AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

POSTCOLONIAL WORLD LITERATURE: THE CASE FOR THE CONTEMPORARY ANGLOPHONE NOVEL

by
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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of English
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
September 2017

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Hiba Nabil Shmaysani for Master of Art
Major: English Literature

Title: Postcolonial World Literature: The Case for the Contemporary Anglophone Novel

In this thesis, I suggest that contemporary Anglophone literature have the potential to perform passive resistance to global misconceptions regarding underprivileged peoples and cultures. I situate contemporary Anglophone novels as a possible leeway between the fields of World Literature and Postcolonialism, and suggest that studying these novels through a postcolonial framework is beneficial in realizing their didactic potential. I provide a close reading of *We Need New Names* (2013) by NoViolet Bulawayo and *The White Tiger* (2008) by Aravind Adiga in order to show the application of the postcolonial framework suggested in the thesis that focuses on plotting the aesthetics of Prize culture found in contemporary Anglophone novels and juxtaposing it with the narrative resistance inherent to the texts.

The Introduction will discuss the aspect of contemporary Anglophone novels that allow for their inclusion in such a study, mainly the inclusion of contemporary Anglophone novels in the field of World Literature, the increased use of the English language as a global language, and the close relationship between institutions of literary production and the book market. Chapter 1 sets up the framework of the thesis and discusses the concept of literary aesthetics through the art of storytelling. The chapter aims to shed light on the importance of aesthetics in the field of World Literature and on its use as a literary device to focus attention on problematic constructions of specific cultural productions, as well as discuss the concept of a narrative resistance using Jasbir Jain's contemporary application (2007) of Stephen Slemon's theory of resistance (1990). Chapters 2 and 3 will provide a close reading of *We Need New Names* and *The White Tiger* respectively, utilizing the framework set up in Chapter 1 to illustrate the application of the reading this thesis is suggesting. In the concluding chapter, I provide a discussion on the importance of contemporary Anglophone novels with respect to dissemination of rectifications of common global misconceptions and

misrepresentations and point to the potential use of these novels as introductory novels because of the ability of passive resistance to allude to a more structured form of resistance.

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To Mariam,

I wouldn't have gotten here without your sacrifices…

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE MODERN ANGLOPHONE NOVEL

A. **The Stage Is Set: The Rise of the Anglophone Novel**

Jan Baetens, in his call to distinguish between World Literature and popular literature, brings to light the lack of "originality" of current Anglophone literature[1]; specifically those deemed as internationally marketable by high-end publishers and are therefore attributed to World Literature. He states that most of the novels are "politically correct rectification[s] of the Norton Anthology syndrome that reduces all literatures of the world to what the Anglophone readers are capable of reading and willing to buy" (Baetens 337). Baetens makes these claims in an attempt to push the idea that popular literature and World Literature are inherently different due to their antagonistic values. While World Literature, to Baetens, values quality, originality, multilayeredness and timelessness, popular literature prefers quantity, novelty sensationalism and voyeurism (336-337). Baetens' definition of what is popular literature seems to consider anything published that garners international success in print, film, video game and other types of commoditized mediums, i.e. literature that has the ability to traverse geographical boarders and commoditized mediums, and advocates for a separation of this literary style from the study of World Literature.

[1] The term Anglophone Literature in this thesis will refer to literatures written in English by members of non-native English speaking countries. Anglophone literature, in this state, has a lot in common with Commonwealth literature, post-colonial literature in English, and New Literatures in English.

This call for separation is not unique to Baeten, and has been used frequently to counter and critique a definition of World Literature given by David Damrosch, one of the field's notable academics. In *What is World Literature?*, Damrosch praises the importance of the circulation and reception of any book outside its national boarders, claiming that it is circulation and reception that allows a work of literature its inclusion in what is considered "world literature". This definition, in opposition to Baeten's call for separation, allows for the inclusion of popular literature within the study of World literature because it relies on circulation and reception; or the 'popular' aspect of popular literature. This definition not only increases the body of texts up for study, but also limits the exclusionary factors that could be applied to a growing and relatively new field. As long as a text meets the marks of "circulation and reception" it should, in theory, be viable as a text for study within the field of World Literature.

Damrosch's definition focuses on the concept of circulation and allows any text, regardless of language, origin, topic, or date of publication, to be included as a world literary text as long as it is highly circulated and widely received. However, this definition glosses over an important aspect of literary study; language. Damrosch himself states that the ability for an academic, or even a group of academics, to be fluent in a large number of languages is not a realistic expectation, let alone the ability of a faculty or a department to boast linguistic fluidity in every language (Comparative Literature/World Literature: A Discussion with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and David Damrosch, 463-465). The ability of a text to be read by an international audience affects both its circulation within the global community and its reception within academic and non-academic circles. This does put

certain languages at a disadvantage to others, specifically languages that are spoken almost exclusively in specific geographical regions.

Translation seems to be the most logical approach to solving this problem. Damrosch even praises the ability of a translated work to add to the original text, using it as a way to further "define works of World Literature" (*Longmans Anthology of World Literature*, 2004). He states that a work that "gains" in translation, that moves out "into new contexts, new conjunctions" (xxv) is one to be studied in the field of World Literature, unlike the "great texts" that do not "read well abroad" because of their distinct ties with their "points of origin" (xxv). Other scholars disapprove of this view of the advantages of translation. Emily Apter, for example, points to the dangers of translation in furthering the divide between Western and non-Western texts within the field of World Literature and, subsequently, postcolonialism.

Her book, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, discusses the dangers of assuming all literature can be translated, and states that an "Untranslatable" work, or a work that loses its cultural and political layers of meaning through translation, is more prominent than not (2013). In her similarly named chapter in *World Literature in Theory*, she revisits the idea of the Untranslatable and questions the use of Translational studies in World Literature, and states that both fields ignore "problems more internal to their theoretical premises" (2014). She goes on to say that World Literature[2], with its reliance of translation as a "critical praxis" for "communication across languages, cultures, time periods and disciplines", disregards a text's "right to the Untranslatable". For Apter,

[2] Emily Apter uses capitalization to denote the field of World Literature instead of the concept of "literature of the world".

World Literature's use of the word "world" disregards the Untranslatable aspects of texts from Third World countries, further shifting Untranslatables into the periphery of the field's construction of the world (347).

Apter has also written and commented specifically on the inequality of translation, in an interview with Simona Bertacco of *The New Centennial Review*, Apter comments on the concept of "equivocity", and states that having something "somewhat mean" the original text is not an acceptable means to introducing the text to a wider audience (Interview with Emily Apter, 2016). When asked how this is related to postcolonial politics, she quoted Gayatri Spivak's article titled "*Development*", and how resisting the equivation of untranslatable ideas is a form of disqualifying "First-World, normative notions of 'equality' that presume linguistic and cultural equivalency". With this critique of a common translational tool, Apter problematizes translated texts used in both the study of World Literature and postcolonialism.

Perhaps more-so than with translations of world literatures, translations of postcolonial texts become even more problematic when one looks at how the field is viewed by some of its scholars. While both World Literature and postcolonial studies share a fundamental goal, "to move the study of literary texts beyond the confines of the classic boundaries of European literature" (World Literature and Postcolonialism, 213), some academics have pointed to the difference between the apparent focus of the texts found in both fields. Robert Young thoroughly discusses how academia has differentiated the texts that belong to World Literature and postcolonial literature, suggesting that the difference lies in the audience and the aesthetic of the text. This is not to say that there is an exclusive

focus on either aesthetics or audience, but that the emphasis on one or the other differs in both fields. Texts considered as part of World Literature emphasize the aesthetic quality of the writing because of their ability to be received globally, while postcolonial texts are "literature written against something", and many postcolonial texts are considered "Resistance Literature"[3].

Postcolonial literature is often literature that works against a system of injustice; even though resistance literature and postcolonialism are not mutually exclusive categories of literature, thus making the problem of the equivocity of such texts through translation twofold. Because of the ongoing injustices facing postcolonial literature, from the choice of language used all the way to the means of circulation through the publishing industry, a postcolonial text written in a non-European or non-classical language already deals with the problems of inequality in its original language due to the difficulty such a text finds in being read internationally in its original format. When such a text is translated, the problem of equivocity is added to the problem of inequality, making the translated text an equivocal translation of what is already an unequal text.

Due to the current era of globalization and the rise in the international market value of European languages, many authors choose to use languages that dominate the literary market and are more accessible to a wider audience, such as English. While postcolonial studies has brought an array of research on how problematic the use of the language of the colonizer is, World Literature's call for a substantial amount of circulation gives languages like English an advantage in allowing the author and the text inclusion in such a field. Taking Damrosch's view on circulation and reception, Anglophone literature steps in as a

[3] coined by Barbara Harlow after her work on Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani in 1987.

form of “cultural translation for Western readers”, a “representation of the diversity of literary point of views” that is different enough to garner attention, but not too different as to alarm or baffle the general Western audience (Young, 214). While Anglophone texts make up a considerable portion of the texts that can be studied in World Literature generally, and postcolonial literature specifically, many critics have claimed the end of true diversity with the rise of the Anglophone novel.

In her essay “How to Teach a Culturally Different Book”[4], Spivak argues that the generalized "global English" has caused a sort of erasure of cultural writings, using the example of the "erasure of the tribal" in Indian writings written in English, which creates a universalizable "Indian Cultural Identity." To her, universalizability of the Indian culture that is part and parcel of the Anglophone Indian novel came from "neo-colonial traffic on cultural identity” (The Spivak Reader, 2013). Writers that should be concerned with removing the equivocity of their own literature and denouncing the injustice in world politics are instead catering their writing to a Western audience by making their cultures more marketable.

Spivak and others suggest that contemporary Anglophone novels are perpetrators of neo-colonialism, and that the inclusion of these novels in the field of World Literature solidifies the idea that these novels, by forgoing the inherent politics of postcolonialism, represent an ongoing erasure of cultural differences on a global scale. Such accusations seem to be aimed mostly towards Anglophone novels that garner a level of critical acclaim within academic circles and Awarding bodies, and note that these novels are built in a way that guarantees high levels of circulation because they appease the prize culture. Many

[4] From *The Spivak Reader*.

scholars point to the fact that such novels are not only easily digestible, but that they also perpetuate stereotypes of cultures that fall in opposition to the call of postcolonialism in shedding light on the inequalities of the world's literary production.

Condemning contemporary Anglophone novels as perpetuators of cultural stereotypes limits the scope in which these novels are studied, specifically with respect to their ability in bridging the gap between postcolonialism and World Literature. This thesis aims to challenge the assumption that contemporary Anglophone literature is unable and unwilling to live up to the politics of resistance found in postcolonialism, attempting to show that it is possible to study these text through a postcolonial framework, even though they fall into the field of World Literature. Furthermore, it argues that the inclusion of contemporary Anglophone literature in the field of World Literature provides the means to study a different approach to postcolonial politics and ethics. While this author contends with the idea that contemporary Anglophone novelists market their work in a way that allows for visibility on an international stage, this thesis aims to show that marketability is neither inherently good nor bad, but a necessary step in order to widen the scope of the conversation surrounding resistance, specifically in its passive form.

By turning to two salient examples of popular Anglophone novels this thesis aims to highlight how these novels take advantage of the rise of World Literature without entirely abandoning the ethical imperatives of postcolonialism. The close readings provided will focus on internationally acclaimed Anglophone novels penned by authors considered in some ways to represent their home-countries, Zimbabwe and India. The choice of the novels under study was made in order to benefit from the already established academic

conversations related to both African and Indian Anglophone novels in general and the novels under study specifically, especially due to the polarizing reviews both novels have received. The rest of this chapter will provide the framework for the thesis by first showing the reasoning behind focusing on Anglophone and not Europhone novels, then by providing a brief introduction into the postcolonial politics retained within these novels, and finally by illustrating the method of study this thesis uses.

B. **Cashing In: The Market and the Reign of English**

The choice of focusing on Anglophone literature instead of a more general Europhone literature lies mostly in the rates of consumption of works in English that is mirrored in academic studies related to the world literary market. Literary scholars point to 'The Market'[5] as either the source of circulation of literature or of the flattening of differences through "supersaturation" of capitalistic demands (On World Literary Reading, 81). This thesis works in conjunction with academic sources that study the market and its relation to literary production, reception, and the commodification of literature with respect to World Literature as a whole.

Most scholars come to an agreement regarding the 'elements' of the literary market: it's close ties with economics, it's continual demarcation of literature as either core or periphery, and its implications as a capitalistic by-product of globalization[6] . The most

[5] Capitalized to show its importance as a concept within the conversation around World Literature, and not as an actual economic phenomenon.
[6] Found in the articles of Sapiro, Vermeulen, Brouillette, and Steiner.

interesting aspect of works surrounding 'The Market' has to do with two main recurring points: The demarcation of English as the reigning language throughout the book market, and the idea that World Literature "commercializes identities" through easy-to-swallow differences (*Against World Literature*, 2013). In fact, in "Globalization and Cultural Diversity in the Book Market", Sapiro attempts to break down the mechanics of the book market while undergoing a quantitative analysis of works in translation mainly in the French and American publishing industry (209-231).

In her analysis of the statistics of literary works in translation and in their original languages, Gisele Sapiro notes that from the 1980s till the 2000s, books translated from and to English have reached the highest percentages amongst all other languages, and states that "globalization has reinforced the domination of English" (Sapiro, 215). Her reasoning for the rise of the English language within the literary market is one that has also been stated by various other scholars, that "markets are in themselves social constructions, which are not independent from cultural and political factors". Ann Steiner raises a similar point in her chapter "World Literature and the Book Market", and situates world politics, world economics, and business conglomerates at the forefront of this language inequality, saying that "former colonies, trade bonds, media ownership, and other kinds of channels link the publishing industries in different countries" (319).

The reasons behind this unique language serge have also been documented thoroughly. The Institut Ramon Llull dedicated a chapter in their "PEN/IRL Report on the International Situation of Literary Translation" to both plot and analyze English's unique situation as a global language (2007). According to the report, there are roughly 400 million

native-English speakers around the world, coupled with around 400 million nonnative speakers and a “nebulous number of people who are currently learning English and have achieved a minimal level of competence”, making the total number of English speakers world-wide “well beyond a billion”. Perhaps what is most interesting to this thesis, and admittedly most relevant due to the limitations imposed on it by choosing to focus only on Anglophone literature, is the report’s analysis of the nature of the English language. English’s “comparative simplicity, vast absorptive capacity, and Subject-Verb-Object grammatical structure” makes the language “easier to process”, allowing for an appealing choice in international and cross-continental communication, a good reason for why “85% of the world’s international organizations use English as an official language”, including the United Nations.

