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Uneasy Attachments: Postcolonial Anglophilia and Identity Formation in Twentieth-Century Anglophone Autobiographies

Anwesha Kundu
Washington University in St. Louis

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of English

Dissertation Examination Committee:
J. Dillon Brown, Chair
Heather Berg
Melanie Micir
Anca Parvulescu
Vincent Sherry

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by

Anwesha Kundu

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Anwesha Kundu

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For my father

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Anwesha Kundu

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Professor J. Dillon Brown, Chair

This dissertation focuses on the impact of anglophilia on identity formation in the British empire. Since Britishness was an identity unavailable to non-white citizens of the empire, this attachment was necessarily unrequited. Analyzing works by Cornelia Sorabji, E.R. Braithwaite, V.S. Naipaul, and Tsitsi Dangarembga, I argue that the critical significance of anglophilia does not lie in the postcolonial subject's success or failure in achieving a British-coded identity, but in the ways in which an affiliation to Britishness can be mobilized to accomplish a variety of personal, political, and social ends. I use a range of autobiographical literature—travel narratives, autobiographical novels, autoethnography—to contend that anglophilia is a significant, if overlooked, affective framework that structures late colonial and postcolonial subject formation. The blending of fact and fiction and the explicit authorial self-performance that autobiographical writing entails highlights one of the core components of my argument: postcolonial anglophilic self-formations exist in the tense space between the undeniable power of socially determined categories ("non-white," "colonized," "woman") and the often-unexpected ways in which they are affectively felt and performed.

Introduction: Anglophilia, Identity, and Empire in the Long Twentieth Century

The twentieth century inaugurated a period of political decolonization in the British empire and brought the postcolonial elite to the forefront. As the British were withdrawing their physical presence from their colonies, the English-educated, middle and upper-middle-class colonial population came into political prominence. The redefinition of their position, both within these newly independent nations and in the world at large, was marked by a deep and abiding attachment to the British empire. The infamous dedication to Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951), a classic anglophilic text, perfectly captures the preoccupations of this project: the long durée of nineteenth and twentieth-century attachment to Britishness, its foundational role in the creation of postcolonial subjecthood, and the flexible mobilization of anglophilic performances in the aftermath of empire. Chaudhuri writes:

> To the memory of the British Empire in India which conferred subjecthood on us and withheld citizenship; to which yet every one of us threw out the challenge: 'civic britannicus sum' because all that was good and living within us was made, shaped and quickened by the same British rule. (v)

Chaudhuri's book won him both notoriety and acclaim in India and England, partly because it made the implicit explicit: that an attachment to British civilizational values could not be erased overnight and that the newly-independent postcolonial Indian subject was entangled in a variety of desiring relationships with British colonial values, institutions, and ideologies.[1] This vision of British belonging arises from within the gap between "subjecthood" and "citizenship" in

[1] Chaudhuri is referring to the British law, medicine, education etc.

Chaudhuri's dedication. As a colonial subject, to perform a British inflected and colonially acceptable subjecthood to gain recognition as a "British citizen" was a failed project.[2] This failure, however, does not, as Chaudhuri's dedication demonstrates, lessen the attachment to empire or terminate the desire for British imperial recognition. Chaudhuri's dedication lays out how the dream of what has usually been dismissed as anglophilia–a simplistic yearning for inhabiting British identity– is an unfulfilled fantasy. However, this fraught and meandering process lies at the heart of my dissertation, in which I argue that the significance of this desiring relationship lies not in its failure, but in its adaptiveness, its ability to produce a different, modified set of identities that characterize *anglophilic* subject formation produced while pursuing Britishness. Moving away from interpretations of anglophilia as expressions of love and desire for an unreachable ideal, my dissertation is interested in anglophilia as the process of creating certain postcolonial identity categories while attempting to attain the ideal of full British subjecthood. I theorize anglophilic subject formations as mobilizing the hybridity of being non-white, colonial/postcolonial subjects who can also fluently perform Britishness. Anglophilia structures and creates a set of identity categories that locates its sense of privilege and authority precisely in this interstitial space that combines the privileges of both Britishness and indigenous elite structures.

[2] This difference is made particularly complicated because of the varied history of British subjecthood and citizenship during and after empire as described in the Home Office's 2017 report, "Historical Background Information on Nationality." The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914 formally declared that every person within the ambit of the British empire, including white Britons, were British subjects. Subjecthood was the main form of nationality. The British Nationality Act of 1948 took into account the independence of several British colonies and redefined British subjecthood. All citizens of Britain and of Commonwealth countries were now British subjects, but the latter were no longer British citizens. Initially, this status allowed any British subject the right to live in Britain. The unwelcome non-white immigration this resulted in after WWII led to the passage of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 that effectively restricted this kind of immigration. The British Nationality Act of 1982 redefined British subjecthood as a residual category that was to be phased out as Britain's empire shrank. British citizenship is no longer synonymous with Commonwealth citizenship and the latter no longer have the right of abode in Britain.

The generic affiliation of Chaudhuri's autobiography also illuminates a set of tendencies in a whole archive of texts that this dissertation explores: an investment in discursive self-creation via autobiography. These texts are part historical musings, part autoethnography—with a blurring of boundaries between the two—and dedicated to narrating the story of "the destiny of British rule in India [and elsewhere]" (vii) through the incidents of individual lives. "A man persuades himself best, and best convinces others, by means of his own experiences" (vii), according to Chaudhuri, and his book is dedicated to creating a coherent, "persuasive," and authoritative persona through the autobiographical mode. It is crucial to note that this is very much a self-consciously created public self. Autobiography as a genre allows for a melding of fact and fiction, objectively framed subjective pronouncements, and a discursive creation of the self vis-a-vis public discourses. It is a genre that constantly mobilizes the productive tension between the self and the world.[3] Chaudhuri's text is exemplary of this in its self-avowed aim of using his own life to explain the historical course of the British empire in India (vii). By framing his individual selfhood through collective British colonial ideologies, Chaudhuri outlines a transportable, public identity category (in his case, the Bengali-British subject) that is not entirely unique to himself, but can be taken up, modified and deployed by similarly placed subjects. Chaudhuri's text reveals a vital node of this project: the autobiographical creation, via anglophilia, of authoritative hybrid public personas that are capacious, flexible, and capable of changing with the historical transformations of empire from the colonial to its post- and neo-

[3] That autobiographical texts consciously mobilize and perform this imbrication of the public and private is established in autobiography studies. For more on self-formation in autobiography studies, see Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*; Pouchet Paquet, *Caribbean Autobiography*: *Cultural Identity and Self-Representation*; Malhotra and Lambert Hurley, eds., *Speaking of the Self: Gender, Performance and Autobiography in South Asia*; Parati, *Public Histories, Private Stories: Italian Women's Autobiography*; Culley, *American Women's Autobiography: Fea(s)ts of Memory*; North, *The Domestication of Genius; Biography and the Romantic Poet.*

colonial iterations. In this dissertation, I explore the strategies of authors who create such authoritative personas as postcolonial anglophiles across the long twentieth century.

What is Anglophilia?

This project argues that anglophilia[4]—the filiation to British values and culture that exist in colonial and postcolonial peoples—is an attachment that is, among other things, cruelly optimistic according to Lauren Berlant's formulation. As Berlant explains in *Cruel Optimism*, "A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing. It might involve food, or a kind of love; it might be a fantasy of the good life, or a political project" (1). This relation involves a fantasy of the "good life" (romantic intimacy, economic stability, social mobility, among many other possibilities) that is too emotionally important to let go of, but whose pursuit has become harmful to the pursuer. Similarly, to embody British cultural markers and love its producers as a non-white colonial person is to be in a fundamentally unequal relationship, in that white Britons will never acknowledge or return that attachment. I am, however, more interested in how an affect like anglophilia can be something *in addition* to being cruelly optimistic. Other than being a damaging relationship, or a dream of unrequited love, what public political ends can it serve for the anglophilic postcolonial subject?

[4] My definition of anglophilia draws on Raymond Williams's formulation of "structures of feeling" in *Marxism and Literature*: as "specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity. We are then defining these elements as a 'structure': as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension. Yet we are also defining a social experience which is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis… has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics (132). William's focus on feeling as the variable lived experiences of more explicitly and formally articulated ideologies informs my process-oriented definition of anglophilia. Equally central to my reading of anglophilia is Williams's framing of feeling as social, collective, and historically inflected rather than being "private, idiosyncratic" and unchangeable across time.

Most postcolonial analyses of anglophilia have been implicitly framed as a response to this value judgement of anglophilia as a "bad" affect, whether to endorse that viewpoint or to read it as potentially subversive. Two critical terms that are similar to anglophilia and have purchase in postcolonial studies illustrate the ends of this spectrum: "colonial hangover" and "mimicry." The former refers to an unthinking following and worship of colonial institutions in postcolonial countries. As a term, it is laden with condescension. The colonially hungover are those who have not been set on the path of political progress; they simply do not know better than to imitate their colonial masters. The dismissiveness encapsulated in the term is reflected in the critical literature. While it is regularly used, it is not theorized in any serious detail. Rather, the obviousness of its unfortunate existence precludes any serious discussion.[5] At the other end of the spectrum is Homi Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry in "Mimicry and Man," which reads the adoption of colonial values, attitudes, and cultural institutions by the colonized as an uncanny copy. The cultural scripts of the colonizer are mimicked by the colonized, and this mimicry, whether intentionally or unintentionally, creates an ambivalent space where the weaknesses of the colonizer might be exposed. Both formulations place the postcolonial subject in a reactive position vis-a-vis British culture. Neither however, seriously focuses on anglophilia as a mode of conscious and strategic subject formation that centers the agency of the postcolonial subject.[6]

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[5] In Ann Laura Stoler's *Interior Frontiers: Essays on the Entrails of Inequality*, her chapter on the mobilization of colonial discourses in contemporary national politics ("Colonial Diffraction in (Il)liberal Times") mentions how "colonial hangover" is a term used by gay rights activists in India to dismiss the colonial-era laws that criminalize same-sex relations (285). Stoler notes the ubiquity of the expression in public press coverage, both liberal and conservative, of gay rights legislation. Elleke Boehmer's chapter on decolonization ("Independence") in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* uses the term while describing how twentieth-century Australian writers like Les Murray were using local idioms in order to resist British literary influence (209).

[6] The colonial subject as being marked by imitative desire, the futility of that desire, and the stunted and tortured selfhood that is the result is well-established thread in postcolonial criticism that focuses on postcolonial subject formation. Both Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks, The Wretched of the Earth*) and Albert Memmi (*The*

Using affect theory, I interrogate the dominant understanding of anglophilia as an original/copy dyad. Instead of reading an attachment to British culture as an adoption and performance of values external to the culture of the colonized, I consider it an integral and not necessarily debased part of that culture. This rereading of anglophilia as an intrinsic component of a colonial culture—not as a "good" or "bad" effect of British colonization that is external to it—allows for a conceptual shift. Instead of focusing on whether anglophilia is conservative or revolutionary, we can examine its textual iterations as strategic performances of an affect that create specific public and political identities for its performers. I consider postcolonial subjects as stakeholders in and co-creators of hybrid national and global cultures by having participated in it through the British empire for several centuries. Part of this project's ethical/political remit, then, is to attend to and interrogate the selfhood and agency of postcolonial subjects, even and especially if they are politically uncomfortable. I give weight to the personal choices and histories of anglophilic subjects in order to expand the ambit of postcolonial studies and its foundational ethical imperative to interrogate colonial power and privilege. Colonial power, I argue, is not neatly contained within the colonizer but spills over the boundaries of the dyadic

Colonizer and the Colonized) see this as a stage in colonial self-formation that is untenable and must eventually lead to a realization of the exploitative nature of colonialism and subsequent revolt. Similarly, Abdul JanMohamed reads the colonial subject's taking on of "a version of the colonizers' entire system of values, attitudes, morality, institutions" (65) as part of the "hegemonic phase" (i.e. control through soft power as opposed to brute force) in the trajectory of colonialism. He argues that the literature produced by (white) colonial writers like Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster, and Joseph Conrad can only confirm the superiority of the European subject and the ultimate impossibility of reconciling that with an egalitarian vision of colonial relations (66). Interestingly, while he includes Naipaul within this group, he mentions in a footnote that "the transformations and repressions that a "native" writer must undergo in order to become a colonialist writer are complicated and also demand separate consideration" (82), thus noting the systematic presence of anglophilic colonial subjects but without a detailed consideration of those subjectivities beyond the "repressions" it must suffer through in order to produce the colonial literature it does. In *The Pleasures of Exile*, George Lamming notes the centrality of the "myth" (26) of British civilization to colonial, specifically Caribbean, subject formation. Lamming is more invested in the possibilities of hybridity, than the previously mentioned critics, but none of these major figures of postcolonial criticism are focused on analyzing this attachment to Britishness as a mode of exercising power and privilege.

relationship and becomes instrumental in the self-construction of postcolonial subjects in messy and – occasionally, at least – politically unexpected ways.

Anglophilic Subjects: Affect Theory and Postcolonial Studies

The four authors I examine—Cornelia Sorabji, E.R. Braithwaite, V.S. Naipaul, and Tsitsi Dangarembga—are all understudied in terms of their deep anglophilic affiliations.[7] Sorabji and Braithwaite are both self-declared anglophiles who were extremely popular in their time but have since fallen out of favor. Naipaul and Dangarembga, while well-studied authors, have not been extensively examined in terms of the hybrid[8] anglophilic identities they create to establish models for postcolonial and global citizenships. I use their works as case studies of anglophilia's mobilizations in different contexts: the formation of the professional Indian woman, the creation of Black British diasporic subjecthood, an expansion of the caste category of the Brahmin, and a critique of traditional patriarchal structures in Zimbabwe. To analyze these formations, I bring together affect studies and postcolonialism. The voluntary self-anglicization of colonial and postcolonial subjects has been the subject of much vexation in postcolonial studies, not least

[7] Most book-length studies of anglophilia have treated the subject in the Anglo-American context. For more, see Tamarkin's *Anglophilia: Deference, Devotion*, *and Antebellum America* and Jones's *Accent on Privilege: English Identities and Anglophilia in the U.S.*

[8] In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha argues that "in-between the designations of identity" there is an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications [that] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (4). Drawing on Bhabha, Robert J.C. Young also uses hybridity as a frame through which he reads Englishness, arguing that Englishness has always been infected with anxiety about containing the Other within itself. The greater the investment in purity, the more intense the anxious awareness of heterogenous, heterodox elements that inevitably undermine that purity. Both Bhabha's and Young's formulations of hybridity emphasize the impossibility of cultural purity, the everyday nature of this cultural exchange, and the falseness of framing colonial power as an untouchable monolith. My use of the term "hybrid" draws on all these points while keeping in mind critiques of hybridity as being a romanticized concept that automatically implies anti-colonial resistance and subversion (see Benita Parry, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*). Instead, I am invested in the ambivalent, performative nature of hybridity as a flexible space that combines elements of different cultures and creates and recreates colonial and postcolonial identities.

because it is, politically, a deeply fraught issue. As a field, postcolonial studies has rooted itself in certain radical political moves: making clear how postcolonial and colonial subjects subvert, resist, and fight back against their colonizers has been central to the field's long-term project. In this context, anglophilia, with its connotations of love for and imitation of the colonizing culture, has been a difficult entity to adequately examine.[9] This colonial structure of messy feeling can be fruitfully illuminated by affect theory, which brings an awareness of ambivalence and ambiguity as generative analytical objects to postcolonial studies.

In keeping with the work of theorists like Sara Ahmed, Paul Gilroy, Lauren Berlant, Hazel Carby, and Bridgitte Fielder, I argue that certain political structures are powerful because they are affective and can contain ambivalent feelings.[10] Colonialism, I contend, is such a structure. At its height, the British empire controlled a significant portion of the populated globe. This control was maintained not by brute force alone, but also by creating and putting in place

[9] Philip Tsang's *Obsolete Empire: Untimely Belonging in Twentieth-Century British Literature* also examines the waning of empire and the lingering presence of Britishness in twentieth-century writers. Tsang argues that for these writers, "literature is the medium and means through which one can cross the gulf between alien and Englishman" (2), and they fuel their literary efforts by holding onto and prolonging the twilight of empire: "the writers in question are caught in the lingering shadow of an empire on which the sun *never* sets" (5). Tsang's text is not, however, concerned with the differences between non-white and white colonial writers, and indeed its archive is largely white. While it is focused on attachment to and performances of Englishness, *Obsolete Empire* does not read anglophilia (a term it does not use), as a flexible and continued strategy of the self that can be textual but is not exclusively so.

[10] A significant part of Sara Ahmed's oeuvre is dedicated to exploring how affect animates ideological and political structures like race, the university, and immigration (see, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion, The Promise of Happiness, On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life,* and *Complaint!*). Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* is concerned with the disappearance of race as an explicit analytic in a post WWII multiracial Britain that defines itself through "complex cultural difference rather than simple biological hierarchy" (10).Lauren Berlant's self-described national sentimentality trilogy (*The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia and Everyday Life, The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*: *Essays on Sex and Citizenship, The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of American Sentimentality.)* is an evolving exploration of American nationalism and its consolidation by way of popular aesthetic modes the derive their potency from their emotional appeal. Hazel Carby's work has looked at how affect is woven into constructions of gender, race, and the intersections of the two (see, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman, Race Men, Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands*). Fielder's *Relative Races: Genealogies of Interracial Kinship in Nineteenth-Century America* describes how race-making was not always and necessarily biological, but could be done through other, " 'horizontal' relations of sexual kinship" (4). These critics all stress the centrality of intimacy and affiliation to the process of both colonization and decolonization. This project builds on these works that think through the importance of affect to colonial and postcolonial politics.

certain frameworks of feeling that would tie sections of their subject population to the empire. Thomas Macaulay's influential "Minutes on Indian Education" sets out just such a frame. His famous plan—to create a "class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and intellect"— is based on creating a strong attachment to English civilizational values in a certain class of Indians. Anglophilia, in this case, is a mode of administration and political control; Macaulay argues that this colonial elite would be well-positioned to help British administrators maintain control over the rest of the empire.[11] While anglophilia is no doubt most often a conservative affect that was essential to the stability of British colonialism,[12] my project is interested in how, like all affects, anglophilia exceeds these boundaries and becomes instrumental in the creation of subjectivities that are not mere tools of empire.[13] As Ann Laura Stoler explicates in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power:* "In the end, there was no panoptical imperial state, but only a partially realized range of efforts...to dictate what cultural affinities and styles, and what distribution of affections, would prevail in the street and home" (10). Stoler emphasizes the partiality of colonial control and its "unanticipated effects" on both the colonizing and colonized populations. That colonial administration and

[11] The importance of affectively coagulated communities to the project of colonial and postcolonial nation-building has been well documented by a range of scholars, from Benedict Anderson to Partha Chatterjee. Both Chatterjee's *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* explore the importance of fellow feeling among expansive and heterogenous groups of people for nation-formation. For more on this, see Michael Billig's *Banal Nationalism,* which was influential in a conceptualization of the affects and effects of everyday nationalism; Tanika Sarkar's *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation*: *Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism* examines domestic and religious feeling as foundational to nation formation.

[12] The creation of British ideological hegemony as a mode of political control over a certain colonial class is a consistent thread in Subaltern Studies. See, Guha, *Dominance Without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India*; Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*; Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse.*

[13] Central to this process is the English language, and several works have already explored this along with the independent life of English in Britain's colonies that have continued into the postcolonial era. See, Vishwananthan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*; Chandra, The *Sexual Life of English: Languages of Caste and Desire in Colonial India*; George, *Indian English and the Fiction of National Literature.*

power was not a smoothly working machine which produced a seamless surface opens up spaces for its subjects to behave in uncharted ways that included a surprising "distribution of affections" and their "unanticipated effects."

These unforeseen outcomes do not get much purchase in early postcolonial criticism. A significant portion of postcolonial scholarship has focused on the various modes of imperial resistance.[14] This is especially true of twentieth-century focused work, which deals with a historical period marked by multiple anti-colonial movements across the globe. My project seeks to expand upon this "resistance" scholarship rather than position itself in opposition to it. That there was indifference, hate, oppression, and resistance is well established. I argue, however, that this contentious relationship between the colonizer and colonized was, and continues to be, informed by elements of interest and desire even while, at the same time, remaining embedded within the hierarchies of power. Indeed, a great deal of the affective force exerted by that relationship originated in this relation of power. A crucial site of this unbalanced power relation is language and the use of English as the language of colonial power. In *Decolonizing the Mind*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o describes the overwhelmingly important role language plays in creating coherent selves and communities: "Language carries culture, and culture carries...the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world" (16). As such, for Ngugi, the imposition of a "foreign" language like English on the colonized population of Africa leads to a systematic psychic fracturing. Building on the idea of the fractured self, I question the notion that the psychic world of any colonized child or writer is essentially African (or South Asian, or Caribbean), as well as the notion that all traces of Britishness, both linguistically and culturally,

[14] See, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*; Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice: The Transformation of English in Post-Colonial Literatures*; Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature.*

are superficial, sterile impositions that can and should be wiped out. Affect is an especially generative approach in this respect in that it allows for an interrogation of this hypothetical, purely African/Caribbean psyche.[15] Are all attachments to English or Britishness entirely forcibly imposed and easily uprooted? Is this kind of psychic homogeneity even possible? My project homes in on this discomfort and seeks to explore the unexamined underbelly of theorizations employing nationalist models of thought and action within anti-colonial movements: the haunting notion that there might be generative connections between anti-colonial nationalisms and "Western" ideas and models.

Three Critical Selves: Gikandi, Hall, and Carby

This project is in conversation with a set of critics who are all trying to answer the vexing question: "Why did formerly colonized people, many of whom had spent generations fighting against colonial domination, seem to invest so much in cultural institutions—such as the school, Shakespeare, and cricket—that were closely associated with imperial conquest and rule?" (Gikandi 1). For Gikandi, the roots of this question lie in his own upbringing in Kenya: "One of the things that puzzled me about my people…is how strongly they detested colonial rule, which they fought tooth and nail, often ending up in prison, and how passionately they believed in the

[15] Ngugi's approach (about a pure psyche) can be linked to the Subaltern School of criticism in terms of their collective turning to the colonial working class, especially the rural population, for an unexhausted, viable, anti-colonial idiom. There is an obvious question here about romanticizing the working class as a bastion of anti-colonial resistance that remains untouched by the various colonial attachments that bedevil the middle class. Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak has already pointed out the dangers of speaking for the subaltern in her famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" There is also the equally pertinent issue of anti-colonial and postcolonial nation formation that these subaltern movements are part of. In *The Nation and Its Fragments,* Partha Chatterjee argues for a robust, innovative postcolonial mode of nation formation that is separate from Western models. It derives its momentum from a sense of spiritual superiority to the Western, colonizing power as opposed to its undeniable subservience in the material sphere. Chatterjee's model, argues for an affective/ psychic separateness from Britishness that allowed for a potent and effective nationalism.

efficacy and authority of colonial culture" (xix). He argues that British affiliation among colonial subjects was part of extensive imaginative and affective exchange between Britain and its colonies both before and after decolonization. For Gikandi, postcoloniality is not just a condition of opposition and indigenous national reimagining, but one of "social hybridity" (xiv). "Colonial Englishness" (ibid) and "local histories and traditions" (ibid) both co-exist and are mobilized to create a set of hybrid national identities. In this line of reasoning, Indianness/Jamaicanness/Zimbabweanness are all co-constitutive with Britishness. Gikandi's work is preoccupied with the creation of national identity and the ways in which the terms "metropole" and "colony" can be muddied in terms of their cultural exchanges. Its significance to this project lies in Gikandi's commitment to both seriously considering (post)colonial subjects' attachments to British cultural institutions and refusing to assign them any automatic valence as either regressive or revolutionary. He chooses, instead, to focus on the ongoing complexities of these identity formations.

Stuart Hall's *Familiar Stranger* is preoccupied with this process of self-transformation and the centrality of the world to the self, observing that "The transformations of self-identity are not just a personal matter. Historical shifts *out there* provide the social conditions of existence of personal and psychic change *in here"* (16). Hall's text, a mix of memoir and theory, expands on this idea of reciprocal identity formation—the ways in which collective publics define individuals and vice vera—by outlining his own changing identifications in response to historical events:

> The term 'Afro-Caribbean', first adopted in the early years of post- war Caribbean migration to the UK, was followed by a series of more refined, hyphenated voter-registration categories like 'Black Caribbean'. In my case (although it surprises people when I say it), black as a personal identity had to wait for decolonization. (15-16)

Hall theorizes, through his own personal experiences, the blurred boundaries between self-determination and the collective categories applied to individuals by public consensus. As he is transformed from "Afro Caribbean" to "Black Caribbean," Hall's language enacts the slippages between his own "freely-chosen" identifications, and the ones attributed to him by institutions like "voter registration categories." Hall's self-identifications must negotiate with the publicly available categories to describe his raced national position. This is not to say, however, that Hall possesses no agency. Rather, he (and I), are interested in the ambiguous fluidity of this process and its ongoing nature.[16] Hall identifies "Black" as an identity marker that is, for him (and by implication for many others), both historically bounded and tied to a range of historical events that span continents and decades. Hall's theorization of postcolonial identity reveals its continuously changing nature, the national and international elements that go into its creation, and, most crucially, the interplay between individual agency and collectively available categories that go into its making.

Hazel Carby's *Imperial Intimacies* takes on this question of postcolonial identity as an international, hybrid construction and thinks through how it transforms post-imperial Britain's sense of itself. Central to Carby's argument is the *non-white* British subject, the erasure of their long presence on British soil, their arrival in large numbers in the mid-twentieth century, and their evolving sense of self. Like Hall's book, part memoir and part theory, it narrates the "everyday ties, relations and intricate interdependencies" of empire that account for her presence in Britain as a Jamaican Welsh woman. Foundational to Carby's account is her father, a Jamaican serviceman who had served in the British air force during World War II and then

[16] As he writes in his essay "Negotiating Caribbean Identities," No cultural identity is produced out of thin air. It is produced out of those historical experiences, those cultural traditions, those lost and marginalized languages, those marginalized experiences…On the other hand identity is not a rediscovery of them but what they as cultural resources allow people to produce. Identity is not in the past to be found but in the future to be constructed" (38).

settled in England after the war, marrying a Welsh woman and having a daughter. Carby describes him as a man dedicated to his identity as a British subject. He was "British without equivocation and [was] unhesitatingly loyal to whatever Britishness meant to [him]" (20). As the story unfolds, Britishness, as understood by him, turns out to be constituted of the same qualities that Gikandi identifies as the core of colonial attachment to British culture—"civilization, progress, literacy, civility" (xiv). Carby's father dresses in impeccable suits, remains self-contained, even in front of the immigration officers who harass him, and loves Thomas Gray's poems (54). Carby's text both locates him within a historical context and, importantly, contends with how his identity, as an "Afro-Caribbean," is different from her own as a "Black Briton," and the different cultural affiliations these differences imply. Emphasizing the process-oriented nature of "race" as a category, she defines it as "a practice or series of practices, a technology that calculates and assigns differences to peoples and communities and then institutionalizes these differences. It is a verb not a noun" (65). Carby's definition of race is cultural. For her, it is a changeable historical construct that is bound up with other identity categories and is intimately tied to the changing conditions of the British empire.

I position myself within this trio of critics because of their understanding that reading postcolonial selves through purely nationalist and anti-colonial frameworks is deeply inadequate, their consideration of colonial attachment as an important thread within both colonial and postcolonial identities, and their exploration of their own subject positions within the structures they study. Anglophilia is at the intersection of all these lines of argument. My project argues that this attachment to British institutions and civilizational values that these three critics are already describing is a central, portable concept that circulates through the British empire and combines with other, locally inflected vectors of identity like ethnicity, gender roles, caste, and

class to create hybrid identities. As I explore in my chapters, anglophilia is central to a variety of identity categories—the professional Indian woman, the cosmopolitan Brahmin, the middle-class Black Briton, the successful Zimbabwean feminist—that were created through the course of decolonization in the twentieth century and continue to evolve and have purchase in globalizing postcolonial nations.

A point of note about the anglophilic identity categories that emerge out of these critical texts is their participation in other axes of social privilege. An attachment to British values is often (but not always) accompanied by a stake in other categories of privilege that allow access to Britishness in the first place. I am not arguing for a politically radical redefinition of anglophilia, but rather for an exploration of the ways in which it is mobilized to access power even within anti-colonial, decolonial, and apparently revolutionary spaces (like gender emancipation in Sorabji and a redefinition of the nation as racially inclusive in Braithwaite). However, this project is more invested in looking at the unanticipated, destabilizing effects that accompany the creation of these hybrid identity categories. For instance, Black Britishness is invested in the wholeness of the British nation *while* undermining Britain's self-definition as being homogeneously white. At the center of this dissertation is an interrogation of the ways in which the radical and the conservative intertwine within postcolonial identities. Ultimately, as a concept, anglophilia reveals the complicated and compromised nature of postcoloniality, the futility of the search for lost origins, and the neocolonial and globalized iterations of colonial culture that continue into the contemporary period.

Chapters

Each chapter of my dissertation explores a particular instance of anglophilia as lived performance or as narrative practice. The range of authors under discussion, both geographically and temporally, illustrates not just the persistence and evolution of this structure of identity formation—the continuities across time and space—but also the differences between its specific iterations. Not all expressions of anglophilia follow the same course to the same ends. This state of always being in process, of repeated frustration, allows anglophilia to, on occasion, overflow its conservative boundaries. While being a colonial affect, its status as unfulfilled desire leads to a continuously proliferating number of ways in which its fulfilment is attempted, creating unanticipated and potentially subversive effects *in addition* to politically conservative ones. My project illuminates these variations through a thorough exploration of anglophilic narrative identity formations. Because of my investment in narrative identity, I have chosen to work on autobiographical publications. Whether they are autobiographical novels, travelogues, or self-declared autobiographies, each text utilizes the genre to make, perform, and subvert identity claims by their authors as citizens of the British (ex) empire. I read these works in the context of their respective authorial histories, both personal and collective, viewing each as an elaborate and ongoing negotiation between "fact," and "fiction," blurring the line between both.

The first chapter locates itself in late empire, examining a short story collection, *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* and an autobiography, *India Calling,* by Cornelia Sorabji, India's first woman lawyer and self-declared anglophile. Sorabji, I argue, uses her attachment and access to Britishness in order to achieve certain feminist ends for herself—a legal education, a long and successful professional career, her life-long status as an unmarried economically self-sufficient woman. She creates an identity for herself as a professional Indian woman. However, the chapter shows, in order to maintain the exceptional contours of her life, she deploys her fluency in

Britishness to keep other women from achieving the same independence she has. Sorabji's narrator in both her autobiography and her short stories exoticizes Indian women as primitive, passive, and unmodern; they are in dire need of an Indian Anglophile like Sorabji—whether as a narrator or a lawyer—who is well-versed in both worlds and can help them navigate life in a British colony. Their unmodernity, associated with an unalloyed Indianness, creates the need for Sorabji's anglophilic modernity. In this chapter, anglophilia becomes a conduit through which certain elite discourses of gender emancipation are expressed.

The next chapter interrogates the figure of the Black Briton in E.R. Braithwaite's autobiographical novels, *To Sir, With Love* and *Paid Servant,* building on the idea of performing an unexpectedly mixed identity. I read the anglophilic affiliations found in the two texts as a complicated process of Black diasporic identity formation that questions the simultaneity of race and national belonging. An emotional identification with England is deployed to disrupt calcified ideas about the moral excellence of white people, and the novels consistently demonstrate an attachment to "English" values, focusing on their successful performance by people of color, while the white characters repeatedly fall short. Taken together, Braithwaite's texts reveal anglophilia to be a complex affective structure that, while being invested in ideas of morality, nation, and civilization, can also unexpectedly destabilize prevalent social norms as it participates in the process of denaturalizing automatic assumptions of racial superiority.

In the third chapter, I explore the intersection of caste and anglophilia in V.S. Naipaul's *An Area of Darkness* and *The Enigma of Arrival*. In both works, the autobiographical protagonist combines his facility with Britishness and his caste position as a Brahmin to create the category of the cosmopolitan Brahmin. He performs the role of the imperial traveler during his sojourn in India (*An Area of Darkness*), augmenting his authority in that position with his unique insights

into Indian culture as a Brahmin native informant. In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul uses his position in the caste hierarchy to establish himself as the perfect resident of the "mother country." He reaches back and connects his elite Brahminical status to a class-based, aristocratic Britishness in the process of establishing himself as the ideal British citizen. Naipaul positions himself as the new citizen of a multicultural Britain who both performs a recognizable elitism vis-à-vis his anglophilic performance of English culture and is capable of hybridizing these local categories of privilege with the global.

My final chapter revisits the concerns of the first, illuminating their evolution and persistence in a different country at the end of the century through Tsitsi Dangarembga's autobiographical trilogy set in Zimbabwe, *Nervous Conditions*, *The Book of Not,* and *This Mournable Body.* How do colonialism and the patriarchy combine to specifically affect women? And how do colonized women strategically use an alignment with Britishness, specifically British education, to resist (or not) the demands of the indigenous patriarchy? Dangarembga's novels explore in detail the psychic and social impasse that is often a marker of anglophilia. She puts forward two versions of anglophilia via the lives of two women characters. While one pursues Britishness as an unachievable fantasy, the other uses it as a critical tool to both question British involvement in Zimbabwe and the indigenous patriarchy's collusion with colonialism as a way to oppress Zimbabwean women. These texts, I contend, view anglophilia as an unavoidable element in postcoloniality. As such, Dangarembga frames it as a possible tool for women who wish to carve out a successful role for themselves in a heavily patriarchal society, while, at the same time, being cognizant of the psychic damage it causes due to the demands of having to maintain an impossible and exceptionalized identity.

The coda looks toward future directions for this project. After focusing on anglophilia as a mode of individual subject formation across the empire, I think through how it evolves across space and time, including over the course of an author's life. Does the expression and performance of anglophilia remain the same as authors grow older and/or move across the world? I consider this through a reading of E.R. Braithwaite's sympathy for the Black Panthers in his 1979 book, *Reluctant Neighbours*. The autobiographical first-person narrator defends the Panthers's militant view on self-defence and points out how they have been falsely demonized in the media as violent criminals to his white co-passenger on a train. This is a far cry from the respectability politics he advocates for in his earlier works that are more popular. I use this example to both briefly show how anglophilia evolves over the course of a single author's life and gesture towards larger issues of how local conditions structure this transnational affect and the significance of focusing on those changes. Basing itself in Braithwaite's evolving understanding of his own positionality and alliances that incorporated the different racial politics of America after he moved there, the coda thinks through how anglophilia is also a locally inflected affect; changing as it moves through the expanse of the British empire, from South Asia to the Caribbean.

Anglophilia is an affective structure that is a result of the British empire but has outlived the latter's existence. It is a form of attachment that has become a strategic tool in postcolonial identity formation. It is a way of claiming agency and belonging. Central to this argument is the notion that these anglophilic identities and performances are not always directed towards the colonizer's gaze. Instead, with the coming of decolonization, anglophilia, hybridizing with local axes of privilege, has become a way to garner cultural capital within the postcolonial nation state. As a critical term, anglophilia allows us to interrogate the limits of hybridity, globality, and

postcolonialism as necessarily emancipatory or radical concepts. Moreover, it can become useful when excavating the ambivalent and even conservative elements of decolonization, in that it helps us read the complex afterlives of colonialism well past the fall of the British empire.

Chapter 1: Anglophilia, Modernity, and the Professional Indian Woman in Cornelia Sorabji

In her 1899 article, "Stray Thoughts of an Indian Girl," Cornelia Sorabji, British India's first woman lawyer, addresses an urgent issue preoccupying the Subcontinent and its administrators: the modernization of the Indian woman. Written as she was still getting her degree at Oxford, this piece outlines a well-developed set of ideas that would be foundational to her career as an author and an advocate for the *purdahnashin* (women sequestered within the harem/purdah/zenana).[1] Indian women, Sorabji argues, are not ready for modernity. While they are subject to oppressive anti-feminist practices such as perpetual widowhood, child marriage, and purdah, they "have hitherto been content with their lot and have not dreamt of resistance" ("Stray Thoughts" 153). Thus, to demolish the traditional patriarchal systems Indian women live within through "too rapid and ill-based reform" would cause them harm (ibid). Modernity, Sorabji intimates, cannot be rushed. This is not an unusual stance for that time. It was an established thread in contemporary conversations about social reform in India that slow educational and social change was preferable to radical legislative redress since the latter would release turbulent and unsavory energies. What is unusual is Sorabji's own positionality as the

[1] I have used the terms "harem", "purdah," and "zenana," interchangeably to mark their sameness to a British audience, not to suggest that the material practices of veiling or segregating women within the domestic space are identical across south Asia or the Middle East. As Inderpal Grewal writes in *Home and Harem*, the figure of the non-white woman secluded within the home was powerful and evocative precisely because the colonial imagination had emptied it of any local signifiers that tied it to a particular geography or community. Instead, harems evoked generalized ideas about imprisoned and helpless women, sensual overindulgence, and female sexuality that was unavailable to the European male gaze (5-6). Sorabji herself had worked in enough zenanas to know the ways in which they varied from place to place even within India. However, she deliberately does not mark these differences in her work but mobilizes the suggestive figure of the harem inhabitant for her own literary and professional ends. I use these terms interchangeably in this chapter because this non-specificity is instrumental to Sorabji's own self-positioning as a woman who is an external expert on harems and is writing to a British audience.

author of this piece. As an unmarried, educated, professional woman, she embodies the very modernity for which, she claims, Indian women are not ready.

This dichotomy is present throughout her oeuvre and is particularly clear in the two texts I analyze, her autobiography *India Calling* (1935) and her short story collection *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* (1901). The autobiographical narrator stands in for the author and performs the latter's modern identity. Sorabji draws on her experiences as a lawyer working among upper-class Indian women in the zenana and advocating for changes in their living conditions. I argue that her attempts at women's reform and her self-making as a modern professional woman are contradictory. To be authoritative and trustworthy, an Indian woman must be exceptional in the eyes of the British reader. She could lose her status as a noteworthy voice if other Indian women could easily achieve the same degree of authority. I explore this tension within her subjectivity through the hierarchic opposition between Sorabji the narrator and the other women characters in her works. The texts are structured such that these women never get to a point where they could challenge the narrator's authority. As a result, the modernizing reformist project that Sorabji advances in her writing ultimately develops fault lines that impede its fulfillment. While Sorabji undoubtedly embodies the changes wrought by modernity in women's lives, this chapter is interested in how she simultaneously exemplifies modernity's capacity for encouraging social stasis and conservatism. It demonstrates how colonial modernity, as instantiated in Sorabji's self-formation, could be an agent of both progress *and* of preserving long-existing sexist and racist notions about Indian women. Sorabji, I argue, creates a well-curated, easily legible public persona that she instrumentalizes to create space for herself within the masculine imperial hierarchy as a non-threatening figure. To be accepted as a professional woman subverting several gender norms, she colludes with other more conservative forms of classed and ethnicized

misogyny. Sorabji's self-making is an early example of the unexpected imbrication of modernity and misogyny within Indian feminism.

Scholarship on Sorabji has focused on her transcendence of well-defined social categories. Sonita Sarker finds her "uncontainable in obedient subjecthood to British ideology" (278). Antoinette Burton's archival work highlights a woman who self-consciously performs the role of the exceptional Indian elite in England (*At the Heart* 112). Both Jessica Berman and Sukanya Banerjee focus on her liminal position—between India and England, between the zenana and the outside world—as self-created and socially endorsed. Berman reads her as a modernist intermediary who stages transformative encounters between zenana inhabitants and visitors from the outside (156). Banerjee frames her in-between identity as interpellating her into the nation as an exceptional "professional" who can claim imperial citizenship as an Indian woman (118). While acknowledging her as a complicated figure, most critical accounts concentrate on how the modernity she epitomized and instrumentalized was a force of change. This chapter, however, seeks to dwell on the ossifying capacities of that colonial modernity.

I use the terms "modern" and "modernity" throughout this discussion as it is conceptualized within critiques of Indian nationalism.[2] This is a historicized understanding of colonial middle-class modernity as it developed in late nineteenth and early twentieth century India. Defined in opposition to Indian "tradition" (which was framed as "unmodern"), "modernity" was read as a Westernized construct whose workings were gendered. Men inhabited the public world of professional competition and could therefore legitimately participate in a Western modernity with their British counterparts. Women were the guardians of the home and a

[2] See Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*; Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*; Ray, *En-gendering India: Women and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives*.

superior Indian spiritual tradition untainted by this foreign modernity. As Partha Chatterjee argues, while the position of upper and middle-class Indian women underwent reform in the early twentieth century, it was restricted under the aegis of a "new patriarchy" that explicitly differentiated the modern Indian woman from the modern Western woman ("Colonialism, Nationalism" 627). Indian women were still largely confined to the private sphere; their education was to make them better wives and mothers, not to prepare them for a career. Consequently, an Indian woman who was a working professional endangered not just her womanliness, but also her Indianness.

As one of a handful of professional Indian women in the early 1900s, Sorabji provides through her life writing one of the earliest enactments of the ongoing, intense debate surrounding the position of the middle-class/upper-class working woman in modern India. "Only too aware of popular reading tastes, a consideration her English editors made sure she never lost sight of" (Banerjee 133), she takes advantage of the performative nature of autobiography to produce a continuous and focused self-making. Her works aim to provide a specific understanding of Sorabji as an exceptional female professional to her Edwardian reading public (ibid). She crafts one of the first sustained accounts of the modern Indian career woman's interiority, illuminating this figure's intimate yet antagonistic relationship with the traditional, homebound Indian woman as a necessary condition for its survival.

