't relevant to women because they, according to Maeve, "belong to a class that is oppressed no matter what happens" (*Maeve*). Framing this difference in terms of class emphasizes the hierarchy inherent to this division of a "nation within a nation." It points to the fact that while it may manifest in more abstract terms, such as through rigid gender roles or stereotypes, the division has very concrete and material economic and political consequences— a fundamental one being that the autonomy and authority of this women's "nation within a nation" isn't respected by Irishmen.

Neither *Maeve* nor *Splendid Isolation* speak for Protestant, Unionist women; their experience of oppression differed from that of their Republican counterparts. The strong conservative influence of the Protestant and Catholic churches meant that both communities experienced the oppressive force of patriarchal social order, but Catholic women could at

least appeal to the "tradition of struggle' and the nationalist tradition of "strong Gaelic women" when assuming activist roles (Kaufman 175). Women in both Protestant and Catholic communities often became politically involved in ways which they were comfortable with as wives and mothers, which were perhaps their only socially sanctioned means of activism. They campaigned against such problems as poverty or poor housing (Kaufman 166), but these efforts were typically geared towards their greater community and not for the women's benefit.

Maeve argues for a model of national community that isn't structured by a sexist hierarchy, one that recognizes and respects gender difference— a kind of "women's nationalism." The film is critical of how the hegemonic discourse of Irish nationalism positions women as subalterns necessary to the formation and supremacy of the Irish male identity. Maeve likens the patriarchy underpinning Irish nationalism to the subjugation inherent to colonial empire when she states that "Men's relationship to women is just like England's relationship to Ireland's. You're in possession of us. You occupy us" (*Maeve*). In this oppositional mode of defining Irish identity, women are positioned as an internal Other that justifies the Irish men's claims of belonging. What is perhaps most striking about Maeve's claim is that this oppositional mode of defining Irish identity isn't contingent on an external Other, such as the cultural and ethnic differences between the Irish and their former British colonizers. Instead, it depends on a form of internal gender difference that is always present in the Irish community. This internal Othering of Irish women illustrates why Republican women will continue to be excluded as second-class members of the national community if Ireland is eventually united by the Republican cause. When Liam incredulously suggests that Maeve desires a "women's nationalism" he unknowingly gestures

to how the admittance of women into the struggle for Irish independence has been predicated on a separation between national issues and women's issues (Scarlata 6). His contempt illustrates how the Republican community has failed to recognize the possibility of "woman" as a political category (Scarlata 6). Pat Murphy claims that "women's nationalism" is an attempt to imagine a "situation in which women would be the central model of culture rather than being other and apart" (Murphy 1594). Such a form of nationalism would recognize and respect gender difference, where said difference wouldn't manifest as the political, social, and economic disenfranchisement of women. *Maeve* seeks to address these differences in concrete terms as a woman's desire for control over her body and public space (such as in conversations), and, more abstractly, as control over historical narratives; moreover, it would demand the recognition that oppression means two different things to men and women in the Republican community.

Unfortunately this imagined women's nationalism remains in the abstract, and *Maeve* doesn't gesture to how such a community of belonging might develop. Maeve rationalizes her self-exile because she "didn't make the rules or build the structure. All [she] can do is withdraw from it" (*Maeve*). As defiant as it is, her exile is an extreme response that opposes the film's underlying message that there needs to be more open dialogue between the genders. *Maeve* abounds with conversations that are either dominated by men or restricted to a single gender group. The most prominent political discussions between members of the opposite gender are between Maeve and Liam, but they appear to be mouthpieces for two opposing extremes in the political spectrum. They speak in such abstract and impersonal terms— rarely using the personal pronoun "I"— that the interactions are not so much personal exchanges as much as formal ideological debates. Edna O'Brien's *House of*

Splendid Isolation (1994), on the other hand, presents an alternative story of a Republican woman's search for belonging that works towards a more open dialogue between the genders. The novel uses the concept of hospitality to offer a more concrete exploration of what a women's nationalism might look like, and what would need to be done by both men and women to change the rules and build a new structure for belonging in the Republic of Ireland.

II. Women as hosts/hostages in *House of Splendid Isolation*

In *Splendid Isolation* the right to claim membership in a national community manifests itself as the right to host, or to assert one's authority over ones house. One of the novel's underlying assumptions, therefore, is that women in the Irish Republic are denied this autonomy and occupy the precarious position of both host and hostage. The narrative begins as a story of self-exile similar to that of *Maeve*. Josie O' Meara, an elderly Catholic woman living in a border county community, has chosen to recluse herself into her country house and live in isolation. She is hardened by years of domestic abuse, and has been controlled and mistreated by men in her community including her husband, her doctor, and a local priest. Josie asserts her authority over this private space by barricading herself from the outside world. She views the house as a space apart from the oppressive control of men, and reassures herself that "a man's home is his castle" and that "she is safe, upstairs in her house, in her castle" (O'Brien 25). The intrusion of McGreevy, an IRA gunman on the run from the police, undermines this assumption and reveals the precariousness of her claim to authority over the house.

As a figure of Irish masculinity, McGreevy invokes the sexist underpinnings of Irish national discourse to deny Josie the right to either grant or refuse him hospitality. Josie objects to the violent tactics of the IRA and reminds McGreevy that he has not been invited into her house, but he trivializes her protests with the Gaelic expression, "O! Bhean an Tighe!" meaning "O! woman of the house" (O'Brien 82). The derisive expression reminds Josie that as a woman she is overstepping her authority by presuming to have the power of a host, and thus reduces her to the stock figure of a nagging house wife. McGreevy forces Josie to submit to the sexist hierarchy invoked by this expression by demanding that she translate the Gaelic into English so as to demonstrate that she understands him. Because he is an intruder and outlaw wanted by the state, McGreevy technically has no legal rights to the house. His authority comes, however, at least in part, from his male privilege and from the violence he valorizes. As a militant nationalist McGreevy is a hypermasculine figure who embodies the male entitlement underscoring Irish nationalism. Male privilege validates his claim of authority over the house, just as he asserts his belonging in the national community, and both his claims come at the expense of women like Josie. When McGreevy claims the house in the name of the nationalist cause, he inscribes it as a political space, a male-dominated realm in which Josie's words carry no weight.

McGreevy's refusal to acknowledge Josie's sovereignty as host illustrates how, in a sexist society like the Irish Republic, the personal is political. Josie can only offer or deny hospitality so long as she has sovereignty over her own home, and this sovereignty is established by choosing who to take in and who to exclude. Jacques Derrida contends that individuals "want to be master at home" and anyone "who encroaches on my 'at home', on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty to host" is regarded "as an

undesirable foreigner and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage" (*Politics* 54-5). *Splendid Isolation* illustrates how this abstract threat of the Other becomes a very concrete, gendered problem in sexist societies: Josie is taken hostage by an usurper whose male privilege trumps her own sovereignty over "her castle." Josie struggles to reconcile her powerlessness with her illusion of authority when she contemplates that "There are two hers, the one who does not dare to admit that in the other room now there is a dangerous man, a savage, and the other her, which contends that she is mistress of the house" (O'Brien 77). The "two hers" suggest that she is split by conflicting perceptions of herself, or a DuBoisian double-consciousness. On the one hand she clings to her perception of herself as independent and in control, and on the other hand she sees herself as men like McGreevy ostensibly perceive her— as a powerless and vulnerable "woman of the house" (82). Her initial attempts to befriend McGreevy in order to dissuade him from his violent missions are, perhaps, attempts to rewrite the hostage narrative into one that recuperates her authority over the house and control over their interactions.

McGreevy's refusal to acknowledge Josie's authority as a host— or even to recognize her subsequent care labor as a form of generosity— suggests that Irish male privilege is sustained by women's labor, and that force is used to maintain this form of parasitism. McGreevy enters the big house not as guest but as a parasite; the distinction being that a guest requires "a law, hospitality, reception, the welcome offered have to be submitted to a basic and limiting jurisdiction" (*Hospitality* 59). Derrida defines parasitism specifically as a critique of contemporary national immigration policies that limit a citizen's ability to help foreigners who are deemed "parasites" by the state, but *Splendid Isolation* plays with this concept as a critique of Irish male privilege. McGreevy is a parasite in that he is an intruder

who is "wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest" (*Hospitality* 60). The novel stresses that, while he is "liable to expulsion or arrest" as a fugitive, he can still assert the authority and legitimacy of his presence as a man— even going as far as to issue the conditions of his stay, such as that Josie not leave without his permission. He views his stay at the big house, and the labor that Josie must perform in hosting him, as a service that he is entitled to rather than as an act of generosity, or an excess that is freely given by another. McGreevy fails to recognize Josie's autonomy and authority as a host, and this is ultimately a failure to recognize her Otherness.

The striking parallels between *Splendid Isolation* and Nadine Gordimer's novel *July's People* point to the simple fact that —even in such disparate contexts as sectarian conflict in the Irish Republic or Apartheid in South Africa— gender and racial privilege are maintained by a steadfast refusal to recognize difference. Just as McGreevy fails to recognize gender difference, Maureen Smales fails to recognize racial difference when she assumes that her former servant, a black South African named July, is hosting her as a friend and not as an employee. Both individuals enjoy white and male privilege, respectively, and view the Other, and the work performed by the Other, as labor that they are entitled to. McGreevy rationalizes his exploitation of Josie's labor as service to the nationalist cause, and Maureen interprets July's labor as the service of one friend to another. Both McGreevy and Maureen view the Other as merely an extension of the Self— hardly as an autonomous individual with his or her own different desires, beliefs, and perspectives. O'Brien and Gordimer both demonstrate how gender and racial privilege can only be naturalized if it is masked with illusion of equality: that is, the illusion must be maintained that the Other *chooses* to host. Conscientious white South Africans like Maureen Smales, for example, must maintain the

illusion that their relationship with black South African employees is an equitable one based on mutual trust and friendship. In the case of McGreevy, and of men in the Republican community of Ireland, the illusion must be sustained that women serve men in the name of a nationalist cause that benefits each gender equally. O'Brien shatters this illusion through McGreevy and Josie's encounter: Josie isn't simply a host or a hostage, or even a hostage turned into a host. As a woman in the Irish Republic she is simultaneously host and hostage, and her subjugated position as a hostage of nationalist discourse is thinly veiled by the illusion of her authority and autonomy as a host who *chooses* to serve the Republican cause. Moreover, as articulated by *Maeve*, men and women do not benefit equally from serving the Republican cause since women "belong to a class that is oppressed no matter what happens" (*Maeve*).

Splendid Isolation highlights how violence and the threat of harm is used to maintain this gender hierarchy in the Irish Republic. In what would appear an unrelated side story that occurred prior to McGreevy's arrival at the big house, a local farmer forces his wife to cook McGreevy breakfast after he finds that McGreevy has helped deliver one of their calves. The wife refuses on the grounds that he is a fugitive and terrorist, but her husband forces her to betray what she considers both her legal and ethical responsibilities. In a moment that simmers with the latent threat of force, "Violent emotions are battling up in her while her husband hoists the frying pan off the fire, holds it aloft, and fixes her as if he would pour the boiling fat over her feet" (O'Brien 17). The nascent bonds of fraternity developing between the farmer and McGreevy appear to supersede the bonds of responsibility and loyalty between wife and husband. Even though the farmer also disapproves of the IRA's violence, he is willing to employ similar terror tactics to maintain his authority in the household. This

scene and countless later instances in which Josie's authority as a host is undermined by men illustrate how conditional hospitality, or the actual conditions of hospitality which are inscribed within a social and political order, are different for each gender within a sexist society. These violations of female authority suggest that the care work and domestic labor of women is a necessary and unacknowledged supplement that makes Irish male privilege— or male parasitism— possible.

Although McGreevy's abrupt arrival at the big house might seem an unexpected and improbable event, it fits seamlessly into the novel's greater narrative about Josie's thwarted search for autonomy: this journey begins when Josie mistakenly assumes that becoming a wife and mistress of a house would grant her a space in which she could assert her right to belong. Josie initially considers the social mobility afforded by marriage a means of obtaining independence and authority. When she receives an offer from James, the last living member of a wealthy, pedigreed Catholic family who owns a large country estate, she is seduced by the prospect of being "mistress of a house" with a "serving girl whom she could call to wait on her" (O'Brien 34). She realizes the frailty of the title "mistress," however, when she discovers that James is an abusive and domineering spendthrift. Her failed attempt to gain social and financial autonomy illustrates Maeve's warning to Roisin that she cannot escape an oppressive home environment by marrying, because "you take on a woman's role to get out of your childhood, and then you have to find a way to get out of that" (*Maeve*). *House of Splendid Isolation* suggests that Josie's search for autonomy is bound to fail so long as she keeps with the prescribed narrative of patriarchal power. This narrative suggests she align herself with a man to gain power. Following it, she never escapes the sexist system that holds her captive.

Josie's ambiguous position as both mistress and captive in James' house can be mapped onto feminist critiques of the Irish Big House novel. The genre, which originated in the early nineteenth century, dramatizes concerns about belonging within the Anglo-Irish community (or Anglo-Irish Ascendancy), and the tensions between this class of landed proprietors and a growing Catholic middle class and rural peasantry (Farkuharson 109). The dominance of the Anglo-Irish is symbolized by the grand figure of the big house; as such the genre traces the decline of the noble Anglo-Irish ascendency, in the face of growing nationalist sentiment and the increasing call for tenant rights, through the decay of the house. Josie becomes mistress of a former big house, and it has been in a continual state of decline since it came under Catholic ownership through James' ancestors. The continued decay of this house, and the fact that it imprisons Josie, suggests that the transfer in power to the Catholic, nationalist community wasn't an act of liberation so much as a restructuring of subjugation (Farquharson 117). Josie occupies an ambiguous position similar to that of female protagonists of earlier Big House novels: these figures, such as the master's daughter, enjoyed certain privileges that came with being part of the dominant class but were also powerless within the patriarchal Anglo-Irish class (Frehner 11). Although *Splendid Isolation* is not a classic Big House novel, it draws upon the tradition to examine how patriarchal subjugation is a continuation of colonial oppression. It works to address concerns about belonging that form along gendered lines rather than religious or nationalist ones.

Josie's search for a community of belonging is hindered by James' violent desire to control the house and by extension her body; as such her body becomes a site of protest and marks her rejection of what would be her next socially prescribed role, motherhood. Her husband James had come from a long line of fervent nationalists and he is desperate to

restore the glory to the family's big house. He desires a male heir in the hopes that it will propagate the family name and history, and demands that Josie fulfill her function as a wife by continuing the family line. The expectation that she reproduce and thus further both the family history and the Irish nationalist cause is illustrative of how Irish women were expected to act as part of the ideological state apparatus of the new, Catholic state: they were expected to propagate cultural and religious values, including patriarchal gender roles (Kaufman 167). Josie's situation also reflects the politics of De Valera's Ireland, a long conservative period ushered in when Eamon de Valera, as the head of a minority Fianna Fáil government in the Irish Free State, inscribed gender roles into a provision on equality in the 1937 constitution.[14] The provision assigned different terms of Irish citizenship to men and women by locating women solely within the domestic sphere as caretakers and mothers, and apart from the political realm inhabited by men (Mullally 23). The novel, written in 1994, shows how these values lingered long after de Valera had ceased to be prime minister.

Josie, however, has felt like an unwanted guest in her husband James' household since her arrival, and can't imagine herself as a part of its future. Years later she reflects on the prospect of a child and concludes, "I was not ready for a child. The crib that he brought up from the cellar was the most forlorn-looking thing. It belonged to his people. It felt alien.

[14] When Eamon de Valera became head of the Irish Free State in 1932 he set to the task of rewriting the Irish constitution. In 1937 the new constitution was ratified, and while it attempted to give Ireland greater autonomy it stopped short of declaring the free state a Republic. The constitution was notable for its conservative and patriarchal stance towards Irish women: Article 41, titled 'The Family' claimed that the political and economic health of the new nation was dependent on the domestic work of women in maintaining families and households. In order to safeguard this prescribed gender role of women, the constitution put several policies into place that limited the rights of women, such as a ban on divorce, a ban on contraceptives, and regulations that limited women's ability to pursue work outside the domestic sphere. Many women who were already employed as public servants in such professions as teaching or public health were pressured to quit, and could only seek temporary work thereafter and at a greatly reduced salary. It wasn't until the mid-1970's that the Irish government finally enacted policies to address the ongoing gender wage gap, when the European Union's Economic Commission pressured the Irish government to rectify this inequality.

