

**THE GLOBAL ANGLOPHONE NOVEL IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: AUTHORS,
READERS, INSTITUTIONS**

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by
Alyssa Luck
August 2024

Examining Committee Members:

Miles Orvell, Advisory Chair, English
Sue-Im Lee, English
Laura McGrath, English
Dustin Kidd, External Reader, Sociology

©

Copyright 2024

by

Alyssa E Luck

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

My dissertation considers specific forms of authorship and the novel produced amid the changes to technology, reading, and audience/author relationships in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Synthesizing several threads of analysis—including postcolonial approaches to twenty-first century novels, explorations of authorship in literary and media studies, and growing attention throughout literary studies to global anglophone as a conceptual framework—I examine the contemporary global anglophone novel form through analyses of four authors who have global biographies, international cultural capital, and a thematically and structurally global body of work. Through analyses of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Kamila Shamsie, Zadie Smith, and Bernardine Evaristo's novels, media coverage, and other writings, I highlight the ways the contemporary global anglophone novel reflects and responds to the changing sociohistorical and cultural contexts of the twenty-first century. I demonstrate that the paratextual function of an author, their brand or reputation, is a key node in determining the value and circulation of the global anglophone novel because it acts as a site of connection between global authors, readers, novels, and institutions. As the global anglophone endures and develops as a critical category, work is needed to better outline its contours. In this dissertation, I work to illustrate one possible approach to building an understanding of the global anglophone through attention to its theorizations and articulations in the literature and author figures it produces.

To my daughter,
who inspires me each day
to find new challenges and moments of joy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the many people I have met at Temple that have helped me develop as a person and scholar. This dissertation would have been impossible, without their influence.

First, a sincere thank you to my committee whose advice helped develop this dissertation and will continue to inspire future work. I am grateful to my external reader, Dustin Kidd, for his feedback and suggestions for future research at my defense. Many thanks to Laura McGrath for her thoughtful and challenging comments throughout the development of this project. I am extremely grateful to Sue-Im Lee for her encouragement and perceptive questions throughout the dissertation process and my time in the program. Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Miles Orvell for his continual support and belief in this project. His guidance was invaluable for developing my ideas and writing.

Second, I am grateful for the opportunities I had to learn from faculty during coursework and at other stages of the program. Thank you to Suzanne Gauch for her guidance in the early stages of the dissertation planning. I also owe thanks to Priya Joshi, Peter Logan, Nichole Miller, Steve Newman, Daniel O'Hara, James Salazar, and Shannon Walters. Through your courses, feedback on my writing, and other guidance, I developed my ideas, but also my voice. I am grateful to have you as diverse examples of scholarship and teaching.

Third, a thank you to the people and programs that have supported me with employment and helped me develop a broader understanding of the institutional context for my writing and teaching. I am grateful for my experience working with the First Year

Writing Program and specifically with Rachael Groner and Cate Almon, for what I learned about teaching, administration, and collegiality. I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to the people at the Student Success Center who supported me for multiple years as an employee and graduate student. The writing retreats and groups were essential to the forward progress of the dissertation. In addition, I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with and learn from Darla Himeles because of her encouragement and for what I learned about writing, teaching, and leadership from them.

Furthermore, a sincere thank you to all the fellow graduate students I've met across campus, including those who have since graduated. Your brilliance, perseverance, and kindness are an inspiration. There are too many people to list everyone, but I am so thankful for the camaraderie and solidarity I experienced. This dissertation's completion is particularly indebted to Min Kyung Boo. I am eternally grateful to her, not only for helping me stay accountable to my writing goals, but for being an inspirational colleague and supportive friend.

Finally, a huge thank you to all my family and friends for continually cheering me on. I am grateful to my parents and siblings for their love and reassurance as I worked toward this goal. Moreover, I cannot begin to express my gratitude to my husband Andrew, who has seen me through all the highs and lows of the degree and dissertation process. His endless support and encouragement made all this possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Global (Dis)Connection	8
Authorship and the “Author Figure”.....	11
The Global Anglophone Novel.....	17
Chapter Outline.....	23
2. A PATH FROM POSTCOLONIAL TO GLOBAL: CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE	27
Legacies of the Postcolonial Author in <i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i>	30
Adichie as Postcolonial Author	32
Ugwu and Authorship.....	38
Ugwu and Adichie’s Englishes.....	41
Global Dimensions of Postcoloniality	44
Growing a Global Identity in <i>Americanah</i>	50
Adichie as Global Author	51
Ifemelu’s Global Authorship	56
Reading Adichie as a Global Author Figure.....	67
3. CRITICAL GLOBAL AUDIENCES: KAMILA SHAMSIE.....	69

Shifting from Postcolonial to Global Contexts: <i>Burnt Shadows</i>	71
Post-9/11 Literature	73
Burnt Shadow’s Global Constructions.....	76
Perspectives on an Anglophone Globe: <i>Home Fire</i>	82
Global Anglophone Intertexts.....	83
Inviting Reader Engagement.....	87
Revealing Unequal Global Networks: Shamsie as Author Figure.....	93
4. GLOBAL STYLE AND NOVEL REPRESENTATION: ZADIE SMITH.....	97
<i>White Teeth</i> : Postcolonial Style in Transition.....	99
Narratives of Smith’s Debut	100
Postcolonial Style in <i>White Teeth</i>	105
<i>White Teeth</i> ’s Style Shift.....	110
Thinking Through the Global Anglophone in <i>NW</i>	113
Smith’s Focus on the Reader	114
<i>NW</i> ’s Style.....	117
“Zadie Smith” as Author Figure	126
5. REIMAGINING GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS: BERNARDINE EVARISTO ...	131
Political Reimagining in <i>Lara</i>	132
Postcolonial Narratives of British Identity	134
<i>Lara</i> ’s Reimagined Britain.....	139
<i>Girl, Woman, Other</i> and Institutional Prestige	142
The Booker Prize and Cultural Authority.....	144
Impacts and Narratives of the 2019 Joint Award.....	149
<i>Girl, Woman, Other</i>	158
Evaristo as Post-Booker Author Figure	169

6. CONCLUSION.....	176
REFERENCES	180

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In December 2006, *TIME Magazine* published its annual person of the year issue with one unexpected difference. Unlike previous iterations, the cover did not reflect a portrait of an individual. Instead, under the magazine title was an image of a computer monitor and keyboard, the monitor modified to have a video play bar underneath (“Person of the Year”).¹ As Managing Editor Rick Stengel explains in his letter to readers, the magazine outfitted all the covers in reflective Mylar to create a mirror that would reflect readers’ faces back at them (8). In the design of the cover, the magazine emphasizes an optimistic and democratic narrative about the changing nature of the internet. Beneath the cover image, is a pronoun rather than name: “You.” It further elaborates: “Yes, you. You control the Information Age. Welcome to your world.” In its mirror-effect and titling, the cover draws in the reader and highlight’s their role in the larger culture. As a cover, the wording is meant to draw eyes and so the emphasis on the individual’s “control” of their “world” is necessarily exaggerated. *TIME*’s emphasis on the individual highlights the change in flows of information with the advent of now ubiquitous user-generated content sites like *Wikipedia*, *LinkedIn*, and *YouTube*. Through its celebration of these new types of site and new structures of content creation, the *TIME* issue draws attention to increased blurring between the roles of audience and author, consumer, and creator.

¹ *TIME* has created an archive of its issues, including scans of full issues at time.com/vault

This shift in the consumer/creator boundary that *TIME* celebrates in this issue materializes at the rough midpoint of a larger globalizing shift in many interlocking aspects of late twentieth and early twenty-first century economics, technology, and politics. These changes are some of the key contexts for the authors and literature I focus on. Published between 1997 and 2019, the eight novels I analyze in this dissertation were written alongside rapid technological and economic transformations. These changes, simultaneous with others in global politics, shaped a particular global consciousness that works within and between evolving conceptions of the nation-state. All of these changes inevitably affected both literary production or industry and literary forms themselves, leading to the particular form of the global anglophone novel and the structural relationships of contemporary global authorship I will trace.

This overly optimistic celebration of the user or audience as creator is echoed throughout the issue and exemplifies an optimistic narrative of twenty-first century technology that persists with many new iterations. Several articles inside the *TIME* issue emphasize the power and work of the early pioneers of the modern internet. For example, there is a networked map of key websites of “Web 2.0” and profiles of both website founders and content creators. As Stengel explains it, the message behind the issue was “that individuals are changing the nature of the information age, that the creators and consumers of user-generated content are transforming art and politics and commerce, that they are the engaged citizens of a new digital democracy” (8). The limitless potential for a democratized and user-generated internet is also echoed in Lev Grossman’s short article on the Person of the Year. He frames 2006 as “about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but

also change the way the world changes” (Grossman, “Person of the Year” 40). There is a lot of truth in Grossman’s claim and the larger narrative of the special issue. The changes in technology, particularly the internet did create a shift in the consumer/creator boundary. There were and continue to be more opportunities for individuals to organize, to speak, and to have an impact. However, what this issue of *TIME* and the larger cultural celebratory narrative of the internet ignore are the larger global inequities these shifts in the internet perpetuated or worsened.

The shift from the twentieth to the twenty-first century brought larger and more intricate global economic networks which resulted in both new centers of wealth and exploitation. Manfred Steger tracing this globalizing shift back to the post-WWII establishment of three international financial institutions—The International Monetary Fund, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later, the World Bank), and the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (later replaced with the World Trade Organization) (45). Though these institutions set the stage for a more global economy, in the later part of the century this group contributed to “the neoliberal acceleration of economic globalization” alongside “the internationalization of trade and finance” and “the increasing power of transnational corporations and large investment banks” (Steger 45). As trade and companies internationalized and grew in influence, so too did national economies become further interdependent on a global scale. Chandra Talpade Mohanty and other critics insist we should also look at the cost of these economic changes. She writes:

Economically and politically, the declining power of self-governance among certain poorer nations is matched by the rising significance of transnational institutions such as the World Trade Organization and

governing bodies such as the European Union, not to mention the for-profit corporations. (Mohanty 229)

Here, Mohanty sheds light on the structural economic inequalities of globalization.

Paying attention to uneven economic development sets the stage for understanding the different accesses to literary production and the intersecting global categories of identity that come into the spotlight further in novels interested in similar critiques.

The growth of technology facilitated a globalized audience while revolutionizing how art, media, and the like are created and interfaced with. As an ephemeral medium, the internet was constantly evolving and conflicting with more established mediums or industries. As illustrated by the *TIME* issue, the internet shifted the relationship between creator and audience. In the literary industry, this was seen, in part, in the ways fan communities were more easily built and maintained through instant connection and flexible digital spaces. Similarly, authors had more opportunities to interact or share their thoughts with a waiting public.

Simultaneously and sometimes enabled or driven by these technological and economic changes, the new millennium saw changing political alliances and conceptions of the globe. One example is the September 11th terrorist attacks and subsequent ones throughout the West like the 7/7 bombings in the UK which shed a light on how America was intricately involved in global networks less visible to its own citizens. This continued with the war on terror and other international wars throughout the first decades of the twenty-first century. Experienced by the North through an onslaught of images, these wars and other violent events helped shape a growing discourse on global citizenship and human rights. I discuss this further in Chapter 2 and gesture towards other scholarship in this vein in the next section. For now, I want to emphasize the interrelatedness of these

historical and social contexts and their relevance for understanding the global anglophone.

Inevitably, these technological, economic, and sociopolitical changes influenced the publishing industry broadly and for literary fiction specifically. From post-WWII onwards, the publishing industry grew and then condensed, forming what Dan Sinykin has called “the conglomerate era—a period that lasted for roughly forty years, from RCA’s purchase of Random House in late 1965 to the release of the Amazon Kindle in 2007” (470). In his analysis of the period Sinykin asserts that one of the key changes to the industry in this period is that “Conglomerate publishers have increasingly committed themselves to profitability in submission to shareholder value” (Sinykin 470). While, arguably, this structural goal and commitment of publishers continues after this period, the advent of e-reader represents an additional marker of the changing experience of reading in light of new technology. Of course, this shift was predated by the increasing popularity of digital forms and the internet. The network chart of Web 2.0 from the same *TIME* issue above, credits Amazon’s “customer reviews and recommendations” for making “book buying . . . a communal experience” (Howe 61). Digital editions of novels further establish this communality by making reading more instantaneous, self-publishing more accessible, and, as the technology developed, making it easier to access reading communities through features like popular highlights and integrated Goodreads (for the Kindle). Where and how readers discovered and saw books expanded. The result is a shift in many forms of literature, particularly the novel.

Scholars have outlined several possible ways of understanding the novel form in the new millennium. I build my literary analysis on approaches to studies of literature

that might broadly be considered related to the sociology of literature. These approaches “coordinate the literary with the social” in order “to provide an account of literary texts and practices by reference to the social forces of their production, the social meanings of their formal particulars, and the social effects of their circulation and reception” (English, “Everywhere” viii). In this dissertation, I combine literary analysis with considerations of the overlapping social forces inherent in the production of the novels I study. I synthesize several threads of analysis including postcolonial approaches to twenty-first century novels, explorations of authorship in literary and media studies, and growing attention throughout literary studies to global anglophone as a conceptual framework. I examine the contemporary global anglophone novel form through analyses of four authors who have global biographies, international cultural capital, and a thematically and structurally global body of work: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Kamila Shamsie, Zadie Smith, and Bernardine Evaristo. Through close reading analyses of these authors’ novels, media coverage, and other writings, I illustrate how the contemporary global anglophone novel reflects and responds to the changing sociohistorical and cultural contexts of the twenty-first century. What I find is that this form of the novel builds on postcolonial frameworks of nation, reimagines global history, and makes space for accessible critiques of its production through its structural, thematic, and formal elements. These characteristics and their potential social effects are further informed by a consideration of its authors and relationship to authorship as a function. I demonstrate that the paratextual function of an author, their brand or reputation, what I will call the author figure, is a key node in

determining the value and circulation of the global anglophone novel. In other words, it illuminates what it means for an author, audience, novel or institution to be global.²

While the author figure may be studied in many different periods, it is particularly useful for considering the literary networks of the transnational and media-saturated present. The author figure provides a focus point for studying authorial voice and celebrity while acting as a site of productive connection between globally situated authors, audiences, novels, and cultural institutions. I argue that the author figure acts as an authenticating, adaptable narrative that reveals these intersections and presents some hope as a leverage for changing inequities in institutions of economic and cultural literary value.³ Attention to the author figure provides one crucial way for understanding the structure of global anglophone literary production and for recognizing or creating space of resistance against its potential homogenizing functions.

In the remainder of this introduction, I first discuss my approach and corpus. Next, I trace the history of the author figure and clarify my own definition. Then, I explain my use of global anglophone to name the contemporary novel form I study and

² I look specifically at the Booker Prize as a global organization in Chapter 5 but consider it as representative of literary prizes more broadly as influential agents or institutions in determining the value of literature. While I do not go as in-depth into different institutions, others with similar influence—e.g., universities, publishers, media outlets—appear regularly in the case studies since the authors I study have significant value or recognition in several different areas of culture.

³ As I discuss next in the introduction, I consider the author figure both as the representative brand, but also how that brand changes over time. As a changing story about who the author is and their significance, the author figure might be read as a narrative.

some of the complexities of that term. I finish the introduction with a brief outline of the remaining chapters.

Global (Dis)Connection

My project and argument are inspired by and interwoven with intersectional and feminist practices that consider the necessity of attention to particularity and the social values attached to categories of identity. By this, I do not mean that I intend put forth a specifically gendered theory of the global anglophone novel or authorship. In other words, despite my choice of four female-identifying authors, I do not understand this project as theorizing a specifically woman's novel or female authorship. However, gender is an inherent consideration of my analyses because of its implication in the sociocultural dimensions of authorship and in the production of the contemporary novel. Many dimensions of feminism, especially postcolonial ones, consider the difficulties of solidarity in the face of different material and experiential realities. In *Feminism without Borders*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty defines her title as an “acknowledge[ment] that there is no one sense of a border, that the lines between and through nations, races, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities, are real—and that a feminism without borders must envision change and social justice work across these lines of demarcation and division” (Mohanty 2). She asserts that attention to difference can make space for connection and collective action. It is only through attention to the specific that solidarity can be formed:

In knowing differences and particularities, we can better see the connections and commonalities because no border or boundary is ever complete or rigidly determining. The challenge is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings better and more accurately, how specifying difference allows us to theorize universal concerns more fully. (Mohanty 226)

Mohanty thus encourages an examination of the particular to find more inclusive connections and frameworks. Her goal is always solidarity and progress in resisting systemic injustice. All the novels I analyze illustrate an interest in forming connections across difference and distance through engagement in particularities.

This consideration of difference as a political necessity might also be understood within a history of U.S. Black feminist work and a development of critical race theory, specifically intersectionality—a term coined by lawyer and scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. In “Mapping the Margins,” she positions intersectionality “as a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics” (Crenshaw 1296). In other words, it is “the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed” (Crenshaw 1245). Crenshaw sees as her “project’s most pressing problem” as “not the existence of [socially constructed] categories, but rather the particular values attached to them and the way those values foster and create social hierarchies” (1297). Crenshaw proposes that intersectional resistance to these hierarchies “requires that we first recognize that the organized identity groups in which we find ourselves in are in fact coalitions, or at least potential coalitions waiting to be formed” (1299). Anna Carastathis builds on Crenshaw’s formulation to propose an understanding of intersectionality “as a struggle concept prefiguring the tasks ahead—including the formation of identities-as-coalitions that preserve multiplicity and heterogeneity—as opposed to a truth taken as axiomatic, signifying feminism’s theoretical ‘completion’” (12). It is not enough to notice intersections; they should be mined for connective/collective possibility.

I have chosen Adichie, Shamsie, Smith, and Evaristo in part because they all attend to the ways connections can be made through differences and distances. As a result, they write novels that illustrate the possibilities for solidarity and resistance to globalization's oppressive homogeneity. This might stem from their own histories, positionalities, and education—all four authors are women of color, Adichie and Shamsie are citizens of nations from the Global South, Smith and Evaristo grew up in working class families, and all have written or spoken publicly about forms of sexism, racism, and/or xenophobia in social structures or institutions. However, what makes them compelling case studies for understanding the intersections of authorship and the global anglophone novel are that these are also very successful authors publishing in English and their novels and careers are, therefore, examples of what global anglophone literary institutions reward. The prestige or regard for these authors and their works is seen in the major literary institutions of academia, media, and publishing: their works are the subject of numerous scholarly publications, some of them hold or have held faculty positions, they have published in established media outlets, their books have been nominated for or won prestigious literary prizes, and their works are translated into multiple other languages. As authors, they occupy an intermediary position and thus represent a fruitful entry point to understanding contemporary authorship.

Their novels similarly sit at an intermediary boundary between and within the fields of postcolonial and global anglophone literatures. I primarily look at the thematic and narratological features of their novels for the ways they reflect their own production and speak to the realities of globalization or the construction of the author figure. Underwriting my close readings is an understanding of the possibilities for the novel

form. As Mieke Bal explains of the novel's deployment of description: "[it] binds elements and aspects otherwise disconnected, whatever their ontological status. What needs binding, what appears disconnected, depends on the relation between the novel and the world (of the readership)" (Bal, "Over-Writing" 607). It is the novel's mode of being to connect through textuality. In their binding function, these novels link global readerships and enable considerations of connection. All four authors have been read in postcolonial contexts which also marks them as good case studies for understanding differences in categorizations of them and their works over time. This is most clearly seen with Adichie and Shamsie whose early novels are set in postcolonial Nigeria and Pakistan, respectively. However, this is also true of Smith and Evaristo, both of whom write novels interested in the postcolonial histories of Britain and the effects of those histories on modern British society and individuals.

Authorship and the "Author Figure"

Though studies of authorship trace changing conceptions of the author over centuries, most see the emergence of the modern concept as originating in the eighteenth century.⁴ The Romantic author is conceptualized "as originator and genius, as fully intentional, fully sentient source of the literary text, as authority for and limitation on the 'proliferating' meanings of the text" (Bennett 55). This is, of course, the exact concept of authorship so famously rejected by mid- to late twentieth century literary criticism and articulated in Barthes's seminal "Death of the Author" (1967). For Barthes, "it is language which speaks, not the author" (143). Barthes' articulation of his contemporary's

⁴ See Séan Burke's *Authorship* (1995); Andrew Bennett *The Author* (2004); Kristina Busse "The Return of the Author" (2013)

critical sentiment helpfully unmoors the text from authorial intent. This allows for a consideration of the role of the author beyond creator of text. Foucault's "What is an Author?" (1969) further considers how authorship functions in how texts are circulated and read. Foucault defines the "author-function" as tied to the meaning and status of literature because it is complexly created in the space between the real writer of the text and the speaker of a text (148). Instead of reading the text solely through or rejecting any consideration of authorial intention, the author is re-inserted into readings of the text through their function. As Kristina Busse reads this twentieth-century shift away and then back towards the author: "the author becomes important again, not in a vacuum but as a historical, political, national, social, gendered, and sexed being who writes and is read within particular contexts and against specific historico-political and socio-economic events" (56). This project understands the author figure as a conversation between these views; it is determined by the text but also outside of it, has multiple selves and dimensions, is not perfectly aligned with the real writer of a text, and is contextual. This understanding of the author figure leads to the specific question: What is the function of the author figure for the global anglophone novel? This question can only be answered by looking further back at what I trace as the roots and companion of the contemporary global anglophone novel, the postcolonial novel, and how authorship functions for this form and in this field.

Both Graham Huggan and Sarah Brouillette have written on how postcolonial authors and their works shape or are shaped by production forces. In his book, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*, Huggan argues that there is a tension in postcolonial literary publishing between two competing values: postcolonialism,

“[which] posits itself as anti-colonial,” and postcoloniality, “[which] capitalises both on the widespread circulation of ideas about cultural otherness and on the worldwide trafficking of culturally 'othered' artifacts and goods” (Huggan 28). He argues that authors writing in this area use a strategy he names “strategic exoticism” to resolve this tension by subverting or redeploying “exoticist codes of representation” (Huggan 32). In *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*, Brouillette instead claims that the postcolonial literary niche is not fully autonomous, but self-consciously created through criticism and readership. She is particularly interested in the ways authors self-fashion in response. Because it is impossible to separate the author from production or material concerns, authors must create the author figure (Brouillette 70). While authors may not admit (or realize) this is what they are doing, we can read in their fiction and discussions of their works, the ways they shape how their brand, and their writings are received and interpreted. The continued growth of social media and literary celebrity suggests that this self-conscious creation is at least one element of global anglophone literary production as well.

In our globally connected world, studies of novel authorship can benefit from studies of authorship in fields like media studies, both for its close attention to the function and effects of celebrity on authorship, and for its examination of how internet culture has influenced the relationship between authorship, audience, and text. While there are some differences between literary and other media production, the reality of our intertextual, transmedia world is that authorship has many similarities across the fields.

In both literary and media or film studies, the study of the author has also been a study of the celebrity. James English and John Frow draw on a history of celebrity studies

in literature to note “a broader historical shift over the last century from a model of authorship dominated by the signature to one dominated by the brand name” (English and Frow 48). The authors draw attention to how this shift has coincided with a split between prestige and celebrity. They explain that celebrity separated from literary value, where “there has been both overlap and striking divergence between this set of celebrity figures on the one hand and the authors who over time command greatest esteem among other writers and critics on the other”, has created “something of a ‘problem’ for literary study” (English and Frow 40). This split and “problem” for literary studies is of particular importance for my focus on authors writing within British literary spheres. The authors emphasize that “this narrative of the commodification of literature and the concomitant elaboration of a corporate-managed literary star system can be readily mapped onto resonant nationalist narratives of declining British self-determination in the face of rising American economic and cultural hegemony” (English and Frow 41).

Loren Glass contends that “Celebrity authorship was a specific articulation of this mystique that enabled a gendered dialectic between modernism and mass culture” (Glass 22). He continues, “Celebrity obviously persists, and certainly some authors are famous, but the specific articulation of the private authorial genius versus the mass marketplace is no longer possible in a society no longer based on the opposition between art and commerce” (Glass 27). While Glass is right about the decline of “private authorial genius,” new readings of authorship and the author figure suggest a new iteration. Contrary to what might be expected, in his reading of the participatory influences of the *My Little Pony* fandom, Derek Johnson argues that even co-production process can reinscribe the authority of the author. He writes, “And yet, the participatory collaboration

of amateurs/consumers/users and professionalized industrial producers has not evacuated media authorship of its powers of distinction and its claims to hierarchy, authority, and power within the creative process” (Johnson 136). Though a new understanding of the author figure may be needed, it is still a key value.

My definition of the author figure relies on what Genette termed the paratext, the “threshold . . . without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text)” (Genette, *Paratexts* 2). As a mediated and relational concept, the author figure is paratextual. It exists on the threshold of a text. But as my chapters will show, the author figure is not developed solely through the authority of the author or their representative.⁵ As Busse contends, “We often ask in literature that the text carry its own interpretive directions with it, but sometimes paratextual frameworks are necessary, whether in explicit squaring-up, in shared community assumptions, or in authorial ethos” (59). In these examples, Busse suggests some paratextual frameworks that may be created outside the author.

This can be extended with Jonathan Gray’s theorization of media paratexts in *Show Sold Separately*. His framework helps shape my theorization of the author figure:

If we imagine the triumvirate of Text, Audience, and Industry as the Big Three of media practice, then paratexts fill the space between them, conditioning passages and trajectories that crisscross the mediascape, and variously negotiating or determining interactions among the three. (J. Gray, *Show* 23)

⁵ Genette differentiates between “official” and “unofficial” paratexts, but in both cases he asserts, “something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it, although the degree of responsibility may vary” (Genette, *Paratexts* 9). My definition diverges from Genette’s here.

If the media paratexts Gray studies fill in the relationships between text, audience, and industry, then the author figure performs a similar function for the global anglophone novel which is born into an inherently transmedial world. It is situated between text and discourse about the text while being influenced and changed through its framing and authentication by author, audiences, agents of production, and literary institutions. In his famous imperative to “Always historize”, Fredric Jameson explains that “texts come before us as the always-already-read; we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretations, or--if the text is brand-new--through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions” (9). In the contemporary moment, many of those “inherited interpretive traditions” are influenced by our everyday transmedial existence and reading the author figure draws attention to global anglophone novels’ engagement with this reality.

Further articulating the author figure requires some additional frameworks from media studies. In Richard Dyer’s influential book *Stars*, he emphasizes:

it is assumed that we are dealing with the stars in terms of their signification, not with them as real people. The fact that they are also real people is an important aspect of how they signify, but we never know them directly as real people, only as they are to be found in media texts.
(2)

This framework is particularly helpful for thinking about the author figure as I engage it in this dissertation. I would add to Dyer’s conception, Jonathan Gray’s proposition for reading “authorial clusters that are always operating and in flux, never finished” (“When” 88). Gray proposes expanding the definition of an author, to instead have multiple authors, by understanding the term as “those who have authority within an interpretive community, and thus have greater abilities to establish the meaning of a text and to append meanings to that text” (“When” 101). This definition includes the original writers

of a text, but also influential critics or, for his media context, producers of paratexts like trailers that help establish a text's cultural meaning. For the novels I examine, there may be multiple "authors" that fit Gray's definition, but the "author figure" I refer to throughout is more akin to Dyer's definition of the signification of the star. However, this expansion of "author" is useful for recognizing all the ways novels are assigned meaning and that the author figure itself can have many "authors" for a similar reason. In thinking about authorship in multiplicity, his "authorial clusters" as a concept draws attention to the temporal dimension of authorship and meaning-making, to emphasize "texts as always in the process of becoming" (J. Gray, "When" 89). For Gray, the concept "demands instead that we examine the social tensions, power differentials, jostling, management, and collaboration between authors, and that we look . . . to the interactions between authors of the 'same' text and to production cultures" ("When" 89). Similarly, we might think of the author figure as in process, a changing symbolic representation that functions to advocate for the text and intersect its other "authors."

The Global Anglophone Novel

This contemporary understanding of the author figure is a key mode for reading and understanding the form, but also the circulation of the global anglophone novel. I recognize this form of the novel as a contemporary of and development from postcolonial forms. How does an analysis of the author figure shed light on the development or characteristics of the global anglophone novel as it differentiates itself from the

postcolonial novel? Answering this question requires at least an outline of both novel forms as subsets of the larger literary fiction field of production.⁶

Much of the production-focused scholarship of the last decades is built on Pierre Bourdieu's work on the structure of the production of art. In *The Field of Cultural Production*, he outlines hierarchical spaces of production or fields whose structure determines the value of any object (piece of art, artist, genre) in the field:

it is the field of production, understood as the system of objective relations between these agents or institutions and as the site of the struggles for the monopoly of the power to consecrate in which the value of works of art and belief in that value are continuously generated. (Bourdieu, *Field* 78)

His theories emphasize the interdependence of meaning within a field. In other words, each object's value is determined by its position in the field and therefore its relationship to the other objects. His primary focus is on cultural or symbolic value, which he argues is sometimes determined relatively independently from economic or commercial value, depending on the field of production. In other words, he considers multiple productions of capital, including symbolic or cultural. Importantly, as James English articulates it: "Every field (by virtue of its recognition as a field) is possessed of its own forms of capital, its own rules of negotiation and transaction, its own boundaries and constraints, above all its own unique stakes" (*Economy* 9). For literature, these fields find means of translating capital between them. English contends that, "Prizes . . . are the single best instrument for negotiating transactions between cultural and economic, cultural and

⁶ For a broader overview of a larger literary market see works by Pierre Bourdieu including *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) and *The Rules of Art* (1996); For an introduction to the different structures and actors within the literary market see André Schiffrin *The Business of Books* (2000); Claire Squires *Marketing Literature* (2007); Angus Phillips and Giles Clark *Inside Book Publishing* 6th ed (2019)

social, or cultural and political capital—which is to say that they are our most effective institutional agents of *capital intraconversion*” (*Economy* 10). However, they are not the only means and my project looks more broadly, and necessarily more briefly, at negotiations of social and cultural capital across multiple institutional agents like universities, prizes, and literary media.⁷ Understanding the competition within and between fields helps mark out the influential roles institutions play in the production, circulation, and even reception of art.⁸ For Bourdieu, these primarily included educational institutions and publishers, but other scholars have sketched out other agents and institutions that impact how we understand novels in their fields of production.⁹

I see the global anglophone novel as building on and within the field of the postcolonial novel. As Sara Brouillette noted in 2009, “literary fiction has become a viable, recognized marketing niche, and the incorporation of postcolonial writers has been an important part of its global entrenchment” (174).¹⁰ By the first years of the twenty-first century, postcolonial literature is well-established as a global field of study

⁷ I return to literary prizes and English in Chapter 5 where I look specifically at the Booker Prize as an actor in determining global anglophone literary value.

⁸ Clayton Childress, in *Under the Cover*, emphasizes the interdependence of these separate fields of creation, production, and reception are “interdependent” as evidenced by how “novels travel across them” (Childress 11).

⁹ For examples see Mark McGurl *The Program Era* (2009); Merve Emre *Paraliterary* (2017); Dan Sinykin “The Conglomerate Era” in *Contemporary Literature* (2017)

¹⁰ Brouillette specifically positions her work about postcolonial writers as an update to Bourdieu saying, “it refines Bourdieu’s important argument . . . that the rise of a large-scale literary marketplace that made it possible for authors to make a living by writing occurred in tandem with the development of an ideology of artistic purity and separation from economic concerns” (3).

but also production. Many postcolonial scholars theorize postcolonialism, as Ato Quayson does, as “a set of theoretical dispositions” rather than an indication of time or perhaps, even, particular novel genre or style (2). Homi Bhabha further reads the purpose of “Postcolonial criticism [as] bear[ing] witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order” (245). But the term also has an adjectival association. In the publishing industry and classroom there is often a pattern of styles, themes, practices, or settings that signal “the postcolonial” to readers and audiences. One famous iteration is the idea of “writing back” as theorized by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back* (1989). But in the twenty-first century, the context for reading these characteristics has changed. An extreme reading would be to say, as Ulka Anjaria does, that “the once-radical aesthetics of the postcolonial novel have been institutionalized” and turned into a category with “recognizable generic conventions” (283). Even without going to that extreme, because it is an established, canonical form established in the late twentieth century, postcolonial literature cannot fully contain the literatures being written in the contemporary moment.

Therefore, I read global anglophone as a possible new direction for considering the frameworks and approaches of postcolonial study in a globalized world. The first part, “global” speaks to the construction of a global consciousness. As poet and literary critic Adam Kirsch contends in *The Global Novel*:

The question of whether world literature can exist—in particular, whether the novel, the preeminent modern genre of exploration and explanation, can be ‘global’—is another way of asking whether a meaningfully global consciousness can exist. Perhaps the answer is already suggested by the question: It is only because we have grown to think of humanity on a planetary scale that we start to demand a literature equally comprehensive.

The novel is already implicitly global as soon as it starts to speculate on or record the experience of human beings in the twenty-first century. Global novels are those that make this dimension explicit. (12)

In the last decades, scholars have argued for several different distinct forms or genres of the novel that respond to this global consciousness. Pheng Cheah's *What Is a World?* (2016) and Debjani Ganguly's *This Thing Called the World* (2016) both consider how literature shapes and is shaped by a consideration of a world scale of connection.¹¹ For Cheah, one important function of "world literature" is its ability to "enhance our sense of (being part of) humanity" (44). Ganguly's conceptualization of world literature is similarly productive. She connects her "conceptualization of *world*" to "the world-making possibilities enabled by the new technologies of globalization" while emphasizing the ways "it resists the space-time compression of global flows and opens up the category *world* to emergent literary sensibilities not overdetermined by the spatial and regional configurations of capital accumulation" (Ganguly, *This Thing* 24). I draw on considerations of the form and function of the novels Cheah and Ganguly identify but maintain that global anglophone is a better articulation of the specific novels I consider.

However, the term "global anglophone" is not without criticism. This is particularly true for postcolonial scholars who are often wary of the ways global anglophone decontextualizes material and affective transnational realities. However, I think there remains possibility for the term. This is the position Ganguly takes in a recent article published in *Interventions*. She suggests, "If the term anglophone is commonly understood as the history of the English language outside England since the rise of

¹¹ See also Yogita Goyal, *Runaway Genres* (2019)

modern mercantilist capitalism, it has never not been global” (Ganguly, “Angloglobalism” 602). She further addresses anxieties within the field by asserting:

Postcolonialism is not dead, and yet we cannot grasp the contemporary resonance of “global anglophone” in literary studies unless we disaggregate English from imperial models of the past. This paradoxical gambit does not disavow the history of English under the British empire and the rise of America in the post-War era, but it shifts the ground of discourse from under the imperial shadow and illuminates new zones of anglophone transculturation. (Ganguly, “Angloglobalism” 605)

Ganguly thus suggests one of the benefits of the term is its productive possibility for expanding postcolonial perspectives. She further posits: “we might also consider the possibility that global anglophone is much more than an intractable literary monoculture out to extinguish the multilingual provenance of comparative literature and defuse the political edge of postcolonialism” (Ganguly, “Angloglobalism” 608). She reframes an understanding of anglophone by historicizing it and considering the room within it for difference. Ganguly stakes her understanding of the term alongside comparative literature models and in the study of English and translation to read the “global” as “a marker of English’s ongoing vernacularization around the world (its multilingual mutation, creolization, and localized codification), its translational vigour, and its prominence in a literary *longue durée* alongside other world languages in human history” (Ganguly, “Angloglobalism” 606). Though I do not consider translation in-depth or use comparative approaches, Ganguly’s point here resonates in how global anglophone novels use English. There is a need for a term that can help us study the ways that globalization has fundamentally changed the economic and political structures of our world. Although nation states are still an integral part of the global landscape, technology and economics, particularly through the internet, have changed the way that we connect, the ways that we think, and, most of all, the ways that we relate to one another. As a result, thinking about

novels solely within postcolonial contexts is insufficient. It is not that we can ignore or move outside of postcolonial contexts, but rather that we add on additional contexts for consideration.

I also think that global anglophone better aligns with the ways many contemporary authors see themselves and this is particularly true for Adichie, Shamsie, Smith, and Evaristo. It thus acts as a convenient label, broad enough to encompass their unique perspectives, while also leaving open the possibilities for a specifically global solidarity. Adichie, Shamsie, Smith, and Evaristo all look beyond colonial or postcolonial histories to consider additional inequalities perpetuated by globalization. The anglophone I study in this novel is a US-/UK-centered anglophone, but I am interested in the ways that that anglophone is shaped by other forces. I also want to consider why it might be one of the most visible anglophones in global publishing.¹²

Chapter Outline

The remainder of the dissertation is organized into four case studies and a conclusion. In all four chapters, I explore what global attention offers in our reading of their author figures and novels. Specifically, I look more closely at four intersections of the author figure—author, audience, novel style, and institutions—and consider what it means for them to be global. Chapter Two analyzes Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's author figure alongside analyses of how author figures are developed in two of her novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013). I argue that this comparison provides

¹² This is one of the reasons I've chosen not to capitalize anglophone throughout this project. To reemphasize that there are many anglophones and even the global anglophone I am looking at as an anglophone that imagines the globe and not necessarily representative of all anglophones.

evidence for how audience and author are connected through an author figure's perceived voice and authority. Further, I demonstrate how an author figure develops differently or how the author/audience dynamic is structured differently in a postcolonial framework versus a global one.

My third chapter focuses on Kamila Shamsie, a writer born in Pakistan, who, like Adichie, began her career with novels focused on the city or land of her birth. Shamsie's novels and career illustrate a shift from postcolonial national trauma to global legacy that mirrors Adichie's but also emphasizes the role of the audience in a different way. I trace this shift alongside readings of *Burnt Shadows* (2009) and *Home Fire* (2017). I show that Shamsie eschews a particular audience, making room for all different contexts. This ability to be accessible in multiple ways and increase engagement and global consciousness highlights how audience is imagined differently and activated differently in a global rather than postcolonial context.

Next, I look more closely at the alignment of author figure, novel marketing, and audience in Chapter 4. To what extent does Zadie Smith participate in or shape the narratives of herself, her writing, and the global anglophone novel? Smith is regularly praised and rewarded for her attention to form and style, for her attempts to find new ways to represent the unrepresentable, but I suggest that this shift is part of Smith's continual attempts to connect global author and reader. We see this first with *White Teeth* (2000), which tries to represent everything in layer upon layer of incomplete, circular, but miraculously connected histories, people, and objects. I read the style of *NW* (2012) as evidence of Smith's own shifting concerns about authorship and audience that center around ethically witnessing and making connections in a decontextualized, globalized

world. In the end, I suggest that thinking about how Smith constructs the reading experience is only one piece of understanding the role of the author figure in the larger global anglophone field.