Sorabji's claim to exceptionality can be read in context of a cohort of "exceptional" Indian women—like Kadambini Ganguly, Rukhmabai, and Anandibai Joshi—who entered white collar professions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[3] As doctors, lawyers, and

[3] Anandibai Gopal Joshi was the first Indian woman to qualify as a doctor with a degree from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania (although her premature death kept her from practicing). Rukhmabai and Kadambini Ganguly were the first women to practice modern Western medicine in India. Significantly, both trained as gynecologists and many of their patients were women in purdah who were unwilling to or prevented from going to

social workers, they achieved long-lasting public recognition and notoriety. Public discourses about femininity, class, race, and religion shaped these women's professional self-images and vice versa. The category of the modern Indian professional woman arose out of this imbrication and was legitimized through the ostensible social necessity of its function: the civilization and education of the traditional, unlettered women who lived in purdah. Women like Sorabji—and their supporters—countered misogynistic criticism and justified their position by pointing towards their apparently vital role in emancipating Indian women. The claim to exceptionality was necessary to argue for the importance of their position—if most Indian women were like them, then their civilizing function and thus their careers would not need to exist. Thus, at its inception, the category of the modern professional Indian woman became associated with the civilizing mission. This connection, while legitimizing the need for professional women, also contributed to the instability of the category. If Indian women at large become successfully civilized, then the exceptional female professional will no longer be necessary. Sorabji's writing illuminates the conservative core of the professional Indian woman's role and how the failure of its avowed project is fundamental to its very construction.

The uncertainties evoked by a figure like Sorabji are clear in a 1902 editorial for *The Times* written in support of an essay she had published in the newspaper. This essay furthers the agenda she had set forth in her "Stray Thoughts," proposing the creation of a government post for women lawyers who could counsel upper-class Indian women in purdah (299). These

public hospitals. Much like Sorabji, these women lived their lives under the public gaze and were subject to intense scrutiny, both positive and negative. Joshi addressed public crowds about the necessity of women doctors and the inadequacy of midwifery. Rukhmabai was famous for both her legal case against her husband that was responsible for the Age of Consent Act in 1981 and her subsequent entry into the medical profession. Kadambini, who actively campaigned for women's rights, was attacked in regional newspapers as a sexually corrupt woman and praised by the British and reformist Bengali communities in Calcutta for her progressiveness (Kopf 125). All these women were also lauded in the British press and public sphere for being emancipated in ways that were legible to the British. They were held up as examples of "civilized" Indian women who were working towards the emancipation of the rest.

sequestered women, often the owners of substantial wealth and property, were at the mercy of their male relatives and employees. Since they could not appear in public before male lawyers or judges, they had to depend on often-unscrupulous agents to safeguard their rights. Sorabji's proposal would allow women in purdah to interact directly with their female lawyers (ibid). Seconding Sorabji's sense of urgency, the editorial frames this as a problem that is "universal among the higher class of Hindu woman" and their Muslim counterparts ("Editorial" 295). Indian women, the anonymous correspondent believes, are clearly unmodern, silent, and helpless; they need the intervention of the benevolent British to survive. The paradox is that this scheme for maintaining women in their cloistered state is being laid out by an ambitious, professional, thoroughly modern Indian woman.

The editorial is aware of this contradiction. Framing her as a "remarkable Indian lady…whose talents, education, and practical training [are] equal to the most advanced of European ladies" (295), it attempts to resolve this tension by echoing the rhetoric of Sorabji's self-making. She possesses the "peculiar qualifications" (297) of being Parsi by birth, rather than Hindu or Muslim, and of having a British education. While most Indian women are her "own sisters" (295), thus giving her special insight into their backward condition, her religious and cultural position is reconfigured into something "peculiar" to establish her superiority over them through her modern, progressive credentials. This conflict between the modern and the unmodern—and its reliance upon constructions of colonial, Indian womanhood—is central to Sorabji's curation of a persona in her legal and literary career. Her writing illuminates the ambivalent, ever-shifting allegiances to both British and Indian ideas of femininity that shaped the figure of the modern colonial author. Her body of work performs the continual self-presentation necessary for a woman author who wanted to create a space for herself within a

colonial market. The failures and contradictions in this process prove to be at least as illuminating as the successes. Despite its progressive and feminist promise, Sorabji's writing reveals the conservatism lurking within the dream of modern colonial womanhood. Her existence does not necessarily imagine new possibilities for Indian women's lives and capacities. Instead, her modernity is exceptional and exists only to confirm the perceived inferiority of Indian women as potential political subjects. Modernity is not only synonymous with progress narratives; it can also be used as an apparatus to maintain the colonial status quo.

The contradictions in Sorabji's writing are informed by the miscellaneous influences in her own life. She was born into a Parsi-Christian family whose children were all educated in British universities and went on to have successful careers. Sorabji herself trained as India's first woman lawyer and spent a substantial part of her professional life working for the British government, providing legal assistance to upper-class Indian women in purdah. Her family celebrated her career and was supportive of women in general but she herself was politically conservative. A self-described "'ardent . . . little Tory,' she opposed Indian independence and the vote for women" (Burton, *At the Heart* 111). Sorabji's relationship to women's reform was marked by a commitment to gradualism and a desire to remain apolitical. She advocated for women's education and maternal health in zenanas without situating them within the larger contexts of women's rights or national independence. Susie Tharu and K. Lalita refer to her as "both a fighter and a victim of her times" (297). This description is representative of her double identity that is not reducible to either regressive anti-feminist anglophile or prescient radical reformer.

Sorabji embodies the paradoxical experience of gendered colonial modernity and expresses it in her writing. Her own selfhood as an exceptional Indian woman can only be

maintained by making her women characters appear unmodern. For the authority of her narrative persona to live undisturbed, the women she writes about must fail at becoming modern and are often punished for trying. Such failure performs two incompatible functions: it upholds Sorabji's narratorial subjecthood while also pointing to its unsustainability as a coherent project. Her unique ability to flourish in the public sphere and position herself as an insightful and sympathetic teacher/reformer in relation to women in the zenana establishes her authority. However, since her women characters cannot withstand the force of her reform and either die or become incapacitated, her efforts are repeatedly cut short. This failure destabilizes Sorabji's narrative authority—the basis of her self-making—and questions her unproblematically knowledgeable persona. Ultimately, her project renders women's collective freedom as an impossibility and demonstrates the orthodoxy and instability that is foundational to the emerging identity of the modern colonial woman in the early twentieth century.

1.2 Women Constructing Women: Harem Literature, Autobiography, and Women's Authority

To consolidate her exceptional role, Sorabji recycles existing tropes prevalent in British women's genres, particularly harem literature and women's autobiographies. In this section, I show how the dialogue between these genres shapes her creation of her unique status in her work. Harem literature developed as a women's genre in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and primarily consisted of first-person accounts by European women describing their sojourns in harems in the Ottoman empire. These works are notable for their emphasis on women's unique narrative authority—since men were not allowed into harems, their claims about them had little truth value and were largely read as fantasy (Herath 34). In *Gendering Orientalism,* Reina Lewis

remarks that "the cult of the harem was central to the fantasies that structure Orientalist discourse" (118). The development of international transport in the mid-nineteenth century allowed middle-class European women to travel to the East in increasing numbers, not just as tourists and wives of colonial officials but as professionals in their own right (Heffernan 48). The harem was no longer primarily the domain of white male fantasizing from afar. A major shift had taken place: the European gaze *could* penetrate the harem through the presence of white women. Their entry into the inner sanctum of the harem created a rare opportunity: a chance to claim special authority over a sphere that could not be undermined by masculine interference. It led to the widespread popularity of harem literature as a species of travel literature by European women who had spent time in these segregated spaces (Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism* 12).

Harem literature and life-writing have much in common. Both were popular among Victorian women and were central to the legitimization of a hard-won gendered authority. Smith and Watson examine how "women engage[d] autobiographical discourse to renegotiate their cultural marginality and enter literary history" (141). Malhotra and Lambert-Hurley emphasize "the contradictory demands that a modernizing patriarchy made on women… [as it shaped their] nascent voice [that was] articulating a self within" (20). Corbett observes that the popularity of women's memoirs rested on their ability to "narrate the self by indirection" (101). The focus was not primarily on the authorial persona being narrated but on the author's ability to "offer an insider's perspective on a sphere to which the common reader ordinarily has little access" (101). This indirection is also true of harem literature. Both genres established textual authority not by focusing on the narrator but on the subjects being narrated. Sorabji uses this indirect insider's perspective in two ways: by focusing on her unparalleled professional qualifications that put her on par with European women and centering her own unusual origins that gave her unprecedented

access to harems. She adapted and combined harem literature and autobiography, fitting both genres to twentieth-century British India, to create an authoritative persona for herself as an Indian woman studying Indian women and advocating for their cause. However, due to her specific racial and national position that was much closer to the objects of her inquiry, she inhabited a far more unstable narrative space that was framed through the troubled language of gendered modernity.

Unlike Sorabji, the autobiographical self-making of white women authors of harem literature was rooted in their ability to embody and confer gendered modernity. As professional, travelling, middle-class women, their authority lay in their ability to contradict male primitivist fantasies about harems and frame the women within them as "actually" relatively progressive and modern; women with whom they could form friendships (Roberts 139). Simultaneously, they maintained their superior position in a hierarchical system within which—as white British subjects—they were clearly the more modern. There is thus a curious combination of authority and reciprocity that is implicit in women's harem writings. This combination arises from a dual investment in their own (and their readers') desire to maintain their superiority and in their actual friendships with Ottoman women. While these investments are unequal, with Britishness being the dominant framework that wins out, there are moments of engagement that transcend a rigid hierarchy and at least resemble mutuality.

Crucially, these moments of mutuality are not incompatible with the white woman author's superior stance. Indeed, her expertise arises out of the privileged knowledge she gains from her close relationships with these women. Their racial and national identities are more distant from the zenana women compared to Sorabji's. As white, British women, they are doubly removed from their subjects. Even if they form friendships with women in the harem, they are in

no danger of becoming *like* them. Their self-making remains separate from their constructions of non-white women. They can safely confer a modicum of modernity upon women within the harem since they belong to the community that is arbitrating on what is "modern" in the first place. Their access to modernity is unmediated and unconditional compared to the non-white, non-British women they describe.

1.3 The Limits of Colonial Women's Narrative Authority

Sorabji does not share a stable relationship to modernity with white women harem writers. Her adaptation of autobiographical harem literature in *India Calling* and *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* sheds light on the particularities of creating an authorial persona as a colonial Indian woman writing to a white British audience. Much like the Ottoman women authors who wrote about harem life, Sorabji too enters a genre that was created by Western women and premised on the irreducible racial difference between white and non-white femininity. In *Rethinking Orientalism*, Reina Lewis explores how these Ottoman authors had a mobile relationship with orientalist stereotypes: both repudiating them as reductive and mobilizing them to reach a wider European audience (7). Similarly, Sorabji repurposes narrative strategies used by white women authors of harem literature while modifying them in significant ways to suit her objectives. She is, however, neither harem inhabitant nor foreign visitor. Her distinctive departures from the conventions of harem literature—as lawyer, anglicized Indian woman, and bearer of a hybrid identity—become the loci where her conflicted subject position reformulates the genre. One of the main elements of harem literature is that of the foreign gaze: the white man or woman gazing at the non-white woman. As an Indian woman who writes about Indian

harems, Sorabji does not, at first glance, occupy that outsider status. She herself was intent on reinforcing her special authority as an *Indian* woman. However, this authority was equally predicated on her being a Parsi-Christian anglophile Indian woman clearly superior to her "little ladies" (*IC* 197), the Hindu/Muslim upper-class women in purdah whom she advised. Sorabji premised her authority on being able to access both occidental and oriental worlds (implicitly, even more effectively than white women) due to an ideal combination of birth and education.[4]

Her Indian birth and her British education, however, are not as compatible as she claims they are. Instead, they destabilize her self-making as a modern colonial woman author recording harem life. While her British education provides her with the framework of superior modernity through which to view her harem clients, she fails to create a "safe" distance from them in the ways white women writers did. Instead, she must retain a special closeness with her Indian charges, recognizing their independent subjectivities and allowing them to have a voice so that

[4] Sorabji's work can be positioned within a tradition of Indian women writing in English about Indian women's domestic lives despite her departure from them in terms of her unique professional position. Whether fiction or non-fiction, these texts were invested in outlining social problems vis-à-vis gender, taking a range of positions on the subject of reform. Krupabai Satthianadhan, a Dalit Christian author, wrote *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* (serialized between 1887-88 and later marketed as an autobiographical novel) and *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* (1894), both of which reveal the restrictions placed on their protagonists' lives due to gender, religion, and caste. Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla, a Parsi writer, narrates the favorable impact of a British education on her life in her autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1911). Unapologetically anglophilic, she advocates for British education as a way to make Indian women into more enlightened wives, mothers, and homemakers. Iqbalunnisa Hussain's three volume novel, *Purdah and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim Household* (1944), offers an auto-ethnographic view of Muslim women's lives in purdah, describing it as a practice that was so deep-rooted that slow, progressive change was the only path to reform. The most obvious outlier in this cohort is Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's short story "Sultana's Dream" (1905). While the rest are realist narratives, Hossain uses the genre of the dream-vision to write a science fiction account of Ladyland, a realm where men are confined to the zenana while women rule in a rational, scientifically progressive, and politically peaceful manner. Significantly, Hossain's text is the most radical vision of women's liberation, while also being the one most clearly divorced from both ethno-religious identifiers and the realist tradition. Sorabji is a product of this strain of women's writing. She too cannot imagine a happy ending for an Indian woman who openly rebels against societal norms, has a positive/ambivalent attitude towards the idea of British education as a path to women's emancipation, and addresses a primarily British readership through her choice of language. She differs from this tradition due to her subject position that she mobilizes to make a claim for exceptionality. Both she and the reception to her work stresses the importance of her professional role both in terms of granting her intimate access to the zenana and keeping her at an objective distance from the women she is reporting on.

they can validate her position as a privileged insider. However, this strategic intimacy exposes her to the dangers of becoming *too much* like zenana women. Her racial and cultural similarities with the harem inhabitants entail that if they share too many of the qualities that define her as a modern Indian woman—competence, professionalism, intelligence—then her own authority comes into question. Her self-positioning as an anglicized, civilized, Oxford-educated Parsi-Christian woman is endangered. Therefore, Sorabji must perform her attachments to Indianness *and* Britishness and inhabit an uncertain, interstitial space to retain her unique authority.

Sorabji lived in the intersections of not just Britishness and Indianness, but different kinds of Indianness. In *India Calling*, the narrator variously refers to herself as being: "Parsee by nationality" (*IC* 3), "brought up English" (ibid), and "taught to call [herself]... Indian" (ibid). This points to a more fluid and heterogenous collection of identities than a relatively straightforward Indian/British duality. Her "cosmopolitan" (ibid) upbringing is "untypical of the Indian home of the period" (ibid) and is framed as unique. Sorabji's parents are anglophiles, but with the "wisdom" to teach their children to be "proud of the country of [their] adoption" and appreciate their distant Persian heritage (ibid). Sorabji establishes this exceptionality at the very beginning of her autobiography, framing it as the origin story of her career as India's first woman lawyer. She views herself as possessing a complicated Indian identity that sets her apart from her future zenana clients and other women who might occupy her professional position.

This exceptionality translates into her inhabiting a uniquely valuable subject position that is part external observer and part native informant.[5] According to Gayatri Spivak, the production of colonial knowledge—via ethnography, administrative reports, and sociological studies—

[5] The term "native informant," a colonial subject who possesses "special" insider information that they can then communicate to the administration in order to help regulate the colonized population came into critical prominence with Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.

requires native informants whose usefulness was predicated on their belonging to the community they were informing on (ix). In *Dwelling in the Archive*, Antoinette Burton puts Sorabji in this position of the native informant creating an ethnography of the zenana, a stance that she sees as being consistent throughout the sum of Sorabji's published works, letters, diaries, and official reports (66-67). "As the first Indian woman to be salaried as a native informant for the government of India" (70), she made a concerted effort to represent herself as not one among several authorities on zenana life, but as the preeminent one to a British audience. However, while Sorabji is a conduit of information about Indian zenanas for a British audience, the "native" element of her "native informing" is not straightforward.

Sorabji is very much *not* a member of the zenanas that she visits for her job as Lady Assistant to the Court of Wards in Eastern India. As a single Parsi-Christian professional woman, her subject position is significantly removed from that of a married Muslim/Hindu upper-class upper-caste woman who lives in purdah. The narrator herself is careful to mark this difference as indelible. She tells us at the beginning of the introduction to *India Calling* that she "has warmed her hand at two fires, without being scorched… [she has] been privileged…to be homed in two countries, England and India" (ix). She is not like the women in purdah who, for her, represent a "flesh-and-blood India" (*IC* 80). These women are locked into their singular identities as representatives of an unalloyed Indianness. According to Burton, Sorabji's reports to the Court of Wards reflected her view that the "zenana was the exemplary Indian home and, as such, represented the heart and soul of 'true' India" (*Dwelling* 72). That she does not belong to this India about which she is "informing" her audience is, Sorabji implies, crucial to the accuracy of her information. She mobilizes the in-betweenness of her identity to argue for the preeminent value of her view. As an Indian woman, her access to information about Indian zenanas will

always be superior to Western visitors, while her anglicized education and upbringing ensures that this information is gathered and presented via a British colonial lens.

This declaration of exceptionality does not, however, go uninterrogated in the British reception of her works. This was primarily framed through questions of authenticity. As Madhumita Lahiri notes in her analysis of Sorabji's reception in England, her professional access to the zenana was the most valuable feature of her writing (138). "The Yorkshire Post classifies *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* [Sorabji's first publication] among 'books to read rather than fiction' because 'although it is a book of [short] stories, these are true pictures of Indian home-life'" (ibid). Sorabji's access via her Indian origins and her Western education to what was seen as two opposite worlds made her the ideal ethnographer. This was, however, an unstable duality. While her outsider position added to her credibility as an "objective" narrator, this very position could be used to question the authenticity that lent value to her writing. "An extremely negative review…suggests that Sorabji as a Parsi Christian would not know 'Indian' customs, which, this reviewer claims, leads to multiple errors in her work" (Lahiri 139). Sorabji's writing is judged according to an imaginary metric of hybridity. They, and therefore their author, need to be the "correct" admixture of Indian and British to be deemed noteworthy of a British readership. This ineffable standard is not reliably achievable. Thus, Sorabji could, at any moment, lean too far into either her Indianness or her Britishness. Her reception is reflective of the instability of her self-making in the public sphere. Her very claim to exceptionality as the only woman who can successfully inhabit this in-between identity brings into question the actual success of her venture. If no one else but she can truly represent women in the zenana to a British audience, can her claims as an authentic ethnographer be verified?

The answer to this question is complicated by the fact that Sorabji's self-construction as a unique career woman is *partially* accurate. Her identity as a professional is noteworthy when read within the contemporary conversations surrounding the modernization of Indian women's lives. The balance between "Indian" and "Western" (i.e., British) values—or what was coded as tradition and modernity, respectively—in relation to women's education was an urgent debate in the early twentieth century.[6] It is notable, however, that this conversation took place within a shared belief-system of gendered and separate spheres. Most Indian proponents of women's education did not actually advocate for true equality but rather enough education to create a "modern" wife who would be able to run a "household according to the new physical and economic conditions set by the outside world" (Chatterjee 628). As Tim Allender writes in *Learning Femininity*, "proportionately, very few Indian girls ever secured careers as a result of their education under the raj" (6). While certain traditionally male professions did, gradually, become more accessible to middle-class women, the actual number of working women remained small.[7]

Sorabji's position as an unmarried woman lawyer therefore was deeply unusual. She inhabited a far more Westernized identity than most of her peers, one that allowed her to speak more effectively to a British readership. She used this platform to call for women's reform. However, in keeping with her desire to retain her exceptional status, Sorabji's reformist

[6] The debate surrounding women's education and career development in the early twentieth century was inextricably tied to the middle-class nationalist movement. Women's reform focused on creating a specifically Indian New Woman who would complement the Indian New Man. She would function as her husband's companion and create a hospitable home for his nationalist concerns. Reminiscent of Victorian ideals of womanhood, there was little space within this reconceptualization of womanhood for career women. For more on this, see Karlekar, "Kadambini and the Bhadralok"; Sangari and Vaid, *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History;* Allender, *Learning Femininity in Colonial India 1820–1932*.

[7] Most of these were professions that could be seen as an extension of feminine care work. For more on this see Srirupa Prasad's discussion of the emergence of women doctors in early twentieth-century India in *Cultural Politics of Hygiene in India, 1890-1940: Contagions of Feeling*, pp. 62-63.

tendencies were in accord with a gradualist view of women's freedom and education. Women within the zenana, she believed, could be educated on how to be good wives and mothers, but they required patriarchal control. Her single departure from this traditionalist position was her advocacy for a select group of professional women as the ideal patriarchal guardians. Sorabji is invested in the figure of the professional woman as a civilizing social worker. Her description of Rukhmabai, one of India's first woman doctors, in her autobiography is also her own professional persona. A woman of an "unusual and fine character… [she is] unemotional, untouched by the hysteria of 'Women's rights'…[and] a steady worker who refuse[s] to be entangled in the moment's politics" (*IC* 79-80). Sorabji sees herself as part of an exclusive group of women professionals who, through their superior selfhoods, are closely guiding Indian women towards enlightenment while keeping themselves distant from the hazards of any collective political action that might bring them too close to their zenana clients. In the following section, I explore the fragility of this position, and the ever-present danger of "becoming unmodern" that threatens it, through an extended close reading of a section in her autobiography titled "Victim of a Horoscope."

1.4 Sorabji and the Maharani: The Precarity of Modern Womanhood in *India Calling*

The concerns of "The Victim of a Horoscope" are in keeping with Sorabji's oeuvre, which is largely autobiographical and ethnographic in nature. The stories she tells of women in purdah emphasize her agential role in their lives. She discusses how her intervention had led to not just material but psychological and affective improvements in her clients. In *India Calling*, she narrates how when the time comes for one of her clients to marry, her mother asks Sorabji to

evaluate the potential bridegroom and find out if he is "good and kind" (*IC* 130). Sorabji attributes this concern for the quality of her son-in-law's character to her own influence over the zenana. "She [i.e. the mother] was evidently learning something: her test was not only, as formerly—the right caste, the right conjunction of horoscopes, [or] the advisable income" (ibid) it was invested in ideas of marital compatibility that are framed as Western imports. Similarly, in *India Recalled*, she saves Giribala, one of her young, widowed charges, from forming a socially unacceptable liaison through her physical and moral intervention. She keeps an eye on her, preventing her from meeting her lover (27). Later, Giribala tells her that what she was doing was "naughty," and she knows that she is now good because "she is no longer ashamed when [she] look[s] into the face of the Miss Sahiba [i.e. Sorabji]" (28). Sorabji's influence over her clients extends far beyond the legal and into the realms of social, moral, and affective instruction. She guides them into behaving and living in the "right" ways, slowly leading them along the path to emancipation while maintaining prevailing gender norms.

In instances when these women who live restricted lives aspire to exercise their own agency by overstepping traditional gender roles in the process, the narrative punishes them with death. In *Love and Life Behind the Purdah*, Sorabji's best-known work, multiple stories end with the deaths of their female Indian protagonists who contravene traditional gender roles. The first story "Pestilence at Noonday" ends with its main character contracting the plague when she defies purdah and goes out alone in public. "Love and Life," "Love and Death," and "Urmi—The Story of a Queen" all feature protagonists who aspire to a Western education and a more companionate relationship with their husbands/suitors. Each story ends not only with the frustration of their desires, but their deaths. This structure of a slow, conservative path to women's rights that is always being threatened with failure if it goes too far, and Sorabji's

ambivalent self-making as the facilitator of this process, is explored in particular detail in "The Victim of a Horoscope."

The protagonist is a young widow who is simultaneously framed as both willful and childlike and as an intelligent, efficient manager of her life and property. This contradictory representation is an instrument of Sorabji's own narratorial self-making within the text. At twenty-five, this "Maharani" is the sole inheritor of her husband's estate, "a very large property in one of the most fertile tracts of India," since he had died childless (*IC* 154). Her property was managed by the Court of Wards that was "able to make the best of it for the benefit of the Ward" (ibid). The narrator explicitly frames this as a desirable and optimal situation as this woman has no formal education and is under the influence of an unscrupulous priest. Emphasizing her infantilization, the Maharani remains nameless throughout the text and is variously referred to either by her title or as the "little lady" (ibid).

This namelessness is a rhetorical device that contributes to transforming the Maharani, who is the protagonist of this story, from a unique agential subject to a recognizable character type within the genre of harem literature. Her two epithets—"Maharani" and "little lady"—contribute to her place in her own tale as a familiar character, the elite but child-like harem woman who needs the help of the zenana visitor in negotiating her life. This framing also has the effect of implicitly transferring agency and individuality to the less visible, second protagonist, Sorabji herself. As the zenana lawyer who is managing the Maharani's estate and counselling her on all aspects of her life, it is Sorabji who is framed as the agential, individualized protagonist by the authorial voice rather than the Maharani. This moment is exemplary of how Sorabji the character—the "I" or the first-person narrator of the story—overlaps with Sorabji the author and how this lack of differentiation bestows authority on both. By using omniscient first-person

narration, a standard autobiographical mode, Sorabji brings together the figure of the author and narrator, highlighting both her own control as the author over the Maharani's story and infusing the Sorabji-figure in the story with the authority and trustworthiness of the omniscient writer. In contrast to its authoritative framing of Sorabji the narrator, the account clearly condescends to its other protagonist, the Maharani. It consistently frames her as a lovable but inconvenient and unruly child: "The little lady [is]…difficult" (*IC* 154). She throws temper tantrums, "fly[ing] into uncontrollable rages" but is quickly distracted from her anger by the antics of her "page-boys" (*IC* 155). Sorabji keeps her occupied with childish make-believe games (*IC* 157). The Maharani, however, does not agree with this formulation of her as a helpless woman. This disagreement between Sorabji's narrator and her narrated subject creates a textual gap through which a different reading of the Maharani emerges.

The text gives us repeated glimpses of her wit, intelligence, and willpower. The Maharani openly resists Sorabji and the British government. She petitions for her estate to be turned over to her sole control and is deeply dissatisfied with her managers and the British courts, going so far as to violate purdah to give a proper "scolding" to an official who had frustrated her plans (*IC* 155-6). Even the apparent markers of her immaturity read differently upon closer inspection. Her interest in the childish games Sorabji thinks up to amuse her is contingent on their relevance to her case against the British Court of Wards. "[T]he games 'Halma,' Hoopa-la,' [and] card games had to be 'pretend' appearances in Court" (*IC* 157). Sorabji and her client pretend to play cards in front of various levels of the justice system and the latter shows a detailed awareness of their relative importance— she tells Sorabji, "I'll let you win before the High Cour-ut [High Court]. It knows nothing…But I win in Ph-ri-vi Consil (Privy Council). *Khabar dar*, take very good care" (ibid). The Maharani warns her not to get too complacent, as she intends to win where it matters.

Before trusting Sorabji with her estate, she makes extensive enquiries about her and even has her followed. As the narrator herself admits, "no detective could have shadowed me so closely" (*IC* 156). In fact, the Maharani has a significant number of qualities in common with the exceptional modern Indian woman as instantiated in Sorabji. Significantly, the representation of the Maharani as competent is an integral part of the narrative strategy: The Maharani cannot be entirely discredited since she needs to affirm Sorabji's privileged position as an Indian zenana expert to the British readers. While the narrator patronizingly describes the Maharani as a silly child-widow, this image is simultaneously and repeatedly undercut by information to the contrary. The contradiction is clear from the surface features of the text. Sorabji's narrative both undermines and supports the agency of the Maharani. The necessity of this double move becomes legible when we examine it in relation to the other protagonist of this story—the autobiographical narrator herself.

Sorabji's narrative persona is both Indian and not-Indian, a precarious identity that brings her closer, structurally and emotionally, to the Maharani. To situate Sorabji's narrator, it is useful to return to British women's harem narratives. These were fantasies of and bids for authority that white women targeted towards a primarily white audience. In *India Calling*, no racial or national borders need to be crossed between the author and her readership. Thus, Sorabji's position and purpose are somewhat different: she wants to be respectable and authoritative in the eyes of her white, British audience as an *Indian* woman. This becomes clear at several junctures. Sorabji narrates her experience of being carried on a palanquin through a forest. The palanquin bearers sing songs to lighten their load and several of them are about Sorabji, expressing their surprise at her unusual behavior and in-between identity. She is a woman, but she speaks "like the *Burra Lat Sahib* (Viceroy) to the guard(s)…*And they obey*" (*IC* 115). Her bearers are confused because

she is clearly not anglicized in her self-presentation. She might sound like the British Viceroy, but she wears saris, or "garments of silk," like other upper-class Indian women (ibid). "Who could she be?", the chorus periodically sings (ibid). This is a sentiment that is repeatedly voiced by other characters in *India Calling* and foregrounded in the text: Sorabji is a woman who cannot be easily categorized.

This uncertainty about her identity extends to her self-framing. In her bid for authority among her white readers, she does not, as might be expected, try to portray herself in as un-Indian a light as possible. Instead, she performs a difficult balancing act: teetering between distancing herself from the objects of her study and becoming intimately involved with them. Sorabji's narration of her engagement with the Maharani is not a straightforward account of distant benevolence towards a client she condescends to and objectifies. It is clear from the story that she is emotionally attached to the Maharani. She writes: "I persuaded her to come live in Calcutta, where I could see her more than when hundreds of miles lay between us" (*IC* 157). Evoking the pain of distance and emphasizing the "hundreds of miles" that would otherwise keep the two from each other, this is an image of separation that is surprising in its intensity, given the professional nature of their relationship. The Maharani agrees to the move and the narrator describes an almost idyllic friendship where she visits her "as often as [she] could" (ibid). She makes the Maharani tell her stories, gets her to read to her from "vernacular books and papers," and teaches her new games (ibid). This is a description of reciprocity that positions Sorabji as her client's friend, not just her benefactor.

The Maharani too displays qualities that reveal her ability to keep up with Sorabji. She has little respect for incompetent British officials, declaring that she could do better as a woman in purdah "with bandaged eyes, and hobbled feet, than [they] do with [their] eyes open and

[their] limbs unfettered." (*IC* 156). She pushes back against attempts to construct her as a helpless *purdahnashin*, particularly in moments when she demonstrates how invaluable she is to her lawyer. Sorabji, who grew up in Maharashtra, lives and works primarily in Bengal on the opposite side of the country. She does not speak the language, nor does she know the customs of the community she is serving. The Maharani does her a valuable professional service by reading to her from local newspapers and educating her in the ways of the people she was working amongst (*IC* 157). The extent of her usefulness is revealed when the narrator admits that while the Maharani "compelled her to tell every detail of the fight [court case]… [Sorabji] thoroughly enjoyed her comments, and was often helped by the information she gave" (*IC* 158). The relationship between the two is figured as being at least somewhat reciprocal, even if the narrator is the superior of the two. What does this textual description of reciprocity serve? What does this closeness signal to her readers?

Antoinette Burton's account of Sorabji's life in England while she is studying at Oxford is enlightening in this regard: while fraternizing almost entirely with white people, she deliberately retains visible markers of Indianness. In her letters to her family, she makes much of her iconic red sari that she customarily wears. She makes no attempts to take on the clothing of her white peers. Indeed, this differentiation is a conscious stylistic choice that signals her singularity. When Rukhmabai, who was studying to become one of the first female doctors in India, comes to visit her in Oxford, she complains to her family that she has copied her style by wearing a red sari (*At the Heart* 141). Sorabji approaches her white audience, and implicitly the privileges of a white identity for herself, not by trying to take on a purely white self-presentation, but by framing herself as the exceptional Indian, the Indian who performs in certain professional

and cultural ways (getting a law degree at Oxford or being presented to the Queen of England) that are recognizable and admirable to a white audience but are still reassuringly other.

To retain this status as a knowledgeable insider to her British readers, Sorabji's narrator needs to be validated in her Indianness by her Indian clients. If she became indistinguishable from the British women who were also allowed into the zenana for similar philanthropic and professional purposes, the framing of her account as insider knowledge would be lost. Thus, Sorabji's double-sided portrayal of the Maharani both as naïve and childlike and as an intelligent, enterprising woman is a strategic device to affirm the doubleness of her narratorial position. She requires the Maharani to acknowledge her Indianness while, at the same time, foregrounding her own exceptionality as a modern colonial woman. The narrator's credibility depends, in part, on the Maharani's. If the latter were to be constructed as typical passive *purdahnashin*, her assessment of the narrator would have no value.

Sorabji's narratorial inhabiting of modernity as confirmed by the Maharani results in denaturalizing her gender position. When the Maharani decides to trust Sorabji with her estate, this trust is framed as being reasonable due to the latter's unusual nature and position as a modern, professional woman who is intent on making her own living. The Maharani says to her: "You are either mad or a puja-in (a religious [saint]) or why should you live like a man or a tiger, eating out of the hand of none: eating only what you kill" (*IC* 157). Sorabji's subjectivity only make sense if she is either "mad," or a saint who has devoted both body and soul to their God (which, in her case, is her profession). In this moment of establishing Sorabji as a unique Indian woman, the Maharani codes her as a man. She is constructed as a man and a tiger, a symbol of masculine power and strength, one who hunts and is self-sufficient. The Maharani repeats and affirms Sorabji own self-making as exceptional. Sorabji's narrative frames her professional life

as a heroic journey: travelling alone across the length and breadth of India, living an itinerant life, and selflessly assisting the helpless women she meets. To emphasize her exceptional status as an independent working woman in this formulation, Sorabji casts herself as a man.

This masculinity is in direct contrast to the Maharani, who is described in hyper-feminine terms. She is "most attractive to the eye" (*IC* 153) and her approach is always signaled by her "heavy anklets jingling" (*IC* 162). Even her methods of trying to gain any power or control are stereotypically feminine and are contained within the category of the cunning, underhanded woman. She is indirect and, it is implied, devious, unlike Sorabji's straightforwardness. She has Sorabji followed to gather information about her instead of asking any direct questions (*IC* 156). She is exasperated that the official in charge of her case will not accept a bribe (*IC* 157). This indirection stands in opposition to the narrator who is straightforward and independent. The framing of Sorabji's gender position becomes uncertain and troubled in this search for narrative authority. Gender-confusion is not a common move in harem accounts by British women. They are trying to gather authority *as women.* Sorabji, on the other hand, distances herself as much as she can from any stereotypes of traditional Indian femininity.

Sorabji's disavowal of femininity in her autobiography is integral to the paradoxical double movement that she performs in her bid for authority: while the objects of her study need to be trustworthy enough to reassure her audience of their commonly held Indianness, they must be clearly inferior to her so that her position as their savior remains undisturbed. White women writing harem literature established their gendered similarities to women of color without any danger of being confused with them. This racial narrative privilege is unavailable to Sorabji, who is in constant danger of being conflated with her objects of study. To avoid this problem, she splits the singular category of "Indian woman" into two: one inhabited by Sorabji's narrator (the

authorial stand-in) alone, and the other by all the other women in her autobiography. The first category is occupied by a masculine, English-educated, anglophilic, professional, single woman. The second is figured as the opposite—the women inhabiting it are illiterate, home-bound, and defined in relation to their husbands. The maintenance of this clear dichotomy is necessary for Sorabji to retain her position of authorial superiority. This leads to a failure of her broader reformist project. While the zenana is not a happy place for women's lives and development in Sorabji's texts, neither is the outer world. The stability of Sorabji's self-making depends on the maintenance of an explicit distinction between herself and her zenana clients and this difference is maintained by their failure to successfully emerge from purdah.

This is clear from the fate that befalls the Maharani. The title of the story—"The Victim of a Horoscope"—gestures towards her unfortunate end. At the very beginning, as Sorabji is narrating her protagonist's history, we are told how curses play an important role in her life and that the government was eventually "compelled to hold a Commission in Lunacy" upon her (*IC* 153). Even before she is properly introduced to the reader, we know that her life will take a tragic turn and become mired in madness and superstition. All the information we later gain about her cleverness and resourcefulness is thus filtered through the lens of her eventual mental instability, a fact that we are proleptically informed of. This keeps her from being seen purely as an intelligent woman caught in a set of difficult circumstances. The accounts of her intelligence are undermined by the shadow of mental illness. When the time comes, the Maharani is gripped by sudden and uncontrollable delusions that lead her to rush unveiled into the garden: "It was a violent type of madness: no one dared approach her" (*IC* 167). She attacks her caregivers who need to be protected from her "attempts at murder" (*IC* 168). The juxtaposition of these two violent "symptoms" creates a correlative effect: she loses her mind just as she loses her veil, or

rather she loses her mind because she loses her veil. The acts of unveiling herself and attempting murder are connected by the narrator via their proximity in the text. The veil, while it limits her capacities and keeps her from living a full life, creates even more havoc when lifted. Unlike Sorabji, the Maharani does not have the psychological capacity to successfully negotiate the processes of self-determination. Life in purdah is the lesser of two evils.

The Maharani's downfall is caused by her attempts to extricate herself from a passive life behind purdah. The narrator implies that this madness was deliberately brought on by a priest who had been favored by the Maharani. According to her servants, "he had administered the concoction of *Dhatura* [a psychoactive plant] that had caused her madness" to steal her money and flee (*IC* 169). That he had access to the Maharani's money at all was a result of one of her attempts at economic independence. After all the debts and administrative costs of her estate are paid off in a particular year, she asks that the surplus be paid to her in cash instead of being invested, as Sorabji advises (*IC* 164). Further, much to the narrator's shock, she intends to use this money to "put curses on people" who are her perceived enemies (ibid). The Maharani remains adamant in her decision, refusing to invest her money in the "rational" causes that the narrator espouses such as charitable works. In response to the narrator's attempts at interesting her in "works of charity," she declares that "the government maintains [the] schools and hospitals" within her estate and that is sufficient (*IC* 166). The Maharani, the text implies, is not suited to public life because of her self-absorption.

Her 'selfishness' is read as a byproduct of her ignorance. She points out that she gave money towards the building of a hospital for *purdahnashin* when the Princess Mary had visited India. "Tell me when the Prinseps [princess] comes again. I'll make a bigger hospital" (*IC* 167), she says. The Maharani is only interested in a charitable cause to get attention. She is amenable

to building another public hospital only if there is a member of the British royal family to notice and applaud it. Not only does the Maharani not understand the wider implications of being a generous civic patron, but her self-promotion is also not very effective. The narrator emphasizes how she cannot correctly name the British royal she is trying to impress, calling her "Princeps," instead of 'Princess.' Sorabji's insertion of an authorial note regarding this in the middle of the Maharani's speech about her attitude to charity is revealing. As an aside she tells us, "so they [the purdahnashin] called our Queen upon her visit to us as a Princess, confusing 'Princess' with the familiar *Prinseps* Ghat [waterfront], beside their sacred river" (*IC* 166). This patronizing note to the reader in the middle of the Maharani's speech dilutes the seriousness of the Maharani's opinions and extends this imputation of ignorance to a collective "they" i.e., all *purdahnashin*.

Sorabji's use of authorial asides as a rhetorical device to remind us of her superior distance from the Maharani's story extends beyond this one moment. The most notable instance occurs when the Maharani is in a state of extremis. The government holds a "Commission in Lunacy" (*IC* 168) upon her to determine her fitness to access even limited financial freedom. During the proceedings she rightly castigates the High Court judge in charge of her case for posting the notice of the case at the gate of her house, an area inaccessible to *purdahnashin* like her (ibid). At this point, while narrating the Maharani's crisis, Sorabji employs an authorial aside that explicitly distances her subject position from the Maharani's. She directly addresses her readership— "'Who says this woman is mad!' said the Judge in an aside to me. It really was very funny" (ibid). This aside reduces the Maharani's illness to a moment of frivolity when Sorabji and the British judge are united in their condescension towards her and we, as readers, are invited to join them. Overarchingly, Sorabji's narration undermines the Maharani's moments of self-sufficiency, pointing out the ridiculousness of her opinions and desires.

Sorabji's narrator is especially derisive of her client's wish to have independent use of her own money. When the Maharani tells her that she intends to use her income to put curses on her enemies, her reaction is an incredulous "*What*?" (*IC* 165). She calls the Maharani "silly" as she tries to explain to her that curses are not real (ibid). The narrative refers to this behavior as an "amazing" aberration that was at odds with her being "shrewder than most, careful about business, suspicious, even miserly in relation to all money transactions" (*IC* 166). Since she wants to use the money for superstitious, and thus illegitimate, purposes, the text reads her very desire to control her own income as similarly illegitimate. Her claims to her own economic independence are not taken seriously. In fact, they are held responsible for her tragic end. The Maharani, after she gets her money, stores it in a strongroom. After her turn to madness, the strongroom is found to be "empty of all but Rs. 16 [22 cents]" (*IC* 169), and the priest is gone. The Maharani's bid for self-determination – her desire to step into a public sphere where she handles her own income – is framed as misguided and even dangerous as it leads to her losing her sanity. Her story ends with her incapacitated, spending her days in the care of her paternal family, fulfilling the promise of a tragic dénouement that had been made at the beginning.

The Maharani's inability to successfully create an identity for herself as a modern woman in charge of her own life imperfectly shores up Sorabji's exceptional narratorial status as an authoritative Indian woman. For a modern woman, the stability of her subject position depends on her successes in the public sphere. Sorabji's identity as a reformer of the zenana and its inhabitants was a large part of her authorial persona. Despite her attempts to improve the Maharani's life, what does it mean for her to fail in effecting any long-lasting changes? In an unexpected turn of events, Sorabji and the Maharani are linked through their common experiences of failure. While the Maharani cannot flourish outside the zenana, her inability to do

so reveals Sorabji's deficiencies as a reformer who cannot imagine and facilitate a life for women like the Maharani in the outer world. At the very moment when she most strenuously tries to differentiate her identity from her client's by detailing the latter's inability to function as a modern woman, she also ends up evoking her own failure in this professed role. The gap between the two positions of the modern professional Indian woman and the traditional backward Indian woman that were initially proposed as absolute opposites begins to close, and the specific fragility of Sorabji's self-making as a modern woman author is revealed.