I couldn't see myself rocking it" (O'Brien 210). The "forlorn" crib is a reflection of the decaying house and Josie's precarious position in it: belonging in the big house (and metaphorically, in the Irish nation) has been limited to "his people," or men who are recognized in nationalist historiography as truly Irish. Josie is a permanent foreigner who is alienated by the thought of even imagining herself part of both James' family and the greater national community. Josie refuses to help propagate a family that she doesn't belong to, and tries to assert control over her body by preventing a pregnancy. James responds by repeatedly raping her, and silences her during these brutal expressions of male power. Josie notes that he holds his hand over her mouth because "he likes the power he has over her, making her sing dumb" (O'Brien 46). This silencing denies Josie the ability to protest, effectively reducing her to a reproductive body. Josie obtains an illegal abortion in order to regain control over her body and eventually becomes a spinster— a stereotyped figure of the Big House novel that reduces the social identity of a woman to her ability to reproduce and consequently carry on the social line.[15] Josie's abortion is, however, born of her own agency and marks her refusal to propagate a nationalist discourse which denies women the right to belong to the national community.

While the history of Josie's failed marriage may appear unconnected to the storyline involving McGreevy, the two narratives are interwoven into a critique of patriarchal oppression that seeks to deconstruct the binary between public and private, or political and apolitical spaces. A *New York Times* book review of *Splendid Isolation* by the American author John L'Heuruex comes to the cursory conclusion that the romance or marriage

[15] Abortion was criminalized throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by the 1861 *Offences Against the Person Act* (Connelly 322). It remains illegal in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and is only permitted in cases where a pregnancy jeopardizes a mother's life. If a woman desires an abortion for any other reason she must posses the financial means to obtain one in England.

component of the novel "is interesting, but irrelevant" and "has almost nothing to do with the principal story" with McGreevy (L'Heuruex). Such a gender-blind reading overlooks intersections of past and present, and in doing so re-inscribes the division between the private and public. It doesn't recognize how both narratives are about captivity, where nationalist discourse plays a critical role in what would appear to be two different acts of hostage-taking; moreover, it also renders illegible the political nature of Josie's acts of resistance within the domestic sphere, such as her abortion. Treating the two narratives as separate and unrelated seeks "to depoliticize women as apart from politics—to construct women as occupying an 'innocent', woman-only space" and this severely "misrepresents women's material, affective, and familial relationships within neighborhoods and communities of belonging" (Crilly, Gordon 1480). O'Brien's novels (such as the *Country Girls* trilogy) have met a fair amount of criticism from scholars who too readily dismiss them as sentimental and clichéd romances: Irish studies scholar Peggy O'Brien determined that the trilogy was little more than a "maudlin, melodramatic tale of woman's woe" (Peggy 475). While *Splendid Isolation* is admittedly one of the most overtly political of O'Brien's works, belittling the role of the romance plot in her novels ignores how it is a vehicle for exploring the deeper politics of gendered hierarchies and the female pursuit of autonomy. Such superficial readings miss how "she explodes romantic fantasies of her heroines" so as to "fundamentally critique social realities" (Colletta 6). In *Splendid Isolation* the parallels — and perhaps more importantly the divergences— between Josie's relationships with her husband and McGreevy provide such a critique. The critic L'Heuruex's mistake, then, was to not recognize how the Republican struggle for Irish independence, and Irish women's struggle for independence and equality, are not different or unrelated issues. The only

communal struggle that L'Heuruex recognizes is that of Republicans seeking an independent Ireland, and he is blind to how women in this community have been, and will continue to be, oppressed even if national independence is achieved.

III. Vulnerability and intergender friendship

Splendid Isolation argues that romantic relations between men and women are instruments of patriarchal control. It then goes on to suggest that Josie' and McGreevy's developing friendship offers a new paradigm for intergender relationships that isn't dictated by a sexist hierarchy. The possibility of intergender friendship doesn't seem to register with male characters in the novel. They tend at least initially to interpret Josie's platonic gestures of friendship towards McGreevy as sexual. When reports emerge that Josie might be hiding McGreevy in her house, a police officer holding her house under surveillance is disgusted by his growing (and completely unfounded) suspicion that she is sleeping with McGreevy. He draws this conclusion while observing the two in a particularly close moment when McGreevy first discusses the loss of his wife and child; thus he mistakes their emotional intimacy and vulnerability for physical intimacy. The policeman assumes that she is hosting McGreevy, fully aware that her actions are considered treasonous, because she is weak and lonely, or in other words, a stereotypical elderly woman. His wild assumption suggests that Irish men may not readily recognize the possibility of friendship between men and women; moreover, it hints at the ways that women's sexuality is politicized as an ideological apparatus. Josie's ostensibly taboo sexual relations with McGreevy are inextricably connected to her politically treasonous activity as host. At an earlier point in their relationship McGreevy disdainfully refuses to be "wooed" by Josie when she shares stories

about her past in order to bond with and hopefully persuade McGreevy to abandon the IRA (100). His initial interpretation of her overtures of friendship as a form of courtship reveals how nationalist constructions of Irish masculinity reject emotional and psychological intimacy as a form of weakness, or a stereotypically feminine flaw. He refuses to relinquish his power to Josie by betraying his political ideals, because to do so would be to accept the subject position of a woman who has been "wooed." Both incidents indicate that sexist nationalist discourse only recognizes intergender relationships that fit its sexual or familial paradigm, relations which are then instrumentalized so as to reproduce and maintain patriarchal control.

Josie, conversely, interprets McGreevy's attempts to bond with her in very non-sexual, if not masculine terms. She recognizes that "he wants my trust. He wants my comraderie" (O'Brien 106). After failing to convince him to leave the IRA, she is horrified by the thought that she has "fraternized" with him (119). Josie might interpret their developing friendship in this manner because she views McGreevy as a figurehead of the IRA and nationalist cause, where both are masculine institutions that she perceives as brotherhoods. Her interpretation does clearly indicate, however, that she views their potential friendship in terms of reciprocity or equality, rather than an enactment of a hierarchal relationship. It gestures towards the kind of bonds that would make for a more inclusive national community— one based on a women's nationalism.

House of Splendid Isolation contends that any kind of women's nationalism must be founded through the bonds of intergender friendship— a radical new model that would depart from the canonical model that, as Jacques Derrida claims, dominates western culture. In *Politics of Friendship,* Derrida argues that friendship is the building block of nationhood,

and that fraternity and filiation are the guiding paradigms for belonging to a national community. This hegemonic model of friendship is based on sameness, specifically maleness, and doesn't tolerate gender difference. In the context of Irish nationalism this model frames Irish identity as a brotherhood demarcated by its opposition to an enemy or Other. Maeve makes this claim when she informs her Republican ex-boyfriend that nationalist discourse positions women as an internal Other that is necessary to the formation of Irish male identity. Within this construction of male Irish national identity, "Men's relationship to women is just like England's relationship to Ireland's. You're in possession of us. You occupy us" (*Maeve*). Such a phallocentric understanding of friendship and belonging poses a huge obstacle for the creation of a more inclusive Ireland. It isn't so powerful that it precludes the possibility of friendship between women and men; it does mean, however, "that within this culture, this society, by which this prevalent canon was considered legitimate, accredited, then there was no voice, no discourse, no possibility of acknowledging these excluded possibilities" (Lynch). *Maeve* and *Splendid Isolation* are critical of how Irish nationalism fails to recognize intergender friendship, and maintain that the social bonds between men and women that are instrumental in constructing a national community may never be recognized if women are continually denied their voices as historiographers. Both texts challenge the dominant paradigm of fraternity as national community by writing both female and intergender friendship into public Irish discourse.

While gaining public recognition is necessary for creating a more inclusive national community, *Splendid Isolation* contends that there is an even greater barrier: the restrictive constructions of masculinity and femininity in Irish nationalist discourse have created gendered communities that are emotionally isolated from one another. Josie resists

becoming emotionally open with McGreevy because years of abuse and mistreatment at the hands of men have limited her ability to recognize men as singular individuals. She perceives him as little more than a stereotype or stock figure of Irish hypermasculinity— as such McGreevy is "a dangerous man, a savage" (O'Brien 77). McGreevy initially only registers with her as a lifeless abstraction, or a disembodied voice of nationalist discourse. Her initial judgment that there's "something wiped out in his nature, his human nature" reveals more about Josie than McGreevy (121), as it suggests that she is unable to perceive his humanity, much less his singularity as an individual. Her accusation that his senseless violence makes him "like all the others" (O'Brien 121) seems directed at all men who have justified violence, especially violence against women, in the name of the Irish Republic. Her deceased husband was one of such men, and McGreevy's arrival forces her to reflect on how her fraught marriage hardened her. Josie acknowledges that there is "Something deep and difficult about the past and the way [she] changed, the way we changed," where both she and her husband became "harder" as conflict would "hammer out every bit of softness in us" (84).

McGreevy struggles to recognize Josie as a potential friend, in part because his time in prison shaped his understanding of friendship as a homosocial, politically-charged bond shared only by men. In a rare moment of emotional intimacy, McGreevy tells Josie that he wished she could have met "some of the boys that [he] was in the blocks with and on the blanket with" so she would be aware of "the bravery that they showed, the craic they made; it only takes being with people like that and one's faith is invincible" (O'Brien 122). This remark implies that McGreevy participated in "The blanket protest" (1976-81), a political protest in Northern Ireland's Long Kesh prison. The protest began when paramilitary

prisoners from the IRA and the Irish National Liberation Army demanded that they receive treatment that would distinguish them from criminals, such as being allowed to wear their own clothes rather than prison uniforms. McGreevy's hard exterior may be a result of the fact that these inmates often coped with tough living conditions by having to "construct a facade of hypermasculinity" that would allow them to "isolate themselves emotionally within the walls of this prison" (Dowler 62). McGreevy's IRA community is formed through a shared male experience of having to always maintain a stoic and impenetrable exterior by denying and repressing all emotional expression and vulnerability. Moreover, the spatial segregation of the sexes created by prisons created a communal divide where "Irish men developed highly charged political friendships which reinforced the exclusion of women from the body politic" (Dowler 53). Men were largely isolated from their families and other women, and these male friendships acted as a "surrogate family," as illustrated by McGreevy's praise that "the boys" were able to make "craic," or a good time, out of their stressful situation. These homosocial bonds of male friendship became impenetrable to women and lasted for decades after the men were released (Dowler 55). The physical segregation of sexes created by prisons sheds light on why Republican men at the pub in *Maeve* praise her father for serving jail time and decried her mother for not being involved in the cause. They refuse to acknowledge the political weight of care work, such as maintaining families and communities when men are imprisoned, perhaps in part because they were so removed from it.

Ultimately, however, McGreevy resists Josie's initial overtures of friendship because they demand that he break from his performance of masculinity— a performance he enacts through silence— by becoming more open and vulnerable to another. When Josie learns that

McGreevy lost his wife and child in a violent raid she pleads with him to open up about the experience. He in turn "brings his hands up to his eyes as if to say, Oh, please let her not ask me things, let her not wring out of me what belongs solely to me, let her not push open doors that I myself have not seen and must one day see and stand on either side of" (O'Brien 196). McGreevy suffers the trauma of having lost loved ones, and in having to repress the experience, the trauma of not being able to outwardly express his pain. Josie's observation that there's "something wiped out in his nature, his human nature" unknowingly points to how a distorted conception of masculinity has robbed McGreevy of the basic human ability to engage in emotional and psychological intimacy with another individual. The novel is highly critical of how patriarchal discourse has silenced both Josie and McGreevy, imprisoning and hardening them to the point that they epitomize Yeats' warning that "Too long a sacrifice/ Can make a stone of the heart" (56-7).

McGreevy's experience with toxic constructions of Irish masculinity resonates with that of Frank O'Connor's narrator in "Guests of the Nation" (1931), a classic Irish short story about male comraderie that transgresses national and religious difference. Like *The House of Splendid Isolation*, O'Connor's story draws upon the concepts of hospitality, friendship, and hostage-taking to critique constructions of masculinity. While the narrative initially appears to be about hospitality— a group of Irish soldiers are hosting their British "chums"— it is revealed that the British men are actually soldiers being held hostage. When the Irish soldiers are called upon to execute the hostages they are forced to choose between adhering to abstract masculine ideals like honor and discipline, or honoring their very real and embodied friendship with the British hostages. The Irish soldiers succumb to the pressure of their duties as men and soldiers, and are haunted by the memory of their dead friends, as

illustrated by the narrator's conclusion that "anything that ever happened to me after I never felt the same about again" (O' Connor 381). O'Connor's story resonates with O'Brien's novel in that it suggests that "manhood' is really the quiet, undifferentiated state of being frailly human" (Foster 21); moreover, the performance of masculinity doesn't allow for the recognition of such a "common human frailty."

House of Splendid Isolation furthers this critique by illustrating how Irish constructions of masculinity denigrate attachment to others, or more specifically, intergender friendship, as a form of vulnerability and a feminine weakness. While the bonds of camaraderie are accepted within McGreevy's political sphere, he is chastised for showing attachment to a woman when he rescues Josie after she becomes ill and lost in the countryside. Although McGreevy initially claims that he acted because he "couldn't let her die" (173), his IRA colleague decries this as an act of "lunacy" and he is forced to rationalize his actions so as to restore the gendered hierarchy: McGreevy was forced to rescue Josie lest she, in a moment of feminine weakness, divulge his whereabouts to the police. When his colleague suggests that McGreevy's decision to put the military operation at risk by helping a stranger is a sign that his impenetrable, masculine exterior is "cracking," McGreevy asserts that "The woman has not got to me" and that "Nothing's broken me, ever" (O'Brien 175). McGreevy disavows any ties to Josie and insists that he was not indebted to her in any way, but his failure to justify his highly uncharacteristic actions suggests that he is driven by a latent sense of obligation that he can't recognize much less articulate. While it is never explicitly stated, the novel argues that this latent sense of obligation is actually a sense of responsibility to the Other, and that McGreevy is beginning to conceive of friendship as a bond that isn't based on a sameness of gender.

IV. Friends and hostages: radical responsibility to the Other

Splendid Isolation argues that McGreevy's sense of obligation to Josie, or his responsibility to the Other, develops as he begins to recognize Josie's otherness, and consequently learns to respect her authority as a host. McGreevy inexplicably returns to Josie's house after he leaves to begin his next IRA mission, fully aware that it is potentially under police surveillance. Unable to rationalize such a risky move, McGreevy questions, "What want in him has brought him back? Why hadn't he stayed in that shed, with Cassidy and the rats, beside the thing, working it out in his mind, every thread and fibre of it, the coiled silence of it, a duplicate of himself?" (O'Brien 197). The "thing" that McGreevy was working on with his IRA colleague (Cassidy) is left unstated, but is most likely the plan for his next mission. Perhaps more crucial is why he considers it a "duplicate of himself," for such a comparison suggests that his sense of self has been reduced from that of a being to a thing— an abstraction without humanity, so tightly wound that he is unable to open up to others. Unlike his first arrival at the big house, he returns not in the name of his own self-preservation but because he wants to protect Josie, who is alone. This risky choice can't be rationalized or worked "out in his mind, every thread and fibre of it" like the logistics of his mission. According to Derrida, an individual "can never justify this sacrifice" in being responsible to the Other and "must always hold [his/her] peace about it" (*Death* 70). McGreevy's inner turmoil comes to a head when a fearful Josie asks that he not leave till the morning and he appears to refuse, by exclaiming, "Don't ask me'—his tone now abrupt, the eyes filched and lonely as he thinks that outside, a few fields away, the job and his escape hang in a grave and dicey suspension" (O'Brien 209). This request calls all of McGreevy's

obligations into question because it increases the likelihood of his being caught by the police: it threatens his livelihood, his obligation to his comrades in the IRA, and more broadly speaking, his dedication to the Republican cause. The conflicting demand that Josie places on him illustrates how he must choose to act on one responsibility at the expense of all others, for he "cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another, without sacrificing the other other, the other others" (*Death* 68). Although he tries to prevent Josie from calling upon him in this way, he silently accepts her request and is captured in the nighttime police raid that leads to Josie's death. McGreevy's return to the big house contrasts starkly with his initial arrival in that he accepts his position as a guest in Josie's house, and the risk and vulnerability that comes with being subject to the host's terms. He recognizes Josie's otherness and honors the demands that she has made of him. In Derridean or Levinasian terms Josie is the transcendent face of the Other who calls McGreevy's ego into question, allowing him to realize his unchosen responsibility and obligation to her.