In my final chapter, I read Bernardine Evaristo as an author whose work has similar themes and connections to national postcolonial histories as Smith's but who was not as widely acknowledged until her most recent novel, *Girl, Woman, Other* won a Booker Prize. Therefore, I examine the role of literary prizes and other institutional markers of prestige in shifting authors like Evaristo from national recognition to global celebrity. I ask: How are these systemic realities reflected and critiqued in her novels, *Lara* (1997) and *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019)? In reading Evaristo as an author figure who questions and critiques the same institutions from which she gains her cultural capital, I suggest she represents the productive possibilities of a global anglophone framework for the author figure.

In my conclusion, I reflect upon the two overlapping questions that propel my dissertation: (1) What is the function of the author figure for the global anglophone novel? And (2) How does an analysis of the author figure shed light on the development or characteristics of the global anglophone novel as it differentiates itself from the postcolonial novel? From there, I briefly consider the future and implications of this research.

To return to where I started this introduction, the *TIME* issue draws attention to changing roles of audience and author in the twenty-first century with the advent of economic, social, cultural, and technological changes. In its celebration of these changes, the issue exemplifies a recurring narrative of optimism that follows these shifts. If we

hope to maintain a hold on the promises of collaboration and solidarity that underlie this narrative, then we must also imagine new tools for its enactment through a recognition of our globalized structures and mechanisms. This is one possible role or project for the global anglophone novel that attention to its author figures makes visible.

CHAPTER 2

A PATH FROM POSTCOLONIAL TO GLOBAL:

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

In her essay about “[t]he expectations of African citizenship”, Adichie considers the links between identity, citizenship, and art (“Shut up and Write” 43). In particular, she thinks about how she shapes herself as an author and how she shapes her writing by thinking about audience:

it is too simple to claim that writing is a private act, end of story. If it were so, I would write in a diary and put it away in a drawer. I write because I have to. I also write because I want and hope to be read. And so an audience – or the possibility of an audience – moves writing from a private to a public space. (Adichie, “Shut up and Write” 39)

The essay thus previews many of the themes of this chapter and dissertation about how audience author and public narratives are linked and authorized through the author figure. First, in the link between author and audience where “the want and hope to be read” motivates the construction of the relationship. As I will show, analysis of the author figure sheds significant light on this dynamic. Second, Adichie’s emphasis on the “public” nature of her writing is a reminder of the multiple contexts in which her novels and author figure are read. As a paratextual element, the author figure is inherently public and is reconfigured alongside the text and audience. These elements of the author figure are the focus of this chapter.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian author with roots in the United States, often splitting her time between the two (“About”). Her books, TED talks, and other work circulate within multiple fields of readership and global audiences. It is her wide-spread appeal and transnational cultural knowledge that marks her career as particularly useful for investigating contemporary global authorship. In this chapter, I look at

Adichie's author figure alongside analyses of how author figures are developed in two of her novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013). These novels are useful for tracing the development of a specific twenty-first century global author figure, not only because they are both of the period, but, more importantly, because they both deeply engage with the creation of authorship in their use of embedded narratives. Each novel considers how audience and author are connected through an author figure's perceived voice and authority to consider what it means for an author to be global. The author figures in Adichie's novels mirror her own development as a global author figure and demonstrate how the author/audience dynamic is structured differently in a postcolonial framework versus a global one while also illustrating how that difference might be blurred when postcoloniality is imagined by a contemporary writer.

Narratological analysis of both embedded texts highlights the relationship among writing, audience, and author figure. My approach to reading these novels is based on the insights and structure provided by Ruth Wenske in "Beyond the Single Story of African Realism." In her essay, she builds on narrative models by Mieke Bal and Gérard Genette to "provide a theoretical exploration of how typicality and typification, as two modes of characterization, connect fiction and reference in Adichie's novel [*Half of a Yellow Sun*]" (Wenske 125). In other words, she explores how the representative nature of realist fiction, the ways it is read as presenting the "typical" or representative of reality, creates a link between the novel and what it references. I use Wenske's conception of "embedded narratives" as she has adapted it from Mieke Bal's work on narratology.¹³ She

¹³ For Bal, the embedded text or narrative is a means of understanding the hierarchical layers of narrative in a text: "the narrative text constitutes a whole, into which, from the

summarizes two ways they appear in the novel: “acts of writing-within-writing (framed/nesting narratives) and writing-about-writing (self-reflective writing)” (Wenske 126). Wenske identifies the novel’s fictional account of the Nigeria-Biafra War, *The World Was Silent When We Died* as one such embedded narrative. I read *The World Was Silent* similarly, but also use the term to read the blogs inserted throughout *Americanah*.

To better analyze embedded narratives, Wenske builds on Genette’s theory of “diegetic layering: the plot (events and characters) is the diegetic level; the embedded narrative is the metadiegetic level; and the historical, “real,” or referential background is the extradiegetic level” (126).¹⁴ The key piece of Wenske’s approach for my own analysis is her “use [of] the term metalepsis . . . to consider narrative embedding as a way of conceptualizing the role of the real author vis-à-vis the text” (Wenske 133). Wenske draws on two versions of metalepsis, both the more limited understanding of it as movement between diegetic levels from Genette’s work and the broader understanding of it as “slippages between fictionality and referentiality” as defined by Elaine Freedgood (133).¹⁵ Wenske ultimately favors the latter and emphasizes the role of metalepsis for realist novels. The form of these novels, specifically “historical realism”, she argues, “enables this kind of metalepsis because of the significance of referentiality—the

narrator’s text, other texts are embedded. The dependence of the actor’s text with regard to the narrator’s text should be seen as the dependence of a subordinate clause to a main clause” (Bal, *Narratology* 51).

¹⁴ See Genette *Narrative Discourse* (1980)

¹⁵ In her “Hetero-ontologicality, or Against Realism,” Freedgood interrogates the function of novels for imagining worlds using G. A. Henty’s *Rujub, the Juggler* (1893) as a case study.

historical background against which the text is deemed plausible and consistent” (Wenske 133). In other words, the realist novel depends upon its referents in reality and thus continuously moves between the boundary of fiction and reference. Though *Americanah* is not a historical realist text in the manner of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, it shares an interest in referentiality and realism and thus I read both as dependent upon the kind of metalepsis Wenske describes. Attention to metalepsis in *Half of a Yellow Sun* provides insight into the specifically postcolonial author figure by considering how Adichie and Ugwu are framed by and frame their audiences. Approaching *Americanah* similarly, begins a conversation around the shift to a global author figure that is visible in Adichie’s career and anticipated to a degree in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

In the remaining space of this chapter, I use an attention to diegetic layering and metalepsis to analyze the distinctions I see in postcolonial and global author figures. I start with a reading of Adichie and Ugwu as postcolonial author figures using *Half of a Yellow Sun*, then move to the ways the global author figure is created in *Americanah* alongside Adichie’s own globalizing author figure. Finally, I conclude with some considerations of the boundaries of the author figure, the movements between real and symbolic levels that a successful global author figure must absorb.

Legacies of the Postcolonial Author in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Half of a Yellow Sun (2006) is Adichie’s second novel. At the time it was published, Adichie was beginning to establish herself as a talented and globe-trotting figure, particularly within American and British networks or institutions of literary value.

Born to employees of the University of Nigeria, she grew up on the campus in Nsukka.¹⁶ While writing her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* and, later, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie completed coursework or degrees at several U.S. universities. She also completed a year-long fellowship at Princeton. *Purple Hibiscus* was published in 2003 and awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (2005), and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for Best Debut Fiction (2004) (“Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie”). It also earned the attention of larger awards; for example, it was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction (2004) and longlisted for the Booker Prize (2004).¹⁷ *Half of a Yellow Sun* earned additional acclaim for Adichie, including nominations for five national or international literary awards and joint wins for the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award in Fiction (2007) and the PEN 'Beyond Margins' Award (2007). Notably, it also won the Orange Prize for Fiction (2007).

When *Half of a Yellow Sun* was published, the novel and Adichie were both situated in postcolonial frameworks by reviewers. Without overstating the similarities between Adichie and her character Ugwu as independent author figures, I want to suggest that we can see similar thematic relationships in how they are identified by their audiences, in their authorial goals, and in how they shape or imagine their audiences.

Reading the embedded narrative in *Half of a Yellow Sun* within the context of how the

¹⁶ While no book-length biography of Adichie exists, biographical information included here is consistent across her official website, a biography on Tunca’s *The Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Website*, and in many of her interviews.

¹⁷ The Orange Prize is now the Women’s Prize for Fiction; its partnership with Orange ended in 2012. According to their website, the prize was first awarded in 1996 and founded as a response to a perceived dearth of top literary prize nominations or wins for female authors. (“Our Story”)

novel and Adichie are framed by literary journalism and scholarship reveals how the production process for the postcolonial author figure relies on careful rewriting of colonial and national history while asking questions about the authority of voice to tell the national story.¹⁸ The postcolonial author is positioned as an intermediary, not quite insider or outsider to either national or extranational audiences. Simultaneously, Adichie and even her constructed author, Ugwu, resist this position and provide evidence of a global connectivity that is, at least partially, outside colonial structures of power.

Adichie as Postcolonial Author

Adichie was and is regularly read in a similar manner to many postcolonial authors: “as an intermediary between the Global South and the Global North, that is as a writer who brings marginalised African histories to the attention of western audiences and makes localised memories available for a larger, globalised memory culture” (Neumann 227). In her early career, she was explicitly praised for her insights into postcolonial Nigeria. In reviews, *Half of a Yellow Sun* was lauded for the perspective it provided into Nigeria and the ways it challenged a silence in Nigerian history. Reviewers placed it alongside established Nigerian writers inspired by the Biafran war as well as within Nigerian literary history more broadly. In many of the American and British reviews of the novel, Adichie is framed as providing insight into Nigeria or sometimes

¹⁸ My analysis primarily focuses on readings of Adichie outside Nigeria to look at the specific postcolonial literary field as it has developed in a global or transnational context. For more about the specific Nigerian literary market and novel see Wendy Griswold *Bearing Witness* (2000); for a broader sense of the novel form as it developed in Africa, *The Novel in Africa and the Caribbean Since 1950* (2016) edited by Simon Gikandi has several entries relevant to Adichie including his entry with Maurice Vambe, and Elaine Savory’s chapter.

“Africa” as illustrated in the *Publisher’s Weekly* review: “That period in African history is captured with haunting intimacy in this artful page-turner” (“Half of a Yellow Sun” 26). The references to her insider access to some “other” place are echoed by *NPR’s* reviewer who praises Adichie alongside “her contemporaries . . . [for] keeping our interest alive in a part of the world that most of us have never visited” (Cheuse 7). Adichie is framed in these excerpts as a writer, but part of the praise is for her “intimacy” with Nigerian (“African”) history and ability to “kee[p] our interest.” The “our” indicating it is an audience in which she is not included. Similarly, in a review submitted to a trade magazine by a librarian and reader, Adichie is praised for making visible a history that is noticeably obscured in common Western knowledge: “When I was a child, starving Biafran children were always mentioned in exhortations to eat up, but I had no idea where Biafra was, or why the children were starving. I am grateful to Adichie for ensuring that for me Biafra now signifies something other than clearing my plate” (Fowler 13). Adichie then is framed as not just a talented author, but a guide to Nigeria and an educator of its history and culture to her Western audience. She is the intermediary, the one burdened with educating and showing.

This is not a position crafted uniquely in book reviews. In her study of Adichie’s interviews, Daria Tunca observes that early in Adichie’s career: “It was common for interviewers . . . to ask the author to provide facts about her country of origin so as to enlighten potentially clueless audiences, a tendency that effectively turned the creative writer into a “native informant” of sorts” (xi).¹⁹ Interviewers, like book reviewers,

¹⁹ Spivak has famously questioned the possibility for the position of “native informant” see *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999). Other scholars have pointed to the ways

contextualize and shape Adichie the author figure as a consequence of how they read, present, and introduce her and her work. But it is a process in which Adichie herself participates. For interviews in particular, she is able to push back and shift the narrative, as Tunca suggests: “Remarkably, Adichie often managed to infuse her answers with interesting comments about colonialism, or to make polite statements that emphasized her limited knowledge about Northern Nigeria, thereby pointing to major cultural and political differences within her home country” (xi). Adichie can refute the idea that she writes to educate. In early interviews about *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adiche notes that she was worried: “Nobody in the US will buy the bloody book because they won’t understand it” (qtd. in Bolonik). Instead, she describes her personal motivations: “I did not choose this subject; it chose me. . . I had to write this book to digest for myself this legacy that I carry” (qtd. in Adebani 29). Despite her refusal of the native informant position, Adichie reinforces her position as part of a Nigerian storytelling legacy, as responsible for telling and re-telling less visible histories. She chooses to affirm her family, cultural, ethnic, or national identities and de-emphasize her position as intermediary to an outside audience. This tension between audiences and position is also visible in how critics contextualize Adichie and her works.

Contextualization of Adichie within Nigerian literary history emphasizes her part of that history and further align her voice with a sense of storytelling authority. Though the emphasis is less on the ways she frames Nigeria for a Western audience, there is a focus on postcoloniality. This is especially seen in scholarship and writing that connects

authors from the Global South are positioned this way including Graham Huggan and Sarah Brouillette who I cite in my introduction.

her or her work to Chinua Achebe's. Achebe is, of course, a ubiquitous figure in discussions of African literature, especially the novel form. For example, Mpalive-
Hangston Msiska credits the 1958 publication of *Things Fall Apart* as the start of "[t]he
widespread production, circulation, and consumption of the novel in Africa" (37).
Similarly, Simon Gikandi communicates the weight of Achebe's significance by
suggesting that he "can be said to have invented, or reinvented, the idea of African
culture" ("Chinua Achebe" 8). Similar claims about Achebe and his influence can be
found throughout discourses on decolonial and postcolonial Africa. This general
consensus among scholars often leads to scholarship that compares Achebe and other
African writers. This is especially true for Adichie who shares Achebe's Igbo Nigerian
background. Adichie herself has noted the influence of Achebe on her and her work: "I
like to think of Achebe as the writer whose work gave me permission to write my own
stories" ("African 'Authenticity'" 42). It is not just Adichie, but also her work that is thus
authorized through comparison to Achebe.

Achebe's fiction acts as important intertexts for *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Reading the
connections between the two illustrate the postcolonial nature of each and the tricky
metalepsis between text and author where postcolonial text shapes a postcolonial author
figure. Ruth Wenske names "*Things Fall Apart* [as]. . . part of the referential background
of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*" (134). Aghogho Akpome argues that Achebe's
Anthills of the Savannah (1987) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* share "discursive intertextual
space" because of their "similar formal and stylistic techniques" in addition to two
paratextual references in Adichie's novel to Achebe's writing in the epigraph and list of
books used in research for the novel (532). He maintains, "*Half of a Yellow Sun* may be

seen as both an extrapolation and a complementation . . . of Achebe's work, as it ostensibly offers a microcosm of information that fills the gaps found in *Anthills of the Savannah's* macrocosmic rendition account" (Akpome 537). Here, Adichie's novel is an integral part of the narrative history of Nigeria, not merely influenced by Achebe, but influential on the field. *Half of a Yellow Sun* clearly has resonance with the decolonial work of Achebe's novel and through this connection we can understand the context for reading its author figure as postcolonial.

When placed in its historical and critical contexts, it is difficult to read *Half of a Yellow Sun* as anything except postcolonial. In addition to its setting in the first decade after Nigeria's independence, its style and themes are also strongly postcolonial. Ulka Anjaria lists several postcolonial elements of the novel including: its setting "in a nation-state still haunted by the specters of colonialism" as well as its reliance on "tropes of splitting as twins and half-suns; images of a stunted futurity represented by the failure to conceive children; images of sexual violence; and an ending marked by ambivalence rather than resolution" (283). Many scholars read the novel in similar terms, drawing attention to the patterns of the postcolonial novel evident in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Other scholars draw attention to its realism or the significance of the novel for its engagement with the history and narrative of the war.²⁰ The novel is divided into alternating early and late 1960s sections which draw attention to the lives of its characters before, during, and

²⁰ For example, Abba Abba makes a case for *Half of a Yellow Sun* as an attempt at symbolic reconciliation in the ways it engages with narratives around Biafra in "Remediating Biafra."

after the Nigeria-Biafra War (1967-1970).²¹ The chapters are focalized through three characters' perspectives: Ugwu, a young boy from a rural village sent to Nsukka to work as a houseboy; Olanna, an upper class, educated woman who returned to Nigeria after earning her degree abroad; and Richard, a white, upper class, British man living in Nigeria. The lives of these characters are intertwined. Olanna dates and eventually marries Odenigbo, the employer of Ugwu. Also, Richard is romantically involved with Olanna's sister Kainene, and spends time writing a book in Nsukka. The novel is focused mainly on the war's influence on their lives and shared world as presented through their diverse perspectives.

There are visible postcolonial aspects in the novel's recurring embedded fictional text, *The World Was Silent*. Akpome sees the embedded narrative as a "meta-historical commentary [which] functions as an important historiographic tool . . . in a way that echoes some of the historiographic strategies deployed in *Anthills of the Savannah*" (538). *The World Was Silent* is thus able to draw attention to the specifically colonial origins of the war. This is further emphasized when comparing the novel to two of the novels from Achebe's *The African Trilogy*, *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* (1964). Both Wenske and Chima Anyadike draw attention to the echoes of a fictional text that appears in both novels, *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*. The text is written by the district commissioner at the end of *Things Fall Apart* and "has become an authoritative handbook in *Arrow of God*, where it is clearly stated as the

²¹ Some scholars, like Toyin Falola and Ogechukwu Ezekwem, editors of *Writing the Nigeria-Biafra War*, trace the start of the war to coups in 1966, but most others use the date the Republic of Biafra seceded and declared itself in 1967.

guiding belief of the colonial officers that the British are the models for all peoples” (Anyadike 143). In this context, *The World Was Silent* can be read as the “long awaited replacement for . . . [*Pacification*] in Africa's meta-fictional world” (Anyadike 148). Wenske reads *The World Was Silent* similarly, drawing comparisons between how the fictional texts are used in each novel. She notes the genre similarities as “both [are] works of historical nonfiction” and the significance of each within each novel as “both books become central at the ends of their novels, overturning readers’ expectations about who gets to inscribe history and how the process of writing history unfolds” (134). Both fictional texts are metacommentaries on the process of storytelling and writing history. But even more importantly, “both highlight the tendency to draw the authors of the novels into our reading of their texts” (Wenske 134). In comparing these fictional books, their significance to conversations about writing colonial and postcolonial history becomes clear. It is their use of metalepsis though, the “draw[ing] the authors of the novels into our readings of their texts” that best sets the stage for understanding the role of writing in shaping the author figure. Ugwu earns the position of national storyteller through his education, mastery of English, postcolonial critiques, and self-framing for a global audience. Examining each of these aspects reveals a metalepsis with the author figure of Adichie.

Ugwu and Authorship

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Ugwu is not introduced as an author, but he develops authority to write through his reading and education journey.²² When he starts the novel

²² Citations for *Half of a Yellow Sun* are indicated by the abbreviation *HYS*

as a houseboy his role is primarily to care for Odenigbo, his employer, and, later, Olanna and to “ancho[r] the domestic life of the central couple with knowledges no longer available to them as middle-class academics” (Erwin 327). In Nsukka, one of these knowledges is rural Nigerian food. The wording of Ugwu’s dedication in *The World Was Silent*, “*For Master, my good man*” (Adichie, *HYS* 541), also emphasizes Ugwu’s movement out of the working class through his mastery of a particular English and through his shift in identity to writer, story-teller, voice of a nation. It is Ugwu’s opportunity to use the phrase Odenigbo used early and often in their relationship. In his understanding of “my good man,” Ugwu names himself equal to Odenigbo, despite his use of “Master.”

Ugwu’s transformation into writer is a long-developing one in the novel. His journey starts with his job at Odenigbo’s where he is able to pursue his interest in cooking, but also given the opportunity to attend school. Education is a path forward for him and he is lucky to have an additional teacher in Odenigbo who continually draws attention to the unspoken remnants of colonialism in Ugwu’s education, even if Ugwu does not yet understand their importance.²³ Ugwu’s authority is developed through his ability to move social classes during the war. In this way, I agree with Lee Erwin that “[e]xpulsion from the domestic space will be required . . . to authorize Ugwu’s writing of the Book” (331). However, I find her contention that “Only when he is conscripted into

²³ Odenigbo gives Ugwu this direction after telling him he will be attending school: “There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass . . . They will teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger. That is rubbish. Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park’s grandfather was born. But in your exam, write that it was Mungo Park” (Adichie, *HYS* 13–14).

the fighting . . . do we see an actual engagement with ‘book’ and reading” (Erwin 335) to be too limited. Leaving domestic space as a conscripted soldier does seem to lead to Ugwu’s transition to writer. However, an alternative reading of his deep engagement with Frederick Douglas’s autobiography at the barracks is that the book is a reminder of home, the books left behind on Odenigbo’s shelf, and the reading journey he began before the war.

I contend that Ugwu’s development into an author starts much earlier. A more persuasive reading of Ugwu’s relationship to reading is John Marx's claim that “ what might otherwise appear as [Ugwu’s] personal experiences of growing up seem more like aspects of professional training” (615). In other words, Marx reads all of Ugwu’s development as preparation for becoming a knowledgeable expert as evidenced in his writing of *The World Was Silent*. Marx emphasizes the role of reading in Ugwu's education and professionalization. He writes that Ugwu's "mentorship begins in the novel's first chapter and in the *locus classicus of postcolonial fiction*—a library filled with tomes acquired in the course of a colonial education . . . The eclectic holdings of this home-cum-library encourage omnivorous reading habits" (Marx 617). Over time, Ugwu continues to learn and the novel names several works of poetry or literature that he reads. During the war, Ugwu’s identity as an educated reader is expanded as he eventually becomes a teacher at Olanna’s makeshift school. This reading highlights the postcoloniality of Ugwu as an author figure and emphasizes that the authority he gains through the reading and education he undergoes in the text is not completely authorized through leaving the domestic space. In fact, much of his education begins before then and is varied in genre or focus. Through Ugwu then, the novel suggests that the basis for

authorized authorship is in reading multiple sources or stories and that expertise is drawn from combining them with personal experience.

Ugwu becomes the only author who can tell the story of *Half of a Yellow Sun* due to his unique education and experience. The only other possibility, suggested by Marx, is Adichie herself as emphasized by the parallel between genres used within *The World Was Silent* and those used to construct *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The text creates author figures on multiple diegetic levels. Ugwu's large knowledge base is evident in the selections from the fictional book. Marx emphasizes the wide range of disciplines apparent in the fictional text; he names the styles as "colonial history," "international politics," "economics," "memoir of witnessing," and "poetic apostrophe" (615–16). He goes on to add:

The puzzle of who might be capable of doing the failed state in such different voices is hardly restricted to the novel's plot. It also shapes expectations about the author whose name is on *Half of a Yellow Sun's* cover. (Marx 616)

He later extends the embedded narrative to include the paratextual pages after the end of the novel, particularly the bibliography and "Author's Note." Marx suggests these elements encourage questions around who could author such a text (616). He contends, "In assigning the fictional author-function to the unlikely Ugwu, *Half of a Yellow Sun* satisfies a craving for unity invoked by that range of sources in Adichie's 'Note'" (Marx 616).

Ugwu and Adichie's Englishes

In addition to shaping the author through education, the novel emphasizes language use as an identifying feature. Language for the postcolonial novel is complex. Since the decolonial period, debates in Africa have focused on the role of English in

African literature and why literatures in African languages have been less visible in Africa's literary history.²⁴ In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o famously advocates for writing in native languages rather than English (27). Postcolonial literature often reflects this tension with many examples promoting narratives of English education and mastery while also considering hybrid or other forms of English outside hegemonic ones.

Ugwu's English development reflects postcolonial development narratives, but also emphasizes Adiche's own relationship to English. Ugwu begins the novel with some English knowledge, but it is limited. When he submits to Odenigbo a requested grocery list, Odenigbo replies: "Remarkable blend . . . I suppose they'll teach you to use more vowels in school" (Adichie, *HYS* 15). Ugwu speaks a legible English, but he is frustrated that it fails to match the type of English he hears around him in Nsukka, used by Odenigbo and the other faculty from the university. However, it is Olanna's English that he is most impressed by:

Master's English was music, but what Ugwu was hearing now, from this woman, was magic. Here was a superior tongue, a luminous language, the kind of English he heard on Master's radio, rolling with clipped precision. It reminded him of slicing a yam with a newly sharpened knife, the easy perfection in every slice. (Adichie, *HYS* 28)

While the comparison to the radio voice seems like an expected postcolonial reference to the remaining colonial influence on values and hierarchies, it also relies on local knowledge. It may be a stretch to say that Adichie is purposefully referencing the yams of *Things Fall Apart*, but certainly Ugwu is using the familiar experience of cooking with a

²⁴ See Mukoma Wa Ngugi *The Rise of the African Novel* (2018) for a more detailed look at the nuances of this topic.

local vegetable to understand the English he hears. It is, therefore, not a completely foreign English, but one that could be part of his everyday experience. Eventually, Ugwu learns a level or version of English that he is proud of: “he could not wait to impress Anulika and his cousins and relatives with his English” (Adichie, *HYS* 109). This focus on his English skills and the social implications of English continues through the novel. Through his education and experience, Ugwu masters English and used it to create a means for storytelling in *The World Was Silent*. It emphasizes his position as postcolonial and informs the readings of the embedded narrative by asking the reader to reflect upon the language of the embedded text, the novel, and who is using or writing in which languages.

While Ugwu’s development of English is central, and reads as clearly postcolonial, his use of it is not the last word on English in the novel. There is Adichie’s own use of English and Igbo in the novel to consider. In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin argue that “post-colonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of ‘English’ by using language to signify difference” (50). This is one way to understand the use of Igbo and English in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. However, as Michael Ross reads it, Adichie’s use of Igbo is “transmitting to readers a familiarizing, rather than estranging, sense of character and conduct” (111). In this case, it might be more accurate to recognize that the language use in the novel reflects a more global understanding of English, or at least one that reflects an experience of language beyond colonial or decolonial contexts. Marlene Esplin writes that, in the novel, Adichie “seems eager to move beyond the great language debates in African literary history and

to assert both her use of English and her asides in Igbo as normative rather than contestatory” (76). This aligns with positions Adichie has taken in regard to English:

Sometimes we talk about English in Africa as if Africans have no agency, as if there is not a distinct form of English spoken in Anglophone African countries. I was educated in it; I spoke it at the same time as I spoke Igbo. My English-speaking is rooted in a Nigerian experience and not in a British or American or Australian one. I have taken ownership of English. (qtd. in Ross 112)

Here, Adichie advocates for a multilingual understanding of Africa that includes English, a stance that is reflected in her novels.

In his article on Adichie’s mixed language use, Ross describes the careful and regular placement of Igbo throughout both *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*: “In these texts a lexicon of frequently iterated expressions, such as *nno* (welcome), *kedu* (how are you), *biko* (please), and numerous others, eventually becomes absorbed into the reader’s working vocabulary” (115). The words are neither defined for the reader nor presented as particularly exceptional beyond their italicization. The novel expects readers to recognize or learn over time their meaning. As Ross summarizes, “English may be the prevailing idiom of the narrative, but the reader is never allowed to forget its function as essentially a heuristic convenience” (115). Adichie’s use of Igbo and English together is noticeable in the narration and dialogue in the text and speaks to a theory of the anglophone that resists prioritizing one form of English, preferring instead a reflection of the languages (and particularly Englishes) that punctuate the lived existence of the characters.

Global Dimensions of Postcoloniality

An analysis of the construction of the author figure for the initially ambiguous author of *The World Was Silent When We Died* points to ways the novel works within

and against postcolonial paradigms. The author of the fictional book is established as a specifically postcolonial figure through the anonymity of the first seven entries. The first appearance of the book is at the end of one of Richard's chapters and throughout the earlier parts of the novel, Richard is characterized as a writer of Nigerian history. He is, therefore, the implied author of *The World Was Silent* for at least the first half or more of the novel. Richard's Britishness emphasizes the colonial history described in the book, but also creates an uneasiness with each entry due to the "we" in the title, as the book describes various aspects of how colonialism shaped Nigeria and eventually Biafra. While there are hints earlier in the novel, the true writer of the book is not revealed to be Ugwu until the last entry of *The World Was Silent* and the final sentence of the novel: "Ugwu writes his dedication last" (Adichie, *HYS* 541). It is here where the narrative gives Ugwu the definitive and authoritative power of storyteller. As Wenske points out:

The reversal in authorship also reflects on the other installments: even though they describe the historical processes that led up to the war, they are intricately tied up with the personal stories Ugwu has collected. Though we never learn how the historical and personal are related in the fictional book, the connection Ugwu makes between them highlights his development as an author and his increasing focus on the global historical forces that caused the war. (141)

In other words, the reveal changes the reading of *The World Was Silent* by shifting the metadiegetic focus in a different direction. I would argue that it draws attention not only to the global forces of the war, but also to some of the expectations and pulls on the postcolonial figure. There are expectations around who does, who can, and who should tell stories of nation and Africa. This is something Adichie seems to be addressing directly in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by playing with the reader's expectations of who has written the histories of Nigeria.

The World Was Silent uses irony to critique the colonial structures visible in the present of the novel and provide context for reading the war on a diegetic and metadiegetic level. One of the roles of *The World Was Silent* in the novel is to interrupt the personal perspectives and histories of the plot with historical context for the war itself. Each of the eight sections is labeled identically with its number and “The Book: The World Was Silent When We Died.” Several of these histories are pointedly critical of the colonial influence on Nigeria and its people. This critical historicizing and its ironic use of language points to the postcolonial nature of this book within a book:

In the Southeast, the Igbo lived in small republican communities. They were nondocile and worryingly ambitious. Since they did not have the good sense to have kings, the British created 'warrant chiefs,' because indirect rule cost the Crown less. Missionaries were allowed in to tame the pagans, and the Christianity and education they brought flourished. In 1914, the governor-general joined the North and the South, and his wife picked a name. Nigeria was born. (Adichie, *HYS* 147)

Here the author of *The World Was Silent* emphasizes Britain’s influence on modern Nigeria. Further, several phrases lend an ironic tone to the otherwise bland description of historical events. For example, “worryingly ambitious,” “did not have the good sense to have kings,” or “tame the pagans.” Even the last sentence, “Nigeria was born,” reads as an ironic metaphor when it comes from a joint effort of the British governor-general and his wife naming and constructing a political entity without consideration for its people or history. The passage illustrates Neumann’s reading that the novel “leav[es] little doubt about the role of British colonialism and the neo-colonial structures in the war. . . making a clear separation between colonialism and postcoloniality impossible” (225). A conflation of the colonial and postcolonial also parallels the diegetic layering present in these scenes.

It is readers' knowledge of the extradiegetic history of the British Empire and colonialism that allows them to better grasp the tone of *The World Was Silent*. The use of irony extends to a later embedded text which describes the independence process post-World War II: "But the British had to preserve Nigeria as it was, their prized creation, their large market, their thorn in France's eye" (Adichie, *HYS* 195). The narrative voice draws on colonial language of "prized creation" and colonial motivations like European competition for land and materials to describe the British motivations prior to independence. According to the narrative voice, the actions the British took to "preserve Nigeria" meant a preservation of the colonial instability of the country: "At independence in 1960, Nigeria was a collection of fragments held in a fragile clasp" (Adichie, *HYS* 195). The placement of this embedded text at the end of a chapter where Richard has witnessed the massacre of Igbo citizens at the airport, further heightens the diegetic layering and postcolonial irony of this installation.

While making postcolonial critiques, the novel also considers making space for Nigerian history within a larger global history, one not completely dictated by colonialism. The novel draws further attention to the historical extradiegetic level in the ways it counters exterior narratives of Nigeria by placing its history firmly within a global network. The descriptions of *The World Was Silent*, but also the novel at large, begin to highlight the ways the global and postcolonial intersect. In addition to providing historical context for the war, one of the other things *The World Was Silent* does is to establish Nigeria and Biafra's place in the global political theatre. In the first entry from the fictional book, the narrator contextualizes the encounter Olanna had with the mother carrying her daughter's body in a calabash on the train after the massacre in Kano. The

writer of the book is described as next mentioning “the German women who fled Hamburg with the charred bodies of their children stuffed in suitcases, the Rwandan women who pocketed tiny parts of their mauled babies. But he is careful not to draw parallels” (Adichie, *HYS* 107). Here, the massacre is placed alongside other global tragedies without explicit comparison or parallel. Instead, it is a complex diegetic layering that suggests meaning. In doing so, the author claims a global context for understanding the tragedy without removing the specificity of this occurrence.

By connecting the history and tragedy of the Nigeria-Biafra War to its larger political network, the novel further articulates the audience for *The World Was Silent*. It is the tragedy of the war that makes visible the postcolonial nation on the world stage. It draws eyes and action in several distant locations: “Starvation made the people of the world take notice and sparked protests and demonstrations in London and Moscow and Czechoslovakia” (Adichie, *HYS* 297). Within Africa, “Starvation made Zambia and Tanzania and Ivory Coast and Gabon recognize Biafra” (Adichie, *HYS* 297). And finally, “starvation brought Africa into Nixon's American campaign and made parents all over the world tell their children to eat up” (Adichie, *HYS* 297). Biafra and its people are objects of pity and infamy on the world stage. Starvation as a weapon is impossible to completely ignore, but it does not succeed in establishing an equal place for Biafra on the world stage. Instead, global possibility is halted by colonial histories as argued by Ugwu: “He writes about the world that remained silent while Biafrans died. He argues that Britain inspired this silence” (Adichie, *HYS* 324). He lists several reasons including “The arms and advice that Britain gave Nigeria shaped other countries” and “In the United States, Biafra was 'under Britain's sphere of influence’” (Adichie, *HYS* 324). He points to

the larger influence of global politics on the individual countries responses. For example, “The Soviet Union sent technicians and planes to Nigeria, thrilled at the chance to influence Africa without offending America or Britain” (Adichie, *HYS* 324). Similarly, “Communist China denounced the Anglo-American-Soviet imperialism but did little else to support Biafra” (Adichie, *HYS* 324). No corner of the world remains ignorant of the starvation in Biafra, but few to none come to their aid. Instead, complicated global politics based on colonial structures or relationships hinder any true support.

The author of *The World Was Silent* shapes his expected audience as a global one. In this way, it begins a blurring of the boundary between the audience of the embedded narrative and of the novel through the metalepsis of Ugwu’s and Adichie’s readers. The epilogue poem in entry seven is aimed at non-Biafrans in its title: “Were You Silent When We Died?” The third stanza is perhaps the most pointedly aimed at a global rather than national audience:

You needn't imagine. There were photos
Displayed in gloss-filled pages of your *Life*.
Did you see? Did you feel sorry briefly,
Then turn round to hold your lover or wife? (Adichie, *HYS* 470)

The poem refers throughout to photographers and photographs of the starvation in Biafra. However, this stanza is the only one to hint at a nationality through the direct mention of “*Life*,” a very popular American magazine through the 1960s. The author then seems to be addressing at least an American audience here, but more likely the “world” from the title of the embedded book.

Analysis of how Ugwu embodies authorship reveals aspects of the postcolonial author figure: authority, postcolonial critiques, and an intermediary position. As a creation of Adiche, Ugwu’s authorship creates moments of metalepsis between audiences

with strengthens each's postcolonial author figure and begins to make space for considering more global dimensions. In the next section, I examine a similar process in *Americanah*. Though that novel continues to make critiques through authorship, its focus is not just colonial structures, but also those created by present economic and technological factors.

Growing a Global Identity in *Americanah*

After the publication of *Half of a Yellow Sun* and its showering of literary awards, Adichie continued to establish herself as an author, expert, and celebrity in a global market. She completed an additional degree from Yale and was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship and a year-long fellowship at Harvard. During this period, she published her first collection of short stories, *That Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), and two exceedingly popular TED Talks: "The Danger of a Single Story" (2009) and "We Should All Be Feminists" (2012). The latter of her TED talks took on a particular visibility in popular culture when it was sampled in Beyonce's 2013 song "***Flawless." The perception of Adichie as the author of *Americanah* in 2013 was thus different from the perceptions of the 2006 author of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The expansion of her canon is part of her own process of negotiating the role of global anglophone figure. As seen in *Americanah* and Adichie's career, the global author figure is created through a shift in the author/audience dynamic that is enabled by technology.

Americanah was met with acclaim from critics and readers. As noted on Adichie's website, the novel made several top book or reads lists from popular review outlets like *The New York Times Book Review* or *NPR*. It was also awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction (2013) and The Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize

for Fiction (2013). The novel focuses on a young Nigerian woman, Ifemelu, and her transnational experiences between Nigeria and the United States. Though presented in a non-chronological manner, the story follows her late childhood in Nigeria, her college and early career years in the U.S., and then her return after thirteen years to Nigeria. During her time in the United States, she writes a popular blog, *Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black*, that she is able to turn into a viable career. However, as we start the novel, she has decided to shut down the blog and return home to Nigeria. After her return, she eventually decides to start a new blog, *The Small Redemptions of Lagos*. The novel is split into parts and chapters with most focalized through Ifemelu though a few follow her former boyfriend Obinze during his time in the United Kingdom. Entries from the blogs, ranging from a few sentences to a whole post are embedded into the text of the narrative. Like *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the embedded texts in *Americanah* are a separate diegetic level from the rest of the plot, though they have more referents since some are inspired by events the reader sees occur in Ifemelu's life. Together, the blogs contribute to a metadiegetic narrative about authorship in a globally connected world through their use of language and illustration of how audiences and authors co-create the author figure.

Adichie as Global Author

Americanah's reviews paint a slightly different portrait of Adichie than those of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. She is still sometimes read as postcolonial or representative of Nigeria, as in this *Entertainment Weekly* review: "As the author of 2006's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which took readers inside Nigeria's civil war, Adichie always gives a voice to characters that many Westerners haven't heard. And *Americanah* is no different"

(Maerz). However, these characterizations are less common, with many more reviewers focusing on the form, content, and importance of the book. Tunca sees a similar pattern in interviews with Adichie: “This “native informant” line of questioning has never entirely disappeared . . . but in recent times the writer has rather been turned into an expert whose valued opinion is sought out” (xi). As Tunca suggests, Adichie is viewed differently with the publication of *Americanah*, due in part, I believe, to the other work she published before its release. But also because of how the novel is read differently from her previous one.