1.5 Pestilence and Purdah: The Death of the New Indian Woman in *Love and Life Behind the Purdah*

The conflict between the need to emerge from seclusion and the dangers of that exit are at the heart of Sorabji's writings about the zenana and are present from the very beginning of her career. *Love and Life Behind the Purdah*, her first work, was published in 1901. It came before her appointment as the Assistant to the British colonial court and her years of sustained professional contact with any women in purdah. It is the first articulation of her developing ideas about women's reform and the role of English institutions in this project, ideas that would go on to recur frequently and extensively in her later works. As such, it is significant that the narrative arc of her women protagonists in purdah already obey a well-developed pattern: the travails of purdah lead to attempts at independence that end in tragedy. Given its presence from the very beginning of her writing career, this pattern signals both its centrality to Sorabji's narrative vision and her self-creation as an author. Rather than being a sequence of events that coincidentally recur across her body of non-fiction simply because they had happened in her professional life, it is a deliberately crafted narrative arc that contributes to Sorabji's self-

making. As Jessica Berman argues, while these stories do not have a first-person narrator, they still, nevertheless, "engage in complex ways with the conventions of narrative fiction and autobiography" (140). The narrative viewpoint is still recognizably Sorabji's: "The narrator as intermediary and the narration itself (as stand-in for Sorabji's testimony at the Court of Wards) become the means toward such modern citizenship for Indian women" (Berman 156). It is this narrative voice that foregrounds a reformist agenda—the modernization of the Indian woman in purdah—while also requiring its failure in order to maintain its own exceptional status.

In "The Pestilence at Noonday," a short story that is anthologized in *Love and Life Behind the Purdah,* Sorabji's paradoxical argument regarding the necessity and failure of women's liberation from purdah is clarified and made more explicit. The protagonist, Sita has been abandoned by her husband several years ago. As a young woman who must remain in purdah due to her married status, she is unable to care adequately either for herself or for her ailing son and father-in-law. Living alone in a crumbling mansion in a state of ever-advancing poverty, her position becomes increasingly unsustainable. When the plague arrives in town, the suspension of everyday routines allows her to push the bounds of her usual confinement as she takes some control of her own life. Unlike the Maharani in the previous discussion, Sita's forays into independence are fueled by the need to survive a crisis that threatens the lives of her loved ones. Even with such unexceptionable motivation, her emergence from purdah ultimately leads to not only her own demise, but her family's as well. For Sita, these deaths are, ultimately, her punishment for trying to chart a more independent course for herself. She is deemed incapable of actually surviving and flourishing in the outside world. In order for both sides of Sorabji's argument to be preserved – that women in purdah are in need of an exit in order to flourish and simultaneously that this exit is fraught with deadly dangers that these women cannot survive –

the figure of this woman is perpetually suspended in an in-between state. This story makes much more explicit the instability of life in purdah in Sorabji's oeuvre. Unlike the Maharani, Sita's life within purdah is unbearable, considering her family's physical frailty and advancing poverty. Sita is a familiar figure who turns up repeatedly in Sorabji's writings: the relatively well-educated, intelligent woman whose life is not just restricted but actively threatened by the conditions of her seclusion. She along with her family will die either of starvation or of the plague, since she, the only active adult member of the household, is forbidden from engaging with the outside world. Sita's entry into the public sphere is necessary if she and her family are to survive.

As the story opens, Sita is already being drawn into a world outside her cloistered family life. An anglicized nouveau riche member of the city, Gopal, wants to marry her. Sorabji's narrates a conversation between Gopal and another character that both reveals his desire to marry Sita, and, importantly, bring her out of purdah. He hopes that "she will be a great help" to his new newspaper since " 'tis well to educate girls sometimes; it makes them marketable" (*LLBP* 17). It will be a chance for her to use her education, albeit in service of her husband. I want to tease out the conflicting impulses surrounding Sita's possible life with Gopal that are at work in this initial scene. Gopal is described as a ridiculous figure. He wears a combination of Indian and British clothing that the narrator makes fun of: "he creaks aloud in cheap patent leather shoes and dubious white socks—ineffectual covering for a gratuitous display of muscleless leg, surmounted by…a rusty black coat" (ibid). He clearly does not want to marry Sita out of love. Yet, it is equally noteworthy that the role he envisions for her as his wife is a relatively active and public one. She is to help him in the editing and publication of his newspaper. This is especially striking when read against her first (missing) husband's attitude towards her education. The story opens

with their moment of parting when he openly expresses his misgivings about her education: "I am sorry that I let them educate you. It has given you notions that patch clumsily on to the heritage of traditions into which you were born" (*LLBP* 14). He reminds her that she is and must remain a good, modest "Hindu wife," regardless of "how glibly [her] tongue adapts itself to foreign languages" (ibid). In contrast to this, Gopal envisions a use for her knowledge of foreign languages. While his articulation of her role is framed in the same language of service—she will put her skills to use to fulfill the needs of her husband—the nature of the service is substantially different and would allow for Sita's entry into some form of public, professional modernity. While Gopal frames Sita's public role in terms of his own very real advantage (the benefit of free labor), once she is within that public space, she will cease to be a "Hindu wife" in the traditional sense. It will bring about changes in her inner life and external circumstances that might not be entirely within her husband's control.

The crisis in Sita's family life that is pushing her towards a more independent, professionally engaged existence is compounded with the arrival of the titular pestilence. Within the complicated network of selfless duty and potential independence that surrounds Sita, the plague has a specific and important function: it is cast in the role of a catalyst that can speed up the impending change in Sita's life. "The Pestilence at Noonday" is a testament to Sorabji's interest in women's entry into the public spere—and out of purdah— via British institutions, especially Western medicine and hospitals[8] both by allowing them to interact with the outside

[8] "Pestilence at Noonday", as well as the collection it belongs to, locates Sorabji concretely within the women's reform movement, making clear her specific interest in medicine and hygiene, while also spelling out the result of women's involvement in the public sphere.Sorabji's commitment to social reform has been attested to by both her contemporaries and critics. In his letter that prefaces the collection, Lord Hobhouse writes that her "efforts in this [i.e. the improvement of the lives of the *purdahnashin*] direction have now become known to many and are becoming more widely known" (13). Sorabji's dearest wish was for an Institute for Social Service in India—a scheme that would "utilize the 'untrained benevolence' of British and Indian women for service among their less fortunate sisters" (Sinha 17). Sorabji herself had initially wanted to be a physician. Antoinette Burton discusses this in detail in *At the Heart of the Empire* (1998). Sorabji was discouraged from pursuing a medical career by, among

world as patients and by giving them a professional path into the public sphere as physicians. The story is set in the midst of a historical colonial medical crisis, the bubonic plague that ravaged the Bombay Presidency.[9] Indeed, disease is the primary narrative catalyst in this story. Sorabji frames the bubonic plague and the ensuing measures taken by the British government to contain and eradicate it as stimulants of both social and individual change.

Sorabji rehearses some of the local narratives surrounding the plague and the British response via a public dialogue between two men of note in the local community, making clear her own stand in the process. One of them is Gopal, Sita's suitor and the owner/editor of a local newspaper. Gopal, "the firebrand" (*LLBP* 17), addresses the gathered crowd in strongly anti-British terms. He paints a lurid picture of the destruction of their lives and property, and even their after-lives, at the hands of the evil plague officials. Gopal conjures a vision of indiscriminate mixing between men and women, Hindu and Muslim, that strikes fear into the hearts of his audience. In Sorabji's text, however, the spokesman for this point of view is an unambiguous hypocrite. Gopal himself intends to leave the city in order to escape the plague (ibid): he is making this argument simply because "the idea pleases him" and he is cheered by

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others—Madeleine Shaw-Lefevre, the outgoing principal of Somerville College (Sorabji's own institution), Countess Dufferin, wife of the Indian Viceroy, and two of her major British patrons, Elizabeth Manning and Lady Hobhouse. One of the explicit reasons for this attempt to keep her from medicine is revealing in context of Sorabji's lifelong belief in the necessity of her professional exceptionality. Manning strongly indicated to her that there were already enough Indian women doctors—referring to Rukhmabai and Kadambini Gaguly who were both training in England—and there was no space for another. While she did give up her pursuit of medicine, her letters home betrays a lingering regret and anxiety. After her sister, Alice, starts training in medicine, she writes: "Mother will have her doctor in the fam[ily] after all in our lime balsa [Alice]" (125).

[9] The Bombay Plague of 1896 led to the institution of several, elaborate plague containment measures by the government. As one of the most important port cities of the. British Raj, its safety was paramount. On the 6th of October 1896, the Municipal Commissioner issued a directive empowering the local medical and police forces to enter forcibly into any house that was suspected of harboring infected residents, remove the plague-stricken to hospitals or segregation camps, and destroy any property that was suspected of being infected by the bacilli. To this end, medical squads led by British doctors and supported by policemen were formed. There was strong local opposition to these measures since they did not take into account any restrictions based on caste, class, or purdah. Rumors spread that the British were using these emergency measures to deliberately disrespect and violate Indian customs and even kill the infected in their hospitals under the guise of treatment.

the "panic-stricken crowd" (*LLBP* 25). On the other side of the debate is the lone voice of reason, the "old Qazi" (*LLBP* 27) who is a mouthpiece for Sorabji's own viewpoint who tells his compatriots that the government is fighting the plague "more on the [Indians'] behalf than theirs; for to infection our poor people are more susceptible" (ibid). In this case, the government is cast as a selfless institution, helping the infected Indians at the expense of their own health. The Qazi emphasizes the self-sacrificing service that is being provided by the English doctors and nurses who are ministering to the plague-stricken and endangering their own health in the process. Sorabji's positive response to the British government's plague policies, while somewhat unusual for that time and place, can still potentially be read as a straightforward anglophilic cleaving to the British government, emphasizing their construction as benevolent, selfless rulers of a benighted populace. What is of interest to my argument, however, is part of Sorabji's support for the British government's plague response is rooted in its ability to disrupt everyday life. The extraordinary conditions of illness and, importantly, its public management create a space for Sita to violate the conditions of her purdah with some impunity. The plague and its attendant medical paraphernalia become a conduit for the protagonist's emergence into an independent, public, modern selfhood. This move inaugurates the reform that Sorabji and her narrator stand-in advocates for, bringing the woman in purdah into the outer world.

As the story progresses and Sita's household crisis deepens, the suspension of daily life both within the family and in the plague-ridden city leads Sita to violate the conventions of her purdah to respond adequately to the extraordinary situation. Both her father-in-law and her son are sick, and Sita is afraid of their imminent removal to the British hospital. At this moment, realizing that she is on her own, Sita decides to "see for herself what the dreaded visit might bode" (*LLBP* 30). For her, this is a transformative moment, this decision to step out of the home,

not for a socially approved purpose like visiting the temple, but to explore and gather knowledge. The narrative gives us a detailed and vivid account of Sita's observations, communicating to the reader the curiosity of her enquiring eye. We follow her as she walks down the familiar path leading to the temple looking at its now-empty state with new eyes. "Now she turned into a street that was different" (ibid). The regular, local padlock on the houses had been replaced with a "strong, good lock and an official seal" (ibid). Sita notes this difference "with interest," concluding that these houses had already been visited by the plague officials (ibid). That Sita's primary affect as she walks down the empty, plague-ridden streets of her city is "interest" is deeply significant. This journey contains an element of exploration and analysis that is absent from its earlier counterpart: her walk to the temple in the beginning of the story. Sita's initial appearance in the public streets is for a socially sanctioned purpose: as a dutiful wife, she is on her way to pray for her absent husband. As such, the journey itself is accomplished as quickly as possible with the least amount of public interaction. She "hugs the shop-fronts, hurrying swiftly forward," avoiding any contact the crowd and her environment as much as she can (*LLBP* 17). This is in direct contrast to her slow meandering down the city streets as she tries to gather information about the plague. "She [looks] with interest at the Dwelling houses," trying to figure out the status of their erstwhile inhabitants (*LLBP* 30). Even in the midst of all this death and destruction, Sita's gaze contains a clear element of enthusiastic learning. This inquisitiveness allows her to take the next step: actually joining a public crowd. Sita comes upon a medical squad that is going from door to door in their search for the infected. "She boldly joined the group at the door, and stood watching, unheeded" (*LLBP* 31). This is a radical shift in Sita's subject position. From the segregated, isolated condition of a woman in purdah whose body must be protected from the outside, male-coded gaze, Sita becomes the one who watches. Sita

becomes a flâneur: the observer who walks down the city streets, making note of its life, anonymous in its crowds.

This moment of anonymity, curiosity, and knowledge gathering is quickly cut short. Significantly, it ends when Sita witnesses plague victims being forcibly removed from their homes to the government hospital and the pitiful attempts made by their healthy family members to hide them. She turns and flees to her house, reminded of the fate that lay in store for her family should they be visited by the plague officials. If they are declared infected, they will be taken to the government hospital where no caste rules will be abided by during the course of their treatment or upon their death. "Sita had followed, fascinated, from one house to another; but now she turned and fled. 'Were they coming to her? What should she do?'" (*LLBP* 32). At the thought of this contamination, all her knowledge of the plague, the death and infection it leads to if left untreated, become useless. Despite her tentative movements towards self-determination, Sita is unable to countenance a common public where she must mix with people of all castes and creeds. After she exercises enough agency to emerge from purdah, it turns out that she does not have the ability to accept or respond adequately to what lies outside it.

The paradox of the woman who occupies an interstitial space between purdah and the outside world becomes clear when Sita comes back home and takes charge of the household in an attempt to keep herself and her family away from the hospital. She assumes authority over the family, a move that violates the feminine passivity she should display as a woman in purdah, in order to preserve the traditional structures of caste and family that are instrumental to purdah in the first place. The party from the hospital that was going from house to house would visit hers the next day, and considering her son's health, his lethargy and his "swollen glands" (*LLBP* 23), they would all be taken to the dreaded government camp for the plague-stricken. Since the other

two members of the household are too old, sick, or young, Sita must take charge. She is the one who has to perform all the disinfection procedures and interact with the medical team when they come to inspect her house. Instead of collapsing under the weight of these expectations, Sita rises to the occasion, using what she had learnt from her previous visits to the hospital and her visit to the plague-ridden houses the day before. Flushing the drains with phenyl and burning sulfur in the empty rooms, Sita is "determined that her visit of the previous day should be turned to every account" (*LLBP* 33). This is a moment of crisis that requires her to become the de-facto head of her household. From being a young woman in purdah whose every move is determined by her family, she turns into a resourceful, active woman who takes charge of her family's fate. Sita hides her father-in-law and son up a tree in their courtyard, thoroughly cleans her house, and then, waits for the inspection party in her "pretty 'lotus' sari" (*LLBP* 34), grinding grain in a posture of everyday, domestic busyness. Sita uses all the strategies at hand to allay the suspicions of the plague inspectors. When the inspectors do arrive, Sita is ready: "She went forward gracefully to meet the searchers. Her veil was drawn with becoming modesty over her face, but she answered the inspector's question herself, and in English" (ibid). This syntactic structure sets up the tension between Sita's "becoming modesty" as a traditional Indian woman and her unconventional act of speaking to the inspector herself in English. This moment exemplifies the paradox inherent in Sita's current state of being; she tries to maintain the restrictions of her veil by literally keeping it on while performing the actions that are vital to saving her family, but which necessarily violate those restrictions. This is a contradictory, unstable configuration that cannot be maintained. The undoing of Sita as a woman who both tries to maintain and violate purdah also mirrors Sorabji's undoing as the author/narrator. While Sita's successful emergence into modernity would threaten the exceptionality of Sorabji the narrator, her destruction also

undermines the authority of Sorabji the reformist author since her attempts at delineating reform fail spectacularly.

The instability of Sita's position becomes clear as events begin to slip out of her control. Although her child and father-in-law are not discovered, Sita herself is taken to the isolation camp when someone remembers her visits to plague-ridden houses the day before. Before leaving, she tries to secretly convey directions to a rendezvous point to her father-in-law in his hiding place, but he does not answer since he has fainted from fear. From that moment onward, it is a swift march towards tragedy: her son and father-law both die in quick succession while Sita is taken away, and she herself expires on her way to the meeting place the next day. Her body is discovered in the morning and the cause of death is pronounced to be "death from the type of plague which lays a sudden grasp on a breaking heart" (*LLBP* 38). Sita's end is a result of her violating purdah and pursuing a more independent path. These attempts are both punished and ultimately constructed as being too much for a "young and gently nurtured woman" (ibid). The curiosity and interest that led her to wander through her neighborhood is punished with the death of her whole family and herself. Her demise is seen as the result of a "broken heart": she does not have the emotional resilience to continue on the path of escape from all traditional roles and embrace a modern, gendered selfhood.

1.6 Conclusion

As she is summing up her life's work in the final pages of *India Calling*, Sorabji acknowledges the indeterminate success of her attempts at both women's reform and self-making. Using the metaphor of life as a tapestry, she sees hers as a patchwork creation, marked

by “signs of carelessness, unfinished ends; here and there too much tension or again too heedless a slackening” (*IC* 300-1). Along with a sense of hasty improvisation and indeterminate openness, Sorabji’s image invokes an understanding of her life as being either too much or too little, never exactly right. Providing critical commentary on her own embodiment of the role, she acknowledges modern colonial women’s identity formation in the early twentieth century to be a quixotic project. As an overdetermined figure policed and mobilized by both colonial and anti-colonial forces for their own ends, the living out of this identity was less an experience of radical possibility and more a difficult and endless negotiation fraught with compromise.

As instantiated in Sorabji, the category of modern colonial womanhood reveals unexpected energies within modernity: questioning its potential for effecting change and revealing its imbrication with conservatism. Her construction of this category includes several characteristics that are precursors to contemporary constructions of neoliberal feminism in South Asia with its focus on the modern woman as an agential subject whose agency depends on denying it to less privileged categories of women. Instead of being a harbinger of progress, modern colonial womanhood insists on its fragile exceptionality and affirms long-held beliefs about Indian women’s backwardness. Sorabji’s life and her writing are representative of how modernity within colonialism was framed as an unusual and rare quality that was only granted to the worthy, a perception that uncoupled it from ideas of widespread political change. Associated with the concept of individual merit, modernity bypassed the necessity for rethinking long-held racist and sexist views about Indian women as a group. Instead of being the automatic ally of anti-colonialism or women’s rights, colonial modernity, as it is channeled through anglophilia, could also be tool to maintain the status quo, a position it continues to occupy in contemporary, postcolonial/neocolonial India. In Sorabji’s writing, the modern colonial woman takes the well-

known mobility of anglophilic modernity as a concept to its logical (if unexpected) conclusion by unveiling its ability to harbor the unmodern.

Chapter 2: Anglophilia and the Creation of Black British Identity in E.R. Braithwaite

In *To Sir, With Love* (1959), E.R. Braithwaite's best-selling autobiographical Windrush novel, the titular sir, a schoolteacher, commits many questionable acts: he expresses distaste for his unrefined working-class students, uses classist and misogynistic slurs in the classroom, and sexualizes his teenaged female wards.[1] However, his judgmental and oversexualizing behavior has not been criticized by the text's reception. Instead, the novel has always been read as a graceful, humanistic text filtered through the lens of social development and education: Braithwaite might express disdain for his students, but he is ultimately a man working towards racial harmony by trying to understand and educate his working-class students in the East End of London. As Caryl Philips writes in his introduction to the novel, "eventually he succeeds in creating a place for himself in the school, and by the end of the book 'Sir' is both respected and loved by pupils and teachers alike" (par. 5). Not only is it surprising that readers have ignored his problematic behavior, but it is even more shocking when one contextualizes it as the actions of a Black man in postwar Britain towards his young, white, and frequently female students. How is the novel able to ignore the standard racializing frameworks of the "sexually aggressive Black man" whose presence is threatening to delicate white femininity? I show that this happens through Braithwaite's mobilization of a different analytic, that of "The British way of life" (*TSWL* 41). This British way of life signals the mobilization of the colonial affective framework of anglophilia.

[1] I will be using the abbreviations *TSWL*, and *PS* for *To Sir, With Love* and *Paid Servant* respectively in this chapter.

In this chapter, I examine anglophilia as an affect that structures the postcolonial subject's relation to Britain. Using E.R. Braithwaite's first two books, *To Sir, With Love* (1959) and *Paid Servant* (1962), I contend that anglophilia is an integral part of Black British subject formation and its national legitimization in a postwar Britain that was in the process of redefining itself as a multiethnic nation. Immigrating to Britain (via America) from Guyana shortly before World War I, Braithwaite wrote his first book *To Sir, With Love* (henceforth *To Sir*), which became a bestseller and launched his international career. He worked for UNESCO, was Guyana's ambassador to Venezuela, and taught at Howard University. Throughout all this, he continued to write—mainly autobiographical fiction—detailing his experiences as a Black man in the world. In *To Sir*, Braithwaite describes how his sense of his own Britishness has been an undisputed fact of life: "I had grown up British in every way. Myself, my parents, and my parent's parents, none of us knew or could know any other way of living, of thinking, of being; we knew no other cultural pattern, and I had never heard my forbearers complain of being British" (*TSWL* 42). Being British is his ancestral legacy, not an external value system that has been foisted upon him. Braithwaite goes on to eloquently describe what he considers Britain's "intangible, yet amazingly real and invaluable export—The British Way of Life" (*TSWL* 41). He lays out a clear picture of the latitude of its influence. The British Way of Life binds people from all over the globe through their common devotion to "British systems of Law, Education, Government… dress and social codes" (*TSWL* 41). While he realizes that in the eyes of white Britons he is "British, but evidently not a Briton, and the fine differentiation was very important" (*TSWL* 45), this realization does not lead him to question Britishness as his birthright. The racism he faces as a Black Caribbean migrant in Britain never induces him to re-examine his loyalties to this attachment. Instead, in a move that perfectly illustrates the political ambivalence of

anglophilia, he mobilizes it to disarticulate race from national belonging, claiming legitimacy as a Black Briton through his performance of British civilizational values. Braithwaite's writings, I contend, are essential documents that perform and record the creation of a particular kind of Black British subject.

I use Braithwaite's work as a case study of how anglophilia is specifically mobilized in a Black British diasporic context. Instead of reading an attachment to British culture as an adoption and performance of values external to the culture of the colonized, I consider it an integral and not necessarily debased part of that culture. Braithwaite, a Black diasporic Caribbean subject, draws on his anglophilic affiliations to both share in and disrupt certain relations of colonial power. These structures of power and affiliation are, however, not dyadic but networked. Braithwaite is connected to several other minority groups in Britain. He attempts to define himself and other Black migrants as British, rather than Black, as a response to the racism he faces in Britain. Braithwaite anchors his Britishness in his social performance as an educated, middle-class man. This identity, however, is not self-sufficient but constructed out of his engagements with three other populations and *their* claims to British citizenship: white women, the white working-class, and the British Jewish community. Braithwaite, I contend, is exemplary of a Black British migrant identity that redefines national belonging through a complex mix of conservative and radical moves. While this identity formation remains attached to a traditional idea of Britishness through a focus on social class and the heteronormative family, it uncouples Britishness from one of its primary markers: race. Instead of anchoring national belonging to *being* British through a racial inheritance that is fixed at birth, Braithwaite affixes it to a performance of the self. To be British is to perform British values in society; it is not dependent on race or the tenure of one's residence on British soil. Thus, in Braithwaite's

novels, Black men and women, and migrants recently arrived from the Commonwealth, can successfully perform Britishness while their more white-coded and traditionally British counterparts (like white women and certain working-class populations) can fail.

Windrush literature has, from its very inception, been closely tied to two major socio-political issues: the selfhood of the non-white migrant in British society and the creation of multicultural Britain as a popular national identity. Produced by Caribbean migrants in Britain after the Second World War, Windrush literature grapples with questions of the diasporic self and its place in a British society whose racist realities were a far cry from the idealized "mother country" promised through colonial education. As Allison Donell writes, despite wide contestation, "The arrival of SS Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks in 1948 and the disembarkation of '492' West Indians from that ship has remained a significant and tenacious signifier within black British history" (195). Popularly imagined as the originary point of the rise of multicultural Britain, the literature that grew out of this community was intimately involved in restructuring the British national imaginary as one that included Black and Brown Britons. I argue that central to this reimagining of both the self and the nation was the affective structure of anglophilia. The creation of the Black or Brown British subject as both a private entity and its socially legitimate existence as a national category is tied to these writers' attachments to their British colonial values and their performance of this version of Britishness as migrant subjects. Braithwaite is an especially overt and potent example of the kind of anglophilia that is threaded through the works of several Windrush authors.

In his magisterial cricket memoir *Beyond A Boundary*, C. L. R. James, a lifelong Marxist and anti-colonialist writes, "Thackeray, not Marx, bears the heaviest responsibility for me" (52). James points towards his love of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and his childhood identification with

its "gibes at the aristocracy and at people in high places" (52) as the start of his socialist politics. James sees a causal relationship between the values propagated by novels like *Vanity Fair*, and what he calls his Puritanism i.e., his anglophilia: "the British reticence, the British self-discipline, the stiff lips, upper and lower" (52). This Puritanism is an affective and moral code comprising qualities and feelings like loyalty, reticence, and humility. In his memoir, James acknowledges the power of this anglophilia over both him and the writers of his generation: "There is a whole generation of us, and perhaps two generations, who have been formed by it not only in social attitudes but in our most intimate personal lives… The social attitudes we could to some degree alter if we wished. For the inner self the die was cast" (54). James is a perfect example of what J. Dillon Brown calls "the particular resilience of these authors in articulating an (at least partial, if agonistic) affiliation with Britishness" (223). Through a reading of E.R. Braithwaite's novels, I look at how this "affiliation with Britishness" was foundational to the origins of the nationally legitimized category of the Black British subject.[2]

2.2. Civilizing: The Creation of the Black British Subject in *To Sir, With Love*

The centrality of anglophilic performance to both the figure of the non-white Briton and the space of multicultural Britain is instrumentalized in Brathwaite's most popular novel, *To Sir*. In this text, we see him mobilizing anglophilia as a mode of assimilation that creates a Black British subject out of the colonial migrant. As Braithwaite's first novel, *To Sir* outlines the

[2] The critical literature on Braithwaite often positions him as being at odds with the rest of the better-known Windrush writers. His open conservatism and anglophilia single him out. J. Dillon Brown comments on the combination of "conservatism and forthright honesty regarding race relations that typifies his writing" (219). Chris Weedon positions him as one of an earlier and lesser-read group of Windrush writers who approach the problem of racism at an individualized and moralistic level that is different from later political responses. David Ellis contends that Braithwaite's writing is the effect of a "kind of mental colonization" (67).

politically uncomfortable foundation of this process of integration: its intimate connections to colonial relationships and structures of power. The novel has had a robust and enduring afterlife in the British popular imagination. In addition to the extremely popular and well-known 1967 film starring Sidney Poitier, it has been adapted for radio and stage. The BBC broadcast it as a radio drama in 2007 as well as commissioning a film adaptation of the novel by Hanif Kureishi in 2015. The text has also been adapted for the stage in 2013 by Ayub Khan-Din. *To Sir* is clearly a novel whose resonances are alive and well in the twenty-first century. All these adaptations focus on the genuine connection between teacher and students that is produced from the teacher's selfless, philanthropic investment in the lives of his underprivileged, and as a result, impolite and crude students. The students initially disrespect and try to humiliate the teacher because of his difference from them, but he is able to win their hearts in the end. I show that what is read as an inspirational story of racial education and harmony is actually a tale of the anglophilic self-formation of the Black British subject through his appropriation of the role of the civilizing missionary over his "vicious" (*TSWL* 76), "noisy, and bawdy" (*TSWL* 77) students. The enduring popularity of *To Sir* is not an outcome of its vision of Britain as an anti-racist utopia, but instead because it outlines a path towards racial assimilation into the British nation without undermining colonial and conservative structures of power.

Missionary accounts of civilizing missions into the "dark" heart of empire were a mainstay of the ideological foundations of empire. The act of civilizing is a racial and colonial relation of power that creates and affirms the superiority of the civilizing agent over their objects.[3] The project of civilizing people into respecting the "British Way of Life" as a way to becoming a Briton is dependent upon Braithwaite framing himself as part of a network of

[3] For more on colonial self-construction through the civilizing mission, see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*; Brantlinger, *Taming the Cannibals: Race and the Victorians.*

hierarchical privilege—through the interrelations between himself and British minoritized communities (like Jewish people, the working-class, and white women), who are redefined as insufficiently British in order to situate his as the superior selfhood within the hierarchy. Braithwaite's self-legitimization as a Black British subject depends on both his ability to civilize and his discernment as a superior subject who can recognize those who *can* be civilized—the white, Christian, working-class—and those who cannot—the Jewish working-class. This narrative of the cultural upliftment of a white, British, working-class population by a Black British migrant tells a larger tale of the transformative effects of the dissemination of anglophilia upon its source—the Black British subject.

The site of Braithwaite's civilizing mission is London's working-class East End that housed a significant Jewish population in the inter-war years. His fraught and evolving relationships with Jewish characters are central to both his life in London and his identity formation as a Black Briton in *To Sir.* While he does not openly refer to Jewishness as a racialized category, he calls upon a set of references that invokes it as such throughout the text. Jewishness is a stable and significantly problematic presence throughout. All of Braithwaite's numerous references to Jewish people are both indirect and invested in reinforcing a sense of the difference between them and Britain at large. The text achieves this through the systematic racialization of the East End as a hub for Britain's working-class migrant Jewish population. Braithwaite's indirect but sustained engagement with Jewishness is clear from the book's opening. We are given his running commentary on the East End as Braithwaite walks through it for the first time while comparing it to the East End of his imagination "with its cosmopolitan population and fascinating history" (*TSWL* 6). He had imagined it as the East End of "Chaucer and Erasmus and the Sorores Minores" (*TSWL* 6). He wants to visit the point of the

Thames from which "Captain John Smith had sailed aboard the good ship Susan Lawrence to found an English colony in Virginia" (*TSWL* 6). Braithwaite clearly disidentifies with the racialized migrant population of the East End or its earlier history as a central node in the transatlantic slave trade.[4] Instead, he imaginatively allies himself to symbols of British imperial culture and education, making clear his credentials as a British gentleman. He describes the contemporary reality of the East End in Dickensian terms—the "noisy, littered street bordered by an untidy irregular picket fence of slipshod shopfronts and gaping bomb sites" (*TSWL* 6), and the buildings around him that are "raped and outraged" (*TSWL* 6). This is far from the East End of "Chaucer and Erasmus" (*TSWL* 6) that he had imagined. Instead, in Braithwaite's eyes, it is a haven of dirt and moral corruption; he feels "sick and dirtied" (*TSWL* 7). The connection between social class and moral rectitude is characteristic of Braithwaite's self-formation. He is the well-dressed, well-spoken, and upright Briton examining this material and moral dirt from a distance.

Braithwaite sketches a picture of the East End that emphasizes its otherness within one of the most powerful imperial centers in the world: "There was rubble everywhere, and dirt and flies" (*TSWL* 7). But most importantly, "there were smells" (*TSWL* 7). A longstanding and dominant Jewish stereotype in the European imagination involves odor.[5] Jewish people and

[4] The West India Docks that inaugurated the East End as a node of empire were established in 1803 for the express purpose of easing the transport of goods like sugar from the Caribbean. Two major driving forces behind the construction of these docks, Robert Milligan and George Hibbert, were themselves slave-owners whose wealth was built through plantation slavery in the Caribbean. Hibbert went on become a Member of Parliament and argued vociferously against abolition, becoming the leader of the pro-slavery lobby against the rising tide of abolitionist sentiment in British Parliament.

[5] The *foetor judaicus*, or the "Jewish odor" that was associated with dirt and unhygienic foreign practices that needed containment was a widespread pan-European belief that dates back to the medieval period. In her article "You Can Change Your Noses," Zoë Roth recapitulates how this form of medieval religious prejudice was re-encoded as racial science in the nineteenth century and continued to inform racial stereotypes into the twentieth century. As Jewish people began to enter into mainstream political and social arenas, anxieties about being able to tell them apart (since many were white passing) coalesced around "ineffable" racial characteristics like smell (77). For more on the longstanding association between Jewishness and odor in the European imagination, see Gilman,

spaces smell different and are therefore bad. This smell in turn is associated with ideas of disease, sexual perversity, and contagion. According to Braithwaite, in the East End "the smells arose from everything, everywhere, flowing together and remaining as a sickening tantalizing discomfort" (*TSWL* 7). What could, however, have been attributed to the inadequate sanitation system and overcrowding in a historically poor and underserved area of London is quickly and emphatically linked to Jewish food and people:

> They [the smells] flowed from the delicatessen shop with its uncovered tray of pickled herrings, and the small open casks of pickled gherkins and onions, dried fish and salted meat, from the fish shop that casually defied every law of health; from the Kosher butcher...I felt sick and dirtied; only the need of reaching my destination forced me past the shops and the smells and the multi-racial jostle of hurrying folk who ignored the flies and smells in single-minded pursuit of their business. (*TSWL* 6-7)

In an economical but highly effective passage, Braithwaite creates a clear and consistent connection between the squalor he sees in the East End and Jewishness without ever explicitly referring to the neighborhood as Jewish. Instead, he calls upon a longstanding, stable set of antisemitic associations, using them to create a distinctly racialized and stereotyped image whose valence is clear for all to see. Some of the unpleasant smells that so sicken him are simply strong-smelling food— "pickled gherkins and onions, dried fish and salted meat" (*TSWL* 6)— that are undesirable because of their foreignness. Instead of the "cosmopolitan population" (*TSWL* 6) of his dreams, the East end is populated by a "multi-racial jostle...in single-minded pursuit of their business" (*TSWL* 7) Braithwaite quickly and successively invokes popular Jewish stereotypes about bad odors, racial indeterminacy, and avarice, using them to create a distinct difference between the Jewish population of the East End and himself who felt "sick and dirtied" (*TSWL* 7) in this neighborhood. This is a clear instance of racialization operating through a set of

The Jew's Body; Geller, "The Aromatics of Jewish Difference"; Zafran, "Saturn and the Jews: Or, Benjamin's Allegory of Aura."

popular British prejudices about Jews. It is significant that Braithwaite would choose such an explicitly British colonial lens through which to view the population of the East End while himself being a Black migrant from one of Britain's colonies. He attempts to ally himself to Britishness by taking on the position of the superior colonial observer in a foreign land, mimicking the specific pathways of British prejudice against its Jewish population. As an anglophilic Christian Black migrant, he implicitly argues here that he is closer to being British than the working-class Jewish residents of the East End.

Braithwaite's redefinition of his national position takes place within a public secondary school in the East End of London. After being rejected from every engineering job that he applies for, Braithwaite is finally appointed as a teacher in Greenslade School, an institution that serves a predominantly working-class population and has a reputation for its students' difficult behavior. Braithwaite's initial descriptions of the East End frame it as an overwhelmingly foreign and backward neighborhood and evokes a set of associative images that merge Jewishness and poverty, thus racializing the East End as a whole, including its non-Jewish working-class population. The long-standing liminality of Jewish identity, "white but not quite" (Trubowitz 73), contributes to what Lara Trubowitz calls "the idea of Jewish difference as itself transferable to others, as migratory and movable" (73). Braithwaite's primary and most evocative descriptions of the degeneration of the East End involve his sense of smell. He conjures up the repugnant and unhealthful smells emanating from the Kosher butcher and the improperly displayed pickled herrings from the delicatessen. In her article about olfactory racialization, Zoë Roth argues:

> odors are made up of microscopic particles that literally enter our bodies…uniting the one who smells with the odor's potential source. The way in which smell troubles phenomenological boundaries often provokes anxieties about contamination, both hygienic and existential. (75)

In keeping with Roth's formulation, even temporary contact with these "Jewish" smells leaves Braithwaite feeling like he has been affected by a miasmatic illness. The East End's long-term exposure to them has surely contaminated its population with this otherness. Braithwaite uses the same strategy, employing the racialized framework of Jewish identity to mark out the otherness of the East End. Jewishness combined with poverty emanates a portable classed racial aura that envelops and circumscribes not just the actually Jewish population of the area, but its Christian inhabitants as well. The native British working-class of the East End become imbued with non-white racialized qualities. Instead of being the center of white, British culture and history, the East End is reminiscent of colonial descriptions of the "uncivilized" parts of the British empire. As such, it is not surprising that Braithwaite frames his students as being similarly uncivilized and therefore, implicitly, not entirely white.

One of the major nodes of racialized colonial otherness is sexual and gendered relations. In this light, I am in conversation with scholars like Ann Laura Stoler, Amy Kaplan, Laura Wexler, and Anne McClintock in examining how the public processes of coloniality, empire, and political control are enmeshed with the apparently private sphere of domesticity, sexuality, and romance. Stoler, McClintock, Kaplan, and Wexler all theorize the centrality of the white woman to the racialized imperialist project.[6] This figure's internal subjectivity, public actions, and gendered racial positionality all serve to reinforce both the material components of colonial control—marriage, reproduction, and familial inheritance—and its ideological underpinnings like racial purity and a "superior" domestic life that is differentiated from its colonial

[6] See Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*; McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*; Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity"; Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism.*

counterpart. As such, the white British woman is central to Britain as an imperial nation and Braithwaite uses his relationship with this character to figure himself as one of its legible and legitimate citizens. As a civilizing force policing the bounds of what constitutes appropriate white British femininity, Braithwaite positions himself within the British nation.

Braithwaite's white female students have been racialized by their proximity to Jewishness and no longer behave like proper British women. Braithwaite focuses on their sexual promiscuity as a shorthand for their larger cultural degradation. *To Sir,* is an account of their civilization under the guidance of Braithwaite, a process that starts with re-establishing the norms of traditional feminine traits like modesty and reserve. The precipitating incident violates the taboo surrounding menstruation. Braithwaite enters his classroom one day to find that one of the students has tried to burn a used tampon in the fireplace. His response to this incident is violent. While there is no evidence of who the culprit is, Braithwaite exclusively blames his female students. After dismissing the boys from the class, he loses his temper, "turning the full lash of [his] angry tongue on the girls… [telling them] how sickened he was by their crude language, sluttish behaviour, and free and easy familiarity with the boys" (*TSWL* 78). Not only does he castigate them, but he also criticizes their mothers and sisters for not teaching them that "there are certain things that decent women keep private at all times" (*TSWL* 78). Braithwaite's violent anger is legitimized as the "righteous" wrath of the proper Christian Briton on a civilizing mission when faced with the supposed sexual promiscuity of colonized populations. Performing this rage as a show of legitimate superiority and using it to establish control over culturally "inferior" groups who must be taught better is a standard move in the process of establishing an empire. Braithwaite, however, does it to argue for his authority over his imperial superiors. The incident with the tampon is followed by Braithwaite laying down the law. His class, he declares,

will be organized according to the rules of polite, gendered society: the boys will be referred to by their surnames, the girls will be called "miss" and he will be addressed as the titular Sir. The girls in his class "must show themselves both worthy and appreciative of the courtesies [the] men will show them" (*TSWL* 82). This encounter serves as a turning point in Braithwaite's relation with his students. From here on out, they become increasingly respectful, studious, and "civilized." The re-establishment of gender norms precipitates a larger move towards respectability in his class. In other words, they begin to behave more like his idea of proper Britons: they discard their "careless unscholarly attitudes" (*TSWL* 12), "gypsyish" (*TSWL* 55) ways, and "soiled and untidy" (*TSWL* 12) clothing and begin to behave like the white Britons they are.

Civilizing his students gives Braithwaite a legitimate position within the civilized nation of Britain. The text separates out race and nationality; being white does not automatically make one British, being civilized does. To present as proper Britons, Braithwaite's students must adhere to the standards of behavior that Braithwaite has been taught through his middle-class colonial education. In other words, they must perform anglophilia. From this perspective, white Britishness itself is an anglophilic performance: it is a state that can be attained through adhering to and acting out certain codes of social behavior. Conversely when white Britons, like Braithwaite's students, do not follow these norms, they are in danger of becoming both racially and nationally unmoored. This triadic relationship between race, nationality, and classed behavior has important implications for Braithwaite's own position as a Black Briton. While he cannot change the pigmentation of his skin, he can perform this classed national behavior and thus claim his position as a Black Briton. Braithwaite's formulation of the Black British subject has wider implications for the legitimization and assimilation of this potentially disruptive

category into the white conservative nation through its ability to envision the Black Briton as an effective actor in a nationalist frame and to de-essentialize white Britishness as a purely epidermal category.

2.3 Loving: Racial Romance and the British Nation in *To Sir, With Love*

Braithwaite's ability to civilizationally transform his students through gendered discipline is one half of his journey towards becoming a Briton. The other is being acknowledged in this work. In this context, I examine Braithwaite's sexualization of his students and his romantic attachments, aspects of the text that have traditionally been critically marginalized. Exploring the connection between anglophilic affiliation and sexuality allows us to find new forms of loving that offer a political solution to Braithwaite's problem of being a devalued Black Caribbean migrant in British society. Through the enactment of sexual power over his wards—something that has a long history within European missionary endeavors—as well as his attractiveness to civilized and desirable white/white-passing women, the Black British subject is able to complete his transformation through anglophilic love. Since his focus is on disciplining working-class white women into behaving like the ideal British lady, it follows that the approval of women is central to him becoming socially readable as an embodiment of British values. The necessity of white female admiration and interest in his journey towards garnering his white colleagues' admiration and envy and becoming the students' beloved Sir explains the surprisingly central role romance plays in Braithwaite's professional career. His romantic life—that is, his successful sexual and familial connections with white British women—serve as confirmation of his own sense of self. There are two women who pay romantic attention to Braithwaite: one is his

student, Pamela Dare and the other is a colleague, Gillian Blanchard. Their individual relationships with Braithwaite act as the apotheosis of his journey towards establishing himself as not only a Briton in the eyes of white Britons, but as the superior Briton.

