ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	THE CRISIS OF SCALE IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION
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The Crisis of Scale in Contemporary Fiction studies how globalization has transformed our relationship with scale and creates a problem of representation in fiction. After the Second World War, new geopolitical, economic, cultural, and technological developments radically changed the form of existing spaces such as the nation-state, while producing new ones like the global city. By the late twentieth century, with the end of the Cold War, the spread of free trade policies like NAFTA, and the start of the Internet Age, these historical developments led to what I term the crisis of scale; that is, humanity's growing awareness of the planet's complexity and interconnectedness has called into question established narratives about the spaces we inhabit, necessitating the development of new representational strategies.

Analyzing depictions of the global city, nation-state, world, and galaxy in novels by China Miéville, Karen Tei Yamashita, Nalo Hopkinson, and Samuel R. Delany respectively, I uncover the set of narrative strategies they use to account for the way

globalization shapes daily life. Turning to popular genre fiction to describe the disorienting and dislocating effects of the crisis of scale, these novelists join a tradition of writers of literary fiction interested in advancing generic traditions such as science fiction and detective fiction. While most critics read the generic turn starting at the end of the twentieth century as a response to the decline of postmodernism, I interpret the literary movement as a formal solution to the problem of representation under the crisis of scale. By self-reflexively and intertextually engaging with their own generic histories, popular genres develop a language for the perspectival experience of the crisis of scale. This dissertation contends that tracking literary developments in genre provides us with a theoretical toolkit not only for articulating and understanding new globalizing conditions, but for developing new subjectivities capable of contending with them.

THE CRISIS OF SCALE IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION

by

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Dedication

To my parents, Doris and Michael, and to my sister Rebecca.

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Introduction: The Crisis of Scale

After discovering that no human in over 500 years has gotten into the Good Place, or heaven on Michael Schur's sitcom of the same name, the reformed demon Michael speculates why:

> Life now is so complicated, it's impossible for anyone to be good enough for the Good Place…these days just buying a tomato at a grocery store means that you are unwittingly supporting toxic pesticides, exploiting labor, contributing to global warming. Humans think that they're making one choice, but they're actually making dozens of choices they don't even know they're making.[1]

In other words, Michael argues humanity's growing awareness of global connectedness makes pure ethical decision-making impossible. While purchasing a tomato in the past involved fewer unintended consequences, grocery shopping now requires a consideration of the use of pesticides in rural areas, international labor conditions, and planetary environmental effects. As a result, the complexity of the global market now entangles the consumer in a complicated web of relations beyond individual control. Even the most mundane task therefore necessitates a consideration of multiple scales exceeding the individual. Thus, as Michael points out, humans are no longer getting into the Good Place, not necessarily due to their moral degradation, but because we have developed a new relationship with scale.

While the idea of the completely autonomous subject is itself a myth, *The Good Place* draws attention to the way globalization now dominates public consciousness. Why, though, does *The Good Place* tackle issues of scale through the form of a primetime sitcom, a genre better known for its focus on interpersonal relations than international and planetary issues? Despite asking such big questions, the show resembles Schur's other workplace comedies, *Parks and Recreation* and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, in its

comedic interplay between relatable, endearing, and contrasting characters. While *The Good Place* indeed adopts traditional workplace comedy tropes, through its fast pace, constant narrative twists, and incorporation of the fantastical, the series progresses the genre in formally innovative ways. The show's interrogation of popular genre conventions to address issues of scale is no coincidence. In fact, *The Good Place*'s awareness of audience expectations and genre conventions is precisely Schur's representational strategy for apprehending scale. While the traditional sitcom addresses moral dilemmas within the family or workplace, *The Good Place* balloons these settings out in absurd fashion to the scale of the universe. Thus, while traditional sitcoms explore the concept of right and wrong through familiar, quotidian scenarios, in *The Good Place* the main characters set up a yearlong experiment in a simulated Good Place neighborhood to test the moral growth of four human subjects. Rather than parodying the traditional sitcom formula, however, *The Good Place* explores familiar moral issues within this unfamiliar context, evaluating their relevance in an era when the family and workplace no longer exist as stable, isolated units, but are themselves interpolated by the planetary scale. *The Good Place* represents globalization, therefore, by doubling down on genre. The series mobilizes and self-reflects upon the workplace comedy's formal conventions to capture the absurd experience of trying to make good decisions on an increasingly complex and networked planet.

As *The Good Place* implies, humanity's awareness of its global connectedness is not a new phenomenon. However, a number of geopolitical, economic, cultural, and technological developments created the conditions in the late twentieth century for what I term the crisis of scale. After the Second World War, the rise of global capitalism and

lower transportation costs increased the importance of the global marketplace. The United States' detonation of two nuclear bombs drew attention to humanity's long-term power over its planet, while the concept of the Anthropocene coined in 2000 gave a name to humanity's contribution to climate change and influence over its environment on a geologic scale.[2] Beginning in the early 1980s, the popularization of neoliberal policies incentivized global trade and closely tied international economic relations further.[3] The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the end of the Cold War, meanwhile, eliminated communism as a serious alternative to capitalism, and opened up new markets in Eastern Europe.[4] All of these historical developments in humanity's conception of scale led to a critical breaking point around 1993, when major free trade policies like NAFTA were passed, the acknowledgment of human-created climate change took a more central role in politics and culture, and the Internet Age began, foregrounding issues of scale in popular culture and fostering a sense of global connectedness like never before.

As an interdisciplinary study bringing together literary analysis, genre theory, critical geography, cultural studies, and phenomenology, this dissertation takes as its object of study the crisis of scale at the end of the twentieth century and the problem of representation it creates for literature. Scales such as the nation-state and world take form as social constructs sustained by societal narratives. For example, while nation-states are real places, they also depend on imagined narratives of community and shared cultural values. If globalization has destabilized the nation-state, then, it has done so by destabilizing established narratives of nation-building. As a representational problem, the crisis of scale disrupts the stories we tell about the spaces we inhabit, necessitating the development of new formal strategies to keep pace with historical and geopolitical

changes. For this reason, in each chapter I analyze depictions of the global city, nation-state, world, and galaxy in novels by China Miéville, Karen Tei Yamashita, Nalo Hopkinson, and Samuel R. Delany respectively to uncover the set of narrative strategies they use to address this problem of representation. While scales are social constructs whose boundaries inevitably create overlap, as critics have argued, they serve different roles within the structure of the world economy.[5] Therefore, I focus each chapter on an individual scale to make legible the way scalar organization shapes the subject's experience.[6]

While the crisis of scale creates a problem of representation in literature, the novelists in this dissertation respond through engagements with popular genre fiction.[7] By the 1990s, postmodernism, a literary style typifying the period following World War II, had undergone accusations of obsolescence. Authors such as David Foster Wallace critiqued irony as an effective critical tool, hybridity politics no longer served as an inherently emancipatory practice, and the media had co-opted and rendered mainstream postmodernism's experimental styles, including metafiction.[8] Critics have long debated terms for the period following postmodernism, including post-postmodernism, cosmodernism, metamodernism, altermodernism, and postirony, among others.[9] This dissertation does not make a declarative statement favoring one periodizing term over the other. Rather, I focus on a strand of literature coinciding with the apparent decline of postmodernism: the generic turn. While modernism rejected genre and postmodernism used genre for parody and pastiche, beginning in the 1990s the literary world saw an earnest return to genre.[10] As author China Miéville and many others have argued, it has

become a cliché to point out the generic turn taking place at precisely this historical moment.[11]

However, while other critics read the generic turn primarily as a response to postmodernism, I interpret the literary movement as a formal solution to the problem of representation under the crisis of scale.[12] In addition to engaging with popular genres, this critical fiction develops a new relationship with allegory, which scales down the complexity of reality as an "extended metaphor."[13] Through the breakdown of the allegorical mode, the generic turn demonstrates the literary challenge of the crisis of scale. Unlike allegory, which relies on stable referential relationships, genre is a historically mutable set of conventions, tropes, and themes. Within genre studies, critics now generally reject generic definitions that do not account for historical changes or the overlap between aesthetic categories.[14] This, debate, however, itself takes place during a historical moment in which scales and genres no longer enjoy the illusion of fixed boundaries. By self-reflexively and intertextually engaging with their own generic histories, popular genres develop a language for the perspectival experience of the subject. This dissertation contends that tracking literary developments in genre provides us with a theoretical toolkit not only for articulating and understanding new globalizing conditions, but for developing new subjectivities capable of contending with them.

The Crisis of Scale

Unlike place, which denotes a fixed site with concrete objects, scale refers to the process of differentiating between categories of place. Thus, while places remain stable, scales change in meaning relative to place. Geographer Neil Smith defines scale as "the

criterion of difference not between places so much as between different kinds of places."[15] For critic Nirvana Tanoukhi, referring to the world literature debate, "scale-making" is a process of "spatial differentiation," meaning that the production of scale necessitates the differentiation of space.[16] Finally, according to sociologist Henri Lefebvre, "the question of scale and of level implies a multiplicity of scales and levels."[17] These critics agree scale does not operate alone, but through comparison. Scale is therefore not a unit of measurement, like distance, but a process of relation. Consequently, scale does not refer to place, but rather to the differences between categories of place.

Considering globalization in terms of scale provides a framework to critically analyze spatial transformations and their consequences for the subject. Critical definitions of globalization emphasize the way political, economic, cultural, and technological processes in the post-1945 period have dramatically transformed humanity's conception of scale. For example, Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson considers globalization "an immense enlargement of world communication," economic geographer David Harvey describes it as "the compression of time and space," and sociologist Roland Robertson defines it as "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole."[18] These definitions recognize that while the physical globe remains relatively unchanged, as a social construct the planet has simultaneously expanded and contracted in its scalar relation to humanity. In other words, the planet is now metaphorically larger and smaller than ever before. As a result of the expansion of the world market and new communications and information technologies, previously dominant scales such as the nation-state seem to be waning in significance,

while emerging scales such as the global city are on the rise. Thus, globalization produces new scales while radically transforming existing ones.

Globalization is therefore not a homogenizing phenomenon which sweeps across the globe equally across all scales, but as Neil Smith argues, is a process of uneven development, a fundamental aspect of capitalism responsible for phenomena such as gentrification.[19] As a result of uneven development, urban, national, international, and planetary scales interpenetrate in new ways, re-scaling human experience. Citing the simultaneous urbanization of suburbs and the movement of diasporic migrants into inner cities, as well as the rise of newly industrial countries and the reorganization of international trading systems and markets, political geographer Edward Soja emphasizes the way "the global is becoming localized and the local is becoming globalized at the same time."[20] As globalization restructured local and global scales, their boundaries have overlapped and collapsed. Due to uneven development, scaling deterritorializes, robbing places of their social and cultural significance, and decenters given places as stable reference points.[21] Globalization's spatial reorganization is possible because, while spaces and places remain relatively fixed in size, scales derive meaning from the lens of the observer. For example, critic Lawrence Buell's assertion, "what counts as a place can be as small as a corner of your kitchen or as big as the planet," expresses the way terms like "small" and "big" require scales to anchor their meaning in relation to the subject.[22] Highlighting this problem of perspective, the title of one of the novels in this dissertation, Samuel R. Delany's *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* (1984), scales down stars to fit inside a pocket. Thus, while scale is already a relational category, by violating established points of reference and forcing the subject to constantly consider different

perspectives, many of which—like stars and sand—are not compatible, globalization undercuts the subject's ability to differentiate between categories of place.[23] Consequently, the subject undergoes spatial disorientation and a destabilization of identity which necessitates a reevaluation of spatial relations.

The subject experiences globalization as a scaling of daily life to accommodate major geopolitical, economic, cultural, and technological transformations. Scaling occurs when the subject, inhabiting a discrete space such as the city, suddenly becomes aware of the influence of higher-order scales such as the nation-state or world. Identifying the relatively new sentiment that "globalization has come to feel obscurely unfair," critic Bruce Robbins argues that Americans have become more aware of global economic injustices of which they have benefitted.[24] This new recognition also comes with the unavoidable fact of our "collective responsibility."[25] In addition to the global, however, the subject also experiences new interconnections between the urban, national, international, world, and even galactic scales. Finally, this multidirectional process does not only scale the subject up, but scales reality down, as well. In other words, just as the local accommodates the presence of the global, so too does the global adapt to the local. For example, a trip to the grocery store now requires a consideration of regional and international scales, while a global fast food corporation like McDonalds must consider local tastes before designing a menu in India. While previously the subject rarely noticed this interpenetration between scales, today, due to the spread of free trade policies, the internationalization of the labor market, and the commodification of the internet, scaling has intensified enough to produce a crisis for the subject.

By scaling daily life and forcing the subject to confront multiple, conflicting scales simultaneously, globalization manages the way we experience reality and forestalls the process of imagining alternative spaces and subjectivities. While in the above example Robbins adeptly characterizes the "beneficiary," he treats this figure as a placeholder and shows no interest in "exploring the subjectivity of such a person."[26] However, awareness alone does not position people to address complex political and economic issues. Robbins acknowledges this problem when discussing how the social division of labor under capitalism has rendered global conditions, such as sweatshops, invisible. Defining the "sweatshop sublime" as a trope of "sudden, heady access to the global scale" that "forces us knowledge of social interdependence," Robbins suggests that this momentary awareness of higher-order scales does not equate to social or political action.[27] As texts like *The Good Place* suggest, the subject is already well-aware of the existence of sweatshops, exploitative labor conditions, and environmental harm. In other words, while our narratives about scale have always been vulnerable, globalization threatens individual agency by managing our perception of reality. Responding to Marx's understanding of ideology through the logic, "they do not know it, but they do it," philosopher Slavoj Žižek insists instead that "they know it, but they are doing it anyway."[28] In other words, self-knowledge does not free the subject from living according to capitalist ideology. The crisis of scale is therefore not a problem of knowledge but of perspective. Rather than diminishing subjectivity as only a shorthand to access the issue of global interconnectedness, then, representing the perceptual experience of those living under globalization might be a necessary precondition for resistance. If the mere knowledge of inequality and exploitation does not itself incite

change, then investing in phenomenological description is precisely the political strategy needed to reorient the subject toward social and political action.

While the problem of scale has always existed, 1993 marked a critical breaking point for the subject: a crisis of scale. This breaking point coincided with several key economic, political, and technological events. The early 1980s saw the rise of neoliberalism with Ronald Reagan's presidency in the United States and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's administration in the United Kingdom. Neoliberalism advances a set of political and economic principles which favor deregulation, financialization, strong individual property rights, the internationalization of corporate power, the free market, and free trade.[29] While neoliberalism champions the principles of individualism and liberty, in actuality the ideology aims "to achieve the restoration of class power" to the economic elite.[30] Following the end of the Cold War, Eastern Europe became more widely available as a capitalist space, solidifying global capitalism's dominance. The passing of NAFTA in 1993, however, represents the culminating achievement of neoliberalism by tying together the United States, Canada, and Mexico into the largest free trade zone in the world at this time.[31] The formation of the European Union the same year constituted a parallel effort to consolidate local economies and form a larger network of free trade.

In addition, 1993 coincided with the start of the Internet Age. After becoming publicly available in 1991, the World Wide Web increased dramatically in popularity and usage throughout the 1990s.[32] While the 2000s saw a greater boom in internet usage per household in the United States, the launch of the first web browsers in 1993 made the internet more accessible and allowed for the creation of online communities.[33] More

importantly, 1993 marked a turning point in which the internet transitioned from a primarily technological achievement to a commercialized product and virtual marketplace. Sociologist Manuel Castells defines this historical development as the "network society," in which the internet's technological revolution proved instrumental in capitalism's reconfiguration during the neoliberal era, advancing capitalism's interests.[34] While the internet would only grow in popularity worldwide, 1993 marks a turning point in which the technology's interpenetration with economics contributed to narratives of the planet as a global network and humanity's new relationship with scale.

As the world has changed under globalization, our old models and narratives of scale are no longer viable. Among NAFTA, the European Union, and the start of the Internet Age, the time around 1993 also saw the development of the World Trade Organization (1995), the increased role of the IMF, the growing economic and political power of NGOs, and a new cultural understanding of climate change.[35] This era is significant not only for setting the stage for future historical events such as 9/11, the Iraq War, and the Great Recession, but also for coinciding with the start of a new literary period registering the impact of these changes in cultural production.

Allegory and the Problem of Representation

By reshaping our understanding of the world, the crisis of scale has put into question the boundaries between literary disciplines, traditions, and genres. For critic Wi Chee Dimock, the vulnerability of political and social boundaries provides an opportunity to recontextualize literary studies on a planetary scale. Defining "deep time" through the "irregular duration and extension" of time over the course of centuries, Dimock redefines

American literature through its historical interconnections in a global, de-nationalized context.[36] By highlighting the connection between literature and scale, Dimock shows that we cannot interpret literary texts without considering their attachments to established spaces such as the nation-state. If, as Dimock suggests, humanity's new relation to scale requires that we reconsider assumptions about nationality and literature, critic Marc McGurl instead shifts focus to scale itself as a representational problem. Radicalizing Dimock's concept of deep time to encompass the entirety of existence from the Big Bang to the future end of our species, McGurl defines the "posthuman comedy" as "a critical fiction meant to draw together a number of modern literary works in which scientific knowledge of the spatiotemporal vastness and numerousness of the nonhuman world becomes visible as a formal, representational, and finally existential problem."[37] While for Dimock, paying attention to scale widens the parameters of national literature, McGurl's analysis breaks them open completely. Together, these critics present the crisis of scale as both a constraint and a possibility for formal innovation and change. As humanity has expanded its epistemological horizons, its representational tools must develop a language to describe what it is like to inhabit and experience these newly understood scales.

Contemporary novels register literature's changing relationship with scale through popular genres such as science fiction as well as allegory, a literary mode which depends on a stable connection between literary and real-world scales. For example, critics generally interpret George Saunders' novella, *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* (2005), as an allegory for post-9/11 U.S. politics.[38] While Saunders' novella could be read purely for its surface-level plot, it qualifies as an allegory due to the strong presence

of this secondary meaning, creating a "doubleness of intent."[39] In the novella, the country of Inner Horner is "so small only one Inner Hornerite at a time could fit inside," and the six others must wait their turn in the Short-Term Residency Zone of the surrounding nation-state, Outer Horner.[40] However, Outer Horner itself only accommodates a few dozen people, and shares a border with Greater Keller, a six-inch wide country which forms a ring around Outer Horner. In scaling the nation-state down to such an absurdly small space, Saunders simplifies and puts in perspective the way national ideology and narratives of sovereignty fundamentally rely on contradictions. For example, after taxing the Inner Hornerites' only source of food and water, an apple tree and a stream, the Outer Hornerites observe the country's poor conditions. One of them, Melvin, concludes, "'No wonder we treat them so unfairly'" (36). By calling attention to their unfair treatment, however, Melvin inadvertently exposes the contradictory logic of their national relations, in which through a reversal of causation Outer Horner blames Inner Hornerites for their own mistreatment. Sensing this, the tax collector, Phil, responds, "'Not that we treat them unfairly, Melvin'" (36). Thus, scaling the nation-state down also compresses national ideology to its essential logic, exposing its contradictions. Through allegory, Saunders' novella effectively represents the political atmosphere of the 9/11 and Iraq War-era of U.S. politics.

A closer examination of Saunders' treatment of scale, however, reveals the way this allegory breaks down, no longer serving as a faithful representation of reality. Instead, the novella symptomizes the crisis of scale and its problem of representation for the contemporary writer. Saunders did not begin writing *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* with allegorical intentions, but instead as a writing challenge to feature abstract

shapes as characters.[41] None of the characters, in fact, resemble people, but rather sets of disconnected body parts and objects. For example, the President "[consisted] of a jumble of bellies, white mustaches, military medals, and dignified double chins, all borne magnificently aloft on three thin wobbly legs" (23). Conceptually, depicting people as objects contributes to Saunders' allegorical project, as he explains, "In Phil himself I saw the embodiment of our tendency to turn our enemies into objects, so that we can then guiltlessly destroy them."[42] However, Saunders' use of excessive detail in character descriptions quickly exhausts their symbolic meaning. The novella includes illustrations, many of which depict the characters' anatomy, such as a medal hanging from the President's exposed spleen (34). Borrowing from generic traditions such as fantasy, surrealism, and magical realism, the illustrations' use of the fantastical does not clarify the novella's allegorical meaning, but instead widens the referential gap between symbol and object. As opposed to the clarity of Boxer the workhorse standing in for the Russian working class in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945), Saunders' use of the fantastical prioritizes the novella's primary meaning over its secondary, allegorical interpretation. The novel's other world-building details, such as Greater Keller's peculiar geography, only further widen this referential gap. The novella thus establishes a tension between its status as allegory and genre fiction.

At the end of the novella, Saunders resolves this tension by abandoning traditional allegory in favor of generic world-building. As the three nation-states seem on the verge of extinction, a literal deus ex machina intervenes when the Creator resets events and erases everyone's memories. At this point, as Saunders fully embraces the fantastical, the allegory entirely breaks down, and the novella loses any clear connection to post-9/11

America. Unsurprisingly, reviews have expressed a distaste for this ending, criticizing Saunders for failing to follow through with his allegory.[43] Thus, while *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* supports an allegorical reading, its inclusion of generic world-building details frustrates this interpretive process.

Rather than failing as an allegory, however, *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* highlights the problem of representation under the crisis of scale. By the novel's ending, Saunders encounters the limits of allegory to scale reality down to a fictional world. After all, scaling reality inevitably leads to differences in kind as well as degree. While humans have no trouble imagining insects scaled up to a monstrous size, as evidenced by films including *Them* (1954) and *Monsters From Green Hell* (1958), we have far more trouble grasping the anatomical impossibility of this concept.[44] Similarly, while artists easily imagine ships ten times the length of their scale model, as early as Galileo, we have known mathematically that a ship of this size would not structurally hold together.[45] Citing the latter example, critics Michael Tavel Clarke and David Wittenberg conclude, "humans' ineptitude in comprehending scale in the real world is likely the flipside of the tremendous ease with which we are able to rescale things in our imaginations."[46] Critic Zach Horton argues, "collapsing scale in our technology and thought diminishes our understanding and ability to fully encounter the world that we inhabit."[47] As Horton suggests, the problem of representation is a failure of imagination to update our aesthetic models in response to known reality. While the urge to scale relies on the assumption of ontological stability, as a process of differentiation, scales are inherently relational and relative. Therefore, although collapsing scales seems to make them knowable for the human perspective, this strategy overlooks the unique

fundamental laws governing each scale, as well as the actual experience of inhabiting them. Thus, the tendency toward scalar collapse, or conflating scales to make them comprehensible, symptomizes humanity's scientific knowledge outpacing its representational models. Consequently, scaling is not a representational adaptation to the crisis of scale, but its chief aesthetic symptom.

In *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*, Saunders does not focus on physical laws, but rather on the impact of social and political laws when scaling the nation-state down to the absurdly small. As I discuss in my second chapter, the nation-state builds an imagined community based on narratives of nativity, borders, and common language to bridge the experiences of citizens who may never meet each other.[48] By scaling down the nation-state, however, Saunders eliminates a defining qualitative trait of this political unit: its large size. Rather than an imagined community of millions, the nation-state becomes an actual community of a few dozen. Just as scaling an insect up to a monstrous size breaks physical laws, scaling the nation-state down breaks sociopolitical laws. Acknowledging the impossibility of reducing the nation-state in scale without fundamentally changing its political form, Saunders therefore has no choice but to end the novella with the breakdown of allegory itself. As a mode which is "hierarchical in essence," allegory depends on a stable ordering of reality.[49] The traditional allegory therefore has faith in the literary form to scale down the nation-state to the confines of a novella. While much of Saunders' novella adheres to this agreement, the ending demonstrates the cost of distorting reality. In locating the limits of allegory, Saunders symptomizes the experience of the crisis of scale. While *Animal Form* might successfully scale down the Russian Revolution to a fictional form, novelists today have less faith in

fiction's ability to contain a reality whose high complexity and intense interconnections across human and non-human spaces creates a new problem of representation. Saunders' novella, therefore, expresses literature's new relationship with allegory by dramatizing the challenge of the contemporary author to represent the crisis of scale.

Following a literary genealogy in which allegories originally provided comprehension and clarity but by the twentieth century relied more on enigma and surprise, Saunders' novella sees the completion of this trend by locating the limits of allegory as a representational mode.[50] By exceeding what Fredric Jameson terms "world reduction," or the whittling away of reality to produce a thematically coherent narrative world, the texts in my dissertation utilize non-mimetic world-building details, such as Saunders' excessive anatomical descriptions, to build narrative worlds which resist singular interpretations.[51] As opposed to allegory's restriction of referents to their primary and secondary meanings alone, these world-building elements accommodate polysemous and even contradictory meanings, suggesting that their narrative worlds contain autonomous realities in dialogue with but separate from our own. In Miéville's *The City and the City,* while two fictional cities, Besźel and Ul Qoma, have a shared geography, recalling real historical cities like Berlin and Jerusalem, the novel exceeds allegorical containment. In interviews, Miéville has expressed his suspicion of allegory, rejecting this mode.[52] However, *The City and the City* does not avoid allegory, but rather invokes and surpasses the mode as a representational strategy. While attending a conference on split cities, the protagonist, Borlú, takes offense to the cities' inclusion: "My super said it wasn't just a misunderstanding of our status it was *an insult to Besźel*."[53] In other words, while Miéville's fictional cities contain references to real-

world examples, reducing them to an allegorical reading alone does a disservice to the novel's investment in generic world-building. Just as Saunders uses allegory to symptomize the problem of representing the nation-state, Miéville draws attention to the mode's limitations in capturing the global city. Rather than restricting themselves to allegory, however, both texts turn to genre conventions, emphasizing in particular non-mimetic world-building details.

The texts in this dissertation invoke allegory to reveal the mode's limitations, announce their intent, or obfuscate the interpretive process. While each text approaches allegory differently, they similarly use the mode to express the challenge of representing the crisis of scale. For example, Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* and Samuel R. Delany's *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* both introduce obvious symbols, the orange and Cultural Fugue respectively, which ultimately entertain polysemous and even contradictory readings that challenge the symbol's ability to represent. In Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*, at the end of the novel, the protagonist, Tan-Tan, literalizes her allegorical self, revealing her performed identity, the Robber Queen, as another version of herself. While these texts use different narrative strategies, they similarly take advantage of allegory's scaling of reality to articulate the problem of representation for the contemporary author.

Postmodernism and the Generic Turn

While allegory enables contemporary authors to thematize the crisis of scale, popular genres provide them with the formal tools to capture the perspectival experience of its conditions. Unlike allegory, which depends on stable connections between scales

and referents, genre fiction possesses the formal flexibility to confront an object which resists narrative containment.[54] After the Second World War, postmodernism emerged as the dominant literary style for this period. Postmodern techniques and modes such as irony, metafiction, and pastiche served as responses to and expressions of globalization's transformation of daily life.[55] By challenging dualisms and binaries, postmodernism constructed a politics of difference as a liberatory weapon against the totalizing forces of globalization. By 1993, however, nation-states and global corporations had long since co-opted local difference and heterogeneity into their structure, robbing these principles of any inherently emancipatory power. Thus, while the hybridity politics epitomized most articulately by postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha once constituted subversion, today critics are more skeptical of the idea of hybridity as an inherently subversive principle.[56] Some critics, like Martin J. Murray, argue postmodernist "heterogeneity" and "self-reflexive eclecticism" correspond with neoliberal globalization.[57] Thus, postmodernism no longer adequately registers our changing relationship with scale, requiring the development of new literary forms.

As opposed to postmodernism's ironic treatment or even deconstruction of popular literary forms, the generic turn progresses these generic traditions forward by mobilizing their conventions and expectations.[58] Since the 1990s, literary authors such as Cormac McCarthy began participating earnestly in generic traditions.[59] Simultaneously, genre writers like Samuel R. Delany and Ursula K. Le Guin saw more widespread acceptance of their work in the canon of literary fiction.[60] Although institutional influence and market conditions made this phenomenon possible, critics generally interpret the generic turn as responding to postmodernism's legacy as the dominant

literary period.[61] If under the crisis of scale postmodernist principles no longer challenge hegemony, the generic turn constitutes a new literary response to this representational problem. Rather than parodying genres and mining creative energy through difference, contemporary authors focus on the presence of ongoing tropes and conventions within generic forms.

While, as Dimock and McGurl suggest, the crisis of scale inevitably puts into question assumptions about national literatures, so too does it force us to rethink the aesthetic and historical boundaries between genres. Fredric Jameson refers to genre as "essentially a socio-symbolic message," while critic Jadwiga Wegrodzka defines genre as a "a semiotic system within a larger system of literature."[62] Rather than a static set of rules and expectations, genres are social institutions which adapt to societal conditions and attitudes. Definitions of genre which do not historicize existing conventions and reader expectations therefore fail to recognize their value as "social [constructions]."[63] As Jameson argues, due to their embeddedness in history, genres constitute ideologies themselves. As a result, "when such forms are reappropriated and refashioned in quite different social and cultural contexts, this message [ideology] persists and must be functionally reckoned into the new form," often through contradiction.[64] However, as intertextual and self-reflexive systems of language, genres possess the formal flexibility to reject, contest, or reform their own historical and ideological ties. Unlike a mode such as allegory, which adheres to particular rules about language, genres are "dynamic" referential systems which change in response to societal transformations.[65] Even periodizing terms such as postmodernism, which may evolve internally, are ultimately susceptible to losing their cutting edge and literary relevance through co-option and

reappropriation by mainstream culture.[66] Genre, however, is neither a periodizing term nor a static literary device, but rather a social construction attuned to historical and societal transformations.