Josie undergoes a transformation when she finally recognizes McGreevy's singularity and is bound to him by her responsibility to the Other. Frustrated by her desire to protect McGreevy, she concludes, "What she wanted really. To blot out those five days and his presence and what he stood for. To get home and lie down and call life normal again" (O'Brien 124). Life cannot be "normal" for Josie so long as she is bound by a sense of responsibility to McGreevy. His unsettling presence resonates with that of the executed British "chums" in "Guests of the Nation": they continue to be a discomforting presence in the narrator's life long after their deaths, leading him to conclude that "anything that ever happened to me after I never felt the same about again" (O' Connor 381). Like McGreevy

she can't rationalize or justify her decision to help the other, and she questions "How many would understand why she had hidden McGreevy; how many would do it themselves and like her not know why?" (O'Brien 164). Whereas McGreevy once appeared an impenetrable icon of hypermasculinity, he now registers as vulnerable and human, or wholly Other: Josie "saw him as she had not ever seen him, defenceless and muttering and insignificant" (197). Josie is finally able to acknowledge his depth and singularity as an individual who exceeds abstractions and stereotypes (Farquharson 129). Her obligation to the Other manifests as her responsibility as a host: she invites McGreevy to stay in her house, under her protection as host, in spite of the fact that his presence brings certain danger. Josie and McGreevy's parallel journeys merge when each is able to recognize and act on their responsibility to the Other by assuming their positions as host and guest, respectively.

The paradigm of intergender friendship offered in *Splendid Isolation* is modeled on a new form of feminist hospitality, one in which host and guest are bound by an infinite responsibility to the Other. A feminist hospitality, as theorized by philosophy scholar Maurice Hamington, seeks to break down the host/guest hierarchy in favor of a relationship of reciprocity; moreover, it minimizes patriarchal power differentials based on property ownership in the name of fostering connections (Hamington 23). Although *Splendid Isolation* certainly gestures towards a communal way of thinking, it argues that such a shift is only possible if women's authority and claim to belonging is first recognized. As McGreevy's transformation would suggest, the patriarchal power differential can only be broken down if it is first restructured so as to affirm the authority of the female host: this process would demand that Irish men learn to recognize and respect gender difference. Hamington emphasizes that reciprocity between host and guest is born out of a "mutual

respect and humility" where "the distinction between guest and host is blurred as both learn and grow together" (Hamington 28). *Splendid Isolation,* on the other hand, argues that such a blurring of positions is inherent to the asymmetrical relation of responsibility towards the Other. In its most ideal form this hierarchy is destabilized as guest and host share the vulnerability of being open and responsible to the Other.

Splendid Isolation goes as far as to position intergender friendship as a form of mutual hostage-taking, where each friend is held hostage by his or her responsibility to the Other. Both Josie and McGreevy are drawn to the big house because it is isolated and allows them to withdraw from others in the name of self-preservation. Their longing for physical seclusion underscores a greater desire for psychological solitude, and their reclusion in the big house is an attempt to retreat inward into their own selves. Although they are motivated by very different experiences they exemplify Derrida's claim that every individual wants "to be master at home" and that anyone "who encroaches on home, on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty to host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage" (*Politics* 54-5). Josie and McGreevy close themselves off from others believing that it will afford them the security and power of being a master or host—a self that is autonomous and in control. They perceive each other "an enemy" because the Other can, by making demands of them, hold them hostage. The distinction between host and hostage becomes hopelessly blurred as Josie and McGreevy are bound by their shared vulnerability of being responsible to the Other. The end of the novel marks a dramatic reversal of the beginning: neither person seeks isolation, and both sacrifice their self-interests in order to help the other. That being said, Josie's death illustrates that being responsible to the Other is

not an abstract gesture but a concrete action that may place an individual in life-threatening danger. That McGreevy survives and Josie meets a violent demise suggests that the consequences of being responsible to the Other will differ for each individual; those individuals who are protected by privilege will face fewer risks than those who are disenfranchised and vulnerable. Both Josie and McGreevy are rendered vulnerable by their attempts to defy state police forces, but ultimately Josie occupies a more precarious position and pays a greater price. The novel forces readers to question whether she should be expected to make this sacrifice, and whether already vulnerable and disenfranchised individuals such as women in the Irish Republic should be expected to take on the added vulnerability that comes with being responsible to the Other.

This being said, *Splendid Isolation* makes unsettling claims about the nature of sacrifice within intergender friendships, particularly in terms of who performs the care work inherent to such relationships. Josie's character naturalizes women as mediators, which in turn reinforces common representations of women as peace makers who are uninvolved in sectarian conflict itself (Sales 1). Josie and McGreevy's friendship is made possible by the immense amount of emotional and psychological care work that Josie performs, and the onus of this labor falls on women. While the novel emphasizes the ways in which this private care work is a political matter, one that needs to be recognized at the level of national discourse, it remains a sacrifice that is disproportionately demanded of women.

The novel does condemn, however, the state for failing to recognize not only Josie's sacrifice but also her authority as a political participant, as evidenced when she is brutally killed before she can fulfill her responsibility to McGreevy. When she attempts to save McGreevy during a nighttime house raid she is silenced for the last time by the masculine

force of the police state. Josie "calls, but no one hears her or looks in her direction" and she is shot "while her mouth, opening to say, but then non-say, is struck speechless and the metal leech is sucked violently and unerringly into the maelstrom of her unfinished plea" (O'Brien 221). This silencing is more than a matter of not being heard: the striking description of her attempting to speak being transformed into "non-say" suggests a complete and utter negation of her agency. It echoes McGreevy's initial exclamation "O! woman of the house!" in that it negates the authority of Josie's words, and her authority over the house. Unlike the alternative of "not say," "Non-say" illustrates that the state doesn't recognize Josie as a political participant who can choose to speak or not speak. By silencing Josie the state denies the political agency of her actions and reprivatizes her voice, further reinforcing the public political sphere as a traditionally male discursive space. It removes Josie from public discourse and potentially erases her friendship with McGreevy before it can become a matter of public knowledge; McGreevy doesn't talk when he is captured and given that he remained largely silent about his wife, who suffered a violent death much like Josie, it is unlikely that he will make their friendship known.

Josie's death is a final and crushing depiction of how sexist institutions like the Irish nation state use force to limit women's right to host, and in doing so, deny women the right to belong in the greater Irish community. The invasion by the police force eerily mirrors McGreevy's initial intrusion into the big house, and it resonates as a climactic example of how systemic sexism shuts down crucial dialogues between men and women. Although the big house is always coded as a political space, it remains a sanctuary or fictional space apart from the state apparatus for much of the novel. The lack of such third part interference allows a new ethical relation to develop between these two strangers, and this responsibility

to the Other makes intergender friendship and a women's nationalism possible. Despite the novel's best efforts to end on a note of longing and hope for a peaceful and unified Ireland, the violent demise of Josie and McGreevy's friendship is a sobering reminder that any progress made among individuals can't be sustained unless change is effected at an institutional level as well.

Chapter Four

The Luxury of Belonging in Neoliberal, Globalized South Africa

This final chapter examines how the ostensibly progressive and racially inclusive "new" South Africa is a continuation of its Apartheid predecessor, where race continues to divide communities, and forms of difference like class and nationality play increasingly important roles in this fragmentation. The state-sanctioned model of an exceptional South African "rainbow nation"— a community which ostensibly embraces people of all races, nationalities, and cultures— has its roots in the progressive white South African model of interracial friendship explored in the second chapter. Both models employ colorblind ideologies and a facade of inclusivity in order to naturalize privilege and mask the oppression and exploitation that makes this privilege possible. This chapter broadens the scope of prior discussions by examining how trust in and responsibility to the Other are not only necessary for forming more inclusive national communities, but of increasing importance in building a more equitable global community. As such this chapter unpacks the relationships and obligations between formerly-colonized nations; moreover, it examines the bonds and obligations between these nations and their former colonizers, the nations of the Global North (also known as the first-world). This chapter also broadens the scope of prior chapters by investigating how the ideologies and policies of neoliberalism and globalization have shaped how South Africans understand community, limiting and disrupting the formation of a more inclusive South African nation and global community. Lastly, this final discussion will grapple with a fundamental concern underlying prior chapters: given that individuals

experience vastly different levels of privilege and precarity, should every individual be expected to take on the risks and vulnerability that are essential to community building? In other words, to what degree should vulnerable and exploited communities —the "Internal Others" of a false community of privilege— take on the risks and sacrifices required for having trust in and being responsible to the Other?

Introduction

Nelson Mandela's inauguration as South Africa's first black president in May of 1994 marked an end to the state-sanctioned racial divisions of Apartheid and a symbolic gesture towards a unified "rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world" (Mandela). South Africa's monumental break from Apartheid elevated it to the status of an "exceptional nation:" years of violent racial conflict had been forgiven during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996, and the nation appeared to move forward as a peaceful, unified, and inclusive community. This exceptionalism is embodied by its status as a "rainbow nation:" the term was first coined by anti-Apartheid activist Archbishop Desmond Tutu to describe post-Apartheid South Africa after its first fully democratic election in 1994, and was later adopted by President Nelson Mandela to signify the end of racially divided nation and the birth of a unified community of various nationalities and races. This state-sanctioned narrative of exceptionalism presents a sanitized representation of South Africa as a nation that is no longer plagued by the social, political, and economic divisions of Apartheid—its rebirth as an ostensibly post-racial nation renders the historical qualifier "post-Apartheid" all but irrelevant.

Post-apartheid literature, however, doesn't accept the easy narrative of exceptionalism and, in a move that distances it from the critiques of stark black and white racial division found in the protest fiction of Apartheid, examines the ways in which South Africa is fragmented by more nuanced forms of difference, accounting for categories like socioeconomic status and nationality. Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2001) and K. Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* (2000), for example, argue that South Africa is far from inclusive and is currently experiencing a crisis of belonging due to the intersecting forces of globalization, neoliberalism, and the continued impact of colonization. This crisis manifests in a young generation of post-colonial subjects who experience a profound sense of alienation and displacement from their supposed homelands, and as a result they wander the globe in search of a sense of belonging. The forces of globalization and neoliberalism only compound this crisis: the increased movement of people, ideas, and resources under globalization destabilizes any sense of a center or home, and the competitive demands of participating in the neoliberal market further weaken the possibility of community formation. The stakes of this crisis are immense: how can South Africa reconcile the isolating ideological demands of neoliberal individualism with the ethical demands of community-building, specifically, trust in and responsibility to the Other? In the context of a globalized community, what responsibility does a more prosperous and developed nation like South Africa have towards its neighboring African nations? Lastly, what hope is there for a more inclusive South Africa if social bonds generated by trust and responsibility pose a threat to the politically, socially, and economically disenfranchised— or the vast majority of South Africa's people?

South Africa's transition to an exceptional, post-Apartheid nation is synonymous with its integration into the global, neoliberal economy. Its claim to "post-racial" status is predicated on its embrace of the neoliberal ideology of 'free choice,' a great racial equalizer that ostensibly erases past injustices. Moreover, globalization promises the movement of people, knowledge, and resources resulting in an egalitarian global community where forms of difference like nationality will cease to be important. Post-Apartheid fiction examines the disjuncture between this idealized promise of a more inclusive South Africa and the more grim reality. The novels I will explore here investigate how the integration of neoliberal economics has conditioned social relations such that the ideologies of self-interest and individualism promote autonomy over community. Moreover, the novels argue that conceiving of "choice" as a matter of individual control, where every protagonist can ostensibly act according to his or her self-interest, only legitimizes and masks systemic racial and economic inequalities. Uneven global development and the policing of mobility through the political system of citizenship has led to a new Apartheid between the nations of the Global North and Global South. *Thirteen Cents* and *The Pickup* argue that the promise of free choice is empty rhetoric, for choice is shaped by constraint rather than freedom.

Both novels examine how forms of generosity like hospitality are a potential means of bridging the divide between the powerful moneyed and propertied class of South African nationals and those marginalized individuals who lie outside it. Similarly, they explore how distortions of the gift in neoliberal South Africa —where the gift becomes a means of exploitation and profit— widen this gap. Both *Thirteen Cents* and *The Pickup* feature young protagonists who are alienated from their places of origin and, because they are adrift and in search of a place they consider home, they embody the current crisis of belonging. This

crisis manifests in Duiker's protagonist, Azure, a young orphan trying to find a home in the streets of Cape Town. His ambiguous racial phenotype prevents him from claiming membership in any of the racial communities, and his lack of communal connections makes him vulnerable to exploitation. Gordimer explores the crisis of belonging through two characters that embody opposing legacies of colonization: that of the formerly oppressed and that of the former oppressors, represented by Ibrahim ibn Musa and Julie Summers, respectively. Ibrahim is an undocumented African from an unnamed African Arab nation working in Johannesburg as a mechanic; he has drifted around the globe in search of entry into, and ultimately belonging in, the nations of the Global North. As an undocumented "foreigner" he tests South Africa's tolerance of national, cultural, and racial difference. Julie Summers is a liberal, white South African who seeks to reject her white privilege by dissociating herself from her family and their privileged life in the Johannesburg suburbs; like Ibrahim she is alienated by her original home. Julie and Ibrahim's chance encounter results in an interracial, transnational, and cross-cultural romance that tests the inclusiveness of the exceptional "rainbow nation," and questions whether the global crisis of belonging can be countered with restrictive models of community like that of the nation state.

Both *Thirteen Cents* and *The Pickup* depict a South Africa where essential components of community building are commoditized and circulated within an informal social economy that seeks to generate profit. Underprivileged and vulnerable individuals like Azure and Ibrahim learn to negotiate this economy, and are forced to choose autonomy over connections with others. The novels argue that the crisis of belonging will continue to plague South Africa and the greater global community so long as trust in and responsibility to the Other, both essential requirements for inclusive community formation, are luxury

commodities only available to economically and politically privileged individuals— to the vulnerable and disenfranchised they are liabilities that cannot be afforded.

I. Race and Community in Duiker's Neoliberal South Africa

Any discussion of the "new" South Africa is as much about the nation's entry into the neoliberal market as it is about the nation's break from its Apartheid roots. At the same time that Apartheid policies were being dismantled in the 1990's, South Africa began implementing market-oriented economic policies in an attempt to integrate itself into the global economy. The result is a South Africa that is characterized by the same ideology of 'free choice' that typifies the neoliberal condition. After years of white South Africa dictating every facet of black and coloured South Africans' lives, including where they could live, claim citizenship, and what kind of work they could perform, South Africa became the land of ostensibly "deracialized choice," where one has the freedom to live and work almost anywhere "so long as one can buy ones way in" (Goldberg 312). Free choice has become the great post-Apartheid equalizer and ostensibly ensures that all members of the "rainbow nation" —regardless of race, gender, class, nationality, or cultural background— have the freedom to act out of self-interest and shape their own futures. Post-Apartheid social critics of many backgrounds, including black and white South African literary authors, such as K. Sello Duiker and Nadine Gordimer, respectively, argue that in reality choice is characterized by constraint, not freedom. It is restricted to one's means: ones resources, connections, and rights (Goldberg 313). The rhetorical move of "choice" offers a false sense of closure on the injustices of Apartheid by "refashioning membership without resentment, reconciliation without responsibility, redress without sacrifice, without giving up privilege or at least

economic power" (Goldberg 312). While the state-sanctioned narratives of exceptionalism and choice claim that the nation has broken free of its tumultuous past, post-Apartheid writers argue that the "new South Africa" is merely a repackaging and rebranding of a state still divided.

One of the most powerful consequences of the ideology of free choice is that it masks over continued racial inequalities with the rhetoric of colorblindness. On a fundamental level free choice confuses the notion of equality, where everyone has the same opportunity to choose, with underlying and sustained issues of equity, that is, not everyone started off with the same resources or options. The colorblindness or nonracialization of free choice—which erases race from the identity of post-Apartheid South Africa, and denies that racism and race privilege shape society— is harmful because race continues to have powerful social effects. Post-Apartheid South Africa "has come to exemplify neoliberal racial articulation," where divisions based on race have supposedly reconfigured into ones based on class. Post-Apartheid literary works like Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* expose the myth of a colorblind South Africa as an empty universalism that elides racial, national, and socioeconomic difference and inequality, all while naturalizing the growing disparity between the poor and very wealthy. As the debut novel of one of the most promising young black South African post-Apartheid writers, *Thirteen Cents* investigates the powerful social effects of race through a racially ambiguous and disenfranchised protagonist, Azure. It examines how the neoliberal ideologies of individualism and self-interest work in tandem with the social effects of race to actively shape the possibilities— or limitations— of community in the "new" South Africa. In doing so it maps the limits of free choice for South Africa's most vulnerable residents.