In their expansive historical account of interracial relationships in Britain in the twentieth century, Chamion Caballero and Peter J. Aspinall delineate the position interracial unions occupied in the popular British popular imagination and their lived realities. While the social perceptions surrounding mixed-race relationships varied over time, depending on current political events and economic conditions, they were always fertile grounds for Britain's national fantasies and anxieties surrounding race, class, and gender. Across the early and middle decades of the twentieth century, the non-white population in Britain was predominantly male, and as such, the white British woman, and her potential "low moral standards" (Caballero and Aspinall 79), was a site of particular anxiety. "The modern woman's laxitude… [such] that she would even have sexual relations with men of color" (Caballero and Aspinall 250), was seen as a clear threat to both the nation's racial purity and its patriarchal authority. White working-class women were particularly constructed as being morally inferior and sexually indiscriminate, "entering into these relationships freely, either due to wanton, primitive lust or monetary gain" (Caballero and Aspinall 64). Conversely, longstanding fears about the violent and rapacious sexuality of Black men and their predilection for innocent white women were also reanimated in the context of this arrival of migrants from the Commonwealth and especially the Caribbean.

In this context, it is especially strange that none of these anxieties is mobilized in Braithwaite's popular reception.[7] Braithwaite's sexualization of his students is a clear thread

[7] F.M. Birbalsingh, in an otherwise critical 1968 review that points out Braithwaite's problematic desire to be seen as a "thoroughly civilized black man" (75), still describes Braithwaite's relationship with his students thus: "by revealing the same qualities of intelligence and cultivated behaviour that he is expected not to possess, he wins the respect of [his] pupils" (74). His use of sexualized and violent language with his recalcitrant female students is

through the novel. When he first meets his class, he comments on his female students' appearance, particularly "their faces [which] bore traces of make-up inexpertly applied or hurriedly removed, giving to their obvious youth a slightly tawdry, jaded look" (*TSWL* 55). Later, as he is teaching class, he notices that one of his students "was fair-haired and slim, with a pair of heavy breasts that swung loosely under a thin jumper" (*TSWL* 58). This commentary is characteristic of Brathwaite's sexualization of his teenaged students. Often expressed under the guise of paternalistic disapproval—"who would allow a girl to go out so sloppily attired" (*TSWL* 58)—it is in line with missionary narratives of non-white female sexuality that use criticism to indirectly express desire. Braithwaite's use of this powerful and influential colonial narrative structure is part of the role he occupies as the civilizing missionary. His inhabiting of this category allows him to escape the otherwise overdetermined and potent fears surrounding the sexuality of Black men in relation to white women. His sexualization of his students approximates the tradition of the white colonial missionary expressing covert desire for his non-white female flock rather than the stereotype of the Black man harassing a white woman. He escapes being racialized as a Black man because his actions are so thoroughly couched within

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referred to as "appeals to their sense of decency" (74). In a contemporaneous review of the 1967 film, which tones down but does not eliminate the titular Sir's problematic relationships with his female students, Bosley Crowther writes skeptically about the film's "nice air of gentility… Mr. Poitier gives a quaint example of being proper and turning the other cheek." The British Library, which features Braithwaite in its online exhibition titled "Windrush Stories," refers to the book's plot as "the story of Ricky Braithwaite, Guyanese teacher in an East End school who transforms a class of unruly working-class kids and falls in love with a white teacher" ("Windrush Stories"). In his 2015 introduction to the novel, Caryl Philips writes, that this is a story of a "somewhat isolated, patrician man who attempts now to make a community out of the pupils in his charge" (Philips). A review in *The Guardian* of Ayub Khan-Din's 2013 stage adaptation describes how "Ricky is initially appalled by his ignorant, unruly pupils. Guided by the headmaster, however, he learns to respect their individuality and wins their affection" (Billington). Spanning several decades, all these responses accept Braithwaite's own self-construction as a "decent," intellectual man who pushes back against his students' prejudices. Even if he is misguided, his gentlemanliness is never questioned. Significantly, the later reviews of *To Sir* and its various adaptations contain no re-readings of Sir's relationship with his teenaged female students as inappropriate. Instead, Braithwaite's own autobiographical self-construction as a benevolent paternal figure continues to hold sway, suggesting its continued potency.

the framework of the British civilizational mission. The character is filtered so deeply through the white missionary figure that he cannot be historically racialized as Black.

Braithwaite's relationship with Pamela Dare, the star student of his class, is exemplary of the uses and limits of a white working-class woman's love to his concept of the Black British subject. With her "cutting intelligence" (*TSWL* 121), Pamela is marked out as exceptional from the very beginning. On the first day of class, she is the only one who excels at a reading assignment. After going through a series of students who, Braithwaite realizes are barely literate, Pamela's reading is a pleasant surprise: "her voice was clear, warm, and well-modulated; she read easily, flowing the words into a clear picture" (*TSWL* 59). Pamela's intelligence is matched by her good looks; Braithwaite describes her as a budding beauty with flaming red hair and a regal bearing. While she initially dislikes Braithwaite and is resistant to his methods, she falls in line with the rest of the class and exchanges contempt for admiration, learning how to behave like one of the "young ladies" (*TSWL* 83) with the "grace and dignity befitting a queen" (*TSWL* 82) in the process. Soon after this transformation, she develops feelings for him. It is noticed by both faculty and students that she has "quite a crush" (*TSWL* 105) on Braithwaite and is "stuck on Sir" (*TSWL* 122) to the extent that she starts performing domestic tasks—"keep[ing his] table tidy and fetch[ing] a cup of tea from the staffroom" (*TSWL* 118)—for him. "She fell into the habit of remaining in the classroom during recess, and doing lots of little things for [him] without being asked, showing a *strange* (emphasis mine) aptitude for anticipating [his] wishes" (*TSWL* 118). Pamela's clear superiority to her classmates makes her eventual capitulation all the more important, and the fact that there is a romantic component to that acknowledgement is not mere coincidence. Braithwaite successfully accomplishes the racial education of a beautiful, white woman. The prize of her love not only confirms her acceptance of that process and its

results, but also Braithwaite's own successful embodiment of the perfect British man who can perform Britishness better than his white colleagues. This fact is confirmed by one of his fellow-teachers who he goes to for advice when he realizes that Pamela has a crush on him. Grace, who functions as the unofficial leader and advisor to the other teachers in the school, tells him that Pamela's infatuation is the natural result of Braithwaite's charismatic embodiment of British masculinity: "His clothes are well-cut, pressed, and neat;…[his] teeth are sparkling, ties and handkerchief matching. He's big broad and handsome" (*TSWL* 124). This is in direct contrast to both the men his students, including Pamela, are surrounded with in their families and neighborhoods and the other male teachers, slovenly and uncouth, who preceded Braithwaite. Indeed, Grace says, Braithwaite is "probably the first real man [Pamela has] met" (*TSWL* 124). That the "real man" Pamela chooses as the object of her affections is Black over the numerous other white men in her life confirms Braithwaite's redefinition of race and nationality. He both successfully embodies British masculinity and does it better than white British men.

While he desires Pamela's acknowledgement, however, Braithwaite is clear on his unwillingness to have any real relationship with either her or any working-class woman. Indeed, his narrative voice embodies in significant ways what G. Balachandran, while describing the white, middle-class response to the East End in the mid-twentieth century calls "the prurient gaze of middle-class observers peering through lens clouded by class, racial, gender, sexual, and political anxieties" (546). This ventriloquizing of an implicitly white middle-class voice explains Braithwaite's highly sexualized descriptions of Pamela. From their very first meeting, he is struck by her physical appearance, seeing her as "a figure topped by long auburn hair caught up in a pony-tail which jerked in time to her vigorous hip-swaying stride" (*TSWL* 13). Braithwaite goes on to make several references to her "full figure" (*TSWL* 206) and her red hair throughout

the book with these descriptions framing her as an adult sexual woman rather than as a teenager. This is confirmed when other teachers, including Gillian, warn him that "she is a woman in every sense of the word" (*TSWL* 105) and that he should be careful in his dealings with her. The precocious, oversexualized woman is both a classist and racist stereotype. Braithwaite uses it here to mark the white working-class Pamela as the negatively racialized figure, affixing racializing characteristics to class position. Pamela's gendered class identity ensures her unsuitability as a serious partner for Braithwaite. This unfitness is clear from the way Braithwaite narrates his reaction to finding out about her feelings for him: "In spite of her full body and grown-up attitude, she was to me a child, and one in my care" (*TSWL* 123). He is "foolishly surprised" by her revelation of her feelings (*TSWL* 122). This declaration of innocence is clearly disingenuous. Its self-contradictory nature is evident from the juxtaposition of his awareness of her "full body" with his insistence that she was merely a "child" to him. He forecloses any possibility of a socially public relationship with her by foregrounding her youth and their teacher-student relationship while simultaneously continuing to sexualize her. In line with colonial missionary ideas about "native" converts as inherently inferior subjects regardless of their degree of devotion, Braithwaite cannot see Pamela as his equal. While she is his perfect student who he has civilized most successfully, the implication is that he remains superior to her and thus, a romance would undermine the superiority he has attained through his performative Britishness.

The aspirational function of interracial romance and its importance to the creation of the Black British subject is clear from Braithwaite's affair with his colleague, Gillian Blanchard, which proceeds to an engagement. For the anglophilic Black Briton to be fully realized as a social identity, it requires social approval whose highest and most enduring form is an

integration into the national body via marriage and family. This relationship will transform Braithwaite's position in British society. The romantic admiration from his white Christian working-class student might confirm in him his own sense of superiority, but he chooses to form the more long-lasting and significant alliance with a woman who is Jewish and comfortably middle-class. In all the important ways, Gillian and her family are an aspirational model for Braithwaite. They are acknowledged and accepted as "true" Britons. Gillian teaches in the same underfunded, working-class school as Braithwaite, but it is very clear from the beginning that for her, this is a temporary position that is not indicative of the larger trajectory of her life. Her father is "connected with international finance, her mother is a fashion designer" (*TSWL* 114). Her parents live in Richmond, one of the most affluent residential areas of London, and Gillian herself has an apartment in Chelsea. She teaches as a hobby, it is "merely a way of occupying [herself] for the time being" (*TSWL* 142), her family's "very generous annual allowance" (*TSWL* 115) being her actual source of income. That temporariness of her sojourn in this school is confirmed at the end of the text when she resigns from her post after getting engaged. Gillian's integration into British society is seamless. "Confident in the assurance of her own poise and breeding" (*TSWL* 99), she is read as a Briton by her white fellow-Britons, and that is what Braithwaite ultimately desires. Yet, her introduction in the text is a distinctly racialized one. Her dark eyes and olive skin "hint at Jewish or Italian parentage" (*TSWL* 20). She reminds Braithwaite of the women of Martinique with her "brown voice" and "skin the colour of honey" (*TSWL* 22). Gillian does turn out to be Jewish. She comforts a Jewish student's family in Yiddish at a moment of crisis, surprising Braithwaite with this "accomplishment [he] had never suspected she possessed" (*TSWL* 130). This interplay between foreignness and Britishness in Gillian's

persona, coupled with her affluent middle-class origins, is crucial to Braithwaite's attraction towards her.

She is a Jewish woman who performs Britishness better than her working-class counterpart, giving credence to Braithwaite's theory of Britishness that uncouples national belonging from race and re-attaches it to social class. With her "low, well-modulated voice" (*TSWL* 22), her reserved manner, and her dignified bearing, Gillian is more "naturally" British than the brash Pamela Dare in her "too-tight sweaters" (*TSWL* 12) and her "flashy cheap earrings and bracelets" (*TSWL* 55). Braithwaite's admiration for Gillian is not singular, it is reflective of her position in society as a desirable, intelligent young woman—a position that is not complicated by any negative responses to her Jewish identity. Indeed, Gillian's Jewishness exists largely as proof that class, not one's racial background is the core component of Britishness. Braithwaite's decision to throw in his lot with her is a move to link himself to a successful instance of what he hopes to achieve in his own personal trajectory. That he is on the right path to achieve this is confirmed when Gillian not only accepts him romantically but acknowledges his superior character. The turning point in their relationship is inextricably bound up with Braithwaite's reaction to a racist encounter with a working-class white man and Gillian's response to it. This event is precipitated by their visit to an exclusive restaurant for Gillian's birthday. As the only visibly interracial couple there, they are subjected to nasty looks and ill treatment. The "service was…exceptionally slow" (*TSWL* 162) and the waiter's "manner [was] casual with an implied discourtesy" (*TSWL* 163). Gillian abruptly cuts short their meal when their waiter spills their soup and instead of cleaning it up, merely stares at Brathwaite with "a faint sneer on his face" (*TSWL* 163). They proceed to her apartment in silence where she then berates him for "not showing a little spirit" (*TSWL* 165) and confronting "that bloody little

peasant of a waiter" (*TSWL* 165) about his racism. She wants Braithwaite to have created a "big, bloody awful scene…to hit him, to beat him down, down" (*TSWL* 165). Instead, he takes it all quietly like "Jesus Christ…all good and patient" (*TSWL* 165). Gillian is angry because Braithwaite does not mobilize his class privilege over the "peasant of a waiter" (*TSWL* 165), doubting his masculinity in the process. Braithwaite, however, makes it clear that the mark of a "real" gentleman is to remain aloof and not express unseemly anger; "beating people up never solves anything" (*TSWL* 165). He is too well-bred to engage in a shouting match with a peasant. Indeed, Gillian's expression of her anger over this incident reduces her to an undesirable working-class woman in Braithwaite's eyes. "Her voice was becoming quite shrill, like a fishwife" (*TSWL* 165) and he no longer wishes to speak with her, becoming "awfully tired of the whole thing" (*TSWL* 165). Braithwaite disengages from any display of "un-British" behaviour, whether on the part of an anonymous waiter or his soon-to-be fiancée.

The relationship is restored only when Gillian returns to her rightful role as a delicate, middle-class woman. After collapsing in Braithwaite's arms in tears, she expresses remorse and penitence, allowing him to return to the role of the comforter and protector. The brief moment when Braithwaite's version of masculinity is questioned passes quickly. Braithwaite explains to her "what it means living with dignity inside his black skin" (*TSWL* 167). Gillian acknowledges and endorses his way of living his life as a Black man—whose stiff upper lip is the right, class-appropriate approach to racist attacks—by declaring her love for him. By the end of the night, she wants him to meet her parents and they are engaged to be married. Braithwaite is invited to join a family that is successfully read as white in British society. He has, in a sense, finally arrived. As a white-passing middle-class woman, Gillian's choice to marry him despite the social disapproval attendant upon an interracial relationship is confirmation of Braithwaite's

own claims to Britishness. The public acknowledgement of his upward mobility and his national integration is confirmed when Gillian announces their engagement to their colleagues and Braithwaite is congratulated as a "damned lucky tyke" (*TSWL* 213) by them. The social approval of his Britishness through marriage and an induction into the heteronormative family is necessary because he is putting forward an unusual proposition: that he, as a Black man from Guyana, is still more British than many white native-born Britons. For it to achieve any lasting power, it needs legitimization from the larger society that he is embedded in. This society consists of his colleagues, students, and romantic partners. Their affirmation and approval of Braithwaite is part of this successful identity formation.

2.4 Multicultural Britain: Biracial Belonging and the Race-Blind Nation in *Paid Servant*

In his second novel, *Paid Servant*, Braithwaite extends the ambit of national belonging from the singular, exceptional Black British citizen to a larger group that is heterogenous in terms of race and class. They are a national community due to their ability to perform anglophilia—"the British reticence, the British self-discipline, the stiff lips, upper and lower" (James 52). This text forwards a potential affective solution to the political crisis of increased immigration from the Commonwealth. Looking forward to later formulations of Britain as a multicultural society, Braithwaite redefines Britishness as a land of race-blind quality. Instead of linking British belonging to whiteness, his characters are framed as "true" Britons insofar as they are able to perform their anglophilia. They need to demonstrate their adherence to British values; namely, a desire for middle-class respectability, an attachment to the heteronormative family structure, and, crucially, the ability to envision Britain as a multiracial nation. Among the core

national values that Braithwaite forwards, the willingness to include Black Britons within the ambit of British domesticity is necessary. In *Paid Servant*, the ones who exhibit such commitments are truly British; their race does not matter. Braithwaite creates an alternate category of national belonging that people can inhabit regardless of race. His formulation of this concept is an important early account of the creation of multiracial Britain as a political and ideological category. By separating race from nationality, Braithwaite reconceptualizes both of those terms. Foregrounding the nation as a collective of individuals performing the same set of values rather than sharing the same biological heritage, the importance of race as a foundation for community-building is undermined. Braithwaite's theorization of race as an unimportant factor vis-à-vis national belonging is explicated through the figure of a biracial child, Roddy, who demonstrates the importance of performing anglophilia as the real condition for legitimate Britishness.

Braithwaite's autobiographical narrator is a social worker who helps place abandoned or orphaned children in adoptive/foster homes. He has been hired to help with the "many problems created by the heavy post-war influx of immigrants into Britain from the West Indies, India, Pakistan, and other Commonwealth regions" (*PS* 7). Braithwaite is employed by the London County Council's Department of Child Welfare to "solve" a relatively new national problem, that of mixed-race children born in Britain to white British mothers and migrant, non-white fathers. While his practical duties are to find homes for those children who have been orphaned, abandoned, or whose parents cannot care for them due to economic problems or social stigma, the ideological problem that Braithwaite attempts to solve is one of racial and national affiliation. Where and to whom do these children belong? Braithwaite's answer is emphatic: they belong to Britain. They are British children, and that fact overrides any fears about racial difference that

were very much predominant in post-war Britain. Braithwaite outlines and emphatically repudiates the anxieties created by orphaned biracial children whose indeterminate origins threaten the white foundations of the British nation. While one of his co-workers worries about the problem of placing a "Half-Mexican" (*PS* 8) boy "in a family where there might be girls" (*PS* 10) and "what could happen in adolescence or later" (*PS* 10), gesturing towards a stereotypically racialized reading of non-white masculinity, Braithwaite instead emphasizes his Britishness.

The Britishness that Braithwaite is attached to is one that was constructed by white Britons. However, these origins become increasingly unimportant. Being white in 1960s Britain, according to Braithwaite, does not constitute Britishness. Instead, what allows people to legitimately inhabit the imaginative space of the nation is their ability to perform their attachment to Britain and its civilizational values. This is very clear from the way Braithwaite frames Roddy. Upon their first meeting at a Children's Home, Braithwaite is immediately taken with the child who is "sturdy and well-made...handsome in every line of him, strong and handsome" (*PS* 20). Roddy has already won over the heart of the Home's matron, a Scotswoman who has "a look of such tenderness in her face" (*PS* 20) when talking about Roddy that it surprises Braithwaite. As the two of them discuss Roddy's future, the Matron is very sure that the "little man will fit into any good family" (*PS* 21), not just a non-white one. As she and Braithwaite discuss the challenges of placing Black children who have been raised by exclusively white caregivers with a Black family, it becomes clear that Roddy's particular desirability lies in the fact that he does not see color. As the Matron says, she "doesn't suppose there would be that trouble with Roddy...he didn't throw any tantrums at the sight of [Braithwaite] and is playing peaceably with a "flaxen-haired little girl" (*PS* 22). According to the text Roddy's place in Britain is legitimate since he codes as an attractive, "quite wonderful" (*PS*

20) British child regardless of race. Later in the text, while participating in "his first real family tea-party" (*PS* 166), a quintessentially British activity, Roddy is "literally bubbling with excitement [but]...each request began with a 'please may I have', and there was a sweet, bright-eyed 'thank you' when helped" (*PS* 166). Roddy is a well-behaved, pleasant, British boy. He is well-versed in British table manners and despite his excitement, can exercise self-restraint and politeness. Roddy's behavior delights the white British family, his prospective adoptive parents, who he is taking tea with. His ability to perform certain British civilizational values, values by which the British had defined themselves against non-white colonized populations, enables a divergence of Britishness from race, situating national belonging in performance.

In *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack,* Paul Gilroy writes that "Race differences are displayed in culture which is reproduced...above all, in family life. Families are therefore not only the nation in microcosm, its key components, but acts as the means to turn social processes into natural, instinctive ones" (43). Gilroy's formulation points to the naturalization of national ideology within familial bonds. A reciprocal relationship of legitimization exists between the nation and the family. The family reenacts national ideals, cementing its rightful place within the nation. The nation, in turn, by participating within the structure of the family, becomes a similarly "natural" universal entity, thus legitimizing its existence. Race becomes an unspoken but crucial triangulating factor. As Gilroy argues, in Britain, it is mostly white individuals and families that are enfolded within this race/nation dyad. Black and Brown families that *are* included within the British nation are treated as exceptions. The blurred line between whiteness and the performance of British culture, making the latter an almost biological entity, leads to the automatic exclusion of most Black and Brown people from British national belonging. The heteronormative family unit is therefore always white in the British national

imagination. To introduce a biracial child is to dilute the whiteness and thus the Britishness of the nation. Braithwaite, however, uses this very move to disarticulate whiteness from Britishness.

Roddy is adopted into a white family that he fits seamlessly into and who, crucially, share his ability to treat everyone equally regardless of race. Braithwaite meets Roddy's future mother Mrs. Tamerlane on the train. Their conversation quickly turns to his job, and Mrs. Tamerlane declares the same race-blindness that Roddy possesses. As Braithwaite talks about "difficulties experienced in trying to find foster-parents, especially for coloured children...her face mirror(s) an interesting interplay of surprise and disbelief" (*PS* 111). She is very willing to adopt a child of any race and expresses particular interest in Roddy. When Braithwaite visits her home and family, they are a picture of domestic harmony. At their "semi-detached, two storeyed house in a pleasant tree-lined street" (*PS* 115) Braithwaite is welcomed to tea by the whole family, including "two chubby fair-haired girls… [and a] large shaggy dog which seemed bent on reaching up to lick [his] face" (*PS* 115) at the door as Mr. Tamerlane welcomed him inside. Braithwaite is won over by the "friendly easy atmosphere" (*PS* 115), the close-knit family dynamics, and the children's eagerness to welcome a new brother. They have a "pleasant grassy backyard, dominated by a patient looking oak-tree, which showed signs of having been well climbed. From its lowest limb two slim chains supported a swing seat" (*PS* 117) for the children. "A thick privet hedge that separated their backyard from a stretch of common meadow [with] one or two places [that bore] the unmistakable signs that a small body could gain easy access to and from the meadow" (*PS* 117-118). Looking upon this domestic idyll, Braithwaite decides that this is "the right place for Roddy." (*PS* 118). This rightness is based on a picture of a traditional harmonious, heteronormative family—a perfect picture of anglophilic domesticity—that is also willing to step into a multiracial British future by adopting a non-white child. The

success of this vision of Britishness is borne out at the book's end. Four months after the adoption, Braithwaite visits the Tamerlanes to find Roddy flourishing in the warmth and security of his new world. The novel ends with Braithwaite watching Roddy walk home from school with his mother and sisters. "A family. Each one belonging" (*PS* 219). Roddy has, at last, found his place in a family and in Britain. The ending signals the generative potential of Braithwaite's multiracial Britain and the crucial place that the family occupies within that construct.

Braithwaite forges a new understanding of British national belonging by undoing the connection between blood and family: family is still central to the nation, but family is not necessarily biological. By foregrounding the racially mixed adoptive family as equally if not more important in forging a new understanding of Britishness, Braithwaite uncouples racial purity and whiteness from national belonging. Instead, the ideal British family is like Roddy's: devoted to each other and to the British way of life. Their racial make-up is unimportant. In a complex intertwining of the radical and the conservative that is a trademark of much postcolonial anglophilia, the importance of the traditional heteronormative family structure in this vision of de-racialized national belonging is enhanced, not diminished. Racial difference is reframed as positive; its re-introduction into Britain is effected through the ability of these Black and Brown people to assimilate within the British family.

2.5 (Un)Natural Mothers: Deracializing Motherhood in *Paid Servant*

This denaturalizing of the British family as an automatically white entity to separate whiteness from Britishness also involves demonstrating that non-white immigrants are equally capable of performing family values that are coded as British. White people, according to

Braithwaite, are not necessarily better at family life than Black or Brown people. Braithwaite is invested in tying Britishness to performances of heteronormative domesticity rather than to race. The figure of the mother as the linchpin of the family and the nation is vital to a robust Britishness.[8] By figuring non-white women as motherly, efficient homemakers and white women as potentially unmaternal and uninterested in traditional family structures, Braithwaite denaturalizes the assumption that whiteness is necessarily essential or even beneficial for British nation formation. Roddy's biological mother, Angela Williams, is exemplary of this brand of white motherhood. Braithwaite first encounters her in Roddy's file, where she is marked down as a potential sex worker. Miss Coney, Roddy's previous case worker, tells him that "soon after the child was born she abandoned him in hospital" (*PS* 9). When Miss Coney had later visited her in her apartment, she promised to visit her son "but...never turned up" (*PS* 10). According to her, "from the state of the room it was not too difficult to guess what she was up to…these fly-by-nights are always on the move…Pregnant again, perhaps" (ibid). Her insinuations that Angela is an itinerant sex worker, and her "fleeting expression of distaste" (ibid) that accompanies these statements, makes clear that she thinks of Angela as a sexually corrupt unmaternal woman who is a lost cause. Miss Coney reads interracial desire, sex work, and a lack of maternal feeling as all part of the same psychic complex. At the start of the novel, Angela is nowhere to be found. She has moved away from her previous lodgings with no forwarding address and her

[8] The two World Wars were instrumental in deepening this association between traditional British feminine domesticity, that needed protection, and the health of the nation (this was also accompanied by movements in the opposite direction: the fight for universal suffrage, women's participation in the labor force, and a simultaneous propagandist focus on the strength of British women in wartime). The extremely popular and oft-reproduced WW1 poster, "Women of Britain say—'GO!'", captures the importance of the mother with its focus on a trio, presumably a family, with a male child and a younger woman clinging onto a taller, more authoritative mother figure as all three look upon a group of soldiers (probably marching off to war) with love, pride, and anguish. For more, see, Cohen, *Remapping the Home Front: Locating Citizenship in British Women's Great War Fiction;* Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War*; Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief.*

disappearance has led to her son being placed in a Children's Home. This opening presents the reader with what is framed as a widely-held assumption in Britain that Braithwaite is pushing back against: interracial desire is a perverse act that leads to further unnaturalness in the (white) mother-child relationship in the form of neglect and abandonment. It is white women who are "held responsible for (re)producing race" (Fielder 15). Braithwaite, I argue, decouples "unnatural" motherhood from racial markers and links it to performances of parenting within the heteronormative familial structure. Thus, his examples of neglectful *and* caring white/Brown/Black mothers throughout the novel serve to embed Britishness in performances of the ideal heteronormative family, regardless of race.

At the very opening of the novel, Braithwaite questions Miss Coney's figuration of Roddy's mother as a negligent parent, assuming that her prejudices regarding interracial relationships, "that [the] unspoken presupposition that the word 'coloured' suggested something inferior or second best," (*PS* 21) have distorted her view**.** He makes clear his position that white women who participate in interracial relations are not necessarily morally corrupt. However, when he does track Angela down, she proves to confirm all the charges of unnatural motherhood. Angela is entirely indifferent to her child. Far from wanting to be reunited with him, she is not even interested in hearing how he is faring in the Children's Home. Braithwaite describes her as having a "pretty face, girlish, except for the eyes...regarding [him] with casual inquiry" (*PS* 94). She veers between this studied casualness and outright hostility during the visit. When Braithwaite tells her that he is there about Roddy, her response is indifferent. Her "voice was flat, eyes cool, unwavering, the attitude relaxed, casual, deliberate" (*PS* 95). Angela is entirely focused on getting Braithwaite out of her apartment as fast as possible without wasting any words. When he directly asks her if she "care[s] anything about him" (ibid), her answer is a clear

and emphatic “No” (ibid). In response to Braithwaite’s appeal to her parental love for Roddy, her “lovely child”, she says she is “finished with that” and has no interest in seeing or hearing about him (*PS* 95-6). When he takes a different tack and tells her that the London Council expects her to pay some child support, she is equally unwilling. She tells Braithwaite that he and the Council can “expect what the hell they like” (96), she is not paying anything since she is out of work. Braithwaite notes that “for someone unemployed she seemed to be doing quite well” (*PS* 96), indicating the spacious well-furnished and decorated apartment that she is living in. Angela, Braithwaite indicates, is not so poor and desperate that she cannot care for her child. She is uninterested in being a mother, a characteristic that, within the framework of the national heteronormative family, makes her an unnatural woman. To Braithwaite, Angela is not unnatural because she has expressed and acted on her desire for a Black man. Rather, it is her unwillingness to care for the resulting child that marks her out as perverse. By explicitly stating his opposition to the automatic unnaturalness of interracial desire (as evinced in Angela) at the beginning of the novel, his later diagnosis of her as a deficient mother disarticulates her neglect of her child from the racial markers of the relationship that led to his birth. Instead, she is unnatural because of her lack of maternal instincts and her disinterest in giving her son a “normal” family life.

Angela is not the only white woman in the novel who is distanced from “natural” family feeling. Using white women as a major narrative node, Braithwaite repeatedly describes the failure of white familial bonds. Near the beginning of the novel, Braithwaite is accosted by a young woman in a coffee shop who asks him to buy her a coffee. During their encounter, she tells him her life story. She had wanted to be a singer but had been thrown out of her parents’ home because she no longer got along with them. Destitute and desperate, she became a sex

worker. One day, “someone rang and made an appointment. The voice was vaguely familiar...When he rang the bell [she] opened the door and there he was--[her] father” (*PS* 18). Her father fled her doorstep in shame and now she “cannot sleep” for she hears his boots on her stairs in her dreams. This lurid tale of almost-incest presents us with an image of spectacular familial implosion. The white family has become a sordid parody of itself with the daughter as a sex worker and her father as her would-be client.

In contrast to the failed families and unnatural mothers among white Britons, Braithwaite furnishes several instances of non-white immigrants successfully living out British domestic values. Mrs. Bentham, a West Indian woman who is recently arrived in London, is a paragon of motherhood even when the child in question is not her own. Braithwaite visits her and her husband in their home in answer to an urgent summons by her. Their apartment is in Stepney, an East End neighborhood that shows clear signs of neglect and dilapidation, with houses “covered with scabs of dirt and flaking paint...broken railings...and large lidless dustbins which squatted beside the littered area-ways" (*PS* 39). The Benthams’ apartment, however, even if it is a cramped single room in a derelict building, “looked and felt comfortable” (*PS* 41), a testament to Mrs. Bentham’s domestic skills. Everything is clean, bright, and in its place, from the “new black perambulator, shiny with chrome fittings” (*PS* 41) to the “highly polished radiogram” (*PS* 42). In contrast to Angela’s unwillingness to even let Braithwaite inside her apartment, Mrs. Bentham offers him food and drink, seeing to his comfort despite his presence in their apartment as a social worker and not their guest. From the very beginning of the episode, she is marked out as an efficient wife and homemaker. Braithwaite’s detailed descriptions of the contrast between their dilapidated neighborhood and the well-kept, hospitable flat inhabited by the Benthams

emphasizes the power of "correct," loving, and well-run family life, at the center of which is a warm, motherly woman like Mrs. Bentham.

Her domestic abilities are matched by her motherly instinct, even towards a child that is not her own. The problem that Braithwaite has been called in to advise on, it turns out, is that her husband has had a child with another woman while living alone in England. This baby, the resident of the perambulator, is now living with them. Its mother, a white woman, has abandoned it. She has "left it with him [Mr. Bentham] and told him she couldn't look after it and it was up to him" (*PS* 43). Mrs. Bentham, however, is convinced that her husband is infertile and the child is not his. She tells Braithwaite that while she had once conceived out of wedlock, her long marriage has been without children. She wants Braithwaite to convince her husband that he has been duped. Even in the middle of this difficult situation, her tenderness towards the baby is apparent. When the child begins to cry, "she rushe[s] over to the pram and [is] gently rocking it on its springs" (*PS* 48) till the crying subsides. When her husband suggests putting the child in a Home till the mother can be found, she "flare[s]" at him, telling him in no uncertain terms that the child will stay with them since it is not the "poor thing's fault" (*PS* 48). When the baby starts crying again, she "hurrie[s] over to the pram and bend[s] solicitously over its occupant, making soft mother noises to it" (*PS* 48). The visit ends with her declaring her intention to keep the child despite her conviction that it is not related to either her or her husband. Mrs. Bentham's motherly feelings, her tenderness towards a child despite it potentially being a reminder of her husband's infidelity and/or gullibility, are at the forefront of this episode. She exhibits the kind of motherliness that Roddy's mother, despite being his biological parent, cannot. Braithwaite detaches motherhood from both biological parentage (as we see in Roddy's adoptive blended family) and from race. Mrs. Bentham is a good mother because she performs the actions that

code her as such, not because of her racial background or her blood relation to the baby in her charge.

The family values displayed by Mrs. Bentham are present in other non-white characters in equally difficult and unorthodox family situations. Braithwaite repeats this structure through his anecdote about Jason, a young Black man from Barbados who is estranged from the mother of his child, an Irishwoman named Brigid. What Braithwaite emphasizes through this episode, however, is not just the parenting ability of non-white characters, but the capacity for unnatural white parents to change. Since heteronormative familial feeling is not tied to ontologically defined categories like race but to self-performances that are fluid, the perverse unmaternal performance can be transformed into the appropriate maternal one. Brigid and Jason's daughter lives in a Council Home with neither parent contributing to her upkeep. When Braithwaite visits Brigid, who lives with her domineering sister, it becomes clear that she is not interested in taking her child back. She tells him that her sister "won't let [her] bring the child here [her apartment]" (*PS* 123). When Braithwaite brings up the prospects of her getting a job that would allow her to put her daughter in a day nursery, her answer sounds like "merely an excuse" (ibid) to Braithwaite. Although, unlike Roddy's mother, she shows at least some interest in her daughter's progress, "literally glow[ing]" (*PS* 124) when Pat is mentioned, she is still reluctant to have her daughter with her. The father of the child, on the other hand, is "ambitious, decent, and trustworthy" (*PS* 129). Although he occupies one dilapidated room in a ramshackle boarding house, Jason has steady work with the Underground at present and bigger career aspirations for his future. He is also eager to marry Brigid and have his family together; he has saved enough money to move away and find a better place for them. Failing that, he has repeatedly requested Brigid to let their child go live with his "married sister in Kent" (ibid), where she would be

raised by a family member, instead of in an anonymous group home. Even his lack of financial support for Pat while she is in care is explained away: he has opened a savings account in her name and deposits money in there for her future. As Braithwaite approvingly notes, "this [is] a man willing and ready to shoulder his responsibilities" (ibid). While this story begins with a neglectful white mother and a loving Black father, it ends with the family being reunited. Under Braithwaite's guidance, Brigid agrees to marry Jason and take her child home, reuniting the heteronormative family and reestablishing a "traditional" home.

Braithwaite emphasizes both his own educational role, and how, with the right approach, women like Brigid can be transformed into mothers and wives. He executes a plan to bring the two together, willing to go outside of his "terms of reference…If it would eventually lead to the child having a home with her parents then it was justified" (*PS* 129-30). Braithwaite invites each to his office without the other's knowledge. After their arrival, he both "play(s) on their love for the child" (*PS* 130) and educates them on the inadequacies of the group home that Patricia, their daughter, is living in:

> I don't suppose either of you have lived in an institution. From what I know of them I think they're not bad; they serve a useful and necessary function, for children who have no parents or whose parents are unable to provide a home for them. My job is to get children out of these Homes and either back with their own parents or with persons who are willing to assume the position and responsibilities of parents. Your daughter Patricia has spent an unnecessarily long time where she is. In the Council's opinion one or both of you could quite adequately take care of her. (ibid)

Braithwaite begins by emphasizing the utilitarian purpose of the group home and its inadequacy in terms of affective nourishment. While it performs a "necessary [social] function," it is no replacement for a real family. It is only a temporary solution. He implicitly paints a picture of their daughter living in this emotionally impoverished environment for an "unnecessarily long time." This appeal to their love for their daughter is followed up by an authoritative re-

categorization of Brigid and Jason as fit parents. As a mouthpiece of the "Council", Braithwaite is empowered to declare that they can both "adequately take care of her." He proposes several solutions—like a "day nursery" or Jason's "married sister [who] is willing to take care of the child" (ibid)—to Brigid's objections to having the child at home all day while she is at work. According to Braithwaite, they can "provide her with a home" (ibid). Brigid is convinced by his logic. She agrees to marry Jason. Braithwaite leaves them alone to discuss the details and "twenty minutes later…they were both smoking and smiling at each other. They told [him] that that had discussed it all and were prepared to try and make a go of it" (*PS* 131). When, three weeks later, he makes a home visit, it is a scene of domestic bliss in the "small basement flat that shone with cleanliness and warmth" (ibid). Braithwaite emphasizes the capacity for positive change within people like Brigid: "most people had no idea of themselves or how much giving they were capable of" (ibid). The episode ends with an exchange that illuminates both the transformative potential of the right approach, like Braithwaite's, and the ways in which racial prejudice can thwart harmonious family-making. When he asks Brigid why she had not responded well to the previous Welfare Officer in charge of her case, she tells him: "It's the way they look at you soon as they know you have a child by a black man" (*PS* 132). Being focused on race, this story implies, can actually undo the successful heteronormative family that is foundational to the nation.

Paid Servant is populated with characters like Jason who, despite being Black, are more British than the British in terms of their value systems and white women like Brigid, who, if they are not already family-oriented, can be educated into becoming better British mothers. By reiterating numerous instances of non-white immigrants performing as well within the heteronormative family as their white, rooted counterparts, Braithwaite uncouples Britishness

from whiteness. Importantly, the novel, then, does not necessarily attach it to Blackness/Brownness. Instead, Britishness becomes a free-floating set of qualities and performances that is potentially available to everybody. Anyone can be British if they do (rather than be) the right thing. At the end of the novel, Braithwaite recounts a set of characters who have previously appeared in the book and who, to him, are true instances of successful Britishness: "they were the Benthams and Tamerlanes, the Rosenbergs, the taxi driver, all those who did not limit their love and kindliness by the unprobable barriers of color or caste, or creed" (*PS* 216). This is a very mixed group: Black and white, middle and working class. The Benthams are Black working-class people who take in a child of uncertain parentage. The Rosenbergs are a middle class, culturally mobile Jewish couple who are eager to adopt Roddy, while the Tamerlanes are the white Christian family which does end up adopting him. Braithwaite pays special attention to the taxi-driver, a white, working-class man who had helped him out when he had gone to recover a pair of Black twins from an empty apartment. "If [he] had any doubt, the memory of the taxi driver washing and dressing the twins with all the skillful tenderness of a loving parent" (ibid) [is] enough to reassure [him]" (ibid). This miscellaneous group is united by its members' ability to extend fellow-feeling to all regardless of birth and biology. Braithwaite frames them as "my people," those who are able to create a community and a nation that is not limited by the "unprobable barriers of colour or caste, or creed" (*PS* 216). *Paid Servant* ends with a redefinition of what an ideal version of Britain would look like: multicultural, race-blind, and bound together by the anglophilic performance of values coded as British.

2.6 Conclusion

Both *To Sir, With Love* and *Paid Servant* end with tableaus of racial harmony and acceptance. The first with a scene of his students, led by Pamela Dare, presenting him with a gift to acknowledge "how very grateful [they] are for all [he] has done for [them]" (*TSWL* 215) especially since "it could not have been easy for [him] what with one thing or another" (*TSWL* 215). *Paid Servant* ends with an idealized picture of a happy racially mixed family. Braithwaite watches "them going in the opposite direction; Ella and Jackie sedately in step, arms linked; June and Roddy holding hands and skipping along beside them. A family. Each one belonging" (*PS* 219). The endings of Braithwaite's novels illuminate the gap that exists between Braithwaite's scant presence in postcolonial criticism and his enduring appeal to readers in Britain. While Braithwaite's anglophilia and the racial assimilation it results in in his texts have been an uncomfortable topic for postcolonial studies, it has been a compelling popular narrative of the multiethnic or multicultural nation. Braithwaite's critics have rightly pointed out the issues with his desire to be British; it is an oversimplified and idealized picture of what it means to be Black in Britain. As this essay shows, however, Braithwaite's popularity is the result of his ability to tap into certain British colonial formations and reconfigure them to present the reading public with a version of Black Britishness that is not fundamentally threatening to the nation's hierarchical foundations. The potent redefinition of national belonging as a category that is more tethered to a set of values rather than to race gestures to an understanding of the nation as a primarily affective category. To *feel* Britishness as part of one's "inner self" (James 54) and to act accordingly is what is necessary to *be* British. This opens a path for non-white Commonwealth migrants to be absorbed into Britain without the nation having to rethink its foundational beliefs. In a move that is a messy combination of the conservative and the

subversive, Blackness is redefined as a "natural" part of Britain while its disruptive potential is minimized.

I will end with a more radical extension of Braithwaite's ideas. By untethering the nation from a biologically constructed category like race and yoking it to the performative affect of anglophilia, Braithwaite's works ask us to rethink the limits of the nation. According to his definition, anyone who feels attached to and performs anglophilic values is a "true" Briton. As such, the anglophilic subjects of the British empire, whether they be Indian, South African, or Guyanese, can lay claim to Britishness even if they never land on British soil. Readers of his works who identify with his autobiographical protagonist are all, conceivably, British, regardless of their actual nationality and can lay claim to the resources of the "mother country." The national borders are now infinitely fungible and the nation becomes a global category that contains a multi-ethnic, multicultural, multitude of people who are not defined by their residence within the material bounds of the country.