The ‘demarcation of English as the reigning language throughout the book market’ has been both qualitatively and quantitatively proved in many recent scholarship, so far so that this particular conception regarding the language can be seen as a canonical view within literary scholarship. Jonathon Arac even states that “English in culture, like the dollar in economics, serves as the medium through which knowledge can be translated from the local to the global” (Anglo-Globalism?, 6, 2002). It should be logical, then, to assume that the choice of writing a novel or an academic text in English is a priority for many authors. The PEN translation report touches on the same equivilancy Arac mentions regarding the English language and the reigning global currency, stating that a literary text written or translated into English will gain a higher readership because of the world wide

accessibility of the English language, thus making English "the world's strongest linguistic currency" (23).

Anglophone authors have access to a larger audience simply by choosing to write in English, a choice that some academics have criticized. While critiquing Damrosch's categories of World Literature, Robert Young touches upon the perceived function of Anglophone novels within the American public, saying that it is meant "to represent the diversity of literary cultures and to act as a form of cultural translation for Western readers" (World Literature and Postcolonialism, 214). He adds that as long as the foreign culture is not "too different", then the Anglophone novel does work as a form of cultural information. Pieter Vermeulen seems to agree with Young, although his reasoning for this representational issue is that the "institutions of World Literature" as a whole, cater to "privileged consumers' demands for easily digestible cultural differences and variations".

Another scholar that has been widely quoted with regards to the rise of the Anglophone novel, Simon Durring, claims that such a rise in what is to be considered world literature allows for a politically dangerous "oneworldedness", or what Emily Apter considers to signify a "relatively intractable literary monoculture that travels through the world absorbing difference" (World Literature and Market Dynamics, 94-95). Similar to Apter's *Against World Literature*, the *n+1* magazine editors in their editorial "World Lite" have scathingly critiqued the rise of World Literature, claiming that specific Anglophone writers belonging to what is considered a foreign culture now represent what it means to be of that culture to the Western audience, naming authors like Salman Rushdie, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and J.M. Coetzee (World Lite, n.p). Interestingly enough, many scholars

seem to agree with Spivak's claim in "How to Teach a Culturally Different Book", that the generalized "global English" has caused a sort of erasure of cultural writings, allowing for a stereotyped, highly consumed, product of 'diversity'.

While, obviously, many authors remain 'loyal' in the way that they represent and present their own cultural backgrounds in their work, Spivak's claim refers specifically to those authors that profit significantly, be it through the awarding body or through book revenue, by watering down the cultures they are representing. As far as this author understands Spivak's position on the matter, there is blame to be placed on successful Anglophone authors that perpetuate particular stereotypes of non-western cultures, specifically because these works of literature reach a much wider audience and therefor may have a much higher influence than their counterparts.[7]

C. **Sneak Attack: On the Cusps of Postcolonialism**

Within the conversation surrounding the importance, or more-like the viability, of Anglophone literature as a representative of non-Western literature, many academics are rightfully concerned with the implications of an Anglophone turn. The dangers found in a literature that homogenizes differences instead of celebrating them have been mentioned by Spivak et al, most notably the erasure of cultural difference for the sake of a globally recognizable and universalizable culture. This is not only limited to the academic world,

[7] On the other hand, scholars such as Brian Edwards have done significant work on the circulation of cultures because of the existence of such a far reaching audience, and his paper "The world, the text, and the Americanist" gave rise to the core idea of this thesis, that Anglophone literature is a necessity in perpetuating the conversation surrounding the readability of marginalized voices and literatures.

novelists[8] and prize judges[9] have commented on the need to appease the Western eye in order to gain recognition, showing that the idea of a different-but-not-too-different representation is both known and worked towards. While this thesis does contend with the idea that award winning and notable authors work within the demands of the literary market and not in opposition to it, some contemporary Anglophone novels are hastily characterized as easily digestible works that do little to aid the ethical imperatives of postcolonialism. These novels, when studied under the framework of postcolonialism, demonstrate a political resistance to specific stereotyped tropes which can be categorized as passive because of its existence within a structured, perhaps even formulaic, aesthetic.

Even though such literary writings receive their fair share of criticism, this thesis attempts to prove that some contemporary Anglophone novels still retain the inherent ethical and political ideals of postcolonialism, and as such are able to bridge the gap between World Literature and postcolonialism. While scholars such as Brouillette and Vermeulen have discussed the dangers of a literary reading that focuses on the politics of the market, whether it's a "capitalist politics of World Literature or the anti-capitalist politics Apter promotes" (Vermeulen, 80), no good can come from situating literary production as anything but a continuously changing product of worldly interactions. This thesis takes the understanding of a literary market influenced by international politics as a

[8] Adaobi Tracia Nwaubani wrote an opinion peace in the Sunday Times on November 28th,2014 that discussed the idea that African writers need to write what "White people" want to read. Her description of the difficulty of publishing an African novel within Africa (barring South Africa), and the inaccessibility Africans have with respect to reading those novels put into perspective how someone can become the next African voice, and how many writers are left unnoticed and under-appreciated.

[9] Tim Parks stated that "When prizes go to foreign books, they tend to come from authors who are consciously writing toward an international public; Orhan Pamuk and Michel Houellebecq both won the IMPAC; many Commonwealth authors competing for the Booker have professedly been mediating between their cultures and ours" in an opinion peace published by The Independent on September 16th, 2013.

given fact and proposes that certain contemporary Anglophone literature are able to work with those influences without undermining their political and ethical role as non-Western texts.

Anglophone literature can both appease the demand of the literary market and resist the boundaries of Western-centric literature by navigating between the aesthetic and the political. This thesis suggests that contemporary Anglophone novels, specifically award winning and widely read texts, retain the political and ethical imperatives of postcolonialism because of their ability to appease the world literary market and not in spite of it. By navigating between the aesthetic and the political ala Young's differentiation between World Literature and postcolonialism, the contemporary Anglophone novels under study manage to retain their ties with the later while venturing into the field of the former.

The method of study proposed in this thesis is twofold: first, plotting the aesthetics found within the narrative of each text, and second, showing the political implications found within each novel separately. The premise of such a method is that because of the ability to appease the expectations of the world literary market, each novel is able to focus on a specific political and ethical cause that can be materialized through the use of a postcolonial framework that situates resistance as an inherent effect of the very narrative of the novel. In addition to this focus, the fact that contemporary Anglophone novels are easily digestible within an international public allow the aforementioned focus to include a wider public within the conversation surrounding cultural inequalities, providing contemporary Anglophone novels a didactic quality on top of their literary value, making these novels highly useful in introducing more aggressive forms of resistance literature to a larger

audience. For these reasons, the resistance found in contemporary Anglophone novels could be considered a passive resistance, unlike the active resistance found in their postcolonial predecessors.

But what *is* resistance literature? What dimensions should a literary work have in order to satisfy the criteria of a literary production working against an oppressive system? In *Resistance Literature* (1987), Barbara Harlow states that resistance literature is an "arena of struggle" (33) historically "waged [o]ver the historical and cultural record" (10). She asserts that resistance literature, or more specifically literature of resistance, "immediately and directly" involves itself with struggling against "ideological and cultural production" (28). This immediate and direct involvement resonates within the field of postcolonialism, and even extends to that of neo-colonialism and comparative literature.

Within the same year, in her article "Narratives of Resistance", Harlow mentions that Fanon's "revolutionary violence of popular resistance" is now "stigmatized in current dominant rhetoric as 'terrorism'" (1987). Such stigmatization has not unraveled over the years, but with the current global dialogue surrounding equality, immigration, and refugee status, never has the idea of active and violent resistance been more under scrutiny. Contemporary Anglophone literature, by showing a more passive approach to the struggle against "ideological and cultural production", can present itself as a transitionary tool into more direct and active approaches towards the same struggle. Because of these novels' ability to reach a wider audience, they are capable of influencing and changing certain misconceptions surrounding non-Western countries that are propagated by global institutions of power, albeit in small doses, without utilizing a confrontational approach. In a sense, this thesis aims to show the value in situating certain contemporary Anglophone

literature as a leeway between postcolonialism and World literature, a didactic approach to expanding the voices participating in the conversation surrounding the inequalities of cultural production within the literary field that is needed in today's political atmosphere.

D. **Stick it to the Man: The Case for Studying Passive Resistance**

The case for accepting award winning, critically acclaimed, and academically controversial Anglophone novels as novels that perform passive resistance to globalized trends of cultural stereotyping rests on two specifics; literary aesthetics and politicized conflict, and their ability to illustrate the faults in the rhetoric surrounding the global image of a stereotyped culture. With regards to literary aesthetic, plotting the ways in which a contemporary Anglophone novel appeases the conditions put forth by the institutions of literary production through the style such a novel is written in provides the novel with the ability to be circulated internationally at a rate that isn't usually afforded to novels that don't conform with the aesthetic standards of said institutions. The act of reading such an aesthetic sets the framework for the dissemination of the passive resistance found in the novel, allowing the small-scaled political contributions found in these novels' narrative resistance a wider platform that can potentially set the stage for further, more aggressive, contributions. Chapter 1 sets up the framework of the thesis and discusses the concept of literary aesthetics through the art of storytelling. The chapter aims to shed light on the importance of aesthetics in the field of World Literature and on its use as a literary device to focus attention on problematic constructions of specific cultural productions. I base the use of aesthetics to supplement resistance on Stephen Slemon's concept of resistance

through narrative (Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World, 1995), and on the contemporary applications of said concept. I will also contrast the use of aesthetics within the field of postcolonialism and the field of World Literature, bringing to light the benefit of plotting the aesthetics of contemporary Anglophone literature in order to show the traces of both fields within the novel. By first performing a reading of the narrative aesthetics of a text, I will illustrate the bias towards a specific mode of aesthetics when discussing the circulation of a book on a global scale, one that proves advantageous to contemporary Anglophone literature when discussing the scope of reach such novels gain. Chapter 1 also discusses the means in which such an appeasement of the aesthetics normally expected within awarding bodies and literary marketing circles allow contemporary Anglophone novels to focus on specific political and ethical calls, illustrating how such focuses are both informative to a wider general public while still retaining ties with the imperatives of the field of postcolonialism.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide close readings of *We Need New Names* (2013) by NoViolet Bulawayo and *The White Tiger* (2008) by Aravind Adiga respectively. Each chapter tackles both the aesthetic specifications of each text and the politicized conflict illustrated within the story-lines. Both novels where chosen specifically because they fall into the category of contemporary Anglophone novels that work within the boundaries set by the world literary market. Both novels are award winning novels that have raised some controversial discussions surrounding their viability as representation of Zimbabwe and India respectively. The novels have also brought forth a respectable amount of scholarship, allowing the discussion found in this thesis an anchoring to an already established academic conversation. *We Need New Names* and *The White Tiger* are also part of a larger discussion

based on the representation of Africa and India in contemporary writing, and while this thesis does not cover the problematic aspect of these representations in depth, it is advantageous to show how even problematic contemporary Anglophone novels can still uphold certain ties with postcolonial studies.

We Need New Names holds the Etisalat Prize for Literature, the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award for debut works of fiction and the Los Angeles Times Prize, all received in 2013, and other awards in the years that followed. It is also a book that has incited a lot of mixed reviews, from praise to contempt, because of the way Bulawayo represents Zimbabwe in the first part of her novel. Bulawayo's vivid and sometimes grotesque descriptions, her lax adherence to grammatical and linguistic structures, her unapologetic and unique naming system, and her recount of displacement as it occurs allows the novel to give voice to the displaced, regardless of previous national associations. Similar to Bulawayo's novel, *The White Tiger* is also a recipient of literary prizes, namely the Man Booker prize in 2008. Its reception, both as an Anglophone Indian novel and as a recipient of the Man Booker, is momentously black and white. Adiga is either applauded for his ability to represent the caste based inequality found in India or condemned for his exploitation of the very people he claims to represent. Unlike *We Need New Names*, *The White Tiger*'s political and ethical focus is directed at two distinct audiences, both the national and the international, and translates into two separate messages depending on said audience.

These novels play into the boundaries set on what is considered an "African" and an "Indian" novel by appeasing the aesthetics of the 'global African novel' and the 'global Indian novel', and present an easily digestible representation of the cultures on whose

behalf they supposedly speak. However, this does not diminish the value of these novels in facilitating the conversation surrounding this type of representation due to the inherent political focus of each novel, a focus that will be discussed in detail in their respective chapters. *We Need New Names* and *The White Tiger* have the advantage of reaching a wider audience because they are easily marketable and wildly circulated, which I propose is in part because of the aesthetics found in each title. This thesis will prove that contemporary Anglophone novels that fall into the field of World Literature remain in essence descendants of postcolonialism in their ability to resist the hegemonic structures of literary productions, and can viably serve as mediators between postcolonialism and World Literature on one hand, and academics and the general reading public on the other when studied under a postcolonial lens.

CHAPTER II

THE DUAL NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE

The question of the role that aesthetics can play within the field of literature is a highly debated topic. Many have commented on the distinction between aesthetics in the realm of philosophy and aesthetics in the realm of literature, with the former being related to the study of 'beauty' and its ethical implications while the latter deems the study of aesthetics as a study limited to rhetoric and form. Loosely defined, literary aesthetics can be considered as the study of beauty, pleasure, and artistic merit, however, recent poststructuralist ethicists have begun to allude to the use of aesthetics in bridging the singularity of literature with the socio-political state of the world in which literature springs from[10]. Understanding aesthetics as nothing more than form and content that "correspond with one another to elicit aesthetic pleasure" (Vogel, xiii-iv) pigeonholes literary productions as mere artistic expressions and diminishes the value that aesthetics add to productions that deal with cultural and socio-political variables.

Literary aesthetics, in its contemporary form, is no longer the study of humanity's imaginative artistic tendencies, nor is it viable as Adorno's[11] ideal of an aesthetics that allows art to gain critical strength by distancing itself from the socio-political situation it arises from. With respect to the field of postcolonialism, the 21st century witnessed a shift

[10] J. Hillis Miller, Gayatri Spivak, Judish Butler, Derek Attridge, and Michael Bernstein (to name a few) have suggested that novels are inherently politicized, and have provided different methods for studying the implications of this politicization on the field of Literature as a whole.
[11] Theodor Adorno's "Aesthetic Theory", published in 1970.

in the approach towards studying the aesthetic dimension of postcolonial texts, specifically the way in which a postcolonial aesthetic framework works within the notions of aesthetics as an "ideological justification of worldwide colonialism" (John J Su, 2011). World Literature, on the other hand, seems to rely on a cosmopolitan aesthetics, specifically when discussing the concept of the "global novel" (Stephan M Levin, 2014). This chapter aims to situate contemporary Anglophone novels within the aesthetic frameworks of both posctolonialism and World Literature. This chapter will show how, on one hand, the 'global novel' aesthetic helps provide an audience for contemporary Anglophone novels, and on the other, how the narrative resistance found in these novels allows for the continuation of postcolonialism's ethical and political imperatives with respect to the field's fight against the concept of an ideological justification for colonialism.