As a coming of age story about growing up in post-Apartheid Cape Town, *Thirteen Cents* is critical of how the racial and economic legacies of Apartheid have constricted the future of its protagonist. Azure's status as an outsider among the various communities in Cape Town is due in part to two interrelated legacies of Apartheid—extreme poverty and violence. Prior to moving to Cape Town he resided in Mshenguville, an informal settlement outside of Soweto, a major township in Johannesburg that is known for its high unemployment and poverty levels. He is rendered a homeless orphan, without a home or any kind of stable community, after his parents are murdered over their increasing debts. The fact that his parents are killed by members of the local black community speaks to the continued problems of black-on-black violence in the post-Apartheid nation. Politicians during and even after Apartheid have justified high levels of crime within black communities by appealing to the myth that black culture is inherently violent. This simplistic and racist explanation ascribes blame to the black community and masks over the structural inequalities and systems of oppression that directly contribute to crime rates, such as low employment and extreme poverty within black communities like Azure's. The desperate need for income forces Azure to relocate to the underbelly of Cape Town where he takes on the precarious work of being a child prostitute for wealthy white men. Although he is only thirteen years old, economic and social forces have forced Azure into an early adulthood where self-preservation dictates his every decision.

Azure's ambiguous racial background exacerbates his vulnerable position because South Africa's racial imaginary is still controlled by the white supremacy of Apartheid: communities form along racial lines, and individuals who don't fit neatly into racial categories are ostracized and excluded. Duiker's Cape Town represents a South Africa that

is anything but colorblind, where race remains a deeply ingrained and restrictive social construct. As Azure navigates black, white, and coloured communities, he is constantly under scrutiny by those who wish to read and classify his racial background.

The residents possess a fine-tuned sensitivity to the nuances and complexities of how "race" has been constructed under white supremacy in South Africa. The process of racial categorization, for example, depends on a very precise mapping out of an individual's lineage: someone only qualifies as "coloured" if both of his or her parents are coloured (that is, both parents are produced by the union of a European and either black or Asian ancestor). If an individual has black and white parents, he or she would be considered "biracial" or "mixed race." The specificity and pervasiveness of these definitions illustrates how the country's racial imaginary has been profoundly shaped by the rigid racial categorizations of Apartheid. The 1950 Population Registration Act paved the way for Apartheid by allowing white politicians to categorize South Africans according to ethnic categories so they could be consequently segregated or, in the veiled terms of the ruling National Party, given their own "cultural spaces" (Louw 48). Racial categories were constructed around physical differences, and distinctions were made by assessing skin color, facial features, and hair texture. More subtle forms of evaluation such as socioeconomic status or manners and behavior (like eating habits) were considered, revealing the degree to which class played a role in constructing these categories. *Thirteen Cents* often downplays these categories by not overtly racializing many of its characters, but it is overtly critical of the desire or impulse to classify an individual's race. Azure's close friend Victor warns him that he attracts unwanted attention because his appearance suggests that he is performing whiteness, particularly when he wears new shoes that suggest wealth. Victor advises "you must watch

what you wear [….] they look at your blue eyes and shoes and they think blues eyes, veldskoene, he's trying to be white. That's how people think" (Duiker 40). Despite the fact that Azure identifies as black, others try to interpret his race in such a way that it is an act of totalization, or an assertion of knowledge and power over that individual. That being said, the categories themselves continue to be of incredible economic and political importance because they maintain racial hierarchies and continue to interpellate individuals into white supremacy. [16]

This paradigm of community formation excludes all individuals who exceed these distinct categories: Azure's ambiguous phenotype alienates him from the black and coloured communities and he is forced to perform "blackness" in order to integrate himself into the racial hierarchy. While he steadfastly claims to be black he doesn't fit into the black community because he has blue eyes, a striking marker of whiteness; similarly he doesn't possess phenotypic features like fair skin that might place him in the coloured community. Duiker never attempts to disambiguate Azure's racial background and this omission is his refusal to participate in a system that seeks to categorize people as a means of control and discrimination. Cape Town residents either fetishize or ostracize Azure for his unusual appearance. White people, including the majority of his male clients, are fascinated by his appearance and question whether his eye color is real. Their attraction rings clearly as an

[16] The economic and political realities of these categories were most explicit during Apartheid, where racial segregation under the Group Areas Act (1950) created hierarchical communities. The subtle distinctions between black and coloured South Africans, for example, led to disparate experiences of Apartheid: coloured communities were given their own segregated space and received slightly better resources and funding. Racial categorization continues to be a heated topic because these identities still correlate with economic and social standing. Racial categorization is, for example, at the core of Black Economic Empowerment, a government program aimed at redressing the inequalities of Apartheid by granting formerly disadvantaged groups new economic privileges. Eusebius McKaiser, a political analyst and lecturer based at Rhodes University in Johannesburg, writes about the economic marginalization of the coloured community with such programs. According to McKaiser, they often show a strong preference for businesses with mainly black owners over those owned by coloured individuals because black South Africans are deemed "worthier victims."

eroticization and fetishization of difference, more specifically, a racial Other who exceeds comprehension. Azure claims that he is unable to look at himself in the mirror because "my blue eyes remind me of the confusing messages they send to people. I wear my blue eyes with fear because fear is deeper than shame" (Duiker 21). The black community stigmatizes Azure for his marker of whiteness because it aligns him with both the white and coloured communities and consequently is a reminder of white supremacy. Azure insists that he is dark-skinned enough to pass as a "makwerekwere," where "makwerekwere" is pejorative South African slang for an African immigrant, or in its more capacious use, a foreigner. He is told that this is not enough, that he has "to be more black…. Like more black than all of us" and that he is excluded and mistreated because "they think you are not black enough" (Duiker 40). Performing blackness requires that Azure not wear flashy clothes or any other items that might allude to wealth or a higher class standing, and consequently, whiteness.

Azure's marker of whiteness similarly alienates members of the coloured community by reminding them that they are not at the top of the racial hierarchy, and as a consequence coloured individuals brutally assert their superiority over him. To some degree Azure faces the dilemma that coloured people have historically been burdened with in South Africa because he is "not black enough, not white enough" to fit into either community.[17] Unlike a coloured person, however, he does not enjoy the social or economic benefits of being aligned with the white community, such as those that were granted to the coloured community under Apartheid. While he is still learning about the complex racial tensions in Cape Town, he

[17] Mohahmed Adhikari's *Not Black Enough, Not White Enough* investigates the complexities of the "coloured" multiracial signifier as a social identity from the formation of the South African state in 1910 to the early 2000s. Coloured South Africans experience shame from having a hybrid identity that affords them an intermediary position on the racial hierarchy. They have a marginalized status under white domination despite the community's attempts to assimilate in the hopes of being welcomed into white society.

finds out that he has misread the race of a violent gangster named Gerald. Azure assumes that Gerald is white because he has straight hair and fair skin but he is informed that "he looks white but if you look closely you can see some coloured blood" in the man's eyes (Duiker 40). This remark highlights the arbitrariness of race: as with Azure's eye color, it requires interpretation and can be misread because it lacks an accurate physical referent. Race is presented here as a psychological artifact from years of white supremacy, for it would appear that no one would know that Gerald isn't white if it weren't already communal knowledge provided by Gerald himself. Gerald is resentful of Azure's blue eyes, because "It's a white thing. It just eats him up that he's not all white" (Duiker 42). Azure's marker of whiteness reminds Gerald that he occupies a middle position on the racial hierarchy, and he compensates for his self-loathing by asserting himself over Azure through violence and abuse.

Cape Town adults recognize that Azure's lack of communal ties makes him exceptionally vulnerable and they exploit his fear for their economic gain, offering him false forms of protection or communal support in exchange for money. Fear is such a motivating factor in Azure's life that it drives him to desperate means of protection, such as being forced into a relationship of dependency with a violent pimp. Azure overpays a pimp for worthless clothing items because their loose alliance keeps other criminals at bay. He recognizes that this business relationship doesn't make financial sense because the pimp "always gives me clothes that are ready to fall apart, so I am always dependent on him. So that I will go back and spend more money on him" (Duiker 18). This relation of forced dependency is taken to a new level when the gangster Gerald tries to force Azure into debt bondage under the pretense that it is repayment for a gift. Gerald has his men physically and sexually assault

Azure and frames the medical treatment that he must consequently receive as a gift that must be repaid. Gerald tries to interpellate Azure into a false community of belonging with the proclamation that "this is your new home. I own you now" (Duiker 66). This moment is steeped in South Africa's history of colonization: as a coloured man, Gerald is asserting his (white) supremacy over Azure by enslaving and forcing him into labor. Debt bondage and other forms of modern slavery like commercial sexual exploitation and forced child labor are pervasive problems in contemporary Africa. The 2016 Global Slavery Index estimates that a quarter million people are living in these modern forms of slavery in South Africa alone. Azure's lack of communal connections makes him particularly vulnerable to forms of modern slavery and exploitation. *Thirteen Cents* emphasizes the ways in which these forms of exploitation are often masked as generous gestures like Gerald's "gift;" as Azure navigates the adult world he quickly learns to be suspicious of gifts because they are never given freely.

Duiker's Cape Town is a perverted form of Marcel Mauss' gift society: gift exchanges are used by the adults of Cape Town to generate social cohesion, but they are motivated by self-interest and attempt to create relationships based on profit.[18] The result is a thoroughly distorted version of community where relationships are commoditized and an individual's membership is determined by his or her use value to others. At its best the relationships that are generated by these exchanges are ones of reciprocity. Azure receives occasional meals in exchange for running errands for a woman named Joyce who asks him to

[18] In his 1925 text *The Gift*, French sociologist Marcel Mauss published a groundbreaking study about forms of exchange and social structure in several "primitive" societies. Mauss examines the ways that gifts, or exchanges of objects, generate social cohesion and build relationships. Societies based on gift economies impose three positive obligations on their members: the obligation to give, to receive, and, most importantly, to reciprocate the gift at a later date.

call her "Auntie." While he enjoys having a pseudo-maternal presence in his life, Azure concludes that adults never give freely, that "There's nothing for mahala [free] with grown ups. You always have to do something in return" (Duiker 7). On one level Azure's observation illustrates Mauss' claim that gift economies operate by obligation so that a recipient must return the gift at a later date. Azure seems to desire a system of reciprocity that over time is meant to achieve a balance or equity, and this longing reflects his naiveté as a new member in the adult social order. On a more implicit level, however, it is a critique of a social system where generous gestures always insert individuals into an economy based on indebtedness. Jacques Derrida offers similar criticism of Mauss in *Given Time* when he claims that a true or ideal gift should be given freely without the expectation of return, and it should try to disrupt rather than create a system of exchange. Derrida recognizes that in an imperfect social world this is an impossible ideal that individuals should nonetheless strive towards in order to be more ethical beings; Duiker's Cape Town illustrates the grim consequences of a social order that isn't guided and self-regulated by such an ideal.

Ultimately, however, this supposed generosity is geared towards profit rather than equity, and within this social economy trust is a highly valued commodity. Azure regularly gives Joyce his meager earnings because she has promised to keep them safe in a bank account. While this arrangement doesn't appear to be an act of generosity in the sense that the money is being more or less circulated between two people, it is an ethical gesture in that Azure is taking a risk by trusting his money with this woman, and this act of trust requires an openness to the Other. It is an act of faith wherein Azure makes himself vulnerable to Joyce, and acts without certainty or knowledge of how she will act in return; it seems to exceed — and consequently disrupt— the seemingly reciprocal exchange between the two. Azure

becomes aware of his precarious position when he learns that she has been exploiting his trust for her own personal gain, and has stolen his savings. He looses both the money he has left with Joyce and his ability to trust her: the loss of these two suggests that in Duiker's Cape Town, they are not distinct entities but rather synonymous— quantifiable commodities that are circulated between individuals in the name of profit. Trust is revealed to be not the excess that it appeared to be, but something that is always reinserted into an informal social economy.

The informal social economy of Duiker's Cape Town is fueled by the need for greater communal inclusivity: it seeks to interpellate marginalized and vulnerable individuals like Azure by offering membership within false communities of belonging.

Adults try to lure Azure into these false communities by framing them as the familial relations that he so desires. Joyce tells Azure that he reminds her of her own son and requests that he call her "Auntie"; she reinforces this sense of intimacy and trust by using the nickname "Zu-Zu" with him. When Gerald explains the terms of his new relationship with (or ownership of) Azure, he insists that he be thought of as a father and caretaker and claims that his residence is Azure's "new home" (Duiker 66). This assertion of paternal authority suggests that contemporary forms of slavery are new permutations of the trope of the benevolent slave Master. In *The Gift* Mauss notes that gift exchanges are often *agonistic* because they enact a competition of generosity, wherein the donor offers a gift that indebts the recipient and demands reciprocation. He points to the practice of Potlatch by several Indian tribes of the US Pacific Northwest, where the donor offers such an excessive gift that it permanently indebts the recipient, as an extreme example of such competitive generosity. Duiker's Cape Town is characterized by a distorted form of this agonistic giving, in that

exploitation is framed as a gift in an attempt to entrap, or in Gerald's case, enslave, the recipient. Azure becomes suspicious of these gifts because they offer no more than a tainted form of social cohesion, or membership in false communities of belonging.

Thirteen Cents expands its indictment of these adults to include Azure's affluent white male clients, arguing that Cape Town's monied and propertied class are parasites who consolidate their privilege by exploiting the socially and economically disenfranchised. The novel draws parallels between Cape Town's informal social economy and South Africa's 'informal sector,' that is, the economic activity that isn't taxed or monitored by the government. As a child sex worker Azure is a participant in this sector, and most of his acquaintances are as well, including drug dealers and gangsters like Gerald and Allen. While *Thirteen Cents* focuses on very dark and seemingly extreme side of Cape Town's 'informal sector,' the reality is that as a whole this economic sector is crucial to the economic survival of many South Africans. According to the 2012 Quarterly Labor Force Survey, there were 2.1 million South Africans active in the informal economy, compared to 9.5 million in the non-agricultural formal sector. The report concludes that South Africa's informal economy plays an increasingly important role in buffering between employment and unemployment, and creating livelihood opportunities for many South Africans. The 2012 report suggested that the informal economy is so important that if it were somehow eliminated, the unemployment rate would rise from 25% to around 47.5%. The 'informal sector' is similarly important in *The Pickup*, as Gordimer points to how the privilege of the Global North is sustained in part by exploitation in the informal sectors of various nations that employ a large number of Global South nationals, like Ibrahim.

Thirteen Cents demonstrates how Cape Town's informal social economy operates in tandem with the 'informal sector' by exploiting those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. Duiker links Cape Town's informal social economy with its informal sector in part through the character of Joyce, who promises Azure that she will safeguard his earnings in a bank account. This act symbolically aligns Joyce with the bankers and other members of the finance class that represents South Africa's economic elite. On an intuitive level Azure draws this connection when he concludes that Joyce is just like his wealthy male clients, several of whom are investment bankers; all of these adults are oppressors and are "all on the same team" (Duiker 107). Both the informal sector and the informal social economy are fueled by precarity. Azure's participation in the informal sector is inherently precarious: he is subject to physical violence, has no job security, and his white clients often refuse to pay or drastically underpay him for services. The precariousness of this work is compounded by the fact that adults like Joyce and Gerald exploit his vulnerability and steal his meager earnings. Azure recognizes this as a form of opportunistic parasitism when he angrily questions, "Why can't they do things for themselves? Why must I do all the work and someone else must steal it?" (Duiker 168). As a literary work that explores the various kinds of economies at play in Cape Town, *Thirteen Cents* grapples with the invisibility and opacity of these exchanges. Just as business within the 'informal sector' isn't regulated by the government, the exchanges within Cape Town's social economy aren't recognized or regulated in any formal way, rendering participants like Azure all the more vulnerable to exploitation. The novel teases out complex intersections of economics, race, and community within Cape Town life, intersections that can never be reduced to statistics or fully captured

in any institutional report. In doing so it affirms Nadine Gordimer's claim that "the facts are always less than what happens" (*Conversations* 76).