While *Half of a Yellow Sun* was read as educating the West on Nigeria, *Americanah* is presented as a different type of didactic experience, for better or worse. Instead of an informant on Nigeria, Adichie is now an expert on social structures of race: “Her work should be read by anyone clutching at the belief that we’re living in a post-racial United States” (Bissell 68). Interestingly, these reviews also emphasize the cosmopolitan characteristics of *Americanah*, and, I suggest, reflect on an understanding of Adichie the author figure as more global than before. If the novel, “unfolds in the era of globalization, when diaspora is a temporary matter and the land of opportunity is no longer synonymous with the West” (Jones and Grossman 57), then certainly Adichie exists in this world too. A world she is able to represent by creating a novel “both worldly and geographically precise” (Peed BR. 12).

One particular frame for Adichie by both reviewers and scholars since *Americanah* is Afropolitanism. Reviews recognize her ability to critique the cross-cultural, global world she is part of: “The new novel by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explores the jet-setting, cross-national Afropolitan experience, but not as a story of

triumph” (Carlucci). Afropolitanism as a term is generally traced to a widely circulated 2005 essay by Taiye Selasi “Bye, Bye Babar” in the LIP Magazine and to its articulations by theorist Achille Mbembe. For Selasi, the term describes a particular African-identifying generation spread across the globe: “We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans, of the world” (4). She sees their outlook as an intermediary position, at home in many different places and with a complex relationship to Africa. She writes, “what most typifies the Afropolitan consciousness is the refusal to oversimplify, the effort to understand what is ailing in Africa alongside the desire to honor what is wonderful, unique” (Selasi 5). In this way, her understanding, and a popular understanding of the term is that it is a celebratory framework. As Dustin Crowley explains, “the concept invokes and celebrates a fully postcolonial, postnational, even post-continental ethos among Africa-connected urbanites. . . enabled in part by a freedom of physical mobility within and between those manifold sites of belonging” (126). Afropolitanism then is understood as a celebratory and positive world view that requires a particular social class as well as ability to travel internationally. Serena Guarracino describes the phenomenon similarly. She writes, “The language of Afropolitanism celebrates movement and syncretism, and aims at complicating African identities as featured in global media by focusing on migrant subjects” (Guarracino 10).

Primarily drawing on configurations of Afropolitanism drawn from Selasi’s description, there are two lines of critique of the term. First, is its perceived focus on commercialization. The second is its perceived “privileging [of] themes of travel and individual identity over communal or geographic specificity and grounded connections with Africa” (Crowley 127). In other words, Afropolitanism is often read as erasing

realities of inequity or overly focused on Western values. Further, the “celebratory” approach is read as insufficient and often “obscures the structural differences that disallow major parts of the global society to be 'cosmopolitan'“ (Pahl 76). However, despite these critiques, many scholars have found more nuance in Afropolitanism, especially its iteration in literature.

Like Selasi and others Mbembe similarly draws on an African “culture of mobility” in his own formulations of the term (9). But for him, he emphasizes the innateness of travel and movement to African culture and history. He writes:

Awareness of the interweaving of the here and there, the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa, the relativisation of primary roots and memberships and the way of embracing, with full knowledge of the facts, strangeness, foreignness, and remoteness, the ability to recognise one’s face in that of a foreigner and make the most of the traces of remoteness in closeness, to domesticate the unfamiliar, to work with what seem to be opposites—it is this cultural, historical, and aesthetic sensitivity that underlies the term ‘Afropolitanism.’ (Mbembe 10)

By extending and complicating the relationship between mobility and Afropolitan, Mbembe neutralizes some of the critiques of the term and opens space for more productive or political work for the concept. Mbembe posits Afropolitanism as both “an aesthetic and a particular poetic of the world” and “a political and cultural stance” (11). For him, the concept opens up the possibility “to revive intellectual life in Africa and, at the same time, the possibilities of an art, a philosophy, an aesthetics that can say something new and meaningful to the world in general” (Mbembe 12). In other words, the concept is a productive way of reimagining Africa and the world through Africa.

In their article, Knudsen and Rahbek examine the specifically literary Afropolitanist aesthetic and frame it as evolved from a postcolonial aesthetic. They contrast “a postcolonial anxiety, the result of feeling lost in-between homeland and host-

land” with “an Afropolitan anxiety . . . [that] seems to emerge, not from a sense of loss, but from being in transit, and multi-local, while commuting across geographical locations, and feeling a sense of belonging to all or none of the places involved” (Knudsen and Rahbek 118). This description helps cement some of the ways in which *Americanah* and its author figure are set apart from those of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The style and concerns have changed in the years between, as has Adichie’s career. The shift in author figure might be read as “a teleological progression from earlier articulations of postcolonial identity” (Crowley 127), but not equivalent to it.

More importantly, literary Afropolitanism engages in critique. Knudsen and Rahbek actually find that often “Afropolitan literary characters themselves . . . do focus on the continuing disadvantage (and perhaps exceptionality) of themselves and their peers as diasporic Africans in the modern world” (122). Texts like *Americanah* do not ignore ordinariness or the unequal power structures that maintain Afropolitanism. On the contrary, fiction can provide a means of critical evaluation of global structures and movement. This is a position supported by Miriam Pahl who reads both Adichie and Teju Cole’s works as “express[ing] a form of critical cosmopolitanism, in that they reintroduce an ambivalence, a multi-layeredness of meanings to the public and online conversations about mobility, globalization and cosmopolitanism from a specifically Afro-centric perspective” (74–75). My own analysis of *Americanah* similarly reads it as positing a critical engagement of Afropolitanism through its engagement with the complexities of transnational connection in personal and virtual relationships. This intersects and overlays its illustration of the formation of a specifically global author figure who must connect diverse audiences.

Ifemelu's Global Authorship

Many critics have commented on the language and style of *Americanah*, more specifically, on its embedded blog posts. The integration of these posts should be read as a reflection on blogging, participatory culture, authorship, and race in the 21st century. Ulka Anjaria reads the novel as an example of what she calls “The realist impulse . . . a purposeful intermediary position, where writers reject the modernist stylistics of canonical postcolonial writing in an attempt to delineate new and previously unthinkable social phenomena” (279). *Americanah* then is concerned with the global not only in its themes, but also in its style. Through its use of embedded blogs it is able to “reimagine the potential relationship between center and periphery outside postcolonial paradigms” (Anjaria 280). This aligns with another common feature of Afropolitanism: “The concept's vigour on the internet distinguishes it from earlier paradigms like Pan-Africanism . . . the internet is a crucial factor in [its] definition” (Pahl 77). *Americanah's* blogs tie it intimately to the internet. And this is also part of a larger shift from the limited global relationships of a postcolonial world to the possibility for reciprocal ones in the contemporary world.

Ifemelu's blog is also an examination of the African diaspora and how its members can relate with one another as well as a direct result of her experiences with racism in America. *Americanah* is familiar with the discourses around Pan-Africanism. The term is used directly by Mwombeki, a student Ifemelu meets at the African Students Association: “Try and make friends with our African-American brothers and sisters in a spirit of true pan-Africanism” (Adichie, *Americanah* 172). The vocabulary and expectation of unity through race across the globe is a shared cultural context for the

characters. However, Mwombeki follows up with a caveat that "Please note that in general, African Americans go to the Black Student Union and Africans go to the African Students Association. Sometimes it overlaps but not a lot" (Adichie, *Americanah* 172). While the characters see the possibility for transnational relationships, they are impeded by differing needs and cultural knowledge. Instead of easy unity, the "The African Students Association (ASA) that Adichie's Ifemelu encounters in the US manifests an Afropolitan anxiety about place and belonging – and about the meaning of Africa" (Knudsen and Rahbek 126). This is an anxiety that Ifemelu eventually uses her blog to explore.

The language of the blog posts themselves reveals this anxiety. As Anjaria notes, "[t]he slangy language, peppered with unvarnished racial terms like Negro and white, and the unconventional use of capital letters can be read as aesthetic expressions of the difficulty of thinking race transnationally in the contemporary United States" (284). The language reflects the need for specific language to deal with the complex problems of transnational connection. It is, also, a specifically online language: "The blog utilizes other thought-provoking or internet ready speech. For example, The terms 'American Black' and 'Non-American Black' are also often abbreviated as AB and NAB, respectively, and accompany a number of other colloquial neologisms playfully masquerading as sociological categories" (Anjaria 284). The genre of the blog and its location online call for particular kinds of language that are a stark difference with the style and voice of the rest of the novel.

It is not only the slang that sets the blog apart, but also the way it balances global and local language. Esplin draws attention to the distinctiveness of the language of the blogs and its intersections with the global and local. She writes:

Through Ifemelu's blog posts, Adichie showcases her familiarity with a world-wide idiom, a form of address very distinct from Achebe's fairly dichotomous relationship with the British empire. Her prose is both local and global—it is marked by mutability as much as locality and evidences Adichie's eagerness to move beyond the colonial confines of the literary marketplace for readers of texts in English. (Esplin 76)

The language of the blog begins to create a sense of the local and global together. In this way, the author figure of the blog also walks this space, which is how Ifemelu is read by the readers of the blog who do not know her identity. It is the blog, particularly *The Small Redemptions of Lagos* in which, as Anjaria suggests, a “new meaning of Lagos as a place one might move to rather than only away from is enabled” because it “allows Ifemelu to understand the condition of postcoloniality differently” (286). She points to the language style that helps permit this: “Stripped of allegory and metaphor, the blog is a space of intense contemporaneity that registers the imprint of ongoing and unresolved theoretical questions on the novel form” (Anjaria 286). The blog's presence in the novel helps create the restructured thinking of the postcolonial nation as global because it forces a reevaluation of postcoloniality. This combined with the Afropolitan elements names the blog and therefore its imagined author or author figure as global as well.

The audience and author figure are created together through the embedded narrative. Ifemelu positions herself in her blog as a perceptive and worldly “Non-American Black.” Her focus is not on unpacking colonial structures, but on making connections with her audience, one that she imagines to be multiracial and transnational. Several of her posts are addressed to fellow Black immigrants. For example, her blog

post titled, "To My Fellow Non-American Blacks: In America, You Are Black, Baby" argues for an understanding of the ways race in America is applied to non-Americans (Adichie, *Americanah* 273). It also provides a means for sharing the ways in which these groups of people are unified through these oppressive structures: "You must nod back when a black person nods at you in a heavily white area. It is called the black nod. It is a way for black people to say 'You are not alone, I am here too'" (Adichie, *Americanah* 274). The writing of her second blog, "expands on the complex relations among different experiences, and also an awareness of the wider debate on Afropolitanism as one of the main global discourses on African and African-American cultural production today" (Guarracino 20). Altogether, the novel thus suggests that Ifemelu as a blog writer is concerned with non-national or extra-national means of connecting. It also illustrates how her choice of audience reflects on her own self-creation.

Interestingly, through discussions of the moderation and comments on the blog, the reader learns more about the geographic makeup of the blog's audience. Though many of her posts are addressed to Americans or immigrants in America, that does not encompass the full audience. As Violeta Duce explains, "the blog becomes a virtual space for citizens of the world and encourages people who often feel underrepresented to speak up and share stories" (248). That international audience comes to matter a great deal for how the novel presents blogging but also how it suggests the author figure is created through readership or audience. As Guarracino notes, the extensive attention to "Readers and their comments" and the "blog as a place of social commentary and not always polite – cultural debate" frames it as "more and more a shared space where the blogger has only limited agency" (17). Here Guarracino suggests that the author is not the

total or perhaps even primary driver of the commentary of the blog. In other words, for the blogging genre especially, the audience is almost a co-creator or coauthor. This suggests one avenue for a global anglophone author figure in which it is a co-creative process or participatory process. This is further emphasized by Pahl who writes: “The fact that Ifemelu is not able to predict which blog posts will be 'successful' (drawing attention and comments) makes clear that the process of meaning making cannot be determined by the blogger, but is to a great extent decided by the recipient” (78).

Because the blog is an embedded text it also creates a further layer of meaning when thinking about the readers of the novel and the intersections of the blog and novel narratives. It is, perhaps, a version of metalepsis. Guarracino points to the shift and some gaps in meaning between plot and blog as a means of creating an audience or drawing attention to audience. She argues: “Leaving readers to figure out the relation severs the self-referential back-and-forth from novel to blog by introducing an “audience,” an active element in the creation of the text” (Guarracino 16). The result is that “Blog readers . . . are always a relevant presence in Ifemelu’s blogging, and allow for some interesting insights on the process of writing in the presence of immediate and continuous feedback (Guarracino 16). The blog then gives insight into authorship and writing both on the diegetic level and on the metadiegetic level. In other words, we can see a global anglophone author figure being created both within the text and through the text. This is done with both the style of the language and with the nature of the type of embedded narrative that Adichie has created for this novel.

One final way that the embedded narrative of the blog gives insight into the creation of the global author figure is in the effect of the blogs, particularly her first one,

on the character of Ifemelu herself. It's clear from the novel that Ifemelu the character is different from the author figure of the blog. We can see this in the different ways that she monetizes the blog. More specifically, the speeches and diversity trainings that she gives have a different voice and a different aim than the speech patterns or style of the blog itself.²⁵ But more so we can see in Ifemelu's development and the growth and ultimate closing of the blog the ways in which text influences author. At the beginning the blog is an outlet for it. As Duce writes: "The blog becomes the only medium for her to express her true self and deal with her experiences in America and her African background, which she now looks at with different eyes" (249). However, the blog does not remain a source of positive introspection for Ifemelu. As Guarracino points out, "As the novel proceeds, Ifemelu's separation from the results of her labour soon leads to a deeper feeling of subordination and annihilation" (17). Ultimately, the blog is intertwined with Ifemelu's sense of self as author and critic. This is why the blog shifts in tone and purpose as the novel goes on. As Guarrancino points out, the social commentary that starts on Ifemelu's blog, ultimately becomes more integrated in the main diegetic level: "as the discrepancy among the different chronological planes of the novel begins to thin down, the novel starts to absorb elements of blogging in its third-person narrator's growing social comments" (14). The blog thus becomes a means for creating the author of Ifemelu. The novel is able to blend the author figure of the blog and Ifemelu's development.

²⁵ After a disastrous first diversity talk, Ifemelu changes her approach when she gives a talk as an invited speaker: "she began to say what they wanted to hear, none of which she would ever write on her blog, because she knew that the people who read her blog were not the same people who attended her diversity workshops" (Adichie, *Americanah* 378).

Through Ifemelu, the novel explores the possibilities and limits for a global author figure. As she is shaped by the blog posts and the act of blogging, her story is simultaneously shaped by her experiences of her identity being read and assigned by others. As Duce describes the start:

Ifemelu is not the prototypical migrant of postcolonial fiction. She leaves Nigeria neither for political reasons nor due to economic scarcity, but, influenced by her boyfriend's veneration of American culture, she moves to the States in pursuit of personal development. (246)

Though she struggles early on to find work and afford her living expenses, she eventually earns a privileged position through her romance with Curt. He uses his influence and network to get her a job that will sponsor her green card and once she has the legal paperwork, her financial security is all but assured. It is for this reason that Ifemelu's character is read as Afropolitan. She has financial means and freedom of access across national boundaries as evidenced by "her passport filled with visa stamps" while dating Curt (Adichie, *Americanah* 246). Her, "Afropolitan self is unavoidably hybridised as a result of multi-locality, mobility and its multiplex cultural embeddedness" (Knudsen and Rahbek 122). This hybrid identity is emphasized throughout the novel. However, as Crowley argues, "even as *Americanah* uses Ifem's own emergence into the global class to counter Afro-pessimism, it does so within a wider sense of an African diaspora still marked and marred by inequity" (140). This is primarily accomplished through parallel comparison. He continues, "It does not replace the single narrative of victimhood with one of agency, but sets them provocatively side by side" (Crowley 140). Ifemelu's experience, alongside the other immigrants in the novel like the salon workers or Obinze, creates in the novel an overall nuanced critique of the structure of globalized networks. More specifically, he points out that "Adichie tempers Afropolitan optimism with frank

depictions of the structural differentiations that unevenly distribute access to modes of global mobility” (Crowley 140). It is not just their parallel depictions, but specifically the ways that structure draws attention to different accesses to mobility. It is in the relationship between Ifemelu’s experience or positioning and her blog’s own social commentary that the novel further examines this.

The blog’s reflection on Black American/African relations and positions is tied into Ifemelu as an author figure. Ifemelu must maintain some distance from race due to her status as an immigrant rather than citizen. This is a critique lobbed at her by Blaine’s sister, Shan who claims that the reason Ifemelu can have such a popular blog on race in America is “Because she's African. She's writing from the outside. . . So she can write it and get all these accolades and get invited to give talks. If she were African American, she'd just be labeled angry and shunned” (Adichie, *Americanah* 418). Despite Ifemelu’s attempts to bridge the diasporic gap in her life and blog, there remain structural barriers to a unified global diaspora.

On her return to Nigeria, Ifemelu faces different, but related challenges to her global cosmopolitan or Afropolitan identities. Her experience of putting a life together in Lagos exemplifies the ways in which she has changed, and her identity can no longer be simply Nigerian. The novel gives a glimpse of what Afropolitan looks like through the Nigeropolitan club:

The Nigeropolitan Club meeting: a small cluster of people drinking champagne in paper cups, at the poolside of a home in Osborne Estate, chic people all dripping with savoir faire, each nursing a self-styled quirkiness—a ginger-colored Afro, a T-shirt with a graphic of Thomas Sankara, oversize handmade earrings that hung like pieces of modern art. Their voices burred with foreign accents. *You can't find a decent smoothie in this city! Oh my God, were you at the conference? What this country needs is an active civil society.* (Adichie, *Americanah* 501)

Here, the novel emphasizes the attire and accent of the club members. It is their attitude and travel experience, but also their consumption that marks them as more cosmopolitan or global than other Lagos peers. Ifemelu is clearly one of them. She joins in on their discussions of natural hair styles: “she caught the righteousness in her voice, in all their voices. They were the sanctified, the returnees, back home with an extra gleaming layer” (Adichie, *Americanah* 502). There is an optimistic glimmer to them, and Ifemelu feels right at home, her sentiments generally matching theirs. Their time abroad joins them together in conversation where they are “all encircled by a familiarity, because they could reach so easily for the same references” (Adichie, *Americanah* 502).

However, Ifemelu does not allow herself to fall easily into an uncritical Afropolitan outlook or experience. Through her, the novel insists on a more balanced approach. It starts with Ifemelu’s own unease about her comfort, her ability to agree with the others about the types of restaurants that are more palatable to their Afropolitan palates: “An unease crept up on Ifemelu. She was comfortable here, and she wished she were not” (Adichie, *Americanah* 503). This is one of the incidents that pushes Ifemelu to write *Small Redemptions of Lagos*. Ifemelu sees herself as both insider and outsider, able to belong and critique. Her second blog, “grounds her in her new locality and life in the city, as a Nigerian, while maintaining a transnational connection through the digital space” (Crowley 134–35). The blog keeps her from needing to choose and it is also what allows the novel to better address the limits of Afropolitanism and reimagine a global identity that encompasses it without ignoring its limits. This is also reflected in Ifemelu’s use of language throughout the novel.

Part of Ifemelu's global appeal is her ability to speak multiple languages and to move freely across different international locations. In her article about language use in the novel, Marlene Esplin lists several languages Ifemelu masters throughout the novel which she describes as a "marked linguistic versatility" (Esplin 75). In addition to what language is spoken, through Ifemelu and the larger narration, the novel puts emphasis on how a language is spoken, particularly English. This includes several different Englishes varied by location including what Esplin describes as "the British-inflected English of her secondary school and university," "Nigerian English," "the speech habits of both African American and Anglo-American communities", "the English of the blogosphere", and "the fast-paced and idiomatic English of Lagos" (75). While there are overlaps in these languages, they each have their own structures, slang, and communities. Ifemelu is able to move back and through each well enough to provide commentary on many of them. The accent of a character is almost always commented upon though Ifemelu's accent gets particular emphasis. A discriminatory encounter with a fellow student during her time in America leads Ifemelu to perfect an American accent. However, as she spends more time in the United States, she realizes that she identifies more with her Nigerian inflected English. As a result, Ifemelu's voice is "one of the crucial points of difference between Ifemelu and most of her returnee friends and acquaintances" (Esplin 83). This is important because it suggests that the Afropolitan language may be British or American accented English, or at least that is the perception the novel pushes back against. Instead, "it is clear that she holds to her continued familiarity with the patterns and cadences of local speech as an affirmation of her loyalty to her home and her mother tongue" (Esplin 83).

Ifemelu remains anchored to Lagos through her accent, and it is another thing, like *Small Redemptions of Lagos*, that promotes a vision of the global that is still linked to the local. The larger impact of this language use is highlighted by Esplin in her article:

By foregrounding the frequent language negotiations of her main protagonists, Adichie clears a space for representing African languages in a global literary marketplace that has traditionally been resistant to even fleeting incursions of African languages into English-only texts . . . Implicit in Ifemelu's story of eventual reconciliation is a carefully wrought declaration of loyalty to language, homeland, and self in an increasingly global society. (85)

Here, Esplin suggests that the language use represents remaining locally anchored in a global world, but I would suggest that, conversely, it can also be a model for global identity in a local place.

Ultimately, *Americanah* illustrates the process of forming a global anglophone author figure as well as its characteristics. Unlike the self-creating informant and critic of postcolonial authorship, the global author figure is a co-creation of author and audience. This is due in part to shifting technology that emphasizes a virtual globality as integral to perceptions of the author. But it is not *Americanah* alone that shapes Adichie's global author figure. Pahl argues that "the label Afropolitan, in the predominant consumerist understanding of the term, has probably been imposed on Adichie because of her online presence" (79). This is an online presence that includes the TED talks mentioned above, but also her curated website and social media accounts, other videos of speeches, and a blog released after *Americanah* that imagines some of the future posts on Ifemelu's *Small Redemptions*. Guarracino gives a brief analysis of the blog's significance:

This marketing strategy achieves heightened visibility and circulation for the book . . . yet it does so by endorsing the invisibility of the blogger and/as writer. Hence, the distinction between writer and character, person

and persona, becomes more and more a dangerous territory where traditional signposts are displaced by the specificities of blog writing. (21–22)

The reproduction of Ifemelu’s blog is a significant metalepsis, blurring the diegetic layers between novel and author. Though the blog is the most obvious one, all of Adichie’s media acts in a similar manner, blurring the boundary between character and author. Her website is a good example of this in the way it organizes and presents information. For example, it echoes the scholarship praising Adichie’s global importance by providing for her book descriptions a count of the languages the book has been translated into. All in all, Adichie may not be her characters and vice versa, but they do influence how audiences read her and read her into the characters.

Reading Adichie as a Global Author Figure

So, what does this mean for Adichie, the author figure? While scholars are careful not to put too much emphasis on the close similarities between Adichie and her characters, the parallels make the comparison attractive. Adichie is a referent, an extradiegetic element for all her novels and conversely, it might be said that her novels are an intertextual influence on how she is read and perceived as an author. While this may be true and obvious for all authors, Adichie is a particularly good case for looking at the global author figure specifically, and the ways it is influenced by celebrity authorship more broadly. Adichie is one of the “authors who dominate reading lists, garner major prizes, and attract significant critical attention” (Neumann 218). This is a popularity and acclaim buoyed by her carefully crafted public figure.

As I noted earlier, between the publications of the two novels I’m studying, Adichie raised her global profile with a collection of short stories and two very popular TED Talks. In addition to being sampled by Beyonce, Adichie also adapted her 2012

“We Should All Be Feminists” (2012) talk into a nonfiction book with the same title; it was published in 2014. Since *Americanah*, she has published two additional nonfiction works, *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017) and *Notes on Grief* (2021), a memoir about the loss of her father. She has also continued to collect a litany of awards, honors, and distinctions that range from Harper's Bazaar's Women of the Year Award (2017) to the PEN Pinter Prize (2018) to honorary degrees from 16 international colleges or universities. Many of these include mention on lists of influential people or similar designations published by media outlets primarily in the US or UK. In light of these accolades, and considering Adichie's own output, “Adichie can thus be considered as part of a wide social network which articulates a continuous flow of framing and counter-framing involving a collectivity of participating subjects” (Guarracino 7). It is not with a single media or even from just Adichie's efforts that her author figure is shaped.

It is through this function of the author figure, perhaps, that we can see that “Adichie has become a signifier for something larger than herself” (Misimang). However, as Misimang will later point out in her article, “All Your Faves Are Problematic,” there is a limit to the universality of Adichie and thus a limit to the function of the author figure as abstract, unified vision of an author. Though the global author figure is shaped to be more cosmopolitan, to move toward, at minimum, a unified diasporic vision, it is still functioning in competitive fields of value and centered around a real person. It is, therefore, imperfect.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL GLOBAL AUDIENCES: KAMILA SHAMSIE

In the previous chapter, I examined the potential global features of authorship, or how an author might shape their own author figure for imagined global audiences using Adichie and two of her novels as a case study. In this chapter, I look more specifically at how an author cultivates and shapes global audiences or readers through a study of Kamila Shamsie and her work. In a 2018 interview for *Herald Magazine* Shamsie said this about audience:

can people please stop telling writers that they write for one particular audience when really writers write for a whole range of audiences? If I thought any book I wrote only worked at one level, and only spoke to one group of people, I would rip it up and start again. (qtd. in Alam et al.)

Shamsie is particularly concerned with the dynamic and varied audiences who read her work and thus a study of her and her writing sheds significant light on what it means for a reader or audience to be global.

Shamsie is a Pakistani and British born in Karachi to a family embedded in Pakistan's literary culture.²⁶ She has published eight novels including her most recent, *Best of Friends* (2022). She has also published a nonfiction book, *Offence: The Muslim Case* (2009) as part of Seagull Book's Manifestos for the 21st Century series. Her nonfiction writing on literature and politics can also regularly be found in publications like *The Guardian*. The city she grew up in features heavily in her fiction, and is the primary setting of her first four novels. As a result, media or criticism often presents her

²⁶ Kamila Shamsie's mother is Muneeza Shamsie, writer and scholar who outlines some of the family connection in her article comparing her daughter's and aunt's novels, "Sunlight and Salt: The Literary Landscapes of a Divided Family."

as a postcolonial voice, an insider to Pakistani culture and literature. However, her life, career, and writing might also be considered from a less national perspective—to look at the ways she represents a global author figure. Her biography supports this reading. She has earned two degrees in the United States and made a home in London, adding a UK citizenship a decade ago. Over time, her novels have similarly expanded their focus from Pakistan to multiple national settings. This shift towards globally-interested novels, is something Shamsie recognizes in her own work. This is evident in the same *Herald* interview where she responds to a question about the “Great Pakistani Novel” with: “I think the idea of the nation-state as the defining framework of a novel has less and less relevance in this interconnected world. At the very least, I seem to have become incapable of imagining a novel that is restricted within the boundaries of a single nation” (qtd. in Alam et al.). In her work as public intellectual and author, Shamsie is especially interested in the multiple meanings of citizenship and nation-states as they relate to her, implied involuntary, global perspective. As she says herself, she is “incapable of imagining” another way.

As I will argue in this chapter, Shamsie's novels and career illustrate a shift from postcolonial national trauma to global legacy that mirrors Adichie's but also emphasizes the role of the audience in a different way. I trace this shift alongside readings of *Burnt Shadows* (2009) and *Home Fire* (2017).²⁷ In analyses of both novels, I point to ethical witnessing as a key barrier to global consciousness that these novels, as articulations of a global anglophone novel form, attempt to solve. In my readings of *Burnt Shadows*, I

²⁷ Citations for these novels will abbreviate their titles for brevity: *BS* for *Burnt Shadows* and *HF* for *Home Fire*.

argue that critical categorizations of the novel as postcolonial or post-9/11 fail to fully address the function of language and the theorizations for transnational or global connections in the novel. *Burnt Shadows* connects world events outside of postcolonial narratives, uses stream of consciousness to blur individual boundaries, and draws attention to the power of language in order to suggest reflective empathy as a means of productive connection. This is expanded in *Home Fire* where adapting styles of other media encourages further critical reading and self-reflection on the part of a reader. Through this analysis, I make space for my final discussion of this chapter: how to imagine Shamsie as a global anglophone author. As illustrated in the opening quote, she rejects the idea of having one audience. Instead, her work eschews a particular audience, making room for all different contexts. This ability to be accessible in multiple ways and increase engagement and global consciousness highlights how audience is imagined and activated in a global context.

Shifting from Postcolonial to Global Contexts: *Burnt Shadows*

Prior to the publication of *Burnt Shadows*, Shamsie was perceived in critical circles as a postcolonial Pakistani voice, an insider to culture and literature. When the novel was published, this reading of Shamsie shifted to frame her and her novel within a post-9/11 framework. In press and criticism, both the novel and Shamsie are positioned as “writing back” against xenophobic and Islamophobic depictions in novels published in the US and UK about post-9/11 life in these countries and the larger “war on terror”. While these frameworks highlight some of the work the novel does to build a global consciousness and develop a critical reader, it leaves hidden how the novel maps the personal or familial story against a hegemonic global narrative. The novel reimagines

global and national histories through this personal story mapping and complicates an easy reading of its own production in English through its thematic attention to language.

Shortlisted for the Orange Prize²⁸ and winner of the 2010 Anisfield-Wolf Award for Fiction,²⁹ *Burnt Shadows* is a wide-ranging novel that explores generational traumas and the links between globally impactful events like the bombing of Nagasaki, the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, and 9/11. It follows several different characters who become more interrelated as the plot moves forward. It starts with engaged couple Hiroko Tanaka and Konrad Weiss in Japan. Then follows a heartbroken Hiroko to India where she meets Konrad's half-sister, Elizabeth "Ilse" Burton and her husband, James Burton. James is a lawyer and colonial administrator who employs Sajjad Ali Ashraf, a Muslim and Delhi native. It then brings the reader through Hiroko and Sajjad falling in love and getting married before skipping ahead to their life in Pakistan over thirty years later where they have a teenage son, Raza Konrad Ashraf. In this period of 1982-3, Sajjad reconnects with the Burton's son Harry, now an American CIA agent with business in Pakistan. The book then jumps again roughly 20 years to the months just after 9/11. Ilse and Hiroko are living in New York with Harry's daughter, Kim. Raza finds himself working with Harry in Afghanistan because of his language skills. So in all, three generations, five countries, and eight characters shape the narrative voice and perspective of the novel. Shamsie presents a narrative of history and language developed outside traditionally postcolonial binary paradigms that speaks directly to multinational

²⁸ now the Women's Prize for Fiction

²⁹ The book's nominations for both British and American literary prizes highlight its international relevance and global consciousness

anglophone audiences through its structure and attention to how language intersects with culture, relationships, and identity.

Post-9/11 Literature

One key context for *Burnt Shadows* is its association with a field of post-9/11 literature. In the wake of the terrorist attacks, writers and authors questioned the place of literature in such a world. As Arin Keeble recounts, “dozens of literary authors produced short pieces for newspapers and magazines in the immediate aftermath” that “were reflective, elegiac and essayistic” (274). In addition to “broad messages of consolation and hope”, Keeble points out that these short pieces were where “Many Anglophone writers expressed anxiety about writing fiction about 9/11 suggesting the attacks had rendered their profession trivial” (274–75). But even the canon of 9/11 novels is often read as sustaining this anxiety. Clemens Spahr reads two 9/11 canonical texts, Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man* and Ian McEwan’s *Saturday*, as representative of a larger pattern of novels that aim “to come to terms with the place of literature in a world whose systemic contradictions 9/11 brought into renewed focus” (221). He finds that “Post-9/11 literature generally has failed to imagine a political role for itself because it has been reluctant to imagine a future that significantly revises the present” (Spahr 221). In other words, they fail to imagine a changed world.

The makeup of the canon is also critiqued for its “heavy concentration of American novels” (Keeble 273) that tend to be inward facing or find difficulty “[b]earing witness to the culturally other” (R. Gray 140). A large portion of these novels are Western-centric and occasionally reinforce the either/or rhetoric around terrorism and thus, at minimum, oversimplified depictions of Muslim identity. As Harleen Singh notes,

“Preoccupied with the perceived psychological and political changes in the country after 9/11, these novels fail to acknowledge that American life has continued at an unabated pace—whereas life in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan has been radically destabilized” (23). Even literary criticism has suffered from what Jay Shelat calls an “enduring whiteness, which detrimentally flattens and skews our understandings of the attacks” by choosing to study primarily white authors’ fictional engagements with 9/11 (Shelat).

Recent scholarship highlights novels that better consider the global impacts and perspectives on changing security cultures and the war on terror. These novels, like the subgenre Roberta Wolfson identifies as “Post 9/11 Muslim novel” work to “trouble dominant discourses about the purity of the US counterterror imperialist project by offering alternative accounts of the 9/11 tragedy that subvert US-centrism” (239). Many Pakistani anglophone novels approach 9/11 or the larger war on terror from this perspective. This approach is one reason given for the recent scholarly attention to Pakistani anglophone literature more broadly.³⁰ Suhaan Kiran Mehta writes, “it was Pakistani novelists’ global lens on 9/11 . . . that arguably earned it readership in the West” (428). Similarly, critics like Paul Veyret note that “Contemporary Pakistani fiction in English now has an established position not only regionally, as part of the South Asian Anglophone novel, but also as a distinct and identifiable stream within global literature” (307).

³⁰ For studies of the history of Pakistani anglophone literature see Muneeza Shamsie’s *Hybrid Tapestries* (2017) or *Routledge Companion to Pakistani Anglophone Writing* (2018) edited by Aroosa Kanwal and Saiyma Aslam.

In many ways, this prominence of Pakistani literature deemphasizes 9/11 itself to think more broadly about the historical period. Priyamvada Gopal asks us to consider how “[t]he present prominence of Pakistani anglophone fiction invites us to think about the ways in which [a] transnational address shapes commercially and critically successful literary representations of Pakistan-in-the-world after 9/11” (22). This is not because the “now canonized date is . . . a moment of self-evident global significance” but instead because the date is “a historical conjuncture at which certain geopolitical contradictions . . . came to a head, spelling a long period of crisis for Pakistan as a nation-state” (Gopal 22). The transnational and global approaches to 9/11 and the war on terror evident in Pakistani anglophone fiction emphasizes, as Claire Chambers argues, that “Important though 9/11 and subsequent events such as the Madrid and London bombings have been for non-Muslim perceptions of Islam, the war on terror has had far greater impact on the lives of Muslims” (129).

One of the risks of reading *Burnt Shadows* as solely a post-9/11 novel is that it can minimize the political work of Shamsie and the novel, limiting them to a postcolonial “writing back” stance rather than recognize the ways Shamsie utilizes her cosmopolitan position to push beyond the postcolonial position of informant. However, scholarship that does read *Burnt Shadows* within a 9/11 framework, often emphasizes the ways the novel continuously pushes back against it. For example, Jayana Jain argues that *Burnt Shadows* “revitalises and recasts the ways in which most post-9/11 American texts have imagined past histories” (47). Likewise, Singh contrasts the “linear narrative” of 9/11 with the novel’s “series of disruptive and disorienting concentric images that build upon the context of imperialism and decolonization to dispute 9/11 as the overarching thematic of

the last decade” (40). As the title of his article says, Singh reads the work of the novel as “decentering 9/11” in the global narrative of history. Daniel O’Gorman similarly groups Shamsie’s novel with others that “offer a critical reaction against the more Anglo-centric or neo-imperialist aspects of globalization” (287). Adriana Kiczkowski posits that Roland Robertson’s “glocalization” unlocks some of the complex interrogations of globalization in the novel (127). As Veyret writes, Shamsie and other contemporary Pakistani authors go “well beyond their assigned location of ‘postcolonial’ authors ‘writing back’” (319). In other words, she and others reimagine the national outside of a center/periphery or reactionary model and enact a global rewriting.

Burnt Shadow’s Global Constructions

Where the novel can be seen pushing past postcolonial novel conventions is in its insistence on not only global characters, but in interrogating the legacies of colonialism and the nationalism they inspired. *Burnt Shadows* is interested in how national narratives are shaped, but also how they influence the individual and can rewrite their stories as seen through Kim Burton and Raza. Many critics compare *Burnt Shadows* to Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient*, claiming that Shamsie similarly interrogates postcolonial and colonial circulations of knowledge and identity.³¹ Maggie Ann Bowers uses this comparison to argue that *Burnt Shadows* “reveals that Britain’s lack of recognition of the history of Asian countries during the colonization of the North Western Frontier, and at

³¹ This is a comparison Shamsie invites by using a reference to the novel as the title for the final section of the novel. In her review of *Burnt Shadows*, Maya Jaggi contextualizes Shamsie with two postcolonial author references, calling Ondaatje’s novel “a guiding spirit” and adding that “Anita Desai’s influence is also palpable, in a pre-partition Old Delhi steeped in Urdu poetry” (Jaggi)

the time of the bombing of Nagasaki, is connected to the absence of knowledge among the British and American public of the history of insurgency, war in Afghanistan and events leading to 9/11” (184). Singh similarly points to the scope of the book to argue:

By layering her narrative with an almost unbearable burden of history—World War II, British Imperialism, India's Independence and Partition, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and its Talibanization, 9/11 and the subsequent American incursions into Afghanistan and Iraq—Shamsie insists that the reader acknowledge the historical relationship between imperialist world orders and terrorism. (34)

In both Bowers and Singh’s readings of the novel, the structure and wide-ranging setting links the structures of knowledge and knowing that led to distant historical events like Nagasaki, the Partition of India, and 9/11. In *Burnt Shadows*, these events become part of a global narrative of history as well as a personal, familial one. Through this structure, the novel suggests that a (post)colonial occupation with nationalism is insufficient for parsing the complicated social problems created up to, by, through, and from these events. Instead, “the wide lens of [*Burnt Shadows*] urge[s] an aesthetic vision of interdependency and inclusivity” (Jain 47).

The novel’s structure contributes to its interrogation of nationalism and creation of a global perspective. In particular, the scenes in the first half of the novel set in Delhi reveal the postcolonial structures of the characters’ societies and homes. In his opening scene, Sajjad contrasts the two parts of his home city. First, there is: “Dilli: his city . . . the rhythmically beating heart of cultural India . . . the place to which his ancestors had come from Turkey over seven centuries earlier” (K. Shamsie, *BS* 33). In contrast, “there was Delhi: city of the Raj, where every Englishman’s bungalow had lush gardens, lined with red flowerpots” (K. Shamsie, *BS* 33). Each day Sajjad crosses the boundaries between these two places, different in looks and affect. The contrast between experiences

of colonialism are further developed through the focalizing narration.