The rest of the chapter will discuss some of the scholarship surrounding both aesthetic frameworks, and will then rely on Stephen Slemon's Resistance theory and Jasbir Jain's contemporary use of Slemon's theory to illustrate how contemporary Anglophone novels retain postcolonialism's call against the acts and effects of colonialism while simultaneously appeasing World Literature's cosmopolitan equivocality of the novel within the global literary market. There is more to gain by viewing aesthetics as a 'means-to-an-end' rather than the worked towards end-goal of a literary product, and as such, recognizing the advantage of applying a specific cosmopolitan aesthetic to a text that shares similar ethical and political objectives with postcolonialism allows for contemporary Anglophone novels, specifically novels that generalize a certain cultural identity, to be viewed as didactic texts that can provide a bridge between the field of postcolonialism and that of

World Literature. The choice to focus on aesthetics and its ability to subsidize resistance through narrative comes from the idea of literary circulation, more specifically, the effects of prize culture on the extent of a novel's ability to circulate globally, both in its original language and in translation.

A. The Booker Prize: The Need for Literary Prestige

Prize culture is essential in understanding the field of World Literature in its present form. The literary world boasts a substantial number of awards, some international and others based on certain ethnic and regional criteria, but for the sake of this thesis, the award under question is limited to Britain's Booker Prize. While the Nobel Prize in literature and the Man Booker International Prize are in-and-of-themselves highly prestigious awards, the reason this thesis will not consider them as staple prizes within the global prize culture is because they are awarded to authors for their life-long contributions to literature, and not for any single title they have published. Another award that is worth mentioning at this point is the Booker's somewhat American counterpart, the Pulitzer. While this thesis recognizes the effect of the Pulitzer on the literary market, the eligibility of this award limits its ability to attract authors that are not American by nationality. Similarily, this thesis does not include the Caine Prize for African Writing because of its focus on short stories and its exclusivity with respect to the ethnicity of the authors considered for the prize. While the Caine Prize does much to introduce African writers to a wider and more international audience, and one of the novels discussed in this thesis is an extension of a

winning short-story[12], such an exclusivity limits the Caine Prize's ability to affect World Literature's relationship with novels that are not written by African writers. On the other hand, the Booker prize, with its more inclusive eligibility criteria, has received unrivaled celebrity status both within the literary world and the general non-academic readers[13]. Receivers of this prize gain the prestige of having won the Booker, and in extension have their books marketed under the award's global celebrity status.

In his influential paper titled "Winning the Culture Game: Prizes, Awards, and the Rules of Art" (2002), James English defines the role that literary awards and prizes take on the world system stage. Awards, according to English, are a "piece of objectified symbolic capital" while simultaneously acting as "an instrument of exchange and conversion with its own particular rules of operation, its own class of operatives or functionaries, its own historical trajectory across the fields of culture" (110). English, while addressing the issue of the Booker Prize specifically, traces the popularity of the Booker, and subsequently the reason for 'prize culture', to the concept of the scandal. In the early to mid20th century, English contests that the "culture game", with respect to Art and Literature, is in a sense actively controlled by awarding institutes, nominees, award recipients, and journalists and critics. The idea of a scandal, either a recipient refusing the award or a descent in accepting the monetary prize for example, has helped shape the prestige of a literary prize, specifically the Booker prize, in the sense that it has managed to keep the conversation regarding the Booker within the public eye specifically because of the "game" of scandals

[12] NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* is an extension of "Hitting Budapest", receiver of the Caine Prize in 2011,

[13] Receivers of the Man Booker Prize receive an expected amount of publicity, both in academic circles and in more lenient recreational reading circles.

embedded in the Booker's history (112-115). The wide-spread fame such scandals have garnered, and the incessant need for scandals vis-à-vis the televised Booker Awards (117), helped solidify the position of Britain's Booker Prize as an influential and key-player in the literary world. In its present state, Britain's Booker Prize has become an awarder of literary prestige, a significant transaction between the awarding institution and the author it awards; publicity for publicity.

How, then, can a literary award such as the Booker Prize, affect literary production in a qualitative manner? Herein lays the concept of a Booker aesthetic, an ever-changing set of expectations a literary work should have in order to get the chance to either win or be shortlisted for this award. To quote Stephan Levin "the double reality at the heart of the Booker's prize aesthetics modulates its status as both a passive reflection of a bland globalism and an active agent of social change and engagement" (478, 2014), and just as English pointed to the duality of the Booker Prize with respect to its capitol and social dynamics, Levin situates the aesthetics of the Booker Prize as a duality between globalism's call to a false worldly equality and its ability to actively tackle the issues of equivocality within the world literary system.

Due to the Booker's ability to act as an "agent of social change", the importance of utilizing such an award in order to initiate a discussion about social change is a unique opportunity in this era of literary production. However, winning the Booker Prize requires the nominated text to show that it follows the aesthetic that the Booker judges have based their primary criteria on. I will attempt to show that by following the Booker aesthetic, contemporary Anglophone novels gain the advantage of contending for literary awards that

can provide them with enough publicity in order to become agents of social change themselves.

B. The Outcome of Globalization: The Global Novel

Levin discusses the specifics of the concept of the global novel in "Is There a Booker Aesthetic? Iterations of the Global Novel" (2014), situating the aspects of the Booker Prize geographically, as an extension of London as a "metropolitan anchor for an emergent transnational body politic" and nationally, as a representation of Britain's "awareness" of itself as a pluralistic society" (483). He points to how such a dynamic problematizes the Booker; and by association awarding institutions generally, by saying that constituting "the novel as a member of a cosmopolitan milieu of texts, each envisioned as exemplars of the national and regional identities the are deemed to represent" (482).

As for the criteria a text must have in order to perform the first aspect of the Booker duality, Levin points to Pascale Cassanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (2004) and her analysis of the three "strategies" non-Western texts must adopt in order to be "culturally valued" by the key players of the literary market[14]. For these strategies to work, a writer from the "periphery" must adhere to being an assimilationist, a differentiationalist, or a revolutionary (Levin, 485). Levin then explains these strategies by saying, that the "assimilationist" dilutes "cultural difference" in order to fully appease the global literary market (255). The "assimilationist", in other words, actively produces texts that perpetuate

[14] Cassanova mentions that in the past, the main player used to be Paris, but the with the rise of English London has taken its place, with New York following close behind; quoted from Levin (485).

a “universalized culture” in order to gain recognition with the world literary system. The “differentiationalists” constitute a “distinctive literary identity through the use of vernacular traditions”, such as folk tales and cultural specific genres. The third strategy, favoured by Casanova, is the “revolutionaries”, writers who “undermine the forms, styles, and codes” of the Western-oriented world literary system (485).

For Casanova, and also for Levin, a non-Western writer aiming to contend with Western texts for the literary prestige offered by the awarding institutions of the literary world must mold their texts to either assimilate into western culture, show a distinctive ‘otherness’ within the text itself, or refuse to be either and “undermine” the rules of the awarding system. The third strategy is the strategy employed by authors writing for the field of postcolonialism, and while Casanova favours this strategy, she agrees that these writers “must conform to modernist style, since this style represents the privileged aesthetic of global literary system”(486). An Anglophone text, as an example, still adheres to the linguistic expectations of a non-Western text, specifically with the possibility of contending for a literary award. Writing in “local languages” automatically disqualifies a text from most of the prestigious awards offered internationally and regionally. A “global novel”, regardless of cultural specifications, must adhere to one of the three strategies above, and, by necessity, must be in a language that provides accessibility to a wide readership globally.

Levin is not the only academic to articulate such an idea; in her essay “ How to Teach a Culturally Different Book”, Gayatri Spivak argues that the generalized "global English" has caused a sort of erasure of cultural writings, using the example of the "erasure of the tribal" in Indian writings written in English, which creates a universalizable "Indian Cultural Identity." To her, universalizability of the Indian culture that is part and parcel of

the Anglophone Indian novel came from "neo-colonial traffic on cultural identity" (The Spivak Reader, 2013). As an example of the relevance of the Booker Prize in generalizing cultural identities under a specific set of novels, Levin mentions Keri Hulme, winner of the Booker in 1985 for The Bone People". Levin specifically discusses the focus of the rhetoric behind her win; her Maori identity, and notes that the "novel's representation of the traumas of colonialism and the strategies of personal and national recovery" (481) were not the main source of conversation. While Hulme herself identifies as "one-eighth" Maori, her Booker prize elevated *The Bone People* into the category of World Literature, and marked Hulme's work as "'classic' Maori text" (482) even though it is writing in English. Understandably, this ability to project a specific cultural identity on a specific text, and then propel the text in the literary market internationally helps narrow the limitations on what a Maori text, and by extension Maori culture, within the public eye, *should* be.

Both Spivak and Levin see that allowing the global market to generalize aspects of literary texts facilitates an image of a generalized cultural identity on an international scope, with Spivak using this argument to show the need to reassess the literary titles found within the field of World Literature, specifically when it comes to contemporary Anglophone novels because of the field's prerogative of categorizing 'worldly' literature. For Spivak, situating novels that generalize the diversity of various cultural identities as literature that represents worldliness delegitimizes how non-Western peoples experience the world, specifically when contemporary Anglophone novels become representatives of cultural and ethnic literatures, as with the example above given by Levin.

This thesis agrees with the need to identify the problems that arise from situating Westernized representations of cultural diversity as worldly texts, however, hastily

characterizing these novels as nothing but generalizing texts disregards the potential use of such novels in introducing the concepts of proper representations to a wider public, as such neglecting the relationship found between these texts and their postcolonial counterparts. In October 1989, on the twentieth anniversary of the Booker Prize, David Lodge pointed to the relationship between the Booker Prize and the "late capitalism" its funding company participated in. He then showed how, despite its problematic contribution to generalizing marginalized voices, the Booker Prize can still be useful as a tool in finding literary texts that facilitate the scope of the conversation regarding said marginalized voices. Levin quotes Lodge directly, the Booker prize, regardless of its problematic beginnings and its history with the use of scandals to garner public attention, has been able to "encourage discussion…curiosity…the exchange of views and the comparison of standpoints" regarding literary products not only in academic circles, but also within popular discussions (483).

C. The Case For Narrative Resistance: The Duality of the Contemporary Anglophone Novel

What Liven attributed to the Booker Prize, this thesis also attributes to award winning contemporary Anglophone novels. These texts are in the unique position of having access to a wide and international global audience, under the condition of appeasing the expectations of the world literary market. Given this position, there is much to gain within the fields of postcolonialism and comparative literature to

consider that contemporary Anglophone novels possess the political and ethical imperatives of postcolonialism, and can be read using a postcolonial framework.

This becomes more important when one takes into consideration what recent postcolonial scholars and comparative theorists have noted about the aesthetic framework of postcolonialism. According to John J Su's article "Amitav Ghosh and The Aesthetic Turn in Postcolonial Studies" (2011), the aesthetics of postcolonialism in its current form risks "denying cultural differences under a universalizing Enlightenment discourse" (66). In fact, Su notes that such a form of aesthetics has already been discussed by Deepika Bahri, in her book *Native Intelligence: Aethetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature* in 2003 (66). While this thesis recognizes the distinctions between contemporary award winning Anglophone novels and the novels that exemplify the field of postcolonial studies, it does suggest that the link between these novels and postcolonial novels is, to this author, more interesting than those between contemporary Anglophone novels and Western novels belonging to the field of World Literature. The link this chapter is suggesting has to do with postcolonialism's core objective; finding instances of resistance against oppressive forms of colonialism. This is illustrated in Stephen Slemon's theory of resistance through narrative.

In 1990, Slemon penned an article titled "Unsettling The Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World", in which he posited the case for the inclusion of Second world writing into the growing field of postcolonialism. Slemon's article rests on two basic arguments, the first is defining the three modes of study of postcolonialism that were prominent during the time of penning the article, and the second is the categorizing the modes of resistance studied within the field. With respect to the first argument, Slemon

claims that the first two modes of study, the first being the idea that postcolonialism is an extension of “Commonwealth” literature and the second being that posctolonialist texts are specifically texts written by the descendants of colonies, are problematic modes of study of what was then the rising field of posctolonialism. He favours a third mode of study that, at the time, was starting to make an appearance within scholarly conversation; postcolonialism as an analysis of the discourse of both colonialism and neocolonialism. His perspective is that postcolonialism should be focused more on the instances of resistance found in the literature, regardless of where these instances appear.

Slemon also differentiated between two modes of studying resistance. The first mode is the one perpetuated by scholars such as Barbara Harlow, i.e. resistance classified as a “category of writing”, a part and parcel of an organized struggle for liberation. The second mode of study, the one preferred by Slemon, is the acceptance of the idea that resistance is necessarily ambivalent. Slemon goes on to say that “resistance texts are necessarily double, necessarily mediated in their social location”, in other words, not only are sites of anti-colonialist resistance not easily located, but they are also an effect of contradictory representations instead of reversals of power. Unlike the first mode of study, which Slemon claims further instigates the divide between the “center” and the “periphery” and takes the assumption that the resistance is somehow found in the text by default, Slemon’s concept of resistance is aware of the problems that can come from disregarding the reality of the power structure found in the world.

Resistance, as his article explains, is never pure and as such the sites of resistance are not allocated to specific forms of texts, but are essentially a “critical manoeuver, a reading and writing action, embedded within it is a theory of communicative action”.