Thirteen Cents complicates the dominant narrative of post-Apartheid South Africa, which claims that class division is now key. It does this by illustrating the ways that race and community play a significant role in these divisions; moreover, it examines how neoliberalism conditions social relations and influences how relationships are constructed. Common critiques of neoliberal South Africa made by social science scholars in such fields as political economy and sociology focus on its massive wealth divide. Marxist scholar David Harvey and South African political economist Patrick Bond describe the division as a "class apartheid" which Bond claims is generated by the "systemic underdevelopment and segregation of the oppressed majority" (Bond 198). To some degree Azure validates this narrative when he groups all of his oppressors, regardless of their racial background, as a class of exploitative "adults." The novel resists such a flat reading, however, by offering a nuanced examination how this economic divide intersects with race, not just in terms of how wealth is divided, but also of how racial community-formation plays a role in who is exploited and subjugated. Azure's condemnation of Cape Town's "adults" suggests an understanding of neoliberalism that is broader in scope than David Harvey's definition of it as a "political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of the political elite" (Harvey 19). *Thirteen Cents* explores the social significance of living within neoliberalism: how it conditions people and influences how they act, think, and feel (May 15). When Azure constructs a class of oppressive "adults" he includes people of all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds who participate in a social system that is guided by

market imperatives: it is dictated by extreme self-interest and individualism. It justifies ruthless competition among individuals in the name of obtaining money and property.

The novel poses unsettling questions about whether generosity—which is by its very definition is an excess—is possible in Duiker's Cape Town if everything, including trust in the Other, is commoditized and reduced to an economy. Azure notes that within this system "Money is everything" (Duiker 18), and people are no exception. The title *Thirteen Cents*, which refers to the pitiful sum that Azure has left in his possession on his thirteenth birthday, highlights how individuals are reduced to monetary amounts based on their use or exchange values. Duiker's Cape Town is a grim representation of how neoliberalism has conditioned the social sphere such that "all forms of social solidarity [are] dissolved in favor of individualism, private property, personal responsibility" (Harvey 23). There is no room for trust in an environment where all relations are strategic and guided by self-interest, and as such Azure learns that with adults, "you can't trust them" and "I don't trust them" (Duiker 50, 166). Trust is a luxury commodity that Cape Town's most marginalized residents can't afford—it is a liability and almost certain risk for someone as vulnerable as Azure. His growing sense of distrust and consequently isolation from others leads him to favor autonomy over membership in the Cape Town community.

Azure rejects the possibility of community in favor of autonomy as a means of survival, but the novel recognizes that this choice is shaped by constraint rather than freedom. Before Vincent, Azure's childhood (and only) friend, leaves town he warns Azure that he should do everything himself rather than relying on others. When Azure asks if he means that he shouldn't trust his money with others, Vincent claims that "money is complicated. It's like people. It keeps changing. Sometimes it's your friend, sometimes it's

your enemy. Don't trust money too much" (Duiker 114). Within the Cape Town community both money and people are volatile and are in a system of constant exchange. Vincent recognizes that money can empower you as a "friend" or act as an "enemy" and imprison you, perhaps a reference to the greed and unethical behavior of the various adults that exploit Azure for financial gain. Vincent's cryptic statements seem to argue that Azure must find his autonomy outside of monetary or economic systems—his sense of self must exist apart from external constructions like money and property. Individuals in Cape Town construct their sense of self around obtaining wealth and power but these are in a constant state of flux and movement, and Azure needs to locate his sense of self in something more permanent. Azure rejects the possibility of community when he refuses to integrate into the false communities of belonging that Gerald, Joyce, and other adults try to force upon him. His decision marks an extreme embrace of individualism and self-interest but it is dictated largely by self-preservation.

As a coming of age story, *Thirteen Cents* marks a young boy's search for an alternative form of adulthood and community where becoming a man, or a member of the adult community, doesn't necessarily entail participating in the current market-driven social system. The reader learns about the complex racial and power dynamics of Cape Town through the eyes of a young boy who is beginning to understand that the social world is not naturally formed, but heavily constructed. The result is a youthful perspective that, in trying to make sense of the world of Cape Town's adults, offers a crushingly logical critique of the status quo. Azure's first-person point of view questions the logic and validity of Cape Town's current social and economic order by revealing not only the absurdity and arbitrariness of how race is constructed, but also the injustices of a system where privilege

and power are constructed through the exploitation of the most vulnerable. While it is likely impossible for Azure to survive without participating to some degree in the current market-driven social system, he rejects the idea that every aspect of the social word must be quantified and reduced to a use value. He refuses to accept the logic that people are only as valuable as the services they can provide, and that even the most abstract, intangible entities like trust can, and should, be calculated, commoditized, and traded. Moreover, he rejects the idea that he can only move forward by exploiting others. The novel ends when Azure retreats to Table Mountain and has an apocalyptic vision of the destruction of Cape Town and all of its inhabitants. He then prepares to return to the city and rejoin the world of adults, stating, "I know what fear is [….] I have seen the centre of darkness [….] I know his secrets" (190). The darkness and uncertainty of Azure's ominous vision is undercut by the fact that he now possesses the self-assuredness that comes with self-knowledge. It would appear Azure has gained an advantage over the Cape Town adults who construct a fragile sense of self around such volatile things as wealth and power: he has succeeded in locating his sense of self in something more solid and permanent—that is, his new-found self knowledge.

Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* expands Duiker's critique of the promise of choice to the context of a globalized South Africa, where the interpersonal connection of responsibility to the Other conflicts with the need for complete autonomy. *The Pickup* shows that the informal social economy of Duiker's Cape Town can be mapped onto a global community that segregates and disenfranchises the nations of the Global South in order to sustain the privilege of the Global North. Within this social economy connections are reduced to use value and responsibility to the Other becomes a commodity much like trust—a luxury that only the most politically and economically enfranchised can afford. Gordimer's critique is

made in part through the outsider Ibrahim, an undocumented black national of an unnamed African Arab nation working in Johannesburg. As a counterpoint to Duiker's Azure, Ibrahim allows Gordimer to investigate how national and cultural difference, in addition to race, play an important role in how belonging is constructed in South Africa as well as within the global community.

II. South African Supremacy and Global Apartheid in *The Pickup*

The story of post-Apartheid South Africa would be incomplete if it didn't account for the ways in which it has been shaped by both neoliberalism and its counterpart, globalization. Nadine Gordimer's 2001 novel *The Pickup* investigates the promise of choice in the context of citizenship and mobility within a globalized South Africa. Gordimer's novel suggests that freedom of choice— specifically, deciding where one will live and work —is a form of first-world privilege and an inaccessible luxury to most subjects in the developing world. Gordimer's critique resonates with Duiker's but on a more expansive scale: it broadens the notion of an economic Apartheid to a global scale where unequal development and limited mobility have created a Global Apartheid between the countries of the Global North and South. The novel represents this opposition through two protagonists that are representative of the Global North and South: Julie Summers, a progressive white South African national living in Johannesburg, and Ibrahim ibn Musa, an undocumented immigrant from an unnamed Arab African nation who has spent his adult life pursuing work in the countries of the Global North, including South Africa. These fictive representatives the Global North and South meet in the "global city" of Johannesburg, where their developing cross-cultural and transnational relationship offers a more cosmopolitan view of South Africa than that depicted

in *Thirteen Cents*. As a "global city" Johannesburg marks the intersections of various economic, political, and technological forces, and embodies the power relations of globalization. The term was coined by sociologist Anthony King to express how uneven global development and modernization has led to concentrations of wealth and resources in the cities of the Global North. Although South Africa is technically within the Global South, its higher levels of modernization, industrialization, and development often mean that it is considered part of the Global North; as such Johannesburg is a destination for Global South nationals in search of work and economic opportunity. The economic need that forces Ibrahim to seek work in the Global North highlights how the noble aims of globalization—such as to end world poverty—haven't been realized, and instead globalization has created a community of "economic refugees" who wander the globe in search of work (Kossew 22). Gordimer's Johannesburg could be any number of large western cities and acts as a metonym for the globalized world (Hunt 103). It is far from a distinct entity in itself and contrasts strikingly with Duiker's Cape Town, where geographical landmarks like Table Mountain and neighborhoods such as Green Point and Sea Point ground it with a specific sense of place. Gordimer's Johannesburg never offers a specific sense of place. In her city the people of the "rainbow nation" struggle to maintain a specific sense of self. Becoming increasingly integrated into a global network—especially with its flows of people and cultures— puts greater pressure on the construction of any cohesive and homogeneous national identity. *The Pickup* sees this mixing and heterogeneity as a source of creative possibility, but questions whether this potential can ever be realized so long as people are unable to imagine forms of community beyond the nation state.

While globalization promises a shift from the nation state to a more global model of community, in South Africa it has led to renewed emphasis on distinctions between foreigners and natives, and the construction of a new apartheid between legal, "native" South African citizens and undocumented residents. The breaking down of national boundaries that accompanies globalization would theoretically allow for more inclusive and heterogeneous forms of national identity. This is, after all, the promise of the "rainbow nation:" a unified South African identity defined by its diversity of cultures and nationalities. *The Pickup* implies that the contrary has occurred in a globalized South Africa, and that the nation state is in fact an increasingly important model of belonging within the Global North. In post-Apartheid South Africa nationality has replaced race as the primary legal tool for policing communal boundaries. The ruling class of both South Africa and, in the context of a Global Apartheid, of the globalized community, are those who are legal citizens of Global North countries, like Julie Summers. The ruling class of *The Pickup* are centered around the figure of Julie's father, Nigel Summers, a wealthy investment banker who resides in the prosperous white suburbs of Johannesburg. When Ibrahim asks Julie to introduce him to her family she is forced to return to this elite community, represented through the elaborate Sunday brunches that her father hosts in his mansion. These Sunday brunches mark a convergence of South Africa's most politically and economically enfranchised residents: investment bankers, lawyers, telecommunications magnates, and other well-connected professionals come together into what is an incredibly concentrated sphere of power and wealth. Whiteness is still reliable marker of privilege within this elite group. Julie notes that there are one or two black South Africans at Nigel's brunch, but this lack of diversity suggests that post-Apartheid policies geared towards rectifying racial inequality, such as 'Black Economic

Empowerment,' have failed to produce actual results and remain symbolic in nature. Throughout the brunch scene and first half of the narrative Gordimer uses the politicized pronouns of "somebody" and "nobody" to reflect Julie and Ibrahim's disparate positions in the global hierarchy. As a privileged national who has connections and social power, Julie is repeatedly referred to as a "somebody" whereas Ibrahim, an undocumented resident from the Global South, is referred to by the narrator as a "nobody." Even the character's names carry this political import: for the first half of the narrative Ibrahim is known by the generic alias of "Abdu," and his actual name isn't revealed until he returns to his homeland and symbolically regains his identity as a "somebody."

The novel is critical of how black South Africans are complicit in this new form of supremacy that is based on citizenship rather than race. When Ibrahim receives notice that he will be deported he asks Julie to use her father's connections to help him fight the order. The two meet with one of the only black South Africans present at Nigel Summer's brunch, a successful lawyer named Mr. Motsumi, who essentially tells Ibrahim that his case is hopeless. While Mr. Motsumi is speaking to Ibrahim, Julie interprets his seeming apathy as a personal attack on her relationship with someone who has been deemed a "nobody." Julie feels:

> A flush of resentment: *He's not for you*, that's what he's really saying: the famous lawyer is one of *them*, her father's people [….] it doesn't help at all that he is black; he's been one of their victims and now he is one of *them* now. He, too, expects her to choose one of her own kind. (80)

Mr. Motsumi may be a black man but he is now identified as one of the ruling elite class, a group that retains its privilege through more subtle forms of neocolonial oppression. Her

description of this class as "her father's people" and people of "her own kind" suggests that a kind of tribal loyalty regulates members of this community— a loyalty that she does not share and from which she seeks to distance herself by referring to the group as a detached "*them.*" Julie views Mr. Motsumi's actions as form of betrayal, for he was oppressed under Apartheid and is now complicit in the continued oppression of other African peoples; she remains oblivious, however, of her own condescending stance. By noting that it "doesn't help that [Mr. Motsumi] is black" and going as far as to claim that he is a "victim", Julie denies him agency and views him as a mere pawn or extension of the white community. Her patronizing attitude reflects her ignorance of the white privilege that she continues to enjoy in a society shaped by white supremacy. She condemns Mr. Motsumi's actions as a moral or ethical failure without accounting for the ways in which his life experience has been vastly different from her own.

That being said, Mr. Motsumi's supposed betrayal of Ibrahim speaks to the racist underpinnings of the "rainbow nation:" its claim to exceptional status, particularly compared to other African nations, relies on racist logic. The myth of South African exceptionalism promises a unified, peaceful national community comprised of various nationalities, but this claim to elitism is founded on a belief that South Africa is superior to other African nations because it is more closely aligned with the Global North. Rather than positioning itself with other formerly colonized African nations, South Africa aligns itself with Southern European or Latin American nations in terms of its levels of industrialization and how it has embraced liberal democracy (Neocosmos 4). The narrative of exceptionalism constructs a racial hierarchy where South Africa rejects its blackness in favor of being positioned with the more "white" nations of the Global North. One of the paradoxes of South African exceptionalism

is that its claims to superiority depend on a racist logic that it simultaneously must elide by asserting itself as a colorblind or non-racial nation. These racist underpinnings are visible when Azure uses the term "makwerekwere" to describe his dark complexion. The pejorative term for African immigrants aligns darker complexions with other African nationalities or "foreigners;" moreover, the popular use of the word connects a darker complexion with the outsider status of being an undocumented resident. These racist underpinnings are also manifest in the increasing waves of xenophobia in South Africa; the South African Human Rights Commission has argued that these attacks are racialized and should be referred to as examples of "Afrophobia" because they target African nationals and not Europeans.

The Pickup complicates traditional critiques of South African exceptionalism by arguing that it is also deeply rooted in the cultural superiority of the West over the East, particularly Arab cultures. The post-Apartheid South African narrative of exceptionalism distinguishes South Africa from other African nations not just in terms of racial or economic superiority, but also in terms of its status as a progressive and newly-democratic nation that wholeheartedly embraces western liberal ideology. Julie and Ibrahim's relationship puts pressure on this distinction because it is both interracial, transnational, and because it represents the interaction of Eastern and Western cultures, is cross-cultural. The text argues that even a professedly liberal western culture will not tolerate such a transgressive relationship. When Julie announces that she will accompany Ibrahim on his journey to his home country, her father angrily questions why she would do such a thing, for she is a woman "to whom freedom, independence, means so much" and "there women are treated like slaves" (*Pickup* 98). Nigel Summers denigrates Islamic culture by claiming that a liberal woman like Julie will sacrifice her autonomy by residing in a culture that the West

deems hyper-conservative and oppressive. Gordimer's critique acquires greater significance given that the novel was published right before the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001: while this event occurred in the U.S., it led to a global resurgence of Orientalist and Islamophobic discourse, and renewed divisions between Eastern and Western cultures.

The exceptionalist discourse of the "rainbow nation" may pride itself in its welcoming of national and cultural difference, but in practice membership in the national community is only accessible to those residents of the Global North who posses the political and economic privilege of mobility. Globalization theoretically entails a breaking down of geopolitical boundaries and a smoothing out of the globe. This would make international movement accessible to a greater portion of the global community and allow members to seek economic opportunity and choose where they live and work. *The Pickup* illustrates the hollowness of this promise through Julie and Ibrahim's disparate levels of mobility: while Julie can easily travel to the nations of the Global North, Ibrahim is either refused entry or experiences great difficulty when attempting secure visas. Gordimer condemns the Global North for using citizenship as a political tool for policing its national boundaries, essentially segregating itself from the Global South. Citizens of the Global South, whose nationalities are not deemed desirable by the Global North, are greatly restricted in their ability to access the resources and economic opportunity of the North. The result of globalization is asymmetrical hospitalities, where only an elite class of wealthy Global North nationals is free to travel the globe. The privilege of mobility becomes an object of contention at Nigel Summer's Sunday brunch, where guests applaud a wealthy white couple's decision to "relocate" to Australia. The narrator is far less approving of this move, claiming that it is a:

> euphemism for pulling anchor and going somewhere else, either perforce or because of the constrictions of poverty or politics, or by choice of ambition and belief that there's an even more privileged life, safe from the pitchforks and AK-47's of the rebellious poor and the handguns of criminals. (48)

This "relocation" can be situated within the exodus of thousands of affluent South Africans who have moved to other Anglophone countries since the end of Apartheid. The government has failed to keep records of this "white flight" but an estimated 800,000 or more white South Africans have emigrated since 1994, leading to the creation of sizeable white South African diasporas in Britain, Australia, New Zealand and many cities in the US and Canada (*Between Staying*). The hypocrisy of choice in South Africa becomes glaringly visible when white South Africans have the ability to escape the crime and poverty that characterizes the legacy of Apartheid, but black South Africans like Duiker's Azure are trapped by these conditions and are unable to act out of self-interest. The narrator—and possibly Julie given that her thoughts are being filtered through the free indirect discourse— is critical of the fact the white community acknowledges no responsibility towards the communities that it exploited and profited from during Apartheid. Moreover, this "white flight" illustrates how vast disparities in wealth and resources develop between the Global North and South. Wealth produced within South Africa isn't invested back into its communities, but rather exported to more affluent parts of the developed world. The majority of the conversation among the businessman at Nigel's brunch revolves around the decline in South Africa' mining industry from which many of the businessmen made their initial fortunes. The men casually state that "it's the end of an old industrial era" and that high levels of unemployment "are not going to be solved by shoring up an industry that's lost its place in terms of global finance" (*Pickup*

43). The casual nature of their conversation belies seriousness of the current economic situation, and suggests that these businessmen have absolved themselves of any responsibility to the laborers that produced their original wealth. They don't hesitate to walk away from this responsibility, as illustrated by the corporate executive who is congratulated for moving his business to Australia because it will entail a "huge expansion in relocation of [his] interests" (46).