The novel uses its limited third person narration to mix the personal and social structures. The reader learns about how the characters see their own place and others in this society on the cusp of revolutionary change. James and Elizabeth Burton are English citizens working and living in India, depending on James' position as a lawyer. Sajjad, his apprentice, recognizes his own place in the hierarchy while dreaming of a better position from which to support a family in his beloved Dilli neighborhood. When he arrives at the Burton house, he stops to admire his reflection:

He paid little attention to those aspects of his appearance that made his mother blow prayers over him to cast off the Evil Eye . . . And instead fixed his attention on the beige cashmere jacket from Savile Row, running his hands along its length with sensuous pleasure. (K. Shamsie, *BS* 34)

It is a jacket he received from his employer. The novel immediately starts a new paragraph from a different perspective without a transition: "The peacock is here," Elizabeth Burton said, watching from her bedroom window and believing it was the slimness of his torso rather than the softness of the fabric he was admiring" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 34). In these small shifts back and forth between the four characters (Sajjad, Elizabeth, James, Hiroko) the novel continuously layers perspective, drawing the reader's attention to the contrasts.

In addition to its structure and narration, the novel's attention to language, particularly through Hiroko's character, interrogates existing national hierarchies and looks for ways to subvert them. Hiroko's character serves as a symbol of global possibilities and she writes her own place into the world through her language skills. Her experiences suggest shared language and empathy create a home beyond nation. All the important relationships she forms through the novel are intertwined with language

sharing: Konrad, Sajjad, and Ilse/Elizabeth. Hiroko falls in love during language lessons with Konrad and then, after his death, Sajjad. These lessons create a safe, shared space. And it is not the use of one language, but the mixing of them that helps to create this intimacy. For example, an early description of Konrad and Hiroko's interactions: "As ever their conversation moves between German, English and Japanese. It feels to them like a secret language which no one else they know can fully decipher" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 19). Their shared knowledge of three languages permits them to bond in a way they cannot with anyone else. They create their own space. Later, when Hiroko takes Urdu lessons from Sajjad, there is similar intimacy created where a discussion of translation or lack of translation helps create understanding between them. Hiroko experiences a similar, though not romantic, intimacy with Konrad's sister where they flow into German unprompted: "and that doing so felt like sharing the most intimate of secrets" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 71). Speaking a foreign language creates new connections and global bonds.

Hiroko's languages are also seen as the key element of her cosmopolitan character. They permit her a sense of freedom separate from that permitted by her passport. Shortly after WWII, her language skills and work for the Americans specifically, creates its own form of freedom for her: "she had every confidence that her three languages and glowing references from the Americans would be sufficient to secure employment anywhere in the world" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 49). Here Hiroko's language skills and her connection to a global power, as America was after WWII, are given equal credit for her confidence in finding a place anywhere in the world. Language also shapes her later experiences of New York: "A city in which she could hear Urdu, English, Japanese, German all in the space of a few minutes. The miracle of it! Sometimes she rode the

subways, overheard conversations her only destination" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 295). This is a position that is challenged as she lives through 9/11 and its effects. In the immediate aftermath, Hiroko "found herself caught up in a feeling of solidarity quite unfamiliar, utterly overwhelming" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 295). But soon, "things shifted. The island seemed tiny, people's views shrunken. How could a place so filled with immigrants take the idea of 'patriotism' so seriously?" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 295). Madeline Clements sees this introspection from Hiroko as only one piece of the novel's greater call to action for the reader:

Shamsie's novels make readers party to intense experiences of intra- and intercultural alienation and connection, seen through analytical and self-critical elite transnational Pakistani and, later, Asian and American eyes. Her narrative outcomes are increasingly contingent on her female protagonists' realisation that positions of isolation and introspection are both unsustainable and unethical in an interconnected globe: they must interest themselves as a matter of urgency in the worlds that exist beyond their windows. (124)

The cosmopolitan nature of Hiroko and the other female characters emphasizes the need for readers themselves to interest themselves in "the worlds that exist beyond their windows" because, as the novel shows, these worlds are intimately related to their own in many, often unseen, ways. The positive attention to language emphasizes this, but the consequences of *not* seeing the interconnections highlights this urgency for a reader even more clearly. This is illustrated through Raza, Hiroko's son.

Though Hiroko passes her language skills and aptitude to Raza, his own experience of language is more complicated. Unlike his mother, Raza feels burdened by his cosmopolitan heritage. For example, he hides his knowledge of Japanese because he feels: "he didn't fit this neighbourhood. A failure, a soap-factory worker, a bomb-marked

mongrel” (K. Shamsie, *BS* 194). His feelings of not fitting in are represented in his reaction to his name:

He spat the words out, over and over: Raza Konrad Ashraf. Konrad. His lips drew back from his teeth as he said it. He wanted to reach into his own name and rip out the man whose death was a foreign body wedged beneath the two Pakistani wings of his name. (K. Shamsie, *BS* 194)

Raza’s knowledge of Japanese and his own name both mark him as different from his friends and neighbors in Pakistan. Though Raza shares a language and culture with his community, the stigma of his mother’s trauma follows him. His family history is not tied solely to local experiences or place and that creates inner turmoil for him and jeopardizes his sense of home or belonging. When he reflects on the impact of language lessons on his life, the narrative tells us: "Languages had always come easily to Raza, but that didn't mean he was unaware of the weight attached to language lessons" (K. Shamsie, *BS* 203). While language lessons create opportunity and positive bonds for Hiroko, they are a weight, a serious consideration, for Raza. Not something to be taken on lightly. Raza eventually finds a kind of freedom through his language skills by using them to leave Pakistan and, later, gain employment with Harry Burton. However, they do not save him from suspicion and in fact lead him deeper in to danger because of the ways he is seen to connect to “the enemy” as conceptualized by the Americans with whom he works. As Emily Horton notes, the events involving Raza and Kim Burton in the final section of the novel “complicates the text’s earlier cosmopolitan optimism, making evident the continuing obstacle of cross-cultural misunderstanding and ethnic prejudice within the global capitalist context” (12). To this I would add that the ending, and specifically the framing of Kim’s actions and biases, might ask a Western, but especially American, audience to reflect upon their own views of nationalism and global connections.

Attention to the global structure of *Burnt Shadows* and the impact of global networks on its characters' identities highlights the lessons about community building and empathy latent in the book. Attention to the global rather than isolated national or transnational relationships underscores the reverberating effects of national trauma and tragedy beyond state borders, the expanded personal and transcontinental experiences of national conflicts. The novel thus makes visible these effects and histories to the reader, opening the door for a reflection on their own place in these histories. This is an act of reflection that *Home Fire* further draws out.

Perspectives on an Anglophone Globe: *Home Fire*

While *Burnt Shadows* reimagines global networks and histories, *Home Fire* draws attention to the precarious position of the individual in the face of competing national powers. In many ways, *Home Fire* is less cosmopolitan and more British than *Burnt Shadows*. However, in narrowing the focus, the novel emphasizes the production of globalized narratives and how they are received by transnational audiences. In doing so, *Home Fire* asks: How can we ethically encounter the story traveling to us at a distance? The novel's answer is its intertextual and intermedial aspects which call attention to the mediation of globalized narrative production as one possible form of resistance to the de-historicizing and decontextualizing nature of globalization.

Home Fire is a story from five perspectives: siblings Isma, Aneeta, and Parvaiz; Aneeta's lover Eamon; and Eamon's father, the Home Defense Secretary, Karamat Lone. These families are intertwined in the present through the legal and political implications of Parvaiz's decision to join ISIS and, later, through Aneeta's relationship with Eamon. Like Shamsie's other works, the novel investigates the impact of the past upon the

present. More specifically, the novel considers both the familial past of the siblings and the larger historical impact of the war on terror. Each character reacts and is shaped by these events in different ways, influenced by their own experience of London and their respective class positions.

Global Anglophone Intertexts

As discussed in my introduction, scholars debate the possibilities for critique within the global anglophone novel form. This debate is visible in the scholarship on Shamsie's work, particularly *Home Fire*. Molly Slavin argues for reading *Home Fire* as a subset of global anglophone novels she calls the "crisis novel." She critiques the lack of specific history within *Home Fire* and novels like it that rely instead on "a decontextualized sense of crisis that caters to a fantasy that it is possible to get past or go beyond neocolonial systems of oppression and violence" (Slavin 93). For Slavin, the novel recreates the emptiness or de-historicizing she sees within the larger term global anglophone. Slavin points to Nasia Anam's sense that "the distinguishing marker of the Global Anglophone text" is "a pervasive sense that the nation-state has failed" (Anam, "Introduction"). Slavin reads this to mean an "unconscious sense that the empire is haunting the global Anglophone with no specific attention to the colonial legacies that continue to influence this literary tradition" (94). While Anam and Slavin are right to warn of the potential danger in a lack of historic specificity—this is a real risk for the global anglophone as a term and certainly as a novel form—this is not a completely fair assessment of *Home Fire* itself.

There is potential in the global anglophone novel for historically grounded critique of globalization and *Home Fire* attends to this in several ways. In a recent article,

Nasia Anam herself argues that *Home Fire* demonstrates some of the political potential of the global anglophone novels in the way they can “subvert[t] the hegemonic legacy of English as a tool of domination . . . by laying bare the conditions that have facilitated the global expansion of anglophone literature” (“Loose Canons” 2). She reads this in *Home Fire* through its critique of the foundational Enlightenment ideas that led to the novel form itself:

The rehearsal of Enlightenment-derived ideas by a character like Farooq – i.e. a brown Islamic militant dead set on seeing the demise of western hegemony – is a radical act of ventriloquism that lays bare the latent violence of the very foundational principles of democracy and universalism. (Anam, “Loose Canons” 17)

In making this argument, Anam draws attention to the interconnection between conditions and form, highlighting how the global anglophone novel’s attention to historicism can produce critiques. Anam connects the experimentation in the novel as building on modernist or post-modernist texts, but what she finds most subversive are the inversions of the founding ideologies of the novel as a form (“Loose Canons” 16). While it is true that the form is not radically new, *Home Fire*’s use of intertextuality and intermediality deserve additional attention because they function to similarly “lay bare the conditions” of the novel’s production by drawing attention to the production of global narratives and stereotypes within it.

Home Fire’s intertextuality is a recurring object of study in recent scholarship which usefully points to its intersections with everything from the UK’s political discourse to the domestic novel.³² Of course, *Home Fire*’s most prominent intertext is

³² For intersections with political discourse see Debjani Banerjee’s “From Cheap Labor to Overlooked Citizens”(2020). For readings of *Home Fire* as a domestic novel see Maureen Moynagh compelling case for reading *Home Fire* and *Burnt Shadows* as

Sophocles' *Antigone*, the play Shamsie consciously adapted to write the novel. In addition to the connection appearing in marketing for the novel, the book's "Acknowledgements" section notes its origins as a play adaptation that later transformed into a novel (K. Shamsie, *HF* 275). There is a multifaceted and multidirectional engagement between the play, its history, and this specific adaptation. As Anam writes, *Antigone* is "an ancient play with an irresolute ending that itself seems to issue an oracular premonition of how easily modern-day nation-states can slip from the democratic into the draconian" ("Loose Canons" 19). The play itself brings in these themes of nation-state that Shamsie expands upon in the novel. I disagree with Slavin's contention that *Antigone* as an intertext contributes to the novel's decontextualized sense of crisis: "By updating Antigone's crisis to our own time, Shamsie frames crisis as having such deep historical roots such that these roots become practically meaningless" (97). This reading of *Antigone* as an intertext, downplays its adaptation history and the ways those act as additional intertexts and permit a more historically specific context for the novel.

The number of adaptations of *Antigone* are difficult to quantify and listing them is certainly beyond the scope of this dissertation.³³ The play has been performed and reimagined in locations throughout the world including within contexts as diverse as

expanding Nancy Armstrong's theories of the domestic novel for the contemporary era in "Kamila Shamsie's Transnational Households" (2023)

³³ For a more comprehensive history of the reception and production of Antigone the figure and *Antigone* the play, see Efimia Karakantza's history of the figure of Antigone, *Antigone* (2022); *Antigone on the World Stage* (2011) edited by Erin Mee and Helene Foley; Maria de Fátima Silva's chapter in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Sophocles* (2017) edited by Rosanna Lauriola and Kyriakos N. Demetriou.

world wars, dictatorships, and police brutality (Krause 18). This expansive adaptability seems to support Slavin's conclusions that as an intertext, *Antigone* suggests a meaningless universality. However, Shamsie specifically places her own adaptation within a particular line of *Antigone* adaptation through her epigraph: "The ones we love . . . are enemies of the state." The lines are taken from Seamus Heaney's 2004 *The Burial at Thebes*. Heaney contextualized his own translation within what he saw as a contemporary parallel where the play and its heroine "were all of a sudden as vital as oxygen masks" (170). From Heaney's perspective:

we were watching a leader, a Creon figure if ever there was one, a law-and-order bossman trying to boss the nations of the world into uncritical agreement with his edicts . . . With the White House and the Pentagon in cahoots, determined to bring the rest of us into line over Iraq. (170)

By opening with a quote from this version, Shamsie adds historical and adaptation context that resists the effects of placing the adaptations' roots "too deep."

When contextualized with modern warfare literature and narratives of the war on terror, the novel's relationship with *Antigone* further lays bare how state victims are produced and in this way the relationship does help the political work of the novel. In his examination of the "the omnipresence of classical Greek stories in modern war literature," Peter Krause argues that "[b]y adapting Sophoclean tragedy, rather than Homeric epic, Shamsie engages with the vital project—at once feminist, anti-imperialist, and anti-Islamophobic of wresting victimhood from the invader and reframing the war as a needlessly violent fiasco" (15). Notably, this is a larger project pushing back against not one strain of imperialist nationalism, but several, particularly rooted in the Global North and literature published in the UK and US in the years during and following the war on

terror.³⁴ Krause further establishes that what the novel is really responding to are the ways in which characters from modern war literature “operate within legal frameworks that permit them to be violent” (20). It is this legal violence that the novel makes visible and critiques. What the adaptation of *Antigone* highlights is that “When [Aneeka] demands to take Parvaiz’s body home, she counteracts the idea, established in Homeric epic and reiterated throughout recent war fiction, that the faceless shapes in the desert are undeserving not only of burial, but also of acknowledgment in narrative” (Krause 20). The adaptation of *Antigone*, when contextualized in this way, strengthens rather than detracts from, the specific critiques and political effects of the novel. In my own analysis of the novel, I see a similar function for its other intertexts.

Inviting Reader Engagement

Several critics have shown the ways the novel’s theatric intertextual form encourages reader engagement and critical work. Naomi Weiss examines the novel’s reimagination of tragic theater devices like the chorus or messenger speech to argue that “Shamsie . . . has captured the affective power of tragedy’s formal possibilities by inviting us, the readers, to participate in her novel’s multitude of voices. In this respect, then, tragic form in *Home Fire* does important political work” (259). Similarly, Rehana Ahmed charts a theatricality in the text that encourages more ethical readings of its Muslim characters by disrupting readings that might otherwise interpret individual as representative. She argues:

By foregrounding the layers of mediation through which we observe the other, the narrative withholds an ‘authentic’ Muslim subject, placing in

³⁴ This tension Krause reads is analogous to and also interwoven in the debates around post-9/11 literature discussed earlier in the chapter.

metaphorical scare quotes the at times familiar, even hackneyed images it offers us, as well as encouraging us to reflect on our own reading practices. (Ahmed 1151)

Both Weiss and Ahmed thus connect the theatricality of the novel to its ethical or political work. The novel's intermediality—its considerations of the intersections of perspective, media, and imagery—also engages the reader and encourages a reflection on witnessing as well as reading practices.

Home Fire might be read as ekphrastic in its employment of virtual, visual intermediality throughout, but particularly in Aneeka's section and the ending. As Mieke Bal defines it, "Ekphrasis is a deployment of visibility within a linguistic discourse. The radical, ontological difference between visual and linguistic utterances is suspended in favor of an examination of the semiotic power of each and their relation to truthful representation" ("Over-Writing" 597). This definition is usefully expanded by Debjani Ganguly to read "the ekphrastic as an intermedial morphological space between print and the visual, the descriptive and the pictorial, the narrative and the image" (*This Thing* 52). For Ganguly, this ekphrastic characteristic is inherent in one form of the contemporary novel: "This too is the burden of the world novel: to morph into forms that are legible to our virtual publics while drawing on all its historic resources as an ever-evolving genre of the present" (*This Thing* 52). *Home Fire* shares this feature with Ganguly's world novel in its attempts to be legible and accessible to its diverse audience.

The appearance of hashtags in the text, alongside television interviews and short social media posts, is a reflection of the overlapping audiences within and outside the world of the novel. The novel primarily uses a form of free indirect third-person narration, focalizing it in each section around a character: Isma, Eamonn, Parvaiz, Aneeka, and Karamat. However, Aneeka's section is significantly different, perhaps

because it is located just after Parvaiz's (unseen) death. It contains several embedded media texts that alternate with Aneeka's grief-stricken perspective. Chapters iii and iv of Aneeka's section look at the impact of Lone's perspective on the media narrative while v and vi recognize the other stories created around Parvaiz's death. Chapter iii begins "[CLOSED CAPTIONING]" and contains a news report and interview with home secretary, Karamat Lone (K. Shamsie, *HF* 192). Weiss argues that this scene, "quite explicitly merges text and live performance . . . just when Home Fire's own merging with its dramatic model comes to the fore" (241). This moment in the text is important then not just for its uniqueness compared to the rest of the narrative style, but also in when it appears. The report that begins the chapter is the first time a reader has confirmation of how Parvaiz dies. In the following interview, Lone announces that Parvaiz's citizenship has been revoked and that he will not be buried in Britain because, as Lone explains, "We will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death" (K. Shamsie, *HF* 193). Chapter iv, is a list of four hashtags each with the phrase "Just started trending" written underneath it. In addition to two tags referencing Lone's nickname (#WOLFPACK) and a misspelled version of Parvaiz's name common in the reporting in this section (#PERVYPASHA), there are two xenophobic tags trending after Lone's interview: "#DONTSULLYOURSIL" and "#GOBACKWHEREYOUCAMEFROM" (K. Shamsie, *HF* 194). The format of these trending tags reflects an aspect of media consumption that dominates contemporary media discourse and the everyday media consumption of many readers.

The narrative shift at the ending exemplifies how the novel uses intermediality to combat globalization's de-historicizing characteristics by drawing attention to a reader's

own role as a global witness. The final section of the novel is given through Karamat's perspective and we follow Aneeka's protest through his consumption of the media reporting it and the ways it comes up in his work as Home Secretary. However, this final scene is an abrupt shift away from the focalized third person narration, to a more universal or maybe descriptive third person. The last scene is a mere two paragraphs introduced with a simple sentence: "Every television channel replayed it endlessly" (K. Shamsie, *HF* 273). The final scene is already completed before it begins as indicated by the brief shift into past tense before continuing on in present. The rest of the scene is thus framed as a looped moment circulating the globe for consumption as evidenced by the "endlessly" descriptor but also in the generalization implied by "*Every*." Because of the novel's own movement through nations and perspectives, this line suggests a global rather than national understanding of the "every." At minimum we might assume a transnational one with channels in Pakistan and the UK replaying the scene. However, with Karamat's public position, there seems to be a high likelihood of "every" having a much larger reach and therefore signification.

Concurrently with the globally signified shifts in narrative perspective, the novel uses embedded media references to further emphasize multiple perspectives, the act of watching, and narrative production. Aneeka's section contains many embedded media forms: hashtags, closed captions, and even a parody Twitter profile. But in these other instances, it is primarily *written* medias being embedded, with the effect of having other voices included in a section otherwise focused on Aneeka's perspective. In contrast, the novel's ending is a television clip ekphrastically imagined and presented as text. As a result, the scene needs direct and repeated reminders of its diegetic medium to avoid

being read as merely a shift in perspective. There are two in the last paragraph of the novel. The first: “One cameraman, a veteran of carnage, stops at the edge of the park, beyond the blast radius as well as he can judge, turns his lens onto the new emptiness of the field” (K. Shamsie, *HF* 274). In this line, the novel turns our attention to the materiality of filming this moment. The “veteran of carnage” descriptor gestures towards the scene’s connection to other images and narratives, both real and imagined. The second reminder interrupts the reunification of Eamonn and Aneeka: “a judder of the camera as the man holding it on his shoulder flinches in expectation of a blast” (K. Shamsie, *HF* 274). The narration not only reminds the readers of how this scene is mediated by introducing a medium specific characteristic, a shaking screen, but it also re-inserts the cameraman to emphasize the many layers between reader and characters. In effect, through its ekphrastic production of the scene, the narration assigns readers a dual position as global watchers and individual readers.

The narration solidifies a reader’s role as one of the watchers of the replayed scene by anonymizing the characters. The reader is placed in the position of being a stranger to the scene, possibly located anywhere in the world, while simultaneously being able to recognize Aneeka and Eamonn from contextual details. So, Eamonn is: “A man in a navy blue shirt” who calls out for a woman (K. Shamsie, *HF* 273). Aneeka is similarly nameless, recognizable through her position next to the coffin, but also defined in relation to Eamonn as “the woman he’s come for.” The effect of this shift is to occupy the position on the one hand, of an unknown global viewer, consuming the circulating camera footage, and, on the other, of an informed reader who has been inside Eamonn and Aneeka’s perspectives in previous sections of the novel. This is not necessarily an

unusual experience for a reader. In just this novel, each perspective is experienced in the context of having read the previous characters' sections. However, because the characters are not named in this moment, this is a particularly jarring shift, perhaps the most abrupt transition in the novel. In one scene change, Eamonn's character and identity, developed over the course of the novel, is stripped down to three identifying characteristics: man, blue shirt, explosives—maybe four characteristics, if we include his reclassification at the end as one of the lovers. This drastic change draws attention to itself and, as a result, a reader is positioned to reflect upon this contradiction between familiarity and ignorance. Who does Eamonn become when framed in this minimal context? How might this replayed recording be re-contextualized outside this moment? The answers aren't provided, but room for the questions is created.

Finally, the novel further heightens the attention to the production of narrative through its refusal to stay at the level of the symbolic. In their reunification as “the man” and “the woman,” Eamonn and Aneeka are transformed into, if not universal, then a representation of a couple unmarked by the specifics of locality. They are reduced to symbol alone: “For a moment they are two lovers in a park, under an ancient tree, sun-dappled, beautiful, and at peace” (K. Shamsie, *HF* 274). This symbolism is set up to be fleeting. While an endearing image of the two people, the ominous “for a moment” interrupts any sense of real beauty or peace the novel might otherwise leave. There is, instead, a lingering sense that they cannot remain as symbols, anonymous and hopeful. It is, therefore, the unseen image that is most powerful in this ending. I agree with Nasia Anam that the unexploded bomb at the close of the novel serves to suggest that the most powerful violence is not the bomb itself but Karamat's abuse of power (“Loose Canons”

19). However, I am uncertain if I agree with her assertion that here “the act of narration has failed” (Anam, “Loose Canons” 19). While her characterization of “the contemporary global anglophone novel as a shattered form” is a productive means for considering the challenges of a form like the novel with “totalizing impulses” (Anam, “Loose Canons” 20), the narration has clearly set up the plot. There is enough contextual (and arguably intertextual) information to know that their death is imminent. The narration has stopped, yes, but I’m not sure it failed. Its conclusion is unrecorded, unspoken, unseen, but still communicated. In leaving the death unwritten, the novel suggests, perhaps, its own participation in the same repetition of this frozen image as the televisions within the diegetic layer of the novel. It is an attempt to keep the boundary between reader and watcher perspectives blurred through a chain of readers (perhaps endlessly) encountering this scene. But even without considering the layers of mediation for the novel itself as a global product, the unfinished scene, in its incompleteness and attention to its own production, asks a reader to finish the thought, to reflect on the dual positionality of specific knowledge and global interrelation. *Home Fire* thus imagines a critical reflectivity that reveals the mediation inherent in stories that circulate globally. By drawing attention to multiple perspectives, the act of watching, and the production of these narratives, the novel creates space for readers to participate in such critical examinations.

Revealing Unequal Global Networks: Shamsie as Author Figure

Shamsie faces some of the same framing as a national voice as Adichie does and we can see a similar shift in how reviewers and critics categorize her. For example: “Shamsie is one of a handful of acclaimed ‘Muslim’ writers who combine their literary

craft with journalistic writing for the British press, which positions them as public intellectuals and perhaps, uncomfortably, as ‘native informants’” (Ahmed 1147). Though interestingly, perhaps because of the differences of English’s history in Nigeria and Pakistan, or due the differences in their relative influence or positions on the global stage, more attention is paid in criticism and reviews to Shamsie’s relationship with audience and her relative privileges. This suggests that the global author figure is influenced or constructed in part due to factors of national identity and national context despite the ability of a global novel to find multiple audiences.

Home Fire provides an avenue, as Rehana Ahmed suggests, for thinking through Shamsie’s own privilege. Ahmed reads the novel as directly resisting specific readings of British Muslims and encouraging readers to reflect upon their own reading and thinking practices. She finds an uneasiness in the text, a reflection of Shamsie’s “peripheral position in relation to the characters and community she renders” (Ahmed 1158). She further suggests that:

the difficult encounters between the characters, the breakdown in communication which marks them, also points us to the uneasy position occupied by a narrative authored by an elite cosmopolitan Muslim that attempts to translate working-class Muslim lives to a middle-class white secular reader. (Ahmed 1158)

Ahmed here draws attention to both Shamsie’s own precarious position in relation to her characters as well as one type of reader. But it’s impossible to narrow down Shamsie’s audience to just one.

Shamsie draws attention to multiple audiences for her work in interviews like the one I began the chapter with, printed by *Herald Magazine* in 2018. In that same interview, Shamsie discusses the unpredictability of selling books:

you never know where you'll find your audiences. Of my novels, *A God in Every Stone* has sold more copies in India than anywhere else; *Salt and Saffron* sold more in Italy – in translation – than anywhere else; *Burnt Shadows* was on the bestseller list in Norway – again, in translation – for weeks and weeks. You write a novel, you send it out into the world and there's always some surprise in the responses it finds in different places. (qtd. in Alam et al.)

The attention Shamsie draws to the global nature of her work suggests that we should be cautious about limiting discussions of her novels' reception to one audience. Despite this, it is necessary to look at the questions she's asked in interviews and the ways she's framed in reviews to better understand how Shamsie as an author figure has evolved. To some extent, the shift is purposeful on Shamsie's part. She chooses the content of her novels and other public writing. We can note in both, as Amina Yaqin does, that "Although Shamsie continues to be a publicly engaged intellectual, in her later novels the task of being a spokesperson for Pakistan is put to one side as she focuses on the art of representation" (236). This is evidenced in the wide variety of characters in *Burnt Shadows* especially. But I would suggest that in *Home Fire*, the focus is less on "the art of representation" and more on drawing in particular audiences and highlighting layers of complexity in the global human experience.

The shift away from being read as a primarily Pakistani author may also be in the growing attention drawn to the inequalities within publishing itself as it relates to publishing in specific languages and different national markets. Shamsie herself recognizes this unequal development of the industry in the translations of her novels: "I know most readers in Pakistan can't read my work because I write in English and, of course, I feel a sense of loss as a result" (qtd. in Alam et al.). However, she goes on to emphasize: "It's not a problem particular to English language writers. If you write in Pashto or Sindhi or indeed in any of the languages of Pakistan, most readers in the

country will not be able to read your work” (qtd. in Alam et al.). The only solution Shamsie sees is “a translation industry within the country that translates Pakistan’s writers into as many different languages of Pakistan as possible” (qtd. in Alam et al.). This is not a simple solution though.³⁵ Shamsie further expounds on the effects of literary market on the accessibility of her novels to different audiences:

Whenever questions of translation arise with my work, I’m aware of how sad and absurd it is that my books are translated into more than 20 languages – from French to Chinese to Arabic to Marathi – but none of them is translated into Urdu, let alone Punjabi, Balochi, Hindko, etc. Of course, I’m delighted that they find homes in all those other languages but I wish they’d find more homes in the languages that I grew up surrounded by. (qtd. in Alam et al.)

Here, Shamsie draws attention to the limits of writing in English, but also the inherent limitations in a publishing industry that is driven by profit. Decisions about translation and profitability are built on models that developed from historically inequitable global networks where certain language audiences, for example French, are seen as more profitable for translations of Shamsie’s novels than audiences in languages she was born hearing. This suggests that, ultimately, it is not only the forms, styles, or themes of Shamsie’s novels that draw attention to histories of globalization, but also their material realities or histories. By drawing this attention, her novels ask their audiences to reflect upon their own role in the creation of these global anglophone narratives and the author figures that function to categorize them. It asks them to imagine and recognize their own global positionalities as readers.

³⁵ The translation industry and its relationship to literature is complex and linked to the ongoing debates about global anglophone as I mentioned briefly in my introduction as well as categorizations of World Literature. See also Emily Apter *Against World Literature* (2013); Rebecca Walkowitz *Born Translated* (2015)

CHAPTER 4

GLOBAL STYLE AND NOVEL REPRESENTATION: ZADIE SMITH

In the foreword to her 2018 essay collection, *Feel Free*, Smith reaches out directly to her readers: “My hope is for a reader who, like the author, often wonders how free she really is, and who takes it for granted that reading involves all the same liberties and exigencies as writing” (*Feel Free* xii). Here, she is inviting an audience who recognizes the “liberties and exigencies” inherent in reading and writing. In doing so, she de-emphasizes the divide between authorship and audience. The effect is similar to those I have discussed in previous chapters; a reader is asked to think critically about making connections over a distance, within the confines of the contemporary moment. Smith looks for a reader with whom she can share an approach to the world. She looks to build a community of reader/writers. Though this collection was published after the novels I examine in this chapter, this sentiment highlights key concepts for reading Smith and her work.

In the first half of this dissertation, I explored the line between postcolonial and global as it exists in fiction that traverses the world and that is by authors whose lives reflect some of the migrancy of their characters. In my analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, I suggested that a primary difference between postcolonial and global anglophone authorship was in how the audience/author relationship was structured as a co-creation. Then, I looked to Kamila Shamsie’s fiction and nonfiction to highlight how the intertextuality of her novels works to ask their readers to consider the construction and reception of global narratives. In this chapter, I look more closely at the alignment of author figure, novel marketing, and audience through two of Zadie Smith’s novels, her

debut *White Teeth* (2000) and her fourth novel, *NW* (2012). Even more than Adichie or Shamsie, Smith works to consider the relationship between novelistic style and the representation of material and affective realities. I suggest this concern is driven by Smith's own desire to connect with readers and she thus exemplifies how novel style can be global.³⁶

Like Shamsie's and Adichie's, Zadie Smith's work is well-known on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond. When *White Teeth* was published at the turn of the century, its author was praised alongside it. Smith was touted as a fresh voice for the new millennium.³⁷ A graduate of Cambridge, Smith lived up to this persona, building a career as a writer and literary critic. In addition to *White Teeth* and *NW*, Smith has published four additional novels: *The Autograph Man* (2002), *On Beauty* (2005), *Swing Time* (2016), and *The Fraud* (2023). She has also published one play, *The Wife of Willesden* (2021), and several pieces of short fiction, primarily in *The New Yorker*. Many of these shorter works were collected in her *Grand Union: Stories* (2019). She is also a prolific nonfiction writer with essays published in *The New Yorker*, *New York Review of Books*, and the *Guardian*. She has three collections where she republished and published some of

³⁶ Though I am focused primarily on Smith's professional publications, a connection might be made here between Smith's desire to connect and contemporary publishing's reliance on "author platforms" that are used to connect audience and author. These "platforms" as defined by writer and researcher Kim Wilkins are "a digital authorial identity that can be leveraged to build markets and increase sales" (68). More about the use of platforms like social media can be found in Simone Murray *The Digital Literary Sphere* (2018); *Literary Careers in the Modern Era* (2015) edited by Guy Davidson and Nicola Evans; Angus Phillips and Giles Clark *Inside Book Publishing* 6th ed (2019)

³⁷ I discuss this more in-depth with an analysis of a sampling of *White Teeth* reviews in the next section.

her nonfiction: *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (2009), *Feel Free: Essays* (2018), and *Intimations* (2020). Alongside working as a novelist and writer, Smith worked as a professor in the Creative Writing program at NYU from 2010 until 2020.

In this chapter, I focus on Smith's authorship as it relates to the global novel form. Smith circles back and forth between the global and the local in her writing. In her fiction, we see her regularly returning to the same corner of London, whose postcode is partially reflected in the title for *NW*, to understand this local/global dynamic. Her attention and interest in aesthetics is thus tied to this concern with place. We see this first with *White Teeth*, which tries to represent everything in layer upon layer of incomplete, circular, but miraculously connected histories, people, and objects. I suggest that the novel's style along with its intermediality in its ending are a means of moving beyond the postcolonial frameworks in which both Smith and her debut novel are read by media and literary criticism. Next, I examine *NW*, where Smith continues to link place to novel style, but in experimental ways that attempt to build community between author and reader. I read the style of *NW* as evidence of Smith's own shifting concerns about authorship and audience that center around ethically witnessing and making connections in a decontextualized, globalized world. I conclude by considering Smith's current status as an established and celebrated author. Though her status seems assured, her enduring popularity is reliant on a continued audience and relevance.

***White Teeth*: Postcolonial Style in Transition**

White Teeth was published in 2000 to a large variety of media and critical attention: "Zadie Smith was celebrated as the poster girl for contemporary British fiction; her novel was reflective of a celebratory and almost harmonious form of multicultural

engagement at the turn of the millennium” (Shaw 56). The reviews and accolades fell alongside similar lines: the novel’s attention to multiculturalism, its humor, its diversity of voices, its youthful vigor, and, on the critical side, its dense, lengthy style. In general, the novel’s reception was unusual. As Marie-Pierre Pouly notes in her analysis of *White Teeth*’s reception: “the immediate inclusion of her first work in the literary canon . . . appears to contradict the logics of recognition within the pure pole of the literary field, as does the mass readership of her work” (21). While recognition in the canon usually takes time and prestige, *White Teeth*, and by extension Smith herself, were thrust into it. This, in part, seems due to the ways the book, author, and historical moment converged. The popularity of multiculturalism in the literary market at the time seems key. As Camilla Palmer writes, “At the turn of this century, multiculturalism was being marketed as a product to be sold . . . [and] Smith, as a symbol of multicultural Britain and its literature, embodied and personified the ideology of multiculturalism” (159). What the reviews and interviews show is that this multicultural narrative about *White Teeth*, among others, is intricately connected to those of Smith as author as well as her author figure or developing name brand. These narratives of her author figure and novel reinforce each other.

Narratives of Smith’s Debut

Reviews are overwhelmingly interested in the diversity of the novel’s cast of characters and its representation of multicultural twentieth-century London: “White Teeth is an impressive debut with a bite that sinks into the complexities of an increasing diversity of all communities of people of color” (Betts 37). The credit for the effective representation of this theme is given not just to the novel, as expected, but also directly to

Smith: “Smith’s real talent emerges not just in her voice but in her ear, which enables her to inhabit characters of different generations, races and mind-sets” (Quinn 8). Similarly: “Smith has an excellent ear for dialect and a wonderfully descriptive sense in the way she presents the multiethnic underclass” (Hoover 1437). Arguably, this element itself has contributed most strongly to *White Teeth’s* enduring reputation, as evidenced by its inclusion in *Time’s* “All Time Best Novels List” in 2010 which touted: “This may be the first novel ever written that truly feels at home in our borderless, globalized, intermarried, post-colonial age” (Grossman, “White Teeth”). This description of the novel aligns with the early marketing and narrative around Smith herself. There is, as Palmer writes, “a marketing synchrony . . . between Smith’s own biographical details and the subject matter of her novel” (158).

The marketing for Smith’s novel relied heavily on her own identity as the London-born daughter of a Jamaican mother and English father. As Kristian Shaw writes, “The process of multicultural marketing concerns an extensive focus on the background, identity, and, most importantly, “authenticity” of the author in relation to their works” and the marketing for *White Teeth* was no exception” (57). Critics have commented in particular on the changing headshots accompanying the marketing of the novel over time. The one accompanying the hardcover edition, and consequently much of the media surrounding its publication, is a headshot of Smith, head angled, hair pulled back, angular thick-framed glasses, unsmiling. Dominic Head analyzes the change in headshots between the hardback and paperback editions of the novel. He notes the shift from a “Afro hairstyle, and the complexion which betokens a mixed-race identity” to “straight dark hair” and “an indeterminate ethnicity” (Head 106). He notes the ways this shift

speaks to Smith's "substantive hybridized identity" (Head 106). In other words, "Smith's own ethnicity was (and is) used as a selling point in the marketing of her author-image" (Palmer 160). Both Smith and the novel are described as fitting for the (multicultural) historical moment, and the description of the novel's popularity and audiences further strengthens this reading.

In their emphasis on Smith's audiences, reviews draw attention to its unexpected popularity. At least two American reviews of the novel celebrate its appearance in the hands of a more youthful audience, emphasizing the novel's difference from its similarly popular peers. In introducing the novel to *Vogue's* readers, Rhoda Koenig opens:

When you see teenage girls on the bus deep in a new hardcover novel without much sex or romance, when you see that same novel has been praised by every English critic and has popped up on the best-seller list its first week out, you know something is happening. (292)

Anthony Quinn's piece for the *New York Times Book Review* similarly praises the more serious content of the novel. He emphasizes the novel's uniqueness compared to other popular "Bridget Jones wannabe" comic novels "in vogue among young British women" because of "its very willingness to look beyond the stock in trade of boyfriends and weight problems" (Quinn 8). The implication is that at least some of the novel's audience is unexpectedly young in light of its themes, or perhaps, that it's unexpectedly popular in light of its established literariness.