Chapter 3: Anglophilia, Caste, and the Cosmopolitan Brahmin in V.S. Naipaul

V.S. Naipaul published *An Area of Darkness* (1964) less than twenty years after the independence of India. Framed as a travelogue, it records his responses, both affective and intellectual, to the country his grandfather had left for Trinidad in the 1880s. In his well-known review of the book, "Naipaul's India and Mine", the Jewish Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel notes the self-focused and affectively charged nature of this text, observing that Naipaul "writes exclusively from the point of view of his own dilemma…his choice and his escape. That temperament is not universal…To forget this is to be wholly subjective, wholly self-righteous, to think first and last of one's own expectations" (Ezekiel 194). Ezekiel points out the contradiction inherent in the unusually solipsistic nature of a book that frequently makes sweeping, objectively framed pronouncements about the Indian Subcontinent and its history. Even the publisher acknowledges in the blurb that this is a "vision distorted by indignation [and] fear" (Ezekiel 201). *An Area of Darkness*, while claiming to be a text about India, is in reality about Naipaul himself. As an exploration of his selfhood vis-a-vis his "Indianness," it outlines his affective relationship with India. The country, its history, and culture, exist as framing devices for his own subjectivity.[1]

This is equally true for his connection to England as it is outlined in a later autobiographical novel, *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987). Chronicling his extended stay in Wiltshire, Naipaul uses his positive attachments (as opposed to "indignation and fear") to the

[1] This is a consistent trope in colonial literature. Authors like H. Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, and Joseph Conrad have used the colonial "outpost" as a space and a backdrop to work out their own Western imperial dilemmas.

surrounding countryside and its people to build and rebuild his own sense of self. This is not entirely surprising since Naipaul's anglophilia has been an established fact both among his literary contemporaries and in critical evaluations of his work. He has been criticized by figures ranging from Derek Walcott to Edward Said as a native informant figure for the West who mobilizes his emplacement within both England/America and Trinidad/India as a way to advocate for the authority of his writing.[2] He has been read as a psychologically colonized subject who aligns himself with the empire while critiquing the benighted colonies. The attachment he demonstrates towards Britishness in *The Enigma of Arrival* is a way to locate himself as a citizen of England. Both texts use a set of anglophilic strategies of the self that emplace him as an authoritative global subject-citizen. While criticism has focused on Naipaul's cosmopolitanism and his colonial attachments that frame this identity, this chapter shows how Naipaul's anglophilia is particularly inflected by the discourses of caste.

Naipaul's anglophilic identity is fundamentally shaped by his caste identity as a Hindu Brahmin man: his devotion to Britishness functions as a mode of closing the gap between his class and caste identities. According to Naipaul, his grandfather indentured himself and immigrated to the Caribbean under the impression that he was going to carry on his ancestral profession of being a Brahmin pundit (an educator cum priest) (*AAOD* 269).[3] In reality, he was pressed into service as a factory worker and a farm laborer. Naipaul's own father was singled out

[2] Walcott wrote a satirical poem about Naipaul called "The Mongoose" that he read aloud at the Calabash Literary festival in Jamaica in 2008. The poem castigated Naipaul for his hunger for colonial recognition and fame–his desire to be British–reminding him of his origins within a family of indentured laborers in Trinidad. In a review of *Beyond Belief*, Naipaul's travelogue about Islam in Malaysia, Pakistan, Iran, and Indonesia, Edward Said frames Naipaul as an author who has become creatively bankrupt through his attempts at garnering Western approval via his native informancy. His is the "implied audience of disenchanted Western liberals who can never hear bad enough things about all the Third World myths" (Said). Both these critiques signal one of the most enduring criticisms made of Naipaul: his disinterest and disgust regarding non-Western countries and his enduring attachment to the West, especially England.

[3] I will be using the abbreviations *AAOD* and *TEOA* for *An Area of Darkness* and *The Enigma of Arrival* respectively in this chapter.

among his siblings and educated to be a pundit. Instead, he became a journalist whose literary ambitions were largely frustrated but still durably passed on to his sons (*TEOA* 350). This exclusively masculine lineage tells the story of a family whose caste, and by extension class, identity has been endangered through the men's inability to successfully continue the ancestral profession. In this chapter, I argue that Naipaul reconstitutes his caste and classed selfhoods through his anglophilic self-performances in *An Area of Darkness* and *The Enigma of Arrival.*

Crucial to my argument is the contention that Naipaul's attachments to Britishness and Brahminism[4] are not oppositional or contradictory, but co-constitutive. They work together to create the figure of the cosmopolitan Brahmin man on the global stage. The cosmopolitan Brahmin sounds like an apparently contradictory figure. Brahmin caste identities are famously parochial, provincial, and self-contained. They define themselves in terms of restrictions and boundaries that keep them separate from other communities. The *kala pani* prohibition,[5] that declared Brahmins who had crossed the "black waters" of the oceans to travel abroad impure, was an explicit prohibition against the intermixing and hybridity that is foundational to ideas of cosmopolitanism. Naipaul, I argue, is able to reconcile caste with cosmopolitanism by founding his cosmopolitan identity on his ability to perform British civilizational values. He demonstrates, as a Trinidadian man, a cosmopolitan facility with British (and to some extent European at large) codes of conduct. He then integrates his attachments to Britishness and Brahminism by illuminating their commonalities: the focus on purity, the idea of the perfect Brahmin or the

[4] I use the term Brahminism in this chapter to refer to a caste affiliation. Specifically, Brahminism involves participation in a set of inherited social, economic, and cultural privileges that come with being a Brahmin and simultaneous investment in keeping Dalit communities disenfranchised. I will use the terms "Savarna" and "Dalit" to refer to upper-caste and non-upper-caste communities respectively.

[5] For more on this, see, Mohammed, "Crossing the Black Water: From India to Trinidad, 1845–1917"; Mohabir, "*Kala Pani:* Aesthetic Deathscapes and the Flow of Water after Indenture"; Mehta, *Diasporic (Dis)locations: Indo-Caribbean Women Writers Negotiate the "Kala Pani".*

perfect British gentleman, (no character in the two books embodies this ideal, but everyone is measured against it and, it is implied, Naipaul is the superior being for being able to integrate both), and the relation of these two figures to certain national self-conceptions. Using these similarities, he reads his Brahmin identity through the lens of his Britishness and vice versa, eventually combining the two to create a hybrid figure that participates in the privileges of both. Naipaul's self-creation via *An Area of Darkness* and *The Enigma of Arrival*, I argue, is an exemplar of a potent postcolonial identity category: that of the cosmopolitan Brahmin who can easily participate in the privileges of Western culture without violating caste categories and has been able to meld the two into a coherent category of privilege.[6]

The cosmopolitan Brahmin is an identity that is a product of the continued connections between the postcolony and the ex-imperial center. Decolonization, the formation of the postcolonial nation, and Commonwealth immigration into Britain are all central to this identity category that bases itself on being able to meld the global and the local, revising what is a local category of privilege into a global one. This is done by connecting indigenous and imperial systems of privilege. The cosmopolitan Brahmin connects Indian conceptions of caste with British ideas of class, arguing that they have similar origins in ontological heritable superiority and require similar performances of cultural exclusivity, thus creating an identity that can

[6] Naipaul's relationship to England and his cosmopolitan identity have been addressed extensively in Naipaul criticism. *The Enigma of Arrival* has been a particular locus of this analysis. Ian Baucom's *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* discusses Naipaul's focus on the ruin as a structure of reconciliation with imperial decline and his place in a post-imperial England. Sanjay Krishnan's "Formative Dislocation in V.S. Naipaul's *Enigma of Arrival*" discusses Naipaul's "disoriented and uncomprehending narrator" (610) as an enactment of the disorienting effects of introducing the periphery to the center. In *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel*, John J. Su draws attention to how Naipaul's belonging in England is triangulated with his attachments to Trinidad and India. Jasbir Jain's "Landscapes of the Mind: Unraveling Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*." looks at *Enigma* as Naipaul's attempt to belong in England as an "outsider." Naipaul's treatment of caste, on the other hand, has not received as much attention. In "Caste Traveling Across the Kala Pani: The Case of the Unborn V. S. Naipaul," Joshil K. Abraham discusses Naipaul's complicated caste identity as a diasporic Brahmin man whose family did cross the black waters. Nivedita Misra's "Naipaul and Hinduism: Negotiating Caste in India" also reads his India trilogy as a way for him to reconcile his Hindu identity with his Anglo-Trinidadian affiliations.

incorporate the privileges of both. The argument for the superiority of this hybridity–rather than "pure" class or caste status–is the idea that the ability to perform and participate in different and hybridized systems of privilege is more advantageous and better suited to a postcolonial, globalized, migratory world where someone like Naipaul is able to perform and claim insider status, as a high class/high caste man, within both the imperial metropole and the postcolonial nation. As the cosmopolitan Brahmin, he is able to both see and analyze India and Britain in ways that their long-term inhabitants who have never left the country cannot. The cosmopolitan Brahmin is an identity category that looks forward to the transformations of imperial and indigenous axes of privilege post-decolonization and during globalization. It expresses the continued life of Indian caste identity and British class identity within a diasporic, globalized world and centers the viability of both in their ability to commingle.

Naipaul expresses this hybridized self-making through his generic affiliations. Naipaul mobilizes the genre of the travelogue as it became popular in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe. The wonder and terror of encountering unknown landscapes as well as the nostalgia inherent in reimagining familiar domestic ones–and the sense of mastery that is created through each of these affective processes–are foundational emotions of Naipaul's self-making.[7] Both *An Area of Darkness* and *The Enigma of Arrival* combine his distinct responses to the domestic and the foreign and outline how Naipaul uses them to negotiate the difficulties that he must face as a Trinidadian attempting to not just enter into but establish authority over Britishness and Brahminism. At first glance, it appears that Naipaul's attitude to India and Britain–as exemplified in these two texts–are polar opposites. Naipaul rejects India as he feels it "slipping

[7] In his very first travelogue*, The Middle Passage*, Naipaul explicitly places himself as the successor of the racist 19th-century traveler to the Caribbean, James Anthony Froude, whose book, *The English in the West Indies,* provides the epigraph.

away from [him]" (*AAOD* 281) soon after he leaves. It is in England that he is given "a new life" (*TEOA* 103). However, a comparative study clarifies that instead of being contradictory forces in Naipaul's sense of selfhood, his attitudes to Indianness and Britishness are harmonious and cumulative in their building of his persona as a cosmopolitan Brahmin. Using certain generic conventions of travel literature–and combining them with frameworks of caste—he creates a category for himself such that his anglophilia and his Brahminism are co-constitutive instead of being contradictory. He uses certain aspects of his caste identity to construct his claims to elite British citizenship and vice versa.

4.2 Travel Literature: Home and Abroad

Naipaul became as famous for his travel writing as for his novels. He authored more than ten travelogues, most of them detailing his journeys into various non-western countries. *An Area of Darkness* is part of what is known as his Indian trilogy [the others being *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1976) and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990)]. In addition, Naipaul has written about places as varied as Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Malaysia, and Pakistan. Naipaul's traveler persona is part native informant, part Saidian cosmopolitan exile, and part humanist/imperial explorer. His work is often critiqued for its explicit racism and xenophobia while being simultaneously praised by others for its unwillingness "to mince words or embrace gooey sentiment" (*Washington Post* Streitfield). Naipaul uses his travel writing to not just create a sense of his postcolonial self, as has been pointed out by several of his critics,[8] but a specific postcolonial persona of a cosmopolitan Brahmin man.

[8] For more on this, see Nixon, *London Calling: V.S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin*; Walder, *Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation and Memory*; Krishnan, *V.S. Naipaul's Journeys: From Periphery to Center*; Matos, "V.S. Naipaul: Travel Writing and the Quest for Postcolonial Identities."

To do this, he draws on the traditions of eighteenth and nineteenth century European travel writing, specifically British travel literature, both imperial and domestic. While travel writing has existed as a genre for hundreds of years, its efflorescence as a popular and populist literary form is a result of imperialist expansion, domestic national redefinitions, and the coming of commercial travel via train and ship that led to the growth of tourism (Batten 2). Amanda Gilroy gestures towards this connection between self-creation and the travelogue in her discussion of Romantic travel writing: "sometimes the circulating discourses of travel secured self-identity and reaffirmed existing convictions of cultural superiority" (1). Gilroy situates travel writing, whether affirming or subverting imperial and nationalist expectations, as being founded on the existence of the individual subject. This subject is either affirmed or disturbed in its established sense of itself, but its centrality as the structuring principle of the travelogue is not in question. Gilroy argues that the encounter between the seeing subject and the landscape being viewed is a co-constitutive one. The descriptions of a space/culture by the authoritative "I" also help describe and locate that subject vis-à-vis markers of such categories as gender, race, class, and nationality.

The two main subgenres of travel literature–the imperial and the domestic–both participated in this self-construction in diverse but harmonious ways. Travel within England was made easier with the construction of better roads and the rise of carriage and stagecoach journeys (Gilroy 2). The Lake District, Lyme Regis, and Scotland were all popular destinations that helped shape England's domestic sense of self, particularly for its rising middle-class who could afford to travel in larger numbers than ever before (ibid). Domestic travel writing was focused on defining travel as an aid to individual health (physical, psychological, and moral), as a way to comment on historical and ecological changes, and as a conduit to creating a classed self.

Imperial travel literature included accounts of male explorers like Mungo Park and David Livingstone who were hailed as pioneers, as well as women writers like Sophia Poole and Emmeline Lott, whose presence in the market became especially noticeable after the coming of commercial travel.[9] Imperial travel writing was preoccupied with making the exotic knowable, establishing the superiority of the British subject vis-a-vis the foreign colonial, and establishing an orientalist body of knowledge to affirm the rightness of colonization.[10]

In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt formulates a character type within the category of the global British subject—the "seeing man"—to define the implicitly masculinized imperial traveler's gaze. The seeing man is capable of a double vision that both enacts colonial conquest and disavows violence and affirms its beneficence at the same time. He is the "European male subject of European landscape discourse—he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (7). Pratt reads the descriptions of landscapes and peoples in imperial travel writing as creating the "innocent" imperial self. The self-effacement that is implied in the "disinterested" descriptions of other places and communities is actually, a "performance of self-effacement" that creates the explorer's imperial and national selfhood (7-8). Pratt reads the descriptive strategies

[9] For more, see Franey, *Victorian Travel Writing and Imperial Violence: British Writing on Africa, 1855-1902;* Howell, *Exploring Victorian Travel Literature: Disease, Race and Climate*; Oerlemans, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature*; Lydon, *Imperial Emotions: The Politics of Empathy Across the British Empire*; Higgins, *Romantic Englishness: Local, National and Global Selves, 1780-1850*; Kuehn and Smethurst, eds., *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility;* McEwan, *Gender, Geography and Empire: Victorian Women Travellers in Africa.*

[10] As Gilroy has pointed out, the boundaries between ideological functions of domestic and imperial travel writing were tenuous at best. The colonial categories, tropes, and stereotypes that were created through accounts of India, the Caribbean, and Africa were repurposed and applied to descriptions of Ireland, Scotland, and Italy and vice versa (Gilroy 3). It was not a one-way movement, but rather a circulation. This idea is also reinforced by Mary Louis Pratt's concept of the "contact zone" in *Imperial Eyes* where imperial and colonized cultures meet, clash, and transform each other while participating in highly asymmetric power relations (4). "While the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery…it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis" (Pratt 6). The domestic and the imperial informed and created each other, drawing from, exchanging, and reinforcing an overlapping set of ideological structures. This imbrication of the domestic and the imperial was essential to the creation of the global British subject.

of travelogues as modes of self-creation and mastery. Her formulation of the seeing man helps us read Naipaul's curiously passive persona in both texts and allows us to reframe his quietude, wonder, nostalgia, and sense of futility as strategies of a self that is aspiring to specific categories of privilege. His "own hopes and fears, and his own bodily experience, constitute the events and register their significance" (Pratt 77). In the following sections, I show how Naipaul uses this strategy of fronting his own selfhood and vision as giving meaning to the world in both contrasting and continuous ways in his accounts of his time in India and England. He is doing this in order to cumulatively create for himself a position of domestic and global mastery as a cosmopolitan Brahmin.

4.3 *An Area of Darkness*: The Imperial Traveler and the Native Informant

An Area of Darkness is Naipaul's first travelogue set in India. Published in 1964, it narrates an independent nation that is less than twenty years old at the time. Naipaul brings to his sojourn a set of expectations and a point of view that are borne out of his imperial and familial origins. As a citizen of another British colony from across the globe and as the grandson of an indentured laborer who had emigrated to Trinidad from India many decades ago, Naipaul comes to the country as both a son of the British empire and a son of India. The masculinist familial frame that is invoked is simultaneously a conduit for his anxieties about being bound to the debased facets of his Indianness via blood and for his desire to escape these binds through his ties to England as his country and civilization by adoption. By taking on the persona of the imperial traveler, he distances himself from India while, at the same time, aligning himself with England through performances of his difference and superiority.[11]

[11] To further emphasize his status as the singular, authoritative imperial traveler, Naipaul barely acknowledges his wife, Patricia Hale, who had accompanied him on this trip. She has no dialogue and her viewpoint is entirely

Travelling by ship, as Naipaul approaches India, he reads each country he encounters through the lens of the "East." "The East began: in the chaos of uneconomical movement, the self-stimulated din, the sudden feeling of insecurity, the conviction that all men were not brothers and that luggage was in danger" (*AAOD* 13). Naipaul's sense of the East is one of alienation and estrangement. He feels isolated and beset by thieves and ill-wishers. Linking the physical appearances of non-Europeans to discourses of "authority and subservience" (*AAOD* 12), Naipaul writes that as he journeys towards India, the "physique of Europe had melted away… men had been diminished and deformed; they begged and whined" (*AAOD* 16). While he views these communities as subhuman, this is not a secure perception that leaves his own selfhood untouched. He insists on his "new awareness of myself as a whole human being, and a determination, touched with fear, to remain what I was" (ibid) as opposed to the "diminished and deformed" (ibid). The articulation of his wholeness is framed through his fear of losing it. His persona as a civilizationally superior imperial traveler is threatened by his epidermal similarities to these "diminished" communities. Naipaul's self-distancing strategies are always bound up with his anxieties about being insufficiently separated from what he sees as the uncivilized East.

The opening section of *An Area of Darkness* articulates this fear through his distress about becoming indistinguishable in the crowd in India and losing his self. The selfhood that is created via the imperial travelogue bases itself on and takes for granted the unbridgeable racial and cultural differences between the observer and the observed communities. That Naipaul is not, on sight, epidermally and physically different from other, millions of Indians, undercuts his authoritative self and creates a sense of anxiety: how can he construct a masterful subjectivity if the very distinctiveness of his self is threatened? As he anxiously remarks upon his arrival to

missing. She remains nameless and is only occasionally referred to as his "companion". For more, see Idris, "'The Traveler and his Hushed Companion': Problems of Narration in an Area of Darkness"

Bombay: “For the first time in my life, I was one of the crowd. There was nothing in my appearance or dress to distinguish me from the crowd eternally hurrying into Churchgate Station” (*AAOD* 45-46). Evoking a sense of huge, homogenous, and anonymous crowds through his reference to the foot-traffic in a major railway station in one of India’s largest metropolises, Naipaul expresses his fear of becoming one with the colonial population and being denied his unique subjectivity. If he cannot be distinguished from other Indians, he is threatened with becoming part of a community whose individuality is disavowed by the imperial gaze.

The stability and visibility of Naipaul’s imperial gaze is threatened by his sameness in a group of Indians:

> Now in Bombay I entered a shop or a restaurant and awaited a special quality of response. And there was nothing. It was like being denied part of my reality. Again and again I was caught. I was faceless. I might sink without a trace into that Indian crowd. I had been made by Trinidad and England; recognition of my difference was necessary to me. I felt the need to impose myself and didn’t know how. (*AAOD* 46)

When the “special quality of response” (ibid) that he expects when he goes to a shop or restaurant in India is withheld, he feels like he is “being denied part of his reality” (ibid) – that is, the reality of being an individuated subject. That he is not being continuously singled out as part of a minority population as he is in England and Trinidad is not cause for a sense of community, camaraderie, or even welcome anonymity. Instead, he feels “caught,” “faceless,” and that he might “sink without a trace into that Indian crowd” (ibid). Naipaul feels that the public “recognition of [his] difference” (ibid) is necessary to his subjectivity and that he must “impose” (ibid) himself in some way to assert this difference. As the language of forceful imposition makes clear, it is by inhabiting the category of the imperial traveler that he attempts to hold onto his separate “whole” subjectivity, and both gain mastery over and distance himself from the nameless, faceless, crowds of Indians.

Naipaul's performance as an imperial traveler is inflected by his racial departure from the implied whiteness of the category and his similarity to the objects of his gaze.[12] Because of this difference, his strategies of self-performance create a set of effects that do not *only* establish his civilizational distance and superiority from the local population. Rather, they locate Naipaul in the unstable in-between position of being a copy, a postcolonial mimic of a colonial figure. While he might perform the same gestures of distancing and civilizational superiority, his assertion of difference does not give him the kind of indisputable narrative authority white British imperial travelers can potentially demonstrate. Instead, his self-performance as an imperial traveler is marked by an ambivalence about the "wholeness" of his being that is threatened at the very beginning of the travelogue. In the following sections, I show how his imperial traveler persona is made up of a mix of moves that both confirm and undermine his superiority.

Pratt's category of the seeing man, specifically her subcategory of the "sentimental" seeing man, allows us to read Naipaul's ambivalent interactions with certain Indian characters. Importantly, it reveals how he mobilizes his incomprehension of their ways and his passivity during these meetings as strategies of creating a troubled but masterful self. Pratt describes the sentimental seeing man as a "responsive and self-dramatizing figure" (77) who performs his "submissiveness and vulnerability" (78) to center himself and create a persona that claims importance through its very performances of self-effacement. Naipaul enacts this complicated series of maneuvers during his meeting with a young Sikh man as he is travelling southwards by train, towards his own ancestral village. This prolonged encounter is framed through an

[12] This is a self-exceptionalizing move that hearkens back to Cornelia Sorabji's creation of a category of one for herself that combined her racial and ethnic similarities to the objects of her study with her ability to perform Britishness in order to establish herself as a unique authority on women in purdah.

ambiguous combination of Naipaul's silent sympathy with the Sikh's vocal disgust with India and its peoples and a simultaneous distancing that hinges on his own position as an imperial traveler who is not part of this muck, unlike his travel companion, who is a member of this country. The whole episode reveals Naipaul's own unique and unstable inhabiting of the role of the (white) imperial traveler and the need for a new category to consolidate his authority. The Sikh, who is never named, is introduced through the impression he makes on Naipaul: "He had made his effect. My eyes returned to that turban again and again… I feared that my interest was inviting his own and making inevitable a contact I wished to avoid" (*AAOD* 234-5). The Sikh is framed through Naipaul's response to him as a type, first and foremost, rather than any descriptions of him as an individual:

> The Sikh's individuality appeared to be muffled by his beard and turban; his eyes were robbed of expression. His reputation in India did not make him easier to understand. There was his military tradition; his ferocity as a soldier and policeman was known. Equally established, in spite of his adventurousness and his obvious success, was his simpleness. The foolish Sikh is a figure of legend. The turban had something to do with it; it heated the Sikh's uncut hair and softened his brain (*AAOD* 235).

He is introduced through a series of racialized stereotypes—his "adventurousness" "ferocity as a soldier and policeman," and "simpleness" (ibid)—that are drawn from British colonial race science. Naipaul uses the turban as a cliched object of fascination that others the Sikh, repeating some obviously false "legend" (ibid) about the turban making him stupid in order to cast him as a recognizable type. Naipaul's own reaction to the Sikh community prefaces this description, teaching us to be both "puzzled and attracted" (ibid) by him. Here, then, Naipaul's apparently passive observation is framed as an objective, teachable moment, communicating to his readers the apparent racial verities of the Sikh community. This instructive frame gives us certain ideological and affective lenses through which to read the Sikh and reframes Naipaul's later

apparently passive interactions with him. The Sikh's behavior confirms several of the stereotypes—his aggression, simplemindedness, and desire for adventure—that Naipaul teaches us about his community at the outset.

As they strike up a conversation during the day-long journey, it turns out that the Sikh is "color-prejudiced" (*AAOD* 236) against other, darker-skinned communities of Indians. He uses abusive epithets about the other South Indian passengers on the train and tries to make common cause with Naipaul as a man who is from England and has, like him, been to London. While they converse, Naipaul, while playing an amiable, placating role with the Sikh, gives us his detailed internal responses that diverge significantly from this part and position him as a removed observer. This is a consistent narrative strategy. The Sikh tries to establish his closeness to Naipaul by stressing their connection to England (even though it is the briefness of his sojourn that is emphasized by Naipaul), insisting that they must both at some point have been to "the Bambi Coffee House…on Finchley Road" (*AAOD* 236). Naipaul, however, tells his readers that "English was only his [the Sikh's] second language and few Indians dealt in irony; and that, for all his longing for Finchley Road… he was an Indian to whom taboos of caste and sect were fundamental" (*AAOD* 237). This moment of patronizing disapproval, and the accompanying self-distancing and sense of superiority is not, however, expressed openly to the Sikh by Naipaul. As he writes "the moment for declaration, and perhaps withdrawal, passed" (ibid). Naipaul positions his passive acquiescence to the Sikh's company and his prejudices as an act of continued and ambivalent curiosity about a colonial subject from whom he is removed.

The instability of this distanced passivity, however, becomes clear as the Sikh continues to become increasingly vituperative against other Indian communities, and Naipaul's silent observation of him tips over into a troubled identification. "He grew more perceptibly bitter as

the journey went on but it answered my mood" (*AAOD* 238). As the Sikh castigates the country with its "decaying towns… [and] withered race of men" (ibid), Naipaul performs his sympathy and agreement with this anger while simultaneously trying to distance himself from it. He does this by designating the Sikh as an Indian and himself, by implication, as non-Indian: "He grew more perceptibly bitter as the journey went on… because his reactions appeared to be like mine it did not occur to me that they were unusual in an Indian" (ibid). Although their response to the India they see "appear" to be similar, they are actually not. As an Indian, the Sikh's rage is "unusual," unlike that of a foreigner like Naipaul who is being exposed to these horrors for the first time. Naipaul attempts to separate his own anger from the Sikh's by attributing them to different causes. While his is understandable due to his position as a foreigner, the Sikh's is evidence of his unusual psychology. This distinction, however, is only partially successful, and Naipaul's affect, and by extension his self-construction, periodically and partially collapses into the Sikh's. He writes: "he answered my own mood…his violence steadied me; he became my irrational self" (ibid). By sympathetically participating in his anger, Naipaul's selfhood becomes entangled in the Sikh's. He does not have the same privilege of the white imperial observer whose difference from his subjects is made indelible through his skin. Their previously set up separation is brought into question and the Sikh reveals the "irrational" Indian facet of Naipaul's self that undermines his position as an authoritative, objective observer.[13] Naipaul's secure, imperial self-positioning comes under scrutiny because the racial difference that is foundational to the category of the imperial traveler in its Romantic and Victorian iterations is not available to

[13] Naipaul's subsequent interactions with the Sikh continue to demonstrate this troubled identification with him. As they interact, the Sikh becomes increasingly vituperative, constantly expressing his hatred for darker-skinned Indians, primarily from the South. He declares that they are "spoil[ing] the race" (AAOD 242). Naipaul is himself of South Indian origin. Yet, he as an imperial traveler, finds some commonality with the Sikh's disdain of India. "The condition of India was an affront to him; it was to me, too...I became more and more involved with his bitterness" (*AAOD* 241).

him. Indeed, if he did inhabit the role exactly as any white man would, he could be read as providing an inferior copy of a white original.

This move both partially removes him from playing the exact role of the white imperial traveler (whose authority is unquestioned) and makes space for a hybrid category by combining the discourse of imperial travel with the discourse of caste, specifically, Brahminism. Instead of completely repudiating his Indian/Hindu origins, he mobilizes it to create a new kind of authority for himself that lets him combine a privileged insider/native informant perspective with the superior gaze of the imperial traveler. Naipaul both redefines the category of the (usually white) imperial traveler and the category of the Brahmin in the process, creating the hybrid figure of the cosmopolitan Brahmin that participates in two elite identities and uses the discursive framework of one to support the other. He combines discourses of race and caste to create this role.

Historically, the analysis of relationships between caste and race have run the gamut from seeing them as totally separate entities to reading them as being fundamentally connected to each other.[14] Suraj Yengde's definition of global caste focuses on its flexibility, the ease with which it adapts to a variety of social structures, and its ability to work in tandem with other systems of oppression like racism:

> [As a] layered mechanism of immovable social hierarchy… that aims to dehumanize certain forms of labour through both structural and economical positions, as well as through the cultural practices of endogamy and ritual… caste as a practice [is] located in commune in the local context with its specific socio-cultural regulations, [and] it can be easily reproduced throughout the world (343).

Yengde's formulation of caste allows for an understanding of it as a global category in a contemporary world and illuminates the long colonial history of caste and race as co-constitutive.

[14] For more on this, see Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India;* Pandey, *A History of Prejudice" Race, Caste, and Difference in India and the United States;* Yengde, *Caste Matters*; Subramanian, *The Caste of Merit: Engineering Education in India*; Rawat and Satyanarayana, eds., *Dalit Studies*; Rege, *Writing Caste/Writing Gender Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios;* Abraham and Misrahi-Barak, eds., *Dalit Literatures in India.*

For my analysis, reading caste as a flexible global term allows for the creation of figures like the cosmopolitan Brahmin that hybridize race and caste discourses. Naipaul's cosmopolitan Brahmin calls upon a long history of white supremacy and Brahminism going hand in hand. In his article on the connections between white and Hindu nationalisms, Ishan Ashutosh points towards their shared basis in the concept of Aryanism that was popularized by Orientalists like Max Muller and Sir William Jones (325). Combining caste discourse with race science, Aryanism "was devoted to locating the geographical origins and migrations of Aryans, identifying their superior racial characteristics, and in suggesting that the exalted caste status of Brahmins was an expression of their being descended from this "pure" and "noble" race" (ibid). According to this theory, Savarna Hindus and white Europeans were descended from the same superior race, thus legitimizing the concept of the Aryan to bring together both race and caste elites, combining the British with the Indian. This idea is foundational to the influential figure of the elite native informant who can use their access to Britishness and Indianness to convey unique and valuable knowledge about the colonized to the colonizer. Thus, the more European-adjacent Savarna Indians were better placed to work with colonial authorities to establish imperial control over India. This is a colonial inheritance that Naipaul, as a postcolonial writer, can activate, and these pre-histories are foundational to Naipaul's own position as a Brahmin author writing about India for a white, Western audience.

At the outset of *An Area of Darkness*, Naipaul's Brahminism seems vexed since he repudiates religion itself. He has been "born an unbeliever" (*AAOD* 34). Despite coming from an "orthodox" (*AAOD* 35) Brahmin family, he "took no pleasure in religious ceremonies (*AAOD* 34)," "did not understand the language" (*AAOD* 34), and with his "lack of belief and distaste for ritual there also went a metaphysical incapacity" (*AAOD* 35). Of Hinduism, he "only" retains his

"sense of the difference of people, a vaguer sense of caste, and a horror of the unclean" (ibid). Naipaul divorces religious caste identity from casteist practice and feeling. He positions himself as an "unbeliever," someone who does not subscribe to Hinduism. Foundational to Hinduism as a religion is the maintenance of caste distinctions. Naipaul disavows any allegiance to caste as an ideological and material system. However, he retains a "vaguer sense of caste, and a horror of the unclean" (ibid). This usage of deliberately ambiguous and affective language separates caste practice and casteist feelings—like a sense of difference from and superiority over Dalits and Muslims–from the need to explicitly identifying and performing as a fully-fledged Hindu Brahmin. Naipaul disarticulates caste from religious belief. Instead, he links it to racial difference; what is referred to as his "sense of the difference between people" (ibid) and subsequently explained through anecdotes about Black Trinidadians. The secularizing of caste is a hallmark of the imbrication of caste and race. In the nineteenth century, "the 'scientific' conceptualization of race justified caste inequalities in secular terms; religion was no longer needed to explain social hierarchies in India as the "universality" of scientific racism purported to clarify the racial origins of caste" (J. F. Chirez-Garza et al. 196). This process of detaching caste practices from religious belief and performance dating back to the previous century is the background for Naipaul's ability to simultaneously uphold Brahminical caste practices while calling himself an "unbeliever" (*AAOD* 34).

Naipaul underplays the presence of both racism and casteism in his upbringing, observing that "In Trinidad, caste had no meaning in our day-to-day lives" (*AAOD* 36), and that in "racial matters…I remained an innocent for long" (*AAOD* 33). This avowal of innocence, however, is undercut by his description of his upbringing and the life of his Hindu community in Trinidad. "We ate certain foods, performed certain ceremonies and had certain taboos; we expected others

to have their own. We did not wish to share theirs" (ibid). This description of an extremely circumscribed community life founded on notions of purity gesture towards both racist and casteist practices. Naipaul also narrates how he learnt that "Muslims were not to be trusted" (ibid). On an "unusual" (ibid) visit to a Muslim family, he is put off by their differences:

> They were Muslims, everything about them had heightened difference. I saw it in their appearance, their house, their dress and presently, as I had been fearing, in their food. We were offered some vermicelli done in milk. I believed it to be associated with some unknown and distasteful ritual. I could not eat it. They were in fact Hindus. Our families were late joined in marriage (*AAOD* 34).

Naipaul tries to distance himself from his family's orthodoxy by framing this as a comic misunderstanding. His lack of religious knowledge has led him to assume that he is witnessing Muslim food practices. This was actually a Hindu family and his ignorance had led to his behaving as he did. However, this abrupt and truncated revelation at the end of the anecdote does not erase Naipaul's Brahmin superiority. His sense of caste difference is built across the whole passage through descriptions of the unwelcome differences Naipaul senses between himself and this presumably Muslim family and his "fear" and "distaste" for having to participate in their customs and food practices. The quick turn at the end does not negate the Islamophobia that is threaded through the entire story.

Along with Islamophobia, the other pillar of Brahminism like Naipaul's is casteism. In another anecdote that follows soon after, he narrates his pleasure at being called a "Real Brahmin" by one of his schoolmates. During a science class when the students are passing equipment to each other, Naipaul lets it pass him by. An Indian boy he identifies as a "class tough" whispers "Real Brahmin" in an "approving" tone with an "unexpected tenderness [in] his voice" (*AAOD* 37). He attributes this to a misunderstanding. He had let the beaker by because he "thought he hadn't been seen" (ibid), not because of a fear of caste pollution. Yet, he is "pleased"

(ibid) by the approval of this boy and his misrecognition as a "Real Brahmin" (ibid). While Naipaul characterizes this as a moment of misrecognition—his classmate does not realize Naipaul's "loss" (ibid) of Hinduism due to his "decision and temperament" (ibid) (i.e. his secular atheism)— this move, once again, detaches Naipaul's Hindu Brahmin identity from religious belief while affirming its legitimacy through caste practices.

Casteist practices like untouchability are often extended to racial segregation. This incident with his schoolmates that Naipaul narrates is also exemplary of the imbrication of casteism and racism. Naipaul does not touch a piece of equipment that has been touched by non-Brahmin *and* Black students. The practice of casteism as undertaken by Naipaul and his community extends these taboos to Black people and combines it with racism. This is made explicit when he outlines the food restrictions of his youth. He is prohibited from buying "black pudding and souse, favourite street-corner and sports-ground dishes of the Negro proletariat" (*AAOD* 35), a dish that he regards with "fascinated horror" (ibid). As a boy, then, Naipaul is prevented from buying certain street-food from Black Trinidadians, and he associates that food with strong negative feelings. The fascination and horror he feels towards Black food is similar to his disgust with the milk and vermicelli that he is served by at the apparently Muslim household. The food/contact restrictions surrounding Dalits and Muslims that are foundational to casteism are, here, extended to race.

Naipaul writes that all he has retained from his childhood training in prejudice is a "sense of the difference of people," and a "vaguer sense of caste" (ibid). His use of qualifying terms like "sense of" and "vague" appear to ameliorate the orthodoxy of his upbringing and frame him as a secular, liberal atheist as opposed to his orthodox Hindu community with their strict rules, rituals, and taboos. This "vagueness," however, transforms the clear rigidities of caste, class, and

religion into a fluid and ambiguous aura that lets Naipaul simultaneously claim non-believer status and retain a sense of caste and religious superiority. The conversion of explicit, religiously affiliated caste practice into a vague sense of caste actually allows for greater contradictions and flexibility within its practice, supports its hybridization with other categories, and ensures that Naipaul can disavow both caste and religion whenever suitable without feeling any sense of having performed caste violation (and conversely, practice caste while simultaneously repudiating it).

It is this more flexible redefinition of caste that allows Naipaul to combine his insider native informant eye as a Brahmin with the vision of an anglicized and distanced imperial traveler. This hybrid vision is in action during Naipaul's repeated and detailed descriptions of public defecation in India. "Indians defecate everywhere," (*AAOD* 74) according to Naipaul. "They defecate on the beaches; they defecate on the hills; they defecate on the riverbanks; they defecate on the streets; they never look for cover" (ibid). As an imperial traveler, Naipaul is overwhelmed by the ubiquity of this practice and even finds it comical. He describes in Bombay a "bespectacled patriarch walking past the university… without warning he raises his dhoti… he squats, pisses on the pavement, leisurely rises…, and continues on his promenade (ibid). This portrait of an upper class, Savarna man relieving himself in public is played for laughs. Naipaul describes the indignity of his actions as an incongruous counterpoint to his "respectable" appearance and his own lack of embarrassment. Channeling the eye of the imperial traveler who finds the event disgusting, obscure, and funny, he performs his familiarity and agreement with British codes of appropriate public behavior.

The imperial traveler, however, is essentially an outsider and cannot provide the unique point of view that Naipaul as a Hindu Brahmin can. To consolidate his unique mastery over the

Indian landscape—a position that the generically white category of the imperial traveler cannot afford him, a non-white man—Naipaul switches roles. He uses his insider knowledge as a Hindu Brahmin to establish his unique insight and authority over the situation.

> These squatting figures…are never spoken of; they are never written about; they are not mentioned in novels and stories; they do not appear in feature films and documentaries. This might be regarded as part of a permissible prettifying intention. But the truth is Indians do not see these squatters and might even, with complete sincerity, deny they exist: a collective blindness arising out of the fear of pollution and resulting conviction that Indians are the cleanest people in the world. (*AAOD* 75)

Naipaul sets up two revelations here: why public excretion is so widespread in India despite the caste imperative to remain clean, and why there is very little public discourse about this. The structuring of this explanation as a revelation illuminates Naipaul's figuration of his role as a Hindu Brahmin who knows what the outsider does not and can explain these mysteries to him. Even if he does not himself subscribe to it, Naipaul is privy to "an Indian method of argument, an Indian way of seeing" (ibid) that allows him to speak about the defecation in India while others do not and also account for *why* Indians do not talk about it. This is only possible because of his simultaneous insider/outsider status that gives him both distance and knowledge about India.

At the end of this episode, Naipaul lays out the necessity for hybridity. He recounts both the advantages of "the observer [who] is seeing what no Indian sees" (*AAOD* 76), and the need to supplement that voice with that of the insider. (*AAOD* 75). This observer can see how these practices "betray a sad want of consideration for others" (ibid) and looks to Britain for the "science of municipal sanitation" (ibid) His is the eye that can look at India with objectivity. However, this "foreign inspiration" (*AAOD* 76) does not allow him to seriously consider the importance of ritual caste practices as entrenched in society. "The celebrated Indian daily bath he

frequently dismisses as 'a kind of bath.' He is unwilling to see beyond the ritual act to the intention, and in the intention to find reality" (ibid). Too carried away by his "foreign inspiration," he cannot understand the spiritual, caste, and religious significance of the daily Hindu bath and sees it only through the lens of hygiene practices. Thus, neither the Indian entrenched in "Indian way[s]" (ibid) of thinking nor the purely Western gaze can, according to Naipaul, give an accurate account of India. To do that, a hybrid gaze is necessary, one that combines the eye of the imperial traveler with that of the caste-conscious Brahmin.[15]

Naipaul's juxtaposition of the "Eastern" and "Western" voices is followed by an example of the hybrid figure that he is modelling himself on: M.K. Gandhi. According to Naipaul, despite Gandhi's fame and his status as the Indian freedom fighter par excellence, Gandhi is "the least Indian of Indian leaders. He looked at India as no Indian was able to, his vision was direct…He sees exactly what the visitor sees" (*AAOD* 77). Naipaul's version of Gandhi is un-Indian in his ability to perceive the ills of India, and he can do that because he uses a Western lens, the "straight simple vision of the West" (*AAOD* 78) that bypasses the convoluted Indian way of thinking. At the same time, he gives importance and credence to caste practices instead of dismissing them as an actual outsider or a highly Westernized Indian could. He "gives as much emphasis to the resolutions passed at a Congress gathering as to the fact that the [Savarna] Tamilian delegates ate by themselves because they would have been polluted by the sight of non-Tamilians, and that certain delegates, forgetting that there were no excrement removers at hand, used the verandah as a latrine" (ibid). According to Naipaul, "it is a correct emphasis…sanitation was linked to caste, caste to callousness, inefficiency and a hopelessly divided country, division

[15] Sudipta Chakraborty's study of *An Area of Darkness*: "Representing the 'Abject,' " also argues for a hybridized self that allows Naipaul to slip in and out of Western traveler and authoritative insider personas. Chakraborty, however, focuses on a psychoanalytic frame, using Bhaba and Kristeva, rather than Dalit studies and the concept of Brahminism, as is the focus of this chapter.

to weakness, weakness to foreign rule" (ibid). Gandhi has the insights of the insider that takes seriously and understands the caste rules that keep Savarna Tamil delegates from being friendly with non-Tamil ones for fear of unwitting caste violation. He also has the critical eye that does not naturalize this as a positive, regular part of Indian life but sees it as a problem that divides India and makes it easy prey for colonizing powers. This ability to combine two kinds of vision: the colonial traveler and the Indian Brahmin is what gives Gandhi, and by implication Naipaul, his special insight.