Slemon's position on resistance being a "reading and writing action" is further articulated in "A Phoenix Called Resistance" by Jasbir Jain (2007). Jain begins his article with a suggestion that can be applied in favour of recognizing the relationship between postcolonialism and contemporary Anglophone literature despite the latter's tendency towards subscribing to a generalized Booker Prize aesthetic; "Resistance discourse needs to be freed from the confines of postcoloniality and placed within the aesthetics of literature"(172).Jain then quotes Jenny Sharpe in her essay titled "Figures of Colonial Resistance", restating how these globalized discourses cause " 'certain problems' with identifying sites of colonial resistance" (172). He suggests that the resistance can be found in either the text itself as a literary device or the interpretation of the subtext of the narrative. Slemon had theorized a similar concept in his own article, quoted partially here and in full in Jain's article,

> "Is it something actually *there* in the text, or is it [resistance] produced and reproduced in and through communities of readers and through the mediating structures of their own culturally specific histories"
>
> (Slemon 104)

Slemon and Jain show that there is a relationship between meaning and textual aesthetics, so much so that the resistance found in a title is neither simply 'meaning' nor 'aesthetics', but a site that is, by nature, difficult to separate from the overall text and inherent in the histories of the authors and titles under study. Jain explains that "if meaning is *there*, it is integral to the text, its thematic concerns and authorial position" (173). Contemporary Anglophone novels still have the capacity to portray "dissidence, non-conformity and resistance within societies"(174), regardless of the way in which such resistance is being presented, mainly because

the sites of resistance found in these texts can be elevated into the position of agents of social change through the institutions of literary awards. Resistance can be located within the narrative because of the way in which the subtext is situated at the time of its production (174). Jain gives further evidence to the case for the relationship between postcolonialism and contemporary Anglophone novels by problematizing the opposite. For him, no good can come from refusing to recognize that a purely postcolonial approach to resistance is a very "fundamentalist" point of view, and that resistance and fundamentalism are not mutually exclusive ideologies. For Jain, when postcolonialism maintains exclusivity of resistance, resistance no longer becomes a fluid "oppositional stance", but a "hardened orthodoxy" that is likened to the very oppressive forces it initially opposed (172). Limiting the eligibility of sites of resistance to literary products that are deemed postcolonial texts *par excellence* delegitimizes the sites of resistance found in texts that do not fully adhere to the field of postcolonialism. For contemporary Anglophone novels, this limitation removes legitimacy of the "oppositional stance" that can sometimes be found through their narratives and aesthetics, and as such limiting the scholarship surrounding the ability of such novels to subvert the universalizing qualities perpetuated by world literary systems from within.

D. Postcolonial World Literature?

This thesis is not the first mention of an inherent relationship between postcolonialism and World Literature, in 2014 Biman Basu penned an article titled

"Postcolonial World Literature", a title this thesis has repurposed, and used a Marxist approach to describe the above mentioned relationship. However, Basu's article briefly addresses the unique position award winning contemporary Anglophone novels hold within that relationship, a position this thesis aims to expand on. Basu builds his argument using an economic perspective on a socio-cultural phenomenon. He claims that postcolonial texts are, by nature, temporal and spacial, similar to both the concept of a Booker Prize culture and the inherent resistance found in a text, in that they deal with both the past "regimes of military conquest and economic exploitation" while simultaneously reconciling them with the new regimes founded by "postcolonialism and globalization" (159).

Basu claims that Marx's call for a globalization that provides the need for interactions between different cultures on a global scale for the sake of a shared world economy(160), and Neitzsche's call against "fatherlandishness and soil addiction" have already come to pass, with the latter's warning of "the fight for the dominion of the earth" already fought and won. Basu even defines World Literature, as a field, as "a Western articulation of 'world literature' which can be seen as the cultural, and more specifically, literary or artistic organ of Western [economic and political] globalization" (155). This claim makes sense in so far as one views such a system as a representation of Foucaldian power dynamics. In contemporary times, the power in the world system is situated in such a way that a perpetual balance is created, where one ideal profits, another loses, "an increase here means a decrease there" (161). Globalization is, by nature, an effect of political and economic dominion, and the concept of World Literature is a result of a world

system that is a “carrier of global affect” (162). As such, aesthetics utilized by contemporary Anglophone novels in order to fulfill the criteria of the “global novel” is by nature political because of its appeasement of a literary system that works in conjunction with global political and economic structures. Using aesthetics to the advantage of the novel is not always a route taken in order to distance these novels from the anti-colonial and anti-objectification imperative of postcolonialism, but a new and subtler mode of fulfilling said imperative within a relatively new world literary system.

CHAPTER III

WE NEED NEW COMMUNITIES: NOVIOLET BULAWAYO'S DISLOCATED IMMIGRANT

NoViolet Bulawayo's debut novel, *We Need New Names* (2013), a continuation of her Caine Prize winning short story "Hitting Budapest" (2011), made waves in the world of literature for being the first novel by a Zimbabwean author to be shortlisted for the Booker Prize. Winner of the Etisalat Prize for Literature (2013), the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Legacy Award for Fiction (2014), and the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award (2014), the novel belongs to what Pier Paolo Frasinelli calls an "uneven 'world literary space'[15] that is organized by publishers and international prizes" that perpetuates a hierarchal power structure in the field of literature (Living in translation: Borders, language and community in NoViolet Bulawayo's We Need New Names, 2015). This chapter will aim to show that while the novel participates in Prize Culture, it manages to act within postcolonialism's call against stereotyped representations of objectified and marginalized peoples.

As a novel written by an African author, much of the criticism *We Need New Names* received site Binyawanga Wainaina's cynical, sarcastic, and controversial entry in GRANTA magazine titled "How to Write about Africa" (2006).Wainaina 'guides' western journalists on how they should report about Africa, stating that in order to follow the trend

[15] As theorized by Pascale Casanova in her *World Republic of Letters,* in which she maps the institutions of literary productions and suggests that literary capitol is situated in a space dominated by the power structures of the center vs periphery dynamic. Frasinelli situates *We Need New Names* as a novel that works through such a dynamic, receiving international acclaim by appeasing the demands of a Western-oriented text rising from the periphery.

of such reports; Africa must be represented in an exotified and monotonous perspective, with constant focus on the topic of poverty, suffering, and 'wide empty spaces" (np), overlooking the fact that it is a continent with much diversity to offer. Even though Wainaina was commenting more on the foreign journalist than the African novelist, others have taken up the call to challenge African novelists and their inclusion of similar tropes. As James Arnett states, it "seems a truth nearly universally recognized that African literature is still written, on some level, with the Western reader in mind" (Taking Pictures: the Economy of Affect and Postcolonial Performativity in NoViolet Bulawayo's We Need New Names, 151).

NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013) is no stranger to concept of appealing to Western audiences and adhering to the criteria of a Prize culture. Isaac Ndlovu mentions that Bulawayo's novel "adopts the attitudes listed by Wainaina to get published in Western Europe and America", going on to say that her depictions of an "Africa in chaos" and her descriptions of life in squatter settlements fall into what some critics have called "poverty porn" (2016, 113). Nigerian author and Journalist Helon Habila, considered one of the most vocal reviewers of *We Need New Names,* joins Ndlovu in criticizing Bulawayo's use of the markers discussed in Wainaina's article, stating that "there is a palpable anxiety to cover every 'African' topic; almost as if the writer had a checklist made from the morning's news on Africa" (The Guardian, 2013). Habila's review, while scathingly honest, doesn't deny Bulawayo's talent as a rising new author, stating that her "linguistic verve" and ambition can surprise the reader with "a thematic transcendence that will take the story beyond its gratuitously dark concerns to another, more meaningful level"(np).

In “Celebrating Afropolitan Identities? Contemporary African World Literatures in English”, Brigit Neumann and Gabriel Rippl consider Bulawayo as belonging to a “new generation of transcultural Anglophone writers” (167) and state that *We Need New Names* does well in criticizing the fetishization of an African essentialism, and that Bulawayo “criticizes the media’s power of world making as stereotypical and uniform, and tailored to western needs” (174). Similarily, Robin Wilkinson’s “Broaching ‘Themes too Large for Adult Fiction’: the Child Narrator in NoViolet Bulawayo's We Need New Names” (2016) praises Bulawayo’s narrative choices and finds political criticism in her narrator’s childhood experiences. Unlike Habila, Wilkinson views Bulawayo’s use of “poverty, religious exploitation, gender inequality, and AIDS”, among other tropes, as a commentary on the issues “facing contemporary Zimbabwe”. For Wilkinson, her use of a child narrator allows her to ignore the formalities of “ideological discourses, public opinions, and theoretical explanations” surrounding these issues and discuss the political and social issues found in her novel directly (124).

The academic reception of *We Need New Names* seems to be either in favour of Bulawayo’s criticism of the effect of the media on the representation of the living conditions in areas like Paradise and her linguistic talents, or in opposition to an African novel written with the intent of being read in Western countries. This chapter will show how both views are necessary in order to situate *We Need New Names* as a contemporary Anglophone novel that retains the ethical imperative of postcolonialism, specifically with respect to the common representations of marginalized and displaced individuals in the present time. The rest of the chapter will provide a description of the tropes found in the novel that appeal to the Booker aesthetic of the ‘global novel’, followed by an analysis of

Bulawayo's linguistic approach to the novel's theme of displacement. Finally, I will end with a close reading of three specific chapters from the novel titled "How They Appeared", "How They Left", and "How They Lived" in order to illustrate Bulawayo's attempt at subverting the representations of displaced individuals in the current global political climate.

A. Representing Zimbabwe

Separated into two distinct parts, *We Need New Names* starts by following Darling, a 10 year old living in a shanty-town in Zimbabwe, and her friends as they spend their days playing in and around Paradise, before moving on to Darling's teenage life as an illegal immigrant living in the United States. Darling's youth is filled with war games, religious fanaticism, absentee parents, AIDS, apathetic NGO workers, child pregnancy due to incestuous rape, and poverty, all told from the perspective of a child that doesn't seem to fully understand what is going on around her. Her and her friends mitigate violence through laughter and strife with enthusiastic child-play. Throughout the whole first part, Darling is keen to remind her friends and the reader that she will soon go to America to live with her aunt in Detroit, or "Destroyedmichygen" as they call it, and that she will no longer have to deal with the situation they are living in as America will provide her with all the riches she needs. With the second part of the book, Darling is in Detroit, but is disillusioned with the American dream. She finds it difficult to cope with being an illegal immigrant; as she made it clear that she broke her visa terms, but can't reconcile with her Zimbabwean origins as her immigration has distanced her from her friends and family back home. In other words,

Darling becomes a person with no nation, an uprooted body dealing with the concepts of home and identity in a foreign land.

Bulawayo's novel contains almost every trope mentioned in Wainaina's piece. She does not have a well-adjusted African character, neither as an immigrant nor in Africa. Her characters in Paradise are all suffering from the repercussions of Operation Murambatsvina, those that chose to go to South Africa for better job opportunities; like Darling's father, either never return or get sick and die, and Chipo was raped and impregnated by her grandfather. The Africans that immigrate to America aren't any better, Aunt Fostalina is trying too hard to 'assimilate' into American culture to the point where her marriage is ruined, Uncle Kojo finds himself an outsider in his own house because he is not Zimbabwean, and eventually ends up somewhat unstable after the death of his son, TK, in the Afghanistan war. Prince has PTSD, Dumi is getting married for legal papers, and Marina's mother has to take the night shift at the hospital every day. Back in Paradise, all the adults are tall and thin and starving. The children of Paradise are all 'delinquents', wild and free and in need of a rough hand from their elders. The scenery from Paradise to Budapest on top of Fambeki Mountain shows wide empty spaces and desolate dusty wilderness.

Bulawayo writes of a witch doctor, a 'Christian' diviner, a scene with a dead body, AIDS, and a dog that made the decision to stop being Bornfree's pet. The security guard at Budapest is the 'Loyal Servent', MotherLove is the 'Starving African', and the adults celebrate the possibility of political change the only way they know how, by music and rhythm. She even has an African performer that entertains at weddings and other such events as Tshaka Zulu, who later goes senile and starts to actually believe he is Tshaka

Zulu. NoViolet Bulawayo uses her characters to illustrate a Zimbabwe that is both shocking and familiar. Shocking in the way that it solidifies the idea that Africa generally, and Zimbabwe specifically, is a place of hardship by vividly describing the effects of the Mugabe regime on the people of Paradise, and familiar in the sense that it is a clear reflection of the news footage of Zimbabwe during and post-Operation Murambatsvina.

We Need New Names, with its recognizable characters, settings, and plot devices, is still inherently a cosmopolitan novel. Its focus on "uncelebrated migrants whose nations' problems have made staying put at home a hostile option" makes for a cosmopolitanism that focuses on a working class form of transnational engagement with the themes of displacement and alienation from the host country and its population (Arnett, 133). Bulawayo's novel fits Stephan Levin's concept of iterations of the Booker "global novel" because of its stereotyped representations of Zimbabwe specifically and Africa in general, and its thematic focus on migrancy and displacement.

Bulawayo herself is considered an Afropolitan author (Neumann & Rippl, 167), and her novel does well to work within the terms of "Afropolitanism", a term that "puts emphasis on the migratory patterns and open entanglements between locally grounded practices and global trajectories" (Wasihun 2016, 393). Her emphasis on the theme of displacement presents itself from the point of view of two different perspectives, Darling's and Bulawayo's. Darling's perspective on her own displacement is apparent in her narration, while Bulawayo's perspective is shown in the three distinct chapters where an omniscient narrator disrupts Darling's narrative.

B. Reflections on Innocence

We Need New Names is written from Darling's perspective, even the dialogue is stated in narration, but there is a distinct difference in the narrative style between the first and second part of the novel. During Darling's life in Paradise, Bulawayo's sentences are stretched out, coarse, include a lot of repetition, and are constantly occurring. Bulawayo has Darling list off most of what goes on around her, negating the need for commas or pauses, and she has Darling describe her life using the present tense. There is urgency in describing the world around Darling, and an instinctual need to cross the descriptions with a flow of opinions and judgments on Darling's behalf. The novel starts off with that exact style;

> "We are on our way to Budapest: Bastard and Chipo and Godknows and Sbho and Stina and me. We are going even though we are not allowed to cross Mzilikazi Road, even though Bastard is supposed to be watching his little sister Fraction, even though Mother would kill me dead if she found out; we are just going.."
>
> (1)

Darling starts her story listing off her friends from Paradise with no pauses in between the names, "Bastard and Chipo and Godknows and Sbho and Stina and me", and the repetition of the phrase "we are going" regardless of the possible consequences to be faced from this act. The children are running to Budapest, an affluent neighborhood that is the direct opposite of their home, Paradise. Darling's style of narration emulates the physical act of running, starting off the novel with the same urgency the children are experiencing while running to Budapest in order to eat guavas. She ends her paragraph with "There are guavas to steal in Budapest, and right now I'd rather die for guavas", again representing the urgency used in her language with her need for guavas regardless of what would happen if the adults found out about the children's trip to Budapest. In a similar

style, Darling also describes the day that Operation Murambatsvina destroyed her previous home, although here the fear that Darling has is clearly seen in the flow of details presented;

> "The men knock down our house and Ncane's house and Josephat's house and Bongi's house and Sibo's house and many houses. Knockiyani knockiyani knockiyani: men driving metal, metal slamming brick, brick crumbling... One ugly policeman points a gun to her head to make her move and she says, Kill me, kill me now, for you have no shame, you could even kill your own mother and eat her up, imbwa!"
>
> (68)

Again Darling lists off the names of the people whose houses are about to be knocked down. In the second sentence, the emphasis is on the words "men", "metal", and "brick", repeating the words "metal" and "brick" after the commas to show how the "knocking" was in fact the men knocking down the houses, not simply knocking on the door. For Darling, and for the people of Paradise, the fact that the Operation was undergone by men from their own country renders the situation all the more unbelievable, as shown by Mai Tari's exclamation of "kill me, kill me now, for you have no shame".After the bulldozers left, Darling uses repetition to make sure the reader understands exactly what happened to the lives of the people she is describing. She focuses on the words "everything" and "everywhere", making sure that the gravity of the situation is describes as best as a 10 year old could describe.