Although the crisis of scale requires that critics pay more attention to genres' historical dimension, equally important is their connection to particular formal devices and aesthetics. While discussing genres as webs of inconsistent and competing assertions, critic John Rieder rejects definitions of science fiction, such as Darko Suvin's "cognitive estrangement," which categorize themselves by singular formal strategies.[67] In recognizing the importance of historical change, Rieder is right to criticize definitions of genre which limit themselves to a fixed set of rules and conventions. However, restricting a definition purely to "common usage" also overlooks genre's value as a theoretical resource. Treating genre as a historical category does not inhibit an analysis of their formal strategies, but rather makes this process possible. In other words, genres become effective theoretical resources when they adapt their formal strategies over time.

While Rieder overemphasizes genres' historical dimension at the expense of their formal conventions, critic Seo-Young Chu develops a methodology for genre which locates traditions along a spectrum of representability. Realism constitutes "low-intensity mimesis" because its objects are available for representation, while science fiction designates "high-intensity mimesis" because its objects generally exceed ordinary experience and require a greater level of creative energy.[68] While Rieder undermines the importance of formal strategies, Chu completely refuses to assign qualitative differences to individual genres. Instead, while realism and science fiction differ in terms of their representational challenges, they exist on the same mimetic continuum. While there is

value in recognizing the overlap between genres, Chu's approach flattens out their formal differences. By collapsing all genres under the same continuum, Chu responds to the problem of scale in literature by undermining qualitative formal differences. Similar to Rieder, she robs generic traditions of their value as theoretical resources. Instead of defining genres either through their status as historical institutions or formal strategies alone, genres draw creative energy through their qualitative differences as a historically mutable set of conventions, tropes, and themes.

Genre's self-reflexivity, intertextuality, and historically contingent array of formal strategies and practices provide contemporary authors with the theoretical tools to represent the crisis of scale. For example, while the traditional space opera represents the galaxy as a knowable space, Samuel R. Delany's *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* critiques this strand of realist science fiction while representing the galactic scale as unknowable. Self-reflexive by nature, genres possess a formal flexibility which adjusts to humanity's changing relationship with scale.[69] Surpassing the limitations of allegory and world reduction, popular genres do not attempt to scale down reality, respecting its complexity, but instead avoid the trap of scalar collapse through non-mimetic world-building. This degree of self-reflexivity and formal flexibility enables genre formations to develop literary worlds capable of representing new, unfamiliar, or radically transformed scales. Symptomizing the crisis of scale through allegory and representing the subject's experience through genre, this critical fiction solves the problem of representation.

Rather than reading the generic turn directly as a response to postmodernism, then, it more accurately solves a formal problem generated by the crisis of scale. The texts I analyze self-reflexively critique their own generic traditions as a narrative strategy

to represent the crisis of scale.[70] In other words, as critic Tim Lanzendörfer argues, "the novel's contemporary cultural, societal, and political engagements are best understood through a reflection on its specific engagement with genre."[71] For example, in *The City and the City*, China Miéville invokes the detective genre's interest in epistemological problems while progressing the genre forward by foregrounding the detective's perspective over information-gathering. Miéville therefore develops the phenomenological detective novel as a formal strategy to make legible the way global cities manage the urban subject's perspective to maintain the status quo. Engaging with genre is therefore precisely the strategy writers use to overcome the problem of representation under the crisis of scale. While each novel confronts a different type of crisis and unique problems of representation, tracking their engagement with genre reveals the author's specific method for confronting these problems. In doing so, these novels not only articulate the specific crises each scale embodies under globalization, but deploy genre conventions to describe the experience of inhabiting these scales.

The Phenomenology of the Subject

The generic turn employs popular genre conventions and tropes to articulate the experience of the crisis of scale. Because this crisis disrupts the subject's given narratives and perspectival experience, what is needed is a critical fiction which prioritizes the phenomenology of the subject. While discussing author Benjamin Kunkel's *Indecision* (2005), critic Emilio Sauri reads the novel as a postmodernist response to Fredric Jameson's supposition that experience "posits itself as a limit that must be overcome."[72] The novel suggests that "the conviction to change the world (politics) derives exclusively

from the things one feels, sees, and experiences, in assuming a given set of subject positions." In other words, "seeing is believing." Thus, if one's ideological commitment is a product of the subject-position one assumes, then developing a new politics in response to the crisis of scale depends on the possibility of imagining and occupying new subject-positions. While *Indecision* "remains skeptical of a politics founded on the commitment to locations, perspectives, and positions" due to postmodernism's inability to think about the future, moving beyond postmodernism therefore requires a commitment to imagining new historical identities and modes of experience.

The texts in this dissertation engage with genre to locate a language for the perceptual experience of the crisis of scale, while imagining new subjectivities capable of contending with its conditions. In doing so, these novels shifts focus away from the abstraction of objective critique to immanent critique; that is, rather than diagnosing social problems from a critical distance, this tradition prioritizes subjective experience.[73] Thus, while these texts seem to abandon traditional critique, reject utopian or revolutionary solutions to political problems, or even seem complicit with the structures of global capitalism, they have instead turned their attention toward describing the phenomenological experience of the subject. This new focus does not imply an acquiescence to the crisis of scale, but rather constitutes a political strategy to make these conditions legible in literature. Moreover, developing new subjectivities orients the subject toward change in the future. For this reason, the texts in this dissertation take a phenomenological approach toward representing the crisis of scale; that is, rather than prioritizing epistemological issues of detailing what we know, or even ontological

problems of definition, these texts chiefly concern themselves with the perceptual experience of the subject.[74]

In foregrounding the subject's consciousness and subjective observation of phenomena, these texts suggest that questions of being or knowing only arise *after* experience. Perspective and experience may not seem as important as knowledge or existence, but the texts in this critical fiction foreground phenomenological issues to express their indispensability to living productively within the crisis of scale. Describing what he later termed fractal geometry, mathematician Benoît Mandelbrot's paper "How Long is the Coastline of Britain?" outlines the impossibility of an objective or universal method for measuring the length of Britain's coastline. Rather, the coastline's length differs based on the scale with which one makes the measurement.[75] Thus, what appears to be an epistemological problem—determining the length of a coastline—becomes a phenomenological problem of scale. Because the crisis of scale destabilizes the human perspective, it is primarily a phenomenological problem. Therefore, while it is important to gather knowledge and define old and new scales, the experience of the subject ultimately frames epistemological and ontological discussions.

The texts in my dissertation foreground phenomenological issues as essential to apprehending the crisis of scale.[76] For example, in Miéville's *The City and the City*, the question of whether a citizen resides in Besźel or Ul Qoma depends entirely on residents' collective perception. Only after describing one's phenomenological experience of the urban environment does determining its ontology become possible. Similarly, in Delany's *Stars,* the novel's galactic scale leads to the existence of "fuzzy-edged phenomena" which do not possess essential properties, but rather depend on the observer's perspective

to contextualize their meaning. A sunset, for example, requires a specific vantage point from the subject and loses all contextual significance when observed from space. Delany's phenomenology draws heavily from philosopher Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist approach to the discipline, locating meaning in relations rather than in objects themselves.[77] While this approach is useful on a galactic scale, where the overwhelming vastness and complexity of the galaxy challenges meaning-making as a process, the other authors I consider do not necessarily take the same deconstructionist approach. As a practical discipline rather than a system, phenomenology need not apply consistently or universally to all cases; authors instead strategically deploy the discipline to address the particular crises each scale embodies.[78] All of the texts in this study, however, agree that phenomenological problems occur prior to and ground epistemological and ontological concerns, and for this reason embrace the discipline as a practical method of subjectivity-building.[79]

For this reason, I treat scale as a practical category as opposed to a category of analysis. Rather than focusing exclusively on analyzing scales as ontological categories, considering scales like the city or nation-state as practical categories "directs our attention to the ways in which scalar narratives, classifications and cognitive schemas constrain or enable certain ways of seeing, thinking and acting."[80] Although scale was originally a taken-for-granted concept, during the 1980s critical geographers such as Neil Smith and Henri Lefebvre turned scale into a subject for analysis. By the 1990s and 2000s, critics transitioned from ontological questions of existence and definition to epistemological questions of categorization and development.[81] Critic Adam Moore similarly calls for the treatment of scale as a practical category. Arguing critics should

focus on knowledge rather than defining or deconstructing terms, Moore seeks to further consolidate the epistemological turn.

However, Moore's argument anticipates my own call to apply a phenomenological approach to scale. As Moore acknowledges, a practical approach not only opens up epistemological observations, but puts a greater focus on cognition, ways of seeing, and perception. In other words, while a practical approach to scale steered the critical conversation in the 1990s and 2000s toward crucial epistemological concerns, under the crisis of scale issues of knowledge are now longer the priority. Instead, a practical approach to scale allows the critic and the novelist to focus instead on the phenomenological experience of inhabiting different scales and the way dominant ideologies shape the subject's perceptual experience. Only by developing a language to describe what it is like to experience the global city or nation-state can authors develop subjectivities capable of living productively within their conditions.

Complicating the author's potential to build new subjectivities, however, the crisis of scale simultaneously diminishes and expands human agency. It diminishes agency by making the subject vulnerable to hegemonic institutions like the nation-state and global corporations. As Chakrabarty argues, "the current conjuncture of globalization and global warming leaves us with the challenge of having to think of human agency over multiple and incommensurable scales at once."[82] Thus, rather than acting as a liberating experience, contending with multiple scales such as the nation-state and planet may simultaneously disorient and paralyze the subject's ability to act. The conflict between scales only compounds this problem further. For example, as a response to neoliberalism's threat to state sovereignty, during the 1990s the neoliberal nation-state

redefined sovereignty to include an economic as well as territorial dimension. However, this new ideological contradiction between open economic borders and closed political borders created a problem of identity for the subject. In Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*, characters such as Buzzworm and Bobby Ngu internalize national ideology, restricting their power to overcome this crisis. Thus, by forcing the subject to contend with multiple, even conflicting scales on a daily basis, the crisis of scale diminishes human agency.

Simultaneously, however, the crisis of scale creates an opportunity to expand agency through the development of new subjectivities. As Neil Smith argues, "by setting boundaries, scale can be constructed as a means of constraint and exclusion, a means of imposing identity, but a politics of scale can also become a weapon of expansion and inclusion, a means of enlarging identities."[83] For example, while in Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber* the protagonist's identity splits in two as a response to trauma, by learning to navigate productively between her two identities, Tan-Tan puts herself in a position of power within her community. While such productive subjectivities must develop immanently within the conditions of the crisis of scale, they possess the potential to reorient the subject toward mobilizing these conditions toward productive ends.[84] The purpose of this dissertation is therefore to track the contemporary author's deployment of generic conventions to foster new subjectivities capable of understanding, navigating, and in some cases even resisting the crisis of scale. The generic turn, through its tension between allegory and non-mimetic world-building, flexibility of formal and aesthetic strategies, and self-reflexivity as a historical dialogue, puts the contemporary novelist in a position to tackle precisely this representational problem.

Chapter Outline

The texts in this dissertation assert the importance of fiction as a historically mutable theoretical resource to address the crisis of scale. As social constructs, scales such as the global city and nation-state depend on narratives to sustain themselves. In disrupting our relationships with different kinds of spaces, the crisis of scale also disrupts our relationship with narrative. Addressing the crisis of scale therefore requires us to rethink the way we tell stories and imagine spaces through literature. Thus, while the following texts reflect the conditions of the crisis of scale, they also act as an "enabling device" and an active theoretical resource shaping the world.[85] In each chapter, I examine a different scale undergoing significant changes under globalization. Within the global city, nation-state, world, and galaxy, the crisis of scale manifests as different crises for the subject. To address these crises, novelists invest in genre as a representational strategy for constructing new subjectivities more capable of ascribing themselves agency.

The first chapter focuses on China Miéville's detective novel, *The City and the City* (2006) and the rise of the global city. Because what one sees and experiences characterizes much of urban life, the crisis of scale manifests in the global city as a crisis of unseeing; that is, by conditioning which urban elements appear or disguise themselves to the subject, global cities promote global capitalist interests and maintain the status quo. To address this crisis of unseeing, China Miéville works within the detective novel tradition, a genre which traditionally focuses on epistemological problems of information-gathering and deductive reasoning. However, *The City and the City* instead prioritizes phenomenological problems of first-person experience and perspective. Doing so provides Miéville with a narrative framework to represent the global city, a new urban

form which similarly foregrounds phenomenological problems. While Miéville rejects the possibility of a utopian solution outside the conditions of the crisis of scale, his novel introduces examples of hybrid spaces such as the *DöplirCaffé* which serve the interests of global capitalism, but nevertheless carve out a space where social change may take place.

Chapter Two focuses on Karen Tei Yamashita's magical realist novel, *Tropic of Orange* (1997), and changes to the nation-state under globalization. As opposed to the lived experience of the city, the nation-state establishes an imagined community based on narratives of nativity, language, and borders. While state sovereignty traditionally favors strong territorial borders, since the 1980s the nation-state has accommodated neoliberalism's rhetoric of free trade and weak economic borders. The contradiction produced by these conflicting imperatives has resulted in a crisis of ideology for the subject. Critiquing both magical realism's commercialization and postmodernism's ironic detachment, Yamashita's post-magical realist novel foregrounds the subject's embeddedness in the structures of globalization. Incorporating a postmodernist pastiche of genre formations as well as the magical realist principle of contradiction, *Tropic of Orange* adopts a logic of immanence, finally locating a representational strategy capable of capturing the neoliberal nation-state. Rather than succumbing to the crisis of scale, however, Yamashita's post-magical realist subjectivity instead attunes herself to its conditions. By inhabiting the nation-state's contradictions, figures like Bobby Ngu and Manzanar Murakami form meaningful new identities who by the end of the novel become active agents in shaping their lives.

The third chapter centers on the representation of the world in Nalo Hopkinson's science fiction novel, *Midnight Robber* (2000). As political units, world models like the

New/Old World and the three worlds system historically affirm the hegemony of the global powers by ordering the planet into temporally separate regions. By relegating Third World nations either to a primitive past or a newly discovered future, hegemonic world models deny postcolonial identities a sense of agency and place in the present. Thus, the crisis of scale manifests in the world as a crisis of temporality. Hopkinson represents this crisis through her revision of Carnival poetics and science fiction. While Carnival poetics effectively critiques colonial ideology through principles of subversion, play, and temporal contingency, by definition the practice does not promise lasting change. To mobilize Carnival poetics as a sustainable threat to the logic of dominant world models, Hopkinson incorporates a science fictional temporality of continuity which returns the postcolonial subject to the present. Now in a position of agency, Hopkinson's new sustainable subjectivity, which she develops through Tan-Tan's Robber Queen character, successfully carries over Carnival principles into everyday life, constructing a new world model based on a science fictional Carnival poetics of temporal contingency and continuity.

The fourth and final chapter, which reads Samuel Delany's space opera, *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* (1984), takes as its object of representation the galactic scale. Although humanity currently resides only on Earth, the galactic scale has historically served as a cultural touchstone of society's epistemological limitations. At the time of *Stars*' publication, imaginings of the Milky Way Galaxy within popular culture employed the science fictional sublime, an aesthetic category which expresses humanity's anxiety in response to potentially unknowable objects beyond ordinary experience. Thus, the crisis of scale manifests in the galaxy as a crisis of unknowability

for the subject. More recently, the speculative turn in philosophy draws from the science fictional sublime in its focus on granting objects autonomy and agency beyond human relations, demonstrating the perseverance of this crisis today. Delany approaches the crisis of unknowability through the space opera, a subgenre of science fiction which depicts galactic space as a knowable object. Through Delany's critique and revision of space opera, the novel takes a postmodernist stance which locates meaning through difference. Developing a new subjectivity through protagonist Marq Dyeth, Delany insists on a political engagement with unknowability. Delany's self-reflexive critique of realist space opera provides a theoretical toolkit to critique any worldview, such as the speculative turn today, which similarly espouses a context-free understanding of unknowable objects.

While *Tropic of Orange* stands as a limit case, *Stars* is the only novel in this study which fully embraces a postmodernist approach to scale. Much of this is owed to the historical context of the novel in which, at the time of its publication in 1984, the literary movement had not yet exhausted its potential or been co-opted and commercialized fully by mainstream culture. While Delany would later be incorporated into the canon of literary fiction, much of his early science fiction was read and marketed purely as genre fiction. Delany's *Stars* therefore anticipates the generic turn taking place since the 1990s. However, as my critique of the speculative turn implies, Delany's novel also insists on the relevance of postmodernism today, especially when applied to scales far beyond human understanding, such as the galaxy. Thus, while the novels in this dissertation vary in their stance toward postmodernism and the movement's legacy, as a practical phenomenology, their literary forms are as much a strategy tailored to addressing the

particular problems and crises of their given scales as they are a historical response to previous literary periods. As such, while critics have struggled to identify a singular, satisfying name for the literary period following postmodernism, *Stars* stands for the enduring relevance of the period's poetics, especially in addressing the representational challenge of the crisis of scale.

Chapter 1: The Crisis of Unseeing and the Global City in China Miéville's *The City and the City*

Introduction

Combining photographs of London with twenty-one written entries, China Miéville's essay, "London's Overthrow" (2011) represents London's high economic inequality, uneven development, and post-industrial decay, offering a counter-narrative to the image the United Kingdom projects out to the world. In one entry, a blurry photograph of a rising escalator and framed advertisements on the walls accompanies the following entry:

> "Ads find places to root that aren't even places. They sprout on the backs of travelcards, the surfaces of the ticket machines that sell them. The fronts of every step out of the Tube, so, rising from the earth, you're faced with strips of meaningless enthusiasm for product. 'All about me the red weed clambered among the ruins'. Marketing chokes London as vigorously as Wells' end-of-the-world Martian flora. Outside Waterloo station, at a bus stop, LoveFilm projects an endless loop of bait-drivel onto a building across the road, so its visions lurch into anamorphic frights on the sides of every bus that passes. And this commercial has a soundtrack. Now, close your eyes, you still can't opt out."[86]

Miéville portrays the advertisements, which he compares to weeds, as an unwanted presence. Like Wells' nightmarish Martian plants, they have invaded and spread across London. Despite these negative connotations, however, by suggesting that the advertisements take "root" and "sprout," Miéville represents them as an organic part of the city. Therefore, Miéville's metaphor naturalizes the advertisements as inextricable to the urban environment. Despite the alien invasion comparison, London has normalized the presence of marketing to the extent that avoiding them becomes impossible. Whether on the "backs of travelcards," the "fronts of every step out of the Tube," or on a "building

across the road," marketing dominates Londoners' sensory awareness. Advertisements, then, are an undesirable but ubiquitous part of living in London.

Rather than simply critiquing marketing techniques as "meaningless enthusiasm for product," however, Miéville seeks to disrupt their naturalization within urban environments. By identifying their omnipresence in London, Miéville suggests that as a result of their normalization, advertisements no longer need to call attention to themselves. While advertisements indeed seek an audience, Miéville's blurry photograph merges them with the walls. By fading into London's background, the advertisements become an uncontested component of urban life. Therefore, the problem with the abundance of advertising is not their vacuous marketing techniques, but rather their unquestioned assertion of space. Miéville juxtaposes the spread of mass advertising with protestors and workers strikes, who constantly struggle to legitimate their access to space.[87] For example, in another entry, when Occupy LSX attempts to access the stock exchange to protest, they discover that "entrance, though, is not a right: the square, like great and growing swathes of corporatized London, once public, these days only pretends to be, and that if you ask nicely. Police block entrance."[88] Thus, while Occupy LSX's visibility signals their denial of access to place, the advertisements' invisibility signals their unquestioned right to occupy urban space. Therefore, advertisements' fading into the background of one's awareness confirms rather than denies their assertion of space in the city. Through his entries and photographs, Miéville frames spatial justice in the city as a problem of seeing and unseeing; that is, by controlling what urban dwellers see or ignore, institutions of the global city like the marketing industry reinforce themselves as fundamental to the urban form itself. "Now close your eyes," Miéville writes. "You still

can't opt out." Miéville concludes, then, that the global city operates through a process of "unseeing," or the recession of urban elements into the background of one's awareness.

London is an example of a global city, or an urban environment with a significant degree of global economic, political, or cultural influence. Global cities like New York may be central to the world market, act as major cultural hubs, or contain high degrees of racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. As Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre has argued, spaces like the city are not given, but are continually produced. The global city, then, is a social product shaped by the rise of globalization.[89] While in "London's Overthrow" Miéville critiques the global city through the form of a multimedia essay, in *The City and the City* (2009) he does so through the detective novel.[90] Miéville's novel is set in Besźel and Ul Qoma, two fictional European global cities and nation-states which occupy the same geographical space. To maintain the imagined border between cities, citizens internalize the spatial practice of "unseeing," or pretending the other city does not exist, regulated by a supranational organization called Breach. The plot follows Inspector Tyador Borlú, who investigates the possibility of breach, or a violation of borders, in the murder of a foreign student, Mahalia Geary. Traveling from Besźel to Ul Qoma to, finally, Breach, Borlú discovers the identity of Mahalia's murderer: Professor David Bowden. Working with Sear and Cole, an international corporation, Bowden manipulated Mahalia into smuggling artifacts illegally across borders. Fearing her exposing his manipulation, Bowden murders Mahalia. In the end, while Bowden faces justice, Sear and Cole escape legal accountability. Borlú, meanwhile, assumes his new identity as an agent of Breach. Throughout the novel, Borlú's perceptual experience captures the phenomenology of navigating the global city. Through the practice of "unseeing,"

Miéville locates a language to describe the way global cities reinforce their authority, and the problem of perspective and agency this creates for the subject.

While "unseeing" in *The City and the City* seems absurd, it only intensifies the experience of navigating any global city. Walking through New York, for example, involves ignoring a great deal of the urban environment, including the homeless, poverty, construction sites, air pollution, litter, and traffic, which reinforces the social production of the city. For example, while "pointing out the positive aspects of Skid Row," historian Robert Fishman suggests, "'Do not look at the homeless, look at these urban industries.'"[91] In other words, pay attention to the city's growth under capitalism rather than to its necessary effects: poverty and economic inequality. However, even as we pretend that the homeless do not exist, if only by looking away, we acknowledge their presence. Similarly, construction sites, air pollution, and litter disturb the social production of the city as a thriving, healthy, self-sustaining environment, when in fact these urban elements are direct consequences of urbanization. Crucially, we do not ignore construction sites and pollution. We complain about obstructed views, the noxious smell of fumes and exhaust, and the trash in the streets. Just as quickly, however, we adapt to these conditions and they fade into the background of our awareness. We unsee these urban elements because, much as they are unpleasant, they are necessary for New York's social production.

Because unseeing requires naturalizing rather than forgetting urban elements, advertisements also adopt this logic. Indeed, to sell products, businesses must generate as much attention around their advertisements as possible. At the same time, the ubiquity of advertisements in New York ironically renders them invisible. As the center of

advertising and tourism, Times Square best expresses how the sheer proliferation of advertising paradoxically fades them into the background of one's awareness. The examples of advertising are endless: posters, billboards, fliers and CD panhandling, store signs and windows, scattered ads in the streets, and of course the digital screens of Times Square itself. As critical Marxist geographer David Harvey has argued, a city's collective symbolic capital is not only a vital part of its social production, but also serves the interests of capitalism. Indeed, "the 'branding' of cities becomes big business."[92] In this case, because advertising defines Times Square's identity, the city's branding is branding itself. However, the quantity of advertising makes it impossible to pay attention to every flier or billboard. Instead, they shift into the backdrop of the urban landscape. Through unseeing, advertisements become naturalized as part of the city's social construction and therefore no longer require direct attention to justify their assertion of space.

These examples of unseeing demonstrate that navigating the global city is not an epistemological problem of uncertainty, since what we know about these urban elements is far less important than how we see them. Rather, the global city's social production under capitalism determines when urban elements appear or do not appear in citizens' daily experience, suggesting that unseeing is instead a phenomenological problem of perspective. Just like the citizens of Besźel and Ul Qoma, the average pedestrian notices and unnotices urban elements unconsciously. The logic of unseeing therefore suggests that the problem of experience under the crisis of scale does not register as a lack of understanding, but as a problem of conforming to given social codes and pretending not to see phenomena of which you are fully aware. Philosopher Slavoj Žižek defines ideology as a set of unwritten rules which determine "what we know but have to talk

about and act as if we don't know," as well as "what we don't know but have to talk about and act as if we do know it."[93] In other words, ideology coercers the subject into a type of performance corresponding to a lack or surplus of knowledge. In the global city, the surplus of information requires the subject to perceive and navigate in ways that resolve contradictions and preserve the socially constructed image of the city. As the ruling ideology of the global city, unseeing is the "background noise" of society which shapes the perception of already known urban elements.

Through the detective story genre, Miéville locates a representational strategy to capture the phenomenological dimension of the global city. While critics have discussed the importance of genre in *The City and the City*, most focus either on Miéville's relationship with weird fiction or the novel's fusion of generic influences.[94] While *The City and the City* indeed draws from speculative and dystopian fiction in terms of setting and plot, the novel's relationship with the detective genre provides Miéville with a formal strategy to represent the experience of navigating the global city. The traditional detective story began with Edgar Allan Poe in the 1840s and took concrete form during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century through British authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, and Dorothy Sayers. By emphasizing the detective's rationalist worldview, this Golden Age era privileged epistemological questions of knowledge-gathering as a reading and interpretive practice.[95] While later generic mutations built upon existing tropes, conventions, and worldviews, they continued to foreground epistemological issues. As a self-reflexive critique and continuation of this genre, *The City and the City* instead emphasizes the detective's powers of observation and

perspective. By shifting focus from epistemological to phenomenological concerns, Miéville reimagines the detective genre within the neoliberal era.

Miéville's phenomenological detective novel represents how the global city creates a crisis of unseeing by directing the subject's experience of urban environments. While critics such as Doreen Massey and Saskia Sassen disagree on a precise definition, they associate the global city with the global scale, which represents the world-wide networks that shape urban spaces from without.[96] While this definition recognizes the linkages between cities and larger scales, it fails to account for the way globalization constructs the scale of the global city within such urban spaces. In the global city itself, the increased contact between cultures, nationalities, and languages produces new hybrid, and even conflicting, spaces and identities. For example, many financially successful spaces in global cities today, such as reclaimed industrial coffee shops and culinary fusion restaurants, collapse cultural, urban, and national boundaries.[97] These hybrid sites do not pose a threat to the global city, however, because as a product of neoliberalism this urban form has already co-opted and commodified local difference. Thus, while critics such as postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha have argued for hybridity politics as a liberatory weapon which exposes the constructedness of urban forms and the interpenetration of nations and cultures which produce them, the global city foregrounds and naturalizes hybrid spaces, neutralizing their subversive potential.[98]

Responding to this crisis of unseeing for the subject, Miéville's detective novel instead frames the subject's disorientation in the global city as a problem of perspective. By foregrounding phenomenological questions of experience and seeing, Miéville not only represents the crisis of seeing, but develops a new subjectivity, through Borlú, who

attunes himself to the global city's conditions. While ultimately Miéville focuses on critiquing the global city through a phenomenological approach, rather than developing a new liberatory politics to combat hegemonic forces, through spaces like the culturally and culinarily hybrid *DöplirCaffé*, Miéville offers a possible model for producing new, productive hybrid spaces despite their incorporation in the global city.

In this chapter, to make the argument for Miéville's phenomenological detective novel as an effective representational strategy for the crisis of unseeing in the global city, I first differentiate the global city from previous urban forms, such as the postmodern city, through its foregrounding the social construction of the global scale, or the hybrid spaces between scales. Next, I discuss "unseeing" as the phenomenological symptom of navigating the global city, and define the crisis of unseeing through the manipulation of the subject's perspective in urban environments. I then analyze how *The City and the City* acts as a phenomenological response to the traditional epistemological detective novel, providing Miéville with a theoretical framework to critique the global city. I conclude by demonstrating the way, by foregrounding issues of perspective, Miéville reveals how globalization reproduces the global city through the ideological practice of unseeing, while imagining new possible strategies of resistance.

Normalizing Hybridity and the Crisis of Unseeing

As sites of global power, global cities contain high levels of urbanization, diversity, density, cultural capital, and are vital to the world-wide network of international trade and finance. Global cities differ from other urban forms, such as megacities and world cities, in the intensified presence of the global scale. While critics

such as Doreen Massey and Saskia Sassen identify the global scale as an exteriorized network, I locate the global scale in the hybrid interstices between scales. In other words, hybridity, which collapses the boundaries between cultural, national, and historical identities and spaces, signals the presence of the global scale. While hybrid spaces predate the global city, Miéville's *The City and the City* signals a shift from the social experience of previous urban forms, such as the postmodern city, by prioritizing questions of phenomenology over epistemology. While in the postmodern city hybrid spaces produce uncertainty, the global city normalizes this social condition as a phenomenological problem. By dictating which urban elements remain visible or invisible to the subject, the global city creates a crisis of unseeing.