Naipaul attributes this clarity of vision to Gandhi's diasporic life. According to Naipaul, "he [Gandhi] sees exactly what the visitor sees" (*AAOD* 77) because he *is*, in part, a visitor:

> He saw India so clearly because he was in part a colonial. He settled finally in India when he was forty-six, after spending twenty years in South Africa. There he had seen an Indian community removed from the setting of India; contrast made for clarity; criticism and discrimination for self-analysis. He emerged a colonial blend of East and West, Hindu and Christian…Gandhi never loses his critical, comparing South African eye (*AAOD* 78).

Naipaul, here, creates strong parallels between himself and Gandhi. Both lived for long periods in other British colonies, both are "colonial(s)", and both saw Indian communities in different settings that presumably led them to become critical of Indians in the Subcontinent. In fact, if 'South Africa' is replaced with 'Trinidad' and the time periods are adjusted, this passage could apply equally to Naipaul. The text implies that Naipaul, in his account of India, occupies the same position Gandhi does. He is an insider-outsider, an Indian Brahmin who is capable of bringing an impartial critical eye to bear on the country due to his diasporic life. This vision leaves out some major differences in their life trajectories: Gandhi was born and raised in India, and after he returned, he lived out the rest of his life there, unlike Naipaul who was Trinidadian and only ever visited India as a tourist. Naipaul's desire to link himself to Gandhi is a bid for a

specific kind of narrative authority that combines caste and anglophilic privilege. While this desire can be read as an attempt to participate in the influence and authority Gandhi had as the "Father of the Nation" while pronouncing on India, it is telling that Naipaul chooses Gandhi and not B.R. Ambedkar the most well-known anti-caste activist during the Indian Independence Movement.[16]

It is important to consider why Naipaul does not ally himself to Ambedkar, who was also a secular unbeliever as Naipaul says he is, when critiquing the caste system. The answer lies in the differences between Ambedkar and Gandhi. The former saw the Hindu religion itself as an oppressive system that was fundamentally tied to caste. Caste/religious reform was not a possibility because the entire structure was based on inequality. Gandhi, on the other hand, was reform-minded. While he acknowledged that the caste system as it existed was oppressive, he believed that it was a necessary part of Indian life. The aim was not to abolish caste, but to instill in everyone the idea of the dignity of *all* labor (Roy 7-8).[17] This would ensure that the Savarnas no longer treated the Dalits as subhuman. Gandhi's framework, which Naipaul connects to, treats caste as a spiritual or psychological problem, rather than as an economic and structural one. Thus, instead of economic, educational, and legal moves that would ensure equality for Dalits—"reserving government jobs for untouchables helps nobody" (*AAOD* 85)--Naipaul repeats

[16] B.R. Ambedkar, who went on to become the most visible representative of the oppressed castes during the Independence movement, was born into a Dalit family in Maharashtra. One of the most prominent anti-caste activists, his polemic, *The Annihilation of Caste,* called for the undoing of caste as a system, rather than reforming it, as Gandhi wanted. Ambedkar saw caste as a fundamentally unjust and inescapably hierarchical system. After Independence, he was the head of the committee that drafted the Indian Constitution. Later in life, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism, declaring that there was no place within Hinduism for Dalits to live equal, free lives.

[17] In her book on Ambedkar and Gandhi, *The Doctor and the Saint: Caste, Race, and Annihilation of Caste, The Debate Between B. R. Ambedkar and M. K. Gandhi,* Arundhati Roy quotes from Gandhi's own speeches– "if Hindu society has been able to stand, it is because it is founded on the caste system" (Gandhi in *Navajivan*, a Gujrati journal)–to point to his support for the caste system. "He believed there should be no hierarchy between castes" (Roy 8) but the system itself, with its connection between birth and profession, should remain intact. Christophe Jaffrelot discusses how "the Mahatma had always contested the opprobrium which blighted the Untouchables by arguing that their occupations were no more demeaning than any other. To set an example, he insisted every resident of his Sabarmati ashram Ahmedabad had to clean the toilets" (60).

Gandhi's focus. "It is the system that has to be regenerated, the psychology of caste that has to be destroyed. So Gandhi comes again and again to the filth and excrement of India, the dignity of latrine-cleaning; the spirit of service; bread-labour…It is only that to a concerned colonial vision of India he is applying Western simplicities" (ibid). By allying himself to a Gandhian view on caste, Naipaul is able to both condemn caste while, at the same time, retain his privileges as a Brahmin. Caste, here, becomes a problem that is more spiritual than anything else, and the figure who can perceive it correctly, is, like Naipaul, a cosmopolitan Brahmin who can bring his "straight simple vision of the West" to bear on Indian problems.

By transforming caste and religion into a psychological problem and positioning himself as the ideal arbiter on both, Naipaul is able to set himself up as a unique authority on India who is better able to read its history than its current, permanent inhabitants. In *An Area of Darkness*, his account of the country, a sweeping overview of its deep history, is a mix of orientalist narratives and Hindu nationalism:

> At Mahabalipuram and elsewhere in the South the ruins have a unity. They speak of the continuity and flow of Hindu India, ever shrinking. In the North the ruins speak of waste and failure, and the very grandeur of the Mogul buildings is oppressive. Europe has its monuments of sun-kings, its Louvres and Versailles. But they are part of the development of a country's spirit; they express the refining of a nation's sensibility; they add to the common growing stock. In India these endless mosques and rhetorical mausolea, these great palaces speak only of a personal plunder and a country with an infinite capacity for being plundered (*AAOD* 217).

This passage illustrates how Naipaul's hybrid gaze is obsessed with purity. He argues for the rightness of the Hindu nation that preceded Mughal conquest, framing the latter as a corrupt, foreign intervention in the history of India. The orientalist foci on the glories of a lost Hindu civilization, the superiority of Aryanism, and Hinduism as the original religion of the Subcontinent that was corrupted by Muslim invaders are all staples of postcolonial Hindu

nationalism. By combining a Brahminical gaze with that of an imperial explorer, Naipaul uses a quixotic and unattainable standard of purity by which he measures India and its inhabitants. The Hindus are "ever shrinking" (ibid), the Muslim are invaders who are only capable of "personal plunder" (ibid). Framing orthodox Indian Hindus as ineffectual and Indian Muslims as foreign interlopers, Naipaul cannot find a population that is adequate to the task of bringing India into the twentieth century. In the entirety of the text, the only individual who is capable and rational is Naipaul the narrator. He is able to give an authoritative account of India because of his position as an insider-outsider that combines global worldliness and local knowledge.

4.4 *The Enigma of Arrival*: The Future British Citizen

In *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), we can analyze the processes through which the cosmopolitan Brahmin becomes a British citizen. An autobiographical novel, it grapples with these questions as Naipaul tries to root himself in England. *The Enigma of Arrival*, while technically a novel, is a mixture of the personal essay, autobiography, and travelogue. This combination of several genres of self-making allows Naipaul to enact his shifting relationship to the idea of England and his own claims to Britishness. The text is based on his experiences in Wiltshire, where he had rented a cottage for a few years on a large and semi-ruined country estate. While he had been accompanied by his wife, Patricia Hale, and his cat Augustus throughout this whole sojourn, Naipaul writes them out of the text entirely. This excision emphasizes the individual (as opposed to collective) self-making that Naipaul is interested in. While the focus on the superior individual traveler is de rigueur in imperial travelogues, it is a more novel and unstable strategy in a text that is trying to make the colonial subject of empire into its citizen. Naipaul's category of the cosmopolitan Brahmin who is the most authoritative

teller of imperial tales is repurposed in this novel to bolster his claims to British belonging. In *The Enigma of Arrival*, Naipaul relies on the hybridity of his selfhood to argue for himself as a new model of a British citizen. For him, decades after the loss of the British empire, the white British citizen is no longer the ideal: he has ossified and become redundant through his loss of imperial power. Instead, it is the hybrid postcolonial subject–like Naipaul the cosmopolitan Brahmin–who is the better prototype for Britain's future.

This claim to exceptionality locates itself in Naipaul's position as an alien in rural England. He reframes the solitariness of the alien into the uniqueness of the ideal future British citizen.[18] The novel opens with a description of Wiltshire and a simultaneous acknowledgement of Naipaul's unfamiliarity with it. He narrates one of his first trips to Stonehenge, which was in the area, telling the story through the lens of his own discomfort at being a stranger: "I never forgot that on the first day I had asked someone the way... I was… concerned with the strangeness of the walk, my own strangeness, and the absurdity of my inquiry" (*TEOA* 9-10). This anecdote combines Naipaul's self-consciousness, his "rawness of response...in the other man's country" (*TEOA* 8), with his sense of possession over British history and its cultural artefacts. During his first visit to Stonehenge, despite never having seen it before, he already knows to read it through recognizable cultural frames of "antiquity, at once diminishing and ennobling the current activities of men, as well as the ideas of literature [that] enveloped this world" which he deems "a lucky find of [his] solitude" (*TEOA* 20).

[18] In his article "My second life, so far away from my first: Cultural Capital and the Postcolonial Outsider in The Enigma of Arrival," Jay Rajiva touches on this same issue. He argues that Naipaul uses the narrative structure of repeatedly contrasting two different selves—the past younger, naive and déclassé self with the current wiser, knowledgeable narrator—to establish his place in England as a cultural elite. It focuses on movements in time as a narrative strategy to establish this authority, unlike the caste-inflected argument I am making here.

This "solitude" is not just a product of his place in Wiltshire as a non-white immigrant from Trinidad, but his special way of seeing the world. As he takes up residence near the village of Salisbury, while he is a stranger to the area, he has unique knowledge of several cultural codes through which to read it. "It was almost the first English town I had got to know…from the reproduction of the Constable painting of Salisbury Cathedral in my third-standard reader…A four-color reproduction which I had thought the most beautiful picture I had ever seen" (*TEOA* 7). In addition to this, he has the linguistic acumen to know that the name of the nearby river, "Avon, originally only meant "river", any river, and that the name of his village, Waldenshaw, is tautological since both "walden" and "shaw" mean wood" (ibid). Indeed, Naipaul's descriptions of Wiltshire are repeatedly framed through references to the canonical greats of British arts and culture, particularly Constable and Shakespeare:

> [L]onging for Shakespeare... I returned to King Lear… and read… Kent's railing speech, "Goose, if I had you upon Sarum Plain, I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot." The words were quite clear to me. Sarum Plain, Salisbury Plain; Camelot, Winchester—just twenty miles away. And I felt that with the help of Jack's geese—creatures with perhaps an antiquity in the droveway lands that Jack would not have guessed—I had arrived at an understanding of something in King Lear which, according to the editor of the text I read, commentators had found obscure (*TEOA* 18-19).

This passage illustrates Naipaul's sense of special mastery over both his environment – that is, rural England – and over English culture. Using one to read the other, he suffuses both with a special importance. The geese that are prosaic everyday animals that his neighboring farmers, like Jack, raise and herd for market purposes are transformed into creatures of "antiquity" (ibid) that have a place in an important cultural text like *King Lear.* Similarly, the continuity and relevance of an old text like *Lear* is revitalized through its connection to the present–the geese are still herded from Salisbury to Winchester, just as in Shakespeare's time. Naipaul makes a connection that is unavailable to both the farmers, like Jack, who have no knowledge of

Shakespeare, and the expert "commentators" (ibid) on Shakespeare who do not know the landscape Shakespeare is writing about. While a recent arrival in Wiltshire, Naipaul brings to it his cosmopolitan self and his knowledge of globally significant (British) cultural artefacts, like Constable and Shakespeare, that allow him to read this landscape in a way that no one else can. He has a special eye that transforms Wiltshire, granting it a significance that is lost to its regular inhabitants: "Jack would not have guessed" (ibid) the importance of his geese, and the traditional British Shakespeare experts do not have the freshness of vision that Naipaul has as a stranger looking upon the British landscape. By reading Wiltshire through the cosmopolitan postcolonial traveler's eye, Naipaul interpellates Wiltshire into a national and global cultural economy and sets himself up as an authority in the process.

Central to Naipaul's sense of belonging and his rooted self in any part of the world is the operation of national fantasies. He exhibits his familiarity and mastery over them, his aptitude for mobilizing them in ways that include him within the bounds of the nation, and also his ability to establish his national fantasies as superior to those of other populations. As a postcolonial subject of empire, Naipaul roots the legitimacy of his existence within the British nation in his capacity for effectively participating in and adding to British national fantasies. He explicitly connects his authoritative self-positioning within Britain to his creation of a sense of non-white postcolonial British belonging, observing about his first walk to Stonehenge that "the solitude of the walk…enabled me to surrender to my way of looking, to indulge my linguistic or historical fantasies; and enabled me, at the same time, to shed the nerves of being a stranger in England" (*TEOA* 19). While he feels like "an oddity among the estates and big houses of the valley" (*TEOA* 15), Naipaul is a harbinger of the future. The grounds of the manor house he occupies, "full of reminders of its Edwardian past, with few connections to the present" (ibid) is connected

to the present precisely through him. His "presence in that old valley was part of something like an upheaval, a change in the course of the history of the country" (ibid). This upheaval is that of the loss of empire and the large-scale immigration of former colonial subjects into England, changing the demographics of the country and fundamentally disrupting its sense of national self. Naipaul places himself as an actor within that large-scale historical process. However, the selfhood he creates is not anticolonial or opposed to Britishness. Instead, he positions himself as part of the historical continuity of British citizenship, claiming his place in it through his ability to both mobilize and create fantasies of the nation.

For Naipaul, belonging to England is linked to a restorative fantasy of nationhood. He cannot truly belong in Trinidad, "feeling [himself] far away" (*TEOA* 120) since he has, all his life "look[ed] ahead and outwards, to England" (ibid). The necessity of fantasy to his sense of national belonging becomes clear when Naipaul narrates how he can feel he is a part of Trinidad only many years after he has left and has been able to recreate it in his imagination by writing a book about its capital, Port of Spain. He lovingly delineates the research he puts into this project, the story he creates about the country: "the documents began to draw me in; and the longer I stayed with them the harder it was to give up the project" (*TEOA* 155). That which was to have taken six months, took two years (*TEOA* 157). Naipaul frames this as a romantic project that is slowly and lovingly nurtured, and it restores to him a positive, wondrous view of Trinidad, his country of origin for which he, for the first time, develops a "deep romance" (*TEOA* 158).

That Naipaul's national fantasies do not need any grounding in political reality becomes clear when he pits his vision of Trinidad against the reality of civil unrest and insists on preserving his own idea of the country as the better and "right" one. When conducting his research, he "found an island full of racial tensions and close to revolution. So, as soon as [he]

had arrived at a new idea about the place, it had ceased to be [his]" (*TEOA* 160). His attachment to Trinidad is dependent on his ability to construct a romantic national fantasy. To preserve this, he must "ignor[e] the rubbish-strewn highway and the bent and battered median rail and the burning rubbish dump and the dust-blown shack settlement" (ibid). Naipaul self-consciously acts out the creation of his national romance. While he acknowledges that the "island meant other things to other people" (*TEOA* 159), referring to the Black residents of Trinidad who were agitating for better conditions, he simultaneously implies the superiority of his vision. Theirs is a "false revolution" (ibid), they "simplified and sentimentalized the past; they did not, like [him], wish to possess it for its romance" (ibid). This process of creating national attachment via romantic fantasy, acknowledging its lack of universal appeal, and yet reconfirming it as the better way of belonging is central to his method of staking claim to Britishness.

Naipaul's initial fantasy of Britain, that he had nurtured in Trinidad, is destroyed after he arrives in London. As Naipaul confesses, after his disappointment upon arrival: "I lost a faculty that had been part of me and precious to me for years. I lost the gift of fantasy, the dream of the future, the far-off place where I was going. Now, in the place that for all those years had been the 'elsewhere,' no further dream was possible" (*TEOA* 134). He can no longer project a fantasy version of England onto the reality. To Naipaul, this inability to participate in or create a fantasy of England is wounding. He expresses his anxiety about this loss: "The disturbance in me, faced with this strangeness, was very great, many times more diminishing than the disturbance I had faced in New York" (ibid) (where he was a traveler passing through, rather than a resident). He loses what is "precious" to him and becomes unmoored. The "disturbance" (ibid) of this unfamiliar London that bears little resemblance to the imperial metropolis he had dreamed of

when in Trinidad "dimnish[es]" (ibid) him psychically. His ability to participate in this fantasy is necessary for him to feel like he is a part of Britain.

Naipaul's is a specifically imperial imagination of England. When he cannot find the white imperial London of his imagination, he begins to feel that he "had come too late to find the England, the heart of empire, which (like a provincial, from a far corner of the empire) [he] had created in [his] fantasy" (*TEOA* 130). The fantasies of nationhood that Naipaul is invested in are continuities of an imperial British imagination. He specifically rejects a multi-cultural, working-class, heterogenous vision of British citizenship. Instead, Naipaul's construction of Britishness is founded on imperial nostalgia that looks back longingly at an idealized past when Britain was a homogenously white country in control of large parts of the globe. In Naipaul's case, however, this nostalgia is rerouted through the selfhood of a non-white postcolonial subject. In *The Future of Nostalgia,* Svetlana Boym divides nostalgia into two categories: restorative and reflective. Restorative nostalgia attempts to recreate a qualified, singular, and authoritative version of the past and use it to give credence to certain ideologies used to control the present. Restorative nostalgia "characterizes national and nationalist revivals all over the world, which engage in the antimodern myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths" (*TEOA* 41). Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" (ibid). Instead of focusing on a singular dream of the past that can be recreated, it is aware of both the multiplicity of pasts and the inability to truly return home. In Boym's terms, Naipaul engages in a mixed nostalgic mode. His focus on ruins and the passing of time are instrumental in creating a national fantasy of belonging. He uses the elements that constitute reflective nostalgia–the scraps of historical memory he collects through the cultural texts about Wiltshire that he encounters, the ruined monuments, buildings, and

landscapes of the estate he lives in–to build a national vision of England. Naipaul uses remnants from the past to create a coherent and long-range vision of the British nation. This creation of a national fantasy is a hallmark of restorative nostalgia. By emphasizing the ruinous and incomplete state of this world, Naipaul's vision of England creates space for him as a citizen who can revitalize this postimperial England.

The novel acts out his creation of authority, taking us through the details of the process, instead of giving it to us as established fact. It makes the text itself a tool of establishing Naipaul's Britishness by showing us how it is done rather than simply stating it. Naipaul builds this sense of authority in the text as he narrates the process of his familiarization with the decaying manor grounds. Initially, "tending to take things too much for granted, seeing 'ordinary' buildings too much as natural expressions of a particular place, it took [him] time to understand what [he] was seeing" (*TEOA* 193). While Naipaul is ignorant at first, his readers subsequently accompany him on his journey of gathering knowledge. His cottage, which seems like a "simple building" in the beginning, is later reframed as "no country 'naturalness' (ibid)." It has been "designed to create just that effect. The walls were thick, perhaps rubble-filled; but on the surface they were a considered mixture of flint and brickbats and warm yellow stone" (ibid). The feeling of warmth and homeliness that Naipaul feels on seeing it is the result of the builder's artistry that he has deliberately employed to create this effect. As he gains knowledge about the manor grounds, Naipaul begins to read them through his own knowledge of British history and culture:

> The antique, ivy-covered, flint-walled storehouse or granary…So that after…the country openness, there was suddenly here a remnant and a reminder of medieval huddle and constriction. And just as, along the droveway, the modernity of the old farm manager's bungalow was set next to the antiquity of the worn, striated slopes, so here the modern fantasy of my cottage and the forester's hut and the farmhouse was set next to, ran into, the Middle Ages (*TEOA* 194-95).

Naipaul reads the manor grounds as a text that contains all of history. Antiquity, modernity, and the Middle Ages are all "set next to" (*TEOA* 195) each other. This reading of the manor grounds performs two functions: it uses the architectural ruins of the estate to create a whole historical overview of Britain, and it positions Naipaul as the authoritative subject who can read the ruins to produce British history. Naipaul uses the ruins and his awareness of the irrecoverable nature of the past that Boym designates as elements of reflective nostalgia (as opposed to restorative nostalgia) to create a national romance of Britain with himself as the chief romancer.

After establishing the romantic historical template of his surroundings, Naipaul affirms his own place in it by linking it to his landlord's. He delineates his eventual acceptance within this landscape: "This was the fantasy to which I returned–the many featured fantasy of manor, manor village around its green, manor garden–and always felt welcomed by" (*TEOA* 196). While acknowledging it as his own fantasy, this fantasy is granted authority through its long, historical potency. It is "the family fantasy which [his] landlord had inherited and which now, I [Naipaul] felt, as I entered more and more into it" (ibid). Naipaul connects his own fantasy of Britain to that of his landlord's, gesturing both towards its roots in imperial nostalgia and its reworking of that nostalgia for a future imperial citizen. Naipaul's self-positioning as a British citizen is informed by his sense of himself as his landlord's successor in the hierarchy of British citizenship.[19] His landlord is a wealthy Edwardian aristocrat who has been a recluse since his

[19] Naipaul positions himself as an *elite* global citizen. As a Brahmin at the apex of the caste hierarchy, he can only identify with a British aristocrat, not a working-class laborer. While Naipaul can move from one system of privilege to another, his elite positionality remains the same. Using the language of both caste and race science, he posits that class position is actually an ontological quality. In his various descriptions of Bray, a driver and mechanic who lives on the estate and is extremely proud of owning his own business. His "vocation was really to be a free man, not to be what his father had been, a man 'in service,' a servant" (*TEOA* 243). Naipaul, however, repeatedly refers to the fact that his family had traditionally been in service at the manor and makes an inescapable link between Bray's personality and his ancestral profession. "In fact, for the very reason that he was reacting against the service manner of his father, Bray had the variable fluid personality of the servant: the various accents, voices, expressions" (*TEOA*

middle age. Struck with some unknown, enervating illness, he rarely makes an appearance outside the manor house and has never directly spoken to Naipaul. In fact, Naipaul has only ever seen him twice, from a distance, during his whole time in Wiltshire.[20] Despite the obvious differences in their positions, Naipaul frames himself as being in sympathy with his landlord's "dignified" (ibid) withdrawal from the world–which is only made possible by his aristocratic wealth. His landlord is always an overdetermined figure who embodies Naipaul's own desires of classed British belonging. This nationalist class fantasy colors his sightings of his landlord. Naipaul's first glimpse of him is sudden and fleeting as he drives by in a car. His reflections on this encounter emphasize both the long and influential history of his landlord's family and their current state of ruin:

> The beeches had been planted at the turn of the century by the father of my landlord and were now like a natural–wasting–monument of the father's grandeur. This grandeur had come from the consolidation and extension in imperial times of a family fortune…it was here... below the trees planted by his father before he, the son, had been born, that I had my first and only true glimpse of my landlord (*TEOA* 187).

247). Naipaul sees servitude as an inherited and immutable quality that can be repressed but never erased. "The deepest part of him [Bray], the part with the hidden memories that would die with him, was his servant's character" (*TEOA* 340-1). While Bray is ontologically a servant, the Phillipses—a couple who work as housekeepers for Naipaul's landlord—are "not by instinct or character servants of a big house; they were people of the town, the outer world" (*TEOA* 222) even when they are performing the role of servants. The difference between the Phillipses and Bray becomes clear at the end. After Mr. Phillips's death, his widow promptly leaves her position and remarries with no thought to how that would contribute to the decimation of the estate and the decline of Naipaul's landlord's fortunes. To Bray, on the other hand, "the dignity of the house had always mattered to him…[it] had given value to his independence; it was what he measured his own dignity against" (*TEOA* 340). Naipaul, thus, frames class position as not circumstantial, structural, and liable to change, but rather, a fixed, inherited, ontological category of personality.

[20] Naipaul bases this figure on his actual landlord, Stephen Tennant (1906-87) when he was living in Wiltshire. Tennant was born into the aristocracy—the son of a Scottish peer—and was part of the cultural elite of early 1900s England. His mother was one of the Wyndham sisters and was related to Lord Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde's lover. As a young man, he was part of the elite bohemian set, "The Bright Young Things," that included the Mitford sisters, Edith Sitwell, and Evelyn Waugh. Tennant went on to have a lengthy relationship with the poet Siegfried Sassoon in the 20s and 30s. The acedia that Naipaul mentions was probably at least partly due to his chronic tuberculosis. Naipaul was not the only author to write a character based on him; he was the inspiration for characters in books by Waugh and Mitford as well.

Naipaul only catches a fleeting glimpse of him as he drives by, but this glimpse is enough for him to start constructing a picture–with "ancient beeches," "wasting grandeur," and an impressive "family fortune" (ibid)—that is in keeping with his own fantasy of aristocratic England. Indeed, Naipaul acknowledges that he is uninterested in getting to know his landlord as an individual. If the two actually meet and talk, he would become "endowed with a character, vanities, irritations, absurdities" (*TEOA* 192) in Naipaul's mind, which would "undo [the] relationship" and the "magic of the place [i.e. the estate]" (ibid). The "relationship" (ibid) here is not any actual friendship with his landlord, but rather a relationship with the fantasy of him, of his position as the aristocratic lord of the manor and the "magic" of class privilege. He is purely a figure of Naipaul's fantasies of class.

These fantasies of class are integral to Naipaul's desire for Britishness and structure his attempts to liken himself to his landlord despite the deep differences between the two. He does this by mobilizing caste as a travelling category that can migrate to England with him and create a bridge to class privilege. Naipaul, the cosmopolitan Brahmin can perform parts of his Brahminism that resemble his landlord's upper-class identity and, through this process of likening, position himself as a recognizable British elite. He finds this common ground by connecting the discourse of his own Brahminical asceticism with his landlord's ability to withdraw from the world due to his class privilege. The similarities between his caste expressions and his landlord's class expressions are emphasized even if these expressions have very different sources. Naipaul's landlord retreats into his manor due to an unspecified psychological illness– "a disturbance of some sort, a morbid lasting depression," (*TEOA* 191) after a "pampered, protected childhood, a manhood of artistic talent and promise and of social frivolity" (*TEOA* 190). Naipaul comes to live on his estate after a professional rejection. Naipaul,

however, frames both these solitary lives as a self-reflective asceticism that is reminiscent of certain traditional recommendations of Savarna Hindu life. To retreat from society at an older age to reflect on one's life and detach oneself from earthly objects is a recognizable life-stage that is outlined in several orthodox Hindu scriptures.[21]

In order to establish this similarity, Naipaul uses the language of moral self-reflection, attributing the "same spirit of withdrawal" (*TEOA* 192), to the manor and by extension, his landlord. He writes: "I wanted when I came to the manor, after the pride of ambition, to strip my life down. I wanted to live as far as possible with what I found in the cottage in the manor grounds, to alter as little as possible. I wanted to avoid vanity" (ibid). He paints his rooms mauve, the "least assertive color [he] could think of" (*TEOA* 216), does not buy anything extra– repurposing tobacco tins to make ashtrays, and avoiding both the vanity that lay in "very small things," (*TEOA* 192) and in being too "affirmative" (*TEOA* 216), which he takes as attempting to bend his surroundings to his will. Naipaul constructs his life on the estate as one of religiously inflected quietism where he tries to shed the vanity and ambition that attach him to the outer world. This, he feels, brings him closer to his landlord: "So I felt in tune with what I saw or thought I saw at the manor; I felt myself in the same spirit of withdrawal. And though I knew men may arrive at similar states or attitudes for dissimilar reasons and by different routes, and as

[21] *Varnasrama-dharma* is a Hindu concept that explicitly links caste with life-stages. Wendy Doniger and Bardwell Smith define it as "social and religious duties tied to class and stage of life" (qtd in Dirks 34). Technically, it can be translated into "duties (*dharma*) according to caste (*varna*) and life-stages (*asrama*)." The *Manusmriti* (*The Laws of Manu*) define four different asramas or life-stages: *Brahmacharya* (the student who prepares for an adult socially-embedded life), *Grihastha* (the householder who participates in family and community life), *Vanprastha* (the forest dweller who retreats from society to contemplate his life), and *Sannyas* (the ascetic who has given up all earthly attachments and awaits death). The concept of *varnasrama-dharma* as a central element of Hinduism is fundamentally tied to the popularity of the *Manusmriti* and its rising status as *the* holy book of Hinduism during the colonial period. As Nicholas Dirks writes, "most scholars today agree that it took on unprecedented status as an 'applied' legal document only under early British rule...it encapsulates British attempts to codify...social relations in a single, orthodox 'Hindu'—and therefore necessarily 'Brahmanic'—register" (34). Naipaul draws on this necessarily Brahminical interpretation of Hindu life practices that was popularized during British rule and was further developed through the rise of Hindu nationalism in a post-Independence India.

men might even be incompatible, I felt at one with my landlord" (*TEOA* 192). This passage affirms Naipaul's similarity, his "one-ness" with his landlord even as he acknowledges the differences in their reasons for their respective social withdrawals and the "different routes" (ibid) they have each taken to it. That Naipaul brings up the deep-seated differences between the two and then dismisses them makes clear the strategic nature of this set of moves. He needs grounds to establish his similarity to his landlord in order to participate in his privilege.

After establishing his similarity to his landlord to position himself as his successor in imperial citizenship, Naipaul then demonstrates his actual superiority. He not only possesses the cultural cache that his British landlord does, but also a newer, more updated version of it. While his landlord is a symbol of the decay of imperial values, Naipaul is the one who can use his flexible caste/classed self-making to carry them forward. Naipaul sees his landlord as a relic from the "the days of imperial glory, when–out of material satiety…–-power and glory had begun to undo themselves from within" (*TEOA* 212). Naipaul uses recognizable tropes of the enervated, aging aristocrat–linking them to his hinted homosexuality– to construct his landlord as the last of his kind. When Naipaul catches another sight of him on a different day, he repeatedly brings up his fatness. His shorts "tight around his plump thigh" (*TEOA* 211) remind Naipaul of the stories he had heard of his "great beauty…as a young man" (ibid). This account of his beauty is, however, immediately accompanied by descriptions of his effeminate "self-cherishing," and the "fatness of self-indulgence and inactivity" (ibid) that undermine the previously positive description and endow it with the shadow of future decay. The kind of aristocracy he was born into is now obsolete, as evidenced by his decaying estate. He is, however, unable or unwilling to reinvent himself in the face of a changing world. He is a representative of elite British decay and sterility. His landlord is not capable of reproducing–

either biologically or, more importantly, in terms of the imperial values he inherits as a British aristocrat.

Naipaul demonstrates the forward-looking nature of his own subjectivity as opposed to the anachronistic nature of his landlord's. He locates the stability and futurity of his position versus his landlord's precisely in this presence, or absence, of flexible self-making. He situates his suitability for taking over his landlord's role within his ability to transport and transform systems of privilege, making them relevant to a more modern world. His landlord's privilege is no longer an uncomplicated good:

> Privilege lay between us. But I had an intimation that it worked against him. Whatever my spiritual state at the moment of arrival, I knew I would have to save myself and look for health; I knew I would have to act at some time. His privilege–his house, his staff, his income, the acres he could look out at every day and knew to be his–this privilege could press him down into himself, into non-doing and nullity (*TEOA* 192).

Naipaul argues that his landlord's privilege is not entirely useful and "it worked against him" (ibid). Unable to suit it to a modern world, "this privilege could press him down into himself, into non-doing and nullity" (ibid). His class identity isolates him, keeps him from having to seek out company or well-being. Naipaul, on the other hand, "knew [he] would have to save [himself] and look for health" (ibid). He attributes this impulse to his position as a subject of empire. The empire "explained…the language [he] used, the vocation and ambition [he] had, this empire in the end explained [his] presence there in the valley" (*TEOA* 191). As a postcolonial subject of empire, he is not ossified in his ways because he must "save [himself] and look for health" (ibid). Unlike his landlord, who does not know how to translate his anachronistic and therefore shrinking economic and cultural privileges into a more contemporary, thriving iteration, Naipaul has become a successful, established author. From "having no money, no job, having developed no talent" (*TEOA* 218) he had become a successful citizen of the world. As he states when

reflecting on his life: “Somehow I had done the writing. Somehow–and twenty years later, it was to seem such a piece of luck–I had engaged myself in the world. And twenty years of a life that had been the opposite of my landlord’s had brought me to the solace of the debris of his garden” (ibid). Thus, as this passage demonstrates, he has been able to “engage” (ibid) successfully with “the world” (ibid) as a globally famous author. Despite both he and his landlord sharing in the “solace” of withdrawal into a ruined estate, their lives have been opposites, with Naipaul as the possessor of more capital as a citizen of the cosmopolitan, globalized British nation than his landlord with his decaying estate.

The novel ends with both Naipaul and his landlord leaving the estate, but their departures are framed in opposing ways. While he leaves of his own accord, with his health and sense of self renewed, his landlord is forced out. As the estate’s upkeep becomes increasingly untenable and its eventual sale is inevitable, Naipaul realizes that his “time in [his] cottage is coming to an end. An accident, a whole series of accidents had kept me protected in what was an exposed situation. Now that protection was coming to an end” (*TEOA* 327). He has shared in the protection afforded by his landlord’s wealth and privilege while living on his estate. His privileged withdrawal from the world was paralleled (and to an extent made possible) by his landlord’s similar withdrawal. However, the crucial difference here is that Naipaul can and does leave on his own terms when his time in the valley is done. He goes on to garner more fame as an author, writing about this very experience. His landlord, on the other hand, is faced with the increasingly grim prospect of an unwilling sale of his ancestral home and having to leave the area. As another resident of the estate says, “Old age is a brutal thing. I suppose they’ll just sell up. In the end, there’ll be nothing left… When you are young you can fight back. When you’re old they can do anything they want with you” (*TEOA* 339). Naipaul’s landlord is old not just in

terms of his individual age, but also his position as one of the last of his kind, an old-fashioned British aristocrat. He is unable to make himself anew.

At the end, Naipaul is back in Trinidad, attending his sister's funeral and preparing to write *The Enigma of Arrival* many years after he has left Wiltshire. The novel closes with a religious and metaphysical meditation on the "sanctities of life" and its cyclical nature:

> Our sacred world–the sanctities that had been handed down to us by our families, the sacred places of our childhoods... places doubly and trebly sacred to me because far away in England I had lived in them imaginatively over many books and had in my fantasies set in those places the very beginning of things, and constructed out of them a fantasy of home…–our sacred world had vanished. Every generation was to now take us further away from those sanctities. But we remade the world for ourselves, every generation does that, as we found when we came together for the death of this sister and felt the need to honour and remember…It [his sister's death] showed me life and man as the mystery, the true religion of men, the grief and the glory. And that was when, faced with real death, and with this new wonder about men, I laid aside my drafts and hesitations and began to write very fast about Jack and his garden (*TEOA* 353-4).

Naipaul, at the close, positions himself as both part of a world that has "vanished" along with its sacred places, and the new generation that has "remade the world" for themselves. He intends to "honor and remember" (*TEOA* 354) the passage of the "sacred world" (*TEOA* 353) as well as look towards a future that is revealed to him to him through the death of his sister and the passage of his childhood world. This world is a clear parallel to the rural, aristocratic England that Naipaul commemorates in his novel. Both are nostalgically framed as "sacred," and noble precisely because their time is past. Naipaul, however, while he understands its sanctity, the distant "fantasy of home" (ibid) that was part of its importance, is also galvanized into action. He begins writing the book through which he, as a new British subject, will "honor and remember" (*TEOA* 354) Britain's imperial past and carry forward its civilizational values into a new, postimperial Britain. That this is a function of the category of the cosmopolitan Brahmin becomes clear when Naipaul is inspired to begin this book because of his exposure to Hindu

spiritual practices via the ceremonies surrounding his sister's death that he then extracts from the framework of religion and applies to his life in Wiltshire. Naipaul uses the language of religious universality to describe these practices and beliefs—"life and man as the mystery, the true religion of men, the grief and the glory" (ibid)—to cloak a particular, historically situated and Hindu Brahminical self-making. He is inspired to start writing through his contact with the particular religious ceremonies surrounding his sister's death. The novel ends with him both writing Britain and writing himself into Britain while surrounded by the sanctities of his Hindu life in Trinidad.

4.5 Conclusion

Naipaul's anglophilia, his claim to Britishness, is inextricably bound up in the language of religion and, by extension, his Hindu Brahmin caste identity. The personas of both the British citizen and the imperial traveler are naturalized through Naipaul's invocation of the rhetoric of Hindu spirituality. In the former instance, this invocation of the aura of his Brahminism allows him to situate himself as an imperial traveler who is also a native informant. In the latter, he then transports certain caste practices to England and sutures them to class performances, thus hybridizing the two systems of privilege and performing his entry into the world of British class privilege through caste. By focusing on the similarities between these sets of caste and class performances, he makes the claim that his facility with the former implies his legitimate entry into the latter category.

The category of the cosmopolitan Brahmin as imagined by Naipaul is a significant figure because it exhibits how anglophilia can hybridize with caste to create a more globally mobile category of privilege for a postcolonial world. By linking certain caste practices to class

practices, the privileges that come with performing British civilizational values are integrated with the privileges of performing a Savarna identity. This process reveals the postcolonial diasporic desire for British belonging as one that can be, and often is, fundamentally conservative. Instead of bringing about a radical redefinition of what British citizenship can be and interrogating the notion of imperial belonging, the diasporic desire for British citizenship is a desire for multiplying privileges. Hybridity,[22] instead of automatically engendering a more open heterogeneity, becomes a way to interlink different systems of hierarchy, both European and non-European, and create a system of privilege whose potency lies in its ability to travel and adapt to different national circumstances.

[22] As I have discussed in my introduction, most influential concepts of hybridity focus largely on its ability to destabilize or subvert. See Homi Bhabha's *Location of Culture* and Robert J.C. Young's *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race.*

Chapter 4: Two Anglophilias and Gendered Self-Formations in Tsitsi Dangarembga

Tsitsi Dangarembga's first novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988)[1] ends with a theorization of anglophilia as a threat. Put forward by the narrator's mother, it frames anglophilia as an all-consuming attachment that, if not tamed and consciously mobilized as a tool, can destroy and kill. In conversation with her fast-anglicizing daughter, Tambu, who goes to a convent school in colonial Rhodesia, Mai tells her that the "Englishness…will kill them all" (*NC* 202). The "them" refers to Tambu's uncle's family, especially his daughter Nyasha, who was raised in England and has a nervous breakdown at the end of the novel because of her alienation from her Zimbabwean surroundings. Mai connects Nyasha's mental illness to her family's general estrangement from the culture of their peoples, condemning Nyasha's brother Chido by observing that he "can hardly speak a word of his mother tongue and…his children will be worse" (*NC* 202-3). For Mai, his relationship with a white Christian missionary's daughter ensures that his future children will be a "disgrace" (*NC* 203)—cut off from the historical continuity of the family, its generational life in the rural homestead, and its relationship with the ancestors and the ancestral land. According to Mai, "you couldn't expect the ancestors to stomach so much Englishness" (ibid). If one extrapolates from Mai's theory of what Englishness signifies, the novel might be seen to imply that anglophilia in its most extreme form could even be fatal. Such an outcome is evidenced by Tambu's brother, whose sudden death while he is at a missionary school precipitates the events of the novel and Tambu's entry into the world of Britishness. In this view,

[1] I will be using the abbreviations *NC*, *TBON*, and *TMB* for *Nervous Conditions*, *The Book of Not*, and *This Mournable Body* respectively in this chapter.

the threat of anglophilia is the threat of cultural effacement; to be removed from a continuing and emplaced generational cycle of life through a psychic breakdown or literal death. While Mai is far from an unproblematically authoritative character in the texts, her mistrust of anglophilia reflects the trilogy's articulation of its dangers, its capacity for damage.

The tension of this ending–which is also the tension at the heart of the *Nervous Conditions* trilogy [*Nervous Conditions* (1988), *The Book of Not* (2006) and *This Mournable Body* (2018)]–is that this anglophilic breakdown is not a foregone conclusion. As Tambu observes, anglophilia was "a threat that would have had disastrous effects if I *had let it* (*NC* 203)" (emphasis mine). As Tambu thinks through her mother's warning, she distances herself from those like her cousin and her brother who had "succumbed" (ibid) to anglophilia. Because she is a "sensible person…who knew what could or couldn't be done" (ibid), she can be the "careful" and critical user of anglophilia who uses her performance of this attachment to gain social mobility without destroying herself. The novel ends with Tambu looking to a future in Sacred Heart, her white, elite boarding school when she begins to "question things and refuse[s] to be brainwashed…bringing [her] to this time when she can set down this story" (*NC* 204). Tambu hints at a possible future where she uses the resources of her school and of her affiliation with the white, English ruling elite in a critical and self-conscious way that allows her to retain a whole, legible selfhood as the author of the text we are reading. This projection, at the end of the first book, is, however, a failed promise. As I demonstrate across my analysis of all three texts, Tambu does fall prey to the "illness," the nervous condition that is anglophilia while it is her cousin, Nyasha, who develops the critical and instrumental relationship with Britishness that allows her to create and retain a whole self.