> "When the bulldozers finally leave, everything is broken, everything is smashed, everything is wrecked. It is sad faces everywhere, choking dust everywhere, broken walls and bricks everywhere, tears on people's faces everywhere."

The constant use of the helping verb "is further showcases the sense of urgency Darling has towards this memory, and towards her life in Paradise in general. The destruction of her previous home, although an act of the past, is constantly being performed through the destitute and impoverished lives lead by the people of Paradise. Recounting this memory in the present tense illustrates the continuous effect Operation Murambatsvina has on its victims, showing the difficulty the people of Paradise have in healing and moving on. This is Bulawayo's way of relating the continuous experiences of the impoverished peoples of Zimbabwe, even though she herself did not live in the country during such a state.

This sense of urgency in her descriptions carries on until Darling is in America, and while the grammatical style of Bulawayo's writing undergoes no significant change, the way in which Darling now sees the world has, no longer filled with the innocence of childhood and with no real connection to the community and the land she now lives in, Darling's reflections on her everyday life. As seen from the example above, even after the bulldozers left, Darling still uses the present tense, her reflection on this particular life event is still as urgent and as emotional as when it first happened. In America, Darling's narration of current events does not differ much from her narration back in Paradise, however, her reflection on those events does. This is shown when Darling and her family attend a wedding of one of Aunt Fostalina's friends, Dumi. Dumi's future son-in-law is being severely unruly, and Darling eventually reaches the end of her temper and slaps the boy.

> "Just before Aunt Fostalina sharply tells me to sit down, I grab the little brat, *pha-pha-pha* with three quick slaps, and rap his head with my knuckles, twice."
>
> (85-86)

Consequently, she has everyone staring at her in shock and disbelief;

> "It's only when I sit back down and look around that I realize what I **have** done. The white people **have already gasped**, and a shocked voice **has already said**, Oh my God. Heads **have been shaken** and eyes **have widened** in disbelief. A few hands **have already flown** over mouths, and the silence **has already descended**." (185, bolded for emphasis)

Darling's reflection on this event differs from her reflection on the destruction of the home she lived in before Paradise, shown by the change of tense used from the present to the past. Had this event happened back in Paradise, Darling may have reflected on her actions, and on the way her actions were viewed by the people around her similarly to how she described going to Budapest; with listing off the people looking at her and illustrating the looks on their faces with an overenthusiastic imagination, but more importantly, she would have described the reaction of the crowd as currently happening using the present tense. But Darling is no longer the same child she once was, and the narration of this event is tangibly different.

Darling's feelings of alienation with respect to her life in America are illustrated in the example above; the difference between her describing her own actions and her describing the reaction other people have towards them can be juxtaposed with her life in Paradise versus her life in America. In Paradise, a certain 'hierarchy' exists between children and teenagers, one where Darling's act of discipline would have been accepted and encouraged, Tshaka Zulu even shouts out that "this is just how we handle unruly children in our culture" (185). As a child in Paradise, Darling belonged to the community she lived in, and was therefore knowledgeable about the acceptable behavior within that community. In

America, her status as an immigrant has not allowed her the opportunity to assimilate into the customs of the natural-born Americans, and the gravity of her alienation is represented through her grammatical change.

Darling's life in America is not the only cause of her alienation. After having moved to Michigan for a few years and lost touch with her friends from Paradise, Darling's description of her [possibly] first conversation with her friends and mother back home shows how much life in America has changed her. Darling has lost the chaotic urgency she had when she was younger, a fact that becomes significantly apparent when her friends ask her to describe what is happening outside and she simply replies with "Just some police cars going down the street" (210). At this point in her life, Darling is used to living in America and isn't as interested or impressed with the 'American way of life' as she used to be. Her friends, on the other hand, have not been removed from the conditions of their childhood, and have retained the same enthusiasm towards America as they had when they were younger, and as such bombard her with questions about the police cars. Darling doesn't seem to understand why her friends are so interested in the police cars, noting how all of the question have made her "a little spend", and that she doesn't know "how to deal with all these crazy question" (210). Chipo doesn't notice this change in Darling yet, and starts describing in great detail what is happening on her end in a style similar to Darling's narration back in Paradise, with listing off the events happening around her in great detail and with limited pauses,

> "what is happening over here is that your mother is finishing cooking istshawala and macimbis, and Sbho is standing there watching her and eating a guava […]"

(211)

Even though Chipo and the others don't notice a change in her at this point in the narrative, Darling herself does. She says that she feels as if she is two people, one that wants to be with her childhood friends and one that feels like her childhood friends are strangers to the point that she "doesn't know how to connect with them anymore" (212). Darling's immigration to America and her alienation from the community she was brought into have forced her to adjust to her new life in ways that then alienated her from her life back in Paradise. Bulawayo explains Darling's change in an interview with Claire Cameron about the experience of writing Darling. Bulawayo admits that the teenaged Darling is "more subdued, understandably because she has to be". For Bulawayo, Darling needed to undergo a change in order to "exist in the US", forgoing the voice she had in Paradise because that voice "came partly from the location and who she is there" (2013). Darling, as a child in Paradise, retained her innocence despite the economic and political hardship she faced in Paradise because she retained a sense of belonging to the location she was in. In the US, Darling had to change herself, including her voice, in order to survive her dislocation to an unfamiliar and somewhat hostile country.

Darling's physical move from Zimbabwe to America and her adjustment to the status of an illegal immigrant is mirrored in the plot by Darling's transition from an innocent child to a disillusioned teenager. The progression of the disillusionment and of Darling's Americanization throughout the second part of the book, and her attempts at negotiating and reconciling her Zimbabwean self with her American one can be seen as an attempt by Bulawayo to "speak to and against the Western hegemonic but stereotypical

construction of Third World subjects and spaces" (Ndlovu, 134). Bulawayo eases the reader into experiencing Darling's displacement, specifically because the novel is a "coming-of-age" story. Darling's loss of the vibrant and chaotic voice of the child for the sake of the structured and "subdued" voice of the young adult allows her audience to move beyond empathy into the realm of experience (Cameron, 2013).

Bulawayo then ends up with a narrator that can ease the Western audience her novel aims to appease into a genuine conversation about the state of displaced individuals, specifically ones that are displaced because of economic or political hardship. Because of Darling's narrative, Bulawayo was able to insert three chapters that force her audience to associate Darling's condition with the condition of displaced individuals as a whole, breaking the novel's engagement with "postcolonial Africa's perceived exceptional status as a source of all kinds of atrocities and sufferings" (Ndlovu, 135) and aligning its political undertones with postcolonialism's resistance to the notions of such an exceptionality.

C. How They Are

Through Darling's narrative voice, the reader experienced her dislocation and alienation, both from Zimbabwe and from America, however, Darling's narrative is meant to appeal to a Western audience, and as such is riddled with the tropes of a stereotyped representation of Africa as a whole. This rest of this chapter will show that Bulawayo was still able to subvert the representations of displaced individuals being propagated in the current global political climate through the use of three transitional chapters that break off from Darling's narrative by utilizing an omniscient narrator. These chapters, titled "How

they Appeared", "How They Left", and "How They Lived" (75, 147, 239), link Darling's experience with the experiences of underprivileged immigrants and dislocated individuals but dissociate and alienate the reader from that very experience. These chapters discuss displacement in a linear progression from specific to general, Bulawayo starts with the people displaced from their communities and forced to live in shanty-towns, she then moves to the displacement of Africans, and ends it with the displacement of people belonging to the Third World in general.

The first chapter, aptly titled "How They Appeared" (75), focuses on the people that ended up in shanty-towns like Paradise. The chapter begins with "They did not come to Paradise", showing how there was no choice in the dislocation, "they just appeared".

> "They appeared one by one…They appeared single file, like ants…They appeared in the early morning, in the afternoon, in the dead of night. They appeared with the dust from their crushed houses clinging to their hair and skin and clothes…They appeared carrying sticks with which they marked the ground…Squatting to mark the ground like that, they appeared broken…They appeared with tin, with cardboard, with plastic…But far too many appeared without the things they should have appeared with."
>
> (75-76)

The word "appeared" in this chapter gives two meanings: their physical and locational appearance and their emotional and mental appearance. People were dislocated from their towns without choice, having to leave their homes either alone or with their families, and they made other towns with what they had available. Within the realm of the physical, they showed up with "dust from their crushed houses clinging to their hair and skin" and with "swollen ankles and blisters under their feet" carrying the materials they intend to rebuild their lives with. Many "appeared without the things they should have

appeared with", emotionally, mentally, on a non-physical level, they have lost hope. The emotional affects the physical, so the way they looked, their appearance, was one of displaced desperation. Referenced within the chapter as the cause for such an appearance, Operation Murambatsvina, officially Operation Restore Order, marked the dislocated people of Zimbabwe as the 'garbage' the Mugabe administration opted to remove from the country. The chapter discusses the political implications of such a militant operation from the perspective of the people that were most affected by it. The adults of Paradise, and by comparison of similar shanty-towns that appeared after Operation Murambatsvina, comment on how the situation is similar to when "the whites drove us from our land and put us in those wretched reserves", specifying that "these black people" that bulldozed their houses are also "evil" (77), allowing Bulawayo to relate the similarities between the dislocation of the people of Zimbabwe due to political instability and their previous dislocation due to the initial colonization of their country.

The confusion surrounding Operation Murambatsvina, along with the feelings of disappointment and grief for the loss of a promised independence are contextualized in the experience of "appearing" throughout the chapter, bolded for emphasis below,

> "Generally the men always tried to appear strong …But when they went out in the bush to relieve themselves and nobody was looking, they fell apart like crumbling towers and wept with the wretched grief of forgotten concubines. …but then the women, who knew all the ways of weeping and all there was to know about falling apart, would not be deceived; they planted themselves like rocks in front of their men and children and shacks, and only then did all appear almost tolerable"

(79)

There is a commitment to the aspects of community and family, even in complete destitution and with their lives "falling apart" the concept of belonging to the community is still a vital part of the lives of the citizens of Paradise. The use of "falling apart", a nod to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and its themes of pre-colonial and colonial life in Nigeria and a staple of African literature, further drives the hardships of living in a post-colonial Zimbabwe and dealing with the shock of suffering such hardships on the hands of their countrymen. This is contrasted with Darling's feelings of alienation from her life back in Paradise and her life in America. Darling lacks this sense of community found in Paradise and as such is stuck in in a state of transition and translation (Frassinelli, 718), a state that is further exacerbated by her status as an illegal immigrant; unable to fully integrate into a new community or return to the community she once belonged to.

The second chapter, "How They Left" (147), moves on from discussing the dislocation within the border of the country and represents African immigrants as a whole. There is a contrast between "How They Left" and the ending of the preceding chapter, "For Real" (133) with regards to the role of the media in perpetuating the image of a 'destitute Africa'. In "For Real", Bornfree, a member of Paradise who was against the current administration of the country and advocated for change through a democratic voting system, was brutally murdered in front of the citizens of Paradise by the supported of the regime. Darling and her friends, not allowed to attend the funeral, sit in a tree outside of the cemetery and watch the proceedings, noting the rage and anger found in the crowd for the death of Bornfree and the state of their country. After the funeral ends and the adults leave, Darling and her friends organically start acting out Bornfree's murder, and while this

initially starts out as a game, the children collectively understand at some level the severity of the murder,

> "The people of Paradise too don't make any sounds. There is this big black silence, like they are watching something holy. But we can see, in the eyes of the adults, the rage. It is quiet but it is there. Still, what is rage when it is kept in…when you do not do anything with [it?]…Such rage is nothing, it does not count."
>
> (145)

The children, not capable of causing any real change at this point in their lives, recognize the anger in the eyes of the adults, they also recognize the uselessness of such anger when it is not proceeded by action. As children, the act of performing Bornfree's murder becomes a type of catharsis, any form of action is better than the silence they witnessed in their adult counterparts. For them, it is no longer a game, it is real, a miniature rebellion against the situation they have no control over. They are overseen by two men from the BBC, who ask them "what kind of game is that?" while taking their pictures. Bastard then "puts his shirt on and says, Can't you see this is for real?" (146).

Unable to fully understand what they've seen as the act of rebellion it means for the children, the BBC men are shown in a voyeuristic position, wanting to document the 'peculiarities' of Paradise without fully grasping the scope of the situation they are documenting. "How They Left" follows this incident, and in a stern and accusatory tonality places the reader in the position of the BBC men. "Look at them leaving in droves" is repeated throughout the chapter, documenting the act of migration while situating the reader as the onlooker,

> "Look at them leaving in droves, the children of the land, just look at them leaving in droves…Those in pain are crossing borders. Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing-to all over …leaving because it is no longer possible to stay. They will never be

> the same again because you just cannot be the same once you leave behind who and what you are""
>
> (147-148)

The constant use of imperative sentences, specifically ones that command the reader to "look", coupled with the variations of the words "leaving", presents the migration of the "children of the land" while using a harsh and accusatory tone does what a reporter would not be able to do: depicts both the external and internal struggle of a people forced to leave their homeland, and as such their identity, because of political and economic struggle. Unlike the reports on channels such as the BBC, the chapter is not written with the intent of making the reader feel like they need to contribute financially or materialistically to these people, instead it puts the reader in a position of forced voyeurism, alienated from the ongoing scene and positioned as helpless as the people leaving their home-country. Unlike the BBC reporters in the chapter before, the reader isn't allowed to "not see this is for real".