The Pickup demonstrates how segregation in Apartheid South Africa and the current Global Apartheid both seek to create a pool of cheap labor and to maintain both the privilege of white South Africa and the Global North. During South Africa's Apartheid, the ruling National Party instituted a series of polices that rescinded the citizenship of black South Africans and made them nationals of the Bantustans or Homelands— independent territories set aside for black South Africans. A dearth of economic opportunity in these Homelands forced black South Africans to seek entry into white South Africa, but their ability to enter and reside within the nation was severely restricted and policed through the use of pass books. Much like contemporary immigration authorities, South African police were charged with the arrest and deportation of "illegal" residents, or black South Africans from the Bantustans that lacked proper documentation (Louw 64). The Homeland System created a massive surplus of cheap and exploitable black labor that sustained the privilege of white South Africa. *The Pickup* positions the legal system of citizenship as a contemporary permutation of South Africa's Homelands: both systems use nationality to restrict the movement of workers and maintain vast pools of cheap migrant labor. The national passport is the modern equivalent of the Apartheid pass book, and Ibrahim is one of the millions of migrants— "economic refugees" in Gordimer's words— who lack the proper documentation

and must take on precarious, unprotected work within the 'informal sector.' Although he studied economics in college, Ibrahim is a mechanic in Johannesburg and is derisively called a "grease monkey." Ibrahim notes that he earns a low wage and isn't granted worker protections because the garage owner who employs him illegally must take on the risk of such a hire. The anonymity and invisibility of his labor masks the fact that the economies of the Global North benefit from exploitative immigration policies that have been constructed to maintain their own privilege.

The Pickup uses hospitality and the political discourse of immigrant as guest to examine how political systems like citizenship and immigration policy not only control the movement of people around the globe, but allow nation states to police the status of immigrants as "legitimate" or "illegitimate" guests. During Apartheid, South Africa didn't have to grapple with large-scale flows of people because it was not considered a desirable destination by migrants. South Africa experienced an influx in immigration in the 1990s after the nation dismantled Apartheid and entered into the neoliberal, globalized market (Crush 8); it is currently one of the most important destinations within the transnational flows of the African population (Okome 10). Ibrahim is representative of the many "economic refugees" who have come to South Africa in the pursuit of work, only to face deportation after he is deemed an "illegal" immigrant by the state. By interweaving practices of private and state hospitality, *The Pickup* enters into an ongoing conversation with scholars who are interested in how the theory and ethics of hospitality inform our understanding of migration.[19] The state interferes with Julie's ability to continue to host Ibrahim in

[19] Since the 1990's a number of scholars have written about hospitality and immigration in a multi-disciplinary context. Many sociological investigations stemmed from heated immigration debates in France during the 1990's such as sociologist Dominique Schnapper's 1991 *La France de l'intégration: Sociologie de la nation en 1990* or Mohand Khelil's 1991 *L'intégration des maghrébins en France.* Literary scholars like Mirelle Rosello

Johannesburg, despite the fact that she is granted a certain level of autonomy as an enfranchised host country national, or a state-sanctioned "legitimate" resident.

While Gordimer's critique is embedded in a globalized South Africa, it resonates with Edna Obrien's critique of police state hospitality in the Irish Republic during the Troubles. Edna O'Brien's protagonist in *The House of Splendid Isolation (1994)*, Josie O'Meara, is unable to host her friend and guest because he is an outlawed IRA operative and deemed an "illegitimate" guest by the Republic of Ireland. The state's right to remove this "illegitimate" guest supersedes Josie's rights as a citizen, and police forces invade her property and seize her guest. The novels tackle different social critiques: Gordimer's focus is on the inequalities of globalization and O'Brien's on the gendered inequalities of membership in the Irish Republican state. Both, however, explore how modern states construct systems of belonging such as citizenship in order to police non-citizens as either "legitimate" and "illegitimate" guests. These modern state apparatuses impinge upon the autonomy of their citizens and deny them the sovereignty required to host others, particularly when this desire to host comes from a sense of ethical obligation towards the guest. In both of these disparate contexts the state uses these constructs of belonging to maintain closed borders and police the movement of internal "foreigners" in the name of national security.

Xenophobia, or "Afrophobia" has become a massive problem in South Africa in part because state-level policies legitimize certain kinds of hospitality while criminalizing other forms: within this political discourse of immigrant as guest, foreign nationals are often framed as unwanted guests or parasites. Xenophobia has surged since the toppling of

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have made leeway in this conversation; Rosello's 2001 *Postcolonial Hospitality: the Immigrant as Guest* uses literary texts and films to examine how hospitality is defined, practiced, and represented in contemporary France, focusing specifically on immigrants from France's former colonies. Jacques Derrida's1996 *On Hospitality* remains one of the most canonical examinations of the political ambivalence of hospitality.

Apartheid in 1994, in part because of the increase in levels of immigration from other African nations; some of the arrivals are refugees and asylum-seekers. In May of 2008 black South African nationals attacked a group of Malawian, Mozambican and Zimbabwean nationals in a township of Johnannesburg; the violence rippled across other provinces resulting in thousands of displaced immigrants and at least sixty-two deaths. In 2015 a xenophobic uprising began in Durban when Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini reportedly stated that foreign nationals were stealing the jobs of South Africans and "must pack up and leave the country" (Wilkinson). The riots spread to Johannesburg and the world took note of this violence when a photographer captured the brutal stabbing of Emmanuel Sithole, a Mozambican national who was killed by a mob of South African nationals (Ofori-Atta). The brunt of this xenophobic violence has been directed towards Africans from other parts of the continent, where certain nationalities such as Nigerians and Mozambicans are often singled out. Survey work by the Southern African Migration Project in collaboration with the South African Human Rights Commission in 2001 found that the consensus among nationals was a hard-line belief that undocumented residents who lacked legal permission should not be allowed the basic rights and protections ensured by the South African constitution (Crush 21). The ruling South African political party, the African National Congress, and its current leader, Jacob Zuma, have been accused by such organizations as the South African Human Rights Commission of not properly investigating and punishing perpetrators of xenophobic violence; the accusations go as far as to claim that the ANC uses state resources to generate and endorse xenophobia as a political tool to deflect from the massive problems plaguing the new nation, such as poverty and government corruption (*World Report*).

At the heart of this resurgence of nativist and xenophobic discourse, however, is a black South African community that is struggling to establish its identity and place in an increasingly globalized world. South African xenophobia is a crude mechanism of othering people and the status of being a "foreigner" or "makwerekwere" is usually determined by very broad and crude stereotypes rather than actual legal status—South African nationals are sometimes targets of violence during xenophobic riots (Neocosmos 1). While this system of exclusion and inclusion is based on the pretense of indigeneity, it is really based on racism. It is a mechanism of othering that echoes the kind of white nationalist anti-Semitism that thrived in James Joyce's Ireland over a century earlier. The protagonist of Joyce's *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom, may be a legal citizen of the Irish nation, but he is denied membership on a cultural or communal level because he is the son of an immigrant from Eastern Europe with Jewish heritage. The stereotype of "the Jew" as an all-encompassing figure of racial Otherness operated in early twentieth century Irish nationalism much as the "makwerekwere" figure functions in contemporary South African nationalist discourse: these figures of racialized "foreigners" serve as the archetypal "Other" that allows the respective nation states to construct a homogenous national identity tied to white supremacy. Both of these post-colonial national communities are invested in the nation state as a restrictive form of imagined community that favors sameness over difference. The creation of a uniform, "exceptional" South African identity becomes all the more challenging in a globalized world where national borders are increasingly porous, and constructing a cohesive national identity necessitates increasingly reliance on binaric distinctions of natives and foreigners, or Self and Other.

The Pickup takes an unusual angle on South Africa's xenophobia problem by arguing that even those who are professedly open to otherness, such as progressive white South Africans like Julie, respond to difference in similarly harmful ways: they are either blind to it or treat it as an object for consumption and pleasure. The new, post-Apartheid generation of white liberal South Africans is represented in the novel through Julie's friends at the "EL-AY Café" in Johannesburg. The group of artists, intellectuals, and young professionals are emblematic of an "exceptional" new generation of South Africans: it is a liberal, multiethnic, and cosmopolitan group that is professedly blind to hierarchical relations of racial or ethnic difference, and as such is referred to as "the Table"—potentially an allusion to the egalitarian community of King Arthur's round table. The fact that the "EL AY café" refers to Los Angeles, another global city, suggests that this cosmopolitan group could be found easily in any other liberal western city, and as such it is a microcosmic representation of globalized South Africa. The members of "the Table" posses a great deal of cultural knowledge and experience and arguably are the intellectual and cultural counterparts of the economic and business elite that gather at Nigel Summer's Sunday brunches. This concentration illustrates how the exchange of ideas inherent to a global flow of knowledge and information is limited to privileged residents of the Global North (*Cultural Globalization*). "The Table" welcomes Ibrahim as a guest by interrogating him about his identity and past:

> The friends have no delicacy about asking who you are, where you are from—that's just the reverse side of bourgeoisie xenophobia [….] they have his story out of him in no time [….] of all they think that they know about that region, *they're* telling *him* about his country. (14)

In this compromised offer of hospitality, "the Table" enacts violence against its guest by demanding his story: rather than offering a place at the table to a stranger or wholly Other, the group imposes conditions upon its guest. This moment illustrates how the "openness to Others" that is touted by progressive South Africans like Julie is merely the flipside of xenophobia. While they do not reject or fear foreigners, they exoticize difference and consider it a form of knowledge that is to be assimilated and consumed for their own benefit. The use of free indirect discourse, where the narrative is filtered Ibrahim's thoughts such as his indignation that "*they're* telling *him* about his country", highlights how "the Table"' is committing an act of neocolonial violence by asserting its knowledge and therefore control over the guest. Whereas xenophobia is characterized by an irrational fear of foreigners, this false openness to Others is a fetishization of foreignness. Julie is not exempt from this criticism and the novel questions whether her initial overtures of friendship towards Ibrahim were attempts to capitalize on his otherness in order to legitimize her belief that she is committed to an inclusive South Africa (Fasselt 19).

As a representative of both "the Table" and a professedly colorblind "rainbow nation," Julie remains unaware of the privileges that she enjoys as a white national, and she is oblivious to forms of difference like nationality. When she first meets Ibrahim Julie mistakenly judges that he is "most likely Indian or Cape Malay background; like her, a local of this country in which they were born descendent of immigrants in one era or another" (*Pickup* 10). She fails to realize that she is blinded by her assumptions of sameness, and her privilege prevents her from recognizing that Ibrahim may not share her nationality. Julie perceives others in terms of race and class, but is blind to Ibrahim's way of seeing others in terms of legal and illegal residents. She represents a new version of the conscientious white

South African, a trope that dominated Gordimer's protest writing during Apartheid. Gordimer was critical of how racial segregation under Apartheid allowed even the most professedly liberal white South Africans, such as Maureen Smales in *July's People*, to isolate themselves in bubbles of white privilege, rendering them blind to actual racial and cultural difference. The nonracialism of progressive post-apartheid South Africa appears to be an extension of the empty universalism that characterized liberal white South African models of interracial friendship under Apartheid. While race and cultural difference is still at the forefront of *The Pickup*, Gordimer's critique morphs in the context of a post-Apartheid, globalized South Africa to new forms of segregation, like nationality. Unlike many of their neighboring African countries that are also grappling with the legacy of colonization, South African nationals of all races can enjoy—at least in theory— the privilege of being an acceptable or desired nationality, and can travel and even possibly relocate around the globe. Moreover, Julie's blindness to nationality is indicative of the fact that she is a citizen in a prosperous-enough country she can sustain her livelihood without having to relocate out of necessity.

III. Global Hospitality and Responsibility as Excess

Gordimer uses the community of "the Table," which arguably embodies the most progressive aspects of the zeitgeist of globalized South Africa, to voice her concern that in an increasingly kinetic, interconnected world, the openness to Others that is essential for community building has devolved into an openness to experiences, or transitory dalliances with Others that do not generate deep social bonds. Julie's circle maintains the belief that their lives are more meaningful if they are able "To be open to encounters" (*Pickup* 10). This

openness to encounters manifests as casual (often sexual) encounters where they can experience a semblance of intimacy without any accompanying commitment or responsibility to others. This is very much in line with the loose sexual encounters and transitory relations of Duiker's *Cape Town*, only now brought to global scale with the Julie and Ibrahim's relationship. Under such a philosophy, all encounters have a use value. Ibrahim is quick to note that the members of "the Table" exploit such encounters with foreigners, treating them as a means of cultural tourism. They maintain a sense of solidarity among themselves that doesn't extend to those who don't share their economic, political, and cultural status, whether this be in terms of education, socioeconomic status, shared nationality, or liberal western political ideologies. Before meeting Ibrahim, Julie seemed to have ascribed to the value of such "encounters" where individuals come into contact with one another but ultimately remain blind to each other's differences; consequently "the Table" is shocked when it appears that Julie's relationship has become more than a sexual dalliance or experiment with "slumming." "The Table" never extends full membership to Ibrahim, making derogatory and mocking references to him as her "Oriental prince"— a nickname which suggest that her infatuation is dictated by a Western fascination with Eastern cultures (36). In less offensive instances he is referred to indirectly as "their friend Julie's pickup"(74)—an opaque reminder that he is not a member of the community, and only is granted access by virtue of his connection with Julie.

Julie and Ibrahim's friendship quickly evolves into a romantic entanglement that is symbolic not only of the kind of superficial relations that characterize globalized South Africa, but also illustrative of how the deeply-entrenched racial politics of Apartheid still shape attitudes towards interracial romance. The sexual attraction that binds Julie and

Ibrahim appears to be a casual, physical connection, the ephemerality of which is suggested by novel's title, *The Pickup*. Gordimer focuses on the politics of these sexual relations— as opposed to the politics of a platonic friendship— because they provide new insight about how Julie and Ibrahim respond to difference. Ibrahim, for his part, fails to acknowledge Julie's otherness and assumes that she is a stereotypical, privileged Westerner who desires him because he offers an adventure, or a sexual dalliance with someone who is exotic. This theory gains additional traction considering the history of Apartheid policies that shaped social norms about interracial sex. Apartheid politicians sought to segregate the races by policing and stigmatizing interracial sex through such acts as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), and the Immorality Act (1950), which criminalized interracial marriage and sexual relations, respectively. Gordimer implies that interracial couplings offer concrete insight into Apartheid's origins, because ultimately Apartheid "is about the body. It's about physical differences" (*Conversations* 304). *Thirteen Cents* supports this claim: the majority of Azure's clients are white men that are attracted to Azure because he allows them to transgress several sexual norms (age, heternomativity), including racial ones—even his ambiguous phenotype suggests that he is a product of racial mixing. Interracial couplings are acts of defiance against the public mores of a white supremacist society (*Conversations* 33), and Ibrahim's cynical view suggests that the allure of these transgressions not only remains strong, but that appeal also extends to cultural difference.

The Pickup seems to corroborate Ibrahim's claim that Julie's romantic interest is, at least initially, a form of false white liberation, and it questions whether her initial actions are a strategic attempt to reject her own privilege and defy white and Western cultural supremacy. Just as Julie Summers is a post-Apartheid permutation of the trope of the

conscientious white South African, her relationship with Ibrahim is a new version of the "heroic romance," a dominant narrative thread that characterized white anti-Apartheid fiction. The "heroic romance" features a white protagonist who, instead of being paralyzed by white guilt, develops a relationship (sexual or not) with a black South African and through this union opposes the oppressive system (Fasselt 20). To a considerable extent this narrative can be mapped onto Gordimer's *July's People* (1981) and J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron* (1990). These novels depart from this narrative, however, in that they resist the simplistic idea that white South Africans can truly absolve themselves of their complicity—if anything they are stories about coming to terms with the impossibility of this. This narrative thread morphs into the "rainbow romance" of post-Apartheid literature like *The Pickup*, where white South Africans disassociate themselves from the past and their continued privilege— at the expense of really grappling with it— through a romance with a transnational subject (Fasselt 20). Julie's union with Ibrahim challenges nativist and xenophobic discourse, and allows her to symbolically distance herself from her white privilege.