Unlike the other authors I have examined in this project, Dangarembga sets forth *two* possible models of anglophilic self-formation in her trilogy rather than just one. On one hand, Britishness is a system of values, privileges, and harms the individual self-consciously negotiates with in order to attain certain kinds of selfhood, both individual and social. On the other hand, anglophilia is an unmediated and uncritical desire that alienates the feeling subject from everything and everyone around them. The creation and development of these two ways of dealing with anglophilic desire in the novels, their movements from one character to another as time passes, are, I argue, explorations of the possibilities of the postcolonial self. Rather than providing definitive answers, Dangarembga's texts interrogate the different relationships that are possible between postcolonial Zimbabwean subjects and their colonial cultural inheritance, as well as the ways in which this relationship is inflected by the increasing presence of a globalizing West in an independent Zimbabwe. Since, as Gayatri Spivak says, "the nostalgia for lost origins" (Spivak) is futile and "pure" Zimbabwean culture is a fiction that can never be recovered in a postcolonial world, the question remains as to how the individual subject deals with the psychological and affective legacies of colonialism. In this chapter, I examine the two possibilities that Dangarembga puts forward: both are compromised processes that are fraught, unfinished, and in some ways fundamentally unsatisfactory. One, however, allows for the retention of a productive selfhood that is rooted in contemporary Zimbabwean culture, while the other alienates and destroys. Dangarembga, I argue, theorizes two different kinds of anglophilia across her three novels. One is a troubled attachment to British civilizational values that is mediated through critical analysis, the other is a purely aspirational desire that is repeatedly frustrated and is psychically destructive and untenable. Through a parallel analysis of both these models and their various expressions in two of the main characters in the trilogy–the protagonist

Tambu and her cousin Nyasha–I argue that Dangarembga's texts map the transforming, multiplying, and enduring nature of anglophilia as a significant cultural-affective framework in a globalizing, postcolonial country. This map has a pedagogic function. It demonstrates two ways of being anglophilic: one as a warning and another as a way of viable subject formation.

The *Nervous Conditions* trilogy is set in twentieth-century Zimbabwe and covers a particularly turbulent period in its history. The novels take place against the backdrop of the country's transition from colonial Rhodesia to independent Zimbabwe, and the end of white minority rule through a protracted and violent guerilla war. The trilogy begins in the 1960s, when Rhodesia is still in existence and ends in the 1990s in an independent, postcolonial Zimbabwe.[2] These radical political shifts are essential to the bildungsroman structure of the trilogy. The novels follow its first-person narrator/protagonist, Tambu, from her early teens to her middle age, charting her development as a woman trying to negotiate racial, colonial, and gender violence as she attempts to achieve social mobility through education and employment. Tambu is born into a poor, rural family, and British education is a way of ascending the social ladder and escaping her origins. The novels adhere to a loose bildungsroman structure that is informed by Tambu's social ambitions and the historical events that surround her.

This traditional bildungsroman of individual social ascension is, however, interrogated and undercut by a central feature of the texts: the imbrication of her narrative within those of

[2] The Zimbabwe War of Liberation or the Second Chimurenga is an example of decolonization as a long and violent process. Colonized by British commercial interests in the late 1800s and named Southern Rhodesia, the country soon developed a white settler minority who functioned as the ruling elite. With the rise of nationalist as well as pan-African consciousness across Central and West Africa in the mid twentieth century, the white minority made several attempts to stave off Black majority rule. In order to delay decolonization, they declared their Independence (The Unilateral Declaration of Independence) from the British government in 1965 and tried to form a hybrid state called Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in 1970 while actively fighting a guerilla war against the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army. All of these tactics did not stave off decolonization. The 15-year civil war known as the Zimbabwe War of Liberation (1964-1979) ended with the birth of contemporary postcolonial Zimbabwe in 1980.

other women in her life. From the opening of the first novel, Tambu's story of growth is explicitly framed as being part of a network of women and their lives. Her story is "about her escape and Lucia's; about her mother and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion—Nyasha, far-minded and isolated, her uncle's daughter, whose rebellion may not, in the end, have been successful" (*NC* 1).[3] I show how Nyasha's character is at least as important as Tambu's own, providing us with a counterpoint, another example of negotiating anglophilia in the course of three texts. Reading *Nervous Conditions* as part of the longer narrative arc that Dangarembga intended, I track the ways in which both Tambu and Nyasha simultaneously negotiate misogyny and colonial oppression, and often strategically deploy Britishness as a way to push back against traditional misogynistic structures. Across texts, their evolving struggle reveals that the anglicization of the Shona woman in erstwhile Rhodesia is a fraught process that is intertwined with certain paths to gender emancipation. While this conclusion, by itself, is not deeply unusual, Dangarembga provides her readers with both a cautionary tale and a possible model for how to negotiate anglophilia vis-a-vis gender, emphasizing its potentiality as both a critical and an oppressive tool. Using Frantz Fanon and Ranjana Khanna's analyses of the postcolonial subject, I show the double valence of anglophilia in these texts.

This twofold significance of anglophilia is revealed through the collective and parallel selfhoods of the women in Dangarembga's novel—a doubling that is significant when we examine the autobiographical nature of the trilogy. Instead of a traditional autobiographical novel where the authorial stand-in is the protagonist, and oftentimes the narrator, Dangarembga instead fashions the first-person narrator's cousin as her representative. Nyasha, much like

[3] While I focus on Tambu and Nyasha in this chapter, the other women, Maiguru, Mai, and Lucia, all have different but equally intensive relationships with Britishness. From Mai's loathing and her belief that it has taken her children from her, to Lucia's establishment of a security agency in postcolonial Zimbabwe that offers its services to the affluent white citizens and the postcolonial elite.

Dangarembga, has parents with advanced educational degrees, is raised in England during a formative period of her childhood, and, after returning to Rhodesia, lives in a mission compound where her father is the headmaster of the missionary school. Nyasha's cultural shock and alienation are similar to what Dangarembga has described as her own (Thien and Dangarembga). Later, much like the author, Nyasha goes to Germany, to finish her education, lives there for a decade, marries a German man, and then returns with her family to raise her children in Zimbabwe. Tambu, the narrator and protagonist, on the other hand, is from a poor, rural family whose members are engaged in subsistence farming and have no relations with the colonial missionaries. She never leaves the country, does not form any romantic relationships, and has no children. Why, then, is Nyasha not our protagonist? Why do we have Tambu's story in such great detail? I argue that these parallel life stories of two women who must both negotiate the psychic and material effects of colonialism allow Dangarembga to forward two kinds of self-formation in reaction to the pressures of "Britishness." Instead of reading Nyasha as the clear authorial stand-in and Tambu as a character who has nothing to do with the author's own life, I argue that Dangarembga plays out different versions of her life experiences as an anglicized Shona woman, the various shapes it could have taken, through both of these characters. Tambu's life functions as a shadow autobiography, a possible path that Dangarembga's own life could have taken but did not. The simultaneous telling of both stories allows Dangarembga to follow two kinds of anglophilic self-formations and explore their different effects and outcomes.

This exploration of different, parallel ways of negotiating with colonial culture as a Shona woman is tied to the texts' triangular relationship with authorial and readerly identification. When asked about the autobiographical nature of *Nervous Conditions* in interviews, Dangarembga has traditionally treated it as an inane and uninteresting question

(George et al. 318). She has, however, repeatedly emphasized the importance of readerly identification and representation. In response to interview questions that framed *Nervous Conditions* as potentially being a novel whose characters girls in Zimbabwe can identify with, she outlines the historical lack of representation of complex Black women characters in Zimbabwean literary culture and the psychic damage it causes: "With everything that you're taught, you construct a kind of cognitive map for yourself that is comfortable…For the people who grew up during my parents' time and my own time this was something that was denied to us absolutely and completely" (George et al. 312). *Nervous Conditions*, she says, "is serving this purpose for young girls in Zimbabwe. They call me on the telephone, you know, just to talk to me. I feel very good about that" (ibid). For Dangarembga, it is important that Zimbabwean women are able to see themselves in her characters and find their problems identifiable and relevant to their own lives. Thus, she instrumentalizes and imaginatively multiplies her own experiences as a Zimbabwean woman, her life story, to tell a communal tale. Autobiography, I argue, becomes a mode of collective self-formation. Instead of creating a single, coherent authorial self who is her stand-in, Dangarembga writes different versions of herself, playing with a fragmented selfhood whose parts are distributed across different characters in order to create a multiplicity of Zimbabwean women characters who are responding to the effects of colonial culture in a variety of ways. This variety allows for a wider range of readerly identification and outlines different modes of response to colonial culture, from critical distance to unexamined attachment. The multiplicity of anglophilias in the trilogy functions as an exploration of multiple reactions to how "History has shaped us to be what *we* are and we can't get away from it" (emphasis mine) (Rooney and Dangarembga). Dabgarembga's three novels thus convey a

sharply focused concern with the collective personhood of Zimbabwean women, and its mobilization of anglophilia, in response to a violent colonial and gendered history.

4.2 Negotiating Gender/Negotiating Colonialism

Dangarembga says that she does not believe that there is a "crisis of leadership in Zimbabwe" but rather a "crisis of personhood" (Shringapure and Dangarembga). Her trilogy "chronicles and dissects this crisis of personhood…it also offers some hope as to how we can tackle it" (Shringapure and Dangarembga). Political change is only possible, she argues, if psychic and affective changes are enacted at both the individual and collective levels. Her trilogy offers an examination of the kinds of personhood available under colonialism and neocolonialism and the transformations possible and necessary if Zimbabwe's political landscape is to change. Dangarembga's focus on the psychology of colonialism is clear from the title of her first book. *Nervous Conditions* refers to Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth* by Fanon: "the status of 'native' is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonized people *with their consent*" (Sartre). By invoking Fanon, the title invites us to read the novel as an exploration of the psychological conditions that are the result of colonization and the affective imbrication between the colonizing and colonized populations that are central to these "conditions." The postcolonial "crisis of personhood" that Dangarembga is preoccupied with is not one borne of pure opposition or oppression, but through colonized people's affective negotiations with colonial culture in order to create a livable space for the self within a colonial structure. This relationship between the individual and the social networks they inhabit is crucial to Dangarembga's theorization of anglophilic attachment. Her "nervous conditions" are not just specific medically recognizable neuroses, but the everyday conditions of

women's lives in colonial Rhodesia and postcolonial Zimbabwe. The term gestures towards a more expansive interpretation of psychological conditions that are not necessarily pathological. Anglophilia, in Dangarembga's works, is a psychological nervous condition whose individual manifestation is a symptom of certain material conditions of living. It is an attachment that is socially and historically created due to the necessity of the self's negotiation with a colonial environment and history. By acknowledging that anglophilia is not *only* a pathological condition that must (or even can) be entirely uprooted and reversed, Dangarembga draws attention to the historical conditions of anglophilia, the irreversibility of these histories, and thinks through how this attachment might be mobilized and negotiated with in order to sustain the lives of women in Zimbabwe.

That Dangarembga is specifically concerned with the particular concerns of women under colonization has been pointed out by many critics. She herself has declared that she is a feminist author (George et al. 318). Deepika Bahri notes that Dangarembga writes the female body as a site of protest against both colonial and patriarchal cultures. She posits that, by virtue of an eating disorder, Nyasha's "dwindling body boldly enacts the pervasive and aggregate suffering and bewilderment of colonized women caught between opposing as well as joined forces" (Bahri). Carl Plasa connects Dangarembga's figures of starvation to a much longer history of the English novel and its use of food as a mode of both feminist despair and protest (128), while Kelli Wixson analyzes how the female characters in the novel use food as a site of agency (222). At the end of *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu and Nyasha are in disparate situations in terms of exercising gendered agency. While the practical Tambu moves onto an even more prestigious missionary school at the end of the novel, "high-minded" (*NC* 1) Nyasha becomes extremely ill and must put her studies on hold. However, since most critical readings of

Dangarembga confine themselves to the first book of the trilogy (largely due to the long gaps between the publication of each book: *Nervous Conditions* came out in 1988, while the latter two were published in 2006 and 2018 respectively), they cannot account for the evolutions Dangarembga traces in her two characters. In terms of the success of their responses to patriarchy and colonialism, they occupy very different positions in the last two books. The "crisis of personhood" (Shringapure and Dangarembga) in Zimbabwean women, and in her characters particularly, that Dangarembga refers to is not a static one. Rather, as this chapter will show, she delineates a set of evolving strategies for dealing with colonialism and the patriarchy. Instead of being a complete, coherent set, these strategies are always in process. The same technique that is successful in *Nervous Conditions* is no longer viable in *This Mournable Body*. In this chapter, I examine how Dangarembga specifically explores anglophilia as a set of mutable strategies–with its attendant benefits, costs, and harms–that women in Zimbabwe use to negotiate their personhood in a colonial, patriarchal world.

The postcolonial personhood that Dangarembga's women attempt to create is always in process due to the contradictions inherent in the psychoanalytical postcolonial subject. Dangarembga's invocation of Fanon in her title calls up his foundational theorization of the colonial subject as being fundamentally divided and doubly estranged.[4] Several commentators

[4] For Fanon, this subject is cut off from his (and it is always a male subject) indigenous origins due to his desire for colonial culture, and he is cut off from that colonial culture due to its racist and hierarchical nature that will never allow a non-white, colonized subject to occupy the same space as a white one (*Black Skin White Masks* 4-7). In *Fanon, Postcolonialism, and the Ethics of Difference*, Azzedine Haddour summarizes this process as "cultural schizophrenia" (98) that is inevitable with the collision of Enlightenment ideals of liberalism and democracy with colonialism. The colonized subject's desire for mastery over colonial culture that Fanon describes is, according to Homi K. Bhaba's foreword, a self-hating wish. The non-white, colonized man "desires not merely to be in the place of the White man but compulsively seeks to look back and down on himself from that position" (xxxii). Fanon argues that anti-colonial national culture is created through a revitalizing of indigenous ways through the political struggle for decolonization. This process can heal the psychic wound of colonialism and undo its attendant estrangement (*The Wretched of the Earth* 159-68). Critics have read this as an expression of Fanon's "realistic" utopianism. Christopher J. Lee in *Frantz Fanon: Towards a Revolutionary Humanism* reads this as Fanon expanding on the "roles of humanism and dignity" (ebook) that can allow cultural healing in the wake of political decolonization. In *Subterranean Fanon: An Underground Theory of Radical Change*, Gavin Arnall points out how,

have argued that Dangarembga performs a feminist revision of Fanon.[5] Plasa, for example, describes how "critics are rightly at pains to stress how Dangarembga's fiction not only deploys Fanon's theoretical insights into the pathological workings of colonial domination but also extends and revises them from a black feminist perspective" (122). This feminist revisioning of Fanon's psychoanalytic theory of the postcolonial subject, however, creates a further split at the intersection of gender and colonialism: while Fanon's male subject can become empowered through the anticolonial struggle, Dangarembga's women characters cannot, since the indigenous patriarchy that is an active part of decolonization is an equally urgent axis of oppression. This split, I argue, creates a subject that is always attempting a reconciliation between gender emancipation, national culture, and anti-colonialism but never quite succeeding.

In *Dark Continents*, Ranjana Khanna examines the concept of postcolonial melancholy as foundational to the postcolonial subject. The Freudian definition of melancholy includes an ongoing desire to recover the lost object. Melancholia is never-ending since the processes of attempted recovery never end either. Khanna reads melancholy as foundational to political decolonization: "Political revolutionary violence is a form of melancholia in unconscious response, perhaps, to the loss of an ideal. The ideal, in this context, is the right of subjecthood and the right not to be exploited" (23). For Khanna, this lost ideal of the just, decolonial nation-state cannot be recovered, since modern nation-formation itself has been made possible only through its vital relationship with its shadow other, the colony. In this chapter, however, I will focus on the ongoing process of attempted recovery, in this case of the specifically female

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according to Fanon, decolonization is often accompanied by a creative renaissance during which the newly freed "reinvent their cultural heritage" (185).

[5] See Nair, "Melancholic Women: The Intellectual Hysteric(s) in 'Nervous Conditions"; Osei-Nyame Jnr., "The 'Nation' between the 'Genders': Tsitsi Dangaremba's Nervous Conditions"; Thomas, "Killing the Hysteric in the Colonized's House: Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*."; Shaw, "You Had a Daughter, but I Am Becoming a Woman Sexuality, Feminism and Postcoloniality in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions and She No Longer Weeps."

national subject, rather than its outcomes. Through my examination of Dangarembga's texts, I argue that this process of trying to recover a viable, generative, and harmonious way of being a Zimbabwean woman is not one of pure failure or disempowerment, but that it yields certain forms of agency, however compromised and limited.[6] The melancholic search for wholeness in Dangarembga's women subjects–a wholeness that would reconcile modern ideas of feminist liberation with a maintenance of indigenous culture–creates selves that are always in-process, mobilizing their attachments to Britishness to carve out their positions as modern, female, postcolonial subjects. In the rest of this chapter, I examine anglophilia in relation to two strategies – self–consumption and alienation – as represented in the lives and self-making of Tambu and Nyasha, the two major characters in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* trilogy. I theorize two kinds of gendered anglophilic subjecthood. Each kind of anglophilia is marked by certain strategies of attachment and distancing vis-à-vis both Britishness and Shona culture. These strategies, I contend, are instrumental in creating a gendered self that is negotiating an agential space for itself in the patriarchy.

4.3 Anglophilia as Consumption

This section considers how anglophilia and its enactment are connected to the consumption of both British material goods and British ideas of the self. "How do people acquire deeply felt and expressed desires for things they never had or wanted before?" (3), writes Timothy Burke in his account of the consumption of British, and more expansively, European commodities in Zimbabwe. Within the *Nervous Condition*s trilogy, this question is equally

[6] Fanon also sees the formation of national consciousness as a process of continuous negotiation whose significance lies in this state of constant flux that is responsive to historical change. This chapter examines Dangarembga's outlining of this as a specifically gendered process.

applicable to British constructions of the individual gendered self. I argue that Tambu and Nyasha both enact their anglophilic affiliations in a bid to create different identities for themselves. Tambu wishes to have the same social mobility and economic security her uncle's family has. Nyasha wants her sexual and intellectual liberation as a woman. Both of them approach their respective goals by choosing to ally themselves with specific forms of Britishness, by consuming certain British products, both material and ideological. As Burke observes, while the choice by a colonized subject to consume a foreign commodity is not a completely free choice that they are in control of, it is also not purely coerced (10). Instead, Tambu and Nyasha creatively use and deploy their anglophilic desires in order to construct certain kinds of selfhood for their own purposes.

The importance of food as a commodity and as a marker of social hierarchy to the life of the family, specifically to the women's lives, is established early on in the first novel. Tambu's evolving relationship to both its production and consumption signals her changing role as a socially mobile young woman: her movement from domestic and agricultural laborer to British-educated urban professional. Tambu's family holds a feast to celebrate the return of her uncle and his wife and children from England. This is a joyous occasion that marks the social prestige he has conferred on the extended family by successfully achieving a British higher education degree that will translate into a comfortable middle-class life in colonial Rhodesia. This feast, and her role in it, makes Tambu conscious of her unstable and changing role. As she is introduced to her cousins, she becomes conscious of her differences, specifically, her precarious place in the family as a poor, young girl. She must cook the food and serve them while eating in the kitchen herself. The feast gives her "an incipient understanding of the burdens her mother talked of" (*NC* 38). This awareness of misogyny drives her to the kitchen where, angered by the unjustness of the world, she spills some of the precious meat for the feast into the hearth. Tambu

expresses her anger, significantly, through her interactions with the food and suppresses it in the same way. Frightened by the disruptive force of her thoughts, she busies herself with cooking. In order to keep her discomfort and anger at bay, she cooks an elaborate meal. Not only does she "take great pains with the stew, letting the meat fry gently in its own fat, and adding enough chopped tomato and onion to make a rich gravy" (*NC* 38), but she also makes sausages out of the leftover parts of the animal. By doing this work, Tambu reassures herself and confirms her necessary place in the family. When the other women come back, they praise her for being a "hard little worker" (ibid) and Tambu feels "so superior, so wholesome and earthy, like home-baked cornbread instead of the insubstantial loaves you buy in shops" (ibid). Tambu, by casting herself in the role of the traditional African woman who is "wholesome… [as] cornbread" (ibid), sets herself up as superior to her "insubstantial" anglicized cousins.

This superiority, however, is not consistently socially confirmed, and it does not survive in the face of the family's adjustment of the traditional hierarchy to suit her uncle's children. Despite their subordinate status as children in the family, Tambu's father tries to flatter their wealthy and powerful father by insisting that Tambu ritually wash their hands along with the elders'. As she goes "down to her knees in front of" her cousin, Chido, she feels "fractious and put upon because [she] thought all three of them should have been eating with [her] in the kitchen" (*NC* 41). While they should, according to custom, eat in the kitchen with her, she is compelled to both wash their hands and serve them an elaborate multi-course meal alongside the older, authoritative members of the family in the main house. Tambu herself eats in the kitchen with only vegetables and gravy and no meat for her meal since "there was not enough left in the pot to make a meal for those not dining" in the main house (ibid). This event is a pivotal moment in her self-formation. She develops an "incipient understanding" (NC 38) of the burdens of both

poverty and womanhood. She realizes that in order to achieve the status that her cousins seem to enjoy, to be able to sit in the dining room and eat meat, she cannot remain a traditional Shona woman like her mother. She "began to see that the disappointing events surrounding Babamukuru's return were serious consequences of the same laws [of male privilege] that had almost brought [her] education to an abrupt, predictable end" (NC 38). Despite her equal, if not greater, intelligence and industry, it was her brother who had been initially chosen as the automatic recipient of an education that would allow him class mobility. It is only his sudden death that makes space for her education. Tambu realizes that in order to gain and maintain agency as a woman in her family, she has to become a stakeholder in the colonial culture that her uncle's family is a part of.

Tambu's integration into colonial culture happens somatically, through her consumption of both food and goods, rather than being an articulated ideology. When we are first introduced to her, she and her family are living in poverty in rural Rhodesia. They are financially dependent on Babamukuru, her uncle who is the headmaster at the nearby mission school. Babamukuru's status in the community and among his extended family is largely derived from his education in England and his patronage by the white Christian missionaries who took him under their wing when he was a boy as a "promising young African" (*NC* 14). Babamukuru sponsors Tambu's education at his mission school with the understanding that, as the oldest child of her parents, she will support them and her siblings in the future. Thus, her encounter with anglicization takes place at her uncle's house in the mission compound where she lives during the school year. Her introduction to colonial culture is through its sensual materiality and bodily excess: "the heavy gold curtains flowing voluptuously to the floor...the sleek bookcases...and the large oval dining room table whose shape and size had a lot to say about the amount that would be consumed at

it...No one who ate from such a table could fail to grow fat and healthy" (*NC* 68-69). Food is central to Tambu's assimilation into colonial culture. At home, she eats vegetables and sadza, as they do not have expensive meat or sweets. At Babamukuru's house, she is offered "lots of biscuits and cakes and jam sandwiches...it was difficult to decide what to take because everything looked so appetising" (*NC* 73). Not only does Tambu eat more, but she also eats differently, learning to suit her palate to another kind of food.

While part of this assimilation is pleasurable, another is a disciplining of her body and her diet. At her first dinner with her uncle's family, she is faced with "something that might have been potato...it was smothered in a thick, white, tasteless gravy...it refused to go down her throat in large quantities" *(NC* 82). In addition to her unfamiliarity with and distaste for mashed potatoes, she is also not used to eating with cutlery. Finding a knife and a fork difficult to use, most of her food lands on the table, the floor, and her lap. Humiliated in front of her sophisticated, anglicized family, she observes that it looks like a "small and angry child had been fed in her place" (ibid). Eventually, her aunt offers her some familiar sadza that she can eat with her fingers, sadza that nobody else at the table eats. Tambu, however, is eager to learn the culinary habits of her uncle's family so that she can be enfolded into their network of power. Over time, she learns to use cutlery and eat at the table. She also develops a taste for British food. The first time she returns home, she is no longer happy with "the hunks of bread cut thick, spread with margarine and taken with tea" (*NC* 134) that is standard breakfast fare. Tambu vigorously expresses her disappointment: "Bread and margarine! I would have preferred egg and bacon!" (ibid). The abundant food that would have delighted her former self is no longer acceptable due to its associations with Shona rural life. On the other hand, eggs and bacon for breakfast is both a class marker and a sign of her participation in Britishness. Tambu's

assimilation into British colonial culture is visceral. It is achieved through both indulging and disciplining her appetites.

In the second work *The Book of Not*, this hierarchical relationship between British food and traditional Shona food is played out on a more public stage, reinforcing the rules of "correct" consumption. Tambu is at a Catholic boarding school where she is in the minority as a Black student. She has won a scholarship that allows her to enter this much-desired institution where she thinks she will be inducted into Britishness. Tambu is, however, never fully inducted into Britishness. While she and the other Black students are taught its putatively superior ways and to despise their own culture, they are always treated as outsiders who cannot ever be "properly British" due to their racial origins. Britishness will always be a favor that is externally bestowed upon them. In Sacred Heart, the Black students are confined to a single separate dormitory room, and as a group, they and their foods are marked out as inferior and even harmful, while British food is framed as being clearly better and more nourishing. Patience, one of the Black students, "brought to school [snack] items that no one could remark upon. She offered around roast peanuts in a packet from the store, rather than a pod…the bottles she brought were always those available at reputable supermarkets like OKs and Checkers" (*TBON* 51). In contrast to Patience's irreproachable anglicized, middle-class tastes, the food brought to school by Ntombi, a working-class member of the same dormitory, is framed as disgusting and unappetising: "some mouldy looking *madhumbe* and a plastic bag of *musoni* so desiccated it was dry as bark" (ibid). Patience and Ntombi occupy very different positions in the school's social ladder, and this difference is emphasized through their gastronomic choices. Food becomes a way to declare classed anglophilic affiliations and separate out those who cannot or will not perform appropriately within the school's elite hierarchy.

This collective, segregated environment, I argue performs a double function. It both reinforces the superiority of British food as the "correct" product for Tambu to consume while alienating her from being able to claim ownership over this kind of food. As a student on a "scholarship that provided…fewer books, yet less uniform and failed completely to encompass the pleasures contained in bottles of Bovril or Oxo and jars or Robertson's or Chiver's marmalade" (*TBON* 49), Tambu cannot lay secure claim to British food as her own. While Maiguru occasionally "slip[s] a bottle of Tomango tomato sauce or Willards peanut butter into [her] tuck" (ibid), it is an unreliable source of anglicized class performance due to Tambu's uneven access to the money that can buy such luxuries. While Babamukuru and his wife Maiguru both prioritize British food, it is not segregated from the more traditional foods that they also eat. When, during her first meal at their house, Tambu is uncomfortable with the British potatoes and gravy and cannot eat them, Maiguru gives her some sadza and tells her to "put into [her] stomach whatever will fill it up and give [her] a good night's rest" (*NC* 82). Tambu is impressed with the regular breakfast of "egg and bacon and tea…[and] for roasting [i.e. toasting] bread before you ate it, as if it had not already been baked, well, yesterday" (*NC* 93) that is available at her uncle's house. However, they simultaneously cook "heavily spiced dishes out of Maiguru's recipe books…which [Nyasha] and Maiguru tucked into with relish" (*NC* 94) that are a far cry from the bland potatoes that Tambu is served on her first night. Also, crucially, this food is part of the family's regular food habits after their prolonged stay in England and is not treated as a separate, hallowed thing that must be kept pure as it is in her boarding school where every meal is entirely comprised of British food.

It is significant that in a boarding school in Zimbabwe, the meals bear no trace of local food habits but are British–"bread and milk with every meal,...a more stolid stodge...the

occasional freshwater fish, and the proverbial distressed vegetables" (*TBON* 47)—with an emphasis on functionality. The fish is supposed to increase their intelligence while the "stodge" is to "keep [them] pelting over the hockey pitch" (ibid). The connection between British food consumption and "correct" nutrition is clear—Shona food cannot provide the same. This hierarchy is even more clearly enforced in the "tuck" or the personal snacks that the students bring to supplement the school fare. "Diverse fish and meat pastes, powdered yeast extracts, the powders of beans and grains, whose consumption proved the consumer was a better being compared with others, were stacked in the centre of every table" (*TBON* 48). This competition of who can prove their anglicized selfhood through their economic access to British foods plays out in the public stage of the common dining room where every student can see what is at "the centre of every table" (ibid). This competition is, however, not just about being able to afford these foods, but about having the superior taste to prefer them:

> Who wouldn't want to be seen spreading anchovy paste or Camembert spread, whatever the taste, since the act of spreading, a prelude to consumption, declared you a better breed than those who did not consume such delicacies upon their carbohydrates…those nourishments stuffed with food content and class. (*TBON* 50)

This move ties economic access to and consumption of certain goods to the creation of a superior, more refined self, a "better breed" ((ibid). To eat British food is to be a better person. Conversely, to eat Shona food is to be an inferior subject.

Unlike Maiguru's kitchen, where sadza and bacon freely mix, students in Tambu's dorm who cannot either afford the expensive Britsh food or have no taste for it need to hide the Shona snacks their parents send them. Tambu's fraught and contradictory responses to this food illuminate her estrangement from both Shona and British culture. She becomes an outsider to both. When her fellow dorm-mates bring Shona snacks, she describes them using a mixed

language of disgust and desire. While these snacks are wrapped in "squashed parcels of brown paper stained in fetid smelling oil" (ibid), Tambu describes the food itself as delicious: "mouthwatering *mbambaira,* boiled cobs of mealies bearing full glistening rows of seeds" (*TBON* 51). Tambu's disgust is a learnt response. While she still finds this food "delicious" (ibid), the fact that it can never be "carried decently to the dining hall table" (*TBON* 50) is enough to repel her from it. Tambu's relationship with food is now so entirely structured by its social value that she cannot understand that others might not subscribe to this system or question it in any way. When her friend, Ntombi, says that she "couldn't see what the fuss was about" (ibid) and is critical of this hierarchy of cultural capital, Tambu attributes it purely to envy, since her family cannot afford British food. When Ntombi shows her friends the madhumbe and musoni she has brought from home, they make fun of her. It "made everyone laugh, asking where she would cook it" (*TBON* 51). Ntombi tries to "hold her own" (*TBON* 51) in the face of their ridicule, declaring that she can find a way to cook: Isn't there wood outside? Are you saying there isn't a cooking hearth here? Those women who clean here [at the school], are you saying they have electricity" (ibid)? She stands up to her upper-class friends by both defending the validity of her food choices and pointing out that they are surrounded by people, the other Black Zimbabweans who work at the school, who eat the same things she eats. Tambu, however, does not see this as an ideological statement of any kind. Instead, to her, it is "just bravado. There was somewhere, in spite of everything, an unspeakable desire for chocolate" (ibid). She cannot imagine a world where someone like Ntombi might not be secretly craving chocolate as a class marker. The marking of this desire both as "unspeakable" and universal is a turning point in Tambu's relationship with anglophilia. While she is among her family and her Black friends in *Nervous Conditions*, she has a sense of control over both the English goods and the ways she is consuming them. She derives pleasure from them that is not purely about cultural capital and

remains aware that other ways of being (i.e., ones not tied to gaining colonial acceptance) are possible. She can still enjoy the mealies she and her family grow (*NC* 21) and the "peaches, guavas and mulberries" (*NC* 134) from the other farmers in her neighborhood. In the boarding school, however, her desire for Britishness becomes more urgent. It also becomes an object of guilt and shame, since she realizes that, in comparison to her white classmates, her Britishness will always be seen as an inferior copy.

In the final book of the trilogy, *This Mournable Body*, Tambu's self-formation as a consumer who is always aspiring toward white Britishness without ever quite achieving it is complete. She is entirely invested in British goods and culture as a path toward social mobility. This investment, however, no longer has the same valence in a globalizing, postcolonial Zimbabwe. At the opening of the novel, she is living in a women's hostel in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. Having recently lost her job, she is also in danger of losing her accommodations since her landlady, an elderly white woman, is made uncomfortable by her presence. Even in such dire straits, she is careful to make sure that her one "pencil skirt with its matching top" (*TMB* 7) that she had bought "as an approximation of the fashion spreads [she] had mulled over in magazines" (ibid) remains pristine while the rest of her clothes and possessions disintegrate around her. When she does get another job as an underpaid schoolteacher, she spends most of her first month's salary in Edgars, an expensive store for Western clothing. She "revel[s] in the colours, textures, and cuts of the newest fashions" (*TMB* 91), finally buying a "trouser suit and coordinating blouse in bottle green" (ibid). This love for Western fashion is matched by her desire to "forget" her rural, Shona origins, and her unwillingness to consume anything that can tie her to it.

Both the extent of her attempts to deny her roots and the psychological damage that results in is made clear from an extended episode involving a bag of mealie-meal that her mother sends her in Harare through a neighbor. At the first mention of this package, her "saliva turned bitter" (*TMB* 55), even if her mother, as this neighbor tells her had walked a significant way to get this gift to her. Subsequently, throughout the book, as Tambu moves from place to place, the bag of mealie-meal follows her despite her attempts to get rid of it. Eventually, it follows her to her prosperous company bungalow, a perk of her final job at a tourism agency. Looking at it covered in "weevil webs…emit[ting] a stronger, staler must than ever" (*TMB* 205), the bag becomes a symbol of her mother's love for Tambu. She expresses her anguish and regret at having abandoned her: "you should have eaten it, you reprimand yourself, cooked your mother's love…and taken it into her body. In this way you would have made a home wherever you were" (ibid). Instead of seeing this as a sign that she needs to repair her relationship with her family and acknowledging the futility of her efforts to forget her past life in the rural homestead, Tambu distracts herself with the "Western" luxuries that her job affords her. After throwing the meal into the garbage, she tries to distract herself. She "fetch[es] a bottle of wine from the pantry, switch[es] on the TV, and forc[es herself] to be engrossed in an Australian soap" (ibid). This does not, however, work. Filled with guilt, anger, and disgust, Tambu buries the rotting meal in the garden as a way to "once and for all… bury this woman" (ibid) – i.e. a version of herself that is poor, unanglicized, and similar to her mother. She narrates her state of extreme distress: "While rage flays at you like a whip, you scoop the meal up again and run out into the garden…you dig a hole deep as a grave and pour in the gift from your mother" (ibid). This symbolic burial of her family and ties to her Shona culture is immediately unsuccessful. Dangerously drunk on wine, she has hallucinations the rest of the night about her mother attacking her in her home: "Her teeth fasten in the flesh of your thumb. You realize it is your

mother. You shake your hand. She holds on. Banging your wrist against its rim you succeed finally in throwing her into the wastepaper bin by the door" (*TMB* 206). However, another hallucination of Mai appears to take the place of the one she disposes of and Tambu spends the whole night "picking up the creatures…who are [her] mother and interring them in the wastepaper bin" (ibid). This horrific, grotesque, and darkly comic scene is a a symbolic enactment of the way Tambu lives her life. Her exhausting attempts to abjure her Shona roots and take on the identity of a fully anglicized woman who lives for her wine, pencil skirts, and Australian soaps fail spectacularly and appear both disturbing and absurd.

Dangarembga indicates that, in addition to being affectively unsatisfactory, this desire for Britishness is also not practically beneficial. Tambu's commitment to British and, more generally, European culture is no longer a guaranteed path to social mobility in postcolonial Zimbabwe. In a country that is courting global capital, a curated version of "authentic" local culture is a more desirable commodity than straightforward Britishness. Tambu's work at a tourism agency in the final third of *This Mournable Body* involves creating and managing tours for European tourists who want to experience the "real" Zimbabwe. While she starts out in a secretarial position, she is eventually entrusted to lead her own tours by her white boss. She is asked by her superior to curate a tour of her family's village, emphasizing the local culture. Before the tour begins, Tambu prides herself on being able to provide an elaborate European breakfast for her clients. She expects her clients to "gorge on…[a] breakfast of French croissants, Danish pastries...and full English with eggs done in three ways,...kidneys, kippers, and liver beside bangers, bacon, and bubble and squeak" ((*TMB* 271-2). This generous spread, however, does not tempt a number of her clients who want "other food" (*TMB* 272). Wanting something, "authentic," they react like "a child whose balloon has been popped" (ibid), when she tells them

that in Zimbabwe "everyone takes pride in being as good as anywhere at anything" (ibid). Tambu's attempt at social mobility by displaying her, and the agency's, facility at provisioning European commodities does not work. anglophilia is no longer a desirable commodity, but "authentic" local culture is.

As the novel makes clear, the European tourists want to see a primitivized version of Shona culture that is untouched by any trace of colonial commodities.[7] Tambu's familiarity with colonial culture is only useful insofar as she can use her understanding to facilitate these desires. Her "patina of…'Englishness' at last turns into a grand advantage" (*TMB* 218) as she takes on the role of the local guide to European tourists. Tambu rationalizes the damage her convent school had done to her psyche by focusing on the "grand advantage" it has now become in her line of work. She meditates on "how restoring it is …to reap a positive outcome from the convent that, while it educated [her], rendered [her] "them," they," "the Africans" (ibid). Her "anglicized accent" makes her "endearingly familiar" to her clients (ibid). She is "still Zimbabwean enough, which is to say African enough, to be interesting to the tourists, but not so strange as to be threatening" (ibid). Tambu cultivates a "fascinatingly enigmatic" (ibid) role as an anglicized Zimbabwean–both native and not by virtue of her ability to perform certain kinds of Britishness while still being reassuringly "African" (ibid).

This hybrid role is, however, an unstable position to occupy. European ideas of the "right" kind of Africanness are no longer the same as when she was a child. Unlike the missionaries, her clients are no longer interested in seeing a "civilized" Zimbabwe. Instead, they want a titillating, exoticized primitivity. Tambu's boss, Tracey, tells her that her partners in

[7] Pedzi, her colleague and rival at the tourism agency, comes up with the idea of a "Ghetto Tour" for European tourists. Creating a plan for "low budget excursions into high density suburbs" (*TMB* 200), Pedzi arranges for a curated experience for tourists who want to experience an exoticized version of poverty.

Amsterdam want “real eco values, authenticity, like millet and thatch, milk from the udder... all those things they say go with villages… like dancing authentically… minimal, like agh, loincloths, naked… torsos” (*TMB* 330). The tourists do not want to see what actually goes on in contemporary rural Zimbabwe but “those things they say go with villages” (ibid); an exotic performance of “Africanness.” Part of Tambu’s tour is a welcoming dance performance by the women of her village, including her mother and other members of her extended family. While the women plan to wear traditional Shona garb– “Java print skirts and wraps…[and] zambia cloths” (*TMB* 275)–during the dance, even these indigenous commodities are not seen as “African” enough. Instead, as Tambu’s boss Tracey makes clear, the women are expected to put on an exoticized performance complete with bare-breasted dancing. While Tracey feels uncomfortable asking this of Tambu, she also tells her that she has “no choice” (ibid) and must make this happen. The consumption of European commodities and missionary ideas of modesty that were drilled into Tambu are no longer entirely desirable. They are not only positively construed as a sign of civilizational progress by the European neocolonial gaze that Tambu wishes to appease.

Tambu’s attempts at approaching British civilizational values by consuming British products is no longer read as a clear sign of her status as a “good… African” (*NC* 14) who will automatically garner white approval and therefore social mobility through this anglophilic position. Instead, she must provide exotic and unreal versions of indigeneity for her European clients in order to win their approval. The trilogy ends with this impasse. At the end, Tambu cannot deliver on the smiling, dancing, naked troupe of women that she promises her boss. Soon after the performance starts, Tambu's mother, who is part of this group, can no longer tolerate the humiliation of dancing unclothed for a group of tourists in front of her whole village. As she

"wails and falls onto the sand, biting the grit" (*TMB* 280), Tambu herself is struck with horror at what she has done: "Grief wells past the banks of a pale purple pool and rushes into your throat…It wraps around your heart and constricts to stop it. Your heart refuses to be stopped. It grows and grows…Your heart bursts. You burst with it and fall down next to your mother" (ibid). Her "grief" is also a moment of realization. She understands that "everything is all wrong" (ibid) in her attempts at fulfilling the demands of her clients. While she is not a member of and has distanced herself from the homestead, she is also incapable of exploiting it without compunction in order to satisfy tourists. Tambu, having failed to effectively deliver what her clients desire, is berated by her boss and soon after, she resigns from her job. At the end of the trilogy, Tambu's anglophilic consumption leaves her in a fraught social position where, instead of enjoying the benefits of a whitening social mobility, she becomes the unwilling and failed facilitator of neocolonial desires.

Tambu's cousin, Nyasha, also consumes British commodities, but in an explicitly critical way. Her anglophilic consumption has a distinctly textual and ideological cast. She uses her attachment to certain discourses of gender that are available to her through British culture to create herself as a modern, gendered Shona woman. This process begins in the first novel of the trilogy. She has a large library of English books "from Enid Blyton to the Bronte sisters" (*NC* 93), and she reads extensively on a range of historical topics–from the Israel-Palestine conflict to pre-colonial life in Rhodesia. She "had to know the facts if [she was] ever going to find the solutions. She was certain the solutions were there" (*NC* 93). Nyasha is intent on creating a map for a critically informed gendered postcolonial self. When Tambu moves into Babamukru's house in *Nervous Conditions,* she witnesses the gender politics surrounding anglophilic consumption and Nyasha's redrawing of the boundaries of what it meant to be a "good girl" (*NC*

81). Before their family dinner, as Maiguru shows Tambu to their shared bedroom, Nyasha is "deeply engrossed in a novel" (*NC* 75) and does not notice either her mother or cousin waiting at the door. She is reading *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a novel that neither of her parents finds suitable. When Maiguru realizes what her daughter is reading, her "lips pursed into a tight, disapproving knot" (ibid). She tells her daughter that she "mustn't read books like that…they are no good for [her]" (ibid). While her mother does not want Nyasha to read *Lady Chatterley's Lover* due to its focus on women's sexuality, Nyasha reads it (as she reads everything else) because she was "going to find a solution" to her troubled gender role. Significantly, while her reading of Lawrence is a transgression of her parents' boundaries, she simultaneously uses his position as a canonical British writer in order to legitimize her reading of sexually explicit material. D.H. Lawrence is "meant to be good" (ibid), she tells her mother. The text aligns Nyasha's fraught emotional and psychological position with her habits of consumption while showing how she strategically uses what she consumes, and their prestigious status within the culture of colonial anglophilia, to legitimize her disruptive idea of womanhood.