In the final chapter that uses the omniscient narrator, again the tonality changes. "How They Lived" (239) is the longest of all three chapters, with the main repetition being nothing more than the pronoun "We". The chapter starts with focusing on African immigrants to the states, then their introduction to other immigrants, for a brief half a page there is a distinction between "We" the African immigrants and "They" the other immigrants, only to state "we were not altogether strangers" (245) resolving to open up the African "We" to an inclusive immigrant "We". While the chapter relates the 'life' of an illegal immigrant, from reaching America, to taking odd jobs, to having children, and finally to death, the tone is in stark contrast to the context,

> "We worked with dangerous machines, holding our breath like crocodiles underwater, our minds on the money and never on our lives.

> Adamou got murdered by that beast of a machine that also ate three fingers of Sudan's left hand. We cut ourselves working on meat; we got skin diseases. We inhaled bad smells until our lungs thundered […] We got sick but did not go to hospitals, could not go to hospitals. We swallowed every pain like a bitter pill, drank every fear like a love potion, and we worked and worked."
>
> (246)

The sentences are shorter, more precise, and give the idea of an acceptance of the situation the immigrants now face with the forging of a new community regardless of the physical and medical dangers they are subjected to. The chapter speaks with what Pier Paolo Frassinelli calls the voice of a "migrant community situated outside the boundaries of citizenship and constituted on the bases of difference"(Living in Translation: Borders, Languge and Community in NoViolet Bulawayo's We Need New Names). The moment where "national and ethnic divisions are superimposed…on people's identities", there exists a "way of living" that is established and maintained without "taking national, ethnic, or linguistic affiliation for granted" (Frassinelli, 720). The immigrant is now located in the West, and so it is important to allow the Western reader to relate to the human experiences of the immigrants. It gives the reader a better look at the lives of those who, in real life, go unnoticed. Bulawayo here presents the illegal immigrant as human being to a society that refuses to acknowledge his/her personhood and represents all immigrants in speaking up about the hardships they now face in this new land. The formation of a new community in spite of the American community that shuts them out allows these immigrants an inclusionary space within their displacement, a space that, within the novel, is never given to Darling, as illustrated by her last conversation with Chipo from paradise.

After Darling attempts to 'console' Chipo about the state of the country she left behind, saying "it pains me to think about it" and that she saw the suffering on BBC, Chipo replies with,

> "But you are not the one suffering. You think watching on BBC means you know what is going on?... Really, it's your country, are you sure?...What are you doing *not* in your country right now?...If it's your country, you have to love it to live in it and not leave it…You left it, Darling, you left the house burning and you have the guts to tell me, in that stupid accent that you were not even born with, that doesn't even suit you, that this is your country?"
>
> (287-289)

Chipo accuses Darling of abandoning her country and revokes Darling's right to claim it as her own. She furthers Darling's alienation from her home-land by telling her that she "left the house burning", while solidifying her alienation from America by pointing to her Americanized accent that "doesn't even suit" Darling. She leaves Darling in a place in-between both, not fully American and no longer Zimbabwean, situating Darling in perpetual translation, of constant renegotiations of her identity as an illegal immigrant, a Zimbabwean, and an African outside of Africa (Frasinelli, 719).

We Need New Names's emphasis on the state of the Zimbabwean, African, and general migrant, in their multiple statuses of dislocation and in the way in which they navigate such a status, coupled with its appeal to Prize culture and the Western reader allow this contemporary Anglophone novel to perform the imperatives of the field of postcolonialism with respect to the dislocation of developing peoples and their migrancy towards developed host countries. The theme of community present in the three chapters mentioned above and the depiction of the emotional and mental anguish placed on people forced into dislocation are humanizing tools used to contrast the media's focus on

representing these people as exceptional cases of anguish and strife. By utilizing the stereotyping trends set by the literary market, Bulawayo is able to relate the experiences of her displaced characters and condemn the alienating conditions they are forced into because of this displacement by allowing her characters a voice distinct from the voices forced on their real-life counterparts. The concept of exceptionality perpetuated by the global media is shown as a problematic endeavor that erases the humanity of each individual under question, and the novel reflects this exceptionality back onto the Western audience by showing how alienation happens prior to, during, and after the physical act of displacement.

CHAPTER IV

IS IT REALLY A WHITE TIGER? THE DUALITY OF AUDIENCE IN ARAVIND ADIGA'S WINNING NOVEL

Similar to *We Need New Names*, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* witnessed highly polarizing reviews both in and out of academic circles, making the scholarship surrounding the novel both highly critical and somewhat black-and-white. Some scholars claim that the 2009 Booker Prize winner is the first of a new approach to postcolonial and neo-colonial texts because of the way it addresses India's past as a British colony and its present as a independent nation, while others state that is yet another Eurocentric vision of the East. Some congratulate the protagonist on subverting the idea that India is a newly reformed democratic sub-continent, while others vilify him for participating in the same system of political and class-related oppression he aims to subvert. There is a significant lack of unified academic decision on whether *The White Tiger* is a self-stereotyping novel written for 'prize culture' or a case of the subaltern finally gaining a voice and being recognized for it.

This chapter will show how Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* fits into the Booker Prize aesthetic of a global novel while simultaneously performing resistance through the narrative of the story, specifically the different audiences such a narrative addresses. The chapter will first provide a brief overview of some of the scholarship surrounding the novel in order to illustrate the different readings already provided for *The White Tiger*, then a close reading of the novel in order to show how it appeases the Booker Prize aesthetic, and

finally, an analysis on the distinct duality of audience the novel addresses; the national audience and the international audience.

A. The Different Readings of the White Tiger

After Adiga won the Man Booker prize, there was a rush to negate his narrator's voice as inauthentic because of the differences in his and Adiga's upbringing. While Balram Halwai, the narrator and anti-protagonist of *The White Tiger*, was born a low-caste son of a rickshaw puller, Adiga was a middle-class son of a doctor. Balram was born in Darkness, Laxmangarh, a rural village along the Ganges River, and was forced out of his school at an early age by his poverty ridden family to help pay off a wedding loan they had taken out for his cousin-sister Reena (The White Tiger, 20). Adiga, on the other hand, was born in Madras, lived in Mangalore, and later immigrated to Australia. He then received a higher education at both Columbia University and Oxford University, while Balram is barely literate.

For this reason, many critics have stated that Adiga's voice is "inauthentic", and that his novel is nothing more than a "class ventriloquism" and a "construction of a re-Orientalized 'cardboard cut-out' title character" (Mendes, 277). In "Slumdog is About Defaming Hindus"[16], Kanchan Gupta spares a few unflattering words about the both Adiga and his novel, mainly that Adiga wrote his novel specifically "in a manner that could not but impress the Man Booker judges", representing India as "a seething mass of unwashed

[16] Referenced by Mendes.

hordes", prejudiced to its core and constantly indulging in "abominable practices like untouchability". Gupta also claims that the novel represents India as a country that, because of its inherent oppressive systems, is unable to truly compete with more advanced and developed nations as a genuine "emerging power", regardless of its "economic growth and knowledge excellence".

Gupta is no doubt referring to the dissonance regarding India's economic growth found within the novel. On one hand, Balram Halwai states that "the future of the world lies with the yellow man and the brown man" (1) and that the 21st century is "the century of [the] *yellow* and the *brown* man" (2), and on the other, he paints the economic situation in India as bleak and over-privileging of the upper-caste citizens. Balram mocks the economic structures found in areas such as the Darkness, the rural areas of North India, and claims that the future of India is all in out-sourcing (176). He delegitimizes the coal market, steel market, and even book market through his recollections of Mr. Ashok, his ex-employer, and his shady business deals with high-ranking politicians in Delhi.

While Gupta is entitled to his indignation over the representation of India's current economic growth as a one-trick-pony, Adiga's narrator does not delve much into the economy of India as he does with the socio-political structure of the cities and areas he has lived in. Yes, money is an important part of the novel, Balram does end up murdering his employer, Mr Ashok, and stealing the money Ashok was meant to bribe the prime minister with, and yes, throughout the novel money flows easily between the hands of corrupt politicians, civil servants, and even hotel managers, but the way in which this money is

framed is more of a representation of how Balram views the politics of the country, and not the economy.

Other critics, such as Lily Want, view Adiga's debut novel as nothing more than a new Orientalist take on writing about India. In her article "The Poetics and Politics of Cultural Studies In Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*", she states that not only does Adiga fail to produce a novel that properly critiques the socio-political problems found in India, but Adiga himself is "trapped in the very culture he aims to critique" (77). She paints *The White Tiger* as an "'imaginative geography' of the Orientalist thought" that has been known to deepen the divide between what is considered First World and what is considered Third World (76), and she uses Edward Said's points on decolonizing cultural resistance in his book *Culture and Imperialism* to point out all of the ways in which *The White Tiger* fails to represent the lower-class people Balram hails from. This thought process stems from Adiga's representation of India as 'Dark India', and while some have commended his dissociation from the 'Exotic India' often shown in Anglophone Indian novels (Anwar, 306), others have stated that this move is not a removal of the Orientalist framework on Indian writing in English, but merely a shift towards a different kind of exotification (Mendes, 276-277).

On the other hand, Robbie B. H. Goh's "Narrating 'Dark' India in *Londonstani* and *The White Tiger*: Sustaining Identity in the Diaspora" (2011) provides a more favourable reading of Adiga's dark take on the living conditions found in the India his novel portrays. Goh traces the rise of modern Indian writers' aversion to romanticizing the homeland, and positions both Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Guatam Makani's *Londonstani* (2006) as

novels that present an honest take on the perpetuating problems found in India (342). To Goh, these novels are a "cultural turn" in Indian Anglophone writing, and are "provoked by considerable frustration and sadness over the continuing state of certain social aspects of India [and] by the shame and outrage that the diaspora shares with the global community at shocking recent events" (343).

As mentioned above, this is only a brief overview regarding parts of the scholarship written on *The White Tiger*, however, it shows how much of an impact this novel had after winning the Booker Prize. Sam Jordison, an author and journalist for The Gaurdian, touched on how the novel was not even penned by many, including Jordison himself, as a possible contender for the prize, let alone a winner (How Did The White Tiger Capture The Booker?, 2008). Adiga's shocking victory, especially over authors who have more presence and experience within the literary field, helped secure a wide and international market for *The White Tiger*, which is set to gain even more of a celebrity status after the release of its feature film adaptation[17].

From a literary perspective, *The White Tiger* fits the criteria mentioned in the 2008 Shortlist announcement. Michael Portillo, the 2008 Chair of Judges, stated in the annual Shortlist press release that "these novels [all of those that made the shortlist] are intensely readable, each of them an extraordinary example of imagination and narrative"

[17] It is unclear as to whether the film will still be produced, as there is a legal and financial dispute between the funders of the movie, Watchtower ,and the producer and screenwriter (Producers Fight Over Movie Rights to Prize-Winning Novel 'The White Tiger', 2012)

(www.themanbookerprize.com, 2008) The language used in the novel coupled with the rampant use of descriptions and imagery help to further expand its possible reading base. As for the technical aspect of *The White Tiger*'s success in the literary market, there is no debate on whether the Booker Prize helped increase the sales of the novel. Prior to winning the Booker, the total sales of the *The White Tiger* was 5,703 books, while the total sales after the Booker reached up to 551,061 as of 2012[18](The Guardian, 2012).

B. A Close Reading of Adiga's Debut Global Novel

Regardless of the shock of having *The White Tiger* win the Man Booker, the novel itself does fit into what Stephan Levin considers an iteration of the Booker "global novel". The juxtaposition between the author and his narrator, coupled with the socio-political aspect of the plot of the novel allows *The White Tiger* its cosmopolitan status, specifically with respect to the geographical focus of the plot. To start, the novel is a series of seven letters written in the time-span of a week. Penned by Ashok Sharma, previously known as Balram Halwai, "for the desk of /His Excellency Wen Jiabao/ The Premier's Office/ Beijing /Capital of the Freedom-loving Nation of China" (*The White Tiger*, 1). Balram's single-sided correspondence with the Premier is written with the intent of telling the Premier the "Truth about Bangalore" and the entrepreneurship found within India. For Balram, he is the most qualified man for this endeavor, "If anyone knows the truth about Bangalore, it's *me*" (2). Within the course of the week, Balram recounts his life, explaining how he went from

[18] taken from https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/oct/10/booker-prize-2012-winners-sales-data

being a low-caste son of a rickshaw puller living in Darkness, Laxmangarh, to Ashok Sharma, the high-caste owner of a taxi service in Bangalore.

Balram's story centers on how he overcame his poverty-ridden childhood, mainly through the murder of his previous employer, the Americanized Mr. Ashok, and suggests that he might have been the cause for the massacre of his entire family, sans his nephew Dharam. In Laxmangarh, Balram, then known as Mannu, was raised in a large rural family originally from the caste of Halwai, the sweet-makers. Due to their impoverishment lead by the socio-political caste system they are subjected too, his father was forced to work as a rickshaw puller, robbing Balram of the chance to grow into the destiny of his caste, which Balram associates with being "fat, and creamy-skinned, and smiling";

> "My father's father must have been a real Halwai, a sweet-maker, but when he inherited the shop, a member of some other caste must have stolen it from him with the help of the police. My father had not had the belly to fight back. That's why he had fallen all the way to the mud, to the level of a rickshaw-puller. That's why I was cheated of my destiny to be fat, and creamy-skinned, and smiling."
>
> *The White Tiger*, 35

His village is run by four landlords, known as the Stork, the Buffalo, the Wild Boar, and the Raven. His mother died when he was a child, and his family is run by his hard-headed and controlling grandmother, Kusum. At school, he was praised for intelligence by the school inspector, who dubbed him The White Tiger because of how rare such intelligence was in the village. Balram, however, was taken out of school at an early age to help pay off a loan taken by the family in order to have a lavish wedding for his cousin-sister, and is forced to work at a tea shop owned by the Stork. Shortly after that, Balram's

father died from tuberculosis in the village public hospital, where Balram learns that the corruption in all institutes found in the Darkness has allowed the hospital to be left without any medical staff. After their father's dead, Balram moved to Dhanbad with his recently-married brother, Kishan, to work at another tea-shop. At the tea-shop, Balram learns that a driver is able to make more money than a sweet-maker, and enlists the help of an old taxi-driver, through the aid of his brother, in order to learn how to drive.