Although Julie idealizes her "rainbow romance" as egalitarian in nature, the novel makes clear that it is rife with power differentials including the gendered power dynamics of nationalist discourse— that is, belonging is negotiated through the female body. Ibrahim may assume that Julie occupies a position of privilege in their relationship, but she imagines their union as one of equals. She quotes a line from the Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges claiming that their relationship is ahierarchical, that it is a "love wherein there is no possessor and no possessed" (Fasselt 26). Gordimer's well-established interest in interracial romance would suggest that it isn't a lack of hierarchy as much as a negotiation of various social, economic, and political differentials. Gordimer wrote about sexual relationships

between white females and black men in such Apartheid novels as *Occasion for Loving, A Sport of Nature,* and *My Son's Story.* She suggests that "through physical love we can experience the sacredness of the Other" but that this possibility takes "place not only between equals but also within the context of social, political, and economic equality" (*Conversations* 43). Gordimer views this combination as the most egalitarian form of interracial romance: the gender status of white women, who are subjugated by patriarchy, balances the racial status of the black men, who are oppressed by racism (*Conversations* 30).

The Pickup complicates Gordimer's prior investigations of interracial romance by factoring in the politics of nationality; it goes so far as to argue that sexual relations are not only a way of experiencing the "sacredness of the Other," but also a space within which individuals can find a sense of belonging. While Gordimer points to the fact that interracial sex continues to be in South Africa an incredibly politicized activity, her novel suggests that sexual relations may be the only social space apart from the politics of nationality. When Ibrahim accepts that he must leave or be deported from South Africa, he is shocked that Julie insists on leaving with him. That evening, "they made love, the kind of love-making that is another country, a country of its own, not yours or mine" (*Pickup* 96). As heavy-handed as this description may be, it makes a direct connection between the act of sex and the conflict of belonging that preoccupies both Julie and Ibrahim. The experience of sex is connected to the longing conveyed in the novel's epigraph, a line from the poetry of white South African writer William Plomer: "Let us go to another country/ Not yours or mine/ And start again." Here sexual relations sate the longing for a utopic space where the legal and cultural divisions of the nation state don't exist. This transnational space is a third country that exceeds the hard logic of the binaries that divide Ibrahim and Julie. It is a break from the

lived reality of nations that are either "yours" or "mine," and an opportunity where the two can "start again" without such conflict. Throughout Julie and Ibrahim's relationship sex seems to be only space wherein their interactions aren't constantly mediated by politics. It offers an alternative sense of belonging to models like the nation state and sheds light on why sexual relations may allow an individual to "experience the sacredness of the Other." The novel suggests that "Sexual intimacy is a form of bodily hospitality" where there is a "momentary collapse of [….] bodily boundaries in which one may be able to locate the Self in the Other" (Fasselt 26). According to *The Pickup,* one such "bodily boundary" of the Self and Other is the political category of nationality, whose different legal and cultural meanings seek to segregate individuals.

The factor of nationality in Julie and Ibrahim's interracial romance inserts it into the gendered power dynamics of nationalist discourse. As seen in Edna O' Brien's *House of Splendid Isolation* and Pat Murphy's *Maeve*, within twentieth-century Irish nationalist discourse the female body is considered an ideological state apparatus in that it is supposed to reproduce and propagate the state's cultural and religious values. Irish Republican men negotiate their sense of national belonging through women's bodies; *The Pickup* suggests that this instrumentalization of women's bodies continues in a contemporary transnational context. Ibrahim's sexual relationship with Julie grants him access to a new potential places of belonging because he can leverage her nationality to gain access to countries to which he would normally be refused entry, and as such her body becomes the space wherein his national belonging is negotiated. The novel never fully resolves whether their initial connection is a measure of social progress or their own selfish interests, perhaps in part because it is more concerned with how their relationship develops over time and in different

cultural contexts (such as the shift half-way through the narrative when the two leave South Africa for Ibrahim's home, a less-developed, rural Arab town). Where do Julie and Ibrahim's investments lie: does each claim a responsibility towards him or herself, or towards the Other? Does their developing relationship transform this sense of responsibility that each might posses? Lastly, how is their understanding of responsibility shaped by the political, social, and economic forces acting upon them?

Much as trust works as a structuring concept of Duiker's *Thirteen Cents*, the concept of responsibility shapes the narrative of *The Pickup*. It assumes new meanings in different contexts and ultimately shapes social relations by binding people into different networks. Julie initially conceives of responsibility as a communal obligation shared by those who benefited from the injustices of Apartheid. When hearing wealthy South Africans discuss national affairs at her father's Sunday brunch, she remembers that Ibrahim is present as her guest, and she "is overcome with embarrassment—what is he thinking, of these people—she is responsible for whatever that may be. She's responsible for *them*" (*Pickup* 45). Julie is ashamed of the white privilege that was generated under Apartheid and has only been further consolidated in the "new", neoliberal South Africa. She believes that leaving her father's mansion in the suburbs and distancing herself from her family's wealth is an effective way of disassociating from this white privilege. As a new permutation of the trope of the conscientious White South African, Julie represents a new generation that must come to terms with the privileges into which they were born. Her story is a continuation of that of Mrs. Curren in Coetzee's *Age of Iron*: Mrs. Curren represents liberal white South Africans who lived through Apartheid but denied being complicit with it, and her death by cancer is symbolic of the fact that she has finally accepted that she cannot be exculpated, and must

accept responsibility for her crime. White South Africans in Julie's generation similarly deny being complicit with this system of privilege and view themselves as evidence that the "rainbow nation" has truly broken from its past; their sense of presentism, and attempts to ignore uncomfortable colonial and neocolonial histories, are indicative of a continuing neocolonial subjectivity. Julie may assert distance between herself and "these people" but her shame suggests that she cannot detach herself fully from the privileged white community. Julie maintains that she can only be responsible to Others if she rejects the elite community into which she was born; this belief creates friction with Ibrahim, who believes that she can only be responsible to Others so long as she can leverage her privilege.

The Sunday brunch at Nigel Summer's house is one of the initial moments in *The Pickup* where Julie and Ibrahim's evolving relationship crystallizes as that of a host and guest, and the host assumes responsibility for his or her guest in addition to the risks that come with this charge. For the first half of the narrative Julie is host to Ibrahim, a non-national, and when the state revokes his legal status as a guest he expects her to fulfill her responsibility by leveraging her resources so he may remain in South Africa.
When Ibrahim asks Julie to fulfill her responsibility as a host, he reveals that he has understood their relationship as a business exchange, or one of use value. As an affluent, white South African national, Julie has the power to help Ibrahim become a member of what he envisions as the global elite, or the nationals of the Global North. Gordimer's Ibrahim is in many ways the flipside to Duiker's Azure: he seeks membership in the very same monied and propertied class of adults that Azure seeks to reject, and he is willing to leverage his relationships to do so. He aspires to become a member of the elite community of Nigel Summer's Sunday brunches, insisting that they "make a success" and are "Making business.

That's not bad, that is the world. Progress" (*Pickup* 62). His tenacious pursuit of work (and ultimately, legal membership) in countries of the Global North marks him as an entrepreneur, or an individual who will make something of himself despite his limited freedoms. He risks social and economic capital, or his family network and even an eventual business offer from his uncle, in the hopes that his ventures will pay off. As an entrepreneur Ibrahim is always looking for investments that will generate a return, including connections such as Julie that will secure him greater freedoms. When she is unable to prevent his deportation he laments that "she failed, with all her privilege, at getting him accepted in hers" (122). He is shocked and resentful when Julie announces that she has bought them both plane tickets and will return with him to his homeland, forcing him to assume the role of host.

Ibrahim is wary of becoming attached to Julie because he believes that becoming emotionally connected to another will impose obligations on him that limit his ability to act out of self-interest. This fear is realized when Julie proposes that she join him as a guest when he returns to his homeland. Ibrahim cannot understand why she would abandon a life of comfort and security, and concludes:

> Love. He had to believe it, existing in her. He felt something unwanted, something that was not necessary, no obligation on some penniless illegal to feel for one of those who own the world, can buy a ticket, get on a plane, present a passport and be welcomed back into the world at any time,[….] he felt responsibility— that's it, responsibility for her. Though he had none; he had not wanted her to come here, she would not let him go and he could hardly have told her that her purpose in his life was ended. (174)

Ibrahim reasons that those who are without economic and political power cannot afford an unnecessary and useless obligation like love; acting according to his own self-interest entails calculating and weighing risks of such a commitment. He concludes that "love is a luxury not for him" (261). The responsibility that accompanies such a deep emotional attachment is an excess only accessible to those who possess the wealth and citizenship that allows them to choose where they will reside, and ensures that they can always return to the comfort and security of their homelands. The repetition of the word "felt" suggests that Ibrahim registers this responsibility on an affective level, but he then positions it as a matter of conscious choice by claiming that "he had none; he had not wanted her to come here." Although the text never resolves this contradiction, the abruptness of the final interjection suggests that Ibrahim is framing it matter of choice in an attempt to assert his agency over something that cannot actually be controlled.

Like Duiker's Azure, Ibrahim avoids forming serious attachments to others as a matter of preservation; while he struggles to remain guarded around Julie, her significant gesture of commitment temporarily opens him up to Others. He agrees to let her accompany him to his homeland when he realizes she offers him:

> Devotion. Is it not natural to be loved? […..] The capacity returned to him, for this foreigner makes him whole. That night he made love to her with the reciprocal tenderness call it whatever old name you like— that he had guarded against— with a few lapses— couldn't afford its commitment, in his situation, must be able to take whatever the next foothold might offer. (96)

Ibrahim views Julie's attachment as "devotion," a kind of loyalty that is almost spiritual or religious in nature and a striking departure from his previous assertions that her interest is

based on a self-centered physical desire (96). He isn't able to fully reciprocate the sacrifice of being devoted to another, only "tenderness" or affection, but the striking claim that the "capacity that returned to him," suggests that he is (if only momentarily) able to be open to another. Such a capacity becomes a liability to someone "in his situation" who must be able to act out of self-interest, or "take whatever the next foothold might offer." His continued assertion that "love is a luxury not for him" can't be reconciled with the fact that "this foreigner makes him whole." Although Ibrahim fervently asserts his autonomy, he is only "whole" or complete in relation to another. The narrative pushes against Ibrahim's disavowal of love: how can something that makes the self complete be considered an excess?

Julie's decision to remain with Ibrahim offers him an initial glimpse of her otherness and destabilizes his understanding of their relationship as one that is superficial and utilitarian. In his review of *The Pickup* in the *NY Review of Books,* J. M. Coetzee remarks that Julie's "gesture shakes [Ibrahim]. For a moment he sees her in all her mystery, an autonomous being with hopes and desires of her own" (*Awakening*). By refusing to hand over the plane ticket and let Ibrahim leave on his own, Julie breaks from his conception of her as an extension of himself: that is, someone that he believes he understands so completely that he can manipulate for his own benefit and use value. When she refuses to comply with his desires and assumes the role of a guest, she morphs into a foreigner, or a stranger who, according to Jacques Derrida, forces us to question the logic, reason, and assumptions that shape our understanding of the world (*Of Hospitality*). Ibrahim is forced, if only briefly, to question his rationale that Julie's company is an unnecessary excess, given the realization that "this foreigner makes him whole." The distinction of self and foreigner that Ibrahim so fiercely maintains as a matter of self-preservation now begins to deconstruct. *The Pickup*

plays with the distinctions of self and foreigner by establishing and then disrupting the clear binary of host and guest when Julie and Ibrahim reverse their respective positions halfway through the narrative.

Ultimately, however, Ibrahim decides that "the foreigner" threatens to destabilize his world and in the face of such a risk, he finds security in his prior assumptions about Julie's motives. Perhaps she is driven by her intense sexual attraction, or has, according to Coetzee, decided to partake in a "complicated moral game of the kind that only the idle rich have time to play" (*Awakening*). The interpretation of Julie's possibly "moral" motivations falls in line with the earlier assessment that her initial interest in Ibrahim isn't necessarily born of an ethical sense of obligation, but is rather more pragmatic and forced— she is trying to act according to a particular moral code or liberal ideology that she espouses. The frivolousness of her participation in a "game" that privileged westerners can "play" sets up a division between those who belong to the wealthy, politically privileged nations of Global North and those in the less developed nations. Towards the end of the novel when Ibrahim has secured visas to the US after having lived with Julie in his village for nearly a year, he derides her hesitancy to move to the United States as a form of silly bourgeois western romanticism. He interprets it as another misguided attempt to reject her privilege, because she doesn't want to "what is it—sell out, they say—you don't live with the capitalists in California" (*Pickup* 252). Julie is only able to denigrate the desire to obtain wealth and power because she, as a member of an elite politically and economically enfranchised community, already enjoys such privileges. As such Julie and Ibrahim can be read allegorically as two diverging trajectories within the narrative of western materialism: a privileged western subject rejects the very material wealth and power that a marginalized eastern subject aspires to obtain. The

novel resists such a simplistic reading, however, arguing that it isn't about the rejection or pursuit of material wealth so much as it is about a crisis of belonging.

Neither Julie nor Ibrahim conceive of his or her respective homelands as the place to which either belong, as such they drift in search of a place where they can root themselves and their exchanges of hospitality can be understood as attempts to "(re)home" themselves (Fasselt 16). *The Pickup* is fascinated with the politics of location and the narrative is structured around a central dilemma: how can characters like Julie and Ibrahim establish something as particular as a sense of belonging in an increasingly rootless and homogenized social world? Gordimer's depiction of the multi-cultural and transnational global city of Johannesburg, and such microcosmic global communities as "the Table" of the EL-AY Café, all suggest that establishing a sense of belonging is contingent upon recovering a specific sense of place (Hunt 104). Contemporary South African writers such as Gordimer seek to address how globalization— the global flow of people, culture, and resources— puts greater strain on how South Africans conceive of a homogenous national identity, and what it might mean to "belong" to such a national community. Phanswe Mpe, one of South Africa's most promising young black writers, responds to the pressures of a globalized South Africa by creating a distinct sense of a place in his debut work, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow (2001)*. The novel generates a specific sense of community and place through its depiction of the diverse Johannesburg neighborhood of Hillbrow. It recognizes the ways in which this vibrant community was created through globalization: its residents hail from all over Africa and have connections to rural towns, other African nations, even Global North countries such as England (Hunt 113). That being said, Mpe's utopic vision of Hillbrow isn't exempt from the many problems facing globalized South Africa, and the community is rife with tensions

generated by incredible poverty, crime, xenophobia, cultural tensions between rural and urban communities, and the AIDS epidemic. In spite of these divisive forces, Mpe's Hillbrow embodies a post-Apartheid national identity that resists the desire for homogeneity and finds cohesion in difference; in a similar vein, Gordimer argues that belonging isn't dictated by national boundaries. *The Pickup* pushes against the notion that belonging is defined through geopolitical constructs when it questions that "To discover the exact location of a 'thing' is a simple matter of factual research" but "To discover the exact location of a person: where to locate the self?" The novel sheds light on Gordimer's assertion that that we must recover a specific sense of place: she isn't concerned with locating bodies in space but rather with locating your sense of self within a particular community. The narrative of *The Pickup* is shaped by Julie and Ibrahim's struggle to locate themselves within a particular community that can claim to belong to, or to "re (home)" themselves.

Both characters view their original homes, or familial networks, as restrictive traps that seek to keep them in communities that they don't feel they belong in; the self-loathing that each feels towards his or her home reflects their different experiences of colonization. Ibrahim rejects the possibility of permanent residence in his home country, claiming that "the future of this place the world tried to confine him to was not his place in that world" (*Pickup* 179). On the one hand this concern is very pragmatic and reflects the fact that globalization has lead to such uneven development that work and economic opportunities are concentrated in the Global North, particularly in global cities like Johannesburg, while rural, less developed areas like his hometown lack opportunities for growth. On the other land, his concern is tied less to actual economic concerns and more to the psychological impact of colonization. When Julie announces that she will accompany him home, he imagines that he

will be perceived as "the filthy wicked foreigner who's taken her to a run-down depraved strip of a country that Europeans didn't even want to hold on to any longer, were glad to get rid of" (*Pickup* 95). Ibrahim's sense of shame maps onto self-loathing of the colonial subject that the Afro-Caribbean post-colonial critic Franz Fanon theorizes in his seminal work, *Black Skin, White Masks*. As a former colonial subject, Ibrahim has internalized the racism and cultural supremacy of his former colonial oppressors, and having been inculcated with this sense of inferiority about his homeland, emulates his former oppressors long after they have relinquished political control over his country.