The global city is the urban expression of globalization. Critics such as Henri Lefebvre and Neil Smith have long argued that society's collective consciousness determines a city's image.[99] In other words, the city's population and social institutions together imagine the social production of urban life.[100] Features of global capitalism such as financial deregulation, transnational corporations, and the expansion of the global market through free trade policies at first seem to have little to do with the contemporary city. Rather, these features appear most relevant to national and international scales, where they take form. The city, however, plays a vital role in the production and reproduction of global capitalism. For critics such as Doreen Massey and Michael Dear, cities embody the lived experience of globalization through urban processes like uneven development and urbanization.[101] Under globalization, then, the urban scale does not lose significance, but rather gains a renewed importance vital to the reproduction of global capitalism.

In *The City and the City,* Miéville represents Besźel and Ul Qoma as global cities through the intensified presence of the global scale. In a passage from the novel, while pursuing Bowden, Mahalia's murderer, Borlú observes, "…the way he's moving…the clothes he's wearing…they *can't tell* whether he's in Ul Qoma or Besźel" (292). By refusing to make explicit his position in either Besźel or Ul Qoma, Bowden ensures that no one will arrest him without risking breach themselves. Borlú marvels at the social prowess Bowden exhibits in becoming "Schrödinger's pedestrian": "How expert a citizen, how consummate an urban dweller and observer, to mediate those million unnoticed mannerisms that marked out civic specificity, to refuse either aggregate of behaviours" (259, 297). In this passage, Bowden first demonstrates his knowledge of Besźel and Ul Qoma only to reject locating his position in either city. Bowden accomplishes this by assuming an ambiguous urban identity, maneuvering in the hybrid space between the cities. Therefore, Borlú's calling Bowden an expert citizen seems contradictory, since he demonstrates his civic prowess by rejecting a singular urban identity. When considering cities like Los Angeles or Tokyo, proving one's status as a model citizen ought to mean firmly identifying with the city's urban identity. Instead, Bowden does so precisely by communicating his location in the interstitial space between Besźel and Ul Qoma. As this passage suggests, then, the model citizen of the global city must effectively navigate the interstitial spaces between scales. Therefore, rather than representing the exteriority of flows and exchanges beyond individual cities, the global scale emerges through the presence of hybridity. Through his mastery of the global city, Bowden demonstrates the way *The City and the City* locates the global scale in the interstices between scales.

While hybridity itself is not new, its normalization as a phenomenological rather than epistemological problem marks the global city's status as a new urban form. Unlike the global city, critics identify the urban condition of the postmodern city as an epistemological problem. Fredric Jameson's discussion of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel exemplifies the disorienting experience of navigating hybrid spaces in the postmodern city:

> The Bonaventure aspires to be a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city…In this sense, then, ideally the mincity of Portman's Bonaventure ought not to have entrances at all, since the entryway is always the seam that links the building to the rest of the city that surrounds it: for it does not wish to be a part of the city but rather its equivalent and replacement or substitute."[102]

The Bonaventure Hotel, as representative of what Jameson calls "postmodern hyperspace," disguises the boundary between the hotel and the surrounding city. In other words, by scaling the city down, the Bonaventure Hotel confuses the differences between itself and Los Angeles. Without clear boundaries to mark off where the city ends and the hotel begins, the border between these scales becomes uncertain. As a result, the architecture of the hotel "transcends the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world."[103] The postmodern city therefore blurs the boundaries between what ought to be separate scales. In consequence, the postmodern subject is incapable of locating herself with certainty, leading to a perpetual sense of disorientation. Critics David Harvey, Edward Soja, and Iain Chambers similarly argue that society's culture of consumption and spectacle has disrupted the social construction of the city as a stable environment.[104] For such critics, epistemological disorientation characterizes the social condition of navigating the postmodern city. Unable to locate

herself, the subject cannot be certain about the nature of her urban identity or the city as a whole. Therefore, these critics take on a modernist interpretation of geographic uncertainty as a symptom of globalization's disruption of spatial boundaries.

In the "Schrödinger's pedestrian" passage, however, Bowden weaponizes his spatial uncertainty to elude the law. Thus, while epistemological disorientation ordinarily disempowers the subject, in *The City and the City* geographic uncertainty also offers a strategy of political subversion. Through his mastery of urban undecidability, Bowden challenges the global city's urban form. Supporting this interpretation, in his own reading of the Bonaventure Hotel, postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha argues that the disorienting experience of this space "reveals the anxiety of enjoining the global and the local; the dilemma of projecting an international space on the trace of a decentred fragmented subject. Cultural globality is figured in the *in-between* spaces of double-frames: its decentered 'subject' signified in the nervous temporality of the transitional, or the emergent provisionality of the 'present."[105] While initially Bhabha seems to associate the global with international space, he instead frames globality as the "in-between." Rather than referring to the globe as a physical space, the global scale exists interstitially. Bhabha develops this point further: "It is, ironically, the disintegrative moment, even movement, of enunciation—that sudden disjunction of the present—that makes possible the rendering of culture's global reach."[106] In other words, the global scale's interstitiality creates the conditions for globalization to spread to scales beyond the urban environment. Rather than invading from without, the global scale develops from within. Critics such as Nezar AlSayyad and Jonathan Friedman have similarly recognized globalization's tendency toward cultural differentiation and its role in the production of hybrid spaces.[107]

As all of these critics demonstrate, rather than an extra-territorial network, these hybrid spaces represent the emergence of the global scale.[108]

Departing from Jameson's modernist reading of the Bonaventure Hotel, however, Bhabha instead insists on hybridity's potential to subvert the postmodern city. Drawing from post-structuralist theory and semiotics, Bhabha's Third Space locates hybridity as the postcolonial subject-position.[109] While the colonizer attempts to impose an essentializing framework of identity on the colonized, the new hybrid identity of the colonized challenges this very process. Postcolonial spaces deploy the cultural hybridity "of their borderline conditions to 'translate,' and therefore reinscribe, the social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity."[110] In other words, hybridity allows the postcolonial subject to translate colonial ideology's construction of place into something new. Hybridity accomplishes this by challenging "our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People."[111] Thus, the colonizer's own attempt to impress an essentialized identity onto the colonized instead produces a new hybrid identity, creating the conditions for Third Space's counter-hegemonic subversion.

Supporting this argument, critics such as Michael Dear and Eric Bulson similarly recognize disorientation as a means of resistance to global capitalism's production of space. For these postmodernist critics, disorientation does not merely symptomize globalization's production of space, but draws attention to the city as epistemologically uncertain, questioning the means of their social construction. Referring to novelists in the second half of the twentieth century, Bulson argues that "disorientation is a way to resist prescribed ways of imagining the world" as well as a "technique and an effect that can

counteract capitalist abstraction and the forgetfulness of history."[112] In the postmodern city, then, globalization's production of space foregrounds epistemological problems of certainty. Whether hybrid spaces restrict or empower the subject, both modernist and postmodernist interpretations share uncertainty as the social condition of the postmodern city. What happens, though, when hybrid spaces become normalized?

In *The City and the City*, hybrid spaces and identities no longer challenge the city as a totality, but instead become naturalized as part of the global city's urban form. For example, as the enforcers of the interstitial space between Besźel and Ul Qoma, Breach best exemplifies how global cities employ hybridity to reject the apparent unity of space. After Borlú knowingly commits breach, Breach enlists him to investigate his own crime. During this process, Borlú learns how Breach functions: "as the two cities had grown together, places, spaces had opened between them, or failed to be claimed, or been those controversial *dissensi.* Breach lived there" (257). Breach operates in both cities as well as the contested and forgotten spaces between them. Rather than acting as a supraordinate authority which controls urban and national scales from above, Breach's power exists in the paradoxical "nowhere-both" of a "third place" within and between Besźel and Ul Qoma (257). Because Breach's authority originates in the interstitial space between the cities, rather than supranationally, the cities limit the organization's power to the crime of breach alone. By operating in the interstices, Breach subverts the construction of the city as a homogenizing or unifying force. Both cities, in fact, base their institutional authority and urban form on Breach's principle of hybridity. As a hybrid "third space," Breach strongly resembles Bhabha's own conception of Third Space, which subverts the essentializing logic of colonial spaces. However, Breach neutralizes Bhabha's

postcolonial critique by co-opting hybridity into the global city's political structure. As the ultimate authority over Besźel and Ul Qoma's political relations, Breach maintains its legitimacy by inhabiting the interstitial spaces between Besźel and Ul Qoma.[113]

Through Orciny, a mythical and utopian alternative to Breach, Miéville satirizes hybridity politics as an effective means of critiquing the global city. Orciny refers to another possible third city which occupies the spaces between Besźel and Ul Qoma. However, the novel ultimately exposes Orciny as a utopian fantasy. Instead, Breach assumes its role as a secret, interstitial city. As Borlú recognizes, referring to Breach, "You're evidence this could all be real" (257). Yolanda, a friend of the murdered woman, Mahalia, makes the possible connection between Orciny and Breach explicit: "I'm not sure Orciny and the Breach are enemies at all…I think Orciny is the name Breach calls itself" (211). Although Yolanda's theory turns out to be unfounded, Breach indeed inhabits the same interstitial space citizens attribute to Orciny. While Orciny represents a revolutionary counter-hegemonic force, Breach is a hegemonic institution which operates through surveillance and coercion. By associating Breach and Orciny as "third spaces," Miéville demonstrates the global city's co-opting and normalizing utopian narratives of hybridity, like Bhabha's. By laying claim to the very spaces which ought to oppose its legitimacy, Breach undercuts the possibility of subverting its authority.

Miéville's representation of Breach and Orciny reflects contemporary critiques of hybridity politics, as well as efforts to develop new strategies to challenge the global city. Precisely because the global scale emerges in the interstices between scales, rather than an extra-territorial network, a Third Space politics poses no threat to globalization, which has already adopted hybridity as fundamental to the global city's urban form. Critics

Katharyne Mitchell and Ananya Roy have argued that hybrid spaces are not by necessity subversive, and can even be "reactionary and oppressive."[114] Because third spaces function only as utopian metaphors rather than material realities, conceptual metaphors like Edward Soja's "thirdspace" open up our spatial imaginations "precisely because [they do] not actually exist" (258). While hybrid spaces generate subversive power by challenging essentialized identities and spaces, global capitalism neutralizes this strategy by normalizing hybridity. While paradoxical, Roy notes "how the essentialized hybrid is presented and legitimated as pure and genuine."[115] Despite being critical of discourses on Third Space, Mitchell and Roy both allow for hybridity to provide a means of counter-hegemonic resistance. Critics of Third Space merely seek to disassociate hybridity from its necessary relationship with subversion. This movement from subversion to normalization, however, marks the transition from the postmodern city to the global city.

With hybridity's normalization, uncertainty no longer defines the urban experience. Instead, as hybridity's naturalization demonstrates, the global city manipulates citizens' perceptual experience through the logic of unseeing. The global city, rather than simply a seat of global economic power, institutionalizes unseeing as a daily practice to naturalize the city's urban geography. As Borlú explains, "The early years of a Besź (and presumably an Ul Qoman) child are intense learnings of cues. We pick up styles of clothing, permissible colours, ways of walking and holding oneself, very fast" (66). Through this indoctrination of citizens into a system of codes, the cities demonstrate that uncertainty signifies a failure to participate in the social production of the urban environment. Even tourists have no excuse but to adopt the city's practice: "they would know, at least in outline, key signifiers of architecture, clothing, alphabet

and manner, outlaw colours and gestures, obligatory details—and, depending on their Besź teacher, the supposed distinctions in national physiognomies—distinguishing Besź and Ul Qoma, and their citizens" (76). If breach indicates a momentary failure to participate in the global city's social construction, unseeing indicates the naturalization of urban and cultural elements. Whereas under postmodernism, disorientation acts in opposition to or even subverts globalization's construction of the city, in the global city unseeing has neutralized uncertainty as an urban condition.[116] Unseeing therefore symptomizes globalization's weaponizing of hybridity.

In addition to normalizing hybridity, unseeing's institutionalization also represents a movement from epistemology to phenomenology as the dominant social condition of the city.[117] While the postmodern city depends on spatial uncertainty, navigating the global city becomes a phenomenological problem of perceiving which urban elements do or do not appear. In *The City and the City*, hybridity indeed exposes the constructedness of space. However, by basing its authority on the principle of hybridity, Breach does not signal globalization's failure to essentialize identity, but its success in remaining flexible to the production of culture as liminal and contingent.[118] As the urban form which prioritizes the phenomenological dimension of the global scale, the global city operates by managing what citizens do or do not see. In neutralizing attempts of subversion, the global city institutionalizes unseeing as a way of experiencing urban life. Thus, the crisis of scale manifests in the global city as a crisis of unseeing.

The Phenomenological Detective Novel

To locate a representational strategy for the experience of the crisis of unseeing and imagine new modes of resistance, Miéville turns to the form of the detective novel. In *The City and the City*, Miéville's phenomenological detective novel recontextualizes the genre's historical associations with knowledge, suggesting that issues of perspective are just as essential and foundational to the genre's aesthetic.[119] In responding to the classical British detective novel, the American hardboiled novel, and the postmodernist anti-detective novel, *The City and the City* revives the genre's interest in questions of experience. By emphasizing the detective's powers of perspective over knowledge, Miéville locates a satisfactory representational strategy for the crisis of unseeing.

Responding to the traditional detective novel, *The City and the City* prioritizes phenomenological over epistemological issues. Despite the novel's ambiguous geography, the practice of unseeing renders epistemological questions irrelevant. Thus, critics who identify uncertainty as the novel's primary focus falsely interpret *The City and the City* as postmodernist anti-detective fiction.[120] Neither does the novel mark a return to certainty and orientation in a manner resembling the British detective novel's form, as other critics have suggested.[121] Instead, the novel concerns itself with the management of perception. In the first chapter, Miéville highlights the detective's perceptual abilities over his skills in knowledge-gathering. Although this chapter introduces the reader to Besźel, the narrative does not provide exposition on unseeing or breach. Instead, *The City and the City* conditions the reader to daily life in the global city by shifting urban elements either into the foreground or the background of the text. The novel begins, "I could not see the street or much of the estate" (3). Rather than starting with an epistemological question about what Borlú knows about the street and estate, or

even an ontological question about the nature of their existence, *The City and the City* begins with a phenomenological question about the conditions with which these urban elements appear to Borlú.

While the rest of the chapter closely follows the conventions of the standard detective novel, it shifts focus from the detective's rationalist abilities to his navigation between different perspectives. As Borlú inspects the crime scene and questions the boys who found the body, while speculating on the nature of the crime remains significant, the narrative draws attention to the detective's expertise in perception rather than fact-gathering alone. For example, while observing the body, constable Lizbyet Corwi says, "'Couldn't exactly say she was well hidden, but it [a wet mattress] sort of made her look like a pile of rubbish, I guess" (4). Here, Corwi emphasizes the presentation of the body, including its concealment within the rest of the environment. For the remainder of the chapter, Borlú struggles with his perception of the body as either an object or person. Later, he observes, "all the rubbish had done was roll into the dead woman and rust her as if she, too, were old iron," emphasizing the tragedy of her death (32). As a reminder of Besźel's criminal underbelly, urban dwellers may unconsciously wish to ignore the body, as it conflicts with the image of the city as a place of law and order. Rather than disguising Mahalia Geary's body or burying it, however, the murderer blends her into the urban environment, rendering her invisible to pedestrians. Thus, the murderer takes advantage of citizens' tendency to unsee urban elements like garbage to hide the body.

While this chapter indeed represents a shift in focus from epistemological to phenomenological concerns, it makes use of familiar tropes and conventions of detective stories dating back to the genre's inception. The traditional British detective story,

represented by the Golden Age of the 1920s and 1930s, provided the foundation for the genre's interest in crime, detection, and inductive reasoning. Most critics credit Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) as the first detective story.[122] Following Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes novels and short stories, first published in the 1890s, brought the detective story into popular literature.[123] The Golden Age drew from Poe's short story, which privileges the powers of rationalism and empirical knowledge to uphold the established order.[124] Authors such as Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, and Anthony Berkeley Cox wrote about "Supermen" who possess exceptional perceptual awareness and solve crimes through inductive reasoning alone.[125] The ending to the detective novel is therefore central to its success, because the solution explains and justifies the story's central mystery.[126] For this reason, many Golden Age texts resemble puzzles in their design, as they implicitly ask readers to search for the story's solution along with the detective.[127] Although *The City and the City*'s almost fantastical setting differs from those of most detective novels, the first chapter also establishes a central mystery familiar to readers of detective fiction: who killed Mahalia Geary, and why? In addition, the novel adheres to the conventions of the detective novel by including examples of chase scenes, several detective duos, and the uncovering of a massive international conspiracy.[128] Most significantly, *The City and the City* provides a certain, narratively closed resolution, which is especially important given the detective genre's origins in privileging questions of epistemology.

Thus, rather than ironizing or departing from the detective genre entirely, Miéville instead builds upon the tradition, privileging Borlú's perspective rather than his inductive reasoning skills alone. However, Borlú's narration turns attention to his own perspective

rather than to the explanatory value of the body's discovery alone. After Borlú chooses to see rather than unsee Mahalia, the body troubles him. Taking note of her wounds, he comments, "She looked unseeingly at me" (7). This observation challenges the inspector's position as subject and the body's position as object. With their roles reversed, Borlú feels unseen by the body, meaning he too has faded into the background of the city's architecture. By reversing their roles, the novel questions the detective's perspective as the ultimate authority in crime fiction, while critiquing the genre's necessary dehumanization of the victims. Many detective stories begin with dead bodies, but in *The City and the City* the body draws attention to her subject-position. Mahalia not only sees Borlú, but seemingly possesses the agency to unsee him. This emphasis on perspective marks a significant change from the epistemological detective novel, which would focus on the body's relevance to the central mystery alone.

While the plot of *The City and the City* indeed resembles the traditional detective novel's relationship with certainty, in questioning the authority of the detective, this scene draws from hardboiled fiction and the postmodern anti-detective novel and their relationship with uncertainty. As opposed to the British detective novel's privileging Enlightenment rationalism, the American hardboiled tradition of the 1930s and 1940s placed doubt in the detective's interpretive skills.[129] Hard-boiled writers such as Raymond Chandler and James M. Cain applied realism and naturalism to the detective novel, representing the detective as a flawed human being rather than a Superman.[130] Sharing a history with film noir, the hard-boiled tradition rejects the optimism and positivism of the British detective novel in favor of cynicism and doubt. In addition, while the British detective novel places faith in the city's police and detective force to

solve crimes, the hardboiled novel features corruption and a crooked police force, leading to skepticism of the city's institutions.[131] While the hardboiled tradition seems like a rejection of the British detective story, it remains invested in the conventions of the genre.[132] For example, hardboiled novels may favor chase and capture scenes over dry exposition, but both traditions generally embrace the certainty of a closed ending. The hardboiled tradition, therefore, merely provides an alternate style and tone to an existing genre.[133]

While Borlú's characterization in the opening scene draws from the hard-boiled novel, the novel's deconstruction of tropes puts it in dialogue with the anti-detective novel tradition. Despite subverting the reader's expectations and parodying the genre's form, the postmodernist anti-detective novel of the post-World War II period continued to privilege epistemological problems. Examples such as Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965) and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962) are structured like detective novels in their pursuit of a solution to a mystery, but they either withhold the resolution or end before its outcome.[134] In addition, outsiders to the detective genre mainly wrote most anti-detective novels.[135] Therefore, anti-detective novels are not detective novels in the strictest sense.[136] Rather than building upon this tradition, these novels subvert, parody, and reject the genre's conventions. Critic Brian McHale calls the detective novel "the epistemological genre *par excellence*" for its investment in questions of knowing.[137] However, while McHale identifies the genre with modernism, postmodernism more directly adopts the detective genre's aesthetic as a form of satire.[138] Anti-detective stories may begin in a place of certainty, but in confronting the limits of knowledge they end in a place of uncertainty. Therefore, despite subverting the detective novel's aesthetic, the

anti-detective novel nevertheless privileges epistemological problems. The traditional British detective story, hardboiled fiction, and postmodernist anti-detective fiction may differ in their treatment of certainty and uncertainty, but all three continue the tradition of the epistemological detective genre.

As the first chapter demonstrations, Miéville incorporates the tropes and conventions of the British Golden Age, the suspicion of authority from hard-boiled fiction, and the problem of epistemological limitations from postmodern anti-detective fiction. In doing so, *The City and the City* acts as a response to and continuation of the detective genre. By privileging the detective's perceptual abilities over his rationalism, Miéville self-reflexively critiques the genre's overinvestment in questions of certainty and uncertainty, while shifting focus to issues of sight, perceptual, and experience. The novel's first instance of unseeing at the end of this chapter demonstrates the way phenomenological questions of perception supersede epistemological questions of uncertainty as the dominant experience of the global city. Borlú notices an elderly woman at the border of the neighborhood: "I was struck by her motion, and I met her eyes. I wondered if she wanted to tell me something. In my glance I took in her clothes, her way of walking, of holding herself, and looking. With a hard start, I realized that she was not on GunterStrász at all, and that I should not have seen her" (12). Borlú discovers that, rather than walking in Besźel, the woman in fact resides in the foreign city and nation-state, Ul Qoma. Drawing from the traditional detective story, the novel references the detective's uncanny powers of intuition. However, in this passage the possibility of knowledge-gathering quickly loses relevance. After looking away, Borlú "looked back up, unnoticing the old woman stepping heavily away, I looked carefully instead at her in

her foreign street at the facades of the nearby and local GunterStrász, that depressed zone" (12). After mistakenly witnessing the woman, Borlú adjusts his mental geography and perceives the city accordingly. While this passage seems related to uncertainty, Borlú's mistake is momentary, and by the end of the passage the city's boundaries remain certain. Rather than an error in knowledge, Borlú's momentarily failure to recognize the boundaries between the two cities is a violation of perception.

Utilizing tropes and conventions of the detective novel, Miéville transforms the aesthetic experience of disorientation in the city from a condition of epistemological uncertainty to phenomenological perspective. While Borlú in his daily life occasionally experiences moments of geographical uncertainty and risks breach, unseeing predominantly defines his mode of awareness. After joining Breach, however, he locates himself in both Besźel and Ul Qoma, and therefore no longer needs to unsee any urban elements. While readjusting his mental landscape of the city, however, Borlú becomes disoriented: "My sight seemed to untether as with a lurching Hitchcock shot, some trickery of dolly and depth of field, so the street lengthened and its focus changed. Everything I had been unseeing now jostled into sudden close-up" (254). The text represents Borlú's disorientation by referencing Hitchcock's use of the dolly zoom shot, popularized in *Vertigo* (1958). The effect of Borlú's vertigo is spatial: "the street lengthened" and objects and people "jostled into sudden close-up." In addition to the spatial nature of this effect, this passage emphasizes the importance of optics.[139] The dolly zoom shot is essentially an optical illusion, as the camera moves background while the lens zooms in, creating a distortion of perspective. Borlú's moment of disorientation, then, as he locates himself and readjusts his urban identity, involves perspective rather

than knowledge. This passage does not indicate Borlú's uncertainty of location or identity, since the Hitchcock shot occurs after his becoming certain of his geographical position. Rather, by emphasizing the importance of optics and perspective, this passage suggests that Borlú's disorientation is directly a phenomenological consequence of sight. In fact, Borlú's ignoring his natural impulse to unsee creates this moment of disorientation, suggesting that unseeing and uncertainty are not related social conditions. Thus, in the global city, disorientation does not constitute an epistemological condition of uncertainty, but rather a phenomenological condition of perspective. By developing the figure of the detective through his mastery of unseeing, Miéville frames phenomenological disorientation as the condition of navigating the global city.

Miéville's phenomenological detective novel self-reflexively critiques and recontextualizes the genre's historical development. As critics have argued, while the detective novel purports to be a puzzle for the reader to solve, it deliberately withholds information crucial to uncovering the mystery, making the solutions impossible to predict.[140] The detective novel's epistemological dimension, then, while important to the genre, distracts from the genre's investment in phenomenological issues of sight and experience. For example, in "The Purloined Letter" (1844), the third of Edgar Allan Poe's detective stories, the detective, Dupin, solves the mystery of a stolen letter by observing that the thief hid it in plain sight. The solution to this mystery is not chiefly a matter of knowledge. In fact, critics have identified a flaw with the story's logic: Dupin does not have sufficient information about the letter to solve the crime.[141] For critics like Julian Symon, this mistake detracts from "The Purloined Letter" as a tale of ratiocination. However, Poe's apparent logical error is not critical to the story's aesthetic because "The

Purloined Letter" is not concerned with epistemological problems. While the police unsee the letter, expecting it to be concealed, Dupin anticipates the thief's gambit and discovers the letter hidden in plain sight. Thus, rather than knowledge, the central problem of the story is a matter of sight. By prioritizing phenomenological questions of perspective over epistemological questions of knowledge, "The Purloined Letter" anticipates developments in the detective genre over a hundred and fifty years later. Rather than reading detective novels as a problem of knowledge, then, we should read them as a problem of perspective. The detective novel structures its plot by manipulating what the detective—and the reader—sees and unsees.[142]

Foregrounding Perspective in the Global City

Miéville's phenomenological detective novel provides him with a theoretical toolkit to represent the experience of navigating the global city, or the urban expression of the global scale. By foregrounding perspective, as opposed to abstract knowledge, as essential to experiencing the global city, Miéville locates a language to describe the crisis of unseeing. Rather than supporting traditional epistemological critique, like Bhabha's Third Space, which seeks to expose and subvert the logic of the global city, unseeing requires a phenomenological understanding of its conditions. Miéville accomplishes this by rendering the feeling of disorientation, associated with the postmodern city, a phenomenological rather than epistemological phenomenon. Rather than disremembering the interconnections between scales, unseeing instead normalizes and institutionalizes the city as a social construction. By inhabiting the detective's perspective, Miéville succeeds

in locating a representational style not only for the conditions of unseeing, but for imagining new productive ways of living within the global city.

Through Miéville's focus on the phenomenology of the detective, *The City and the City* reveals the way unseeing controls citizens' awareness of the boundaries between spaces. As a detective, Borlú proves himself as an expert observer, which allows him to represent unseeing in phenomenological terms. For example, on his way to work, Borlú says, "In the morning trains ran on a raised line metres from my window. They were not in my city. I do not of course, but could have stared into the carriages—they were quite that close—and caught the eyes of foreign travelers" (25). In this passage, Borlú already knows what he would see if he looked into the carriages, demonstrating that unseeing is not a problem of knowledge. Rather, unseeing requires Borlú to remain hyper-vigilant of Ul Qoma in order to maneuver around it. Borlú's use of the past modal verb, "could have" treats his observation of the carriages as a past possibility that did not transpire. Ironically, Borlú's very denial of this observation signals its reality. Unseeing, therefore, does not involve "not-seeing." Rather, unseeing requires citizens to acknowledge the other city twice: first to see it, and second to unsee it. As Borlú continues his commute, for example, he observes the neighborhood: "In Besźel it was a quiet area, but the streets were crowded with those elsewhere. I unsaw them, but it took time to pick past them all" (25). Here, Borlú first acknowledges the crowded streets before taking the second step to unsee them. These two steps do not happen simultaneously. Rather, the movement from seeing to unseeing "[takes] time." Unseeing is not a process of forgetting, but instead requires double-sight; that is, citizens must constantly adjust their mental landscape of both cities, while remaining cognizant of the borders between spaces. Utilizing the

conventions of the detective genre, Miéville determines that unseeing therefore does not refer to a process of forgetting or ignoring urban elements, but in fact requires citizens to be self-conscious of the social construction of space. To achieve this, unseeing does not condition citizens to ignore foreign spaces, but instead to acknowledge such spaces twice. As a phenomenological rather than epistemological practice, unseeing compels subjects to constantly adjust their mental geography.

In addition to requiring a double sight, unseeing's phenomenological dimension naturalizes rather than disguises the social construction of urban spaces. During a cab ride, for example, Borlú notices that "The Pont Mahest was crowded, locally and elsewhere" (25). By requiring citizens constantly to reinforce the social construction of the city, unseeing draws attention to categories of scale such as "local" and "foreign." In doing so, unseeing exposes the arbitrary nature of scale, in which such terms are only meaningful as long as citizens reinforce their relevance. Unseeing therefore not only constructs but deconstructs locality and foreignness. Rather than challenging the global city's form, however, unseeing naturalizes this experience. Despite revealing the instability of spatial categories, unseeing neutralizes the critical potential of subverting its logic. Precisely by normalizing unseeing as a natural practice in urban environments, then, the global city legitimates itself.