Balram then manages to get a job as the driver of the Stork's son, Mr. Ashok, who had just returned from America with his wife, Pinky Madam, in order to aid the family with their problems in their dealings with politics. Balram then goes to Gorgaon, the most Americanized suburb in Delhi, as the primary driver to Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam, after having ousted the previous primary driver as a Muslim. In Gargaon, Balram lives in a cockroach infested room in basement of the apartment complex his master rents an apartment in, and learns of the corruption rampant within India's political system, as well as the fact that the Stork has to continuously bribe The Great Socialist (possibly based on Lalu Prasad Yadev) in order to keep evading the taxes set on his involvement in the coaling industry.

In Delhi, Balram witnesses the true divide between the lower-caste servants and their masters, and becomes increasingly disillusioned with the life of servitude he was born into. This disillusionment is aggravated when he was about to be framed for a hit-and-run Pinky Madam committed while driving under the influence, especially when Mr. Ashok and his family, the Stork and Ashok's brother, the mongoose, casually mentioned that Balram will not go to jail because of their connections at the police force. Balram is

shocked that the only person with a conscious ends up being Pinky Madam, who later asks Balram to drive her to the airport, thus ending her marriage to Mr. Ashok.

After Pinky Madam's departure, Mr. Ashok starts leading a life of debauchery, an act that further enrages Balram as he views himself as an extension of his master. Later, Balram's family sends his nephew, Dharam, to also learn how to be a driver. Eventually, Balram kills Mr. Ashok, fuelled by the rage he has because of his father's death and the unforgiving nature of the master-servant relationship he has with Ashok, slitting his throat with a broken bottle of Johnny Walker Black. He steals the bribe money Ashok was supposed to pay the Great Socialist, and runs away to South India with Dharam.

In Bangalore, he forms a relationship with the police force, also based on bribery, and ends up heading a successful taxi service catering to the workers of the outsourcing companies abundant within the city. In his final letter to Mr. Jiabao, he recounts how, while he was writing his previous letters, one of his drivers ran over a boy on a bicycle and ended up killing him, and how he managed to evade any legal action by bribing the chief of police more than he already does. Balram, now known as Ashok Sharma, visited the house of the boy and offered to pay the family and employ their other son at his taxi company. He ends his letters by saying that, due to his current financial and caste status, he may be finally ready to have children of his own.

The continuous move between "Darkness" and "Light", with the Light being cities experiencing economic success such as Delhi and Bangalore, and the increased moral depravity of the narrator during his shift from Darkness to Light situate *The White Tiger* as

a darker representation of a cosmopolitan literary style. The theme of globalization and international economic networking becomes more apparent after Balram becomes Ashok Shurma, meaning after he settles in India's rising outsourcing city, Bangalore. Even some of the narrative devices used within the novel, such as the distinction between Light and Dark, the Master vs Other social structure, the animal imagery, the use of coprophilia, and the "rags-to-riches" storyline, give the novel the status of a global 'Indian' novel because of their already distinct position within previous Anglophone Indian texts. The rest of this section will discuss these different elements and their contribution to the contemporary Anglophone Indian 'tradition' of storytelling while explaining their use towards the plot of the novel, and ultimately, towards the resistance found in the narrative.

In "*The White Tiger*: The Beggar's Booker" (2009), Sneharika Roy states that the novel is "something different" and that it "does not conform to the expectations of readers" (57), while M. Poonkodi suggests that the novel falls within the "common theme" of representing "conflict or war between two groups", in this case that of the master v/s the other (The Voice of Servility and Dominance Expressed through Animal Imagery in Adiga's *The White Tiger*, np). While Adiga's novel does turn away from the 'Rushdie-esque' style of magical realism and romanticizing India, it is by no means the first novel to explore the darker aspects of life in India.

Goh attempts to plot this modern style of writing about India, and lists off an array of authors and works that have taken to representing Dark India in lieu of romanticizing the sub-continent. His list includes Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, David Davidar's *The Solitude of Emperors,* Gautam Malkani's *Londonstani,* and Vikram Chandra's *Sacred*

Games, and gives these novels a thematic arc. For Goh, modern Indian writers in English, specifically those with ties outside of India, have taken to pointing out the unfair socio-political disparities found within the sub-continent, focusing on the 'darkness' that they perceive plagues the way of life found back home. This theme of darkness is both literal and metaphorical, both geographical and social. The narrator Balram refers to the rural areas found along-side the Ganges as the Darkness, which includes his birthplace; Laxmangarh. For Balram, India is two separate entities, that of the Light and that of the Darkness,

> "I am talking of a place in India, at least a third of the country, a fertile place, full of rice fields and wheat fields …Those who live in this place call it the Darkness. Please understand, Your Excellency, that India is two countries in one: an India of Light, and an India of Darkness. The ocean brings light to my country. Every place on the map of India near the ocean is well off. But the river brings darkness to India—the black river"
>
> *The White Tiger*, 8

Again, this distinction is both literal and metaphorical, both the Light and the Darkness represent geographical areas in India, respectively coastal and trading cities v/s rural areas around the Ganges, they also stand in as descriptions for the lives of the people who live in those areas. While listening in to the debates surrounding the upcoming elections at the tea-shop in his hometown, Balram notes that the enemies of the Great Socialist's campaign promise this year was that "they were going to topple [the Great Socialist] over and drag the River Ganga and everyone who lived on its banks out of the Darkness and into the Light" (56). This is obviously not a promise of relocation, but of improvement. For the people living in Darkness, social and political inequity is part and

parcel of why these areas are Dark, because the means of progressing and gaining freedom have been taken away from them.

Balram, and to an extent Adiga, seems to take the description of the "Light" as more of a joke, a campaign promise, than that of reality. He makes several notes of the government perpetuates the idea of leading the people "out of the darkness and into the light", most notably perhaps as he describes the statue of Ghandi found in Delhi, and juxtaposes it with the corrupt government built on bribery (77). This in itself is a window into Balram's disillusionment with the concept of "Light", since representation of a free India is tainted with an India of corruption. Throughout the novel, it becomes apparent that the only difference between the India of Light and the India of Darkness is an individual distinction based on a person's caste, and that is made clear when Balram, now Ashok Sharma, states that the reason he was never found by the police is that he had changed castes, "The police searched for me in darkness: but I hid myself in light" (66). This falls in perfectly with what Poonkodi states is the "common theme" of opposing and sometimes warring sides, and allows the novel to take on a more socio-political motif surrounding its representation of India.

Poonkodi also points to other ways in which *The White Tiger* falls into the common stereotypes found in Anglophone Indian novels, such as the use of animal imagery. To Poonkodi, "Balram's comparison of rich landlord with animals and birds is stereotyped" (np), as is the humanizing of animals and the dehumanizing of people rampant within the novel. This is apparent with Balram's description of his family's water buffalo, who he claims is the "most important member" of his family. He describes the water buffalo as the

"fattest thing in our family", just as water buffalos are in every family in Balram's village, stating that the women of the families fed the water buffalo "all day long", because the water buffalo's milk production was related to the family's ability to produce "a little more money at the end of the day". For a family living in impoverishment, the water buffalo, as a constant producer of income, was "the dictator" of Balram's house (11).

While this passage not only illustrates the poverty ridden conditions his family lived in in Laxmangarh, it also shows that for the poor, their lives are not more important than that of their animals. Balram's family takes more care of the water buffalo than of its members, mainly because of its importance as a source of income. The animals have a purpose, unlike the people, and to that extent it makes sense for Balram and the people of Laxmangarh to refer to the rich landlords as various different animals. This naming system does not extend to the lower-caste characters found in the novel, only the animals have importance, and so only the rich get that association.

In "Imagery, Coprophilia, Carnography and Feminism in *God of Small Things*", Amarnath Prasad states that "Coprophilia is a significant motif in modern Indian fiction in English"[19], and Poonkodi reflects on the exuberant use of coprophilia in *The White Tiger*. As expected, the coprophilia is most apparent when Balram is describing the location and lives of the people he considers living in Darkness, both geographically and metaphorically; "The hogs and stray dogs near the tea shop would scatter, and the smell of dust, and sand, and hog shit would blow into the shop" (14), "Hundreds of pale hens and brightly colored

[19] taken from a quote in "The Voice of Servility and Dominance Expressed through Animal Imagery in Adiga's *The White Tiger*".

roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly, pecking each other and shitting on each other" (100), "Everyone knows there is a butchers' quarter somewhere in Old Delhi, but not many have seen it. It is one of the wonders of the old city—a row of open sheds, and big buffaloes standing in each shed with their butts toward you, and their tails swatting flies away like windshield wipers, and their feet deep in immense pyramids of shit" (151), "The men were defecating in the open like a defensive wall in front of the slum: making a line that no respectable human should cross. The wind wafted the stench of fresh shit toward me" (154), "There was the smell of ammonia in the air; one of the drivers was pissing not far from us" (88).

However, one of the focuses of Poonkodi's article regarding the use of coprophilia was the time in which Balram and his brother took their father to the local public hospital. Here, the use coprophilia is meant to show how the lower-caste people were treated with respect to the upper-caste, an aspect of the novel that Poonkodi seems to applaude, while others, such as Lily Want, states is nothing more than a "repertoire of shocking brutality" (77). While walking into the hospital, they stomped on "the goat turds which had spread like a constellation of black stars on the ground" (25), and after their father died, the brothers were forced to mop up the blood left on the floor while the ward boys "petted and fed" a wondering goat "a plump carrot" (28). Here, again, the animals are treated with more reverence that the poor, a theme that not only is found within the novel as a whole, but is also typical of the style of social critique in modern Anglophone Indian novels (Roy, 65).

Finally, the plot and narrative voice of *The White Tiger* also follow a contemporary tradition of Anglophone Indian storytelling. The novel as a buildingsroman "rages-to-riches tale", Roy states, is a "staple theme of Indian cinema as well as regional Indian literatures" (58), and notes that Balram, a "synecdochic figure" is "symbolic of a certain class", and she compares Balram to "Rushdie's Saleem Sinai in *Midnight's Children*, Allan Sealy's Eugene in *Trotter Nama*, and Shashi Tharoor's Draupadi in *The Great Indian Novel*" who, in their respective novels, became symbolic of the entire nation (59).

As shown above, *The WhiteTiger* follows a tradition of narrative devices used in contemporary Anglophone Indian novels, and as such promotes to an extent the idea of a homogenized Anglophone Indian voice. With respect to the Man Booker Prize's production of heterogeneous representations of the global novel, representations that are mostly based on the cultural identity and identity politics of the authors and texts, *The White Tiger* does not stray far from the expectations of such a prize. Even with the lack of a unanimous critical response towards the novel, it still manages to appease the Booker aesthetic expected from contemporary Anglophone literature opting to compete within a global market. The unique aspect of Adiga's debut is that it seems to be written with the intent of performing the duality of Booker aesthetics and narrative resistance because of its different approach to two separate audiences.

C. The National and the International Intent of Meaning

With respect to the national audience 'back home', Sneharika Roy mentions that this novel "does not conform to the expectations of readers [in] India, vis-à-vis the Indian novel in English" (56), and ends her article by stating;

> "While it is ironical that the drivers whose lot Adiga describes may never be able to read his novel, except in translation, their neo-colonial masters certainly will. These anglophone Indian readers will find not the hybrid reflections of themselves and India that they have come to expect from Indian postcolonial fiction, but an ironical appraisal of the contradictions and inequalities that mark the neocolonial condition."
>
> (67)

Adiga does not represent those that belong to the upper-caste in an endearing manner, and his narrator's experience with these characters is in no way positive. He represents the middle and upper caste characters in from the point of view of the servants, highlighting the neocolonial sociological systems of enslavement India still participates in. Even Mr. Ashok, who was more caring and generous to Balram than his own grandmother, was still shown to have ulterior motives for treating Balram in a somewhat respectable way. While contemplating whether or not he should kill Mr. Ashok, Balram looks at two piles of spit on the floor, the left one seemingly listing off Mr. Ashok's virtues while the right one his vices;

The left-hand puddle of spit seemed to say: Your father wanted you to be an honest man.	But the right-hand puddle of spit seemed to say: Your father wanted you to be a *man.*

Mr. Ashok does not hit you or spit on you, like people did to your father. Mr Ashok pays you well…He has been raising your salary without your even asking.	Mr. Ashok made you take the blame when his wife killed that child on the road. This is a pittance. You live in a city. What do you save? Nothing. (246)

Balram distinctly shows that India is in its neo-colonial state, and the problems rampant throughout the socio-political system within is not merely a reflection of the left-over colonial powers within the sub-continent, but of the caste-culture prevalent throughout. India, as a former British colony, did gain its independence in 1947, however it retained the distinctions already made within its society during its past as a colony. The concept of lower-class servitude and upper-class luxury on top of a detailed description of a corrupt political foundation disrupts the image of an idependent and self-regulating state and sheds light on the effects of colonialism found to this day. The neo-colonial aspect of India found within the novel is directly discussed early on in the book, with Balram saying that "India has never been free. First the Muslims, then the British bossed us around. In 1947, the British left but only a moron would think we became free then" (21-22).

The White Tiger reflects the current situation within the Indian sub-continent, specifically with reference to Adiga's portrayal of the hardships of the lower-caste and the inequalities of the caste system as a whole. Article 46 of the Indian Constitution marks social injustice against lower-caste and poverty ridden individuals illegal, and yet, as the

novel illustrates, many still face the injustices of such a socially ingrained system. This is especially true with the Dalits, the members of the lowest caste, formerly known as "Untouchables" because of the restrictions set on them with respect to any form of physical contact with anyone outside of their caste. At present, Dalits still are relegated to work the worst and most unpleasant jobs in India, such as getting rid of cow carcasses and cleaning up human and animal waste.

There have been many instances throughout the last few years of the social discrimination faced by around 160 million Dalits in India (The Caste Formerly Known as 'Untouchables' Demands a New Role in India, 2016). On July 11th, 2016, 4 Dalit men where flogged for handling the carcass of a dead cow. As Dalits, their job was to skin dead cows, but not to kill them, and the assailants wrongly accused them of the crime and sent many of them to the hospital. This sparked a somewhat-national and international repulsion to the situation of the Dalits and other lower-caste people, and brought the discussion of caste injustice back to the forefront of Indian politics, prompting many protests against the unjust caste-system run by the human rights group Navsarjan; an anti-social discrimination group founded by and for Dalits (An Indian Charity Battled Caste-Based Discrimination for Three Decades Then it became a Target, 2017). By the end of 2016, the organization lost its off-shore funding, which is one of its main sources of funding, because the government deemed that Navsarjan was "carrying out 'activities detrimental to national interest' and aiming to upset religious and caste harmony" (np).