This is the same paradox applied to Smith herself throughout reviews and articles of her debut. She is regularly referenced by her age, her youth emphasized in many, if not most, reviews and interviews. For example, Rhoda Koenig's review of the novel in *Vogue* is accompanied by the headshot of Smith already discussed and a blurb in white text on a red background: "London's Hot New Author is 24" (292). The same photo, but

larger, accompanies Sarah Lyall's interview with Smith, published alongside Anthony Quinn's review of the novel in the *New York Times Book Review*. Here the photo is captioned, "Zadie Smith, who wrote "White Teeth" three years ago, when she was 21" (Lyall 8). This blurb focuses even more on Smith's youth by its insistence on naming the age she wrote the novel rather than her age at its publication. And it is, of course, her youthful perspective that is emphasized in reviews of the novel. *White Teeth* is called "second-generation Rushdieism" (King 116) though Smith's own style is often emphasized: "Twenty-five-year-old Smith's ambitious, busy, comic portrait of immigrants in late twentieth-century London owes much to Salman Rushdie in terms of style, but the freshness and youthful vigour of the writing is all her own" (Perry 18). Both reviews emphasize Smith's age while simultaneously tying her to the postcolonial literary establishment represented by Rushdie. Smith and her novel are presented as a mix of young and serious, new and literary. Author figure and novel are aligned as one media narrative.

Not all reviews, however, were effuse with praise. The style, in particular, drew criticism, with some assigning blame to the novel itself and others to Smith's skills or personality. While some read the novel as merely "a restless hybrid of voices, tones and textures" (Quinn 7), others read it more negatively: "The plot is dense and the style didactic, redeemed by flashes of lucid dialogue" (Longmore 47). The density and length came up often as it was described in a range of ways from an "occasionally sprawling novel" (Perry 18), to "overreaching [as] a natural consequence of Smith's ambition" (Quinn 8), to "more diffuse than she can fully carry off" (Sandhu 21). Some of these critiques are sandwiched in-between praise like Bruce King's review for *World*

Literature Today: “Although brilliantly written, *White Teeth* feels hollow. It is too long for the characters to be merely amusing, and I found myself reacting against many of their stupidities” (117). These critiques were taken to their extreme in James Wood’s well-studied review for *The New Republic*.

Wood sees the novel as representative of a problematic contemporary style he calls “hysterical realism” where “Storytelling has become a kind of grammar” (41). In other words, description or information are “how they[these novels] structure and drive themselves on. The conventions of realism are not being abolished but, on the contrary, exhausted, and overworked” (J. Wood 41). Wood reads *White Teeth* as an example of this form of contemporary novel, concerned with information, detail, and realism that, to him, reaches a level of caricature. In addition to the style, the form is also critiqued: “An endless web is all they need for meaning. Each of these novels is excessively centripetal. The different stories all intertwine, and double and triple on themselves” (J. Wood 42). Though Wood sees redeeming qualities in *White Teeth*, he ultimately is using it to critique a pattern of contemporary novels. What I think is missing from Wood’s critique is a recognition that the density of realism, humor, and circularity, contribute to the novel’s political work and align with the implicit marketable values of its author figure. What *White Teeth* shows is that providing excess layers of detail comes close to representing the multifaceted ways colonialism impacts the present in both affective and material ways. Influenced by postmodernism, and with attention to the practices of reading, the style of *White Teeth* reflects its themes and its production. To apply Sarah Lyall’s description of Smith to *White Teeth*, it is “spiky in manner, striking in appearance and very, very clever” (8). In particular, I want to suggest it is the cleverness of the novel,

and its ability to make its readers feel included in the cleverness, that contributes to the feeling of alignment between Smith as author figure and *White Teeth*. The novel works to attract and engage the very audiences that aligns best with Smith's author figure (young, clever, culturally savvy, literarily inclined).

Postcolonial Style in White Teeth

Scholarship on *White Teeth* has analyzed its peculiar narrator from many angles, with a particular focus on how to read the narrative tone. Most relevant to my argument is work done to link the narrative voice to a reader's experience. In her analysis of the diasporic space of the novel, Elif Toprak Sakiz argues that "the narrator inclusively addresses a global audience" as evidenced by the use of second person pronouns, diverse cultural references, and use of specific dialectic English words or phrases (7). In other words, their existence throughout the novel, "show[s] that the reader is apt to understand these specific references and share this hybrid experience with the characters (Toprak Sakiz 7). A reader is incorporated in the global nature of the text. However, it is not enough to create this multicultural, global space. The novel works to represent the difficulties of this space, the ways it is impacted by history. These layers of history impact the characters and encourage a more critical reading of multiculturalism or the postcolonial present by a reader. This aligns with Ulrike Tancke's own assessment of the text; she finds that the narrator's interventions "convey a complex and ideologically challenging message, which asks readers to critically assess one's own, commonly held beliefs and widely accepted convictions" (Tancke 30). In what follows, I suggest it is not only the narratorial comments, but also the style and framing that encourages this action from a reader.

It is clear from the novel's references and intertextual moments that in addition to being very metaphorically layered the novel is very reference heavy. The style and level of detail also reflect postcolonial reality. A reality where "[q]uotidian relationships and interactions are built on colonial nostalgia, historical amnesia, and the supposed superiority of whiteness" (Kershaw 869). The novel continuously places plot as a secondary priority to descriptive detail as exemplified by the Glenard Oak scene. In this moment in the chapter, Irie is searching for Millat to warn him about the school administration's coming raid. It is easy to imagine this scene in a different novel taking place over the course of a few sentences or a couple paragraphs. In *White Teeth*, this scene takes place over several pages because the narrator is focused on describing the experience of being at the school and its geography. Even just looking at the pages, the level of detail can be seen in the density and length of the paragraphs. That stylistic choice slows down a reader, makes them work their way through the details to get to the plot, which isn't revealed until two pages later where it is listed as one of the many things happening on in the grounds:

Nerds by the pond, checking out frog sex,
Posh girls in the music department singing French rounds, speaking pig
Latin, going on grape diets, suppressing lesbian instincts,
Fat boys in the PE corridor, wanking,
High-strung girls outside the language block, reading murder casebooks,
Indian kids playing cricket with tennis rackets on the football ground,
(Smith, *WT* 243)³⁸

The hierarchy of characters and plot are flattened, turned into a list of observations. The first five are of categorized groups rather than individuals. The tense is in motion,

³⁸ Further citations for *White Teeth* are similarly indicated with the abbreviation *WT*

incomplete. Each group is assigned a location in the school's geography and interrupted in very specific actions. Then five named characters and their actions are added to this list, finally getting a reader closer to the plot of the scene. This delay deemphasizes the main characters. They are equally part of the school's geography:

Irie Jones looking for Millat Iqbal,
Scott Breeze and Lisa Rainbow in the toilets, fucking,
Joshua Chalfen, a goblin, an elder, and a dwarf, behind the science block
playing Goblins and Gorgons. (Smith, *WT* 243)

The general sentence structure and patterns are maintained in the list; naming specific people rather than groups is the only change. Two of these characters are not mentioned again, Scott and Lisa. Their inclusion further muddles what might otherwise be a spotlight on Irie and Millat, members of the two key families in the novel. There is no hint that Joshua Chalfen and his family will soon hold a key place in the plot except perhaps that he is the only named member of his group, the rest identified by their chosen fantasy characters. Though this flattening is temporary, the narrator soon focuses more primarily on Irie, Millat, and Joshua's specific interaction, it is a move that specifically mirrors the thematic structure of the novel, circular and dense with details. It is postcolonial not only in theme or content, but in style.

A related, but different approach to match theme and form is in how the novel narrates history. Rather than proceeding linearly, the novel makes space to unpack the connections between peoples and histories. The school itself, Glenard Oak, serves as an example of how colonial stories are repackaged by the institutions that have much to gain by sanitizing them. It is another example of the historical amnesia that Kershaw sees in both the novel and reality: "as multicultural as London appears, its built environment still contains symbols of Britain's colonial power" (877). When Irie and Millat are caught, the

headmaster decides a fitting punishment is a forced study group with Joshua Chalfen. An opportunity to strengthen their grades and, as the headmaster sees it, be in “a stable environment” (Smith, *WT* 252). He frames this opportunity/punishment as “very much in the history, the spirit, the whole *ethos* of Glenard Oak” and its founder (Smith, *WT* 252). At the moment the headmaster says this, the narrative shifts to provide space to unpack the headmaster’s claims, thereby inviting a reader to do the same. This scene might be considered one example of what Sarah Ilott sees as the use of humor to reveal power structures in the novel. She writes, “The perspective switching engendered through the destabilizing effects of narrative humor allows readers the critical distance necessary to reflect on the power relations affecting the (mis)management and (mis)representation of British multiculturalism” (Ilott 170). The use of irony and humor in the passages following the headmaster’s statement, provide the space for a reader to question the reality of the novel’s multicultural present. The narrative begins by introducing Glenard through the school’s framing of him as a “kindly Victorian benefactor” but the ironic tone of the passage immediately suggests a secondary reading of the character (Smith, *WT* 252).

What follows this introduction is a description of one way the school frames its history:

The official party line stated that Glenard had donated the money for the original building out of a devoted interest in the social improvement of the disadvantaged. Rather than *workhouse*, the official PTA booklet described it as a “shelter, workplace, and educational institute” used in its time by a mixture of English and Caribbean people. According to the PTA booklet, the founder of Glenard Oak was an educational philanthropist. But then, according to the PTA booklet, “post-class aberration consideration period” was a suitable replacement for the word *detention*. (Smith, *WT* 252)

The replacement of “workhouse” with more palatable words is made ridiculous with the comparison to the replacement of “detention.” Further, it suggests an underlying

uneasiness with the history of Glenard, which turns out to be both representative of larger colonial histories and very personal for Irie's family.

The next few pages of the novel explain the evolution of Glenard's decision to fund the workhouse, whose building would eventually become Glenard Oak. Its presentation in the novel satirizes patronizing, benevolent colonialist narratives. As the novel explains, the scheme was inspired by Glenard's experience "as a successful colonial who had made a pretty sum in Jamaica, farming tobacco, or rather overseeing great tracts of land where tobacco was being farmed" (Smith, *WT* 252). From Glenard's perspective: "One was impressed by the Jamaican's faith but despairing of his work ethic and education. Vice versa, one admired the Englishman's work ethic and education but despaired of his poorly kept faith" (Smith, *WT* 253). Therefore, he decided to fund a tobacco factory in London that would employ three hundred Jamaicans as well as Englishmen, to work together. When Glenard dies in the 1907 Jamaica earthquake, his experiment falls apart, leaving the men who traveled from Jamaica stranded and unemployed. The narrative concludes of this history:

All in all, then, the headmaster was wrong: Glenard could not be said to have passed on any great edifying beacon to future generations. A legacy is not something you can give or take by choice, and there are no certainties in the sticky business of inheritance. Much though it may have dismayed him, Glenard's influence turned out to be personal, not professional or educational: it ran through people's blood and the blood of their families; it ran through three generations of immigrants who could feel both abandoned and hungry even when in the bosom of their families in front of a mighty feast. (Smith, *WT* 255)

Glenard Oak then, in its revision of the Glenard narrative, ignores the true legacy of its founder. The novel spends space expounding on this history to provide a more layered understanding of the setting, but also to build its multifaceted critique of colonialism, and, in particular, the history of colonial education. It accomplishes this through its

humor or irony, but also by simply making space for multiple perspectives, the effect of which is its dense, sprawling plot and narrative voice.

White Teeth's Style Shift

Throughout, *White Teeth* provides primarily postcolonial critiques and uses its excess description to enact them. This continues through the ending, but in addition, the novel takes on a larger consideration of audience and enacts its own form of intermediality. Like *Home Fire*, *White Teeth* relies upon visual or television tropes to shift attention to a reader's own witnessing. As Archie himself exclaims at the start of the final chapter, "It's just like on TV!" (Smith, *WT* 431). But further, *White Teeth* draws on the language of marketing to emphasize its own constructed-ness and ultimately contribute to its metanarrative as clever and able to connect with a wide range of audiences and perspectives.

Smith's novel ends with a scene of violence. The climax of the scene begins with the phrase: "Every moment happens twice: inside and outside, and they are two different histories" (Smith, *WT* 441).³⁹ Samad and Archie realize simultaneously that the scientist working with Marcus and Magid is the same Nazi doctor Archie supposedly killed in the desert, bonding the two men for the past fifty years. The narrative moves back and forth between what individuals are seeing until Irie notices that: "Millat is reaching like Pande;

³⁹ This is not the first time this line appears in the novel. Smith also introduces an earlier scene with this same phrase (*WT* 299). In that scene, Irie's great-grandmother, Ambrosia, is sexually assaulted by Glenard. Moments into this assault, the 1907 earthquake occurs, Glenard is killed by a falling statue, and Ambrosia goes into labor, giving birth alone to Irie's grandmother Hortense. The repetition of this phrase here is another example of the novel's formal attempts to engage with the plurality and circularity of history. To emphasize the postcolonial view of histories versus History.

and Archie has seen TV and he has seen real life and he knows what such a reach means, so he stands. So he moves” (Smith, *WT* 442). Time slows in this moment as history (Pande), television and reality (Archie’s war experiences) are blurred. Archie synthesizes knowledge from his own experiences of all three to act, to put himself “between Millat Iqbal’s decision and his target” (Smith, *WT* 442). And then the narrative moves to a flashback, the explanation of what was not shown the last time Archie and the doctor were in the desert, when the novel’s last gun went off. After a few pages of the past, the novel returns to the present, picking up from its cliff hanger: “So Archie is there, there in the trajectory of the bullet, about to do something unusual, even for TV: save the same man twice” (Smith, *WT* 447). The novel draws attention to its own fictionality and its relationship with other storytelling mediums. It further provides enough detail that the scene could be imagined on screen as well, though it asserts its own constructed difference: “What a performance. If it were TV you would hear the saxophone around now; the credits would be rolling” (Smith, *WT* 447). This scene draws attention to a reader’s participation in watching the scene unfold by its shift into the second person and into meta narration or critique, as suggested by the evaluative possibilities for “What a performance.” The readers are further addressed through the “endgames” or glimpses into the future of the characters that the narrator presents.

Like Benjamin Bergholtz, I read the “endgames” of the novel as working to engage a reader and highlight some of the text’s own paradoxes. As he writes, by “highlight[ing] *White Teeth*’s paradoxical relationship both to a market . . . and to fundamentalism” the novel’s narration “induces the sort of dialectical reflection and respect for ambiguity from its readers that is largely absent from its characters”

(Bergholtz 545). The novel wraps up the storylines for the members of the Jones and Iqbal families by addressing which audiences might want to know different things. For example, “The same focus group who picked out the color of this room . . . would no doubt check the box that asks to see all these things played to their finish” (Smith, *WT* 448). Or: “And is it young professional women aged eighteen to thirty-two who would like a snapshot seven years hence of Irie, Joshua, and Hortense sitting by a Caribbean sea” (Smith, *WT* 448). The effect of these endgames is to draw the readers’ attention further to the artifice, to the ways they are called and marketed to. To draw attention to their own participation in the process while simultaneously building the reputation of the author as seeing through the veil, of being knowledgeable and authentic. Or at least, assign these attributes to the narrative voice: “But surely to tell these tall tales and others like them would be to spread the myth, the wicked lie, that the past is always tense and the future, perfect” (Smith, *WT* 448). The narrative demands an acceptance of ambiguity even as it caters to a comfort with finality.

This mirrors the forced ambiguity of the plot’s end. As Peter Childs and James Green point out in their analysis of *White Teeth*, the diegesis of the ending is also ambiguous. The mouse’s escape is “ambivalent” because “after all, the mouse’s future is, to some degree, already encoded – but its triumphant getaway leaves the novel’s ending crucially unresolved” (Childs and Green 42). There is no grand solution, no tidy ending possible, regardless of what the endgames try to achieve. As the novel suggests, “neither the social engineering of multicultural experimentation nor discourses rooted in religious or racial purity will be adequate” (Childs and Green 42). These elements certainly contribute not only to the novel’s reputation and its continued appearance on syllabi and

best lists, but also to Smith's own reputation which has continued to grow and change in the twenty-plus years since *White Teeth*'s debut.

Thinking Through the Global Anglophone in *NW*

Smith's 2016 novel, *Swing Time*, may seem to be the more obvious choice for a discussion of globality because its content and form reflect more conventional markers of it. However, though it appears to be a more national or local novel because of its exclusive setting in London, *NW* imagines the work of forming global connections through its form. It is also the novel contemporary to Smith's work to establish herself as a literary critic.⁴⁰ Between *White Teeth* and *NW*, Smith continued to publish personal essays and two additional novels, *The Autograph Man* (2002) and *On Beauty* (2005). The critical and nonfiction essays from this period reveal an author engaged in considerations of form, as well as the interconnected roles of writer and reader or author and audience. In 2009, she published her first collection of nonfiction essays in *Changing my Mind: Occasional Essays*. This collection reveals a thoughtful author, attentive to the relationship between reader, publisher, author, and book. Reading *NW* alongside this discourse illustrates how it disrupts expectations around novel form, continually drawing in a reader to reflect on the lines between local and global community. This is further enhanced with the novel's murder plot, which ultimately questions the ability of fiction to represent, to know beyond the immediate and specific. This shift in Smith's fiction and

⁴⁰ Smith is, of course, not the first author to establish herself as a literary critic. What makes this transition particularly interesting are the ways that it coincides with other changes in publishing like the rise of the author platform. The relevance for my argument is that we can see her author figure being shaped by the overlapping and reinforcing considerations of writer, reader, and novel style in each of the three genres she is writing in: essay, criticism, fiction.

nonfiction writing aligns with the shift in her author figure from national or postcolonial voice to global anglophone authority. Ultimately, *NW*, perhaps even more so than *White Teeth*, challenges readers to consider the role of language and literature in imagining the possibilities of or for connection more globally.

Smith's Focus on the Reader

Changing my Mind is primarily composed of essays and literary criticism that were previously published or presented. Even though Smith claims in the foreword that “I didn’t realize I’d written [the book] until someone pointed it out to me” (*Changing* xiii), its organization reveals Smith’s critical interests: Reading, Being, Seeing, Feeling, Remembering. It is this first section, “Reading” that I find most illuminating for reading *NW*. This section contains six essays that were published primarily in *The Guardian* and *The New York Review of Books*. In each essay, Smith examines the role of a reader from a number of perspectives. For example, herself as a young reader, Forster’s relationship with his audience, or the contrasting ideal readers for Barthes and Nabokov.⁴¹ It is this last example that best highlights the relationship of reader and author figure in *NW*.

In “Rereading Barthes and Nabokov,” Smith juxtaposes the approaches to author and reader established by these two greats of literary criticism. She insightfully defines the ideal reader of each, naming Barthes’s ideal reader “a producer” and Nabokov’s ideal reader for his novels as “something resembling a butterfly collector, with an interest both empirical and aesthetic” (Smith, *Changing* 51). Smith ultimately rejects both of these positions. For her, the freedom offered to a reader by Barthes is “isolating, because it

⁴¹ Respectively: “*Their Eyes Were Watching God: What does Soulful Mean?*”, “E.M. Forster, Middle Manager”, and “Rereading Barthes and Nabokov”

jettisons the very idea of communication, of any possible genuine link between the person who writes and the person who reads” (Smith, *Changing* 57). Instead, she tries to establish “a cautious faith in the difficult partnership between reader and writer, that discrete struggle to reveal an individual’s experience of the world through the unstable medium of language” (Smith, *Changing* 57). Here Smith establishes both her own ideal (a link of connection between reader and writer) but also hints at the problem of representation between language and reality that underlays *White Teeth* and comes to the forefront of *NW*.

This relationship between form and representation is also explored to an extent in perhaps the most well-known of the articles republished in *Changing my Mind*, Smith’s 2008 review of *Netherland* by Joseph O’Neill and *Remainder* by Tom McCartney, “Two Directions for the Novel.”⁴² In it, Smith examines literary history and form by juxtaposing the two novels and what she reads as their differing philosophies of the novel. She reads *Netherland* as “an anxious novel” built upon a history of realism, specifically lyrical realism, that is not sure language can authentically represent the reality of identity (Smith, *Changing* 74). In contrast, she reads *Remainder* as focused on materiality and an emptying of symbolism and authenticity, an avant-garde that doesn’t totally reflect upon itself and its own long literary history. She finds a continuum between these two approaches, but points to some of the downsides of lyrical realism in particular: “Everything must be made literary. Nothing escapes” (Smith, *Changing* 80). In his reading of the article, Christopher Holmes argues that Smith attempts to advocate for

⁴² This review was originally published as “Two Paths for the Novel” in the *New York Review of Books* and retitled for *Changing My Mind*.

novels that permit thinking through them. He reads Smith as critiquing *Neverland*, for its philosophical failure: “Smith’s critiques *Netherland* not for its emptiness, but the very idea of form as capable of fullness, completeness, perfection” (Holmes 147). In contrast, McCartney’s novel “empties out interiority entirely: the narrator finds all his own gestures to be completely inauthentic and everyone else's too” (Smith, *Changing* 85). *Remainder*, in its experimentation, makes space for new ways of thinking, for working through the problem of representation.

This is one of the problems Smith attempts to address through *NW*. As evidenced by *Changing My Mind* and Smith’s interviews in the intervening years, it’s clear that, as Kristian Shaw has noted, “In the years following *White Teeth*’s publication, Smith bemoaned the contemporary literary marketplace and the failure of the novel to accurately represent the world or indicate the value of the novel form as a unique ‘good’” (63). Part of this work also involved establishing herself and her work as more than the roles offered to her through her publication of *White Teeth*, to “limi[t] ethnic marginalization” by expanding thematically to “directly engag[e] with the socioeconomic inequalities and crosscultural interdependencies that define the contemporary moment” (Shaw 63–64). Camilla Palmer reads this as “Smith’s ambivalent relationship with her own authorial persona, in at once both engaging with and rejecting the labels attached to her and her work” (163). However, I would like to suggest that this critical and thematic move on Smith’s part, to engage and reject labels, is part of Smith’s reevaluation of the author/reader relationship and the novel form itself during this period rather than solely part of her relationship with her own author figure.

NW's Style

To write her way through these philosophies of the novel, Smith experimented with style in *NW*. Examinations of the styles in *NW* look at how they change over the course of the novel and how they differ greatly from Smith's previous novels. It is a novel much more concerned with time and knowledge as indicated by its narrative shifts and reflective characters. David James sees *NW* as a departure in style that pushes against lyrical realism or hysterical realism. He reads *NW* as defamiliarizing: "*NW*'s irregular and occasionally ludic formal devices together un-work 'lyrical realism'" (James 213). Breaking from the layered density of *White Teeth* or the realist nature of *On Beauty*, *NW* imagines community and readership through a different form. These more experimental choices help illustrate the possibilities for form to think globally. In other words, they show that it is not necessary to have a globally located plot to have a global anglophone novel. The global is inherent in the production of the novel and visible in its form and style. Specifically, the novel depends upon repetition and attention to multiple perspectives. In this way it attempts to align reader and writer, to permit "stumbling toward meaning simultaneously" (Smith, *Changing* 57).⁴³

The novel is a form that, as Benedict Anderson and others have claimed, provides a symbolic means of shaping and enhancing an abstract sense of national community, and potentially other communities as well. Anderson argues that "print-capitalism . . . made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate

⁴³ Though Smith uses this phrase to describe her own experience as a reader of Nabokov, I use it here to suggest that a similar relationship is developed in *NW* between reader and author.

themselves to others, in profoundly new ways” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (36). Print-capitalism, which for Anderson included both the novel and the newspaper, helped to unify large groups of people in a new, and national, way. Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s explanation of the new sense of time, Anderson writes: “The old-fashioned novel . . . is clearly a device for the presentation of simultaneity in ‘homogenous, empty time,’ or a complex gloss upon the word ‘meanwhile’” (Anderson 25). A work like *NW* suggests that the novel as a form continues to find new ways to connect and form communities, even in the twenty-first century. It is through a narrativization of a new place/time dynamic that *NW* blurs the lines between local and global, taking its global readers along the boundary between the two. Grounded in the local, the novel’s sense of time uses recurring images and discourses that are unique references to specific individuals and places. However, a nonlocal reader can only become immersed in the local through the coherence created by these repetitions. In other words, the space for a global community is created through these repeated local details.

These details are also part of engaging a reader as the repetitions encourage simultaneous meaning-making as a reader seeks them out and links them. For example, the number 37 is significant to Leah, but appears in unusual ways throughout the novel. The chapters in Leah’s perspective are sequential except for four chapters titled “37.” These chapters interrupt the narrative but provide additional context or some other thematic significance. For example, the first one explains the significance of the number “37” for Leah that she borrowed the superstition from someone she dated: “the girl had a theory that 37 has a magic about it, we’re compelled toward it” (Smith, *NW* 46). In producing this scene, the novel invites a metalepsis. Whereas Leah is drawn to the

number after this suggestion, a reader is now also hyper-aware of its purposeful repetition throughout, perhaps even “compelled toward it.” When the number returns in Natalie’s section of small vignettes, it is in the title of the twenty-fourth one: “24. The number 37.” Here it represents Natalie’s realization that she and Leah are growing apart by symbolizing the number for the bus route on which Leah is leaving (Smith, *NW* 216). The number 37 thus becomes symbolic on several levels: for the characters (particularly Leah), as a way to symbolize the changing relationship between Leah and Natalie, and in the very telling of the story as a reader traces its presence or absence.⁴⁴ This possible engagement of a reader to notice and take part in this meaning making blurs diegetic layers and acts as a form of metalepsis.

The novel also invites a reader to engage in meaning-making by drawing attention to referential gaps. Early in Leah’s section, the first “Visitation,” the narrative describes her walk home from work in two consecutive short chapters, “9” and “10”. The first is a single page, which starts “From A to B” (Smith, *NW* 41). What follows is a recreation of computer-generated directions. Presented are: The start and end destinations, three optional paths and their estimated completion times, specific directions, including the distances for each step of one path option. Though the directions appear to represent the reality of walking this path, as Wendy Knepper describes it, trying to follow them “proves to be a rather frustrating encounter with the ‘real’” (117). In fact, “any attempt to follow them soon proves impossible” (Knepper 117). The narrative draws attention to this gap between the real experience and the novel’s experience of the walk with the final

⁴⁴ The section, “Host,” does not have a number 37; it skips from “36. Your enemy’s enemy” to “38. On the other hand” (Smith, *NW* 226).

paragraph of the chapter:

These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route. (Smith, *NW* 41)

As Knepper further notes, while these instructions, and this paragraph in particular, do establish the real-world referent for the walk, through parody and in their impossibility “they also signal the discrepancies between mapped and lived spaces, virtual and material words, imagined and actual places” (117). These “discrepancies,” or metalepses through extradiegetic or referential and diegetic layers are further emphasized by the novel through the next chapter which claims to trace the same path as the previous instructions.

Instead of clear walking directions, however, “From A to B redux” establishes the globality of the seemingly blank place described in the previous chapter through sensory detail. As Jennifer Leetsch describes, “it offers another, alternative version of the Google Maps directions—deeply entrenched in the visceral, noisy, sticky London mess, the entrails of the metropolis” (100). The sensory detail is established early on the page; the first sentence attempts to describe the smells of the place: “Sweet stink of the hookah, couscous, kebab, exhaust fumes of a bus deadlock” (Smith, *NW* 42). There is an emphasis on the details of the global characteristics of the place in the list of media consumed—“Polish paper, Turkish paper, Arabic, Irish, French, Russian, Spanish, News of the World” (Smith, *NW* 42)—and also in the list of people: “The Arabs, the Israelis, the Russians, the Americans: here united by the furnished penthouse, the private clinic” (Smith, *NW* 43). The simultaneous location of these individuals creates the appearance of a community unified by a diverse number of cultural and consumer goods. It suggests a global community united by place. The passage further develops the global implications

of the walk through its ironic use of “everybody” to emphasize the experience and the possibility of a connection to a community of others: “Everybody loves [object being observed]. Everybody” (Smith, *NW* 42). This unification is made absurd in its application to things as diverse as sandals, horse racing, or fried chicken (Smith, *NW* 42–43). Also notable in this chapter is a moment of second person narration that pierces this description overloaded with detail: “Walk down the middle of this, you referee, you” (Smith, *NW* 43). A reader is directly invited into the moment and assigned a place in the community.

The “Crossing” section of the novel similarly invites engagement from a reader, but through a reflection on perspective. Instead of comparing a cartography to a lived experience, this section considers the difficulty of seeing beyond a local view. This section is entirely made up of a walk Natalie/Keisha makes through the neighborhood she grew up in. However, like the walking directions in Leah’s section, instead of creating a clear map or sense of place, Natalie’s walk blurs boundaries and reveals the difficulty of making sense from the close-up view. As she wanders throughout *NW*, the chapter titles and occasional place names the only markers of specificity. Each chapter title claims a straightforward understanding of a specific, limited place: “Willesden Lane to Kilburn High Road”, “Shoot Up Hill to Fortune Green”, “Hampstead to Archway”, “Hamstead Heath”, “Corner of Hornsey Lane”, “Hornsey Lane”. But these clear locations are in contrast with the content of the chapters which are often nondescript or provide insight only to characters and not place. For example, the material descriptions often could be describing anywhere: “She couldn’t resist this display of the textures of the world; white stone, green turf, red rust, gray slate, brown shit. It was almost pleasant, strolling to

nowhere" (Smith, *NW* 372). While the A to B redux is an everywhere in its excess, Natalie's walk falls into moments of "nowhere," nondescript, yet named locations. Similarly, chapters "Hampstead Heath" and "Corner of Hornsey Lane" are made up entirely of dialogue and present no narrative descriptions at all.

Eventually, Natalie ends her walk at a bridge. She looks out through the view created by the anti-suicide barriers installed on the bridge:

The view was cross-hatched. St. Paul's in one box. The Gherkin in another. Half a tree. Half a car. Cupolas, spires. Squares, rectangles, half moons, stars. It was impossible to get any sense of the whole. From up here the bus lane was a red gash through the city. The tower blocks were the only thing she could see that made any sense, separated from each other, yet communicating. From this distance they had a logic, stone posts driven into an ancient field, waiting from something to be laid on top of them, a statue, perhaps, or a platform. (Smith, *NW* 384)

Here, Natalie and the novel reflect on perspective. That which was so familiar up close, is made abstract or unfamiliar at this distance. Only the most local icons, the "tower blocks . . . made any sense." But the rest is still part of the "Beautiful view" as the woman with the "French accent" says unconvincingly next to Natalie (Smith, *NW* 384). Zooming in or out may change the crosshatched view, but this scene attests to the need to consider perspective in the viewing. In his analysis of this scene, Nick Bentley suggests that, "This passage neatly represents a hovering hesitation between a postmodern rejection of a totalising unity and the tentative possibility of a sense of meaning to be gained from the urban landscape Keisha observes" (739). If we view the global perspective as one at risk of being totalizing, then this hesitation might symbolize the space between global and local perspectives or communities. As Natalie pauses to consider it, so must a reader puzzle along with her at the disjointed connection between whole narrative and close view, between fiction and reality, between local specificity and a distanced, global

perspective.

While the other repetitions and reconsiderations of place in the novel question the line of local and global, the recurring and moving focus on Felix's murder imagines more specifically what it means to make empathetic connections or try to gain knowledge across a distance. Though Felix is a character unrelated to the others in the novel, except for his membership in their local community, he "nevertheless acts as connective tissue between all of them" (Leetsch 95). Smith employs dramatic irony to activate a reader's empathy and attention to how the personal is affected by the world around us. She creates space for a reader to empathize with Felix, but also to see Leah and Natalie's attempts at the same action through the shifting perspective focuses of the novel.

In the first section, Leah almost misses the mention of the "fatal stabbing" that has not yet been revealed to be part of the novel's plot: "In the corner of the room a television talks. It talks for a long time before Leah notices it, and then only because it names a local road, one street from her own" (Smith, *NW* 104). It is the local, personal connection that draws Leah's attention to the incident, then, through her, the narrative's, and finally a reader's. The reporting of the stabbing is presented in a different font, one used for dialogue rather than narration in this section. The television becomes a speaking character in the scene:

The television says:

- The young man, named locally as Felix Cooper, was 32 years old. He grew up in the notorious Garvey House project in Holloway, but had moved with his family to this relatively quiet corner of Kilburn, in search of a better life. Yet it was here, in Kilburn, that he was accosted by two youths early Saturday evening, moments from his own front door. It is not known if the victim knew—
- He was murdered! Why does it matter where he grew up? (Smith, *NW* 104).

It's unclear if this last line is Leah or Michel's response. As Sarah Illott argues, in the first section of the novel empathy is created on the formal level. The lack of punctuation around dialogue acts to "clos[e] the gap between narrator and character and forcing readers into closer proximity with characters without presuming fully to have access to their inner lives" (Illott 173). This is particularly relevant to the introduction of Felix through a news account of his murder because news and individual are blurred. The readers must actively identify each speaker.

The next section of the novel, "Guest," is focused on Felix and follows him on the day of his death. He thus appears in the novel already dead, a fact known only to an attentive or return reader. The section functions to humanize Felix. It follows him on a day where he gets up and ready with his girlfriend, visits his dad, travels into central London to purchase a car, and breaks up with a lover. He is stabbed on the way home, never able to complete the journey. In her examination of empathy in the novel, Tammy Amiel Houser points to Felix as perhaps the only character to engender a reader's empathy. This is enabled by the style of the novel which follows a more traditional realism in Felix's section. It is the style of the surrounding sections that makes this possibility so stark: "Despite the presence of interior monologues and stream-of-consciousness narration, the two women remain impenetrable" (Houser 142). While the interior monologues of the first and third sections should provide insight into Leah and Natalie, their narrative modes create distance instead. If Felix is the only empathetic character, then his present is affectively felt, a ghost in the background of the remaining novel. He haunts reader and character alike.

When the murder is next reported in "Crossing," only a reader can recognize it for

what it is. From Natalie's perspective, it is as an "incident" depersonalized and anonymous (Smith, *NW* 360). Though Natalie tries to fill in the blanks, to see the specifics of the incident, she is prevented by a police officer:

All she could see were more policemen and a white canvas tent off to the left, on the pavement opposite the bus stop. What kind of incident? He didn't answer. She was no-one. She didn't merit answering. A kid on a BMX racer said, Someone got jukeed innit. (Smith, *NW* 360)

Natalie and, through her perspective, a reader can now only see the murder from the outside, it is literally obscured from view, made into part mystery and part inconvenience. It is only through the informal modes of community communication, the voices of the unnamed kid, that any details are shared. The capitalization of "Someone" is the only hint of personhood offered to Felix.

In the second "Visitation" section, once the details of the death become news, circulate in headlines for Natalie and Leah to consume, Felix, or more specifically his murder, becomes a recurring focus. Leah and Natalie attempt to empathize with Felix's death, become obsessed with ways it may connect to them. Felix is again anonymized in Leah's reflections on her life to Natalie:

"I just don't understand why I have this life," she said quietly.
"What?"
"You, me, all of us. Why that girl and not us. Why that poor bastard on Albert Road. It doesn't make sense to me." (Smith, *NW* 399–400)

Unlike the first, this section of the novel returns to a traditional use of quotation marks for the dialogue, reversing the blurring and closeness of the earlier scene. There is a distance between Leah and Felix. Instead of a person, Felix becomes a lesson or problem for Leah and Natalie to solve, a distraction from their own problems.

He soon becomes a solution to the gap that has grown between them. The novel ends with Leah and Natalie submitting Nathan's name to the police as a possible person of interest for the murder:

Natalie dialed it. It was Keisha who did the talking. Apart from the fact she drew the phone from her own pocket, the whole process reminded her of nothing so much as those calls the two good friends used to make to boys they liked, back in the day, and always in a slightly hysterical state of mind, two heads pressed together over a handset. 'I got something to tell you,' said Keisha Blake, disguising her voice with her voice. (Smith, *NW* 401)

The two friends are able to reconnect, to move forward with their own lives, energized by their conclusions about this unknowable event. But despite getting a view of Felix's death, a reader cannot be sure if justice is served in this confession to the police. All the views of Felix's murder, that night, do not provide an easy or clear solution, even for an attentive reader. What is left then is discomfort, an uneasiness with the form. *NW* thus uses circularity and multiple viewpoints to blur the distinction between global and local and theorize the ways of knowing at a distance. In the end, Natalie and Leah are unable to know Felix or move beyond their mediated reception of his murder to a fuller understanding of his humanity, but he is able to act as a connecting thread for the friends. This ambiguity in the ending, but also in the form itself, reflects the dynamic and sometimes tenuous relationship developed between global author and reader.

“Zadie Smith” as Author Figure

As I have shown, both *White Teeth* and *NW* match their style to the conditions of their production. *White Teeth* held optimism for representing and resisting colonial narratives or systems through a comedic, dense, and polyphonic style. Published twelve years later, *NW* came into being in a much different, more globalized world and as such it appears more skeptical, more cautious of the ability for novels to represent reality, to

make space for critical approaches to totalizing narratives. While it also uses different perspectives and voices, it exudes more uncertainty and fewer feelings of convivial cleverness. This aligns with shifts in Smith's evolution as a writer and public intellectual.

As suggested by Smith's large body of publications and honors, her author figure now looks a little different than at her first publication. Over and over again that narrative was about the "impossibly young" (Lanchester) Smith, "being hailed as one of the prominent voices of her generation" (Perry 18). Many reviews and reactions were convinced she was "a writer of mighty potential" (Sandhu 21). While the youthful narrative has faded in the years, the celebration of her talent remains consistent: "There has never been any doubt that Smith can write. Like Amis, she is as celebrated for her nonfiction as for her novels" (Allardice). Smith herself contributes to this narrative of brilliance from the start through her recognition and retelling of the attention she received at her debut. In a recent essay about her 2023 novel, *The Fraud*, she explains her initial decision to leave England after the publication of *White Teeth*: "I was definitely weary of London's claustrophobic literary world, or at least the role I had been assigned within it: multicultural (aging) wunderkind" (Smith, "On Killing Charles Dickens" 16). Smith's initial youth and potential has transformed into an assured status. As Allardice recently wrote in her interview with Smith: "Now 47, the wunderkind has become the grande dame of British fiction" (Allardice). But in her ascendance, Smith has now become a well-established part of the literary institutions that ushered her in so quickly.

Concurrently with her rise in literary prestige and status, narratives around her identity move to center on an uncertainty of authority or a lack of absolute positions. She has built a career that straddles the line between popular and literary, an author figure of

the middle: “she seems to be intellectually interested in new paths for fiction, but writes in a way that courts popular appeal by its soothing storylines, familiar characters and comfortingly reasonable as well as gently authoritative narratorial tone” (Childs and Green 40). This seems to be the legacy of Smith, or perhaps the ongoing narrative around Smith as writer, public intellectual, and critic. However, an analysis of this narrative highlights the unstable connection between author figure and audience.