Through Borlú, *The City and the City* develops a subjectivity capable of apprehending, if not contesting, the crisis of unseeing. Borlú accomplishes this by framing his role as an investigator through his ability to inhabit different perspectives rather than through his cognitive abilities alone. To take an extreme example, when

someone shoots Yolanda across the cities' borders legally, through a neutral zone, Borlú comments,

> "*No breach has occurred* though a woman had been killed, brazenly, across a border…A heinous, complex, vicious killing, but in the assiduous care the assassin had taken—to position himself just so at the point where he could stare openly along the last metres of Besźel over the physical border and *into* Ul Qoma, could aim precisely down this one conduit between the cities—that murder had been committed with if anything a *surplus* of care for the cities' boundaries, the membrane between Ul Qoma and Besźel." (235)

By taking care not to commit breach, even while blatantly murdering Yolanda, the shooter expresses his fear of Breach over local law enforcement. Considering the dominance of unseeing to daily life, the shooter's actions also characterize murder as a lesser crime than violating an imaginary border. In exploiting the border's social construction to commit murder, then, the shooter exposes the absurdity of unseeing as an ideological system. In doing so, the shooter seems to critique the global city through his blatant subversion of its social construction. At the same time, the means of his murder show a deep respect for the city's borders, and the real consequences he would face for violating them. Even Borlú, who seeks the shooter's capture, admires his expert navigation and understanding of the cities' boundaries. The texts contrasts the "heinous, complex, vicious," and brazen nature of the murder with his precision and "*surplus* of care" in upholding the cities' boundaries. Borlú's stupefied reaction therefore communicates his admiration for the shooter as an adept citizen, despite the violent nature of his crime. The shooter's actions may seem absurd, but instead express an experienced awareness of the global city. The shooter's actions and the scene itself emphasize the way the global city conditions citizens to constantly readjust their mental geography.

Similarly, Borlú's pursuit of the shooter seems to expose a gap in the logic of unseeing, but in fact reifies the ideological practice. Because they reside in different cities, Borlú cannot acknowledge the shooter directly. Rather, he must insist, "This was not, could not be, a chase. It was only two accelerations. We ran, he in his city, me close behind him, full of rage, in mine" (237). On the surface, it seems absurd to imagine Borlú and the shooter running parallel to each other without overt acknowledgement. Despite Borlú's insistence otherwise, this scene indeed resembles a chase, and therefore risks breaking the cities' sociopolitical laws. The absurdity of this scene draws attention to the arbitrary nature of the cities' collective mental geography, exposing their social construction. As in the previous example, however, the tension in this scene draws from Borlú's and Breach's sincere belief that this is not a chase. The text reads, "I was not looking at him, but fervently, legally, at Ul Qoma, its lights, graffiti, pedestrians, always at Ul Qoma" (237). Because unseeing requires a hyper-vigilance of both cities, Borlú can successfully follow the shooter without declaring an overt chase. This discrepancy seems like a difference in semantics, but understanding this scene requires a phenomenological understanding of the global city. As with unseeing itself, categorizing this scene as a chase becomes a matter of perspective. In order for this scene to constitute a chase, Borlú must communicate this information, and nearby pedestrians must perceive this reality. Thus, through the novel's treatment of a popular detective novel convention, Miéville captures the phenomenological dimension of the global city.

By applying the logic of unseeing to the urban landscape itself, Miéville locates a representational strategy for what it is like to navigate a global city. As in reality, in *The City and the City,* the logic of unseeing does not merely apply to the border between

Beszél and Ul Qoma, but to the social, economic, and political divisions within the cities themselves. Through Borlú's perspective, the novel frames Beszél's urban geography as a matter of perspective rather than knowledge. For example, Borlú describes Lestov, the constable Lizbyet Corwi's beat, as "almost a suburb," and "technically an island, though so close and conjoined to the mainland by ruins of industry you would never think of it as such, Kordvenna was estates, warehouses, low-rent bodegas scribble-linked by endless graffiti. It was far from Beszél's heart that it was easy to forget, unlike more inner-city slums" (9). In this passage, Borlú hedges his language in classifying Lestov, using words such as "almost" and "technically" to demonstrate how urbanization transformed this neighborhood. While the passage may indicate undecidability in terms of the neighborhood's status, Borlú in fact suggests that Lestov's urban identity as either urban or suburban, as well as island or mainland, depends on one's perception. More so than a formal definition, the city's collective consciousness determines Lestov's urban identity. Finally, Lestov's location makes it "easy to forget." This is not an issue of memory, but rather of public perception. Citizens ignore Lestov's existence due to its location and the negative economic consequences of urbanization. In this passage, Miéville foregrounds the phenomenological issue of sight in the global city. Without mentioning unseeing, the text prompts the reader to consider what they perceive or ignore in an urban environment.

In addition to shaping citizens' perception of urban elements, unseeing normalizes the effects of globalization more broadly. For example, Borlú's description of the crowd expresses the way unseeing ultimately relocates urban decay in the backdrop of citizens' perception: "Poverty deshaped the already staid, drab cuts and colours that enduringly characterize Besź clothes—what has been called the city's fashionless fashion" (18).

Miéville uses the language of negation, with words like "deshaped" and "fashionless," to demonstrate the way Borlú first registers the crowd only to mentally undo their presence. This logic of negation, as an example of unseeing, does not render the crowd invisible, but rather fades them into the background: "Those who were out looked like landscape, like they were always there" (17). In this example, Borlú does not literally unsee the neighborhood because both reside in Besźel. Rather, this passage demonstrates how unseeing functions more broadly in the global city. Unseeing does not disguise but rather normalizes the consequences of globalization.

By normalizing the effects of globalization, unseeing shifts urban elements into the background of society's collective consciousness. For example, the movement of high-tech companies and foreign investors into Ul Qoma creates an economic boom that also produces urban decay in Besźel. During Borlú's investigation in Besźel, he constantly notices examples of uneven development, including "hobbled factories and warehouses…a handful of decades old, often broken-glassed, at half capacity if open. Boarded facades. Grocery shops fronted with wire. Older fronts in tumbledown of classical Besź style. Some houses colonised and made chapels and drug houses: some burnt out and left as crude carbon renditions of themselves" (17). The movement of these industries from Besźel to Ul Qoma results in severe ramifications for the local population. As a visual representation of the negative consequences of uneven development, globalization ought to render these spaces invisible to pedestrians to maintain the myth of economic prosperity and equality. Instead, unseeing neutralizes any potential critique by conditioning citizens to observe the urban decay twice: first to see it, and second to unsee it. Through this process, unseeing normalizes post-industrial decay

as fundamental to the city's design. By foregrounding its impact on space, globalization shifts the consequences of its actions into the background noise of society.

The conclusion demonstrates the way foregrounding perspective enables Miéville's phenomenological critique of the global city. In an epistemological detective novel, solving the mystery at the end ordinarily resolves the plot's central conflict. Even in a postmodern anti-detective novel, the uncertainty of the resolution itself constitutes a statement on how we process the limits of knowledge. In *The City and the City*, however, solving the mystery emphasizes the way offering a counter-narrative to the global city's social construction depends on reorienting the subject's perspective. Working with Mikhel Buric, a politician who manipulates Besźel nationalists into becoming "a fence for foreign bucks," Bowden has been using the myth of Orciny to disguise an illegal smuggling operation across borders (285). With their help, Sear and Cole, an international electronics company, successfully smuggles artefacts across the borders of Ul Qoma and Besźel and into the rest of Europe. While Bowden and Buric face consequences from Breach, Sear and Core do not appear affected. While the ending resolves the novel's central mystery, the solution does not change the societal structure beyond Bowden's arrest. Sear and Cole, the perpetuators of the conspiracy, face no legal consequences. By ending *The City and the City* by demonstrating the irrelevance of knowledge to the novel's resolution, Miéville emphasizes the way unseeing in the global city renders epistemological issues trivial to the urban form.

In addition to downplaying the importance of knowledge to the detective novel, the ending emphasizes the way the crisis of scale instead operates through the manipulation of the subject's perspective. During the investigation of Sear and Cole, "the

company and its tech arm had come up, but the chains of connection were vague" (309). Precisely by disguising the division of labor under global capitalism, Sear and Cole avoid culpability. By rendering the global scale, or the interconnectedness between spaces, invisible, the global division of labor provides the means for its reproduction. In fact, Breach's enforcement of unseeing facilitates Sear and Cole's successful smuggling of artefacts outside of the cities. Mahalia, taking advantage of an "unstable urban location," transports the artefacts from Ul Qoma, where others from Besźel pick them up (265). Despite committing breach, this plan succeeds precisely because the hybrid urban geography of the cities ensures that no one will see or question Mahalia's actions. Maintaining the divisions between scales through unseeing discourages onlookers from catching her. Thus, Sear and Cole manipulate the cities using the myth of Orciny, Besźel nationalism, and even unseeing itself to ensure the success of their smuggling operation. While unseeing functions locally to manage citizens' perception of the global scale, this example demonstrations the international consequences of unseeing's logic of managing perspective.

Traditional epistemological critique therefore has limited value here, since bringing this new information to light changes nothing about the nature of international relations. Through his phenomenological detective novel, Miéville steers away from the pitfalls of traditional epistemological criticism toward a more productive form of phenomenological critique which inhabits the subject's perspective. As a form of international law, Breach's interstitial nature offers a blueprint for the possibility of its own subversion. Indeed, neither Breach nor international law is a superordinate authority which establishes rule from above.[143] However, while Breach operates interstitially,

under international law, according to Miéville, "the coercive violence of the legal subjects [nation-states] themselves – regulates the legal relation."[144] International law does not require a superordinate authority because international law is not a body of rules beholden to outside enforcement, but a process whereby, in its modern form, "the capitalist states [struggle] among themselves for domination over the rest of the world."[145] For Miéville, modern international law is intimately tied to imperialism and global capitalism, and is for this reason fundamentally unreformable.[146] As a relationship and process rather than a body of rules, international law is indeterminate and contingent.[147] In consequence, it is fruitless to look for a resolution of legal arguments in the arguments themselves. Rather than a question of legality, the interpretations of the nation-states themselves decide resolutions to international conflicts.[148] Consequently, nation-states with more coercive power have more authority to criticize or legally defend one's actions.[149] International law therefore does not operate through the certainty of a stable body of rules or necessarily through the uncertainty of lawlessness and chaos. Rather, international law depends on the states themselves to make their interpretations seen or unseen, backed by coercive power.

According to Miéville, because international law is fundamentally unreformable, the only possibility for progressive change lies outside the law in the court of public opinion.[150] Arguing for the importance of scale, Neil Smith discusses the "homeless vehicle," which allows its users to transgress social boundaries. While the practice of unseeing renders the homeless invisible, according to Smith, the homeless vehicle "empowers the evicted to erase their own erasure."[151] As a subversive form of resistance to globalization, the homeless vehicle violates the boundaries of urban space by "jumping

scales."[152] Significantly, the act of "jumping scales" is not in itself subversive, but one which reifies the social production of scale itself. Rather than the act alone, one's urban identity determines the possibility of spatial and social subversion. Other groups, such as the police, freely and legally "jump scales" within urban spaces, an act which validates the power of the state. Similarly, in *The City and the City*, Breach legitimates itself through its own exception to the practice of unseeing. Neil Smith argues that "by setting boundaries, scale can be constructed as a means of constraint and exclusion, a means of imposing identity.[153] By setting the terms for which citizens may see, cross, or inhabit different scales, globalization maintains social and political control of the global city. Subverting the hegemonic forces of the global city, then, requires a phenomenological understanding of how the urban form operates, as well as the blind spots it leaves open from which new subjectivities could emerge.

In *The City and the City*, however, the same structures which produce the global city fundamentally shape public opinion. In other words, globalization's production and management of scale creates a barrier to social change. While Breach plays an important role in enforcing unseeing, the public is largely responsible for its normalization. As a member of Breach, Ashil notes, "It's everyone in Besźel and everyone in Ul Qoma. Every minute, every day. We're only the last ditch: it's everyone in the cities who does most of the work. It works because you don't blink. That's why unseeing and unsensing are so vital. No one can admit it doesn't work. So if you don't admit it, it does" (311). Unseeing, therefore, is a self-reinforcing spatial practice which functions because of citizens' faith in its effectiveness. Changing public opinion toward Breach would

therefore challenge the organization's authority as well as unseeing and its self-constituting role.

However, as *The City and the City* makes clear, as a symptom of globalization's control of the global scale, unseeing itself discourages citizens from making such changes to the city's social production. The novel contains many examples of the way unseeing neutralizes the potential for social organization and radical change, but the story of the Ul Qoman man and the Besź maid narrativizes this social condition: they find themselves "meeting in the middle of Copula Hall [a neutral zone], returning to their homes to realize that they live, grosstopically, next door to each other, spending their lives faithful and alone, rising at the same time, walking crosshatched streets close like a couple, each in their own city, never breaching, never quite touching, never speaking a word across the border" (134). This example is personal rather than overtly political. However, unseeing's management of individual relationships demonstrates how completely this practice dominates everyday life. Unseeing determines how and when citizens may cross political, economic, and social boundaries. By controlling public perception of scale, unseeing discourages the social contact which might lead to romantic relationships or even organized dissent. Therefore, despite Miéville's claim for the potential of progressive change outside of the law, *The City and the City* reminds us that the production of scale shapes even public opinion.

Although unseeing shapes public opinion, its logic also opens up the possibility for progressive change, however rare or unintentional. For example, the *DöplirCaffé* demonstrates how the logic of unseeing can produce meaningful social contact as a byproduct of its management of perception. Borlú describes,

> "A common form of establishment, for much of Besźel's history, had been the *DöplirCaffé*: one Muslim and one Jewish coffeehouse, rented side by side, each with its own counter and kitchen, halal and kosher, sharing a single name, sign, and sprawl of tables, the dividing wall removed. Mixed groups would come, greet the two proprietors, sit together, separating on communitarian lines only long enough to order their permitted food from the relevant side, or ostentatiously from either and both in the case of freethinkers. Whether the *DöplirCaffé* was one establishment or two depended on who was asking: to a property collector, it was always one." (22)

As a fluid space capable of becoming one establishment or two depending on the perspective of the customers, the *DöplirCaffé* takes advantage of the global city's normalization of hybridity. Because the *DöplirCaffé*'s hybrid urban identity exists only in its customers' collective imagination, the establishment foregrounds its own social construction. The *DöplirCaffé* resembles Bhabha's Third Space by providing a hybrid space which deconstructs the production of scale and challenges essentializing notions of urban identity. Despite this productive potential, highlighting the way owners' financial interest makes these hybrid spaces possible, Miéville reminds the reader that the *DöplirCaffé* only exists as a result of capitalism. By claiming the *DöplirCaffé* as a single space, the owners split the property tax fees rather than paying them separately. In addition, Borlú notes that the *DöplirCaffé* no longer exists, with the Besźel ghetto replaced by "newly gentrified chic" houses (22). The *DöplirCaffé* is therefore vulnerable to the same capitalist conditions which made it possible. Rather than subverting the global city, the *DöplirCaffé* is a product of this urban form.

However, reading the *DöplirCaffé* through a phenomenological lens, rather than through its subversive potential alone, reveals the way it builds new productive subjectivities. Similar to unseeing, navigating the *DöplirCaffé* is not a subversive experience; instead, customers naturalize the establishment's hybrid structure as a

cultural invention. However, while unseeing normalizes the social production of scale in order to enforce borders, the *DöplirCaffé*'s fluid social boundaries promote intercultural and interfaith contact. Even if the *DöplirCaffé* owes its existence to the needs of capitalism, its ability to carve out a hybrid space of multi-and-intercultural interaction demonstrates a possible weakness in unseeing's production of the global city. Rather than settling for a subversive politics, the *DöplirCaffé* thrives through hybridity's normalization. Customers' ability to freely navigate between shops and communities demonstrates the way the global city makes this space possible. By attuning themselves to the global city's phenomenological conditions, citizens can become active agents in shaping hybrid urban spaces. By marking divisions between scales and enforcing boundaries, unseeing also creates blind spots where meaningful social change may originate.

In the real world, groups and organizations have similarly taken advantage of hybridity's normalization to develop new productive spaces. For example, Smart Cities represent an effort to integrate digital technologies with global cities to make their various institutions and services, including transportation, enterprise, infrastructure, and currency, more economically efficient. According to the most recent plan for Smart London, still in the planning stages, London's status as a global city makes Smart London not only necessary but possible.[154] Smart London imposes its social production of the global city by asking Londoners to collaborate in this process, which is only possible with the recognition that the city is a constantly changing, socially produced place. Using access to open data as a cornerstone of the plan, Smart London aims to incorporate and indoctrinate the public into the city's image as technologically innovative, efficient, fast,

and clean. Indeed, Smart London's plan even encourages citizens "to report environmental quality issues such as graffiti" by text message or mobile upload.[155] As a hybrid space combining the material London with the immaterial space of the internet, Smart London turns the city's social construction into a tool to impose an institutional image on the populace. While in *The City and the City* citizens must unsee urban elements that do not cohere with the city's collective image, Smart London uses technology to turn this social construction into a material reality.

While Smart Cities and the use of online platforms opens up the possibility for governments to impose a top-down social construction of the global city, these same tools can be used to create an image of the city which is democratic, non-hierarchical, and equitable. Projects like Ushahidi's SMS platform in Kenya and the "eco-towns" in the UK take advantage of big data and hybrid online social platforms to provide community-based, do-it-yourself urban planning projects.[156] Authors Thomas Ermacora and Lucy Bullivant call this bottom-up urban planning strategy "recoding," whose ethos is "premised on the idea that placemaking is not static."[157] By taking advantage of hybridity's normalization, these projects make the public participants in the city's social construction. In doing so, these bottom-up strategies of placemaking provide models of counter-hegemonic resistance. While hybrid spaces no longer possess the subversive power they held in the postmodern city, naturalizing hybridity presents an opportunity for citizens to attain a degree of agency over the social and material production of their cities. Recoding and do-it-yourself planning materials on the internet offer other means for the subject to take conscious control over the social and material production of the global city in a way impossible under postmodernism. Having finally dispensed with

epistemological uncertainty as a social condition, citizens may freely pursue the phenomenological question of what urban elements should be made visible.

In *The City and the City,* unseeing neutralizes the potential to subvert globalization's control over the global city's representation by normalizing the social construction of space. Rather than reinforcing the borders between scales, then, unseeing institutionalizes when and how citizens may cross them. Ultimately, *The City and the City* demonstrates the endless flexibility of globalization to co-opt the counter-hegemonic principle of hybridity and even nationalist ideology to create the conditions for its reproduction. The very "in betweenness" of the global scale makes citizens susceptible to political and economic exploitation. Despite the work of globalization to control citizens' perception of the global scale, paying more attention to the subject's experience is an essential step in imagining new productive relationships with the city. If unseeing thrives by normalizing the logic of hybridity, then the first steps of resistance may form in the unaccounted-for spaces between scales, in the very interstitiality from which the global scale emerges.

Chapter 2: The Crisis of Ideology and the Nation-State in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*

Introduction

After a street peddler, Margarita, in Karen Tei Yamashita's magical realist novel, *Tropic of Orange* (1997), tells the African American unofficial social worker, Buzzworm, that her oranges were "imported from Florida," he corrects her:

> "If it's Florida, it's not imported. Same country, see. If it's Mexico, it's imported."
> "Por qué? Florida's more far away than Mexico."
> "You got a point, Margarita."[158]

As an El Salvadorian, Margarita has an outsider's perspective on the national and juridical differences between the United States and Mexico. Compared to Los Angeles's distance for her homeland in Central America, the distance between Los Angeles and the Mexican border seems inconsequential. As a result of her outsider status, Margarita overlooks importation's political significance, confusing it for a purely geographic term. However, Margarita's lack of a national attachment puts her in a position to expose the nation-state's social construction. While Mexico and the United States possess real power over their territory, they depend on narratives of national unity to naturalize their borders and maintain legitimacy. While Buzzworm appears to have internalized national ideology, and thus corrects Margarita's error, she is not invested in reinforcing the nation-state's legitimacy. This is a problem for the nation-state, which depends on subjects' reinforcing narratives of national unity to maintain sovereignty. This scene, therefore, reveals national ideology's vulnerability to migrant communities, whose heterogeneous identities challenge narratives of national homogeneity.

While Margarita's error seems to place her in a privileged position outside of national ideology, Buzzworm's correcting her suggests the opposite. Despite their social construction, nation-states wield enormous power over their territory, and their management of national borders has material consequences for the subject. In Margarita's case, the flow of domestic and international trade impacts how her business operates. Indeed, she depends on the importation of oranges for her trade to continue uninterrupted. Despite not seeming like a participant, as a member of a migrant community, Margarita becomes incorporated in the nation-state, serving the needs of the national economy. Thus, while Margaritas' identity seems to challenge narratives of national homogeneity, her labor nevertheless proves useful for the nation-state. Therefore, while Margarita represents a set of changes to the global economy, this passage reminds the reader that even in the neoliberal era, national borders still matter.

Through Margarita and Buzzworm's misunderstanding, the text identifies a contemporary source of tension in the way the nation-state constitutes its authority: neoliberal ideology. If the nation-state traditionally emphasizes the imperative to create a homogenous national community, the growing importance of the world market appears to challenge this goal. In other words, while the nation-state depends on socially constructed differences between the United States and Mexico, exposing the logic of national ideology blurs the separation between scales. Margarita experiences this confusion as a crisis of scale. If the border does not matter, where does the United States begin and Mexico end? What is the difference between national and international space? While the nation-state requires clear answers to these questions to maintain order, subjects of the nation-state also rely on distinct separations between scales to sustain their national

identity. In *Tropic of Orange,* while this scene and others hint at the possible vulnerability of national ideology to critique, Yamashita's novel also emphasizes the nation-state's absolute authority to commit violence upon the subject. Thus, rather than succumbing to these globalizing changes, the nation-state instead seems to have altered the way it establishes sovereignty.

In Yamashita's novel, other characters similarly experience moments of confusion in response to the nation-state's struggle to reconcile national ideology with new global realities. *Tropic of Orange* follows seven principal characters both within the United States and across the border into Mexico, over the course of a week. The Tropic of Cancer has become inextricably tied to an orange in Mexico, and as the orange travels north, the border between the global north and global south collapses. As all of the characters converge in Los Angeles, Latino journalist Gabriel Balboa and his Japanese American girlfriend, Emi, investigate a string of international conspiracies with the aid of Buzzworm; Japanese American homeless ex-surgeon Manzanar Murakami conducts traffic over the freeway; Mexican American Rafaela Cortes searches for her husband, Chinese Malaysian Bobby Ngu; finally, the mysterious prophet-like figure Arcangel transports the orange across the US-Mexico border. Through these storylines, Yamashita's characters confront contemporary problems of understanding what it means to be a subject of the neoliberal nation-state. For all of these characters, their collective struggle for subjectivity within the nation-state converges on the category of national sovereignty.

As the nation-state's ruling ideology, national sovereignty refers to the way the traditional nation-state maintains authority by regulating its border. In the above passage,

new flows of international trade disrupt this process, challenging sovereignty's ideological logic. In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which came into effect in 1994. By eliminating barriers of trade between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, NAFTA incentivized the free movement of capital across borders. While neoliberal trade agreements like NAFTA do not directly challenge the nation-state, their rhetoric of freedom and open economic borders appears to conflict with the nation-state's principle of strong territorial borders.[159] Neoliberal ideology thus poses a potential threat to state sovereignty by valuing the freedom of the market across borders. While some critics argue that neoliberalism undermines the authority of the nation-state, others argue for its changing the functions of the nation-state, which becomes both more and less sovereign.[160] Instead, I argue that this ideological shift has transformed the definition of state sovereignty. While as a political term sovereignty values the nation-state as a bound territory, as an economic term sovereignty values the nation-state as an unbound territory in an international network. This is why President George H.W. Bush and President Clinton both argued for NAFTA's necessity on the basis of "national security" and American democracy, even though free trade favors porous economic borders.[161] This new definition suggests that sovereignty itself is flexible, capable of accommodating contradictory principles. As an ideological compromise between neoliberalism and the nation-state, sovereignty now serves the interests of the nation-state, global corporations, and the economic elite.

However, sovereignty's instability and conflicting narratives leave the subject of the nation-state vulnerable, disrupting categories of national identity we take for granted. While the above passage serves as a small example, *Tropic of Orange* contributes to a

larger cultural shift which constitutes a crisis of scale for the subject of the nation-state. By renegotiating the boundaries between national and international scales, sovereignty's conflicting principles render uncertain the subject's position within the neoliberal nation-state. As a result, the subject's national identity becomes unstable. Even Buzzworm, who devotes himself to addressing Los Angeles's structural inequality and the victimization of the homeless, nevertheless corrects Margarita's misuse of the term import. In this case, Buzzworm's behavior clashes with his personal values and goals. Buzzworm's confusion therefore suggests a crisis for the subject, whose lived experience conflicts with the nation-state's ideological principles, leading to a reexamination of national identity. As *Tropic of Orange* demonstrates, while vulnerable populations like refugees, immigrants, and the homeless bear the brunt of the destabilization of national identity, all subjects of the nation-state participate in and are affected by sovereignty's contradictions. At stake in this chapter, then, is the subject's phenomenological experience of neoliberal sovereignty as an ideological construct, and the possibility of developing new subjectivities capable of challenging its principles. Thus, the subject's relation to neoliberal sovereignty manifests as a crisis of ideology.

Yamashita examines the crisis of ideology through a magical realist lens. While this genre historically critiques colonialism and the traditional nation-state, by 1997, the colonial model of hegemony had long been replaced by globalization, which introduces a new set of political and cultural problems. Therefore, Yamashita participates in a tradition of authors writing in English, such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Arundhati Roy, who use magical realism to respond to problems of globalization both within and outside the United States. In the previous chapter, I

discussed the way globalization normalizes hybridity in the global city. This presents a problem for the postcolonial critic, because hybridity no longer possesses the subversive power to challenge dominant ideological systems. While *Tropic of Orange* confronts a similar dilemma, Yamashita does not treat hybridity politics as outmoded in the same manner as Miéville. Rather, taking advantage of magical realism's close associations with postcolonialism, Yamashita satirizes—rather than discards—the genre. Yamashita's deliberate subversion of magical realist tropes demonstrates her engagement with critical debates about the genre's problems, including its tendency to exoticize and romanticize local cultures, ventriloquize diverse voices, and, finally, privilege the realist tradition.[162] Most significantly, Yamashita both satirizes and renews magical realism's celebration of contradiction to critique its oppositional worldviews.

In addition to magical realism, *Tropic of Orange* is also indebted to the legacy of postmodernism. The form of Yamashita's novel incorporates postmodern aesthetic techniques, including its networked structure and generic bricolage.[163] However, like magical realism, by the 1990s postmodernism had undergone critiques of being co-opted by mainstream culture, therefore neutralizing its subversive power. Understanding these limitations, Yamashita incorporates a range of genres in her novel, including film noir, hard-boiled fiction, and disaster movies. As an example of postmodern pastiche, *Tropic of Orange* is interested in the way these genres interact with magical realism. Despite Yamashita's investment in postmodernism, however, she rejects the movement's use of ironic detachment as outmoded in favor of an aesthetic of immanence. By putting these genres in contact, Yamashita uses postmodernist techniques both to satirize these genres and arrive at a new formal strategy which accounts for their aesthetic weaknesses. For

these reasons, I refer to *Tropic of Orange* as a post-magical realist novel which both participates in and satirizes the tropes of magical realism and postmodernism.

Rather than entertaining the fantasy of critical distance, Yamashita critiques the nation-state by inhabiting its ideological contradictions. Just as the nation-state adopts conflicting narratives under neoliberalism, Yamashita's post-magical realist novel embodies similar contradictions. Even further, Yamashita emphasizes the unavoidable connection between magical realism and capitalism. While *Tropic of Orange* introduces figures like Buzzworm, Manzanar Murakami, and Arcangel, who imagine models of the nation-state outside neoliberalism, these characters often undercut their own message, adopting the logic of neoliberalism they aim to oppose. By inhabiting neoliberalism's contradictions, Yamashita makes the reader complicit in the nation-state's exploitative practices. Rather than surrendering to neoliberalism, however, *Tropic of Orange* satirically assumes its contradictions to arrive at a representational strategy for the crisis of ideology. While by necessity *Tropic of Orange* does not offer a revolutionary counter-politics, inhabiting their contradictions makes legible the development of new productive subjectivities who become active agents in shaping the future of the neoliberal nation-state.

In this chapter, I first consider theories of the nation-state under neoliberalism, while making the case that sovereignty's new economic dimension leads to a crisis of ideology for the subject. Next, I discuss the history of magical realism, as well as the novel's relation to postmodernism, and argue for interpreting Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* as a post-magical realist novel which critiques the nation-state through the logic of immanence. Following this claim, I close read a series of passages from

Tropic of Orange, identifying their engagement with genre as well as Yamashita's embracing magical realism's aesthetic of contradiction. I conclude with a final reading from the novel which argues that Yamashita foregrounds magical realism's embeddedness in neoliberal structures to develop new subjectivities capable of critiquing, and in some cases resisting, the neoliberal nation-state. Through her post-magical realist aesthetic, Yamashita foregoes the possibility of critical distance, while also developing new national subjectivities capable of critiquing the neoliberal nation-state.