While *The White Tiger* doesn't reference any specific character as being a Dalit, the portrayal of the harsh and unjust living conditions of other low-caste individuals and the

depiction of the bleak financial aspects of the lower-caste are placed in the center of the plot of the novel. Balram's story shows how difficult such a life is, and how immoral one must become in order to leave such a life behind. Balram is no friend to the middle and upper class Indian reader, and refuses to allow any justification for such a social system. Adiga's national audience will not be able to see themselves in Balram, but they will recognize themselves in Mr Ashok and his social network, and Balram's narrative makes it clear that this representation is not the Westernized and civil image such a class wishes to retain.

Just as *The White Tiger* situates the middle and upper class Indian Anglophone reader as site of continuous social injustice, Adiga's work does not spare its international audience. Balram describes in detail a culture of general acceptance towards the subjugation of a large percentage of the sub-continent's population through his explanation of "The Great Indian Rooster Coop" (99). He presents his international readership a detailed reason for the acceptance of such subjugation but then problematizes its apparent solution. Balram likens the life of the lower-castes and the servants to roosters up for slaughter, saying,

> "The trustworthiness of servants is the basis of the entire Indian economy. The Great Indian Rooster Coop. [Here] in India we have no dictatorship. No secret police. That's because we have the coop… A handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9 percent—as strong, as talented, as intelligent in every way—to exist in perpetual servitude; a servitude so strong that you can put the key of his emancipation in a man's hands and he will throw it back at you with a curse."
>
> (100)

Balram contrast India, a supposed 'democracy', with the communist system of China, and positions the Rooster Coop as India's own version of the "secret police". Balram

doesn't view the political system in India as being any different than that in China, other than the fact that in India the people enforce the conditions of servitude on themselves. Through the idea of the Rooster Coop, Adiga allows his novel to momentarily lay blame on the victims of social subjugation by claiming that self-regulation among those living in servitude causes the perpetuation of such injustice. Historically speaking, social revolutions have always been allocated onto the shoulders of the multitudes of underprivileged people that are most in need of a revolution, and the modern-day consensus around countries and areas that require such a revolution is the lack of a unified call towards social change. This idea that social change starts from the bottom up is specifically related to the notion of freedom rampant in a globalized world. A free country allows for a free people, and freedom is worth fighting for. At this stage in the novel, Adiga is mimicking the 'call to arms' of previous social revolutions that have taken place in mostly Western countries, asking the "99.9%" to take back the freedom that they should have been born into. However, it is Balram's narrative vis-à-vis the Rooster Coop that shows the resistance towards the notion of a universal right for freedom.

Writing for the Man Booker Prize is writing for a mostly British, Irish, American, and Commonwealth audience. An audience that, for the most part, already live in regions that provide the means to uphold the concept of 'every man born free', and so appealing to that ingrained notion of freedom that is viable in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States through the description of the Rooster Coop allows Adiga the unique position of showing the discrepancy within the notion of a universal right to be free.

Balram might have been able to escape the Rooster Coop by refusing to participate in it, but his escape is shown as very individualistic, selfish, and immoral. Balram does not

instill a sense of revolution onto the reader; in fact the idea that his rise to a higher caste might have cost his whole family their lives paints him as opportunistic at best. Balram even states it right after his description of the Rooster Coop, and says that "only a man who is prepared to see his family destroyed—hunted, beaten, and burned alive by the masters—can break out of the coop. That would take no normal human being, but a freak, a pervert of nature" (102).

Adiga also presents other examples of the consequences of individuals attempting to force social change on their oppressors in the novel. At the beginning, when Balram is still describing his life back in Laxmangarh, one man attempted to break the unwritten rule about lower-caste people not being able to vote on their own. As Balram describes, the ruling political party in the region would register all those eligible to vote, and without allowing them to vote on their own, would cast their votes in for the party;

> "On the day of the election, one man went mad….One of my father's colleagues, a small dark-skinned man whom no one had taken any notice of until now, was surrounded by a mob of rickshaw-pullers, including my father. They were trying to dissuade him, but only halfheartedly. They had seen this thing happening before. They wouldn't be able to stop this man now.
>
> Every now and then, even in a place like Laxmangarh, a ray of sunlight will break through. All these posters and speeches and slogans on the wall, maybe they get into a man's head. He declares himself a citizen of the democracy of India and he wants to cast his vote. That was where this rickshaw-puller had got to. He declared himself free of the Darkness: he had made his Benaras that day."
>
> (58)

Balram then continues to say that the man got beaten to death by the police, all because he attempted to vote. The passage is quoted in full because of its distinct political undertones, specifically the line that says "all these posters and speeches and slogans on the wall, maybe they get into a man's head", and because of its explanation of the consequences of

attempting to escape the Rooster Coop. Prior to the elections, The Great Socialist ran a campaign throughout The Darkness, promising freedom and equality to its people. The people themselves understood the hypocrisy of the situation, and they understood that when the time to vote came, their names would be used by those in power without their knowledge. Voting, a right promised to the people by the independent Indian state, was a luxury only afforded to the middle and upper caste citizens of The Light. The rickshow-puller, by going against the normal accepted behavior in such a situation, attempted to break out of the Rooster coop for the sake of a promised freedom. The police, i.e. the Indian government, imposed the Rooster coop for the other rickshaw-pullers by beating the dissenter to death. Here the distinction between an India of Light and an India of Darkness is highlighted through the hypocrisy of an independent nation that offers only a few of its people the 'luxuries' of said independence.

Adiga manages to trivialize the importance of maintaining the caste system within the Indian socio-political context while simultaneously depicting the hardship faced by an attempt to cause such a change by the oppressed classes. Putting scholars and critics aside, *The White Tiger*'s reading base, both national and international, is comprised of individuals who have a certain level of education, but the novel focuses on the lives of individuals that have not been provided that luxury. By explaining the Rooster Coop and then directly negating the solution provided, Balram illustrates the differences between the freedom provided to individuals in 1st and 2nd world countries and the façade of freedom allocated to the rest of the world. The equivocality of the Booker Prize and the literary market with respect to texts from the 'perephary' is mirrored in *The White Tiger* as the equivocality of human beings with respect to the concept of freedom.

The novel does not end on such a bleak tone, but does in fact provide a genuine solution to the problem of social injustice found in India. Balram, now Ashuk Sharma, realizes that to help change the social context he was born into, the oppressed require the help of members of the oppressing group. He ends his narration by informing Mr. Jiabao that he has two plans for his future, one for the near and one for the far. For the near future, Ashuk Sharma is considering venturing into the real-estate business, but his plan for the distant future summarizes one of the main causes of the problem of the Rooster Coop and provides a long-term and viable solution,

> "I think I might sell everything, take the money, and start a school—an English-language school—for poor children in Bangalore. A school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God or Gandhi—nothing but the facts of life for these kids. A school full of White Tigers, unleashed on Bangalore!"
>
> (190)

Balram's focus on an "English-language school" without "prayers and stories about God or Gandhi", is a focus on a school that teaches the reigning global language and deals only with facts and information. He specifies that the school would be for poor children and will provide them with the tools of being White Tigers themselves, able to hold their own and compete in Bangalore's rising economic status. Balram's focus on education is reminiscent of Spivak's concept of an "aesthetic education", which Simon During references in "The Postcolonial Aesthetic". Such an education, Spivak states, would "transmit critique" while forming "a channel for upward social mobility" (500). By "transmitting knowledge rather than experience", an such an education allows for the formation of "new collectives" (500), and in Balram's situation, of a city filled with White Tigers.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

> "In a world where socialization equals survival, the creation, distribution and reception of the literary crucially preserves historical, national and transnational memory, the expansion of knowledge, and, inevitably, the power-dynamics involved in all these process"
>
> (Asucion Lopez-Varela, 2013)

The contemporary Anglophone novel, as a viable contender within the current global literary market, often receives the criticism of being a product of globalization. I use the word criticism because of the way in which many scholars assume globalization's affect in perpetuating a heterogeneous form of world-making. Globalization, however, is neither simply the bringer of an era of new literary directions nor a mere extension of a capitalistic approach to a global power system, but a modern-day economic and political global condition that progressed historically along-side humanity's conception of the world as it is today. Marx's prediction of a globalized world system, a "universal inter-dependence of nations" and its direct effect on a universal ownership of the "intellectual property" of individual nations (Basu, 160) has become the reality of the contemporary world. Globalization's effect on the world's literary production cannot be easily negated; the current state of linguistic hegemony, the political and economic roots of the global literary market, the role of Prize Culture in propagating specific narratives into mainstream culture, and the domination of preconceived notions towards specific ethnicities on an international level can attest to the inherent connection between globalization and literary production.

This thesis does not aim to defend such a connection, nor does it condemn the current global state, it attempts to showcase the position of contemporary Anglophone novels in such a system of literary production and to present these novels as descendents of the postcolonialism because of the ability to read passive resistance within these novels when studied under a postcolonial framework.

What joins the novels discussed in this thesis with each other and with the contemporary Anglophone novels that have not been discussed is their ability to form new literary constellations that are products of the state of the world in which they arise from, constellations that focus on unsettling specific political misconceptions regarding the ways in which underprivileged peoples are represented. Recognizing the way in which contemporary Anglophone novels utilize the literary market by catering to the aesthetic conditions necessitated by the institutions of power within the market, and reading past those aesthetic conditions into the inherent political nuances found in these novels showcases the potential for passive resistance found in contemporary Anglophone novels because it recognizes the conditions placed on contemporary literary production and the ways in which these novels still manage to subvert some of the problematic misconceptions such conditions propagate. Chapter 1 and 2 show that *We Need New Names* and *The White Tiger* play in to stereotypes of a poor and savage Africa and a politically corrupt India respectively, and this thesis contends that such stereotypes are problematic and should be assessed as such, but that does not negate the political imperatives potentially found within these novels nor the potential use of such imperatives in introducing the basics of resisting global misrepresentations.

Despite being condemned as stereotypical novels that promote stereotypical representations of marginalized peoples, these novels can be read in ways that have the potential to shift the political imperatives of postcolonialism and highlight a new form of politics in World Literature by focusing on relating the dismal experiences of the characters to their audiences. In "What is a World? On World Literature as World-Making Activitiy" (2008), Pheng Cheah states that literature "enables us to imagine a world through its powers of figuration" because of its ability to arouse pleasure and "a desire to share this pleasure through universal communication" (27). Through literature, one can create and re-create infinite images of the world, all of which are viable as representations of worldliness, equal in their legitimacy despite the equivocality of the literary production system.

The potential contemporary Anglophone novels have in relating the experiences of the underprivileged to an international audience can be utilized as a tool to introduce the problems that arise from misrepresenting these experiences because they are able to be read as non-confrontational literary productions. By living through the same experiences the characters go through, the reader gains the ability to relate to the characters in a way that is unique to each individual story. Contemporary Anglophone literature's stance as a segue between postcolonialism and World Literature is inherently political because it is able to relate the experiences of the characters *vis a vis* world politics to the audience of these novels, marking the relationship between text and reader as a political relationship. In *Ideology and Form in African Poetry*, Emmanuel Ngara depicts this relationship as follows;

> "In the process of reading, the reader and the text also enter into a dialectical relationship. There is no one-sided cause and effect relationship. The text bares itself to the reader, exposes its multiple layers of meaning and

> aesthetic effects, and the reader responds by not only receiving what the text offers but also by injecting into it something of his or her perceptiveness, ideological insights and sensitivity." (16-17)

As Ngara suggests, the reader and the text are bound together, feeding off of each other's knowledge. There is a give-and-take relationship between reader and text just as there is between two conversing individuals, but unlike the act of conversing, reading is a personal and somewhat solitary action. It is this relationship that gives the contemporary Anglophone novel its didactic capabilities within the Anglophone world because it allows for the act of self-reflection. The reason the potential resistance found in these novels should be considered a passive resistance is due to the fact that such a resistance is recognized through the act of reading. The experiences of the characters found in these novels are potentially relatable enough to suggest a different political conceptualization of the world than that propagated through various information channels, but the effect such a conceptualization has is unique to each reader because of the unique relationship each reader establishes with the text.

In academic circles, novels such as *We Need New Names* and *The White Tiger* are used as reading material for introductory courses specifically because they have the ability to provide a general view of some of the problems facing underprivileged peoples and because they conform to a mode of writing that is familiar enough to facilitate the ability of students from various academic backgrounds to understand the political imperatives found in the novels. Just as introductory courses are important in order to present slightly different viewpoints to a diverse student body and create a conversation that can potentially lead to

an interest in more specific and focused courses, contemporary Anglophone novels can find a place in both World Literature and the field of postcolonialism simultaneously because of the potential in introducing conversations that discuss the ability of both fields to work together in producing a more inclusive representations of the world they both aim to define. With respect to the potential passive resistance of contemporary Anglophone novels, there is room to study their ability to introduce wider audiences to the imperatives of the more structured resistances found in postcolonialism because they appease an aesthetic framework that facilitates their circulation on an international scale, thus allowing these novels propagate the ethical and political imperatives of postcolonialism the field's usual readership.

Realizing the narrative resistance found in award winning contemporary Anglophone novels as reflections of the dynamics of the current world order, exactly because they are a by-product of economic and political globalization, is realizing their ability to portray the injustices and misconceptions rampant in modern-day global politics to the communities and individuals that do not deal with these injustices and misconceptions. By relating the human experience of the underprivileged, they create worlds centered on these experiences, thus becoming tools for bridging the gap between the Western-oriented view of World Literature and the political and ethical motivations of postcolonialism, albeit at the level of the English speaking world. The driving themes of both novels, displacement for *We Need New Names* and social inequity for *The White Tiger*, reflect political problems faced by marginalized individuals and discuss solutions for these problems; community formation and accessible education respectively. Contemporary Anglophone novels become political in their own right because they eschew the politics of

their postcolonial predecessors in favour of the international status gained through World Literature. The utilization of similar stereotypes perpetuated by colonial writers, while problematic, can be viewed as a tool for writers disadvantaged by the current institutions of literary production in order to gain a certain level of critical acclaim that would not have been afforded to them had they followed in the footsteps of purely postcolonial writers. Contemporary Anglophone novels have the potential of retaining the imperatives of postcolonialism while simultaneously benefiting from the international readership World Literature can provide, a potentiality that this thesis suggests is worth studying further, specifically with respect to these novels' reception on a global scale.

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