In addition to books, Nyasha also consumes food differently than Tambu; instead of using it as a marker of social capital, she uses it as way of redefining her position as a woman. Indeed, the two kinds of consumption are inter-related. During dinner, Tambu observes how her cousin expresses anger at her reading being policed by her father through her refusal of food. She brings *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to the dinner table, which sparks a complicated conflict. While Lawrence is a canonical author who writes Great Books, her father does not want his daughter reading it as it compromises his sense of her "decency" (*NC* 92). He removes it from the dinner table while his daughter is not present. When Nyasha returns, she asks after her book, becoming

increasingly agitated at the prospect of her parents simply taking her book away with no discussion:

> 'But you wouldn't, would you? Not without telling me, would you?' asked Nyasha in consternation. Maiguru looked so unhappy you could not blame Nyasha for thinking her mother had taken her book. 'But Mum! How could you? That's–that's–I mean, you shouldn't–you have no *right* to–'(*NC* 83)

She expresses her shock at this unilateral exercise of parental authority that has no space for her views. According to her, they have "no *right*" (ibid) to violate her autonomy by controlling her choice of reading. Nyasha invokes the language of rights, something that particularly agitates her father. He says to her: "I expect you to do as I say. Now sit down and eat your food" (*NC* 85). The coupling of food with gender expectations is clear from this statement. Babamukuru wants to control his daughter's consumption, both intellectual and physical. Nyasha reacts by "sulkily...[taking] a couple of mouthfuls" (*NC* 83) and then excusing herself from the table. This tussle between father and daughter, his desire for her to behave like a "good" Shona girl and hers for independence, is dramatized through scenes of conflicts over consumption.

A central problem that Nyasha tries to solve is that of her father's and Shona society's limits on her life as a young woman. After she stays out late with a boy after a dance, the conflict with her father comes to a head and turns violent. Babamukuru tells her that "no decent girl would stay out alone, with a boy, at that time of night" (*NC* 113) He berates Chido, her brother, for letting his sister "behave like a whore without saying anything" (*NC* 114). Nyasha taunts her father, goading him when he questions her for behaving "like a whore" (*NC* 116). Instead of "learn[ing] to be obedient" (*NC* 117) when he strikes her, she strikes him back. "I told you not to hit me," she tells him, "punching him in the eye" (*NC* 115). The encounter ends with

Babamukuru threatening to kill her and Nyasha "walk[ing] out of the room" silently (ibid). Later, when Tambu asks her why she disobeys her father, Nyasha connects it to her time growing up in England, to the life she had led there and the ideas she had been exposed to. Her behavior has been reframed now that she has returned to Rhodesia. She "was comfortable in England but now [she's] a whore with dirty habits" (*NC* 117). Nyasha points out the alternate perspective living in England has given her and the effect it has had on her decision to be herself, regardless of the kind of consequences she has just suffered: "It's not England any more, and I ought to adjust. But when you've seen different things you want to be sure that you are adjusting to the right thing. You can't go on all the time being whatever is necessary. You've got to have some conviction" (ibid). Her life in England as well as her consumption of a different set of ideas about gender expectations and women's rights have given her a different perspective on the limits of being a "good girl" (*NC* 81). Nyasha uses her attachment to a set of British texts and their ideological stance on gender and sexuality to articulate a more agential selfhood for herself as a woman.

Dangarembga dramatizes the double bind of colonialism and gender by highlighting the role of British cultural texts in expanding Nyasha's horizons vis-a-vis women's rights while also focusing on her awareness of racism and colonial violence: "the condition of South Africa…Arabs on the east coast and the British on the west…the nature of life and relations before colonization" *(NC* 93). With her way of "persistently seeing and drawing attention to things you would rather not talk about" (*NC* 97), Nyasha's consumption of Britishness creates a fraught attachment within her. She is unwilling to entirely disavow her relationship to a British culture that has played a vital role in her self-formation while simultaneously grappling with its oppressive, colonial implications. While I will analyze the psychic implications of Nyasha's

predicament in the next section, I will now examine how, in the final novel of the trilogy, she at least partially resolves this emotional paradox and minimizes the harm it does to her by turning her anglophilic consumption into a creative process. After spending her later youth in Europe pursuing higher education, she returns to Zimbabwe and starts a series of workshops for young women, that aims to give them "not only a voice, but an analytical one" (*TMB* 129). She wants to "build a place where women can study women's issues with modern technology" (*TMB* 132). While everyone around her, including Tambu, her husband, and her aunts, "cannot think of anyone who is interested in women's issues" (ibid), and are of the opinion that she should be teaching them something more "useful" like advertising, Nyasha is invested in teaching creative writing as a way of self-examination and subsequent self-formation.

Nyasha's idealism, her desire to change the status quo and introduce new ideas to her students is seen as an impractical foreign import by her family. Tambu thinks that this "being obsessed with one's own person" (*TMB* 149) is a luxury that she has learnt in Europe and has no place in Zimbabwe. However, Nyasha is determined to use what she has learnt in order to create an empowering and collective gender framework for women in Zimbabwe that is specifically suited to their cultural frames. She asks her students to research a "great African woman" (ibid), and while most of them do not understand the assignment and write about themselves, one eventually ends up writing about their mother and her death during the civil war (*TMB* 174). By focusing on the story of her mother's death, and her murderer's continued freedom due to a presidential pardon, she is looking into a set of traumatic national experiences that are collective and are relevant to the self-formation of all her fellow students. This collective analysis and growth are what will create, according to Nyasha, a discourse surrounding women's rights and selfhoods. She wants her workshops to help women to start "telling different stories. Stuff that's

uplifting. Not just the nonsense on television. Not all that tragedy either, as though that's the only story there is… [she wants to tell] stories of things and people [they] can admire that in the long run make us better than we've managed to be so far" (*TMB* 148). The workshop, in addition to fostering intellectual growth, also gives them a space to explore new ideas in a safe and generative environment. Tambu describes an idyllic scene: "The pale gold of mid-afternoon shimmers through the open space…excited laughter peals…[Nyasha] talks intently…the participants gaze at [her]...and take notes…then they are all laughing again…They fling their arms here and there, and around each other, and Nyasha is lost in the heart of it" (*TMB* 133). Thus, Nyasha does not simply consume British/European products. She analyzes them critically and, in the final book, learns how to extract certain ideas that she can them herself add to and modify to create a new ideological framework for gendered selfhood that is a new, hybrid product. Nyasha's attachment to Britishness, her consumption of Western texts and ideas, end with her creating a new product that is specifically for Black Zimbabwean women in a contemporary, postcolonial nation.[8]

[8] The positive potential of a communitarian approach to women's lives and rights is also brought up through the other characters in the trilogy. An important secondary character in the first and third novels is Tambu's maternal aunt, Lucia. She is unmarried, has relationships with multiple men, and is unwilling to tie herself to take on a subservient position as a traditional wife. "Although she had been brought up in abject poverty, she had not…been married to it at fifteen. Her spirit, unfettered in this respect, had experimented with living and drawn its own conclusions" (*NC* 127). While staying with Tambu's family to help her mother with a difficult pregnancy, she herself becomes pregnant with Takesure, Tambu's paternal uncle's child. When the largely male elders of the family call a meeting to discuss the situation, Lucia, Mai, and Patience (another aunt), are largely excluded from this meeting. Drawing on the "fierce sisterly solidarity they [have] established there in the kitchen" (*NC* 137), the women discuss the injustice of keeping them out of important family gatherings where one of their fates is being decided. It becomes clear that Lucia and Mai have a bond that cannot be easily undone. Despite Lucia's sexual relationships with both Takesure and Jeremiah, Tambu's father, Mai is on her sister's side. She berates her for sleeping with her husband, but in the end, supports Lucia when the latter wants to join the elders' meeting to plead her case. At the meeting, Lucia both declares her scorn for and lack of trust in Takesure and Jeremiah and her attachment to her sister. She says that if she is to leave, she will take her sister with her since she is unwilling to "leave [her] alone with this man who has given her nothing but misery since the age of fifteen" (*NC* 145). Lucia does not trust the men to do right by either her or any of the other women in the family. This commitment to helping other women, creating exclusively women-only spaces, continues in the final book when she opens a security agency. Using the training she and "women like [her]" had received as fighters in the Second Chimerunga, she has, as one of her employees, Christine says, "made a place for…veterans" (*TMB* 151). At the end of the third novel, Tambu joins this agency herself. In addition to Lucia, Mai is also part of this attempt at creating public roles for

4.4 Anglophilia as Alienation

The consumption of Britishness that accompanies anglophilia is accompanied by a simultaneous estrangement from local cultures. Alienation as a strategy of self-formation is central to anglophilia. The anglophile distances themselves from their indigenous roots in order to perform their loyalty to colonial culture. This deliberate move is accompanied by an inadvertent estrangement. As Dangarembga presents it, since colonial culture will never fully accept the anglophile as an insider, the latter remains in an aspirational position, never achieving the privileged position they dream of. This Fanonian subjecthood is foundational to the *Nervous Conditions* trilogy. Both Tambu and Nyasha exhibit the alienation that is central to the anglophilic postcolonial self. While Fanon can envisage a generative national culture based on anticolonial struggle as a mode of undoing this alienation and empowering the implicitly male postcolonial subject,[9] Dangarembga, extending Fanon's warnings about the dangers of the comprador elite who could take over colonial systems after independence (*Wretched of the Earth* 122), as critics have already shown, is clear-eyed about this national culture's misogyny and its collusion with systems of colonial oppression. Without access to an unproblematic vision of cultural revitalization, Dangarembga instead focuses on examining this mode of alienation as an uneven and ongoing process whose conclusion can be *both* destructive and potentially useful in some fashion. Indeed, more than definitive conclusions, she is interested in how anglophilic

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women in the final book. As the treasurer of the Women's Club in their village, she arranges for the local tour that Tambu and her tourism agency want to offer their clients. It is she who smooths the way with the Chairwoman of the Club who can sway the local authorities in favor of the tour. "Without too many words she and [Tambu's] mother agree that they will discuss the matter after [Tambu] leaves" (*TMB* 252). She is part of a network of women in the village who can influence its affairs.

[9] For more, see Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth;* pp. 159-68.

alienation can change paths within the same subject and even more importantly, can be mitigated or transformed into something more productive for the postcolonial subject.

Tambu and Nyasha both enact differing degrees of alienation from Shona culture. For Tambu, it is a relatively straightforward path where she becomes more and more removed from her family and her roots in each successive book as she pursues social mobility through Britishness. Crucially, Tambu refuses to critically reflect on her anglophilic attachments, afraid that if she does so, she will lose the selfhood she has painstakingly created for herself through her anglophilic attachments and education.[10] Nyasha, however, takes a different road. Her alienation in *Nervous Conditions* is qualitatively different from Tambu's in that it is rooted in a critical attitude to both Shona *and* British culture. Anglophilia becomes a tool she uses to question certain aspects of Shona and British communities. By the third book, she inhabits a "liminal complexity" (*TMB* 130) as a Shona woman whose alienation from certain aspects of her culture is a conscious critical stance rather than a symptom of her psychological colonization. Nyasha repurposes colonial alienation, turning into an analytical tool that allows her to maintain a critical distance from parts of both British and Shona cultures, and importantly, to reimagine a

[10] Tambu's deliberate foreclosing of any kind of critical thought that might destabilize the life she aspires to begins in *Nervous Conditions* when, every time she formulates a criticism of Babamukuru, her conduit to Britishness, an education, and a more affluent future, she immediately represses it. Unwilling to articulate her doubts even to herself, she suffers in both body and mind. When Babamukuru arranges a Christian wedding ceremony for Tambu's parents, insisting it is the only way to legitimize their union despite them having been married for decades already, Tambu balks at the idea. She did not want to attend "a wedding that made a mockery of the people [she] belonged to and placed doubt on [her] legitimate existence in the world" (*NC* 163). However, she is unable to voice her strong objections. Her "reverence for [her] uncle, what he was, what he had achieved, what he represented and therefore what [she] wanted, had stunted the growth of [her] faculty of criticism" (*NC* 164). Unable to acknowledge her distress either to herself or to anyone else, Tambu becomes physically incapacitated on the wedding day. She feels disembodied and emotionally detached. She had "slipped out of [her] body and was standing somewhere near the foot of the bed" (*NC* 166). Even when Babamukuru comes in "looking dangerously annoyed… the body on the bed didn't even twitch. Meanwhile the mobile, alert [Tambu], the one at the foot of the bed, smiled smugly, thinking that [she] had gone somewhere where he could not reach [her], and [she] congratulated [her]self for being so clever" (ibid). Unable to get out of bed, she misses the ceremony despite Babamukuru's threats and scolding. This is an early instance of Tambu's self-alienation. While, in *Nervous Conditions,* the narration does give us some of her explicit criticisms of her living conditions, despite their subsequent repression, this psychological structure is far more advanced in the latter two books that contain even fewer moments of analytical thinking on her part.

new way of being a woman in postcolonial Zimbabwe that is neither wholly British nor Shona, but a hybrid of both. Through the parallel lives of Tambu and Nyasha, Dangarembga shows her readers two very different kinds of subjectivities that are possible through deploying anglophilic alienation as a strategy of self-making.

Tambu's alienation from her family and her culture begins in *Nervous Conditions* and takes proper hold in the second book of the trilogy, *The Book of Not*. Here, confined to a segregated dormitory and surrounded by mostly white students who refuse to touch her for fear of contamination, Tambu begins to internalize the standards of her white peers and teachers more fully than before. Subjected to bigoted behaviour, double standards, and humiliation by both the nuns who run the school and her fellow students, Tambu turns her anger and despair inwards. Instead of becoming disenchanted with her school and critically reexamining her attachment to it and its ideals, she commits further to her anglophilia and its promise of social mobility. In order to maintain this loyalty, it becomes necessary for her to shift the blame for all the oppression she is subjected to onto herself: she is treated badly because it is her fault, not because she occupies the bottom rung of an oppressive and hierarchical system. This process of absolution and self-blame alienates Tambu from herself. She becomes unable to access her true feelings, her anger towards a racist, sexist colonial system. Her alienation cuts her off from all community including her own self.

The loneliness of this radical alienation and Tambu's estrangement from both British and Shona culture is made particularly clear through a pivotal event in the novel, the prize-giving for the best O-level results at the school. Viewing it, as the ultimate sign of her ability to succeed within her school, Tambu is fixated on the O-level prize, a silver cup "engraved impressively with leafy decorations" (*TBON* 137). She fantasizes about the prize-giving ceremony. She would

be acknowledged by the guest of honor at the ceremony, "[her] name would be inscribed on [the cup] for everyone forever to see…Then people would know who [she] was, a person to be reckoned with and respected, not a receptacle of contempt like the gardeners, maids, cookboys, and terrorists" (*TBON* 138). Tambu imagines her long-awaited triumphant entry into colonial culture, into the world of social mobility that will set her apart from other Black people in the eyes of her teachers and peers. She desires acknowledgement and acceptance, thinking that the O-levels are the path to success. The actual event becomes emblematic of both her desperate desire to be part of colonial culture, and her inability to ever truly be included. Tambu does get the highest marks in her O-levels. However, the trophy is awarded to Tracey Stevenson, a white student, since the school wants to avoid the embarrassment and disruption that would be caused by having a Black student onstage, accepting the highest honor in front of all the families of the white students. They change the rules at the last minute and award it to her since Sacred Heart "undertakes to nurture well-rounded human beings" and Tracey is a "champion swimmer" (*TBON* 188). At the prize-giving ceremony, "girls who had not excelled were tucked…far away from the proceedings, so that mediocrity was well-hidden… Here, at the end of the sixth form section, [Tambu] shrunk within [her] seat" (*TMB* 192-3). Tambu is disappeared from even appearing as a participant at the event, reduced to the status of a mere audience member.

Tambu's emotional reaction to this chain of events is both an enactment of her estrangement from herself and from any kind of community and her refusal of any kind of critical understanding of anglophilia. While she is initially elated at her O-level results, viewing herself and her fellow Black student, Ntombi, who had gotten the second highest score, as "living proof of the benefits that would accrue to the land if only we were made equal" (*TBON* 184), this sense of success through fair play is soon undermined. As the prize winners are

announced ahead of the ceremony, and Tambu waits for her name to be called with "uncontainable excitement" (*TBON* 188), the headmistress announces Tracey as the winner, citing her athletic performance in addition to her O-level results as the ostensible reason for her win. Tambu is humiliated and thunderstruck. However, instead of being outraged at the school, she is "fearful that [she] deserved it…there must have been a mistake in the results, otherwise… the headmistress would not have done it" (*TBON* 190). Tambu cannot conceive of questioning the system into which she has put her complete faith in the interests of social mobility.

This episode suggests that if she questions the mechanics of her attachment to Britishness and acknowledges its entirely one-sided nature, she would have to rethink her entire subjectivity. Instead of doing that, she blames herself for falling short, since "Sacred Heart could never be wrong" (*TBON* 197). This move not only alienates her from the white colonial community that she wants to be part of (and can clearly never truly enter), but also the other Black students. Ntombi, after Tracey's win is announced, urges Tambu to refute this with the headmistress. Arguing that Tambu "can't just let all this happen like that" (*TBON* 190), Ntombi offers to accompany her to the headmistress's office and support her. Tambu, however, turns against Ntombi. "Savouring the bitterness" (*TBON*189), "snort [ing] with great disgust" (*TBON* 190), she accuses her friend of wanting to get her into trouble by urging her to stand up for herself. In an effort to preserve her own perception of her attachment to Sacred Heart as unproblematic and unexploitative, she not only places the blame on herself, but expands it to include the other Black students who offer her help. Refusing to introduce any analytical dimension to her attachment to Sacred Heart, she becomes estranged from both herself and any community. Her attachment to Britishness isolates her completely.

Dangarembga emphasizes the unsustainability of this isolation and the importance of critically informed community building by examining how Tambu mistakenly applies the Shona concept of *unhu*– "I am well if you are too" (*TBON* 175)—to her colonial white peers and teachers. *Unhu* is a social concept that emphasizes collective responsibility, reciprocity, and harmony within a community through its members' investment in the well-being of the group rather than their individual selves. *Unhu* can only work if every individual within the group abides by this social contract. Tambu, in an attempt to become a stakeholder in British culture, applies the concept of *unhu* to her school. Her actions anticipate the reciprocity she desires, and she shows a consideration for her white peers' well-being that outstrips her concern for her own happiness. The dangers of attaching oneself to the wrong community and the psychic harm it causes become clear in the aftermath of the prize-giving ceremony. Instead of realizing that the *unhu* she imagines herself to be participating in with her white peers and teachers is non-existent, she persuades herself that according to the rules of *unhu* she is the one at fault, and as "the one who was moving against the larger current was to come to [her] senses, realise the sovereignty of the group and work to make up for the disappointment." Then you would become somebody, as more *unhu* would accrue. (*TBON* 199). By foregrounding the needs and "sovereignty" of a community that does not acknowledge her as a member, Tambu is both alienated from her own happiness and from seeking out a community that would participate in a reciprocal, ethical social relationship with her. Her attempts at applying a Shona concept of community exclusively to her British school, where all the white students and teachers explicitly reject her as an equal member, keep her from feeling emplaced within either British or Shona culture.

This inability to recognize real, generative community also keeps Tambu from feeling any sense of solidarity with other Black women. When introduced to a Black professional

community, she rejects it and refuses to participate in it as a productive member. In *This Mournable Body,* after she resigns from her position at an advertising agency that had plagiarized her work, she unwillingly takes on a job as a teacher at a public high school. For the first time since her early school days in *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu is in a majority-Black social and professional environment. However, she is not able to flourish within this community since she no longer recognizes it as her own. While she cannot participate in a relation of *unhu* with a white community like Sacred Heart because of their refusal to admit her as an equal member, she has no sense of *unhu* either for her students or her fellow-teachers in this workplace, since she, for her part, refuses to recognize them as her community. Born into a free Zimbabwe and studying with other Black students and teachers, Tambu's pupils have a clear sense of self and a confidence that is a far cry from her isolation and inferiority complex while she was at Sacred Heart. Her "pupils are all born frees or as nearly so as to make no difference" (*TMB* 87). They possess a "forthright manner of meeting [her] gaze that indicates they expect more of the world than [she] ever dreamed the planet contained" (ibid). Tambu's pupils have no sense of racial or cultural inferiority.

Tambu, however, is so estranged from her own community that she cannot feel any hope or camaraderie with her students. Instead of fostering and encouraging their sense of confidence as Black women and directing it towards productive pathways, she feels combative towards them. She feels no sense of *unhu* towards these young Black girls; instead, she feels a "smouldering resentment, a kind of grudge" (ibid). Tambu treats her students as her rivals and, even, at times, as her oppressors. When she does her rounds during recess and finds them smoking a cigarette or drinking, instead of treating them like high schoolers who are breaking a school rule, Tambu reads it as a personal insult to her when they do not try very hard to hide

their contraband or appear contrite. She "crush[es] sympathy, convinced that their freedom-filled post-Independence was vastly more advantageous" (*TMB* 89) to hers, she starts keeping a logbook of her students' "offences" that, when the headmistress does not take seriously, she takes to the police station. Tambu refuses to see the difficulties of her pupils' lives, constructing a fictitious paradise of privilege and complete freedom for them while, simultaneously, resenting that they – that is, other Black women – could possess a freedom and confidence that she does not. "They bear no resemblance to [her] adolescent self. The energy in their bearings as they walk across the lawns, clatter across the red tile corridors, or charge around the playing fields tells you these young women see their future stretch into glittering horizons" (*TMB* 87). Instead of becoming part of a community of other Black women as their peer or their mentor and encouraging and directing their "energy" (ibid), she distances herself from all Black communities. The situation ignites a dislike for her students that "interfere[s] badly with [her] attempt to reinvent [her]self as a model teacher" (ibid). In her desire to attach herself to a white Britishness, she alienates herself from a potentially welcoming and generative group of peers.

Her sense of complete alienation comes to a head when she physically harms one of her pupils and suffers a psychological breakdown. Tambu especially dislikes Esmerelda, a pupil who disregards her rules and gives her insulting nicknames due to her unrelenting strictness with her students. When Esmerelda becomes involved with a rich, older man who is the Minister of Mining in the government and pictures of them together are published in a newspaper, instead of offering her support and guidance, Tambu becomes enraged that Esmerelda cannot be punished for her public sexual involvement with a man. During class, Esmerelda brings several copies of the newspaper to share with her friends in order to show off her relationship. Uncaring of Tambu's disapproval, she makes no special effort to hide them. Tambu becomes progressively

angrier and, in this moment, dissociates from herself: "You observe with surprised interest, very much as though examining another person, that in spite of swallowing and holding deep breaths, your breathing is growing more rapid" (*TMB* 94). Displacing her anger and focusing it on her students' inability to answer a question during class, her repressed sense of antagonism towards her students and their perceived privilege erupts as she threatens them with violence:

> You pick up her T square and take a few steps…Your chest rises and falls. Sweat runs down your face. It slithers into your eyes. It gushes out of your armpits mingled with antiperspirant. You have seen how they do not want a qualification in biology, you say; in which case your pupils will receive a qualification in violence. Two or three young women pull at her. This has no effect. Instead, you escape yourself into an unbearable radiance (*TMB* 94-95).

She strikes and blinds another student, Elizabeth, since she cannot expend her rage on Esmerelda, who has a powerful lover. The narration describes a set of physical processes in order to convey the extremity of Tambu's feelings without using any affective language. This violent episode is experienced as a moment of profound self-alienation by Tambu. At the moment of inflicting violence, she "escapes" herself. Instead of narrating it as an action she consciously performs, Tambu's selfhood becomes disembodied. She is no longer rooted in her own consciousness, experiencing her actions as a disintegration of her self, she "escapes" into an "unbearable radiance" (*TMB* 95). At moments when her longstanding tactic of staving off any sense of injustice and its attendant bad feelings through an elaborate system of repression do not work, her feelings erupt as (often misdirected) violence that she cannot consciously acknowledge. This event is the apotheosis of her systematic refusal to critically reflect on her actions. Tambu undergoes a triple alienation in this moment. She alienates herself from her community. She is blocked from acknowledging the bad feelings that result from her having to take on the "inferior" position of a schoolteacher in a majority Black school due to her rejection

in white professional environments (like the advertising agency). And finally, she needs to dissociate from herself whenever these repressed feelings come to the surface and express themselves in an uncontrollable manner. Tambu's anglophilia disconnects herself from both her community and her own sense of self, and this radical alienation results in a psychological breakdown that confines her to a psychiatric hospital for many months.

Unlike Tambu, Nyasha's sense of alienation is not due to her unilateral desire for Britishness and the attendant rejection. It is instead caused by her awareness of her lack of a legitimate position in society as an anglicized Shona woman who is critical of both British and traditional Shona culture, especially as they are practiced in her family. While, after returning from England, her family eats British foods at a British-style table, the dinner is conducted according to a traditional gendered hierarchy. As Tambu narrates it during her first dinner at their house in *Nervous Conditions*, Babamukuru is served first, and then the women and the children. His wife holds up each dish for him as he serves himself until his plate is full. When it appears that their cook has forgotten to make the gravy that he loves, Nyasha pauses dinner to make it herself. The delay leads to his food getting cold, so his wife eats his portion while performing the "the ritual dishing out" (*NC* 81) of his meal afresh. Maiguru performs the traditional wifely rituals, deferring to him, fussing over him, and calling him many endearing nicknames. Babamukuru accepts it all silently as his due. The complications arise when Nyasha, who has grown up in England, disrupts the traditional rituals of this dinner table by introducing a foreignness to it through her actions. She "did not wait for her father to finish. By the time he was onto the third dish, she was helping herself to the rice" (ibid). Her father chastises her for not observing the rules of seniority, indicating that she should take her cues from her mother's obedience: "Do you think she doesn't know what she is doing, waiting on me like this" (ibid)?

Nyasha's minor rebellion is indicative of a larger disruptive force within her. As a Shona woman who has been raised in England and who uses her knowledge of a different community to question the one she is embedded in at the moment, she is alienated from her culture not just in terms of the broad strokes of what it means to be a woman, but in her daily lived experience with her own family.

Part of the unspoken center of the novel is Nyasha's eating disorder, a fact that is obliquely hinted at throughout the novel and ultimately reaches a crisis at the end. Her eating disorder is both an expression of her rebellion against her father and her adherence to Western ideals of beauty. This double and ambivalent valence of Nyasha's relationship with food is symptomatic of the larger contradictions of the position of the educated Shona woman in Rhodesia: there is no perfect, socially harmonious position she can occupy. Nyasha is academically brilliant, and while this pleases her father, it also makes her more uncontrollable. Moreover, as a teenaged girl who has come of age in England, she is invested in a set of beauty standards that are no longer applicable to her life in Rhodesia. We see Nyasha through her cousin Tambu's eyes, and from the very beginning, Tambu is struck by her open difference. At their first meeting, "pretty, bright Nyasha" looks out of place in her short dress, like she had "obviously been" to England. Tambu repeatedly comments on Nyasha's preference for angles, rather than curves, a body that is the opposite of what most Shona women want. Throughout the novel, she is figured as being out of place in her environment despite possessing many desirable social markers like wealth and intelligence. At one of their early meetings, Tambu finds her "morose and taciturn" (*NC* 60). It is unclear to her why someone as "blessed" as Nyasha with her pretty clothes and her education could be so unhappy. Nyasha herself, however, is very articulate about her in-betweenness. She tells her cousin that she and her brother should not have been

raised in England, as it causes problems for her parents: “Now they are stuck with hybrids for children...who can’t help having grown into [a person] who has been there” (*NC* 78) While Nyasha refers to both herself and her brother as hybrids in this statement, as the novel progresses, it is clear that his selfhood is not as riven with contradictions as hers. As a man, his acceptance into their community is far more wholehearted despite (and also because of) his anglicization. It is Nyasha who is caught inhabiting a psychologically and politically in-between identity as an anglicized Shona woman.

The progression of Nyasha’s eating disorder remains an indirect presence in the text until near the end where it dramatically explodes into view. Tambu, who has in the meanwhile gone away to a Catholic boarding school, returns to Bababmukuru’s house and sees his family through new eyes. Nyasha has “grown skeletal...and is pathetic to see” (*NC* 198). Dinner is now a “horribly weird and sinister drama” in their house. Babamukuru sets out a large helping of food in front of his daughter and then covertly watches and waits for her to eat it. Nyasha regards her plate “malevolently...darting anguished glances at her father” (ibid). She then eats her food very quickly, drinks three glasses of water, and then excuses herself from the table so that she can purge. While her father is intent on her eating her food in front of him, he does not seem to care if she secretly purges herself – the “atmosphere returns to normal” (ibid) at the dinner table after Nyasha has finished eating. Her state leads Tambu to do something she very rarely does: question her uncle. Her cousin is “losing weight steadily, constantly...it dropped off her body hourly and what was left of her was grotesquely unhealthy from the vital juices she flushed down the toilet” (*NC* 199). Tambu is troubled that her uncle cannot seem to see it. The text reinforces the extent of Nyasha’s estrangement from her family by emphasizing their obliviousness to her obvious distress.

The untenable nature of this familial and social arrangement that isolates a single member so completely becomes explicit at the end of the novel. Eventually, Nyasha has a violent psychological breakdown:

> Nyasha was beside herself with fury. She rampages, shredding her history book between her teeth ('Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies'), breaking mirrors, her clay pots, anything she could lay her hands on and jabbing the fragments viciously into her flesh, stripping the bedclothes, tearing her clothes from the wardrobe and trampling them underfoot. 'They've trapped us. They've trapped us. But I won't be trapped. I am not a good girl. I won't be trapped. (*NC* 201)

Throwing furniture and breaking mirrors, she refuses to be a "good girl" (*NC* 82). Repudiating the double demand for docility from her as a woman and as a Shona woman, Nyasha places herself within a long history of colonization that has forced her whole family, especially her father, to play the role of a "good boy, a good munt, a bloody good kaffir" (*NC* 200).[11] Colonization has, according to her, "deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other. We're grovelling" to the British and their ways (ibid). It has alienated her and her family from both having authentic relationships with their own interiorities and with each other. She links her distress to knowing that she belongs at least partially to the British–"I'm not one of them but I'm not one of you" (*NC* 200)–despite the harm they have done to her community. This is Nyasha's final self-diagnosis of her nervous condition, and its existence is indicative of the qualitative difference between Tambu and Nyasha's respective types of anglophilic alienation. Tambu,

[11] Nyasha's nervous condition, particularly her eating disorder, has been extensively discussed in *Nervous Conditions* criticism. It has been discussed from feminist, postcolonial, and disability studies perspectives. See, Creamer, "An Apple for the Teacher?": Femininity, Coloniality, and Food in *Nervous Conditions*"; Nfah-Abbenyi "(Re)Constructing Identity and Subjectivity: Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, Tsitsi Dangaremba"; Rahman, "Bodily Secrets: The History of the Starving Body in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*"; Barker, "Self-Starvation in the Context of Hunger: Health, Normalcy and the "Terror of the Possible" in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*"; Barker, "Hunger, Normalcy, and Postcolonial Disorder in *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*."

despite being the narrator of these novels which are her life story, entirely avoids critical reflection. In order to continue on her projected path of social mobility through connecting herself to Britishness, she represses all the damage it does to her and turns her anger on herself and her own community, cutting herself off from both. Nyasha, on the other hand, is able to critically evaluate herself, even when in a state of extremis. The next morning, when calmer, she tells Tambu that "there's a whole lot more…[She's] tried to keep it in but it's powerful. It ought to be. There's nearly a century of it," (*NC* 201) indicating the longer history of gender within colonialism that has led to her own rage-filled selfhood. She connects her sense of estrangement and the subsequent psychological breakdown to larger gendered and colonial structures and the oppressive force they exert upon her.

The radical estrangement Nyasha experiences in *Nervous Conditions* is reworked through community engagement in the final novel. In *This Mournable Body*, Nyasha has been able to undo her alienation through her creation of the gender and racially conscious community she desires.[12] She undertakes critically informed community building that connects her to young Zimbabwean women as well the women in her family. Through her workshops, and eventually her NGO, she is involved in collective consciousness raising among young Black Zimbabwean women. Using her connections to and knowledge of both British and Shona cultures, she is able to transform what was an alienating in-betweenness in *Nervous Conditions* into a tool that helps bring these young women together and gives them a new map of how they could potentially construct their own selfhood in a postcolonial, globalizing Zimbabwe. The significance of Nyasha's venture, while it is unclear how far it will be able to affect lasting change or be

[12] Nyasha is largely absent from *The Book of Not*, which follows Tambu's life in her boarding school. We occasionally hear of her recovering from her breakdown, continuing her studies at her father's school, and eventually getting high scores at her A-levels at the end of the book.

financially viable in the long term, lies in its ability to imagine a different world. She "still think[s], though, every time [she does] a workshop with the young women, it makes a difference…It changes something" (*TMB* 152). Tambu is unable to understand this, since Nyasha's way of living in the world is financially and socially precarious, a fact that bothers Tambu, but not Nyasha. The differences in their anglophilic attachments become apparent through Tambu's continued radical alienation from herself and everyone around her due to her desire for social mobility via proximity to whiteness as compared to Nyasha's complex, fraught but still generative attachments to her students and her community.

Nyasha has close relationships with both her aunt Lucia and Christine, a family friend. Lucia and Christine are both ex-freedom fighters who have a much more pragmatic view of what is possible for women in Zimbabwe. Lucia runs a successful security company that Christine works at, and they advise Nyasha to teach her students more practically oriented skills, "something useful…like how to make advertisements" (*TMB* 148). While neither agrees with Nyasha's way of doing things, they acknowledge the overall validity of her venture. Arriving to help her with the food preparations for her workshop, Lucia tells Nyasha that "it's better to support a woman who is supporting other women" (*TMB* 147), and so she and Christine are always available to help whenever necessary. It is clear from the way they greet each other that they have been helping out with Nyasha's workshop for a while. When Nyasha embraces Lucia and Christine and expresses her gladness at their arrival, Lucia reminds her that Nyasha has never called on them and "not [gotten] an answer when it was possible for [them] to give one" (ibid). While they do not agree with Nyasha's idealism, they show interest in her workshop, suggesting changes and improvements. All three women quickly and effortlessly continue their respective tasks in the kitchen as they talk. It is Tambu who feels "increasingly uneasy in this

sphere where the three women have found their place" (*TMB* 149). At the end of the third novel, it is anglophilic, alienated Nyasha who has been able to emerge from her nervous condition and learn how to live in a state of in-betweenness without necessarily being alienated, thereby parlaying her fraught double consciousness into the creation of a community she is invested in.

4.5 Conclusion

Following the lives of its characters from childhood to middle-age, the *Nervous Conditions* trilogy utilizes the form of the bildungsroman to show the different outcomes of the two kinds of anglophilia I outline in this chapter. Dangarembga's novels show how an attachment to Britishness is intimately tied to narratives of postcolonial self-definition and development. In a postcolonial nation, Britishness as a structuring social value is impossible to escape entirely; anglophilia is not an exceptional individual phenomenon, but a common social one. Dangarembga shows readers two ways of negotiating this predicament, acknowledging both its enormous ability to harm and its potential as a critical tool. These different outcomes are expressed through Nyasha's and Tambu's stories, which follow very different trajectories and end up constructing two parallel and contrasting bildungsromans. Tambu's unexamined anglophilic attachments and her desire for white British recognition as an essential component of her selfhood leads to a failure of the bildungsroman structure. Because of her alienation from every kind of community and her own self, her attempts at social progress are repeatedly foiled by her psychological estrangement from any productive idea of society. Similarly, her repression of her own emotions, which results in her alienation from her full personhood, prevents the kind of maturity and personal growth that is the mark of a bildungsroman. The failure of this narrative structure illuminates anglophilia as a nervous condition that keeps the anglophilic subject from

developing an independent subjectivity that does not need to rely on its dyadic and subservient relationship to colonial culture.

However, as her cousin's example illustrates, anglophilia does not *necessarily* have to be pathological. Nyasha's life story shows how it can become a tool of self-critique and community building, instrumental in expanding ideological horizons and imagining alternative modes of gendered selfhood. Returning us to the concerns of the first chapter with its preoccupations with social mobility, gender, and postcoloniality, Dangarembga offers a us a more tentative, critical, and ambivalent understanding of anglophilia at the close of the twentieth century than Sorabji's confident declaration of the superiority of anglophilic gendered subjecthood at the beginning. Anglophilia is an unavoidable legacy of colonization in Dangarembga's work. It is here to stay, as is gender as a construct. Instead of viewing it as an exceptionalizing framework that the woman postcolonial subject can use to mobilize social privilege, as in Sorabji, it is a ubiquitous phenomenon that every postcolonial subject has to contend with in some way, however different they may be. For Dangarembga, it is critical reflection, or its lack, that crucially inflects each subject's encounter with anglophilia and the effect it has on their self-formation. To be anglophilic is not necessarily a path to disaster, but to be uncritically so is. Dangarembga's work, through its multiple theorizations of anglophilia, offers us a sense of its varied and enduring afterlives in the postcolonial nation, the transformations it undergoes through globalization, and the disillusionment that is tied up with this dream of imperial belonging.

Coda: New Directions

How has colonialism created particular affective structures in colonized populations? How do we account for positive feelings within the subjects of empire for the very structures that oppress them? Is an attachment to Englishness simply an expression of a colonized mind or does it have other, more complex origins and ramifications? For Sorabji, anglophilia aids in the self-formation of a professional Indian woman who draws on Britishness as an important axis of her authority. Naipaul uses anglophilia to establish his legitimacy as a privileged global traveler and a British citizen. Using authors like Naipaul and Sorabji, this dissertation examines anglophilia—an attachment to structures of English governance, education, and culture—as an affect that underlies self-creation within subjects of the British empire in the long twentieth century. While much has been written about feelings of colonial oppression, terror, resistance among the colonized, and the subsequent joy of decolonization, there is very little accounting of anglophilia except to dismiss it as "simply" an effect of colonization. Through the preceding chapters, I hope to have complicated this simplicity both by establishing it as a significant and widespread affective formation across the British empire and by interrogating its contents and reading it as a complex, paradoxical, and sometimes even politically radical structure of feeling.

My contention that postcolonial feelings—like anglophilia—constitute a distinct affective category generates a set of useful questions. Are there different kinds of anglophilia? If so, what are the conditions that create these distinct versions and what is the still-common thread between these different iterations? This is not to say that these iterations are entirely separate from a more universalized understanding of anglophilia as a commonly-held affect across the empire, but rather, that the specific lived conditions of colonialism have fundamentally shaped the affective structures of colonial and postcolonial subjects. I am committed to examining and illuminating

these emotions not as universal formations that have remained essentially the same across time and space, but as historical artefacts that have been shaped by the material conditions under which they are formed and performed. Can Naipaul's anglophilia, a product of his Trinidadian and British belongings, be compared to Sorabji's who lived most of her life in India? In order to do this, a genealogy or history of anglophilia that accounts for it as both a global and local phenomenon is necessary. Are there specific local iterations of anglophilia, and if so, how they express themselves? Is there such a thing as South Asian or Caribbean anglophilia.

As we have seen throughout the preceding chapters, anglophilia is far more dynamic than critics have tended to assume, and the anglophilia of each of these authors, and their autobiographical characters, often changed significantly across their careers. How did their relationship to Britishness, or even their understanding of what constitutes it, change as they moved across the globe and through time? Did the anglophilia that they started out with remain unchanged till their last text? For example, E.R. Braithwaite, in *To Sir, With Love* (1959) and *Paid Servant* (1962), encourages a brand of respectability politics among the non-white residents of Britain to help them assimilate better into the British national imaginary. He is insistent on middle-class life, heteronormative family, and respect for law and order as foundational to becoming "good" British citizens. However, Braithwaite moved to America in the 1970s and spent the rest of his life there. In 1972, he published *Reluctant Neighbours,* a generically ambiguous book that essentially chronicles an extended conversation between Braithwaite and a white, middle-class, middle-aged man on a train between New Canaan, Connecticut and New York City. Touching on a variety of topics, including and especially race relations, the text's (and Braithwaite, the first-person narrator's) viewpoint on the Black Panthers strikes a completely different note from his arguments for assimilation in the previous novel. When his

co-passenger castigates the group as “extremists who bomb and burn” (158), Braithwaite fires back:

> I am wondering why you’ve selected the Panthers as your example of violence. However, let me say this. I identify with every black brother and sister, whoever they are, wherever they might be. This does not mean I support whatever they do or say. But why the Panthers? I’ve not heard of them bombing or burning anywhere…I have read that they announce themselves determined to no longer put up with abuse or ill treatment, and they have stated their intention to defend themselves, violently if necessary. It seems to me the operative word here is defend. Perhaps they anticipated and expected a need to defend themselves (158).

This passage is a far cry from the Braithwaite that urges quiet assimilation in his previous works. While he nominally does not “support whatever [the Panthers] do or say”, he is clearly in sympathy with an explicitly revolutionary Black Power political party that actively condemned assimilation as a failed and useless tactic to achieve parity with white Americans. This is a very different version of Braithwaite who supports the right of Black people to “defend themselves, violently if necessary” against “abuse or ill treatment.” What transformations did he undergo to find himself making a case for the Black Panthers, a party that advocates the exact opposite of attachment and closeness to (neo) colonial structures of power? Any future version of this dissertation needs to account for how E.R. Braithwaite’s strategies of the self, and anglophilia’s relationship to them, change over the course of his life and texts. I am invested in not just anglophilia’s centrality to postcolonial subject construction, but the evolution of anglophilia as an affect and of the subject they are constructing across the course of time and space.

Ultimately, this project makes a case for the affective potency of empire long after its formal dissolution. While the British empire may no longer exist, its cultural influence continues to be a presence, if the breathless coverage of Elizabeth II’s Jubilee celebrations is any indication. We must read these attachments not just as holdovers from a different time, but as

living affective structures that have survived decolonization and evolved during the postcolonial period. Anglophilia as an affective structure has been, as this dissertation shows, instrumental in the creation of postcolonial identities, not just in passive, unconscious ways, but as an explicit strategy. To fully account for the many-layered history of the British empire and its legacies, it is crucial for us to study not just the revolutionary and the anti-colonial, but the deep ambivalence that is embedded in both decolonization and the subsequent nation-formation–an ambivalence that is clearly expressed through the continued life of an affiliation like anglophilia.

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