The porous boundary between author figure and work maintain the function of the author figure even through rejections of one or the other. This is seen clearly in Andrea Long Chu’s provocative review of *The Fraud* (2023), “How Zadie Smith Lost Her Teeth.” In the review, Chu declares that “*White Teeth* remains by far the best thing Smith has ever written” and laments that “Smith has apparently concluded that *White Teeth*’s greatest strength, its audacious unreality, was in fact its fatal flaw. Today, she is firmly within the realist camp despite her recurring feints at departure.” Though I wouldn’t characterize Smith’s work like *NW* as a “feint at departure” from realism, Chu’s review is particularly useful for the ways it draws attention to Smith’s own participation in the creation of her author figure and an analysis of it reveals how narratives of Smith as a person continue to be aligned with narratives of her writing, even in alternative narratives that do not align with the ones Smith herself participates in.

Chu moves throughout the review essay between novel and author, barely differentiating moves between fiction, intent, and reality. Smith as an author figure represents the possibilities for commercial success by walking a clear, and perhaps middle, path. But we might also ask how this approach obscures Smith’s and her writings’ own participations in the global literary market. Chu points out one artifice on

Smith's part: "Smith regularly confesses that she has 'no qualifications to write as I do,' downplaying her own essays as 'the useless thoughts of a novelist.' This is disingenuous. She is Zadie Smith" (Chu). What Chu reads as insincere, I read as Smith's ongoing contributions to the construction of her author figure, to the marketable narrative of her name. This is a position she can hold because of her literary prestige, because her name can be used in a sentence as short-hand for all the ways she is qualified, an expected expert, a celebrated public voice, a known literary quantity, and more—Zadie Smith is Zadie Smith.

But what about the readers? Zadie Smith is only Zadie Smith to the extent that she is read that way and, as I have shown, her novels and her other participations in the creation of her author figure are attempts to shape the reading experience and readers' critical perspectives. This too is an area in which Chu's review is illuminating. Chu suggests that Smith's careful creation of a middle position, her attempts to build alongside a large variety of readers, may be insufficient to weather the changing priorities of a younger readership. Referencing some of Smith's comments on her students' changing attitudes towards books, she writes:

But when young people rate a novel poorly because they disagree with its politics, it is more convenient to assert that they have simply abandoned the old-fashioned field of aesthetic inquiry altogether than to reckon with the possibility that aesthetic inquiry *itself* is being remade. And so Smith congratulates the new generation on preferring politics to aesthetics; the best way to get someone off your lawn is to direct them to a lawn of their own. (Chu)

While criticism and reviews of Smith have primarily focused on the readers she does align with, Chu opens up here the possibility for thinking through the limitations of Smith's approach. Even playing the middle cannot assure control or stability in the author figure; the narrative must be continually reestablished. However, as evidenced by Chu's

review, praise or popularity are not necessarily needed to reestablish this narrative. The author figure is able to adapt, to absorb controversy and criticism. In other words, this reading of Smith shows how the author figure is a functional and structural position. In the uneven, globalized world where niche markets dominate and author/audience boundaries continue to blur, the author figure is a means to synthesize competing literary valuations. I continue to explore this role of the author figure and the possibilities for changing the institutions it intersects with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

REIMAGINING GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS: BERNARDINE EVARISTO

In her article, “Beyond the Great White Male,” Bernardine Evaristo draws attention to the role of cultural institutions like universities in shaping literary value and, therefore, what is read. She asks: “Which novels are being presented as worthy of our critical attention by those with academic and cultural authority? What are the absences, how are they justified, and how do we redress this?” (Evaristo, “Beyond” 46). These questions and the article more broadly represent a pattern of critique Evaristo has made throughout her career that calls to some of the larger implications for the author figure. In the previous chapters, I have examined the relationship between author figure, novel, and audience. Next, I look more directly at how these come together in the face of competing and overlapping global fields by examining the relationship between individual authors and the institutions involved in the production of literary cultural capital, like universities, associations or societies, and prizes. How does cultural capital translate to influence or vice versa in globally structured fields? What role can or does the author play in utilizing influence to critique, or even change, the institutions that bestow that cultural capital upon them?

Evaristo has a wide catalogue of publications: one book of poetry, a novella, six novels, two non-fiction books, and a plethora of essays, articles, and short fiction. To consider the role of multiple institutions in her career and in developing her as an author figure, I center my argument primarily around two of her novels: her first verse novel,

Lara (1997),⁴⁵ and her Booker winning “fusion fiction” novel, *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019).⁴⁶ Read alongside her memoir, *Manifesto* (2021), and her career accolades, these novels illustrate the evolution of Evaristo as an author figure who questions and critiques the same institutions from which she gains her cultural capital.

Political Reimagining in *Lara*

Evaristo’s career has always been politically focused. In *Manifesto*, Evaristo talks extensively about how her parents’ activism encouraged her own: “my creative career and activism can be traced back to growing up in a political household where individuality was encouraged by my mother, and both parents exemplified social responsibility and political engagement” (Evaristo, *Manifesto* 30). From the very beginning of her career, she created the art and the community that she wanted to see. Soon after graduating college, she co-founded the first Black women theater group in the UK, Theatre of Black Women (1982-1988), to create roles in theater that they wanted to see as well as host workshops and other developmental opportunities.⁴⁷ Then, in 1995, Evaristo co-founded Spread the Word to promote diversity in writing. As described on their current website, Spread the Word is a “literature development agency, a charity and

⁴⁵ Evaristo revised, expanded, and republished *Lara* in 2009. Though I will discuss this revised version briefly later, my analysis is focused primarily on this first version.

⁴⁶ “Fusion fiction” is Evaristo’s own term for the style of the novel which is closer to prose than *Lara* but still incorporates many poetic elements. She uses this term in many of her interviews (See for example Anna Sethi’s interview for *The Guardian*) and in her memoir. I discuss this term in further detail in my analysis of *Girl, Woman, Other*.

⁴⁷ For more on the company and its mission, see Nicola Abram “Theater of Black Women” (2020); Susan Croft “Theatre of Black Women” (2013); Evaristo *Manifesto* (2023).

a National Portfolio client of Arts Council England . . . [who] build strategic partnerships to foster a literature ecology which reflects the cultural diversity of contemporary Britain” (“About Us”). The organization is connected to the arts community and develops public programs that promote and materially support writers. But more importantly, its aim is to change the “ecology” of publishing in the UK. This aim reflects Evaristo’s consistent message and suggests that leading into the publication of *Lara*, Evaristo’s writing and activism were already intertwined. The novel, therefore, might be read as an analogous and integrated part of the career and reputation that Evaristo was already in the process of developing.

Scholarship and reviews on *Lara* have two primary interests. One line of inquiry—for example, analyses by Patrica Murray, John McLeod, Kathrin Kottemann and Pilar Cuder-Domínguez—considers the novel’s postcolonial context and attention to the themes of race and national belonging.⁴⁸ These readings compare Evaristo and *Lara* to, often canonical, postcolonial writers or texts like Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*, Derek Walcott’s *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, or V.S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men*. A, sometimes intersecting, second strain of analysis is on the form of the novel itself. For example, Matthew Whittle considers how elements of the structure participate in an “aesthetics of disorder” (533). Analyses by Lars Ole Sauerberg and Emmanuel Adeniyi look at the verse novel form and how *Lara* fits within that literary history through its specific iteration of verse. These patterns are also seen in the reviews of the novel. For example,

⁴⁸ Evaristo herself refutes a postcolonial label—“I never saw myself as postcolonial but British” (Evaristo, *Manifesto* 203)—but her works’ inclusion in this area speaks to the larger context in which they (and she) were (and continue to be) read.

Bruce King's review for *The Caribbean Writer* contextualizes the novel alongside a generation of Black, mostly immigrant writers, like Walcott. Similarly, Stewart Brown, in his review for *World Literature Today*, hopes that *Lara's* hybrid form might be "one of the fruits of a multicultural British consciousness" (84). Though less well-known or studied at the time of these reviews than some of her contemporaries, Evaristo is recognized for her literary talent and the political aspects of her fiction.

My analysis is primarily interested in the first strain of scholarship and reviews, especially for the ways they address Evaristo's larger goals as a writer. In his analysis of Evaristo's *Lara* and *Emperor's Babe* (2001), John McLeod writes:

She has striven to show that the fortunes of black peoples in history are not marginal or of interest only to black readers, but play a central part in the wider historical narrative of the British isles and make a mockery of notions of cultural and racial purity. (177)

McLeod emphasizes the novel's work to reimagine British identity. With only two novels and her poetry published at the time of McLeod's writing, Evaristo was already establishing herself as an engaged author, focused on influence and change to the larger narratives that surround her. An examination of the novel emphasizes transcultural, transnational, experiences, but filtered through the distinctly intersectional lenses of the characters: race, gender, class in particular. I argue then that through its interrogation of national narratives of belonging, *Lara* might be read as anticipating the form and politics of *Girl, Woman, Other*.

Postcolonial Narratives of British Identity

Lara is a short verse novel of 140 single-page poems that moves in and out of different characters' perspectives. Though *Lara* is the primary driver of the novel, it opens with a prologue from her great-great-grandmother's perspective as a slave in

Brazil. It then quickly moves to her Nigerian father, Taiwo, and his 1949 arrival in England where he meets and marries Lara's mother, a white Englishwoman of Irish heritage, Ellen. The novel shows their courtship and then Laura's childhood and young adulthood as one of their eight children. Lara moves from the suburbs to central London and then more broadly around the world, with visits to Nigeria and Brazil to connect more with her family history. The story moves back and forth between time periods and perspectives, sketching out Lara's roots through interludes into her predecessors' pasts. Echoing McLeod's reading of the novel, Vedrana Velickovic suggests of both *Lara* and *Soul Tourists*, "By constantly going back in time and engaging with the past, Evaristo's novels reflect on the unresolved histories of nation, 'race' and empire that still affect the present" (75). I would add that these "unresolved histories" often appear as painful confrontations with narratives of race and national belonging within the diegesis of the novels.

Important context for both *Lara* and *Lara* are narratives of British nationalism in the second half of the twentieth century. Lara's very existence is tied to Britain's colonial history through her parents' experiences, which are reflective of England after World War II. Similarly, as evidenced in critics' postcolonial framings of it, the novel was published during a period where these narratives were being highlighted, examined, and rewritten by British and postcolonial writers. Historian Paul Ward describes post-war Britain as participating in an "imperial illusion" where "many Britons persuaded themselves that Britain was unchanged, indeed was stronger as a result of victory in war and restoration of the Empire on which the sun never set" (163). This perception influenced political decisions but also common perceptions, particularly of nationality

and race. This continues throughout decolonization. As Matthew Whittle explains in his analysis of literature during this period:

In these “official” accounts of the end of empire, the moment when colonies gained their hard-won freedoms is not seen as a victory for anticolonial resistance but as the final triumph of British colonial order. These examples enunciate a dominant narrative of British exceptionalism that disregards the multiple instances of resistance that were met with British colonial force. (532)

In other words, credit for independence is assigned in official narratives to “British exceptionalism” or other positive traits rather than attributed or credited to anticolonial or resistance movements in these nations. In this narrative, colonies become nations not through the Empire’s weakness, but through its strength, as represented by its ability to bestow freedom. It is possible and maybe even likely that this narrative, the illusion of strength, may have been punctured “with a waning sense of national confidence in Britannia’s continuing prowess as an imperial power” as these resistance movements led to changes like the partition of India in 1947 or the establishment of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1948 (Nasta 565). However, if that is true, then the fear further fortified the desire for a narrative that upheld the former Empire’s greatness and its claim to superiority. In either case, narratives of British exceptionalism continued at home throughout the twentieth century and thus I read both the novel’s characters and the novel itself as responding to these narratives.

The characters in the novel both believe and disprove these narratives of unity and strength. At the start of the novel, Lara’s father, Taiwo, sees England, and particularly London, are a destination. He imagines the BBC broadcasts as a literal call “to paradise”: “London calling The Empire! Calling The Empire! / Come in Nigeria! *I’m coming! I’m coming!*” (Evaristo, *Lara* 3). Taiwo optimistically sails for London, ultimately

disappointed in what he finds. Here, as elsewhere in the novel, the form draws attention to “the verbal as the construction site for meaning” (Sauerberg 459). The verse separates “Come in Nigera!,” adding emphasis to Taiwo’s interpretation of it as a welcoming gesture, an invitation inside the home of the country. However, it isn’t until he dates Ellen that Taiwo feels any small amount of real welcome in England: “to him / she revealed the goodies of a country he'd only known / as a stranger peering through snug windows on icy nights” (Evaristo, *Lara* 9). Taiwo and Ellen, at least before their marriage, experience England in opposite ways: Taiwo as a stranger and Ellen as an accepted part. Though this could be attributed to familiarity from childhood, Taiwo’s experiences of racism in England and Ellen’s community’s reaction to their engagement, suggests that is not the only or perhaps even principal driver of his “stranger” status.

This reading of Taiwo’s status is reinforced by the questions of home, belonging, and national identity that arise throughout Lara’s own childhood. Several scenes point to the ways Lara herself feels unwelcome, a lack of belonging: “Home. I searched but could not find myself, / not on the screen, billboards, books, magazines, / and first and last not in the mirror” (Evaristo, *Lara* 69). There are no representations of women like her in her home country’s media. The absence is further reinforced through the actions and words of her fellow Britons.

The enduring national narrative of Englishness that surrounds Lara is visible in a scene between her and her friend, Susie, a white classmate:

'Where'you from, La?' Susie suddenly asked
one lunch break on the playing fields. 'Woolwich.'
'No, silly, where are you from, y'know orginally?'
'If you really must know I was born in Eltham, actually.'
My dad says you must be from Jamaica,' Susie insisted. (Evaristo, *Lara*
65)

Here, one legacy of the 1948 arrival of *Empire Windrush* from Jamaica seems to be how the perception of that period of immigration filters how Lara's identity and belonging are perceived. The national narrative of the immigrants from the Caribbean surrounds Lara and influences how she's read by others. Susie's insistence on Lara's otherness is understandably upsetting to Lara herself who replies immediately with "I'm not Jamaican! I'm English!" 'Then why are you coloured?' (Evaristo, *Lara* 65). The verse format adds extra emphasis to the contrast between these two pieces of dialogue by placing them in the same line. In Susie's question lies the evidence that the national identity is mythologized as white. Even after Empire has become Commonwealth, Britain's narrative of national belonging is predicated on whiteness. Further, it is predicated on a binary of center and periphery. After learning that Lara's father is from Nigeria and not Jamaica, Susie asks: "'Where's Nigeria then, is it near Jamaica?' 'It's in Africa.' / Where's Africa exactly?' 'How should I know, I don't / bloody well live there, do I!' (Evaristo, *Lara* 65). Individual locations of Empire are invisible to the center as evidenced by Susie and Lara's own inability to articulate with any specificity the location of Nigeria. Susie's (and her father's) attempts to locate Lara's identity, and later Nigeria itself, through Jamaica also points to the enduring legacy of *Empire Windrush*, where Jamaican immigrants have come to represent all immigrants, or at least come to (falsely) explain the presence of all Black Britons. The novel thereby highlights this discrepancy and rewrites the narrative through Lara.

The final straw for Lara is Susie's question: "Is your dad from the jungle?" (Evaristo, *Lara* 65). The imperial and racist implications of the question are self-evident, and immediately apparent to Lara: "[she] stormed off. Susie ran after her. 'What's the

matter, Lara?’” (Evaristo, *Lara* 65). Susie’s confusion further speaks to the embeddedness of the narrative of white Englishness in the culture surrounding Susie and Lara. Susie genuinely seems confused by Lara’s reactions. The novel thus critically imagines and rejects the racialized histories and narratives that surround Lara through her character development and relationships. She is able to reconceptualize her nationality and belonging through her travels to better understand her familial roots.

Lara’s Reimagined Britain

The novel, through its multiple narrators and Lara’s international journeys, extends the history of Britain and emphasizes its own hybridity. In contrast to the linear, binary narratives of colonial and post-Empire Britain, the structure of the novel creates “a linked yet by no means homogenizing narrative” (McLeod 178). It moves back and forth in time, place, and perspective to illustrate the family tree, an action Lara tries to take herself. As a young adult, Lara goes on trips to Nigeria and Brazil. The Nigeria trip allows her to connect with extended family and learn more about her father’s childhood. They make visible an extended history of Britain and thereby “affir[m] that Britain is a hybrid and heterogeneous nation that has been forged out of a long history of slavery, colonialism, and immigration” that goes back further than “the end of the Second World War, decolonization, and the arrival of the SS *Empire Windrush*” (Whittle 537).⁴⁹ In other words, the trips provide context that refutes the limited narratives of Black British identity previously available.

⁴⁹ While Whittle is referencing the 2009 edition of *Lara*, his analysis is relevant for the 1997 version as well.

The revision of British identity and history is echoed in the end of the novel. Lara reflects on her change in her perspective:

I savour living in the world, planet of growth, of decay,
think of my island--the 'Great' Tippexed out of it—
tiny amid massive floating continents, the African one—
an embryo within me—I will wing back to Nigeria again
and again, excitedly swoop over a zig-zag of amber lights
signaling the higgledy energy of Lagos. (Evaristo, *Lara* 140)

Each move of these lines emphasizes Lara's acceptance of the disordered and embraces a disruptive mode of being. This includes viewing the planet as simultaneously two opposites ("growth" and "decay") and in the emphasis on non-linear movement or existence ("again / and again", "zig-zag", "higgledy"). The "Great" being "Tippexed" or corrected out of Great Britain like a typographical error is a playful way of engaging with the changing narrative of the nation and Lara's own relationship with it, a recognition of her new perspective on its size. As Patricia Murray saliently identifies, Lara "has to leave London in order to grasp the nature and promise of its post-coloniality" (45). She needs the experiences of being in these other places to fully recognize the possibilities for London in the future. It is only then that "London emerges not as the privileged signifier of post-coloniality but as a key point in an endless chain of signification, and through which cultural identity is constantly postponed" (P. Murray 45).⁵⁰ This is once again a counterpoint to the homogenizing tendencies of colonial and even official decolonial narratives. Great Britain here is not exceptional, no longer "Great" as Lara muses, but

⁵⁰ Murray here is referencing Stuart Hall's "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" from *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (1990) ed. Jonathan Rutherford where he builds on Derrida's concepts of iteration and the signification of the sign.

rather one node of a network. Lara's reimagined perspective is the novel's reimagining of Britain's postcolonial identity.

The expansion of the novel only serves to strengthen the novel's ability to reimagine Britishness. Though the additions are primarily stories from the perspectives of Lara's (and Evaristo's) white ancestry, in doing so the novel draws further attention to immigrant constructions of the nation. Evaristo's decision to revise and republish *Lara* in 2009 is an unusual one. Its republication was an opportunity afforded by its falling out of print and the closure of its original publisher. In republishing it, Evaristo made significant changes to the style and content. Though it remained a verse novel, she changed the organization of the verse and added significant portions. These new sections added more detail about Lara's matrilineal heritage, giving more insight into her German and Irish ancestors' perspectives and stories.⁵¹ The result is a more balanced family tree, and more emphasis on the ways Englishness as a narrative, is written through colonial and immigrant history. The revised version thus develops, but does not substantially change the work of the original.

In *Lara*, Evaristo identifies the enduring harm of binary colonial narratives and imagines a possible salve by making visible and "celebrat[ing] Britain's age old transcultural nature" (Ledent 308). The novel does this through its hybrid form, attention to language, and use of multiple perspectives. Disrupting established narratives of English or British identity and history is work that Evaristo's later novels continue through things like imagining a Black female poet in Roman London (*The Emperor's*

⁵¹ For more details on the changes between versions see Sebnem Toplu's analysis of the novel in *Fiction Unbound*.

Babe) or staging conversations with long-dead historical figures of color (*Soul Tourists*).⁵² And it is work that her most well-known novel, *Girl, Woman, Other* accomplishes through similar ways: multiple perspectives, hybrid style, and a large historical scope. That novel, however, goes a step farther, looking instead at the ways cultural institutions of many kinds uphold and disseminate classed, gendered, and racialized hegemonies.

***Girl, Woman, Other* and Institutional Prestige**

In the two decades between the first publication of *Lara* and *Girl, Woman, Other*, Evaristo further established herself in arts networks and institutions and was active in finding ways to advocate for others to join her. During this period, she published four novels—*The Emperor’s Babe* (2001), *Soul Tourists* (2005), *Blonde Roots* (2008), *Mr. Loverman* (2013)—and a novella, *Hello Mum* (2010). She also expanded her efforts to increase publishing diversity. In 2005, she initiated the Free Verse report, published by Spread the Word, and supported with public funds to research the lack of published Black and Asian poets (“Free Verse Report”). The report “revealed that under 1% of all poetry books were written by poets of colour” in the UK (“Activism & Advocacy”). Next, Evaristo established, alongside Arts Council England, *The Complete Works* (2007-2017), “a national programme which selected 10 outstanding black and Asian poets, and offered them mentoring, seminars, literature retreats and publication in a Bloodaxe

⁵² *Soul Tourists*’s characters are alternatively called “forgotten heroes of Europe’s past” on the book’s cover (Evaristo, *Soul Tourists*), “ghosts of colour from European history” on Evaristo’s website (“Soul Tourists”, *Bernardine Evaristo*) and “forgotten luminaries from the rich mix of black European history and literature” in its Amazon description (“Soul Tourists”, *Amazon.com*).

anthology”(“Home”). The intention was to make a difference in the lack of diverse publishing by creating opportunities for poets of color to develop and have their work seen. During these decades, Evaristo further strengthened her academic credentials by earning her doctorate in Creative Writing and working full-time as a faculty member. In 2011, she began working at Brunel University in London where she is now a Professor of Creative Writing. While at Brunel, she founded a poetry prize, the *Brunel International African Poetry Prize* (2012-2022), for “the development, celebration and promotion of poetry from Africa” (“Brunel International”).⁵³ So even as she earned more credentials and security for herself, she continued to make opportunities for others as well. This was the state of her career, rather accomplished on its own, when her novel won a Booker Prize.

The reception history of *Girl, Woman, Other* (and, arguably, current narratives around Evaristo) are dominated by its win of the 2019 Booker Prize approximately five months after its publication. Since then, reviews, interviews, marketing, and more, rarely fail to mention this feat. To better understand the impact of the Booker on Evaristo’s career and author figure, it is necessary to understand the prize’s own reputation and influence. While winning a Booker generally has a similar effect on any author’s career, Evaristo’s win is particularly notable for two reasons: she was the first British Black

⁵³ In 2022, the prize was taken over by its previous partner, the African Poetry Book Fund (APBF), and renamed the Evaristo Prize for African Poetry which announced its first winners in 2023 (“Brunel International”). A look at APBF’s website suggests Evaristo is no longer involved in the administration of the prize but is a member of the APBF Editorial Board. Therefore, she likely continues to support it in other ways like publicizing it on her social media pages as she did by reposting a submission announcement in Oct 2023 (Bernardine Evaristo [@BernardineEvari]).

woman with a winning book in the award's fifty-plus year history, and, against the rules of the prize, the 2019 judges awarded the prize jointly to *Girl, Woman, Other* and Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments*. My analysis of *Girl, Woman, Other* thus has three parts. First, I look at how the Booker Prize uses scandal to build and maintain its influence and its narrative of being a global prize. Then, I examine how the 2019 split win scandal continues this history and highlights how influential the author figure is to the award's functioning. Ultimately, the reactions to and the effects of the 2019 scandal, reveal the strength of the prize's influence and its ability to shape the form and reception of the contemporary global anglophone novel and author figure. Finally, I look to the Booker winning novel itself. I argue that *Girl, Woman, Other* reflects Evaristo's own position as an agent of the production of cultural capital and imagines the institutional change for which she advocates. The novel balances accessibility and critique through its experimental form and characters' reflections on their relationships with larger cultural institutions or paradigms like national theatre, universities, and literary canons.

The Booker Prize and Cultural Authority

The Booker Prize, self-described as “the leading literary award in the English speaking world” was founded in 1969 by publishers Tom Maschler and Graham C Greene with the goal of creating a prize comparable to France's Goncourt (Booker Prize Foundation, “About”; “Story”). The name stems from the prize's sponsorship by Booker McConnell, a conglomerate trying to move away from its colonial history and grow its own Author's Division (Booker Prize Foundation, “Story”). Though the prize did not have the prestige of being the oldest prize in Britain, it still managed to grow itself into

one of the most well-known and influential prizes for English language literature. From the start, the Booker was a national prize with global ambitions.

Two types of growth are noticeable in the Booker's history, absorption of controversy that increases popularity and expansion of reach. In *The Economy of Prestige*, James English suggests that the prize's success is due mainly to its ability to court scandal. He points to a number of scandals in the early years of its existence that bolstered its presence in the press including John Berger's infamous acceptance speech in 1971 where he donated half his prize money to the British Black Panthers as a form of reparations for the exploitation in the prize's sponsor's past. English notes that these scandals of the 1970s meant that "just a decade after its near collapse, the Booker outstripped all other British literary prizes combined in terms of the sheer volume of publicity, renown, and book sales it could generate for its winner" (*Economy* 207). This is a history that the Booker itself reads similarly. In her 2018 article on the history of the Booker Prize for a special issue of the *Times Literary Supplement*, Gaby Wood, Chief Executive of the Booker Foundation, writes of Berger's speech: "you might argue that when he made his acceptance speech, he didn't just give the prize the greatest public impact it had hitherto enjoyed. He also drew attention to the possibility of a prize that would shed light on the world and welcome its rebels" (17).⁵⁴ A bit later she follows up this recognition of the positive effects of scandal with the assertion that: "All of this, the prize has absorbed. Because its mission is not just to find out who the best writers are; it's

⁵⁴ I use Wood's current title according to the Booker website here. Wood has led the Foundation since 2015 when the position was titled "Literary Director" (Flood, "Gaby Wood").

to make available to a wider public their habits of thought” (G. Wood 17). In these quotes we can see the Booker Prize’s efforts to absorb and redirect its history of scandal. They also emphasize the ways the prize’s influence and renown is bolstered through continual disagreement and criticism over the prize winners and the prize itself. Finally, in statements like Wood’s, we see an emphasis on the reach of the prize, its ability to “make available to a wider public” not just the books, but the “habits of thought” of the authors themselves.

These ambitions are recognizable in one of the more notable scandals of the Booker—the foundation’s decision in 2013 to open up eligibility for the prize to any author who is published in the UK regardless of citizenship. This decision, in addition to further solidifying the prize’s renown through the critique it garnered, can be understood as an overt way the prize attempts “to reach beyond national boundaries both for objects of esteem and for (other) sources of legitimacy” (English, *Economy* 260). In fact, the press release framed the change as a “global expansion” (“Man Booker”). In this change to its structure, the Booker works to establish itself as a global prize while reinforcing its national prominence. This decision might also be framed within English’s characterization that prizes like the Booker have a “fundamentally global nature” (*Economy* 257). The significance of which is that “even the most nationally rooted competition has had to be understood as part of a system or relational field whose boundaries and rules and ultimate stakes exceed and subsume national cultures” (English, *Economy* 257). In other words, the Booker is moving within a larger field of literary capital production that cannot be reduced to the bounds of the UK. In this light, the

Booker's decision was perhaps inevitable and a recognition of the prize's place in the larger literary economy.

However, this position is continuously reinforced by the Booker's meta-discourse. To return to the press announcement about the expansion, the Booker administration justified the change by asserting its authority and dominance of the global anglophone field. The press release frames the prize by noting it "is widely regarded as the most important literary award in the English-speaking world. But, paradoxically, it has not allowed full international participation to all those writing literary fiction in English" ("Man Booker"). Here, the Booker promotes its own narrative as "the most important" in the anglophone world. Further justifications for the change emphasize the perspective that English itself is global. As Jonathan Taylor, the Chair of the Booker Prize Foundation at the time, is quoted: "We are embracing the freedom of English in all its vigour, its vitality, its versatility and its glory wherever it may be. We are abandoning the constraints of geography and national boundaries" (qtd. in "Man Booker"). The word choice here is specifically drawing on assumptions or undertones of righteousness about English as a dominant language. The alliterative adjectives for English add a powerful cadence to the statement, an almost drumroll to the reveal of "its glory" and the prize's decision to "aband[on] the constraints" of the nation. This narrative continues in how the Booker Foundation writes about the prize several years later. To return to Wood's article, she uses similar language in describing the prize and its history: "It's a huge responsibility to think of the prize as being global, but there's no denying that it is. If you look at the books that have been rewarded, they suggest it always was" (17). While not quite as impactful as the language from Taylor's announcement, Wood here is

emphasizing the globality of the prize and attempting to reframe its past (“it always was”).

However, the reality is that that structure of the Booker Prize is still very much one that limits and controls what novels fit into its definition of global. It is, therefore, important to consider the limits to how globally representative of English fiction the prize can truly be. This is Paula Morris’s critique in her article, “The ‘Leftovers of Empire’: Commonwealth Writers and the Booker Prize.” Morris challenges the narrative that the Booker is an international prize, that it is indicative of the best anglophone writing. She points out that the limits on submissions almost guarantee that Commonwealth writers have a harder time earning consideration and certainly of winning the prize. These limits are outlined clearly in the submission rules, but not much discussed in scholarship or journalism on the prize. In addition to limiting eligibility to novels published in the UK and Ireland, the Booker Prize limits the number of books that can be submitted by UK publishers for consideration. As laid out in the submission rules, these quotas are determined by the number of longlist inclusions a publisher has in the last few years. Publishers who have been longlisted more often, can submit more books.⁵⁵ Publishers with no previously longlisted titles can only submit one book for consideration. On top of these quotas, new books from authors who have had previous books shortlisted are automatically eligible. The result of this structure, as argued by Morris, is that books from Commonwealth nations are rarely submitted, even if lauded in their home nations.

⁵⁵ For the 2024 Booker, these quotas were two submissions for 1-2 previous longlists, three for 3 previous longlists (Booker Prize Foundation, *The Booker Prize 2024 Rules & Submissions* 3).

If, as English asserts, the late twentieth century saw a decreasing influence of “the national fields of production” and an increase in the direct exchange of local for global cultural capital (*Economy* 272), then it makes sense that decades later there would be a, perhaps greater, disconnect between nationally valued literature and the global value produced by the Booker. However, Morris may be right:

Decisions about ‘the best novel of the year written in English’ cannot be ceded to British publishers and prizes, any more than they should be ceded to US publishers and prizes. The true scandal of the Booker Prize is . . . in the way the rest of the anglophone world accepts its authority without debate, and without thought to viable alternatives. (269)

Even in her proclamation of the Booker as a national rather than global prize, Morris recognizes here that the Booker’s narrative about its own globality is the generally accepted one. It is what makes her critique so important. But understanding the ability of the Booker to define global anglophone is, in part, a recognition of the ways that *that is how it currently functions* despite evidence that it, perhaps, shouldn’t.

Impacts and Narratives of the 2019 Joint Award

The joint 2019 award further exemplifies how the Booker functions as an arbiter of global anglophone taste, how it absorbs scandal, and the key role the author figure plays in literary prestige. The split was controversial because after the prize was split in 1992, the rules changed to prohibit splitting the prize again (Booker Prize Foundation, “Facts and Figures”). This controversy was bolstered by the historic significance of Evaristo being the first Black woman to be awarded the prize since its inception in 1969. These facts combined led to two intertwined threads of criticism: that the judges did not fulfill their responsibilities and that the controversy of the split detracted from the importance of Evaristo’s win.

Much, if not most, of the media directly following the 2019 Booker announcement focuses on the split judgement. Many criticisms were made about the decision of the five judges to refuse to pick a winner. In a more extreme criticism, Erica Wagner, a former Booker Prize judge, argued the result reflected a “darker” reality of 2019 where there was an “unhealthy disregard for the rules” and she “wonder[ed] whether the judges would have been quite so cavalier about their decision in a different political climate” (Wagner). Many critics shared her suspicion of the implications for the future of the prize, though few connected it to larger political shifts. Instead, they focused on the implications for the prize itself, its reputation for choosing novels of literary merit, and for the authors or their reputations. In his article arguing that the judges failed to perform their jobs, Sam Leith, also a former Booker judge, suggests that the biggest problem with the split win is that it creates: “The suspicion in the reading public’s mind . . . that one or other of these considerable authors was being patronised; that something extra-literary had entered into the considerations of the panel” in a way that a single winner would not have (Leith). Leith’s concern is that the joint award tarnishes the Booker’s reputation because it creates doubts about whether the prize has the ability to pick the *best* book. Simultaneously, he suggests that the split is a disservice to the winners because it creates doubts about each book’s literary value. What Leith misses is that the split highlights how the Booker already functions regarding how it assigns literary prestige to author figures alongside books.

The structure of the Booker and the defense mounted by at least one of the 2019 judges suggests that the Booker already considers factors outside the book itself in choosing a winner. In particular, the author figure weighs significantly in the selection

process. As I noted earlier, both the publisher's history of longlisted titles and an author's history of shortlisted titles factors into the selection process. By providing authors who have been previously shortlisted automatic entry into consideration, the rules suggest that previous achievement should be a factor in narrowing contenders. Of course, consideration does not guarantee or necessarily result in a longlist or shortlist position. Yet, consideration of the author figure did seem to factor into at least one judge's decision. Afua Hirsch, a member of the 2019 judging panel, published a short article defending the judges' choice to award the prize to two novels. She argues that "the outcome would always be imperfect, because it was an impossible task" but she highlights the impossibility with these hypotheticals for comparing a six-book shortlist where "each and every one [was] good enough to win":

How do you judge the titanic career, the contribution to culture of Margaret Atwood, against the sheer beauty of Elif Shafak's *Istanbul*? How do you compare the haunting Igbo tragedy, told by Chigozie Obioma's Odyssean narrator, to the *Ulysses*-like audacity of Lucy Ellmann? How do you pit the phenomenon of Salman Rushdie against the quality and consistency of Bernardine Evaristo, who was in my view hitherto hugely underrated? (Hirsch)

The qualities Hirsch names for Atwood and Rushdie are not directly tied to their books, and, arguably, the description of Evaristo is more about her oeuvre than this single book. This suggests that, despite Leith's claims, the author's reputation, their author figure, has always been a factor in determining who is included in the short or longlists, and perhaps even in the winner. I am not arguing that these selections are invalid or that somehow these books do not deserve these recognitions. I only suggest that it is disingenuous, or at least inaccurate, to claim they are, or perhaps ever have been, awarded without "extra-literary" considerations. The author figure is ever-present in the reading and evaluation of the book.

The critiques around the erasure or diminishment of Evaristo’s win in media coverage of the award, similarly highlight how literary prestige is structured or intersects with the extraliterary. In this case, the narratives about the win intersected with larger conversations about race, publishing, and literary prestige due to Evaristo’s identity as a Black woman. Many members of the publishing and literary communities lamented the missed opportunity to have the media around the 2019 prize focus solely on Evaristo. Sana Goyal, an editor for *Wasafiri*, noted that the “judges’ rule-breaking antics took precedence over what could’ve been a truly record-smashing, history-making, trajectory-altering move for the prize” (qtd. in Flood, “Backlash”). Eishar Brar, an editorial director for publisher Knights Of, felt similarly: “The split decision is now the overwhelming narrative when the sole focus should be on this historic and long overdue first” (qtd. in Flood, “Backlash”). The critiques stem from the context of a publishing world where wins like Evaristo’s are still historic firsts and thus are part of a larger ongoing conversation about the state of publishing itself. At a 2021 *The Bookseller’s* conference, Sunny Singh, co-founder of the Jhalak Prize, framed the work of her own prize in terms of larger prizes like the Booker:

The Jhalak Prize was set up in its outward-facing motivation to celebrate writers of colour in this country who are consistently, even now, sidelined and not necessarily awarded or celebrated. Let’s be frank—with the Booker, half a Booker has been awarded to a Black female author. So we’re not exactly doing well on that front. (qtd. in H. Wood)

In the end, the effect of the split was to draw attention to the gaps and biases in the publishing industry as a whole. These gaps are visible because of Evaristo’s identity as a Black woman and because of her own focus on inequity in literary spaces. Note that the critiques are not about who should have won, but rather about the effect of the split itself. There are no suggestions that either author deserved the award more or less. It is the split

itself that opens the opportunity to read the award as representative of the larger structural inequities in how literary prestige or opportunities are dispersed. This is echoed in two small controversies about the media coverage of the 2019 Booker.

One brief and little discussed controversy was the award's coverage by *the Guardian's* which published an article describing Evaristo's book as "obscure," an adjective that made it into the article's original title: "Booker judges split between huge event novel and obscure choice" (Obi-Young). The swift backlash and title change highlight how the split itself brings conflicts in evaluating literary prestige to the forefront of the discussion. In the article, Justine Jordan concludes: "Two extraordinary books, then: but it has to be said that this feels like a fudge, weighing a huge event novel against a more obscure choice and trying to have it both ways" (Jordan). Here Jordan implies what Sam Leith had feared about the implications of the split—that it creates doubts about the legitimacy of the award and a sense that one or both authors were shortchanged. To do so, Jordan leans into the economic and perhaps global perspectives of these novels, and more broadly their authors with Atwood's name holding the higher recognition and economic production in the comparison.

When Jordan's article was published, it received some criticism for how she characterized Evaristo in particular. As writer and journalist Otosirieze Obi-Young argues:

there is nothing obscure about a novel that centres the lives of Black British women like never before . . . Except that this novel only minutes ago made its author the first Black woman and first Black British person to win this prize in a world filled with outstanding Black female writers. Except that Black people, and especially Black women, consistently see their achievements diminished by mainstream media. (Obi-Young)

Obi-Young criticizes Jordan for undervaluing Black female writers, for implying the topic and scope of the novel is marginal rather than “event.” He places this critique within a larger institutional history and narrative around literary prestige. While Jordan may have been writing about the relative global reputations of each winning author, Obi-Young’s critique highlights the conflicting contexts in which Evaristo is being read. On the one hand, Jordan describes the celebrity or status of these authors, how recognizable their author figures or names are within a global anglophone context. On the other hand, Evaristo and her novel are read within a longer history of inequity in literary institutions and prestige. Obi-Young further points to several critical posts on Twitter written in response to Jordan’s article being posted there.⁵⁶ For example, editor Kish Widyratna requests that that *The Guardian* “Please sort yourselves out and fix this headline” (qtd. in Obi-Young). Similarly, author Kaliane Bradley’s post, stated ironically:

loving that an author whose novel is has been a firm reader & critic favourite, who has received an honour or award almost every year since 1999, including multiple awards/accolades in multiple years, who has published 9 books, is “obscure.” (qtd. in Obi-Young)

These responses align with Obi-Young’s insistence on recognizing the historical and structural context in which Evaristo is writing, in highlighting the ways she already meets many of the metrics of literary prestige that Jordan has ignored or undervalued.