The Neoliberal Nation-State and the Crisis of Ideology

In *Tropic of Orange*, Yamashita represents the crisis of ideology by highlighting the way neoliberalism undermines the nation-state's authority over its territory. While attempting to trace an outbreak of poisoned oranges to their origin, Gabriel discovers the complexity of the United States' trade routes with Latin America:

> "Well, say Brazil's quota for oranges is exhausted, then Brazil exports to Honduras. Honduras to Guatemala, Guatemala to Mexico, and Mexico to the U.S. Then it's cool even though everyone knows the orange harvest is dead in Mexico in June. Keeps everyone in business." (244)

In his effort to uncover the truth, Gabriel reveals a problem in the way the nation-state adapts to global trade conditions. While Mexico does not harvest oranges in June, its exportation to the United States continues by relying on a complex system of foreign trade quotas. In June, then, the existence of Mexican oranges is an economic and juridical fantasy which allows international trade to continue uninterrupted. However, as a sovereign nation, Brazil ought to exercise authority over its border. In bypassing Brazil's quota system, this trade agreement violates the nation-state's autonomy over its territory. Therefore, while this trade agreement serves national interests, it also subverts their

authority. Thus, while bypassing Brazil's quota system benefits these nation-states economically, this arrangement undermines national sovereignty.

This passage registers critical debates about national sovereignty in the neoliberal era. Neoliberal trade agreements like NAFTA, which make possible such international trade routes, appear to undermine the authority of nation-states to regulate their borders. Sovereignty, as the ideology of the nation-state, relies on myths of national unity to authenticate this political form. Unlike walking through a city, which entertains the fantasy of common experience of place, citizens of the nation-state will never meet or know one another. This is a problem for the nation-state, which must establish a sense of national identity to maintain sovereignty. For political scientist Benedict Anderson, printing technologies contributed toward a national identity based on unified fields of communication and exchange.[164] While nativity is also an important touchstone of national identity, for Anderson, common languages make possible the formulation of official nationalisms.[165] During the colonial era, the adoption of official nationalisms allowed the European powers to spread across the globe without threatening their national identities.[166] Thus, while citizens of nation-states may not meet each other, they are united as an imagined community through narratives of national identity based on cultural touchstones such as language.

For the modern nation-state, while language and nativity remain significant, territoriality emerges as fundamental to narratives of national identity, and thus the way this political form derives sovereignty. This is because, unlike previous political forms, the extent of the nation-state's administrative authority corresponds exactly to its national territory.[167] For this reason, sociologist Anthony Giddens defines the nation-state as a

"bordered power-container."[168] Anderson similarly recognizes that the nation-state must be limited, with "finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations."[169] The border, unlike the more nebulous term, frontier, delimits the territory of the nation-state. Therefore, while the large scale of the nation-state poses a problem, narratives of language, nativity, and territory contribute to the formation of a national homogeneity which legitimates this political form.[170]

While cultivating national identity helps to maintain national sovereignty, the rise of globalization after the Second World War presents a challenge to the nation-state as an imagined community.[171] By the 1980s, the rise of neoliberal policies challenged the nation-state further by loosening trade restrictions and opening up economic borders. Some critics recognize this threat, arguing that while we should not abandon the term entirely, the present international society seriously threatens sovereignty.[172] Others argue that while powerful new international institutions like NGOs, the World Bank, and the IMF have assumed roles traditionally reserved for nation-states, national governments remain essential for mediating between domestic and international scales.[173] Therefore, the neoliberal nation-state is both more and less sovereign. Additionally, some argue that by ceding some of their control over the global economy, nation-states in fact consolidate their dominion over national security.[174] Unlike international institutions and corporations, nation-states alone assert the authority to militarize, signaling a clear jurisdictional difference from these nonstate actors. Thus, most critics argue that rather than weakening the authority of the nation-state, neoliberalism decenters national sovereignty, adapting its role in an increasingly international world.[175]

The problem with the critical debate is that, whether neoliberalism strengthens or weakens the nation-state, sovereignty itself remains unexamined. By focusing on changes for the nation-state, critics generally operate under the assumption of sovereignty as a stable term. Rather, sovereignty constitutes an ideological system which remains flexible to the needs of the nation-state. Literary theorist Terry Eagleton defines ideology as a set "of discursive strategies for displacing, recasting or spuriously accounting for realities which prove embarrassing to a ruling power; and in doing so, they contribute to that power's self-legitimation."[176] Understanding sovereignty's history and changes under neoliberalism is therefore essential for examining the lived experience of subjects of the nation-state. While sovereignty historically developed to resolve the nation-state's inconsistencies, as an ideological system sovereignty itself contains inherent contradictions since its inception.[177] State sovereignty developed in 1648 after the Thirty Years War as an agreement between the European powers to legitimate a new international order of political states.[178] Thus, while today critics argue that international institutions undermine the powers of the nation-state, from the very beginning sovereignty originates on an international scale.[179] However, in globalization's age of relatively high-speed communications and information technologies, and lowered transportation costs, the principle of territoriality no longer possesses the same power to preserve the international order. In the post-1980s era of neoliberalism, global capitalism has transformed not only nation-states, but the way they legitimate themselves. Consequently, globalizing trends necessitate a redefinition of sovereignty which reflects contemporary strategies of legitimating national authority.

By revealing the nation-state's new contradictory imperatives of maintaining the principle of territoriality while loosening economic borders, Yamashita's reflects the redefinition of sovereignty under the crisis of scale. While eating in a sushi restaurant, Emi and Gabriel decide to "people watch," which involves fabricating stories about others' nationalities. Emi remarks, "'Cultural diversity is bullshit'" and is representative of "a white guy wearing a Nirvana T-shirt and dreds" (128). While Emi provocatively targets cultural diversity, the true object of her critique is neoliberalism, which constructs an ethos of multiculturalism to generate capital. As a result of its profit-seeking goal, neoliberalism devalues human beings, which Emi recognizes, saying, "We're all invisible. It's just tea, ginger, raw fish, and a credit card." A woman sitting beside Emi takes offense to her statements, countering, "I love living in L.A. because I can find anything in the world to eat, right here. It's such a meeting place for all sorts of people. A true celebration of an international world" (129). Having internalized neoliberal ideology, the woman appears to stand for a utopian international order, unaware of or apathetic to the exploitative commodification of "cultural diversity." This passage represents the neoliberal imperative to weaken national borders on the basis of freedom and cultural exchange. While the woman sees Los Angeles as a de-nationalized, multicultural space, Emi exposes the largely Western, corporate interests which motivate this neoliberal worldview.

While this example from the sushi restaurant highlights the way neoliberalism co-opts multiculturalism and internationalism to serve the needs of capital, later Emi recognizes how this imperative contradicts the nation-state's principle of territoriality. Emi speaks about a woman from Mexico City who "'pumps her breast milk and brings it

here [Los Angeles] every day'" (90-91). Gabe calls the woman's "international breast milk" one of the "benefits of NAFTA," which values the movement of labor across borders but not people. Reducing this woman's identity to her labor allows her to cross back and forth between borders, since this follows the neoliberal imperative of weak economic borders. However, as a human being, the woman cannot herself travel across borders, since this violates the imperative of strong territorial borders. This example highlights the way the neoliberal nation-state maintains sovereignty by adopting a set of contradictory principles. Despite exposing this contradiction, however, the text does not question the effectiveness of the ideology itself. Gabe even jokes, "'I wonder if Nestlé knows about this," suggesting that the absurdity of the "Mexican wet nurses" arrangement may not stand in the way of, but rather contribute to, neoliberal commodification (91).

Thus, while the principle of territoriality remains important, the neoliberal nation-state expands sovereignty's parameters to include an economic dimension. Incorporating neoliberal principles into the concept of sovereignty allows nation-states not only to contribute toward the neoliberal project of restoring and preserving elite power, but to legitimate their own authority. During the early 1990s, debates for NAFTA relied not only on the principles of neoliberalism but also of territoriality. For example, during his 1993 debate with Ross Perot, Vice President Al Gore employs neoliberal rhetoric, positioning the debate over NAFTA as "a choice between the politics of fear and the politics of hope."[180] At the same time, however, Gore also portrays NAFTA as a matter of national self-interest necessary for the United States to compete internationally with growing economies like Japan's. To make this argument, Gore compares NAFTA to the

Louisiana Purchase and the purchase of Alaska, both of which, he argues, were the right decision and "made a difference for our country." By comparing a trade agreement which would loosen economic boundaries to territorial purchases which expanded the United States' borders, Gore contradicts his neoliberal ethos. Moreover, when Gore suggests NAFTA would bolster United States' influence on the Mexican government, whether to enforce environmental standards or labor laws, he further undermines these neoliberal values of freedom and optimism. Thus, while Gore indeed advances neoliberal values to justify NAFTA, he paradoxically also turns to principles of territoriality and national self-interest to make the same argument. Regardless of this contradiction, Gore's arguments were successful. NAFTA passed that same year and came into effect in 1994.

The success of Gore's arguments suggests that combining neoliberalist principles with those traditionally reserved for national sovereignty proved effective and convincing to Congress and the American public. Neither was Gore alone in employing these arguments.[181] Just before signing NAFTA, President Bill Clinton called the agreement "a defining moment for our nation."[182] He continues, "For this new era, our national security, we now know, will be determined as much by our ability to pull down foreign trade barriers as by our ability to breach distant ramparts." Paradoxically, Clinton merges the rhetoric of free trade ("pull down trade barriers") with that of territorial warfare ("breach distant ramparts"), uniting these contradictory principles. Despite this contradiction, by justifying NAFTA on the basis of national security, Clinton solidifies the conflation of neoliberal principles with national sovereignty. Meanwhile, to promote NAFTA in Mexico, President Carlos Salinas argued in 1990 that "'Mexico will be able to strengthen its sovereignty through a stronger economy,'" directly linking national

sovereignty with the logic of free trade.[183] These contradictory arguments are not an accident or a rhetorical blunder, but rather a strategy for promoting the interests of neoliberalism while simultaneously affirming the authority of the nation-state. By joining neoliberal rhetoric directly with sovereignty, Clinton and Salinas contribute to a redefinition of this term. No longer confined exclusively to territoriality, sovereignty now contains an economic dimension.[184] Thus, as a term which legitimates the nation-state, today sovereignty paradoxically values both strong territorial borders and weak economic borders. While ideology exists to resolve contradictions that exist in the world, sovereignty's own inherent and historically produced contradictions now constitute a crisis of ideology. This crisis threatens to destabilize the myths of territoriality, nativity, and nationality which otherwise go unquestioned.

While the crisis of ideology ought to weaken state sovereignty, Yamashita's representation of SUPERNAFTA, the literal embodiment of NAFTA, demonstrates how these ideological contradictions instead establish the nation-state's authority. Before his fight with Arcangel as El Gran Mojado, SUPERNAFTA argues for NAFTA's benefits using the language of neoliberalism: he promises that free trade represents "progress" and is "your ticket to freedom," and claims to fight for "that multicultural rainbow of kids out there" (257). Despite representing capital and the economic elite, SUPERNAFTA uses a rhetoric of freedom, multiculturalism, and international unity. However, SUPERNAFTA cannot help but perform a distinctly national, American identity. The text makes constant references to Hollywood movies like *Terminator* and *Rocky,* and contradicts SUPERNAFTA'S own rhetoric by calling him a "national" hero in comparison to El Gran Mojado, an "international" hero (257-258). SUPERNAFTA'S final weapon, a "tiny

patriot," refers both to a missile and to devotion and defense of one's country. Therefore, in his pursuit of supporting capital, SUPERNAFTA relies on contradictory arguments and modes of performance: he represents nationalism and internationalism, unity and multiculturalism, and finally the nation-state and neoliberalism. Despite embodying these contradictions, SUPERNAFTA wins over much of the crowd. While SUPERNAFTA implodes, his ideology ultimately prevails, as the only winner of the fight is capital: "somewhere the profits from the ticket sales were being divided" (263). Therefore, *Tropic of Orange* suggests that despite the obvious contradictions of neoliberalism's partnership with the nation-state, they nevertheless hold significant political, economic, and sociocultural power.

As this passage demonstrates, contradiction does not signal the failure of sovereignty's ideology, but the way nation-states legitimate themselves. Philosopher Giorgio Agamben argues that "the paradox of sovereignty consists in the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the juridical order."[185] In other words, "the sovereign, having the legal power to suspend the validity of the law, legally places himself outside the law." Because of the sovereign's unique position both inside and outside of the law, the sovereign alone possesses the power to suspend the law. Drawing from political theorist Carl Schmitt, Agamben argues that the state establishes sovereignty through the "state of exception," or a state of emergency in which the force of law appears through its suspension. Because sovereignty exists in a paradoxical space both internal and external to the law, it creates a zone of indeterminacy which blurs the distinctions between inside and outside, as well as the transgression and execution of law. In this space of undecidability, the state justifies its violence against the "*homo sacer*," or

the person excluded from the law and reduced to bare life.[186] As such, Agamben argues that for modern states, the state of exception is not a temporary ban but rather the rule.[187] While Agamben refers to the Nazi State as an early example of the state of exception becoming the rule, today the permanent state of exception "has reached its maximum worldwide deployment."[188] Contradiction is therefore not a threat to the modern nation-state, but the means by which it establishes sovereignty.

The crisis of ideology therefore does not denote the waning power of the nation-state, but as a state of exception, is the strategy by which the neoliberal nation-state legitimates itself. During the 1990s, the Bush and Clinton administrations' promotion of neoliberal agreements like NAFTA coincided with strict immigration laws and the militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico. Rather than undermining the nation-state, this contradiction in U.S. policy defines neoliberal state sovereignty. Discussing "sacrifice zones" along the U.S.-Mexican border, or "'places allowed to be logged, drilled, mined, or toxically contaminated for 'the good of the national or global economy,'" critic Joni Adamson argues that NAFTA's economic integration does not conflict with the militarization of the border.[189] Rather, drawing a connection between NAFTA's sanctioning of sacrifice zones and the militarization of the border, Adamson argues that the Border Patrol constructs walls and checkpoints to guide undocumented immigrants toward a dangerous desert terrain that represents another kind of sacrifice zone. Similar to Agamben's state of exception, Adamson's sacrifice zones refer to spaces where the nation-state legitimates its authority through the law's suspension.[190] Adamson thus directly links economic policy with the militarization of the border, arguing that the two are intertwined and consistent with U.S. interests. Thus, this

contradiction in U.S. policy is not only consistent with the nation-state's interests but reinforces its sovereignty.

As a crisis of ideology, sovereignty's contradictions do not threaten the nation-state, but rather the subject, especially politically and economically disempowered groups like refugees, immigrants, the impoverished, and the homeless. Through his homelessness and birth in a concentration camp, Manzanar Murakami embodies the nation-state's dehumanizing actions. Among his other stories, journalist Gabriel Balboa seeks to "humanize the homeless," implying that they have been dehumanized (43). By embodying the way citizenship functions through both the inclusion and exclusion of political and civil rights, the homeless remind the American public of the fragility of their own citizenship and potential to be reduced to bare life.[191] For example, while observing traffic, Manzanar connects the spectacle of traffic, TV, and pop culture to "the utterly violent assumption underlying everything: that the homeless were expendable, that citizens had a right to protect their property with firearms, and that fire, regardless of whether it was in your fireplace or TV set or whether you clutched a can of beer or fingered a glass of Chardonnay, was mesmerizing" (123). In other words, spectacle unites the public while distracting from systemic violence against the disenfranchised. At the end of the novel, the Harbor Freeway literally widens, and the homeless create a temporary dwelling within the traffic jam. Through their dehumanization and denial of rights, the government justifies sending the military to destroy the freeway community through extreme violence. Witnessing this apparent suspension of law, Manzanar associates the violence with the United States national anthem: "Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air?" (240). By linking

state violence to nationalist language, the text suggests that sovereignty both derives from and justifies the nation-state's power to dehumanize. The language of the national anthem does not contrast with state violence against the homeless, but invokes narratives of sovereignty and nationality to justify such violence. The United States government alone exempts itself from laws against coercive force and militarization, even going so far as to ground its sovereignty through this exception.

By wielding political power through the suspension of law, the neoliberal nation-state displaces the consequences of sovereignty's contradictions to the subject. For example, while waiting to talk to Gabriel, Bobby Ngu lists off newspaper headlines (161). Most of the titles refer to global economic issues such as the "*internationalization of the labor force*" and the "*globalization of capital*," both of which follow the imperative of free trade. However, one title, the first in Bobby's list, refers to immigration and the principle of territoriality ("*Maquiladoras & Migrants. Undocumented, Illegal & Alien: Immigrants vs. Immigration*"). Bobby says that Prop 187 aims to "keep illegals out of schools and hospitals," which he recognizes as a threat to his and his wife Rafaela's existence. By framing immigration as another economic issue, the newspaper dehumanizes the lived experience of immigrants, reducing them to an economic variable. In addition, by uniting the principles of free trade and territoriality, the newspaper serves as an indoctrinating tool for sovereignty. Bobby recognizes the way institutions like newspapers paradoxically link these two ideological systems while listing off the "Gifts from NAFTA," which include products like "oranges, bananas, corn," and "lettuce," laborers like "dishwashers, waiters," and "masons," and "undocumenteds, illegals, aliens."[192] While NAFTA does not officially produce undocumented workers and illegal

immigrants, Bobby recognizes that NAFTA's prioritization of labor and capital over people exacerbates socioeconomic problems and makes such conditions inevitable. In other words, despite promoting opposing imperatives, the ideologies of neoliberalism and the nation-state are closely related. By uniting these principles, the nation-state casts neoliberal policies as matters of national security, while simultaneously devaluing the subject as a mere economic statistic.

While the subject ought to resist the nation-state's dehumanizing policies, instead they have a personal investment in upholding sovereignty's conflicting narratives. Seeking to preserve the myths of national identity on which they depend, the subject is therefore complicit in reinforcing national ideology. For example, Bobby's father claims that his son has "the future," meaning that his life in America offers the potential for upward mobility and financial success unavailable to him (17). Quantifying the "future" as an attainable product strongly recalls the rhetoric of SUPERNAFTA, who promises the "future," which he claims is "what everyone really wants" (257). Promising a good life through free trade policies is precisely neoliberalism's strategy for convincing the American public to adopt its ideology. Bobby's father's desire for "the future" is an example of what Lauren Berlant calls cruel optimism, which exists "when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing."[193] In Bobby's father's case, the same myths of American freedom that motivate his optimism also contribute to trade policies which put his bicycle factory out of business. This cruel optimism signals the success of neoliberal ideology, which uses the rhetoric of freedom to convince individuals of its necessity even as it exploits them. Thus, Bobby's father perpetuates myths of neoliberalism, becoming a participant in the nation-state's legitimation.

In addition to Bobby's father, the "poisoned orange" crisis dramatizes the way the neoliberal nation-state legitimates itself through the crisis of ideology. In this example, while the chaos of international trade routes seems to undermine the nation-state, the scandal in fact supports neoliberal sovereignty. The narrator calls this crisis an "*illegal alien* orange scare," comparing the United States' military response to its strict immigration laws and control of the border (140). By juxtaposing the poisoned orange crisis, a product of NAFTA's complex trade routes, with the militarized border, the text suggests that the imperatives of territoriality and free trade may not conflict after all. Rather, both serve the interests of the nation-state. The United States' and Mexico's use of military force in response to this crisis constitutes a display of power—in ways that suspend the law—that legitimates the nation-state. Thus, while the crisis of ideology serves the interests of the nation-state and the economic elite, living under sovereignty's rule impacts the subject in dehumanizing, exploitative ways.

The ideology of neoliberal sovereignty thus presents a problem of representation for writers who wish to critique the nation-state. By basing its sovereignty on the principle of territoriality, the nineteenth century nation-state is vulnerable to any critique which exposes this political form's constructedness. However, by incorporating the principle of free trade, the neoliberal nation-state immunizes itself against any critique which reveals a political form's heterogeneity or hybridity. In an era when the nation-state has co-opted narratives of multiculturalism, postcolonial concepts like Homi Bhabha's Third Space do not possess the same subversive power they once held. Finally, by making the subject a participant in its own legitimation, the neoliberal nation-state removes the possibility of critical distance. As such, the crisis of ideology requires

writers to develop a new theoretical methodology capable of critiquing the nation-state. Doing so necessitates a reconsideration of aesthetic techniques, representational strategies, and genre.

Post-Magical Realism

By combining magical realism with postmodernist aesthetics, Yamashita locates a representational style to address the crisis of ideology. In self-reflexively responding to contemporary critiques of magical realism and postmodernism, *Tropic of Orange* makes the reader complicit in the ideological construction of the neoliberal nation-state. While Yamashita's solution denies the possibility of critical distance, by renewing magical realism's aesthetic of contradiction while employing a postmodernist pastiche of genres such as hard-boiled fiction, Yamashita creates a language to describe the phenomenological experience of the crisis of ideology, while building new productive subjectivities which emerge immanently from the neoliberal nation-state's conditions.

Developing out of the traditions of classical realism, modernism, and later postmodernism, magical realism does not have a clear, consistent stance toward the nation-state. Most critics trace the first wave of Latin American magical realism to French-Russian Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier and Venezuelan writer Arturo Uslar-Peitri, who lived in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s. Carpentier coined the term "*lo realismo maravilloso*" (marvelous realism) to describe "the mixture of differing cultural systems and the variety of experiences that create an extraordinary atmosphere, alternative attitude and differing appreciation of reality in Latin America."[194] In 1955, Angel Flores coined the term "magical realism" to refer to an artistic tradition which combines aspects of magic realism and marvelous realism. The publication of Flores' essay led to a second

wave of magical realism in Latin America, most notably through Columbian novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez. When magical realism first appeared in English during the 1970s in the United States, West Africa, India, and Canada, the movement solidified its status as a global phenomenon.[195] As a result, by the 1990s magical realism had broken free from the perception of its exclusive ties to Latin America, becoming the "postcolonial mode par excellence."[196]

While many definitions of magical realism exist, critic Wendy B. Faris summarizes the genre's central tension most succinctly: "magical realism combines realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them."[197] While the realist tradition privileges empirical evidence, objectivity, and knowability, magic represents the imagination, irrationality, and the fantastical. Due to realism's ties to the European literary tradition, magical realism often associates this mode with the logic of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, while aligning magic with indigenous, postcolonial, and hybrid cultures. Rather than merging these genres, magical realism juxtaposes magic and realism in the same narrative world, emphasizing their incompatibility. Thus, both realist and non-realist traditions influence magical realism's aesthetic.

In fact, magical realism's incorporation of opposing worldviews contributed to critiques of the genre in the 1990s, at the time of the publication of *Tropic of Orange.* Charges of magical realism's commercialization and outmoded aesthetic converged on two critiques: the genre either overdetermines its magical elements or its realist elements. In terms of the critique of its magical elements, critics accused magical realism of engaging in a commercialized exoticism which represents indigenous cultures and myths

through the lens of narrative primitivism.[198] In "I am not magical realist," published in 1997, the same year as Yamashita's novel, Chilean writer Alberto Fuguet wrote, "I don't deny that there exists a colorful, exotic aspect to Latin America, but in my opinion, life on this continent is far too complex to be so simply categorized."[199] In other words, while magical realism describes aspects of rural life in Latin America, in an increasingly globalized world in which population distributions shift dramatically toward cities and urban areas, magical realism no longer represented most of Latin America. Rather than describing lived cultural experiences, magic transformed into escapism. Instead, Fuguet argues that Latin American writers should not retreat from but rather adapt to local technological and cultural changes. He later referred to this literary movement as "McOndo," or **"**a global, mixed, diverse, urban, 21st-century Latin America, bursting on TV and apparent in music, art, fashion, film, and journalism, hectic and unmanageable."[200] Unlike a great deal of magical realism, which he sees as an escapist fantasy, Fuguet argues that McOndo is both "global and rooted," which more accurately describes the reality of twenty-first century life in Latin America.[201] Fuguet's critique of magical realism suggests that including non-realist elements in any form risks endorsing dangerous notions of escapism. Similarly, while magical realism's international popularity encouraged writers to embrace a diversity of identities, critics accused the genre of engaging in narrative ventriloquism. While magical realism's multivocal form allows for a multitude of voices, the genre fail to inhabit them.[202] Thus, critics condemn magical realism for over-emphasizing its magical component, which risks exoticizing and romanticizing Latin American voices and identities.[203]

As opposed to the critique of its magical elements, other critics claimed that due to the genre's investment in the realist tradition, magical realism paradoxically affirms, rather than subverts, European narratives of colonialism.[204] Although some critics argue that the genre's focalization remains indeterminate, others have pointed to magical realism's tendency to narrate events in a matter-of-fact tone as evidence of a realist narrative voice.[205] Under this interpretation, magical realism examines supernatural phenomena from a realist lens.[206] In other words, magical realism applies realist narrative practices which privilege rationality and empiricism to literary elements which belong to the realm of the irrational and supernatural. This literary strategy draws creative energy from the incompatibility between these two systems, which signals the limits of realism and the European perspective.[207] Furthermore, pairing realist narration with a magical narrative allows the writer to present the perspectives of both the colonizer and colonized, as well as the tensions and gaps between them.[208] While this technique opens up representational opportunities, it also leaves the genre vulnerable to criticism. By adopting a realist, European viewpoint, magical realism often endures critiques for reproducing and tacitly endorsing colonialist attitudes about reality.[209] Thus, in continuing the realist tradition, critics often accuse magical realism of reaffirming the reductive binary between European rationality and indigenous irrationality.[210]

As a Japanese American writing in English in the United States and representing a multi-ethnic cast of characters, Yamashita could be accused of both sets of critique. To arrive at a narrative strategy capable of exposing the exploitative violence of the crisis of ideology, Yamashita must address these contemporary debates. The first chapter of the novel, however, deliberately evokes the language of traditional magical realism. In the

first line, “Rafaela Cortes spent the morning barefoot, sweeping both dead and living things from over and under beds, from behind doors and shutters, through archways, along the veranda—sweeping them all across the deep shadows and luminous sunlight carpeting the cool tile floors” (3). Despite the incongruous mix of animals, including iguanas, crabs, and mice, the list structure of this sentence emphasizes the matter-of-fact tone of the passage. The narrator notes, “Every morning it was the same,” emphasizing the monotonous nature of this task. This realist tone contrasts with the irrationality and unlikely nature of Rafaela’s task. The text notes that “there was no explanation for” the unusual pattern of animals invading the house. The crabs, finally, present the most impossible detail of Rafaela’s task, since the house near Mazatlán resides so far from the ocean. The first page of *Tropic of Orange* is therefore reminiscent of traditional magical realism. The realist narrative voice clashes with the extraordinary nature of reality. The tension between these two oppositional worlds represents Mazatlán as a fantastical place which exists outside the post-Enlightenment logic of European rationalism. As critics have noted, however, such a reading risks exoticizing Latin America, thus reinforcing rather than undermining the binary between realism and magic. Interpreted on its own, this passage does not address magical realism’s critiques, but arguably provides a target for them.

To address these critical concerns, Yamashita draws upon the aesthetics of her novel’s other literary tradition: postmodernism. However, like magical realism, by the 1990s postmodernism endured its own critiques of commercialization by mainstream culture. Consequently, to develop her representational strategy, Yamashita must not only account for magical realism’s contemporary critiques, but postmodernism’s, as well.

Specifically, *Tropic of Orange* addresses the argument that postmodern irony no longer possesses the subversive potential to critique the neoliberal nation-state. According to writer David Foster Wallace, "irony, entertaining as it is, serves an almost exclusively negative function. It's critical and destructive, a ground-clearing. Surely this is the way our postmodern fathers saw it. But irony's singularly unuseful when it comes to constructing anything to replace the hypocrisies it debunks."[211] In other words, while irony successfully articulates what the writer is *against*, it fails to identify what the writer is *for*. Critic Lee Konstantinou historically contextualizes the exhaustion of postmodern irony with the end of the Cold War. With the defeat of the Soviet Union as an alternative to capitalism, irony moved from the margins of American culture to the center. As a result, "irony transformed from an instrument of revolution to a symptom of the impossibility of revolution."[212] Consequently, postmodern irony is not equipped to imagine alternatives to neoliberalism. For Konstantinou, a group of writers which includes David Foster Wallace and Dave Eggers attempted to transcend the limits of postmodern irony. These postironic writers used postmodernist formal strategies to reorient the reader from cynicism to belief. Thus, in the same era when critics accused magical realism of losing its subversive edge, postmodernism underwent a similar critical reexamination.

For postmodernism to maintain its subversive power, while addressing magical realism's contemporary critiques, Yamashita must therefore be cognizant of the limitations of postmodern irony. Attuned to the reality of the neoliberal era, Yamashita seems to reject postmodern irony as outmoded. Through her use of sarcasm and mockery, Emi embodies postmodern ironic detachment. While Emi appears to embrace

neoliberalism in her fluency with the internet's logic of simultaneity and virtuality, and familiarity with the media's sensationalism, her performance mocks neoliberalism's worldview. The text assures the reader that by operating through postmodern detachment, Emi "didn't mean it. She never did" (19). While Emi critiques neoliberalism through ironic detachment, this strategy comes at the expense of her sense of self: "It was questionable if she even had an identity" (19).[213] Unable to separate herself from irony, Emi assumes a constructed persona. Thus, while Emi opposes neoliberalism, she fails to articulate an alternative to promote, making herself vulnerable to Wallace's critique. Therefore, Emi's ironic detachment merely disguises her embeddedness in neoliberalism. Despite the value in Emi's postmodern irony, her death at the end of the novel signals postmodernism's inability to properly critique the neoliberal nation-state.[214]

Given this reading, one might be tempted to categorize *Tropic of Orange* as a postironic novel which attempts to transcend postmodernism's limitations. Just as Wallace and Eggers use postmodernist techniques like metafiction to work through these limitations, Yamashita's focalizing technique—which adopts a postmodernist voice echoing the ethos of the mass media—attempts to move past ironic detachment. The problem with this interpretation is that *Tropic of Orange* does not compel readers toward belief in the way Konstantinou describes. By writing within the magical realist tradition, Yamashita treats belief as a precondition for the reader's participation in the text; or, rather, in order to accept contradictory and impossible events as true, the reader must suspend her disbelief from the get-go. Taking this one step further, for Yamashita, belief—in neoliberal "optimism" and "freedom"—is precisely the political problem she must solve.