Julie's self-loathing, conversely, embodies the flip-side of this psychological legacy of colonization in that she is ashamed of being born into a privileged community of former colonial oppressors. Julie distances herself from her family's wealth and resources, even when they could be used to help another, because she believes it would indebt her to the very people she seeks to reject and make her complicit with the white supremacy that made the family's wealth possible in the first place. She resists Ibrahim's requests that she use her resources to help him because she views any connection with her family as a potential trap. One of the great ironies of *The Pickup* is that it is that both Julie and Ibrahim experience this self-loathing, or shame regarding their origins, but that this shared experience only drives them further apart. When Ibrahim first asks to meet Julie's family and she attempts to dissuade him, the narrator remarks that "For the first time, the difference between them, the secret conditioning of their origins, an intriguing special bond in their intimacy against all others, is a difference in a different sense—an opposition" (*Pickup* 38). Their shame of their origins is exacerbated by the presence of the Other—Ibrahim makes his most scathing

critiques of his home country when he is imagining how Julie must perceive it, and vice versa—yet they fail to bond over this shared experience.

The conflict that arises out of Ibrahim and Julie's shame regarding their respective homes can't be cleanly mapped onto a critique of western materialism: it suggests that their interest in one another isn't fueled by concerns about wealth and privilege as much as an abstract desire for belonging. Ibrahim is aware that Julie wants to disavow her privileged origins, but is highly critical of the fact that the ability to reject privilege is in itself a form of privilege. He interprets her attempts to assert her independence from her family as actions motivated by stubborn pride rather than shame; moreover, he deems her ability to reject her family and relocate abroad as a form of privilege. Ibrahim appears hypocritical, then, when he rejects his Uncle's generous offer to let him take over a family business in his home village. This gift would appear to be the business opportunity that an entrepreneur like Ibrahim has dreamed of, one that would allow him to "make a success" by giving him the financial means to elevate his family's standard of living. Much to his family's dismay, he dismisses the generous offer as a trap set by his family— a responsibility that would tie him to his home and prevent him from being able to seek his fortune abroad. His willingness to give up financial and material security, as well as a respectable position in his village, in favor of an uncertain future of poverty and anonymity, undermines the theory that his motives are purely economic or materialistic. That he is so opposed to accepting his place of origin as his rightful home, so much so that he is willing to sacrifice economic security in order to be free of it, would imply that he can't imagine himself as part of, or belonging to, the world that he comes from. When the novel ends Ibrahim has used Julie's connections to obtain visas to the U.S. and appears to be embarking on the same journey that initially

brought him to Johannesburg: he leaves his community and Julie behind, and is about to resume his vulnerable position as a precarious laborer. His willingness to accept such high risks with unlikely rewards suggests that he is still in search of a place that he feels he can belong to, and that he imagines that he will only find this if he becomes a successful member of a very specific community, that is, a citizen of the Global North.

Both Ibrahim and Julie's attempts to (re) home themselves reflect the fact that they do not view their original homes as places that they belong to; rather, they view their families and places of origin as false communities that threaten to trap them. Their dilemma resonates with that of the young Azure: while they experience very different levels of vulnerability and privilege, these protagonists experience a crisis of belonging that makes them reject membership in communities that offer (what they perceive as a) false sense of security and belonging. Becoming tied to these communities —either by accepting gifts or by accepting responsibility to others— is a form of vulnerability and potential entrapment. Azure and Ibrahim maintain that self-preservation can only be ensured through an extreme individualism that favors autonomy, or responsibility to oneself, over community. While Julie shares this individualistic impulse, she has been privileged enough to not forgo community altogether and creates surrogates such as that of "the Table", whom she refers to as "her elective siblings" (22).

Julie and Ibrahim come to an impasse when she suggests that it would be in Ibrahim's best interest, and the most "responsible" choice (186), to accept his uncle's offer; her desire to remain with his family suggests that, unlike Ibrahim, she has come to consider it a home that she can belong to. Julie admits that she has "never lived in a family before, just made substitutes out of other people, ties" like "the Table," but claims that she now realizes that

"there are….things….between people here, that are important, no, necessary to them….I don't mean the way you are to me…..that doesn't fit in with anybody, anything else, and that's all right" (187). Julie struggles to articulate her growing awareness about the value of communal bonds, as illustrated by her frequent pauses and failure to articulate these connections more precisely than as "things." She realizes, however, that these familial or communal bonds are, contrary to what Ibrahim believes, necessary to one's well-being and sense of self, and not a luxury. This logic resonates with the earlier claim that while Ibrahim considers Julie's love an excess, it is necessary because it "makes him whole." Julie draws a distinction between her relationship with Ibrahim, claiming "that doesn't fit in within anybody, anything else," as if to point to its singularity as a non-familial bond between two individuals who are embedded within a complex matrix of historical, economic, cultural, and political factors. Ibrahim dismisses the possibility that he can only be responsible to himself and his family by permanently establishing himself in his village because it deeply conflicts with his individualistic stance on responsibility. Acting out of his own self-interest, and the interest of his family, demands that he be rootless and free from obligations and social bonds that might hinder his movement.

Ibrahim rejects the idea of permanent residency because he can't imagine Julie as part of his home: he doesn't trust that she will remain with him, and recognizes that making such a commitment to her will only render him vulnerable. The relationships that Ibrahim is willing to invest in are those with use value: as an entrepreneur with limited access to the global market, he recognizes that "connections are everything" and that a white South African national like Julie is a great networking resource (238). He shares the same worldview as Duiker's Azure, in that they both maintain that "there's nothing for mahala",

and that adults form social relations either as entrepreneurs or consumers. Julie has always been, from Ibrahim's perspective, a consumer. She is a tourist who enjoys consuming cultural experiences for her own pleasure, whether by having casual encounters like the members of "the Table" or by going on an adventure with her lover to his remote, undeveloped village. As entrepreneurs and consumers, Ibrahim and Julie embody the neoliberal ideology of individualism, where "the other is not someone to whom I bind myself, but rather someone from whom I either consume pleasure or invest time in and other resources" (May 70). He is wary of the time when Julie's interest will wear off, either because she has tired of him sexually or because she is finished with her cultural adventure. He maintains that his detachment is "the protection he must take to guard against that thing, luxury, people who could afford it called it love" for "That would be his weakness—the day when she packed the elegant suitcase and went away, this adventure worn thin, as it will" (*Pickup* 137). Although they arrive at this conclusion on very different terms, both Ibrahim and Azure maintain that connections to others are liabilities. Being open to another is a "luxury" that can be afforded only by those who are less politically, economically, and socially vulnerable. *The Pickup* and *Thirteen Cents* illuminate one of the paradoxes of community in globalized, neoliberal South Africa: for the disenfranchised, connections to others are not a source of protection, but vulnerability.

IV. Sacrifice, Inclusivity, and Deep Relationships

The false communities of privilege that are interrogated in previous chapters, such as interracial friendship in Apartheid South Africa and intergender friendship during the Troubles of Northern Ireland, all suggest that a radical trust in and responsibility for the

Other are essential to building communities of difference. This kind of openness requires individuals to put themselves at great risk by being physically and emotionally vulnerable to one another. The question underlying previous chapters is brought to the forefront in post-Apartheid South Africa: in hierarchical relationships where one individual enjoys certain protections from his or her privilege, can or should this be a mutual sacrifice? The brutal demise of Josie O'Meara, O'Brien's female protagonist in *House of Splendid Isolation,* suggests that for women in a patriarchal and militarized nation state like the late-twentieth century Irish Republic, being responsible to the Other and potentially unifying a fragmented Irish community means embracing bodily harm— if not death. When in the final scene of *July's People* the white South African protagonist, Maureen Smales, finally realizes that she is no longer protected by the white privilege of Apartheid and must trust her black companion with her life, she is unable to do so. *July's People* is critical of the false and self-serving model of interracial friendship that liberal white South Africans espouse, but on a practical level it highlights the immediate dangers that white South Africans must face if they are to trust black South Africans with their future well-being in a post-Apartheid South Africa. *Thirteen Cents* and *The Pickup* extends this interrogation by questioning whether in the current age of neoliberalism and globalization individuals whose existence is already precarious should have to take on even greater vulnerability in the name of forging social bonds and building community.

The possibility of a more inclusive South Africa depends on whether the radical responsibility towards and trust in the Other that are required for community building can be reconciled with the isolating demands of individualism and self-interest. False communities of privilege are created through segregation and self-isolation, whether this be as

conspicuous as racial segregation under Apartheid, or as subtle as the gendered segregation within Irish nationalist discourse, which isolates men and women through rigid constructions of gender. In neoliberal, globalized South Africa the roles of the consumer and entrepreneur "are isolated one from another, each in [their] own world. The borders of those worlds may touch, but they do not interpenetrate" (May 70). The various barriers that Ibrahim constructs between himself and Julie prevent this interpenetration of the self and Other, the "protection he must take to guard against that thing, luxury, people who could afford it called it love"(*Pickup* 173). The degree to which he refuses to imagine Julie as part of his world is an attempt to ensure that while "The borders of [their] worlds may touch" they will never "interpenetrate." In all of these literary contexts, from Joyce's Dublin to Duiker's Cape Town, "interpenetration" of the self and Other through trust and responsibility to the Other is a form of vulnerability. Though these literary works are skeptical of the practical limits of such theorizations of belonging, they never loose an intense—and perhaps idealistic—longing for more inclusive communities.

The hope underscoring the otherwise bleak narrative of *Thirteen Cents* is that Azure still voices a desire for unconditional friendship— an alternative to relationships that are shaped by consumption and profit. He stubbornly clings to the belief that "everyone has a connection, even if it's just one person in the whole world" (Duiker 109). He finds such a connection in a childhood friend named Vincent who is "a grown-up, but not like the others. He doesn't bullshit. He says it like it is" (108). Vincent isn't duplicitous or exploitative: his offers of advice and unconditional help have led Azure to consider him a "big brother" and "special friend" whose kindness contrasts sharply with the false offers of belonging that mask themselves as familial relations. Vincent isn't a major character in the narrative and

eventually leaves Cape Town to seek work elsewhere, but the novel suggests that he remains a positive presence and guiding force in Azure's life. Azure's desire for a "connection" or friend defies the market imperatives of Cape Town's informal social economy: it resists the calculation and accounting of such relations in favor of the non-economic character of gift-giving that Derrida discusses in *Given Time*. Azure's connection to Vincent embodies the kind of "deep friendships" that philosopher Todd May argues "cut against the grain of neoliberal relationships" (May 108). When Azure maintains that "everyone has a connection" he is voicing a desire that can't be reduced to specific reasons or explanations, much less the logic of use value. Within "deep friendships" borders remain between individuals, but they become effaced and more porous (May 115), and interpenetration of the self and Other becomes possible.

Julie's transformation in *The Pickup* offers another understanding of how deep connections might manifest themselves through a radical trust in, and responsibility towards, the Other. When towards the end of the narrative Ibrahim reveals that he has secured visas to travel to the United States, Julie refuses to leave, claiming:

> I really thought you saw how I was beginning—you make it so hard to explain— to live here. Oh my god. How I was different—not the same as I was back there when you met me. I thought we were close enough for you to understand, even if it wasn't something you—didn't expect." (262)

Julie's fumbling attempt to articulate her desire to remain—the pauses, exclamations, and signs of frustration—suggests that she has formed deep connections with his community that can't be reduced to specific reasons or explanations. She has formed bonds that she previously longed for when she argued that Ibrahim should stay in his community because

there are "things….between people here, that are important, no necessary to them" (187). Her inability to communicate this desire illustrates how these connections can't be rationalized and leave her "with the sense that there is a hole near the center of [her] words" (May 83). Julie's insistence that she is beginning "to live here" indicates that she has (re)homed herself and accepts Ibrahim's family and village as her own. It may be an elective family much like that of "the Table," but the novel indicates that it is potentially permanent and poses risks. An infuriated Ibrahim leaves for the United States without Julie and his eventual return is left uncertain. After Ibrahim's departure Julie's future is questioned by her sister-in-law, Khadjia, a young woman who has spent many years resenting her husband, Ibrahim's brother, for disappearing to the oil fields in the pursuit of fortune. As foils of one another, both are outsiders who, after having relocated to a new home, have been abandoned by their partners in the name of seeking profit abroad. Khadjia reminds Julie of the precarity of their positions when she says, as either a reassurance or taunt, that "He'll come back" (*Pickup* 268). The novel hints that Khadjia's comment might be directed to herself, as she has clung to the hope that her husband would eventually return. Julie's choice is a radical act of trust in Ibrahim since he gives her no indication of returning; moreover, it suggests that perhaps for the first time in her life, she feels a deep-enough connection to a community that she can call it her home.

Ibrahim does eventually admit that he has— despite his constant self-policing— a deep connection with Julie, but it is not enough for him to consider his home a place that he belongs to. Only in the privacy of his thoughts "he can admit it to himself only" "his love for her" but it is a "weakness that is not for him" (*Pickup* 266). In his review of the novel Coetzee claims that Ibrahim remains untransformed because "it is the woman rather than the

man who is sensitive and pliant enough to grow from the experience" (*Awakening*). This strikingly essentialist reading frames women as stereotypically more empathetic and compromising than men. Coetzee's critique aligns, however, with South African studies scholar Rebecca Fasselt's criticism that Ibrahim is a flatter character than Julie. Fasselt claims that Ibrahim is limited by the trope of the underdog, and not allowed to develop or grow. Fasselt's criticism isn't without its merits, and African writers and literary scholars have questioned whether Gordimer's representations of black characters, such as that of July in *July's People*, are developed and multifaceted enough to suggest that she has successfully broken free of the hegemonic western, white consciousness. The narrative form of *The Pickup* and *July's People* is primarily responsible for the fact that Gordimer's black characters may appear flat and one-sided: both novels employ third-person free indirect discourse, and this form of third person narration privileges the perspectives and thoughts of the white protagonists over those of the black protagonists. July and Ibrahim remain enigmatic characters because their interiors not as rigorously explored as those of their white counterparts. This may reflect Gordimer's unwillingness as a white writer to "speak" for the Other, or her own limitations as a white writer who simply can't escape her own white consciousness. That being said, both Fasselt's and Coetzee's assertions rely heavily on an understanding of Ibrahim as a fictional construction, whether in terms of Coetzee's questionable assumptions about gender or Fasselt's understanding of Ibrahim as a literary trope. The novel pushes against either of these readings by emphasizing the various historical, economic, cultural, and political factors that influence their decisions and have shaped a singular relationship that "doesn't fit in within anybody, anything else" (*Pickup* 187). Even conceiving of the decision to remain as a "choice" threatens to erase or obscure a

long history of economic, social, and political policies that produced singular individuals like Julie and Ibrahim. As a well connected, wealthy, white South African national Julie enjoys privileges and securities that will continue to protect her even in her current state of precarity. For these reasons the difference between her and Ibrahim's choices cannot simply be attributed to a single factor like gender or a character limitation —where one's choice is shaped by freedom, the other's is shaped by constraint.

Julie's final (re)homing is made possible by her newfound understanding of responsibility as a social bond that isn't restricted by sameness, whether in terms of race, culture, or nationality; on a symbolic level her decision highlights the responsibility that the nation of South Africa has to the greater African community. The decision to establish roots in a poor, remote village is irreconcilably opposed to *The Pickup's* vision of a loose, globalized community where connections are increasingly transitory and valued for their potential profit. Rather than lamenting an increasingly fragmented global community that lacks a particular sense of place, *The Pickup* claims that a renewed understanding of responsibility towards Others makes cohesion, inclusivity, and particularity, possible. The ending of *The Pickup* offers Julie as a hopeful counterpoint to the earlier example of white South Africans relocating abroad: she leaves South Africa but unlike her fellow nationals she is directed by a deep sense of responsibility and has found a sense of home in a community of difference, not sameness. Her radical gesture of responsibility binds two African nations and eastern and western cultures, highlighting not an opposition but an interpenetration of both South Africa and other African nations, as well as the Global North and South. Gordimer's vision of the new South Africa cannot be contained within its own national boundaries, and its existence depends on the presence of a foreigner. Though tempered with

cynicism it never relinquishes its desire a future global community that is “a country of its own, not yours or mine.”

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