Approximately seven minutes after being posted to Twitter, the article’s title was renamed: “Booker Judges Try to Have it Both Ways” (Obi-Young). This small change away from “obscure” in the title (though not in the url or the body of the article) is evidence of the ongoing renegotiations around Evaristo’s author figure. As her authorial

⁵⁶ Twitter has since been renamed X

identity is read in the larger Booker context, there is a stronger conflict between the multiple fields of value it intersects and synthesizes.

The second media coverage flub further highlights how the split itself implicates the Booker in British publishing's racial inequities. In a discussion of the 2019 Turner Prize which split the win amongst the four shortlisted books at the request of the authors, BBC presenter Shaun Ley commented on the differences with the Booker prize where the judges "gave it to Margaret Atwood and another author, who shared the prize between them" (qtd. in Flood, "'Another Author'"). The omission of Evaristo's name from the comment sparked immediate backlash, including a direct critique from Evaristo herself who posted to Twitter: "How quickly & casually they have removed my name from history – the first black woman to win it. This is what we've always been up against, folks" (qtd. in Flood, "'Another Author'"). Here Evaristo enters into the discussions of racial inequities in literary prestige structures or histories. The post quickly garnered support and the BBC issued the following apology:

Our presenter was speaking live when he made the comparison between the Turner and Booker prize results – this part of the item was unscripted and he didn't say Bernardine Evaristo's name at the time. We apologise to her for the offence caused. (qtd. in Flood, "'Another Author'")

The apology focuses on the lack of action ("didn't say") rather than the implication of the omission—that the presenter either did not know or forgot Evaristo's name in the moment. It is an understandable human error, but the uproar it caused speaks to the larger dissatisfaction with the structure of literary publishing, a movement that Evaristo aligns herself with. It also highlights an underlying media narrative of the 2019 split that the Booker was not quite able to absorb: the prize was split between Atwood and an author who might be forgotten or overshadowed in the shared spotlight, not because her novel

wasn't worthy of winning, but because her achievements and her status within literary institutions are undervalued or valued differently than Atwood's in the transmedia, global context of the Booker Prize. The dominate narrative is that this is due to structural inequities (primarily race and gender are named) within how literary and other institutions function. I would add that it marks one entry point for thinking through the many contexts in which authors are read or valued.

Both the Booker Prize and Evaristo used the controversies and extra media coverage to solidify their own perspectives and narratives around their global visibility and status. For the Booker especially, this solidification is enacted through a neutralization of critique. About a week after the award announcement, the Booker Prize Foundation published a post that begins:

So, for all the fuss, the Booker Prize does what the Booker Prize always does. The prize winner always receives a massive sales boost following their victory and this is just what has happened to Bernadine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*. The 2019 joint winner more than doubled its lifetime sales in the five days following the win, selling 5,980 copies, a not-to-be-sniffed-at 1,340 per cent surge in sales week on week. ("The Booker Prize Bounce, Doubled")

Here, critiques of the award decision are relegated to "fuss" and the monetary benefits awarded to Evaristo are prioritized as the most impressive or key fact to focus on alongside assurances that the benefits she saw are equal to those of past winners ("always does," "always receives"). Atwood's more impressive sales (13,400 copies; 191,108 lifetime sales) are then introduced with an understatement that the *Testaments* "has not done too badly either" (Booker Prize Foundation, "The Booker Prize Bounce, Doubled"). The framing works to solidify the Booker's narrative of its influence on markets and to absorb the critiques made against it by proclaiming business as usual. The effect is to

minimize discussion of the potential impact of the win on the Booker's reputation or administration and redirect it to the economic impact on the book and author.

The economic impacts are a clear and quantifiable means of seeing the prize's influence on these authors, but the sales figures are only a small indication of the Booker's influence. Though the Booker itself focuses on economic impacts to minimize critiques of how it functions in the realm of literary prestige, its influence over shaping the global anglophone is visible in interviews with Evaristo that emphasize the many ways in which her win has reframed her career as a British writer to possibly a global one. Her novel was optioned for television, her back catalogue was ordered into reprint, and the release of *Girl, Woman, Other* in the US was brought forward. Evaristo told Rebecca Liu that "everything that's happened to me is testament to the fact that the prize has done what the prize does, which is put writers' careers into another stratosphere" (qtd. in Liu). Furthermore, Evaristo sees the prize as a sort of institutional blessing. A sign that perhaps of the ways her own position is conditioned through the cultural capital she gained in her win. In an interview for *Vanity Fair*, she says:

But what I find fascinating about the Booker is that I've written this book—which some people would call a "queer" book, about black British women, quite radical in terms of its stories and structure—and it's going out there into the world and people are reading it! The prize has given it this stamp of approval. (Evaristo qtd. in Tepper)

Here, Evaristo to some degree echoes the Booker's own narrative of its prestige and influence. It has the power to give approval, to send books "into the world." In the end, the Booker's own narratives around its influence and globality seem to have truth at least in how they actually operate in literary institutions and markets.

The economic impact of the prize cannot be ignored and the language of its influence around global anglophone novels seems to be echoed by journalists, scholars,

and authors alike. Those whom the Booker chooses to include in its inner circle of prestige, see immediate benefits and a shift in their own author figure that reflects some of the prize's own brand or narrative around globality and prestige. What remains is to consider *Girl, Woman, Other* itself and how the novel might make itself accessible to or resist these narrative framings. Despite Evaristo's framing of the novel as "quite radical" it has many qualities that align with Evaristo's general approach of using institutional access or knowledge to invite others into the discourse.

Girl, Woman, Other

Girl, Woman, Other is a novel about the lives of twelve people, mostly British Black women, and their experiences and lives in the UK. While most of the novel takes place between the late twentieth century and the recent present, several chapters take place in the early twentieth century. Therefore, like *White Teeth*, the novel includes a wide range of perspectives and experiences, as well as a large cast of characters. The novel has five numbered chapters and an epilogue; the first four chapters are each split into three subchapters named after a character the subchapter follows. Each of the twelve characters' stories is further divided into numbered sections. The fifth chapter is just divided into numbered sections and has a subtitle of "The Afterparty" to provide context. The novel delves briefly into the depths of each character before pulling back to examine a different one. As Dwight Garner colorfully describes in his review for *The New York Times*: "You begin to feel you are always between terminals at a very large airport, your clothes and toiletries in a little wheelee suitcase behind you" (C1). The characters are connected through a wide range of relationships in the book. For example, some primary characters are mother/daughter, best friends, great-grandmother/grandchild, colleagues,

or teacher/student. The book also loosely links most of the characters through the plot by arranging for them to be at the premiere and afterparty (hence the subtitle of Chapter Five) for one character's (Amma) play at the National Theatre. The style and content of the novel appeal to a broad audience along popular and prestige lines, but especially in its approach to examining the relationship between individual and institutions of cultural capital production.

Much of the limited scholarship on *Girl, Woman, Other* extends the praise of its reviewers to examine more critically its breadth and timeliness. Several scholars discuss how the novel exemplifies contemporary feminisms like transnational, transcultural, or fourth-wave feminism. Though still being theorized, fourth-wave feminism "builds on second- and third-wave Black feminists' call for an inclusive approach to overcome the classism and racism typical of the earlier phases" (Strauss 18). In this way, it focuses more specifically on diversity and building solidarity across intersectional groups. As Sara Strauss explains, this includes national differences: "In its awareness of the intersections that shape women's personal identities and the different forms in which they experience discrimination in patriarchal societies, fourth-wave feminism attempts to mobilize 'women's joint power' on a transnational scale" (19). The novel is well-suited for imagining what this solidarity might look like. As Paula M. L. Moya and Luz M. Jiménez Ruvalcaba compliment, the novel "reshap[es] an understanding of that past" and they note, "[Evaristo] understands that if she wants to make positive change in the direction of social justice, she must first imagine that change" (293). In its alliance with this form of feminism, the novel works to imagine how community and unity can be formed across groups, particularly in a global framework.

Further, since “[r]ace does not function solely within a national frame, and within the boundaries of literary conventions lie intersectional realities that both resist and yet call for representation” (Moya and Jiménez Ruvalcaba 303), the transnational and historical elements of the novel seem of particular appeal to this reading, for the ways it “thematizes transcultural feminism” (Sarıkaya-Şen 309) or might be “considered as one of the foundational literary texts” of the fourth-wave feminist movement (Strauss 16). The novel’s content, form, and style all help contribute to its attention to intersectionality and building community among a diverse set of people. Though Carolina Sánchez-Palencia’s analysis of the novel is focused on its “diverse chronologies” (318), she similarly finds that:

the black British womanhood of [the novel’s] twelve characters is represented intersectionally within a complex matrix of categories of identity—age, class, occupation, sexuality, upbringing—that evidences the relational modes in which belonging and unbelonging are produced in terms other than just race and gender. (326)

In these readings, the novel ultimately contributes to building solidarity either through “ultimately vindicating the possibility to create alliances among nonnormative groups” (Sánchez-Palencia 326) or by “create[ing] empathy with the fictional characters depicted” (Strauss 30). It is the content, themes, format, and style of the novel that combine to create the polyphonic space that has impressed popular and critical readers alike.

The style and approach are a balance between experimenting with form and making the novel accessible to a wide readership. According to Evaristo, “The novel also had to be accessible to the general reader because I don't want my work to appeal only to those with a doctorate in experimental fiction” (*Manifesto* 169). Despite its length, *Girl, Woman, Other*, moves quickly, using a style Evaristo has named “fusion fiction.” Like *Lara*’s style it is a hybrid form, but slightly more like prose than verse. As

Evaristo explains, it is a style “which employs a pro-poetic patterning on the page and non-orthodox punctuation, while fusing the women’s stories together” (*Manifesto* 169). It is a style meant to move nonlinearly and without the rigid stops of conventional prose like periods. Evaristo says, “I loved writing in this form because it allowed me to flow freely—from interiority to exteriority, from the past to the present, from one character’s narrative to the next” (*Manifesto* 169). This style creates moments of insight, empathy, and reader engagement throughout the text. It is particularly powerful in moments of pain or crises, when the style looks more like Evaristo’s verse style of the past. For example, the lines that introduce the section about the children Grace lost:

the first two to announce themselves were washed out in clots of blood
then there was a boy who started cooling down a few hours after the
midwife put him in her arms
until he slowly became marbled (Evaristo, *GWO* 394)⁵⁷

The imagery of these lines imparts the horror of the experience and as the scene continues, Grace’s voice and pain are articulated clearly for the reader. In its representation of these women’s lives, the novel is punctuated with similar scenes of pain like Carole’s contemplation of suicide, the sexual assaults on her and LaTisha, or Penelope’s reaction to being told she’s adopted. But the writing also captures the unique voice of each character in more humorous ways. For example, the opening to Penelope’s section where she, at the time, fourteen year old writes in her diary that her “parents were dull and dispassionate automatons crawling towards their deaths” and “it was unfortunate / because she herself was brimming with vivacity and racing towards a marvellous life that stretched gloriously ahead of her” (Evaristo, *GWO* 276). In these scenes, the novel is

⁵⁷ Citations for *Girl, Woman, Other* are indicated by the abbreviation *GWO*

fresh and engaging, inviting the reader along into the perspectives of each character while also leaving space for critique of those perspectives.

Using its engaging style, *Girl, Woman, Other* acts as an accessible mouthpiece for Evaristo's politics that imagines the relationship between individual and institution, and the possibility for enacting change, in expected and unexpected ways. The novel's attention to institutions of theatre and higher education maintains and expands the critical work of Evaristo's earlier novels. While *Lara* reimagined the history and definition of British identity, *Girl, Woman, Other* reimagines cultural institutions themselves through its characters' experiences with them, in a sometimes overly didactic way. We see this most obviously in the characters of Amma and Roland, each of whom consciously considers the power or status of the individual in larger institutions like theatre or academia. However, the novel also reimagines institutional thinking in less obvious ways, as in through Winsome and her reading group.

Evaristo has spoken at length about her approach to activism and to institutions. In an interview about *Girl, Woman, Other*, several months before her Booker win, Evaristo described her position: "I work within the systems to change them, because I think there is a limit to what you can do when you are outside the power structures" (qtd. in Sethi). For Evaristo, it is more effective to be part of an institution, to be an insider who can enact and negotiate for change. She makes a similar claim in her memoir, published after her Booker win:

The person I am today no longer throws stones at the fortress. I sit inside its chambers having polite, persuasive, and persistent conversations about how best to transform outmoded infrastructures to accommodate those who have been unfairly excluded. The rebel without has become the negotiator within, who understands that we need to sit at the table where the decisions are made, and that enrolling people in conversations is

ultimately more effective than shouting at them (satisfying as that can sometimes be). (Evaristo, *Manifesto* 217–18)

Evaristo does not seem to completely reject approaches to change that come from the outside, but she does suggest it is more effective to work from within. Evaristo imagines herself as part of both the establishment and part of a push for change. She advocates for this as an effective means of shifting the priorities, makeup, and impact of institutions like literary publishing. Of course, this is a position that she already finds herself in and it would be difficult to separate her perspective from that reality. The novel imagines and investigates this relationship between cultural institutions and individuals through Amma, Roland, and Winsome.

Amma is the first character introduced in the novel. She is walking past the Thames on her way to the National Theatre, hours before the debut of her play. As the novel describes her, Amma “spent decades on the fringe, a renegade lobbing hand grenades at the establishment that excluded her . . . until the mainstream began to absorb what was once radical and she found herself hopeful of joining it” (Evaristo, *GWO* 2). This shift in her status within theatre as a cultural institution is one of the tensions between herself and some of her old friends. Sylvester accuses her: “you've dropped your principles for ambition and you're now establishment with a capital E, he said, you're a turncoat” (Evaristo, *GWO* 33). This is a critique Amma completely rejects: “she argued it was her right to be directing at the National and it was the theatre's job to make sure they attracted audiences beyond the middle-class day-trippers from the Home Counties” (Evaristo, *GWO* 33). Amma recognizes the issues are systemic, not personal. She is a member of the national community, and directing is thus part of her rights. Further, she argues: “while troublemaking on the periphery's all well and good, we also have to make

a difference inside the mainstream, we all pay taxes that fund these theatres, right?" (Evaristo, *GWO* 33). For Amma, becoming part of the establishment is also, in part, recognizing the ways in which she is responsible for it and already a part of it.

The novel also recognizes the risks of this approach to institutions through a brief section in "the After-party" focalized through Roland, Amma's friend and her daughter's father. Roland is a successful and popular academic; he is a professor at a London University and has three bestselling books on contemporary life (Evaristo, *GWO* 46). Roland is a class success story, having earned his cultural capital as "the state-educated son of African working-class immigrants" (Evaristo, *GWO* 412). His section offers a foil for considering Amma's own success since "unlike Amma, his career has never been predicated on his perceived identities, as expected of black intellectuals" (Evaristo, *GWO* 414). Roland's critiques of cultural institutions like higher education recognize the unfair burden of representation. From his perspective "neither his blackness nor his gayness are the result of conscious political decisions, the former is genetically determined, the later psychically and psychologically pre-disposed / where they will remain, not as intellectual or activist preoccupations / but rather as footnotes" (Evaristo, *GWO* 415). To achieve success, Roland leans into his class position. Roland reflects that earlier in his career "he'd already decided he wasn't going to be accepted by *L'Établissement*, he was going to *become* it" (Evaristo, *GWO* 415). Roland chooses to adapt and become the institution, rather than try to change it or wait for it to accept him unlike Amma who "waited three decades before being allowed in through the front door" (Evaristo, *GWO* 406).⁵⁸ He

⁵⁸ Interestingly this narrative predicts the similar one that Evaristo shares after her Booker win where a long career precedes a prestigious recognition through woman-centered art:

questions: “why should he carry the burden of representation when it will only hold him back” (Evaristo, *GWO* 415). This choice appears to have larger social consequences for him, at least in the brief windows the novel offers into his life.

Both Amma and Roland are able to critique and move within the cultural and class institutions around them, though their approaches and careers look different. It is clear that both approaches offer success, though the primary difference seems to be in community. While Amma is surrounded by a large number of friends at the party, and is able to emotionally connect with her best friend Dominique over the course of the night, Roland has only one or two unsatisfying conversations with others. His perspective ends with a reflection on the acceptance he yearns for from his daughter: “all she has to say, and really, just *once* shouldn’t be *too* difficult / you done good, Dad” (Evaristo, *GWO* 417). In all, Amma seems much more satisfied with her career choices and while she does seek reassurance as well, it is answered by the people she’s worked with and supported.

Amma, then, seems to be the more straightforward embodiment of Evaristo’s position, but Winsome’s character also provides a less explored alternative. In her analysis of *Mr. Loverman* and *Girl, Woman, Other*, Corneila Photopoulos points out this pattern: “Evaristo’s characters are presented as neoliberal subjects who resource their individuality to become more than ‘respectable’: they become *successful*” (192). They are able to escape “impoverished and underprivileged spaces” (Photopoulos 192). Though, as

“I’ve been in the arts nearly 40 years and for this to happen at the age of sixty has been a staggering experience, especially with a radical, experimental novel positioning black British womanhood at its centre, a third of whom are on the queer spectrum” (Evaristo, “2019”).

she points out, this escape does not change the class structure and rather the novels “illustrat[e] how the neoliberal horizon of possibility reinscribes economic inequities via classed space” (Photopoulos 202). This is enacted through Amma and Roland, both of whom approach inclusion differently, but make no economic changes or shifts to these institutions. They only consider changes in who can partake in the benefits while finding upward socioeconomic mobility for themselves. Winsome’s experience is a little bit different and does not fit as neatly into Photopoulos’s analysis of classed space in the novel.

In London, Winsome and her husband Clovis are working class immigrants who slowly build a stable life after they arrive, meet, and marry in the 1950s; eventually “in the sixties, they settled in Peckham, bought a bomb-damaged house, [and] did it up over the decades” (Evaristo, *GWO* 268). While they see some upward mobility in the UK, there are several social and economic benefits to their retirement in Barbados. Primarily, “the sale of the house in London allowed them to buy this one by the beach” (Evaristo, *GWO* 253). Further, from their work in London, Winsome and Clovis “have a reasonable pension, and won’t have to worry about money for the rest of their lives so long as they stay parsimonious” (Evaristo, *GWO* 253). They thus move up in social class and position in their return to Barbados, seemingly reflecting an inverse of the center/periphery colonial structure that ultimately reinscribes the same dynamics on a globalization framework. However, Winsome’s story highlights the ways cultural value does not need to follow these prescribed flows. On the “periphery,” cultural products like books are evaluated differently and new networks can be created.

Winsome's reading group is one way the novel attempts to imagine creating new networks. The group is made up of "women who'd also returned to Barbados from America, Canada, and Britain" including "a secretary in the civil service in Toronto," "a clerk at the CIA in Virginia," the woman who "ran the first black hairdresser's in Bristol," and "one of Britain's first black schoolteachers" (Evaristo, *GWO* 253). The women come from varied class backgrounds and education. Putting the reading group in the context of the Caribbean's colonial history reveals its significance. Evaristo has written about her father's education as a colonial subject:

Those who grew up in [the British Empire's] colonies, such as my father, were taught by teachers from England who painted a rather rosy picture of the imperial centre. In fact the colonial powers had so little regard for the 'native' subjects in their colonies around the world that they didn't bother to teach them about their own indigenous cultures. My father knew more about snow and the rolling green fields of the English countryside, which he'd never seen, than about the topography of his own country. ("Autobiographical Essay")

Here Evaristo emphasizes the imperial function of or, at minimum, the imperial impact on education during the British Empire's rule. The story of her father is echoed throughout postcolonial literature and criticism. For example, critiques of colonialism's effects on education appear in Odenigbo's advice about exam answers to Ugwu in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. They also appear in myriad ways in *White Teeth*, for example, in the dissection of the school's history and an ironic reappearance of the phrase "an English education" throughout. Similar themes of dissonance or imperial structures of education can be found in Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994) and, relevant for the Caribbean context, Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack Monkey* (1970) or Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* (1985). This connection suggests a critical value to Winsome's reading group as a reconsideration of literary education.

The reading group is a rejection of the established canon of literary value and a reimagining of how it can be more relevant to place. Winsome recounts: "she and the reading group had a big argument, no, it wasn't no argument, it was a debate, the other day, about whether a poem was good because they related to it, or whether it was good in and of itself" (Evaristo, *GWO* 254). Winsome's reframing of the argument as a debate highlights her growing confidence in a more formal and critical, if not academic, space. Further, her group is considering questions that position themselves as authorities and echo former and ongoing debates in academic circles around literary value and canons. The reading group's debate ends when:

Dora said there was no such thing as objective truth and if you think
something's good because it speaks to you
it is
why should Wordsworth or Whitman, T.S. Eliot or Ted Hughes mean
anything special to we people of the Caribbean? (Evaristo, *GWO* 255)

Dora reasserts the women's authority to determine literary value; they are authorities not only of their own opinions but on the literary value of individual books and authors. By recentring "we people of the Caribbean," American or British institutional valuations of anglophone writing become irrelevant. The debate echoes those in literary scholarship history around canon formation, but also reimagines a Caribbean education as one that does not rely on the British standards established during colonialism.

The next line re-enforces this through Winsome's lack of knowledge around these canonical figures: "Winsome made a note to go to the library to look those names up" (Evaristo, *GWO* 255). But the line also suggests a shift in Winsome herself as she takes on a researcher or knowledge-maker role in order to determine her own education. This shift allows Winsome to imagine a change in herself: "her mind buzzed with their debates and she thought of how she could improve her arguments in the future" (Evaristo, *GWO*

255). Winsome is in the process of becoming an authority, imagining taking her place in the philosophical debates around literary value. The novel thus enacts part of what Evaristo imagines as a recognition of the imperative for promoting a broad range of perspectives and stories: “A wider range of voices, cultures, perspectives can only enrich what already exists and will contribute to a more inclusive education system and a more egalitarian society” (“Beyond” 47). However, how these perspectives are incorporated determines how much of a threat they are to cultural institutions. Though Winsome and her reading group establish a possible counter to institutions that determine global anglophone literary value, their influence is ultimately personal and local.

The fact that Evaristo won the Booker for a novel that questions and critiques the narratives and institutions that the Booker itself represents raises an interesting contradiction. However, it is a tension that seems inherent in, and sometimes a source of maintaining influence for, these institutions that function on a larger, often global, scale. Though the characters raise challenges to institutional authority, each of them is easily absorbed or ignored by those same cultural institutions. The Booker Prize is similarly able to use the accessibility of the novel and its contemporary relevance to bolster its own authority through its authorization of its critiques. The novel’s win may not have changed Evaristo’s author figure in the sense of the values and writing she is known for, but it did offer her a more secure, more visible vantage point from which she can continue promoting her own views and goals.

Evaristo as Post-Booker Author Figure

Since the publication of *Girl, Woman, Other* and its subsequent Booker win, Evaristo has taken advantage of her increased platform by continuing to stake her claim

within British cultural institutions. She published two nonfiction books in the wake of her Booker win, a memoir, *Manifesto: On Never Giving Up (2021)*, and *Look Again: Feminism (2021)*, a book in a series sponsored by Tate Britain where writers reflect on different aspects of the collection. In *Manifesto*, she builds on the narrative of her life and work, solidifying the aspects that infuse all her work leading up to her Booker: social history, personal experiences of identity, relationships, and activism. She ends the book with “Evaristo’s Manifesto” a short, two-page description of the values she has developed over her life. Unsurprisingly, many of these have to do with creativity and writing or storytelling and they provide a framework for understanding her career and author figure, particularly post-Booker win.

This is especially true of the first point in her manifesto list: “Everyone should have the opportunity to create, share & consume stories that reflect their cultures & communities, so that we all feel equally validated” (Evaristo, *Manifesto* 223). In many ways, Evaristo has consistently pushed for one thing: wider diversity in the arts. From her theatre company to co-founding Spread the Word to *The Complete Works*, many of her efforts throughout her career create tangible differences in whose stories are seen and heard. This is also true within her novels where she makes space for lesser told stories of Black British history.

She further bolsters her career and writing choices with visible institutional roles, post-Booker. In the fall of 2021, Evaristo was selected to be the 19th President of the Royal Society of Literature, a charity that supports writing and authorship throughout the UK. Her current tenure is 2022-2026. This is a development of the work she was already doing—she was elected as a Fellow in 2004, has participated in many of its events and

programs, and has served on the governing council as a Vice Chair. Still, her selection is significant: “She is the second woman and first writer of colour to hold the position since the RSL was founded in 1820, and she is also the first president who was not educated at Oxford, Cambridge or Eton” (“*Bernardine Evaristo*”). Though it is not a governing position, Evaristo is able to further the work of the charity by associating it with her author figure, while publicly encouraging its council to continue the work that most aligns with her own goals, supporting writers and increasing diversity in publication. In the RSL’s announcement of Evaristo’s selection, Evaristo herself said of the honor:

Literature is not a luxury, but essential to our civilisation. I am so proud, therefore, to be the figurehead of such an august and robust literature organisation that is so actively and urgently committed to being inclusive of the widest range of outstanding writers from every demographic and geographical location in Britain, and to reaching marginalised communities through literature projects, including introducing young people in schools to some of Britain’s leading writers who visit, teach and discuss their work with them. (qtd. in Callaghan)

In this quote, Evaristo affirms the prestige and importance of the RSL (“essential,” “august,” “robust”) while praising the specific ways the organization’s work aligns with her own goal to see many different groups of people have opportunities to publish.

This is also seen in her involvement with the Sky Arts RSL Writers Awards, which ran in 2021 and 2022. The award “focused on discovering and nurturing talented emerging writers of colour, working across different literary forms. The scheme was developed in order to counteract the underrepresentation of British writers of colour” (“Sky Arts”). It chose one upcoming artist in each of five categories: fiction, non-fiction, playwriting, poetry, and screenwriting. Each year, the five winners received ten mentoring sessions with an assigned RSL Fellow as well as two with Evaristo, who served as Ambassador for the award. Winners emphasize the networking aspect of the

program and its ability create opportunities by raising their author profile. As 2021 fiction winner, Christina Fonthes said, “We have Bernardine Evaristo’s name behind us” (qtd. in *Celebrating the Sky Arts RSL Writers Awards*). Evaristo is not only supporting the general work of the program, but directly supporting its winners through her time, advice, and by lending a small amount of the prestige associated with her name, and by extension, her author figure.

In addition to the RSL presidency, Evaristo accepted several other honors after her novel won the Booker that highlighted her new, sometimes international, institutional prestige. In 2021, she became the ceremonial President of her alma mater, Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance. Of the role, Evaristo said: “I think it’s really good to have a black woman as the head, even if it’s the titular head of a drama school, because it makes a very powerful statement” (qtd. in Bakare). Like so many of her other awards and roles, Evaristo is the first black female president of a major drama school and “the appointment makes Evaristo one of the few people of colour to stand as figurehead of a major higher education institution in the UK” (Bakare). The role places her among British celebrities with global name recognition.; other UK drama college presidents “include[e] Dame Judi Dench (Mountview), Benedict Cumberbatch (Lamda) and Kenneth Branagh (Rada)” (Bakare). Since 2019 she has also been awarded a number of other honors including, an OBE (2020), named an Honorary Fellow at two UK universities, awarded at least seven Honorary Doctorates, and selected for an International Honorary Membership to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2021) (“Honours”). The last honor, in particular, highlights the growth of her prestige across national boundaries.

Evaristo's growing celebrity and cultural capital give her additional leverage to enact one of her other manifesto points: "Personal success is most meaningful when used to uplift communities otherwise left behind. We are all interconnected & must look after each other" (*Manifesto* 223). It is not enough to believe that there should be room for other voices, Evaristo emphasizes that action is needed. For her, success is more meaningful when it is used to help others succeed. Her institutional roles directly contribute to this goal, but so do the opportunities she is able to take advantage of by leveraging her institutional prestige. For example, she was chosen to participate in the 2023-2024 Rolex Mentor & Protege Arts Initiative as a mentor to Ghanaian author Ayesha Harruna Attah. Evaristo sees her mentor role as one about sharing her resources: "We writers support each other face-to-face by going to events and book launches and hosting discussions. That's something that has been missing from Ayesha's writing career, and so part of my role is to bring that to her" (qtd. in Beighton). She also enacts this manifesto point through her curation of a book series, *Black Britain: Writing Back*,⁵⁹ that aims to find new readership for rediscovered Black British writing of different genres and to bring visibility to these stories that might otherwise be forgotten.⁶⁰ Evaristo picks and writes introductions for these reprinted books. In marketing for the series, she pointed to

⁵⁹ In its title, the series seems to be building on the postcolonial concept of "writing back" as coined by Salman Rushdie and theorized by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back* (1989). As I discuss in the introduction, writing back considers the center/periphery model of empire and the relation of authors from the "periphery" to the center in their works that reimagine or challenge British anglophone hegemony. Here the series title suggests a similar challenging of Black British literary history or canon.

⁶⁰ There are thirteen books published in the series as of November 2023. ("Black Britain").

what she sees as its importance: “Each generation builds on those who went before and I’m keenly interested that today’s writers and readers will engage with novels that still feel current in their complex narrativisations of Black lives” (“Bernardine Evaristo Rediscovered”). This work aligns with her general approach to examine the narrative of history and learn from that past rather than impressions of it.

One final relevant manifesto point: “Society operates via powerful & often impenetrable networks that uphold its tribal hierarchies, so we must establish our own systems as countermeasure” (Evaristo, *Manifesto* 224). As I suggested earlier, *Girl, Woman, Other*, tries to examine and reimagine these networks and new systems. One small way we might see Evaristo enacting this piece of her manifesto is through her website and social media. Each year since 2019, Evaristo has posted an “Annual Round-Up” to her website that chronicles Evaristo’s professional activities for the year. This includes mentions of any publications or prominent interviews she has given as well as talks, interviews she’s conducted, prizes she’s judged, the activities or highlights of the organizations she holds positions in, and many similar activities. These “Round Ups” thus serve multiple purposes—telling a story about Evaristo, sharing some of the spotlight with the community that surrounds her, creating a network between her and her readers that intersects but is not directly created within literary institutions. For example, in the first one, “2019”, Evaristo celebrates the new publications of poets that were part of *The Complete Works* and names the winners of prizes she judged that year and the last two years of winners for the prize she founded, The Brunel International African Poetry Prize. In adding the blog post, Evaristo recognizes the increased attention to her website and her voice in the months following her Booker win and creates another space to

highlight not only her own accomplishments, but to lend a small piece of the spotlight to the other organizers, prize winners, and writers that she interacts with throughout the year by naming them and their work, sharing links to prizes and organizations, and sharing images of them alongside photos of her own accomplishments. She is able to capitalize on that attention to her author figure to continue sharing her perspective but also to make space in the spotlight for others. She also directs readers to her social media as a space they might hear more about her perspective: “I will post on social media about books I've read and loved, and might even do this on Goodreads” (Evaristo, “2019”). There are also direct links to her social media at the bottom of each page of her site. In this redirection, Evaristo encourages readers to join her in conversations about literature outside of more traditional institutions. Though social media is a key part of any brand’s marketing (including authors’) it is still a gesture that hopes for creating space for networks and conversations that are not directed by literary institutions themselves.

As Evaristo’s growing list of accolades suggests, the Booker did indeed provide her with opportunities and greater name recognition. Like the prize itself, she capitalizes on attention and prestige to establish herself further as an institutional insider. As a result, she exemplifies the ability of literary institutions to perpetuate their own influence through absorption and authorization. Her insistence that she is creating the leverage necessary to encourage literary institutions, but particularly publishers, to change, opens the possibility for a more optimistic understanding of these processes. While the idea that this can lead to visible structural change seems less clear, Evaristo might still represent the possibilities for a global anglophone author figure as a model for consistent, incremental, changes in the distribution and authorization of cultural capital.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In the end, we can see shifts in the last two decades to the structure, priorities, and function of the author figure as technology, reading, and audience/author relationships have changed. The novel, as an adaptable form, cannot remain the same in the face of this restructuring of social, economic, and cultural relationship. Through my analyses of four contemporary authors and their writings, I have traced the interwoven signification of author figure and novel form for the global anglophone contemporary. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Kamila Shamsie, Zadie Smith, and Bernardine Evaristo are situated as author figures to exemplify global anglophone conceptualizations due to their global biographies, international cultural capital, and a thematically and structurally global body of work. Close reading analyses of these authors' novels, media coverage, and other writings illustrate how the contemporary global anglophone novel reflects and responds to the changing sociohistorical and cultural contexts of the twenty-first century.

More specifically, a study of Adiche alongside *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah* exemplifies what it means for the author figure to be global. In my readings, I proposed that the author figure is a portable framework and that looking at author figures within texts created a metalepsis that creates meaning for understanding the value placed on authorial voice in postcolonial literature and how that authority has been democratized in global anglophone novels. Next, I argued that attention to Shamsie's author figure, as it informs and adds signification to her novels *Burnt Shadows* and *Home Fire*, emphasizes the role of audience and reader in maintaining the political thrust of postcolonial frameworks in a globalized world. In other words, Shamsie and her works

can help us define and imagine a changing, diverse audience. In my discussion of Smith, I considered how global author and audience impact what global novel style can be, especially for an author like Smith who is primarily concerned with making connections with her reader. Using Smith's most stylistically interesting novels, *White Teeth* and *NW*, I explored the role novel style plays in shaping how authorial authority is created and in making space for author and reader to find meaning together. Finally, I looked at the interplay between global author and global institution, specifically the Booker Prize. I examined the author figure's dialectical function between adaptable narrative and leverage for change as illustrated by Evaristo's institutional authorization and the consideration of cultural narratives of resistance in *Lara* and *Girl, Woman, Other*. Throughout the dissertation, I outlined how elements of the global novel interweave, influence, and create the author figure and the relationships it mediates: intermediality and intertextuality being two primary ones. This form of the novel builds on postcolonial frameworks to reflect back its own global production, and thereby make space for accessible critiques of that production through its structural, thematic, and formal elements.

To return to the first of my key questions: What is the function of the author figure for the global anglophone novel? I have aimed to show how the author figure functions as a paratextual and transmedial narrative that mediates between text, author, audience, and institution. These characteristics of mediation are key to the way authorship is conceived and encountered in the twenty-first century. This is true for the global anglophone novel that holds an intermediary position between institutions and industry and also for the authors and audience who write them from transnational and

intermediary positions. As such, the author figure maintains a fixed point of intersection from which to encounter and read the novel. Further, it enhances or authorizes critical readings that work against decontextualizing forces of globalization in the novels through the ways it slips into the layers of the text and both contextualizes novels and opens the possibility for leveraging change.

Articulating the author figure and using it as an analytical object provides some answers for my second question: How does an analysis of the author figure shed light on the development or characteristics of the global anglophone novel as it differentiates itself from the postcolonial novel? A focus on the author figure forces a consideration of the location of texts and authors within a metatextual, intertextual, historicized framework. What it reveals is that the global anglophone novel develops from and alongside traditionally postcolonial forms of the novel. Novels of this type share an interest in examining hegemonic power structures but extend the intertextuality and hybridity of postcolonial novels to consider contemporary identities and relationships. These novels reimagine global history through new connections that make visible the production of hegemonic categories, but also themselves. A final characteristic is the engagement with the audience and an attention to making space for accessible critiques of globalization or other structures that perpetuate inequality.

My research fits within ongoing discourses around authorship in several areas of scholarship and should be of interest to those in fields like postcolonialism, sociology of literature, or similar. My close readings and analyses are built on postcolonial, production, and media studies scholarship and continue the ongoing analyses of the production or function of the author as well as the literary novel's transnational and

global dimensions. Underlying this work is an assumption of the importance of particularity, of the need to attend to intersections and borders to look for collective possibility when imagining the global. As the global anglophone endures and develops as a critical category, work is needed to align contemporary authors with and to better illustrate a broader understanding of the term. In this dissertation, I have worked to illustrate one possible approach to building an understanding of the global anglophone through attention to its theorizations and articulations in the literature and author figures it produces.

Considerations of the global dimensions of literature have gone through several iterations of study over the last half a century or more, including banners for transnational and world approaches to literature and other fields. Each category has its own inflections and its own tensions, but we are now at a point where more can be seen and said about this transition between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mohanty frames the difficulty of finding critical terminology this way: “we are still working with a very imprecise and inadequate analytical language. All we can have access to at given moments is the analytical language that most clearly approximates the features of the world as we understand it” (227). One way we might understand “the world” is through the literature it produces. The authors I have considered here have explored, in different ways, the possibilities for global connection, as well as the barriers that stand in the way. As readers, we must respond by developing critical language and perspectives that also consider these characteristics of our world.