The issue Yamashita tackles is therefore not a lack of faith, but rather the cultural and aesthetic problem we confront when postmodernism exhausts its subversive potential. Having lost its cutting edge, postmodern irony no longer enjoys critical distance from its object of critique. Rather, the subject is firmly entrenched in the neoliberal network. Wallace argued that after adopting ironic self-reference in the 1990s, "television has become immune to charges that it lacks any meaningful connection to the world outside it. It's not that charges of nonconnection have become untrue but that they've become deeply irrelevant."[215] Television therefore co-opts irony to make itself immune to this practice's effects. Not only does this make irony an ineffectual form of critique, but television itself becomes self-critical. Applying Wallace's statement to mainstream culture more generally, irony therefore collapses the distance between critics and their cultural objects of critique. Critic Mitchum Huehls links this problem directly to neoliberalism, which evades traditional critique by vacillating between conflicting norms and values.[216] For example, neoliberal ideology employs both the rhetoric of free individualism and networked collectivity, despite this seeming contradiction, because both narratives support capital.[217] This strategy of vacillation consumes the grounds with which opponents of neoliberalism may launch a counter-argument. Therefore, forms of critique like ironic detachment which imagine the subject's critical distance from her object of critique no longer exist. While postironic writers view this as an occasion to transcend these limits, Yamashita instead examines the nature of subjectivity under these new neoliberal conditions. This elimination of critical distance, rather than the perils of postmodern cynicism, is the representational problem Yamashita confronts in *Tropic of*

Orange. For this reason, I agree with critic Rachel Adams, who calls *Tropic of Orange* a limit case which exhausts postmodernism's political value in the post-Cold War era.[218]

The stakes, then, are clear: Yamashita's novel must navigate between the traps of magical realism's commercialization and postmodernism's ironic detachment. Putting her magical realist aesthetic in dialogue with postmodern formal techniques, Yamashita develops a style of post-magical realism which successfully articulates transformations in the nation-state and national sovereignty at the end of the twentieth century. To do so, Yamashita must revise realism's position in the neoliberal era, developing a contemporary version of this genre which I call virtual realism. The opening to *Tropic of Orange* encapsulates the new dynamic and differences between virtual realism and magic:

> "Gentle reader, what follows may not be about the future, but is perhaps about the recent past; a past that, even as you imagine it, happens. Pundits admit it's impossible to predict, to chase absurdities into the future, but c'est L.A. vie. No single imagination is wild or crass or cheesy enough to compete with the collective mindlessness that propels our fascination forward. We were all there; we saw it on TV, screen, and monitor, larger than life." (1)

This introduction establishes the novel's narrative voice, while providing the rhetorical foundation for its two central terms: magic and virtual realism. By pitting "imagination" and "collective mindlessness" against each other, the narrator places them in competition, and therefore opposition, with respect to the reader's attention. Imagination, as well as its associations with fantasy, stands for magic. Collective mindlessness, along with the "TV, screen, and monitor," stands for virtual realism. The narrator's statement, "No single imagination is wild or crass or cheesy enough to compete with the collective mindlessness that propels our fascination forward," admits to the fallibility of magic as an alternative to virtual realism. While magic is "single," or individual and local, virtual

realism is "collective," or multiple and global. By collapsing the narration into the plural "we," the narrator makes the reader complicit in these conclusions. Despite the impulse to fight the logic of virtual realism, magic is doomed from the start. Even further, the narrator states, "We were all there; we saw it on TV, screen, and monitor, larger than life," establishing that Yamashita's narrator subscribes to the logic of virtual realism.

While most magical realist texts juxtapose realism with the magical, Yamashita develops virtual realism as a new language to describe contemporary cultural and socioeconomic conditions. However, Yamashita does not abandon realism. Rather, virtual realism represents the extension of realism into the neoliberal age. Realism developed alongside the nineteenth century nation-state, providing a language to describe new social, cultural, and technological developments. As critics such as Joe Cleary have argued, the lack of realist accounts of imperial and capitalist atrocities in the nineteenth century denotes the repression of their effects for the European powers.[219] Critics Jed Etsy and Colleen Lye describe classical realism as mapping "national space as a working social totality," implying that realism serves the interests of the nation-state by rendering opaque its network of social relations.[220] In other words, not only does realism lack a language to critique imperialism or capitalism, but it naturalizes these developments as part of the social order. Finally, Fredric Jameson identifies nineteenth century realism with the bourgeoisie, demonstrating that as the dominant genre of this era, realism is favorable to the economic elite.[221] These critics therefore claim that rather than resisting hegemonic structures, realism reifies the nation-state. While no literary period or movement has a necessary attachment to a particular politics, and exceptions certainly exist, magical realism internalizes this modernist critique of realism as a part of its form.

As a version of classical realism for the neoliberal era, virtual realism reifies hegemonic structures such as the nation-state. Virtual realism achieves this by representing reality through a lens of familiarity. Like realism, then, virtual realism privileges the status quo, making it incompatible with the magical, which resists hegemonic societal structures and institutions. In one passage, Arcangel performs a miraculous feat by pulling a bus. However, those watching the event on television do not recognize the fantastical nature of Arcangel's accomplishment because "the virtually real could not accommodate the magical. Digital memory failed to translate imaginary memory."[222] In other words, expecting the artificiality of sensationalist news and reality TV, the audience is not equipped to recognize the truly fantastical. Virtual realism strives, if unsuccessfully, to translate events in a way that fulfills audience expectations. Therefore, from these passages alone, virtual realism appears to be a merely superficial extension of realism.

While virtual realism advances realism into the neoliberal era, Yamashita suggests a paradoxical affinity between virtual realism and magic. In one scene, Rafaela and Bobby discover the border "caught finally between their ephemeral embrace. They straddled the line—a slender endless serpent of a line—one peering into a private world of dreams and metaphysics, the other into a public place of politics and power. One peering into a magical world, the other peering into a virtual one. 'Will you wait for me on the other side?' she whispered as the line in the dust became again as wide as an entire culture and as deep as the social and economic construct that nobody knew how to change" (254). As a magical realist text which places two incompatible worldviews in opposition, Yamashita's symbolism is not subtle. The virtual world, a "public space of

politics and power," refers to neoliberalism, which produces "economic [constructs]" like NAFTA which "nobody knew how to change." The magical world, "a private world of dreams and metaphysics," refers to cultural beliefs and traditions outside the logic of capitalism. The wide and deep gulf between the virtual and magical signals their incompatibility as oppositional worlds. On the surface, then, this passage supports a traditional magical realist interpretation which pits clear oppositional worlds against each other.

What strikes me about this passage, however, is not the obvious symbolism, but rather the lack of aesthetic differentiation between the magical and virtual worldviews. Despite the neat separation between these spheres of social life, both seem fantastical, incomprehensible, and inspire awe. Thus, this passage's efforts to distinguish these worldviews only reveals their resemblance. Unlike realism, which serves as the language of the traditional nation-state, virtual realism must adapt to the disorienting conditions of the neoliberal nation-state. Naturalizing phenomena like David Harvey's spatially disorienting time-space compression, the spectacle of the mass media, and the hyperreality of global technological and economic networks, virtual realism normalizes the effects of globalization. However, virtual realism's privileging of virtuality is not superficial, but the strategy by which the nation-state neutralizes counter-hegemonic critique. Virtual realism, like magic, promotes an ethos of freedom, is multicultural and international, and enchants. Virtual realism is therefore the generic style of neoliberalism, which undercuts magic's subversive power by eliminating the aesthetic distance between them. As the generic equivalent of neoliberalism's co-opting of hybridity, virtual realism co-opts magic's capacity to create a sense of wonder. Unlike traditional magical realism,

which represses the interconnections between magic and realism, Yamashita foregrounds their paradoxical co-existence. By adopting both virtual realism and the magical as its representational strategies, then, *Tropic of Orange* makes postmodern ironic detachment and critical distance impossible, while opening up the possibility of critique elsewhere through the logic of immanence.

Yamashita's virtual realist narrative voice satirizes the critical debate surrounding magical realism's privileging its realist elements. While this reading seems to conflict with the traditional interpretation that magical realism opposes the structures of globalization, the novel's opening, which assumes the voice of society's "collective mindlessness," responds to the critique that magical realism assumes a realist narrative voice (1). By foregrounding, rather than disguising, magical realism's participation in the realist tradition, Yamashita suggests that the genre retains an inextricable connection to the dominant power structures it seeks to resist. For example, the secondary table of contents, "HyperContexts," reflects the novel's focalization technique. While the Contents organizes the chapters in chronological order, the HyperContexts organizes its chapters by character. This non-linear structure reflects the simultaneity of events in the novel, recalling the form of hypertext fiction and other textual forms on the internet. The HyperContexts, therefore, aligns the novel's very structure with the logic of virtual realism, reinforcing Yamashita's focalization technique. Rather than entertaining the possibility of a utopian alternative outside the neoliberal network, Yamashita makes the reader complicit in the neoliberal nation-state's legitimation. Arguing no neat opposition between virtual realism and magic exists, Yamashita situates her novel within the neoliberal network.

As a post-magical realist novel, *Tropic of Orange* represents the incompatibility between magic and virtual realism, but nevertheless emphasizes their resemblance. This resemblance obfuscates the process of differentiating these opposing worldviews. As a result, Yamashita embraces an aesthetic of contradiction. Most critics highlight the oxymoronic nature of magical realism as a term as well as its paradoxical form, and seek to resolve this apparent contradiction.[223] For example, critic Maggie Ann Bowers argues that because the worlds of magic and realism are incompatible, magical realism occupies a liminal space between them.[224] Critic Wendy B. Haris identifies the reader's "hesitation" between two understandings of events as intrinsic to the genre's form.[225] Finally, critic Jesús Benito Sánchez argues that magical realism does not reject realism but assumes an "intrinsic ambivalence" between its terms.[226] Regardless of the terminology, all of these critics search for a resolution to magical realism's inherent contradiction. While Haris and Benito Sánchez accomplish this through uncertainty and vacillation respectively, Bowers invents a transitional space which equalizes differences. However, by intensifying and foregrounding contradiction through virtual realism, Yamashita responds to critical discourses on magical realism. Those who criticize magical realism for its escapist and exoticizing tendencies reduce the genre to the fantastical, while others who argue magical realism conforms to post-Enlightenment notions of rationality reduce the genre to realism. Each critique ignores half of magical realism's aesthetic form, and more importantly the source of its aesthetic and political power: contradiction. Taken together, Yamashita's satire of critical debates of magical realism renews contradiction as the genre's central generic trait. In *Tropic of Orange*, magic and virtual realism are neither complementary nor irreconcilable, but both

simultaneously. Thus, Yamashita successfully develops virtual realism as a post-magical realist narrative strategy which addresses critiques of magical realism and postmodernism.

Navigating between contemporary critiques of magical realism and postmodernism, Yamashita arrives at contradiction as her representational strategy. However, contradiction creates a new problem: without critical distance, how does the neoliberal subject avoid succumbing to the violence of the nation-state? What do new subjectivities look like in the neoliberal nation-state, and how do they adapt to the crisis of ideology?

Inhabiting Contradiction

Having identified contradiction as a satisfactory response to contemporary critiques of magical realism, Yamashita combines this aesthetic with postmodern formal techniques to answer these very questions. Magical realism's tendency to expose contradictions poses no threat to the neoliberal nation-state, which legitimates itself through contradiction. Yamashita's post-magical realist novel, however, not only exposes contradictions, but inhabits them. As Fredric Jameson argues, "magical realism depends on a content which betrays the overlap or the coexistence of pre-capitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features."[227] Rather than providing a counter-hegemonic politics through its magical aesthetic or fully embracing hegemony through virtual realism, magical realism paradoxically juxtaposes both traditions, suggesting that the same cultures which resist globalization are also complicit in its development. While magical realism traditionally supports post-colonial readings by disguising these

contradictions, Yamashita foregrounds them. Some critics argue that Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* generates a genuinely revolutionary counter-hegemonic politics, while others claim the novel adopts a political strategy that closely resembles the network of global capital it seeks to oppose.[228] Still others suggest that the novel abandons critique altogether.[229] While these interpretations seem incompatible, each identifies one component of the novel's post-magical realist aesthetic: *Tropic of Orange* critiques neoliberal sovereignty by revealing our complicity in its construction. With neoliberalism's elimination of critical distance, Yamashita inhabits the contradictions of magical realism and the nation-state as a form of critique. While not inevitable, recognizing our participation in the nation-state's legitimation is crucial to organizing meaningful resistance.

By incorporating postmodernist formal techniques, Yamashita illuminates and provides an aesthetic response to magical realism's contemporary problems. Unlike modernism, which rejects genre, postmodernism mixes multiple genres together through pastiche.[230] Rather than providing an earnest continuation of genre formations in the present, postmodern pastiche juxtaposes disparate traditions as a kind of patchwork.[231] By putting differing generic traditions in dialogue, pastiche draws attention to their constructedness.[232] As a network novel, *Tropic of Orange* includes a range of characters who embody different genres, including magical realism, film noir and hardboiled fiction, disaster movies, cyberpunk, and dystopian fiction, among others. Following the principles of postmodern pastiche, *Tropic of Orange* is less interested in advancing these generic traditions than juxtaposing their aesthetic techniques and setting their differences against each other.[233] Thus, while magical realism seems to exhaust its value in the

1990s, postmodern techniques renew the genre's subversive potential. Although magical realism's contemporary critiques present a challenge, putting disparate genres in dialogue allows Yamashita to develop an appropriate representational strategy to capture the neoliberal network: post-magical realism.

Gabriel's narrative offers a preliminary model for Yamashita's postmodern pastiche. Unlike the novel's third-person narration, which comprises the majority of the text, Gabriel's first-person perspective closes the gap between character and author. Similarly, while much of the narrative assumes a virtual realist tone which observes magical events through a matter-of-fact, rational lens, Gabriel's perspective offers an alternative narrative voice. Thus, while the rest of the novel hesitates between the attractive but ultimately flawed allure of magic and the mindless but inevitable fascination of virtual realism, Gabriel is in a position to work through magical realism's criticisms. However, because Gabriel does not fully succeed in locating a meaningful subjectivity in the neoliberal nation-state, his narrative teaches us the missteps this strategy could take, while preparing the reader for a more successful model of post-magical realism through Bobby Ngu's character.

Addressing the critique that magical realism exoticizes Latin America, Yamashita undercuts her deliberate homage to traditional magical realism through Gabriel Balboa. Gabriel's name refers both to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the popular magical realist author, as well as to the Biblical angel. Despite Gabriel's Mexican heritage, he feels distant from his Chicano identity and purchases a house in Mazatlán to feel closer to the land. The text makes clear, however, that Gabriel merely romanticizes Mexico. Gabriel refers to his "acquisition of land" as a "timeless vacation" which includes the "erotic tastes of chili

pepper and salty breezes" (5). The narrator, focalized through Rafaela's third person perspective, views Gabriel's renovation project as a "romantic impulse" and his position as a "romantic tourist" (6). As a representative of magical realist authors, especially those writing in English outside of but about Latin America, Gabriel's metafictional narrative references the criticism that such authors exoticize and romanticize a land of which they are unfamiliar for commercial gain.

However, while in other texts this limitation may remain latent, Yamashita foregrounds this criticism. Understanding her own subject-position as a Japanese American author writing in English, Yamashita turns the historical context of her novel's composition and reception into subject matter. One need not close read the possibility of romanticizing buried in magical realism because *Tropic of Orange* brings this issue to the surface of the text. As the narrator notes, "In Gabriel's mind the Tropic [of Cancer] ran through his place like a good metaphor" (5). Gabriel, like Yamashita, is consciously aware of his promotion of the symbolic over the real. His planting of a non-native orange tree which "couldn't survive in this climate" most clearly demonstrates his reducing Mazatlán and the Tropic of Cancer to metaphor, exoticizing and eroticizing a now unfamiliar land (10). As a stand-in for the English-speaking magical realist author and Yamashita herself, Gabriel demonstrates the pitfalls of engaging with a genre that by the 1990s had become highly commercialized, international, and multi-ethnic. While, as Yamashita's authorial proxy, Gabriel begins mired in the problems of the contemporary magical realist author, the conclusion to his narrative offers a possible roadmap for authors interested in addressing the genre's criticisms.

Genre provides Yamashita with the representational tools to resolve Gabriel's authorial dilemma. Yamashita represents Gabriel's narrative resolution as a turn from a magical realist aesthetic to film noir. By the end of the novel, Gabriel indeed abandons his tendency to romanticize, demonstrating hope for the contemporary magical realist author. At this point in the novel, while Gabriel has amassed strong evidence of two conspiracies—drug and human organ smuggling—he finds the "connections fuzzy" and is no closer to resolving these conspiracies than before. As a result, Gabriel turns to the virtual realism of the internet to console himself and find further answers. Previously, Gabriel's girlfriend, Emi, died during the homeless takeover of the freeway. Fluent in the language of digital technologies and familiar with the simultaneity and instantaneity of virtual communication, Emi adapts to and masters the virtual realism of the internet. Despite previously expressing distaste for the internet, following Emi's death Gabriel adapts to the conditions of virtual realism. More importantly, he learns to use the internet to further his investigations. The text represents Gabriel's transformation through genre: "Maybe I had finally lost my romantic notions; I'd become truly noir, a neuromancer in dark space" (245). Gabriel refers to William Gibson's postmodern science fiction novel, *Neuromancer* (1984), which draws influence from the detective novel and film noir to represent the virtual space of the internet. Gabriel implies that becoming a "neuromancer," or adapting to the logic of virtual realism, facilitates his finally abandoning his "romantic notions." Thus, Gabriel finds a satisfactory subjectivity by turning from the romanticism of magical realism to neoliberal film noir. By adapting to the virtual realism of the internet, which is itself inextricable from neoliberalism, Gabriel constructs a new sense of self with renewed purpose. Interpreting Gabriel's narrative

metafictionally, similar to Fuguet's "McOndo," the contemporary author can avoid the problems of romanticizing Latin American cultures by attuning herself to the ever-evolving conditions of modernity and globalization.

However, Gabriel's turn to virtual realism comes at the expense of his magical worldview, and therefore does not constitute a productive form of postmodern pastiche. Rather than putting these genres in dialogue, Gabriel merely substitutes one for the other. In doing so, the text suggests his acquiescing to the hegemonic structures of globalization he works to oppose. In abandoning magical realism, Gabriel enters "a new dimension in communicating" in "the big borderless soup" of the internet, aligning himself with the rhetoric free trade (246). After her death, Emi continue to reach Gabriel through virtual messages which suggest that Gabriel's turn to virtual realism does not provide an escape from his romantic notions. She calls his pursuit to uncover these conspiracies "a little dated" and "passé," and jokes that Gabriel will turn the story into a screenplay (248). While Emi often speaks ironically and sarcastically, her dialogue constantly questions characters' worldviews, pointing out their hypocrisy. Understood as metafiction, Gabriel's turn toward virtual realism is just as hackneyed, romanticized, and commercialized as contemporary magical realism. In fact, despite Gabriel's utopian language, he admits that virtual realism may not lead to answers, since his efforts produce "an expanding universe where the holes only seemed to get larger and larger."[234] Consequently, Gabriel "no longer looked for a resolution to the loose threads hanging off my storylines," desiring only to continue his search (248). Virtual realism therefore only defers Gabriel's desire for resolution. Thus, despite Gabriel's embracing virtual realism,

Yamashita leaves the reader with enough doubt in Gabriel's change in worldview that abandoning magical realism altogether does not resolve the genre's contemporary issues.

While Gabriel fails to put his competing worldviews in dialogue, Bobby's narrative demonstrates how postmodern genre mixing can produce a more meaningful subjectivity capable of articulating a critical stance toward the neoliberal nation-state. The text describes Bobby as "Chinese from Singapore with a Vietnam name speaking like a Mexican living in Koreatown" (15). While Bobby's complicated identity resists racial stereotyping, it is also a product of geopolitics and neoliberalism. In Singapore, when Bobby's father's bicycle factory goes out of business following the arrival of an American company, Bobby and his brother pose as Vietnamese refugees to enter the United States. Global free trade policies therefore victimize his family by allowing international corporations to drive out competition at the expense of the local economy. Similarly, the refugee crisis in Singapore exemplifies the way foreign military intervention in Vietnam exploits the politically and socioeconomically vulnerable. By uniting these two seemingly separate geopolitical developments, the text suggests that the United States' foreign military intervention and free trade policies are connected through the ideology of sovereignty. Rather than merely becoming a victim of the crisis of ideology, however, Bobby takes advantage of geopolitical conditions to secure passage to America. In contradictory fashion, he both exploits and is exploited by global neoliberal policies designed to benefit the elite. Thus, sovereignty's contradictions produce Bobby's complex national identity.

Understanding the influence of the hard-boiled detective novel on Bobby's narrative is essential to the development of Yamashita's post-magical realist novel. In the

last chapter, I discussed the way Miéville's *The City and the City* advances the contemporary detective novel. Unlike Miéville, however, Yamashita is not invested in revising the crime novel, but rather in playing this genre's aesthetics against others, including magical realism. The opening to Bobby's first chapter not only introduces his character, but also the importance of genre to his narrative:

> "Check it out, ése. You know this story? Yeah, over at Sanitary Supply they always tell it. This dude drives up, drives up to Sanitary. Makes a pickup like always. You know. Paper towels. Rags. Mop Handles. Gallon of Windex. Stuff like that. Drives up in a Toyota pickup. Black shiny deal, all new, big pinche wheels. Very nice. Yeah. Asian dude. Kinda skinny. Short, yeah. But so what? Dark glasses. Cigarette in the mouth. He's getting out the truck, see. In the parking lot. Big tall dude come by with a gun. Yeah, a gun. Put it to his head and says, GIMME THE KEYS! It's a jacker. Asian dude don't lose no time, man. No time. Not a doubt. Rams the door closed. WHAM! Just like that. Slams the door. On the jacker's hand. On the jacker's gun! Smashes the gun. Smashes the hand. Gun ain't worth shit. Hand's worth even less." (14)

Unlike other characters, Bobby speaks in short, clipped sentences that resemble the narrative style of hard-boiled fiction, which the novel reproduces through the third-person narration. The frequent use of sentence fragments, repetition, and direct address to the reader is also reminiscent of voice over in film noir, a genre highly influenced by hard-boiled fiction. Moreover, the violence and action in this passage resemble crime fiction's focus on "chase and capture" scenes, especially compared to earlier form of detective fiction.[235] Finally, Bobby, like many hard-boiled protagonists before him, even has a smoking problem. Indeed, while Gabriel shows an academic interest in film noir and hard-boiled fiction, Bobby is the embodiment of this aesthetic.

Yamashita's identifying Bobby's narrative with hard-boiled detective fiction creates a set of genre expectations. In hard-boiled fiction, readers expect a cynical protagonist to lead them through a dark, dour world full of moral ambiguity. Unlike

previous forms of detective fiction, in hard-boiled fiction the detective attempts a quest for truth "against a 'reality' which is no longer explained and constricted within the optimism and rationality of nineteenth-century positivism."[236] By invoking the tropes and narrative style of hard-boiled fiction, Yamashita lays out the stakes of Bobby's narrative: is Bobby's hard-boiled, cynical attitude effective in helping smuggle his cousin into the United States? Similarly, is hard-boiled fiction the most appropriate genre to represent, and even resist, the neoliberal network? In short, no; or, rather, not alone. The genre's cynicism too closely resembles the postmodernist attitude of ironic detachment which Yamashita seeks to transcend.[237] Similarly, hard-boiled fiction's realist attitude too closely aligns the genre with virtual realism, which is similarly insufficient. Rather, putting hard-boiled fiction in dialogue with magical realism allows Yamashita to arrive at the most appropriate generic style to represent the neoliberal network.

Throughout the novel, Bobby's cynicism benefits him. While Bobby wants to reacquire his family, unlike his father, who subscribes to the false optimism of neoliberal ideology, Bobby is skeptical of the possibly of securing "the future." His skepticism, including his lack of faith in government institutions, proves advantageous. Through his willingness to operate outside of the law, Bobby secures his wife, Rafaela, a green card, and in the present smuggles his cousin into the United States (78). In addition, Bobby's lack of naivety allows him to avoid victimization. While negotiating with "the snakehead" over his cousin, the text constantly mentions his lack of belief: "Bobby don't fall for this talk," "Bobby don't believe it" (100). In doing so, Bobby successfully negotiates for his cousin's passage. Therefore, Bobby's ability to navigate the criminal

world of Los Angeles directly ties to his hard-boiled skepticism. Without this attitude, which Yamashita captures through genre conventions, he would not succeed.

Bobby Ngu's lack of faith in government institutions, represented through the hard-boiled tradition, facilitates his subverting the narratives of the nation-state. To smuggle his possible cousin across the border, Bobby first takes her to a beauty shop: "Get rid of the Chinagirl look. Get a cut looking like Rafaela. That's it. Now get her a T-shirt and some jeans and some tennis shoes. Jeans say Levi's. Shoes say Nike. T-shirt says Malibu. That's it" (203). As he had done in Singapore, Bobby crosses into America through performance. While Bobby pretended to be a refugee, however, his cousin assumes an American identity. As a result, the border patrol does not scrutinize Bobby's forged documentation: they "drag themselves through the slit jus' like any Americanos. Just like Visa cards" (204). Performing an American identity, which includes supporting international corporate brands, allows Bobby's cousin to escape detection by the border patrol. By comparing her, an immigrant crossing the border, to a Visa card, Bobby conflates narratives of the U.S. militarization of the border with free trade policies. While the nation-state uses this contradiction to establish sovereignty, Bobby uses it to smuggle his cousin across the border. Rather than exposing sovereignty's contradictions, Bobby exploits them, undermining the neoliberal nation-state. While this strategy does not challenge state sovereignty directly, it locates a blind spot with which resistance is possible. As a hard-boiled character, Bobby's embeddedness in the neoliberal network is not a problem, since he cynically does not imagine an alternative or make claims at escaping the crisis of ideology. Rather, Bobby's position within the neoliberal network directly facilitates his subversion of its principles. Thus, rather than suspending

rationality and relying on magic, Bobby demonstrates his willingness to inhabit the nation-state's contradictions.

However, Bobby's hard-boiled cynicism also risks succumbing to the exploitative conditions of neoliberalism. The text reveals that Bobby's lack of a drive to positively shape his future deprives him of his family. When Bobby declines joining Rafaela in organizing a union of janitors to fight for higher wages and benefits, she takes their son, Sol, and leaves him (17). Despite his cynicism, then, Bobby unknowingly subscribes to neoliberal ideology, valuing the myth of individual autonomy as the secret to economic success. Thus, while Bobby's hard-boiled ethos is valuable for undermining neoliberalism beyond the law, in his professional and personal life he unwittingly reinforces the ideology's principles. Moreover, his cousin's earnest engagement with the world reveals his hard-boiled attitude's limitations. Fearing the loss of her national and cultural identity, Bobby's cousin brings "dirt" from her village in China (230). While Bobby has lost his native accent, the dirt symbolizes his cousin's desire to preserve her cultural identity. Applying a skeptical reading of this moment, holding value in this territory reinforces the principle of territoriality as a marker of nationality. Therefore, Bobby's cousin perpetuates myths of nationality of which she is a victim. Bobby, whose identity defies stereotyping as well as the principle of territoriality, perhaps finds his cousin's clinging to territory naïve and childish. However, because no alternative to neoliberalism exists outside of its network, the girl's attachment to her homeland is no more naïve than Bobby's hard-boiled skepticism. Arguably, by transporting China's territory across borders, Bobby's cousin even defies the supposed fixity of national boundaries, subverting the principle of territoriality. Moreover, her transportation of dirt

from China literalizes Buzzworm's call to make societal changes on the ground by "[respecting] the territory," implying that the girl's identification with her homeland is foundational to a possible counter-hegemonic politics" (187). Thus, despite their mutual embeddedness in the neoliberal network, by forming a relationship with his cousin, Bobby begins to see the limitations of his worldview. In order to move past these weaknesses, Bobby must learn to adopt a post-magical realist attitude which puts these genres in dialogue.

Bobby's hard-boiled narrative does not come in contact with magical realism until the end of the novel, after reuniting with Rafaela. While attending the wrestling match between El Gran Mojada and SUPERNAFTA, Arcangel—as El Gran Mojado—brings Sol back to Bobby (261). The narrative reads,

> El Gran Mojado tossed him [Bobby] the orange. Sol's hands were too little to catch it. There was the slightest moment of indecision, Bobby wondering how to keep the balloon and catch the orange. But the symphony of the moment spoke for itself as he released the balloon, letting it float into the spotlights, and caught the precious fruit in midair. (261)

This moment is central to Bobby's narrative because it expresses the way magical realist and hard-boiled discourses make contact. Having witnessed Arcangel's magical and SUPERNAFTA's virtual realist entrance, Bobby lays aside his skepticism ("the slightest moment of hesitation") and accepts the moment on its own terms. Despite merely catching an orange, "the symphony of the moment spoke for itself." The word symphony refers to Manzanar's magical realist narrative strategy, affirming its importance here. Finally, Bobby's letting go of the balloon foreshadows the end of the novel, when he lets go of the line itself which both unites and divides the global north and global south. While this is a small moment embedded in another character's narration, Bobby's

presence here contrasts remarkably with his hard-boiled skepticism elsewhere in the text. The novel implies that in order to reunite with his family, Bobby must learn to accommodate the magical in his life. The text does not reject the hard-boiled genre—this attitude indeed allows Bobby to subvert the principles of the nation-state—but rather puts both genres in dialogue to develop a satisfactory representational strategy for living within the neoliberal nation-state.

The novel's ending, and Bobby's final chapter, encapsulates Yamashita's post-magical realist narrative strategy, which satirizes both postmodern and magical realist traditions, while renewing these genres through their interaction. For Bobby, this means pairing his hard-boiled attitude with a magical realist aesthetic. After reuniting with Rafaela and Sol, Bobby holds onto the Tropic of Cancer. The text reads: "What are these goddamn lines anyway? What do they connect? What do they divide? What's he holding on to? What's he holding on to?" (268). Having witnessed Arcangel's spectacular battle with SUPERNAFTA, Bobby is in a position to reconcile his hard-boiled worldview with magical realism. While Bobby literally holds on to the Tropic of Cancer, which separates the global north and global south, this passage refers to the U.S.-Mexico border and other political boundaries between nation-states, as well. On a personal scale, this line also represents Bobby's separation from his wife and son, as well as his guilt. As a result, Bobby "lets go. Lets the lines slither around his wrists, past his palms, through his fingers. Lets go. Go figure. Embrace. That's it" (268). Without questioning the supernatural nature of these events, or hesitating, Bobby engages with the magical nature of this passage. Bobby indeed reunites with his family, and through the positive language of letting go and embracing appears to stop worrying about his failures as a parent or

inability to secure a "future." Despite the individual limitations of hard-boiled fiction and magical realism, juxtaposing these genres allows Bobby to arrive at a satisfying representational strategy for the neoliberal subject. Without relinquishing his skepticism, Bobby acknowledges his embeddedness in the neoliberal network, yet persists in building a new magical subjectivity anyway.

Having arrived at this moment after working through his relationship with his hard-boiled ethos, Bobby's embrace of the irrationality and unfamiliarity of the magical tradition signals his adopting a post-magical realist worldview. While Bobby's representational strategy seems overly utopian, by necessity his juxtaposing disparate genres also results in unavoidable contradictions. As Yamashita promises in the novel's opening, this passage is appropriately "cheesy," bordering on naïve acquiescence (1). After all, following the ideology of sovereignty, in addition to territorial borders, the line also represents the economic borders of neoliberalism. Letting go therefore entails surrendering to the overwhelming complexity and authority of the neoliberal nation-state. This contradiction does not escape the text; rather, through genre, Yamashita makes legible how inhabiting contradiction provides a path toward developing new national identities. For example, in addition to loosening economic borders, Bobby's letting go means abandoning the principle of territoriality and opening up national borders across the western hemisphere. Therefore, the same contradictions in the definition of sovereignty which allow Bobby to exploit the border patrol also make the ending to this novel ambiguous. However, rather than resolving these ambiguities or ignoring them, Yamashita's post-magical realist novel inhabits them. In doing so, *Tropic of Orange*

develops new subjectivities within the nation-state that, unlike the postmodern and magical realist traditions before her, are in a position to resist the neoliberal network.

As an example of postmodern pastiche, Yamashita's narrative style finally arrives at an appropriate narrative strategy for representing the neoliberal nation-state. While hard-boiled fiction is wisely skeptical of the nation-state's institutions, like postmodern ironic detachment, this genre does not articulate a positive stance; even further, this preference for critical distance risks reproducing neoliberal notions of individual autonomy. Meanwhile, although magical realism offers an alternative, often optimistic vision to neoliberalism, the genre fails to account for changes in economic and social life which make neoliberalism immune to a hybridity politics of critique. Yamashita's post-magical realist novel, therefore, accounts for these weaknesses in generic styles by putting them in dialogue. Bobby's hard-boiled skepticism ensures that the optimism which magical realism espouses is not equivalent to naïve complicity, but a desire to fight for a national subjectivity even given our embeddedness within the neoliberal network.

Subjectivity and Immanence

By renewing and foregrounding contradiction as magical realism's primary aesthetic, Yamashita provides a model, through Bobby, for building new subjectivities immanently within the neoliberal network. To conclude, applying this post-magical realist aesthetic to Manzanar Murakami's narrative resolves a critical dispute over the novel's most widely debated passages. While most critics read Manzanar's worldview as either in agreement with or opposition to the neoliberal network, we should instead read these passages as a struggle for personal identity. Accepting rather than resolving

contradiction is the first step toward addressing the crisis of ideology and constructing meaningful subjectivities. Reading Manzanar's narrative as post-magical realist best exemplifies the way *Tropic of Orange* inhabits the neoliberal nation-state's contradictions as a form of critique.

Manzanar Murakami's narrative demonstrates the paradoxical relationship between neoliberalism and magical realism. Born in the Japanese American concentration camp for which he is named, Manzanar is living proof of the nation-states' deriving sovereignty through biopolitical control. As a homeless man, and arguably a refugee in his own country, Manzanar destabilizes categories of the nation-state such as nativity and citizenship. The Japanese American community, who seek inclusion in the nation-state by reinforcing its contradictory myths, rejects Manzanar for not fitting "their image as the Model Minority" (36-37). Rather than participating in the construction of the neoliberal nation-state, Manzanar appears to opt out. He conducts traffic over a freeway overpass, creating a symphony composed of cars, living bodies, and the totality of Los Angeles itself. Manzanar's strategy for mapping Los Angeles appears as the solution to Buzzworm's earlier desire for a "real map" that accounts for all of the city's layers (81). Unlike Buzzworm, who represents Los Angeles locally, Manzanar claims that he "could see all of them [the maps] at once," ordering them in "a complex grid of pattern" that resembles music (56). As an alternative to capitalism's mapping of space through labor and capital, Manzanar offers a global imaginary which considers all of the world's dimensions. Therefore, some critics claim that Manzanar's global vision of Los Angeles locates a meaningful alternative to global capitalism.[238] Consequently, *Tropic of*

Orange develops a genuinely counter-hegemonic politics that escapes globalization's totalizing grasp.

In my previous reading of Gabriel's and Arcangel's narratives, however, I contested this magical realist interpretation, arguing instead that Yamashita's post-magical realist novel does not accommodate critical distance or magical escapism. While *Tropic of Orange* presents Manzanar's symphonies as an optimistic alternative to neoliberalism, Yamashita undercuts this reading by emphasizing the way Manzanar paradoxically grounds his global vision in the structures of globalization. For example, during "*The Hour of the Trucks*," a riot leads to trucks erupting in flames and the homeless making camp on the freeway. While the text describes the sympathetic reactions of average citizens, it also emphasizes "an imminent collective sense of immediate live real-time action, better than live sports, whose results—one or another team's demise—were predictable, and better than CNN whose wars were in foreign countries with names nobody could truly pronounce. Of course everyone remembered the last time they had gathered on freeways to watch a spectacle; white Broncos had since become the vehicle of choice" (122). The average subject experiences the freeway disaster through the lens of virtual realism: reducing the event to a familiar spectacle, like the O.J. Simpson chase, citizens view the scene from a comfortable distance, regardless of its immediacy. The virtually real nature of the freeway fires reinforces assumptions about homelessness and security which contribute to the legitimation of the nation-state. The novel's form requires readers to experience the magical through the virtually real: "Manzanar pressed on through the spectacle that the present circumstances would soon become, the chatter of silly and profound commentary, the cruel jokes…All of these

elements shifted bizarrely through the movement barely controllable by Manzanar's deft style" (123). Not only does the narrator focalize events through a virtual realist lens, but Manzanar does, as well. Instead of opposing the spectacle, Manzanar conducts it, creating no external space to critique neoliberal ideology. Even the temporality of this passage ("the spectacle that the present circumstances would soon become") implicates Manzanar in the spectators' virtual realist reaction before the spectacle occurs. Manzanar's conducting emerges immanently within, rather than outside of, the novel's virtual realist narration. While critic Mitchum Huehls argues that Manzanar dispassionately represents all objects, which includes but is not exclusive to neoliberalism, instead this passage suggests that Manzanar's worldview emerges within the hegemonic structures of globalization and neoliberalism.[239]

While paradoxical, Manzanar's symphonies emerging immanently within the neoliberal network may be necessary for resistance to take place. In their discussions of globalization, political philosophers Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri conceive of the "multitude" as a political body which creates "an open and inclusive democratic global society."[240] Crucially, the multitude emerges immanently within globalization's boundaryless network to develop an equally distributed, decentered network with the potential to shift power to the people, freeing sovereignty from its ties to politics.[241] Hardt and Negri's argument that resistance to globalization should form immanently supports the interpretation of Manzanar's symphonies as genuine counter-hegemonic resistance. Arguing for precisely this reading, critic Robyn Blyn states, quoting Hardt and Negri, "because this Empire itself takes the form of a network…'You can only fight a network with another network.'"[242] We therefore should not read Manzanar's virtual realist

narration as a failure, but rather as a necessary condition to develop a revolutionary politics. Thus, the novel's virtual realist narration, and Manzanar's symphonic network, register the multitude emerging immanently within the neoliberal network as the only means of resistance.

While this reading identifies Yamashita's investment in immanence as a narrative strategy, other critics argue that Manzanar's magical worldview not only emerges from the conditions of neoliberalism, but reproduces them. While thinking about his lost granddaughter, Emi, Manzanar has an "out-of-body" experience in which he views the globe from a planetary scale, in geologic time:

> Encroaching on this vision [of his past] was a larger one: the great Pacific stretching along its great rim, brimming over long coastal shores from one hemisphere to the other. And there were the names of places he had never seen, from the southernmost tip of Chile to the Galapagos, skirting the tiny waist of land at Panama, up Baja to Big Sur to Vancouver, around the Aleutians to the Bering Strait. From the North, that peaceful ocean swept from Vladivostok around the Japan Isles and the Korean Peninsula, to Shanghai, Taipei, Ho Chi Minh City, through a thousand islands of the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Micronesia, sweeping about that giant named Australia and her sister, New Zealand. Manzanar looked out on this strange end and beginning: the very last point West, and after that it was all East. (170)

As in previous passages, Manzanar's vision offers an optimistic worldview that resists globalization. However, critics such as Susanne Wegener and Ryan Brooks note the way this passage resembles the neoliberal network it claims to replace. Wegener compares the "lyrical rhythm" of this passage to the "pathos of national anthems," arguing that this passage's language "evokes the impression of abundance and a picturesque yet containable diversity" which does not escape global hegemonic structures like the nation-state, but is a product of them.[243] Wegener concludes that instead of opposing neoliberalism's "fluid spatial economy," this passage reproduces it. Similarly, in his

reading of the conclusion of Manzanar's story, when he imagines the world as a "new kind of grid" filled with conductors like himself, Brooks argues that Manzanar's utopia "resembles the vision in neoliberal political texts."[244] While, as a product of the neoliberal nation-state's exploitative policies, Manzanar seeks a meaningful mode of resistance, his network of conductors instead resembles the neoliberal network of sovereign state actors.

While analyzing Manzanar's conscious or unconscious allegiance to a consistent worldview is productive, this reading practice has also led to a critical impasse. Rather than revealing Manzanar's connections to or rejection of the neoliberal network, this passage demands a post-magical realist interpretation; that is, without discounting the previous two readings, we should recognize the way this passage foregrounds and inhabits its own contradictions in order to produce a new subjectivity within the neoliberal nation-state. In particular, this passage highlights the impact of the crisis of ideology on the subject. Manzanar uses language which evokes the nation-state's efforts to legitimate itself. Manzanar's statement, "and there were the names of places he had never seen," precisely identifies the obstacle to the nation-state's unity: the impossibility for citizens of the nation-state to know and meet each other. This passage therefore symptomizes the impact of the crisis of ideology on the subject, who must reconcile the nation-state's contradictions to preserve his sense of self. Despite this problem, Manzanar's language, including his use of the present participle ("encroaching," "stretching," "brimming," "skirting"), expresses his desire for global connectivity and common experience. By transcending the nation-state entirely, Manzanar seems to exceed this scale's limitations. Manzanar's vision therefore represents a kind of

international imagined community which unites the world through shared experiences, regardless of scale or distance.

Paradoxically, however, Manzanar's international vision depends on national and personal scales to orient his journey. We might imagine a version of this passage in which Manzanar foregoes human-invented place names entirely, relying instead on descriptive language which privileges national geography. While the passage includes the place names of regions, islands, and geographic formations, nation-states comprise the largest category, implying that nationality remains an essential touchstone of experience even on a planetary scale. Manzanar's reluctance to abandon the nation-state acknowledges the inextricable connection between national and international scales. Because sovereignty requires international recognition, individual nation-states depend on this planetary network to legitimate themselves. Likewise, the international scale would not exist without the network of individual nation-states. Manzanar does not represent these nation-states dispassionately, but rather using descriptions which resemble the romantic language of tourism commercials ("brimming over long coastal shores," "skirting the tiny waist of land," "that peaceful ocean swept"). Manzanar's nostalgic descriptions also reduce nation-states to a personal scale, personifying them as a kind of family. For example, the narrator refers to New Zealand as Australia's "sister." This reduction of nation-states to the scale of the family calls to mind Aristotle's claim that the household represents the smallest political unit from which other scales, such as the village and city, derive.[245] Whether through Manzanar's use of familial language or references to the nation-state, his visions therefore represent an attempt to contain the planetary scale within a manageable, controllable scale.

This representational strategy is, as critics have already pointed out, highly problematic. However, exposing Manzanar's hypocrisy is not satisfactory, since contradiction is precisely the condition of the neoliberal subject. Rather, this passage best expresses the crisis of scale and its impact on the neoliberal subject. As a disembodied figure witnessing visions on a planetary scale, Manzanar literalizes metaphors of globalization, including deterritorialization and time-space compression. Having become literally unmoored, in both space and time, Manzanar must search for a meaningful engagement with the planet *despite* the impossibility of a utopian alternative to the neoliberal nation-state. Significantly, Manzanar's visions begin on a personal scale. Reminiscing on the direction of his life, Manzanar's thoughts of his lost granddaughter, Emi, motivate his planetary vision. The problem Manzanar confronts, therefore, is the desire for human connection and identity on a planet whose scale and complexity exceeds comprehension. Rather than interpreting this passage as Manzanar's contribution to a counter-hegemonic politics, we should instead read it as a personal struggle to reclaim his subjectivity within a nation-state that denies his humanity. Through his struggle for identity, Manzanar draws attention to the nation-state's contradictory dependence on international and personal scales for legitimacy. This passage's contradictions therefore represent the existential violence the neoliberal nation-state commits on the subject.

Despite his inevitable embeddedness in the neoliberal network, Manzanar strives for personal and universal human connection anyway. Recognizing the contradictions which the neoliberal nation-state produces in the neoliberal subject, Yamashita nevertheless insists on magical realism's necessity. The passage ends with Manzanar looking out "on this strange end and beginning: the very last point West, and after that it

was all East" (170). What makes this end and beginning strange? It could be their paradoxical relation as equivalent yet in opposition. It could also be the sudden realization that the West and East eventually meet, and therefore the planet's divisions are entirely human-made. Regardless, the use of the word strange indicates this passage's investment in the magical as a worldview. Unlike virtual realism's familiarity and fulfillment of expectations, Manzanar's magical narration is estranging, meaning that he offers a planetary vision that is unfamiliar, contrasts with dominant representations, and subverts expectations. Rather than locating this worldview outside the neoliberal network, Manzanar finds it immanently within that network. While the novel stops short of forming a "multitude" which resists the conditions of globalization, Manzanar's visions recognize and inhabit the contradictions of the nation-state. To recover his identity as a subject of the neoliberal nation-state, Manzanar does not relinquish his romantic fantasy. Rather, he works through this representational problem, arriving at a post-magical realist vision which foregrounds magical realism's own contradictions, including the genre's embeddedness in the structures of globalization. Thus, when at the end of the novel Manzanar develops "a new kind of grid" defined by conductors like himself, he begins to reenter the sphere of personal relationships (238). Doing so means transcending the fantasy of his disconnection from the world—and of neoliberal ideology—but also puts him in a position to make meaningful change on the ground.

Rather than succumbing to the magical worldview's inextricable connection to neoliberal ideology, *Tropic of Orange* instead employs this contradiction to make legible everyone's participation in this political relationship with the neoliberal nation-state. During Manzanar's global vision, he "saw it [Latin America], but darkly, before it could

shift irrevocably, crush itself into every pocket and crevice, filling a northern vacuum with its cultural conflicts, political disruption, romantic language, with its one hundred years of solitude and its tropical sadness" (170-171). Here, the text explicitly refers to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) as representative of magical realism as a whole, supporting a metafictional interpretation in which the global north absorbs this literary tradition into its cultural consciousness. Rather than existing apart from the global north, Latin American cultural and political problems "[fill] a northern vacuum," both producing and becoming a product of their relationship (170). Manzanar includes his own "romantic language" in this relation, implying that he too is a part of the sociocultural exchange between hemispheres (170). This passage represents this exchange as a problem of scale, using language which suggests a compression of space ("crush itself into every pocket and crevice") that puts disparate cultures and traditions in contact (170). In addition to identifying these globalizing trends as a crisis of scale, this passage also emphasizes the impossibility of a counter-hegemonic politics outside neoliberalism. Because human civilization "covered everything in layers," while occupying all available space, no room for utopian escape exists (170). Rather, Manzanar's planetary scale demonstrates the widespread interconnections between all spheres of human and non-human existence. While this vision seems to disconnect Manzanar, and thus the reader, from the more concrete social conditions on the ground, the planetary scale of this passage in fact reorients the reader toward a more meaningful understanding of place. To varying degrees, we are all complicit in reproducing the narratives and subjectivities which sustain the nation-state. Inhabiting the neoliberal

nation-state's contradictions is therefore essential for producing a new national subjectivity capable of resisting this political form.

As a post-magical realist novel, *Tropic of Orange* refuses the comforting fantasy of critical distance. While inhabiting rather than resolving the crisis of ideology means abandoning the certainty of a resolution, this post-magical realist narrative strategy also opens up a space for Yamashita to critique the neoliberal nation-state. In revealing the possibility of critique through immanence, *Tropic of Orange* creates the conditions for characters to develop subjectivities that do not succumb to the violence of the neoliberal network. As a limit case of postmodernism, then, *Tropic of Orange* satirizes both magical realist and postmodernist styles in the 1990s, while nevertheless insisting on putting these genres in dialogue. Yamashita's post-magical realist novel therefore paradoxically renews the representational strategies of these movements while calling for their approaching exhaustion.

Chapter 3: The Crisis of Modernity and the World in Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*

Introduction

At the precise moment Tan-Tan, the protagonist of Nalo Hopkinson's science fiction novel, *Midnight Robber* (2000), cements the creation of her new identity, the Robber Queen, she reminisces about the past:

> *She and Melonhead up in a wet sugar tree, arguing happily about whether it was humane for the Nation Worlds' to exile their undesirables to a low-tech world where they were stripped of the sixth sense that was Granny Nanny. She and Quamina years younger, undressing their dollies and making them play doctor. The look of amusement on Aislin's face when she found them. Chichibud on that first day on New Half-Way Tree, showing her how to roast meat on a spit and never saying that he hated it cooked. Her mother, Ione, letting her play with the colourdots, trying on lip colour after lip colour with her and laughing at the effect. The house eshu from Toussaint, singing her lullabies when she'd woken in terror from nightmares.*[246]

Rather than appearing in chronological order, these memories transition freely between Tan-Tan's childhood on the post-industrial planet, Toussaint, and adolescence on the pre-colonial planet, New Half-Way Tree. The progressive tense ("arguing," "undressing," "showing") emphasizes a sense of fluidity between these disconnected memories, collapsing the boundaries between the eras of Tan-Tan's life. By overlapping her memories, Tan-Tan removes their context and causality, treating them as if they exist in a liminal space outside of time. Fragmenting her memories allows Tan-Tan to disregard the causes of her hardships, instead invoking her nostalgia. The first memory, in fact, expresses Tan-Tan's mourning the loss of Granny Nanny, the Artificial Intelligence system governing Toussaint, even though Granny Nanny's surveillance and control created the conditions for her exile in the first place. Notably, Tan-Tan's happy memories do not ease her anxieties, but rather exacerbate her restlessness. As the text notes, "Her

mind was only running backwards, backwards in time" (247). Rather than examining her past critically, then, Tan-Tan unravels the chronology of her memories, creating a sense of temporal fluidity and liminality that emphasizes her disconnection from the present. Thus, Tan-Tan's memories suggest that despite constructing a new identity, she has not in fact overcome her past.

As this passage demonstrates, attempts to build new identities disrupt the subject's relationship with time. During Tan-Tan's flight to the parallel world, New Half-Way Tree, the narrator notes, "They were leaving Marryshow's paradise, shifting to a new world, her and her daddy" (76). Tan-Tan's inability to reside in the present therefore stems from her movement between worlds. Rather than merely referring to the novel's two planets, then, worlds impose unique temporal frameworks upon the subject. As the ruling authority over Toussaint, Granny Nanny's world model manages daily life in Toussaint and New Half-Way Tree. For example, as a douen, or non-human native of New Half-Way Tree, Chichibud recognizes the political power of Granny Nanny's world model: "Oonuh tallpeople been coming to we land from since, and we been keeping weselves separate from you. Even though we sharing the same soil, same water, same air" (172). While Chichibud recognizes the separation between the human and douen worlds as an ideological fiction, he admits to succumbing to its artificial divisions and living as if in a separate world from the humans. Because integrating their worlds would most likely result in violence, the social conflict between the humans and douen reinforces Chichibud's behavior. Thus, by constructing a world model dividing the human and douen regions, Granny Nanny maintains the status quo.

Similar to Granny Nanny, existing world models deriving from colonialism in the past and globalization in the present divide the planet into temporally distinct zones. However, while in *Midnight Robber* material boundaries separate worlds, it is unclear how socially constructed temporal frameworks in the real world restrict regions' geopolitical agency and maintain global hierarchies. Addressing this question, critic Dean MacCannell describes "ethnicity-for-tourism" as a phenomenon in which subjects of postcolonial spaces use the authenticity of their cultural past as a marketable object for tourists.[247] In an effort to stay relevant in the global economy, Third World nations commodify "exotic" cultural forms, such as folk costumes and handicrafts, which colonists may have once dismissed as primitive.[248] As an example of ethnicity-for-tourism, after Trinidad's independence in 1962, the state has taken steps to market Carnival, its most valuable cultural export, as intrinsic to Trinidadian cultural and national identity.[249] Critic Philip W. Scher argues that in objectifying Carnival's traditions for the global tourist industry, Trinidadians have turned into "tourists of themselves."[250] Trinidadian Carnival has therefore become, for many, a nostalgic method of inhabiting a past that may have never existed. At the same time, because the state commodifies this past to compete in the global market, Trinidadian Carnival also exemplifies the state's efforts to stake out their place in the future of the global economy. As a result, joining the global capitalist network requires citizens of Third World nations like Trinidad to look historically backward and forward simultaneously, and in the process lose sight of their place in the present.

Thus, a Trinidadian vendor selling a traditional masque costume to an American tourist inhabits two temporalities simultaneously: a past temporality in which traditional

Carnival customs and traditions are symbols of nostalgic cultural authenticity, and a future temporality in which such customs and traditions have market value for the historically new global tourist industry. The American tourist may examine this masque costume and call it a cultural "artifact," relegating the costume to the past, or a cultural "discovery," implying its place in a newly uncovered future. In either case, the tourist denies the vendor and her cultural traditions a space in the present. The Trinidadian government's very efforts to compete in the global market therefore contribute to the nation's inability to become contemporary. While, as Scher argues, many nation-states market their cultures in a similar way, Trinidadian Carnival's ubiquity as a marker of cultural identity makes this case unique.[251] An American could ignore Disneyland's Main Street as a false form of commodified nostalgia; however, Carnival is an intrinsic part of Trinidadians' cultural and national identity. Therefore, the Trinidadian subject's paradoxical displacement in the past and future at the expense of the present constitutes a crisis of modernity; that is, the subject's own efforts to enter modernity only further colonialist myths of primitivism and discovery, leading to her inhabiting multiple temporalities simultaneously. Thus, while world models may seem only to hold symbolic value, their social construction produces real global hierarchies which position First World nations as active agents and Third World nations as objects of exploitation.

In *Midnight Robber,* Tan-Tan's inability to reside in the present reflects the transformation of Third World identities under globalization. In the novel, Tan-Tan's life on the Caribbean planet, Toussaint, becomes disrupted when her father, Antonio, kills a man, leading to their exile on the pre-colonial planet, New Half-Way Tree. There, Antonio repeatedly rapes Tan-Tan, leading to her killing him out of self-defense. After

her second exile within New Half-Way Tree, one of the native inhabitants, or douen, Chichibud, welcomes Tan-Tan into his family and community. Meanwhile, Antonio's second wife, Janisette, seeks revenge on Tan-Tan for his death. To defend herself and address societal injustices, Tan-Tan dons the identity of the Carnival character, the Robber Queen, building her own conception of a future Caribbean identity. Throughout the novel, Tan-Tan's experience metonymizes the Caribbean subject's conditions under colonialism and globalization, in which the dominant global powers deny the Caribbean world a place in the present, making this region available for political and economic exploitation.

To build a new world model capable of contesting and replacing those of colonialism and globalization, Hopkinson employs Carnival poetics. Derived from the popular festival, Carnival poetics refers to a literary mode, developed by literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, which privileges a set of principles including subversion of authority, play, performance, hybridity, and contingency. While Carnival began in medieval Europe, through colonialism the festival spread and became popularized throughout the Caribbean. Critic Michaeline Crichlow argues that "through bold expressions of dissidence," Carnival starts "a 'revolution in the mind' in the form of a kind of alternative reality."[252] As the aesthetic counterpart to Carnival's events and practices, Carnival poetics offers a world-building model which recontextualizes the present reality. Despite this potential to conceive of new realities and identities, critics have argued that Carnival only holds symbolic political value, and as a state-regulated event serves to maintain the status quo.[253] By temporarily licensing subversive behavior, Carnival questions

hegemony, but its contingent temporality also makes it vulnerable to becoming complicit with dominant ideologies.

To solve this political problem, Hopkinson turns to science fiction, a genre which similarly considers ontological approaches toward critiquing the status quo. While science fiction, like all popular genres, is an ever-changing set of practices, and therefore resists a singular defining characteristic, most critics recognize the genre's tendency to imagine new or different realities which form a dialogue with the present.[254] While Carnival poetics and science fiction each possess complex cultural genealogies with significant aesthetic differences, they similarly construct alternate worlds to defamiliarize given models of reality. As opposed to Carnival's liminal temporal conditions, however, science fiction develops a continuous temporality in which the present and imagined future occupy a shared narrative space. Unlike realist fiction, which maintains an ontological hierarchy between narrative worlds, science fiction grants its imagined futures a material reality within the present space of the novel.

Adopting science fiction's flat ontology, Hopkinson therefore develops a new science fictional Carnival poetics with a contingent and continuous temporality. Through the novel's mythologized anansi stories, Hopkinson develops two diegetic worlds representing Tan-Tan's imagined and real selves. By the end of the novel, Tan-Tan learns to productively navigate between her identities, and as a result the novel eliminates the ontological hierarchy between its primary and secondary diegetic levels, allowing them to share the same narrative space. As a form of metalepsis, Hopkinson's treatment of her narrative worlds acts as a metafictional commentary on science fiction's relationship with temporality. Rejecting a realist hierarchy between narrative worlds, Hopkinson insists

instead on a science fictional continuity between the present and imagined future. By constructing an imagined future which exists continuously with the present, Hopkinson retains Carnival's subversive potential while ensuring the possibility for lasting change. As a result, Hopkinson not only argues for the Caribbean's unquestionable place in the present, but constructs a world model for creating new sustainable subjectivities capable of thriving under the crisis of modernity.

In this chapter, I first discuss the way hegemonic world models function according to an oppressive teleology which orders the globe into temporally distinct zones, resulting in a crisis of modernity for the postcolonial subject. Next, I examine Carnival's complicated relation to colonialism and globalization, and claim that the practice's contingent temporality both positions Carnival against teleological world models while preventing lasting change. Following this claim, I argue that Nalo Hopkinson's science fiction poetics in *Midnight Robber* solves this problem through the inclusion of a temporality of continuity which returns the subject to the present. Finally, I analyze the way Hopkinson's science fictional Carnival poetics develops a new subjectivity through Tan-Tan's Robber Queen character, whose strategic navigation between worlds radically reorients the conditions of the crisis of modernity toward productive ends.