REFERENCES

- Abba, Abba A. "Remediating Biafra: Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* as a Symbolic Vehicle of Postwar Reconciliation." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1–17. *ProQuest*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2979/reseafrilite.51.4.01>.
- "About." *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*, <https://www.chimamanda.com/about/>. Accessed 6 May 2022.
- "About Us." *Spread the Word*, www.spreadtheword.org.uk/about-us/. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.
- Abram, Nicola. "Theatre of Black Women." *Black British Women's Theatre: Intersectionality, Archives, Aesthetics*, edited by Nicola Abram, Springer International, 2020, pp. 23–84. *Springer Link*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51459-4_2.
- "Activism & Advocacy." *Bernardine Evaristo*, <https://bevaristo.com/activism/>. Accessed 3 Dec. 2023.
- Adebanwi, Wale. "'My Book Should Provoke a Conversation'--Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie." *Conversations with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*, edited by Daria Tunca, UP of Mississippi, 2020, pp. 28–39. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6247166.
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. "African 'Authenticity' and the Biafran Experience." *Transition*, vol. 99, no. 1, 2008, pp. 42–53. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/251543.
- . *Americanah*. Anchor Books, 2014.
- . *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Anchor Books, 2007.
- . "Shut up and Write." *New Statesman*, vol. 148, no. 5453, 11 Jan. 2019, pp. 38–43. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/docview/2166949540/abstract/9EC12CC1A12841F3PQ/1.
- Ahmed, Rehana. "Towards an Ethics of Reading Muslims: Encountering Difference in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*." *Textual Practice*, vol. 35, no. 7, July 2021, pp. 1145–61. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2020.1731582>.
- Akpome, Aghogho. "Intertextuality and Influence: Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006)." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 53, no. 5, Sept. 2017, pp. 530–42. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2017.1333449>.
- Alam, Muhammad Badar, et al. "'I Know Most Readers in Pakistan Can't Read My

- Work Because I Write in English’: Kamila Shamsie.” *Herald Magazine*, 12 Nov. 2018, <https://herald.dawn.com/news/1154009>.
- Allardice, Lisa. “Zadie Smith: ‘I Get in Trouble When I Talk about the State of the Nation.’” *The Guardian*, 26 Aug. 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/aug/26/zadie-smith-i-get-in-trouble-when-i-talk-about-the-state-of-the-nation>.
- Amazon.com. “Soul Tourists: Evaristo, Bernardine.” *Amazon*, <https://www.amazon.com/Soul-Tourist-Bernardine-Evaristo/dp/0140297820>. Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.
- Anam, Nasia. “Introduction: Forms of the Global Anglophone.” *Forms of the Global Anglophone*, cluster of *Post45: Contemporaries*, edited by Nasia Anam, Feb. 2019, post45.org/2019/02/introduction-forms-of-the-global-anglophone/.
- . “Loose Canons: The Global Anglophone Novel and the Failures of Universalism.” *Interventions*, Jan. 2023, pp. 1–21. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2022.2161062>.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 2006. *ACLS Humanities EBook*, hdl.handle.net/2027/heb01609.0001.001.
- Anjaria, Ulka. “The Realist Impulse and the Future of Postcoloniality.” *Novel*, vol. 49, no. 2, Aug. 2016, pp. 278–94, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-3509035>.
- Anyadike, Chima. “The Global North in Achebe’s *Arrow of God* and Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*.” *The Global South*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2008, pp. 139–49. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40339264.
- Apter, Emily S. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. Verso, 2013.
- Ashcroft, Bill, et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203426081>.
- Bakare, Lanre. “Evaristo Says ‘powerful Statement’ to Be First Black Female Head of UK Drama School.” *The Guardian*, 10 Dec. 2020, www.theguardian.com/books/2020/dec/10/evaristo-says-powerful-statement-to-be-first-black-female-head-of-uk-drama-school.
- Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 4th ed., U of Toronto P, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5042382.
- . “Over-Writing as Un-Writing: Descriptions, World-Making, and Novelistic Time.”

- The Novel, Volume 2*, edited by Franco Moretti, Princeton UP, 2006, pp. 571–610. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv27tctsx.39>.
- Banerjee, Debjani. “From Cheap Labor to Overlooked Citizens: Looking for British Muslim Identities in Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire*.” *South Asian Review*, vol. 41, no. 3–4, Oct. 2020, pp. 288–302. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02759527.2020.1835141>.
- Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*. Edited & translated by Stephen Heath, Hill and Wang, 1977.
- Beighton, Rochelle. “Why Booker Prize-Winning Author Bernardine Evaristo Is Mentoring Ghanaian Writer Ayesha Harruna Attah.” *CNN Wire*, 9 June 2023. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A752369664/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmarkAONE&xid=3eb291bc.
- Bennett, Andrew. *The Author*. Routledge, 2004. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203003312>.
- Bentley, Nick. “Trailing Postmodernism: David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas*, Zadie Smith’s *NW*, and the Metamodern.” *English Studies*, vol. 99, no. 7, Oct. 2018, pp. 723–43. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838X.2018.1510611>.
- Bergholtz, Benjamin. “‘Certainty in Its Purest Form’: Globalization, Fundamentalism, and Narrative in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*.” *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 57, no. 4, 2017, pp. 541–68. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/pub/19/article/664573.
- “Bernardine Evaristo.” *Bernardine Evaristo*, bevaristo.com/. Accessed 3 Dec. 2023.
- Bernardine Evaristo [@BernardineEvari]. “Now Open for Submissions for a Second Year. The Brunel International African Poetry Prize (2012-2022) Taken on by the @AfricanPoetryBF Who Renamed and Reconfigured It. Thanks @brittlepaper for Posting. <https://t.co/QT5vFfRbNv>.” *Twitter*, 16 Oct. 2023, <https://x.com/BernardineEvari/status/1713793429946208660>.
- “Bernardine Evaristo Rediscovered Six Novels by Black Writers for Black Britain: Writing Back Series.” *Penguin Books UK*, 28 Oct. 2020, <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2020/10/black-britain-writing-back-bernardine-evaristo-hamish-hamilton-series/>.
- Betts, Tara. “White Teeth.” *Mosaic Literary Magazine*, no. 9, 30 June 2000, p. 37. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/magazines/white-teeth/docview/217448535/se-2?accountid=14270.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge Classics, 2004.
- Bissell, Sally. “Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Americanah*.” *Library Journal*, vol. 138,

no. 8, May 2013, pp. 67–68. *Gale Academic OneFile*,
link.gale.com/apps/doc/A327356853/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-
AONE&xid=2b3f15b8.

“Black Britain: Writing Back.” *Penguin Books UK*,
www.penguin.co.uk/series/bbwb/black-britain-writing-back.

Bolonik, Kera. “Memory, Witness, and War: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Talks with Bookforum.” *Bookforum*, vol. 14, no. 4, Dec. 2007. *ProQuest*,
www.proquest.com/magazines/memory-witness-war/docview/2039490851/.

Booker Prize Foundation. “About the Booker Prize.” *The Booker Prizes*,
thebookerprizes.com/booker-prize/about-the-booker-prize. Accessed 11 Dec.
2023.

---. “Booker Prize Facts and Figures.” *The Booker Prizes*, 1 Aug. 2023,
thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/features/booker-prize-facts-and-figures.

---. *The Booker Prize 2024 Rules & Submissions*.
thebookerprizes.com/sites/default/files/2023-12/Booker_2024_Rules_141223-
R2.pdf. Accessed 1 Jan. 2024.

---. “The Booker Prize Bounce, Doubled.” *The Booker Prizes*, Oct. 2019,
thebookerprizes.com/booker-prize/news/booker-prize-bounce-doubled. Internet
Archive Wayback Machine,
web.archive.org/web/20210509054536/https://thebookerprizes.com/booker-
prize/news/booker-prize-bounce-doubled.

---. “The Booker Prize Story.” *The Booker Prizes*, thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-prize-
story. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Edited
by Randal Johnson, Columbia UP, 1993.

---. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Translated by Susan
Emanuel, Polity Press, 1996.

Bowers, Maggie Ann. “Asia’s Europes: Anti-Colonial Attitudes in the Novels of
Ondaatje and Shamsie.” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 51, no. 2, Mar.
2015, pp. 184–95. *Taylor and Francis Online*,
https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2015.1012815.

Brouillette, Sarah. *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*. Palgrave
Macmillan, 2007.

Brown, Stewart. Review of *Lara* by Bernardine Evaristo. *World Literature Today*, vol.
73, no. 1, 1999, pp. 83–84. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/40154568.

- “Brunel International African Poetry Prize.” *African Poetry Book Fund*, <https://africanpoetrybf.unl.edu/contest-prizes/the-brunel-international-african-poetry-prize/>. Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.
- Burke, Seán. *Authorship*. Edinburgh UP, 1995. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.libproxy.temple.edu/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrs61.
- Busse, Kristina. “The Return of the Author.” *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, John Wiley & Son, 2013, pp. 48–68. *Wiley Online Library*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118505526.ch3>.
- Callaghan, Morgan. “Bernardine Evaristo Announced as New President of the RSL.” *Royal Society of Literature*, 30 Nov. 2021, rsliterature.org/bernardine-evaristo-announced-as-new-president-of-the-rsl/.
- Carastathis, Anna. *Intersectionality: Origins, Contestations, Horizons*. University of Nebraska Press, 2016. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4694113.
- Carlucci, Paul. “Americanah [Book Review].” *allAfrica.Com*, May 2013. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A330426735/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=58443970.
- Celebrating the Sky Arts RSL Writers Awards*. The Royal Society of Literature, 2023. *YouTube*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcbBeDOBoHY.
- Chambers, Claire. “A Comparative Approach to Pakistani Fiction in English.” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 47, no. 2, May 2011, pp. 122–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2011.557182>.
- Cheah, Pheng. *What Is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*. Duke University Press, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822374534>.
- Cheuse, Alan. “Review of Half of a Yellow Sun.” *World Literature Today*, vol. 81, no. 1, 2007, pp. 7–7. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40159342.
- Childress, Clayton. *Under the Cover*. Princeton UP, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1vxm7zv>. *JSTOR*.
- Childs, Peter, and James Green. “Zadie Smith.” *Aesthetics and Ethics in Twenty-First Century British Novels: Zadie Smith, Nadeem Aslam, Hari Kunzru and David Mitchell*, Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 31–55. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1334423.

- “Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.” *Gale Literature: Contemporary Authors*, Gale, 2021.
Gale Literature: Contemporary Authors,
link.gale.com/apps/doc/H1000157547/CA?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-CA&xid=359e0d5f.
- Chu, Andrea Long. “How Zadie Smith Lost Her Teeth.” *Vulture*, 5 Sept. 2023,
www.vulture.com/article/zadie-smith-the-fraud-review.html.
- Clements, Madeline. “Stranger Intimacies — The Novels of Kamila Shamsie.” *Writing Islam from a South Asian Muslim Perspective: Rushdie, Hamid, Aslam, Shamsie*, edited by Madeline Clements, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016, pp. 122–54,
https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137554383_5.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.” *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1991, pp. 1241–300. *HeinOnline*,
heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/stflr43&i=1257.
- Croft, Susan. “Theatre of Black Women.” *Unfinished Histories*, Nov. 2013,
www.unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/theatre-of-black-women/.
- Crowley, Dustin. “How Did They Come to This?: Afropolitanism, Migration, and Displacement.” *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2018, pp. 125–46. *ProQuest*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2979/reseafritelite.49.2.08>.
- Davidson, Guy, and Nicola Evans. *Literary Careers in the Modern Era*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4008759.
- de Fátima Silva, Maria. “Antigone.” *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Sophocles*, edited by Rosanna Lauriola and Kyriakos N. Demetriou, BRILL, 2017, pp. 391–474. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4848156.
- Duce, Violeta. “Social Media and Female Empowerment in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah*.” *The European Legacy*, vol. 26, no. 3–4, May 2021, pp. 243–56. *Taylor and Francis Online*,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2021.1891667>.
- Dyer, Richard. *Stars*. Revised, BFI, 1998.
- Emre, Merve. *Paraliterary: The Making of Bad Readers in Postwar America*. U of Chicago P, 2017. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4942150.
- English, James F. “Everywhere and Nowhere: The Sociology of Literature After ‘the Sociology of Literature.’” *New Literary History*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2010, pp. v–xxiii. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/article/400848.

- . *The Economy of Prestige*. Harvard UP, 2005. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3300174.
- English, James F., and John Frow. "Literary Authorship and Celebrity Culture." *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*, edited by James F. English, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2008, pp. 39–57. *Wiley Online Library*,
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470757673.ch2>.
- Erwin, Lee. "Domesticating the Subaltern in the Global Novel in English." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 47, no. 3, Sept. 2012, pp. 325–39. *SAGE Journals*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989412451589>.
- Esplin, Marlene. "The Right Not to Translate: The Linguistic Stakes of Immigration in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2018, pp. 73–86. *ProQuest*,
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2979/reseafritelite.49.2.05>.
- Evaristo, Bernardine. "2019." *Bernardine Evaristo*, bevaristo.com/2019-2/. Accessed 3 Dec. 2023.
- . "Autobiographical Essay." *Gale Literature: Contemporary Authors*, Gale, 2023. *Gale In Context: Biography*,
link.gale.com/apps/doc/H1090150498/BIC?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-BIC&xid=82c22c7c.
- . "Beyond the Great White Male." *New Statesman*, vol. 149, no. 5541, 9 Oct. 2020, pp. 44–47. *ProQuest*,
www.proquest.com/docview/2450789083/abstract/1DF4501A643342C1PQ/25.
- . *Girl, Woman, Other*. Black Cat, 2019.
- . *Lara*. Angela Royal Publishing, 1997.
- . *Manifesto : On Never Giving Up*. Grove Press, 2022.
- . *Soul Tourists*. Penguin, 2020.
- Falola, Toyin, and Ogechukwu Ezekwem. "Scholarly Trends, Issues, and Themes: Introduction." *Writing the Nigeria-Biafra War*, edited by Toyin Falola and Ogechukwu Ezekwem, 1st ed., Boydell and Brewer, 2016, pp. 1–14,
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781782047735.003>.
- Flood, Alison. "'Another Author': Outrage after BBC Elides Bernardine Evaristo's Booker Win." *The Guardian*, 4 Dec. 2019,
www.theguardian.com/books/2019/dec/04/another-author-outrage-after-bbc-elides-bernardine-evaristo-booker-win.

- . "Backlash after Booker Awards Prize to Two Authors." *The Guardian*, 15 Oct. 2019, www.theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/15/bernardine-evaristo-margaret-atwood-share-booker-prize-award.
- . "Gaby Wood, Head of Books at Daily Telegraph, Appointed as New Literary Director of Booker Prize Foundation." *The Guardian*, 30 Apr. 2015, www.theguardian.com/books/2015/apr/30/gaby-wood-head-of-books-daily-telegraph-new-literary-director-booker-prize-foundation.
- Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" *Textual Strategies*, edited by Josue V. Harari, Cornell UP, 1979, pp. 141–60. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.libproxy.temple.edu/stable/10.7591/j.ctvr7f6kr.8.
- Fowler, Chris. "Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Half of a Yellow Sun." *The Bookseller*, no. 5273, Mar. 2007, pp. 13–14. *Gale Literature Resource Center*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A164104433/LitRC?u=temple_main&sid=summon&xid=42bfaadf.
- "Free Verse Report." *Spread the Word*, www.spreadtheword.org.uk/free-verse-report/. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.
- Freedgood, Elaine. "Hetero-Ontologicality, or Against Realism." *English Studies in Africa*, vol. 57, no. 1, Jan. 2014, pp. 92–100, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00138398.2014.916913>.
- Ganguly, Debjani. "Angloglobalism, Multilingualism and World Literature." *Interventions*, vol. 25, no. 5, July 2023, pp. 601–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2023.2175418>.
- . *This Thing Called the World : The Contemporary Novel as Global Form*. Durham : Duke UP, 2016.
- Garner, Dwight. "A Novelish, Polyphonic Eruption." *The New York Times*, Nov. 2019, p. C1(L). *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A604760135/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=189da4f8.
- Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Translated by Jane E Lewin, Cornell UP, 1980.
- . *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Janet E. Lewin, Cambridge UP, 1997.
- Gikandi, Simon. "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Culture." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2001, pp. 3–8. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3820418.
- , editor. *The Novel in Africa and the Caribbean Since 1950*. Oxford UP, 2016.

- Glass, Loren. *Authors Inc.* New York UP, 2004. *JSTOR*,
<http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.temple.edu/stable/j.ctt155jkc9>.
- Gopal, Priyamvada. "Of Capitalism and Critique: 'Af-Pak' Fiction in the Wake of 9/11." *South-Asian Fiction in English: Contemporary Transformations*, edited by Alex Tickell, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016, pp. 21–36. *Springer Link*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-40354-4_2.
- Goyal, Yogita. *Runaway Genres: The Global Afterlives of Slavery*. New York UP, 2019.
- Gray, Jonathan. *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. New York UP, 2010. *ACLS Humanities EBook*,
<hdl.handle.net/2027/heb31973.0001.001>.
- . "When Is the Author?" *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp. 88–111. *Wiley Online Library*,
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118505526.ch5>.
- Gray, Richard. "Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis." *American Literary History*, vol. 21, no. 1, Mar. 2009, pp. 128–51,
<https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajn061>.
- Griswold, Wendy. *Bearing Witness*. Princeton UP, 2000. *JSTOR*,
<www.jstor.org.libproxy.temple.edu/stable/j.ctv346rps>.
- Grossman, Lev. "TIME Person of the Year: You." *TIME Magazine*, vol. 168, no. 26, Dec. 2006, pp. 38–41. *EBSCOhost*,
<search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=23469016&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- . "White Teeth." *All-TIME 100 Novels*, 11 Jan. 2010,
<entertainment.time.com/2005/10/16/all-time-100-novels/slide/white-teeth-2000-by-zadie-smith/>.
- Guarracino, Serena. "Writing 'so Raw and True': Blogging in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*." *Between*, vol. 4, no. 8, 8, Nov. 2014, pp. 1–27,
<https://doi.org/10.13125/2039-6597/1320>.
- "Half of a Yellow Sun." *Publishers Weekly*, vol. 253, no. 26, 26 June 2006, pp. 26–27. *ProQuest*,
<www.proquest.com/docview/197086719/abstract/A3AFE22C3E6D4E3DPQ/1>.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, pp. 222–37.
- Head, Dominic. "Zadie Smith's White Teeth." *Contemporary British Fiction*, edited by Richard J. Lane et al., Polity Press, 2003, pp. 106–19.

- Heaney, Seamus. “‘Me’ as in ‘Metre’: On Translating *Antigone* .” *Rebel Women: Staging Ancient Greek Drama Today*, edited by Stephen Wilmer and John Dillon, Bloomsbury, 2005, pp. 169–73. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1715657.
- Hirsch, Afua. “Judging the Booker Prize: ‘I’m Proud of Our Decision.’” *The Guardian*, 16 Oct. 2019, www.theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/16/booker-prize-winners-margaret-atwood-bernardine-evaristo-judge.
- Holmes, Christopher. “The Novel’s Third Way: Zadie Smith’s ‘Hysterical Realism.’” *Reading Zadie Smith: The First Decade and Beyond*, edited by Philip Tew, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 141–54. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1507639.
- “Home.” *The Complete Works*, 25 Oct. 2017, thecompleteworkspoetry.wordpress.com/.
- “Honours.” *Bernardine Evaristo*, bevaristo.com/honours/. Accessed 3 Dec. 2023.
- Hoover, Danise. “White Teeth.” *Booklist*, vol. 96, no. 15, 1 Apr. 2000, p. 1436. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link-gale-com.libproxy.temple.edu/apps/doc/A61934504/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=33e058bd.
- Horton, Emily. “‘How Did It Come to This’: Post 9/11 Statism and the Politics of J’Accuse in Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows*.” *Women’s Fiction and Post-9/11 Contexts*, edited by Peter Childs et al., Lexington Books, 2014, pp. 191–205. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1832682.
- Houser, Tammy Amiel. “Zadie Smith’s *NW*: Unsettling the Promise of Empathy.” *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 58, no. 1, 2017, pp. 116–48. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26445560.
- Howe, Jeff. “Your Web, Your Way.” *TIME Magazine*, vol. 168, no. 26, Dec. 2006, pp. 60–61. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=23469020&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Huggan, Graham. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*. Routledge, 2001.
- Ilott, Sarah. “Zadie Smith’s Narratives of the Absurd: A Social Vision Represented through Humor.” *Reading Contemporary Black British and African American Women Writers*, edited by Jean Wyatt and Sheldon George, Routledge, 2020, pp. 161–77. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, https://doi-org.libproxy.temple.edu/10.4324/9780429199271.

- Jaggi, Maya. "When Worlds Collide." *The Guardian*, 7 Mar. 2009, www.theguardian.com/books/2009/mar/07/burnt-shadows-kamila-shamsie-review.
- Jain, Jayana. "How Did It Come to This?: Reconfiguring Borders in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Burnt Shadows*." *Thinking Past 'Post-9/11,'* Routledge India, 2021. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, <https://doi-org.libproxy.temple.edu/10.4324/9781003172321>.
- James, David. "Wounded Realism." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2013, pp. 204–14. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org.libproxy.temple.edu/stable/43297914.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Cornell UP, 1982.
- Johnson, Derek. "Participation Is Magic." *A Companion to Media Authorship*, edited by Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp. 133–57. *Wiley Online Library*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118505526.ch7>.
- Jones, Radhika, and Lev Grossman. "Love in the Time of Globalization." *TIME Magazine*, vol. 181, no. 18, May 2013, p. 57. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=87555596&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Jordan, Justine. "Booker Judges Try to Have It Both Ways." *The Guardian*, 14 Oct. 2019, www.theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/14/booker-judges-split-between-huge-event-novel-and-obscure-choice.
- Kanwal, Aroosa, and Saiyma Aslam, editors. *Routledge Companion to Pakistani Anglophone Writing*. Routledge, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315180618>.
- Karakantza, Efimia D. *Antigone*. Routledge, 2022. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, <https://doi-org.libproxy.temple.edu/10.4324/9780429436864>.
- Keeble, Arin. "The 9/11 Novel." *The Routledge Companion to Twenty-First Century Literary Fiction*, edited by Daniel O'Gorman and Robert Eaglestone, Routledge, 2018, pp. 273–85. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315880235>.
- Kershaw, Hannah. "Remembering the Indian Mutiny: Colonial Nostalgia in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 57, no. 6, Nov. 2021, pp. 868–81. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2021.1931943>.
- Kiczkowski, Adriana. "Glocalization in Post-9/11 Literature. *Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie." *Journal of English Studies*, vol. 14, Jan. 2016, pp. 125–36. *EBSCOhost*, <https://doi.org/10.18172/jes.2813>.

- King, Bruce. Review of *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith. *World Literature Today*, vol. 75, no. 1, 2001, pp. 116–17. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40156375>.
- Kirsch, Adam. *The Global Novel: Writing the World in the 21st Century*. Columbia Global Reports, 2016.
- Knepper, Wendy. “Revisionary Modernism and Postmillennial Experimentation in Zadie Smith’s *NW*.” *Reading Zadie Smith: The First Decade and Beyond*, edited by Philip Tew, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 111–26. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1507639.
- Knudsen, Eva Rask, and Ulla Rahbek. “An Afropolitan Literary Aesthetics? Afropolitan Style and Tropes in Recent Diasporic African Fiction.” *European Journal of English Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, May 2017, pp. 115–28. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2017.1344473>.
- Koenig, Rhoda. “People Are Talking About: Books: Zadie Smith’s Dazzling Debut.” *Vogue*, vol. 190, no. 4, 1 Apr. 2000, p. 292. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/magazines/people-are-talking-about-books-zadie-smiths/docview/879315144/se-2.
- Krause, Peter. “Antigone in Pakistan: *Home Fire*, by Kamila Shamsie.” *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2020, pp. 13–22. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/docview/2585506305/abstract/61FF676A487C4D85PQ/1.
- Lanchester, John. “The Land of Accidents.” *The New York Review of Books*, 8 Feb. 2001, www.nybooks.com/articles/2001/02/08/the-land-of-accidents/.
- Ledent, Bénédicte. “Looking Beyond, Shifting the Gaze: Writers in Motion.” *The Cambridge History of Black and Asian British Writing*, edited by Mark U. Stein and Susheila Nasta, Cambridge UP, 2020, pp. 296–310, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108164146.020>.
- Leetsch, Jennifer. *Love and Space in Contemporary African Diasporic Women’s Writing: Making Love, Making Worlds*. Springer International, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-67754-1>.
- Leith, Sam. “The Booker Prize Judges Had One Job.” *UnHerd*, 15 Oct. 2019, unherd.com/2019/10/the-booker-judges-had-one-job/.
- Liu, Rebecca. “How Bernardine Evaristo Won the Booker.” *Prospect Magazine*, 2 May 2020, www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/culture/40173/how-bernardine-evaristo-won-the-booker.
- Longmore, Zenga. “Fairyswearyland (Book Review).” *The Spectator*, vol. 284, no. 8947, 29 Jan. 2000, p. 47. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/magazines/fairyswearyland-book-review/docview/1295915905/.

- Lyall, Sarah. "A Good Start." *New York Times Book Review*, 30 Apr. 2000, p. 7.8.
ProQuest,
www.proquest.com/docview/217279474/abstract/EFB46AE26DB249A1PQ/1.
- Maerz, Melissa. "Americanah." *EW.Com*, 13 May 2013,
ew.com/article/2013/05/15/americanah/.
- "Man Booker Prize Announces Global Expansion." *Media for Man Group*, 18 Sept. 2013, www.man.com/man-booker-prize-announces-global-expansion.
- Marx, John. "Failed-State Fiction." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 49, no. 4, 2008, pp. 597–633. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20616403.
- Mbembe, Achille. "Afropolitanism." *The Passport That Does Not Pass Ports: African Literature of Travel in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Isabel Balseiro and Zachariah Rapola, translated by Laurent Chauvet, Michigan State UP, 2020, pp. 7–12. *EBSCOhost*,
search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=2523061&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- McGurl, Mark. *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing*. Harvard UP, 2009. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3300851.
- McLeod, John. *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis*. Taylor and Francis, 2004. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=199482.
- Mee, Erin B., and Helene P. Foley, editors. *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*. Oxford UP, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199586196.001.0001>.
- Mehta, Suhaan Kiran. "Reimagining Journeys and Communities: A Postsecular Reading of Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 52, no. 4, 2020, pp. 419–33. *Project MUSE*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sdn.2020.0049>.
- Misimang, Sisonke. "All Your Faves Are Problematic: A Brief History of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Stanning and the Trap of #blackgirlmagic." *Africa Is a Country*, 10 Apr. 2017, africasacountry.com/2017/04/all-your-faves-are-problematic-a-brief-history-of-chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-stanning-and-the-trap-of-blackgirlmagic.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke UP, 2003, <https://doi-org.libproxy.temple.edu/10.1215/9780822384649>.
- Morris, Paula. "The 'Leftovers of Empire': Commonwealth Writers and the Booker Prize." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 56, no. 2, Mar. 2020, pp. 261–70. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2020.1728914>.

- Moya, Paula M. L., and Luz M. Jiménez Ruvalcaba. “De-Forming and Re-Making: Bernardine Evaristo’s *Girl, Woman, Other* and the Multifocal Decolonial Novel.” *Race in American Literature and Culture*, edited by John Ernest, Cambridge UP, 2022, pp. 292–306, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108766654.024>.
- Moynagh, Maureen. “Kamila Shamsie’s Transnational Households and the Intimate Violence of the State.” *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2023, pp. 191–209. *Project MUSE*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sdn.2023.a899472>.
- Msiska, Mpalive-Hangson. “The Novel and Decolonization in Africa.” *The Novel in Africa and the Caribbean since 1950*, edited by Simon Gikandi, vol. 11, Oxford UP, 2016, pp. 37–54.
- Murray, Patricia. “Stories Told and Untold: Post-Colonial London in Bernardine Evaristo’s *Lara*.” *Kunapipi*, vol. 21, no. 2, Aug. 2019, ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol21/iss2/9.
- Murray, Simone. *The Digital Literary Sphere: Reading, Writing, and Selling Books in the Internet Era*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2018.
- Nasta, Susheila. “‘Voyaging in’: Colonialism and Migration.” *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature*, edited by Laura Marcus and Peter Nicholls, Cambridge UP, 2005, pp. 563–82. *Cambridge Core*, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521820776.033>.
- Neumann, Birgit. “Anglophone World Literature and Glocoal Memories: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*.” *New Approaches to the Twenty-First-Century Anglophone Novel*, edited by Sibylle Baumbach and Birgit Neumann, Springer International, 2020, pp. 217–36. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6000732.
- Ngugi, Mukoma Wa. *The Rise of the African Novel*. U of Michigan P, 2018. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9724578>.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Heinemann, 1986.
- Obi-Young, Otosirieze. “The Guardian UK Criticized for Headline Calling Bernardine Evaristo’s Booker Prize-Winning Novel Obscure.” *Brittle Paper*, 14 Oct. 2019, brittlepaper.com/2019/10/the-guardian-uk-criticized-for-headline-calling-bernardine-evaristos-booker-prize-winning-novel-obscure/.
- O’Gorman, Daniel. “War on Terror.” *The Routledge Companion to Twenty-First Century Literary Fiction*, edited by Daniel O’Gorman and Robert Eaglestone, Routledge, 2018, pp. 286–97. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315880235>.

- “Our Story.” *Women’s Prize for Fiction*, www.womensprizeforfiction.co.uk/our-story. Accessed 27 Oct. 2022.
- Pahl, Miriam. “Afropolitanism as Critical Consciousness: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s and Teju Cole’s Internet Presence.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2016, pp. 73–87. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24758432.
- Palmer, Camilla. “Zadie Smith’s ‘White Knuckle Ride’: From ‘Black Woman Writer’ to ‘Acclaimed Novelist and Critic.’” *Hecate*, vol. 41, no. 1/2, 2015, pp. 156–65. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/docview/1822033839/abstract/3099BBE179A54DC0PQ/1.
- Peed, Mike. “Realities of Race.” *New York Times Book Review*, 9 June 2013, p. BR.12. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/docview/1367707407/abstract/824476D95B4C4EEFPQ/1.
- Perry, Jane. “Paperback of the Week: *White Teeth* Zadie Smith.” *The Observer (London, England)*, 21 Jan. 2001, p. 18. Gale Academic OneFile, *Gale*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A71573558/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmarkAONE&xid=83bedf0b.
- “Person of the Year: You.” *TIME.Com*, time.com/vault/issue/2006-12-25/page/1/. Accessed 15 Mar. 2024.
- Phillips, Angus, and Giles Clark. *Inside Book Publishing*. 6th ed., Routledge, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351265720>.
- Photopoulos, Cornelia. “‘Be Gone’: Escaping Racialized Working-Class Space in Bernardine Evaristo’s *Mr. Loverman* and *Girl, Woman, Other*.” *Locating Classed Subjectivities*, edited by Simon Lee, Routledge, 2022, pp. 183–205. *Taylor and Francis Ebooks*, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003119425>.
- Pouly, Marie-Pierre. “Playing Both Sides of the Field: The Anatomy of a ‘Quality’ Bestseller.” *Poetics*, vol. 59, Dec. 2016, pp. 20–34. *ScienceDirect*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2016.02.002>.
- Quayson, Ato. “Introduction.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Postcolonial Novel*, edited by Ato Quayson, Cambridge UP, 2015, pp. 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316459287.002>.
- Quinn, Anthony. “White Teeth.” *New York Times Book Review*, 30 Apr. 2000, pp. 7–8. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/docview/217271465/abstract/937434C0CF0542BAPQ/1.
- Ross, Michael L. “Ownership of Language: Diglossia in the Fiction of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.” *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2019, pp. 111–26. *ProQuest*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2979/reseafritelite.50.1.07>.

- Sánchez-Palencia, Carolina. "Feminist/Queer/Diasporic Temporality in Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019)." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 29, no. 2, May 2022, pp. 316–30, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505068211048466>.
- Sandhu, Sukhdev. "Excremental Children." *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 5051, 21 Jan. 2000, p. 21. *Gale Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/EX1200498514/TLSH?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-TLSH.
- Sarikaya-Şen, Merve. "Reconfiguring Feminism: Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*." *The European Legacy*, vol. 26, no. 3–4, May 2021, pp. 303–15. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2021.1898109>.
- Sauerberg, Lars Ole. "Repositioning Narrative: The Late-Twentieth-Century Verse Novels of Vikram Seth, Derek Walcott, Craig Raine, Anthony Burgess, and Bernardine Evaristo." *Orbis Litterarum*, vol. 59, no. 6, 2004, pp. 439–64. *Wiley Online Library*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0105-7510.2004.00817.x>.
- Schiffrin, André. *The Business of Books: How International Conglomerates Took over Publishing and Changed the Way We Read*. Verso, 2000.
- Selasi, Taiye. "Bye, Bye Babar." *The Passport That Does Not Pass Ports: African Literature of Travel in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Isabel Balseiro and Zachariah Rapola, Michigan State UP, 2020, pp. 3–6. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=2523061&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Sethi, Anita. "Bernardine Evaristo: 'I Want to Put Presence into Absence.'" *The Guardian*, 27 Apr. 2019, www.theguardian.com/books/2019/apr/27/bernardine-evaristo-girl-woman-other-interview.
- Shamsie, Kamila. *Burnt Shadows*. Picador, 2009.
- . *Home Fire*. Riverhead Books, 2017.
- Shamsie, Muneeza. *Hybrid Tapestries: The Development of Pakistani Literature in English*. Oxford UP, 2017.
- . "Sunlight and Salt: The Literary Landscapes of a Divided Family." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 44, no. 1, Mar. 2009, pp. 135–53. *SAGE Journals*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989408101656>.
- Shaw, Kristian. "The Cosmopolitan Value of the Multicultural Novel." *The Novel as Network: Forms, Ideas, Commodities*, edited by Tim Lanzendörfer and Corinna Norrick-Rühl, Springer International, 2020, pp. 51–68. *Springer Link*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53409-7_4.

- Shelat, Jay N. "Pattern Recognition: The Enduring Whiteness of 9/11 Literary Studies." *Legacies — 9/11 and the War On Terror at Twenty*, a cluster of *Post45: Contemporaries*, edited by Jay N. Shelat, 11 Sept. 2021, post45.org/2021/09/pattern-recognition-the-enduring-whiteness-of-9-11-literary-studies/.
- Singh, Harleen. "Insurgent Metaphors: Decentering 9/11 in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*." *ARIEL*, vol. 43, no. 1, Jan. 2012, pp. 23–45. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A362638887/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=ba9ca253.
- Sinykin, Dan N. "The Conglomerate Era: Publishing, Authorship, and Literary Form, 1965–2007." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 58, no. 4, 2017, pp. 462–91. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/707332.
- "Sky Arts RSL Writers Awards." *Royal Society of Literature*, rsliterature.org/sky-arts-rsl-writers-awards/. Accessed 3 Dec. 2023.
- Slavin, Molly. "The Contemporary Global Anglophone Novel, Mobility, and Crisis." *Global South*, vol. 15, no. 1, Fall 2021, pp. 92–109. *EBSCOhost*, <https://doi.org/10.2979/globalsouth.15.1.06>.
- Smith, Zadie. *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays*. Penguin Press, 2009.
- . *Feel Free: Essays*. Penguin Press, 2018.
- . *NW*. Penguin Books, 2013.
- . "On Killing Charles Dickens." *The New Yorker*, 10 July 2023, pp. 16–18, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/07/10/on-killing-charles-dickens.
- . *White Teeth*. Vintage International, 2001.
- "Soul Tourists." *Bernardine Evaristo*, bevaristo.com/soul-tourists/. Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.
- Spahr, Clemens. "Prolonged Suspension: Don DeLillo, Ian McEwan, and the Literary Imagination After 9/11." *Novel*, vol. 45, no. 2, Aug. 2012, pp. 221–37, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00295132-1573949>.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Harvard UP, 1999.
- Squires, Claire. *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

- Steger, Manfred B. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780192886194.001.0001>.
- Stengel, Richard. "Now It's Your Turn: TIME Magazine." *TIME Magazine*, vol. 168, no. 26, Dec. 2006, pp. 8–8. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=23468907&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Strauss, Sara. "Intersectionality and Fourth-Wave Feminism in Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*." *Women: A Cultural Review*, vol. 34, no. 1–2, Apr. 2023, pp. 14–32. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2023.2184613>.
- Tancke, Ulrike. "White Teeth Reconsidered: Narrative Deception and Uncomfortable Truths." *Reading Zadie Smith: The First Decade and Beyond*, edited by Philip Tew, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 27–38. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1507639.
- Tepper, Anderson. "The Little Book That Could: How Bernardine Evaristo Became an International Writer-to-Watch in 2019." *Vanity Fair*, 13 Dec. 2019, www.vanityfair.com/style/2019/12/bernardine-evaristo-girl-woman-other-interview.
- Toplu, Sebnem. *Fiction Unbound: Bernardine Evaristo*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1106887.
- Toprak Sakiz, Elif. "Narrative Space in the Mapping of Diaspora Space: Liminal Spaces and Subjectivities of 'Happy Multicultural Land' in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*." *Journal of European Studies*, Jan. 2023, p. 00472441221141956. *SAGE Journals*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00472441221141956>.
- Tunca, Daria, editor. *Conversations with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*. UP of Mississippi, 2020. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/templeuniv-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6247166.
- Velickovic, Vedrana. "Melancholic Travellers and the Idea of (Un)Belonging in Bernardine Evaristo's *Lara and Soul Tourists*." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 48, no. 1, Feb. 2012, pp. 65–78. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2011.570498>.
- Veyret, Paul. "Fractured Territories: Deterritorializing the Contemporary Pakistani Novel in English." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 56, no. 2, June 2021, pp. 307–21. *SAGE Journals*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989418808039>.
- Wagner, Erica. "The Booker Judges Reflect an Unhealthy Disregard for the Rules." *Financial Times*, 18 Oct. 2019, www.ft.com/content/63553614-f0da-11e9-a55a-30afa498db1b.

- Walkowitz, Rebecca L. *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*. Columbia UP, 2015.
- Ward, Paul. "Empire and Decolonisation." *20th Century Britain*, edited by Nicole Robertson et al., 3rd ed., Routledge, 2022, pp. 158–73, <https://doi-org.libproxy.temple.edu/10.4324/9781003037118>.
- Weiss, Naomi. "Tragic Form in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*." *Classical Receptions Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2, Apr. 2022, pp. 240–63, <https://doi.org/10.1093/crj/clab008>.
- Wenske, Ruth S. "Beyond the Single Story of African Realism: Narrative Embedding in *Half of a Yellow Sun*." *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2020, pp. 125–54. *Project MUSE*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ari.2020.0030>.
- Whittle, Matthew. "Decolonization and the Aesthetics of Disorder: Naipaul, Evaristo, Boland." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 58, no. 3, Sept. 2023, pp. 531–44. *SAGE Journals*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989421996054>.
- Wilkins, Kim. "Writing Resilience in the Digital Age." *New Writing*, vol. 11, no. 1, Jan. 2014, pp. 67–76. *Taylor and Francis Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790726.2013.870579>.
- Wolfson, Roberta. "(Mis)Reading in the Age of Terror: Promoting Racial Literacy through Counter-Colonial Narrative Resistance in the Post-9/11 Muslim Novel." *College Literature*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2023, pp. 237–67. *Project MUSE*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lit.2023.a902218>.
- Wood, Gaby. "For the Taking: Notes from the Man Booker Prize Archive." *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 6014, July 2018, pp. 17–19. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A634284095/AONE?u=temple_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=111fe28f.
- Wood, Heloise. "Singh and Mosse Reveal Opposition Faced by Women's and Jhalak Prize." *The Bookseller*, www.thebookseller.com/news/sunny-singh-we-were-accused-diluting-literary-merit-prizes-1290529. Accessed 4 Jan. 2024.
- Wood, James. "Human, All Too Inhuman." *The New Republic*, vol. 223, no. 4, 24 July 2000, pp. 41–45. *ProQuest*, www.proquest.com/docview/212799870/abstract/4E78983DB764A7APQ/1.
- Yaqin, Amina. "Necropolitical Trauma in Kamila Shamsie's Fiction." *Muslim World*, vol. 111, no. 2, May 2021, pp. 234–49. *EBSCOhost*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12383>.