World Models and the Crisis of Modernity

Under globalization, conceiving of the world as a social construct becomes essential to understanding geopolitical realities. The postcolonial subject inhabits a world model which positions her in both the past and future in relation to the present of the First

World. As a crisis of modernity, the postcolonial subject's denial of a place in the present strips her of agency in a global context. While often interchangeable with the physical globe, I differentiate the scale of the world with that of the planet. Earth is indeed an example of a world; however, the globe has relatively fixed spatial dimensions and refers exclusively to the planet as a material object. Rather, as a social construct, a world's size, boundaries, and ontology can vary widely in scale. For example, the phrase "in one's own world" suggests that worlds exist on a personal scale, while the world as synonymous with the cosmos implies an extension to the scale of the universe. Thus, while a world possesses a physical dimension and exists in reality, as a social construction a world is more accurately "a form of belonging or community," as cosmopolitan theorist Pheng Cheah argues.[255] We regularly construct worlds as a method of social organization to set boundaries between what we perceive to be ontologically distinct and separate spaces, ideas, events, and realities.

While the last chapter examined the category of the nation-state and the perception of its diminishing importance, this chapter focuses on the world scale and the perception of its increasing significance under globalization. Postcolonial critic Debjani Ganguly asserts that in 1989, coinciding with the rise of the Information Age and global capitalism on a planetary scale, a literary turning point occurred, during which the new global novel replaced the chronotope of the nation with the world.[256] Drawing from historian Benedict Anderson, Ganguly argues that as a formal analogue of the nation, the nation-state novel assumes a homogenous community of readers with shared experiences.[257] In contrast, contemporary novels have a networked structure that rejects a sense of unity, omniscience, and boundedness.[258] While nation-states seek to cultivate

spatiotemporally homogenous imagined communities across large distances, worlds internalize the openness of the global capitalist network as a part of their form. Thus, nation-states insist on spatial homogeneity, while worlds accommodate temporal heterogeneity. Under the crisis of scale, then, as political, economic, and technological realities broaden the scope of public consciousness, the world achieves a renewed importance as an object of study.

As a political unit, the world is a temporal concept of ontological organization. Each world model possesses a unique temporal framework which divides material spaces into ontologically distinct zones, regardless of existing spatial, cultural, or social interconnections. As Cheah argues, "before the world can appear as an object, it must first *be*. A world only is and we are only worldly beings if there is already time. The unity and permanence of a world are thus premised on the persistence of time."[259] Not only does the spatial dimension of a world presuppose its status as a temporal concept, but as political units, worlds introduce temporal problems of contingency, causation, and possibility. Specifically, as models of historical progress, worlds represent different conceptions of modernity. For example, the New World, as distinguished from the Old World of Western Europe, refers to lands in the Western Hemisphere available for colonization. The newness of the New World advances colonial myths of discovery, normalizing European conquest. Treating the New World's temporal separation from Europe as an ontological condition therefore makes this space available to be "discovered," regardless of the already existing native inhabitants. Thus, while as social constructs world models lack a physical presence, their ideologies have real world consequences.

Globalization in the post-Cold War period has not provided alternate world models, but rather re-centers modernity as a universal ideal. Lower transportation costs, neoliberal policies promoting free trade, and new information and communications technologies have interconnected the planet more than ever before.[260] Thus, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the dawn of the Internet Age, and the increasing dominance of global capitalism in the late 1990s, critics reexamined modernity as a teleological concept and term for historical progress, even debating whether we have entered a "posthistorical" age.[261] Globalization has therefore led to a crisis of scale not only for individual nation-states, but for world models and the way they are constituted. As the originary site of the New World and a part of the Third World today, the Caribbean's long history of colonialism has shaped the region's development, while globalization has only introduced new problems of economic exploitation. In fact, this history led Pheng Cheah to argue that the Caribbean does not belong to any world at all.[262] Whether as a source of slave labor or resource extraction, Cheah argues, the Caribbean's modern history has prevented Caribbeans from constructing a cohesive sense of identity and rootedness, leading to a state of "worldlessness." This history informed author V.S. Naipaul's "sardonic designation of the Caribbean as the 'Third World's Third World.'"[263] In lacking a world, the Caribbean is absent any meaningful cultural, political, and economic agency in the present. Rather, as a part of the undeveloped Third World, the Caribbean has historically served merely as a supplier of resources and labor for the global powers. Denying a world for the Caribbean therefore contributes to the region's powerlessness both locally and on the global stage.

In *Midnight Robber*, Hopkinson narrativizes the experience of the crisis of modernity for the Caribbean subject through Tan-Tan, who inhabits multiple worlds and identities simultaneously. As both omniscient narrator and authoritative ruler of Toussaint, the A.I. network Granny Nanny imposes her world model upon both the reader and characters. After Tan-Tan's father, Antonio, commits murder, he flees from their world, Toussaint, to its "dub side," New Half-Way Tree (2). This involves a movement in space as well as time. As a place of exile, New Half-Way Tree is home to criminals, "drifters," and "ragamuffins," as well as the douen. Granny Nanny says that "where Toussaint civilized, New Half-Way Tree does be rough." Granny Nanny's calling New Half-Way Tree rough draws attention to its difficult living conditions in comparison to Toussaint's wealth and absence of bodily labor. Conversely, the use of the word civilized portrays Toussaint as an advanced society further along in its historical development than its alternatives. Granny Nanny states that "New Half-Way Tree is how Toussaint planet did look before the Marryshow Corporation arrived." In comparing New Half-Way Tree's present to Toussaint's past, Granny Nanny imposes a historical model upon the planet in which one world provides a window into the other's origins, regardless of their contemporaneity. Granny Nanny therefore develops an evolutionary model of human progress in which, despite existing contemporaneously, New Half-Way Tree inhabits the rough space of the past while Toussaint represents the civilized space of the present.

However, Granny Nanny not only interprets New Half-Way Tree as a reflection of Toussaint's history, but of its future, as well. While passing through the dimensional veil between worlds, Antonio sings an old sailor song, explaining that "'People in ships would go through it like we going through dimension veils'" (74). Supporting this

historical analogy, the narrator explicitly compares Antonio and Tan-Tan's journey across the veil to the middle passage between Africa and the Americas, indicating a movement from pre-colonial Africa to the colonial Caribbean, as well as from freedom to slavery: "They were trapped in a confining space, being taken away from home like the long time ago Africans" (74). Through this historical comparison, the novel suggests that New Half-Way Tree represents native Africans' onerous future during the slave trade. In contrast to this hardship, at the beginning of the novel, Granny Nanny implies that New Half-Way Tree offers the possibility of an optimistic future for the lost people who think "the world must be have something better for them, if them could only find which part it is" (2). Whether New Half-Way Tree represents bondage or possibility, however, the dimensional relationship between these worlds, as well as the novel's structure, portrays New Half-Way Tree as a future space proceeding after Toussaint. While it is possible to travel from Toussaint to New Half-Way Tree, it is not possible to travel back. This implies a sequential relationship in which *New* Half-Way Tree occurs after Toussaint rather than before. However, this association directly contradicts my claim that New Half-Way Tree stands in for Toussaint's past. Rather than resolving this contradiction, Granny Nanny vacillates between conflicting representations of her world model's temporal conditions.

Hopkinson draws from existing world models in her representation of New Half-Way Tree as simultaneously preceding and proceeding Toussaint. By perpetuating colonialist myths of discovery and exploration in a far future environment, Hopkinson suggests that the ideologies of past world models remain just as relevant today. As the first world model operating globally, the New World, as distinguished from the Old

World of Western Europe, refers to the lands in the Western Hemisphere available for colonization.[264] In terms of its temporality, the global powers situate the New World paradoxically both before and after the time of the Old World. The New World is a future space because it represents, for the Europeans, the possibility of settlement, the extraction of resources, and the extension of their empires into an emerging, not-yet-existing space. As a future space, the New World must be discovered in order to exist. Paradoxically, the New World also occupies a space of the past due to its treatment by the Europeans as a primitive, rough, undeveloped space. As a past space, the New World must undergo development and progress toward modernity. The spatiotemporal disjunction between the New and Old Worlds is therefore an ideological distinction which normalizes and justifies the atrocities of the global powers.

Despite the formal end of colonialism and the rise of globalization, current world models still rely on conflicting temporal frameworks to order geopolitical hierarchies. Most modern world models emerged directly after the Second World War to identify and assign new global hierarchies. In 1951, after the rejection of "underdevelopment" by countries already developing or developing differently than the West, the United Nations selected an economic world model which classifies countries as "economically developed countries" (the United States and its allies), "centrally-planned economies" (the Soviet Union and its allies), and "primary producing countries."[265] However, other world models remained, dividing the planet up politically into capitalist and communist countries, as well as economically into developed and underdeveloped ones.[266] In the 1970s, the classification of countries as "core countries," "periphery countries," and "semi-peripheral countries" took hold, which for the first time categorized communist countries

outside of this designation alone.[267] While differences exist, all of these world models ignore questions of geographical separation and diversity when grouping together countries labeled underdeveloped, primary producing, or semi-peripheral, suggesting that issues of space and borders are less relevant than political and economic power. Thus, modern world models carry over the colonialist strategy of dividing the planet into geopolitical hierarchies.

While these alternatives certainly remain relevant, the three worlds model has somehow survived its antiquation at the end of the Cold War and constant efforts to abandon the term, suggesting it possesses an ideological power as an attractive method of global organization. One of the first examples of the term in print, anthropologist Alfred Sauvy's 1952 publication of "*Tres Mondes, Une Planete*" ("Three Worlds, One Planet") refers to a third political option between capitalism and Stalinist communism.[268] While the term's original meaning was dropped as these socialist movements were overwhelmed by McCarthyism, it nevertheless spread quickly through academic circles, where the Third World began to refer to countries unaligned with the First World of the United States and its allies or the Second World of the Soviet Union and its allies. Simultaneously, however, the UN debated alternative world models as a diplomatic issue. As critic Peter Worsley argues, "The accusation that the concept of the Third World is only a piece of mystification, designed to persuade people into asserting an equal independence of both the First and Second Worlds, is an accurate one."[269] In other words, the concept of the Third World obscures existing political and economic interconnections. Rather than offering a separate and autonomous alternative, the Third World undergoes exploitation by the First and Second Worlds. Therefore, the three

worlds system, like all hegemonic world models, does not refer to a real ontological separation, but merely disguises the falsity of this myth. Thus, while today the Third World refers to a relation that does not exist, indeed this relation never existed in the first place.

Colonialist myths of discovery and primitivism survive in the three worlds model through its temporal framework. Similar to the New World, the Third World possesses two contradictory temporalities. First, as critic Arif Dirlik notes, Sauvy stated that despite its name, the Third World was "'in fact, the first world in the chronological sense.'"[270] Dirlik continues, "the modernisation discourse shaped by the three worlds scheme was also informed by a historical teleology that placed the First World at the end of history, showing the others the way to their futures, even though some Third World societies might take a detour through the Second."[271] Under this view, the Third World lags behind the First World in terms of historical progress and will be last to modernize. In other words, similar to the New World's past temporality as a primitive region, the Third World is a pre-modern space which, when exposed to industrialized capitalism, will join the First World at the end of history.

In addition to the Third World's temporal position before the First and Second Worlds, it also proceeds after them. As Worsley argues, "The concept of the Third World…necessarily implies the existence of two prior worlds."[272] In other words, because the Third World follows consecutively from the first two worlds, it necessarily occurs after the formation of the First and Second Worlds. Therefore, the Third World occupies a future temporality which makes these regions available for economic exploitation. Just as the New World's newness made possible its "discovery" by colonial

powers, the "untapped markets" of the Third World justify and normalize economic exploitation by the First World. Placing the Third World at the last stage of history therefore makes its incorporation into the world market not only possible but inevitable. While the Third World possesses two distinct and conflicting temporalities, therefore, its conception of history remains consistent. The three worlds model assumes a teleological view of history in which countries follow a linear path toward global capitalism.

The concept of the Third World has persisted even after losing its original meaning because its function does not exclusively relate to the Cold War, but instead reflects broader ideological trends about history and modernity tracing back to colonialism. Historian Mark T. Berger writes, "the idea of the Third World was increasingly deployed to generate unity and support among a growing number of non-aligned nation-states whose leaders sought to displace the 'East–West' (cold war) conflict and foreground the 'North–South' conflict."[273] In other words, while the term Third World is no longer relevant in the post-Cold War era, it now serves a similar ideological purpose by dividing the North and South into ontologically distinct zones. This implies that despite the specificity of its terminology, the Third World is most useful politically for the way it organizes regions relative to the First or developed world. Sociologist Fouad Makki supports this interpretation, going so far as to argue that the Soviet Union is a relatively minor factor in terms of the history of world models.[274] In sharing the same temporal framework as colonialism and globalization, the three worlds system aligns with the conception of modernity as a teleological march toward historical progress.

Returning to *Midnight Robber*, this short analysis of the survival of colonialist teleology through the three worlds model illuminates how Granny Nanny's world model

operates. Comparing the Marryshevites' arrival on Toussaint in the past to New Half-Way Tree in the present, Granny Nanny treats the colonization of the planet as a historical inevitability. Her statement that colonizers killed the indigenous douen people "'to make Toussaint safe for people from the nation ships'" implies a teleological right to transform this world (32). Because the Marryshevites' occupation of Toussaint is predetermined, the means of securing this world—even through genocide—are therefore inconsequential. In addition to exploiting New Half-Way Tree as a version of Toussaint's past, Granny Nanny's world model also portrays New Half-Way Tree as a future space of possibility. Treating New Half-Way Tree as a "New World" lacking its own history, Granny Nanny exiles her undesirable subjects to this planet. Because New Half-Way Tree represents a space of future possibility, displacing her subjects to this developing world merely fulfills its historical purpose. This temporal framework normalizes the power imbalance between the two worlds, as the narrator notes, "Toussaint people didn't talk too much about the criminals they had exiled to New Half-Way Tree" (19). The citizens of Toussaint avoid their complicity in New Half-Way Tree's exploitation due to the temporal gap between these worlds. While Toussaint is a utopian space free of labor, and must maintain this status, New Half-Way Tree is rough, wild, and primitive, and must also remain unchanged. Thus, by reordering a political colonizer-colonized relationship as a temporal present-past and future relationship, Granny Nanny constructs a teleological world model that maintains the status quo.

Tan-Tan's struggle for a coherent identity and place in society reveals how the crisis of modernity shapes the subject's experience. Following their exile to New Half-Way Tree, Antonio repeatedly rapes Tan-Tan. In order to preserve her image of her father

as a good man, Tan-Tan mentally splits both her father and herself into good and bad versions: "Daddy was two daddies. She felt her own self split in two to try to understand, to accommodate them both" (140). For Tan-Tan, her good version perseveres by displacing her bad version to the Carnival character, the Robber Queen. When Tan-Tan kills Antonio before another attempted rape, she attributes responsibility to the Robber Queen: "It must have been the Robber Queen who pulled out the knife" (168). As a coping mechanism, the Robber Queen character allows Tan-Tan to survive in the harsh world of New Half-Way Tree. However, she experiences traumatic nightmares: "She felt unreal. Is which world she living in; this daddy tree, or the nightmare daddy world?" (213). Despite having already passed through the veil into New Half-Way Tree, Tan-Tan continues to experience a doubleness of worlds. Tan-Tan's trauma therefore manifests as the paradoxical doubleness of inhabiting two conflicting worlds simultaneously.

As critics have discussed, Tan-Tan's sense of doubleness, as well as Hopkinson's use of the word veil, strongly evokes W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk.*[275] Not only does the veil function as a metaphor for the color line dividing America, but it also refers to Du Bois's popular concept of "double consciousness," or the sense of twoness black Americans experience in inhabiting the worlds of both white and black America. As Du Bois explains, black Americans are "gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world."[276] Therefore, the experience of double consciousness involves a paradoxical desire to merge the white and black worlds both to escape white contempt and to achieve black empowerment. As a symptom of this contradiction, double consciousness leaves the subject within both worlds and in neither.

Resembling Du Bois's concept of double consciousness, Tan-Tan's experience makes legible the way the crisis of modernity forces the subject to inhabit multiple conflicting worlds simultaneously, denying them a sense of agency and belonging.

While Tan-Tan's circumstances remain specific to her narrative, they also stand in more broadly for the postcolonial Caribbean experience. For example, the novel describes the colonization of Toussaint in terms of rape: the Marryshow Corporation "sink them Earth Engine Number 127 down into it like God entering he woman; plunging into the womb of soil to impregnate the planet with the seed of Granny Nanny" (2). In associating the Marryshevites' arrival with sexual conquest, the novel recognizes colonialism's exploitative violence. Similarly, while explaining her being raped by Antonio, Tan-Tan says, "He was forever trying to *plant* me, like I was his soil to harvest" (260). Comparing her body to the land, Tan-Tan frames Antonio's act as a type of colonization over her body. By forming a connection between Tan-Tan and colonial violence, the novel suggests her experiencing a doubleness of worlds embodies the Caribbean postcolonial experience. While the concept of double consciousness refers to the black American experience more broadly, Hopkinson writes specifically from a Caribbean perspective. As a transnational space with more than seven-hundred islands and a huge diversity of nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures, the Caribbean does not match essentializing definitions of identity. Rather, the Caribbean is a hybrid region which produces new identities and communities through the intermixing of cultures. Thus, any effort to build a new subjectivity under the crisis of modernity must consider the Caribbean's unique historical conditions.

What is needed, then, is a Caribbean world model positioned against those aligned with the principles of colonialism and globalization, or a version of what critic Mark C. Jerng calls racial worldmaking which embeds "race as a historical tendency and in our temporal structures for organizing the significant features and events of the world."[277] As a temporal process of ontological organization, then, worldmaking has the potential to address the crisis of modernity by critiquing and replacing exploitative world models. According to Cheah, "In decolonization struggles, the openness of worlding is figured as an opening of the existing world to colonized peoples by the inauguration of a new temporality."[278] In other words, postcolonial subjects can engage in worldmaking projects by introducing new temporalities that do not align with the ideologies of colonialism or globalization. Therefore, Hopkinson must develop a Caribbean world model, as well as an aesthetic style capable of representing, defamiliarizing, and even resisting the crisis of modernity's conditions.

Carnival

As a worldmaking strategy specific to the Caribbean region, Carnival poetics and practices have the potential to challenge and replace dominant world models. Despite its political and aesthetic value, Carnival poetics has an ambivalent relation to hegemonic world models. Thus, Hopkinson must address Carnival's shortcomings to make the poetics a viable worldmaking strategy under globalization. Tracing its roots to medieval Europe, Carnival in Trinidad possesses a complicated history with ties to colonialism.[279] Carnival originally served as a political and cultural compromise which accommodated pre-Christian traditions by the church and allowed for "bold expressions of dissidence" to

maintain the status quo.[280] Because of Lent's association with penance, Carnival became about liberation.[281] Carnival therefore "always licensed the crossing of many kinds of boundaries."[282] During the colonization of the New World, while Carnival practices waned in Europe, the festival became popular in many colonies including Cuba, Trinidad, Saint Dominigue, and others. In Trinidad, while Carnival began in the eighteenth century and was largely celebrated by the white elite, by the 1830s, with the abolition of slavery, the festival rose in popularity among the racially and ethnically hybrid lower classes.[283] Thus, while Carnival began as a white European Christian celebration, in Trinidad and the rest of the Caribbean the festival developed a local character reflecting the identities and cultural traditions of its diverse population.

Representative of this region, Carnival's contingent temporal framework contrasts with the teleology of hegemonic world models, positioning the poetics as an ideal worldmaking practice for the Caribbean. While Carnival may appear merely as an annual festival, its social customs and aesthetic practices constitute a world model with a unique temporality. Supporting this assertion, Bakhtin calls Carnival a "second world," while critic Milla Cozart Riggio, quoting Shakespeare, refers to Carnival as "a world elsewhere."[284] Rather than a place, Carnival is a spatially fluid event which has migrated across the globe. Even Trinidad's own specific style of Carnival has successfully developed in other regions such as Brooklyn.[285] Conversely, Carnival season, which occurs between Christmas and Lent, has resisted major scheduling changes.[286] Thus, as a world model, the festival and its poetics are temporal in nature. Creating what Bakhtin calls a "twilight zone of possibility," Carnival time is liminal, occupying a temporary position outside of yet in direct relation to the oppressive certainty of ordinary time.[287]

Additionally, by temporarily sanctioning subversive performances which parody the rigid social codes of the everyday, Carnival time privileges notions of fluidity, movement, and transformation.[288] Rather than favoring a teleological view of time in which events transpire linearly toward predetermined outcomes, Carnival time adheres to the rhythms of human bodily perception.[289] Because of this, Carnival time is spontaneous, socially produced, and contingent. Quoting anthropologist Thomas Hylland-Eriksen, critic Philip W. Scher explains, "Carnival is the supreme liming time," meaning that it is "'entirely contingent on the shared meaning that can be established spontaneously.'"[290] Given Carnival's contingent temporality, the festival seems perfectly positioned to contest the teleological world models of colonialism and globalization.

Hopkinson's treatment of Carnival in the novel reflects the festival's emancipatory and subjectivity-building potential. Taking place during Jonkanoo Season, Toussaint's Carnival celebrates "the landing of the Marryshow Corporation nation ships that had brought their ancestors to this planet two centuries ago…All the bloods flowing into one river, making a new home on a new planet" (18). As a festival commemorating the founding of their home, Carnival celebrates Toussaint as a racially, ethnically, and nationally hybridized space. In addition, Carnival preserves the historical memory of Caribbean history and folklore.[291] For example, Tan-Tan's eshu, her personal A.I. connected to Granny Nanny, lectures her on historical Carnival figures such as Belle Starr and Peter Minshall, as well as folkloric figures such as Mancrab and Brer Anansi (29-30). Moreover, Toussaint's Carnival practices derive largely from Afro-Caribbean traditions, and especially emphasize stories of escaping slavery (57). Therefore, in Carnival, storytelling itself preserves the Caribbean's historical past. In addition to

serving as a cultural repository for the Caribbean's collective memory, Toussaint's Carnival temporarily suspends social norms and collapses boundaries between categories of identity. The novel refers to the "ecstatic license of Carnival" which gives the Marryshevites the ability to play with their identities, whether through sexual displays, crossdressing, or "cell-sculpted" bodies (55). This liberating celebration of embodiment and the fluidity of identity contrasts with ordinary time, when most Marryshevites display a distaste for bodily labor.[292] By collapsing boundaries between divisions of class, race, gender, and sexuality, Carnival temporarily allows the Marryshevites to make visible and freely express their complex identities.

Hopkinson develops Carnival poetics not only as a set of principles but as a language reflecting the heteroglossic voices of the Caribbean as a transnational space.[293] Through "code-sliding," or switching between dialects, *Midnight Robber* incorporates "three modes of address": Standard English, Trinidadian creole for emphasis and irony, and Jamaican creole to signal opposition.[294] For example, as critic Jilliana Enteen recognizes, in one scene Antonio, speaking with Maka, employs a Trinidadian dialect: "So is what I hear allyou runners doing? When you turn off Nanny'" (52). After Antonio and Maka gain a higher level of familiarity, however, he uses the Jamaican exclamation, "'Rasscloth'" (52). Not only does Hopkinson's approach to language reflect her transnational background, but by remixing languages through various levels of address, she collapses linguistic boundaries and provides characters with complex modes of cultural expression. Moreover, Hopkinson's code-sliding technique reflects the histories of creole languages as linguistically hybrid.[295] According to Hopkinson, because creole languages developed both within and in opposition to colonial language, they possess the

potential to challenge dominant power structures. Thus, "When your language has been colonized, you find ways to subvert and reconfigure it."[296] Hopkinson's use of creole dialects in *Midnight Robber* therefore challenges the colonial myth of languages as separate and hierarchical. Through the very language of *Midnight Robber*, Hopkinson develops a Carnival poetics reflecting the principles of hybridity, subverting authority, and collapsing boundaries.

Hopkinson draws from theoretical analyses to develop her own Carnival poetics based on a collapse of boundaries, fluidity, embodiment, hybridity, and storytelling as a strategy for preserving historical memory and cultural identity. While theories of the carnivalesque as a political strategy began with Bakhtin, who examines medieval and renaissance Carnival practices as a populist subversion of the hierarchical order, as critics such as Gerard Aching have noted, Bakhtin's theory may not be applicable to the comparatively multiethnic, transnational, and class-straddling space of the Caribbean.[297] Despite this, critics generally argue that the Caribbean festival maintains many of its European aesthetic principles.[298] For example, Carnival practices parody the ruling classes through mimicry and masking as a method of subverting authority.[299] In the transnational, multiethnic, and racially diverse Caribbean, Carnival also uses performance and mimicry to parody and question racial power structures; as a result, Caribbean Carnival poetics privileges hybrid and heterogenous identities.[300] Through Carnival's subversion of the ruling authority through masking practices, Carnival poetics developed with specific aesthetic preferences, including play, liminality, and subversion, which provide authors with representational models to depict, interpret, and critique world models.[301]

Despite Carnival's subjectivity-building potential, its contingent temporality may also contribute toward a possible failure to critique and replace dominant world models. Critics are divided on whether Carnival poetics subverts or affirms the ideologies of colonialism and globalization. Proponents of the "safety valve" interpretation argue that Caribbean festivals like Carnival and Jonkonnu possess only symbolic rather than actual potential to resist hegemonic class structures.[302] Due to its liminal nature, Carnival time sets itself apart from ordinary time, creating a separate world without directly contesting or replacing the dominant one. By offering the illusion of freedom, Carnival maintains the status quo and avoids the disruption of daily life at other times of the year.[303] Others, however, argue that while Caribbean Carnival practices may not possess the revolutionary potential to topple the established social order, they constitute an instance of "lower-frequency" politics that instead seeks to "gain and maintain visible representation."[304] Thus, as a product of colonialism, Carnival's specific relation to dominant world models remains uncertain, creating a potential obstacle toward its subversion of hegemonic world models. For Hopkinson to make use of Carnival poetics as a world model, she must address its historical development and critiques.

In *Midnight Robber*, Hopkinson confronts these problems in her imagining of two different Carnivals drawing from distinct historical periods in Trinidad. In mapping this history onto her science fictional setting, Hopkinson emphasizes how, while Trinidadian Carnival has developed its own identity based on local traditions and beliefs, it retains damaging colonialist values in some form. Hopkinson's treatment of Carnival poetics indicates that rather than subverting or affirming hegemony, the festival performs both functions simultaneously, suggesting that any revision to Carnival poetics must

acknowledge its complex and conflicting history. Despite permitting new types of social behavior, Toussaint's Carnival imposes its own set of restrictive social norms upon the Marryshevites, including colonial models of gendered and ethnic identity. At the beginning of the novel, Antonio discovers that his wife, Ione, has been cheating on him with a man named Quashee. Despite the fact that dueling Quashee would not solve his marital problems, Antonio repeatedly states that he must fight Quashee in a Carnival fighting yard to reclaim his and his wife's honor (59). In tying Ione's infidelity to his honor, Antonio reinforces the rigid gender binary in which men must fight to maintain an image of masculine power while women lack agency. Thus, while Carnival loosens social norms and blurs the otherwise firm divisions between race, gender, and sexuality, the festival also imposes social norms still entrenched in these restrictive divisions.

Antonio and Quashee's fight calls to mind the way Trinidadian Carnival, especially during the 1860s to 1950s, centered on issues of class deriving from the festival's colonial origins. The period between 1860 and the early 1890s was known as "Jamette Carnival," or the Carnival of the working class.[305] During this era, for the upper classes Carnival became more "disreputable" with an increase in violence and sexual acts. Simultaneously, however, Carnival crystallized as a symbol for Trinidadian identity. Indeed, as Scher argues, the middle class mobilized Carnival as a nation-building practice to "secure legislative autonomy from England."[306] Understanding this political significance, the Governor imposed a series of restrictions, including forbidding masks in 1846 and police suppression in the 1870s and 1890s.[307] By the 1890s, following the Canboulay Riots of 1881 and a series of strict ordinances directed against the working class, Jamette Carnival ended.[308] At this time, Carnival continued to upgrade socially,

gain mainstream acceptance, and become widely practiced by all social classes. The middle class solidified control over Carnival by appropriating the event as a nationalist cause to unite all of Trinidad. As Scher argues, however, "the control and political manipulation of Carnival in the name of the polity had been a strategy to disguise basic class interests under the guise of national interests."[309] This appropriation of Carnival by the middle class continued into the next century, with efforts to remove "obscene" elements like sex and violence. By moving the event away from Downtown, the 1919 Victory Carnival heightened class divisions further.[310] Thus, while the transition from Jamette Carnival to twentieth century Carnival can be thought of as a slow movement from colonial to national control, more accurately it represents a change in power from the lower to middle classes.

Bearing in mind the class issues which pervade Carnival's historical development, Antonio's fight with Quashee reproduces colonial narratives which bind the population into a rigid set of behaviors and character models. Specifically, this scene invokes narratives of the respectability-reputation binary within colonial Trinidad and Carnival. Defining middle class discourse in Trinidad, respectability is associated with femininity, domestic values, morality, and propriety. Conversely, reputation is associated with masculinity, public image, immorality, and improper behavior.[311] While this discourse glorifies respectability as a model for European values, reputation stands for Creole-African society. For critics and historians, the binary also provides a lens for interpreting historical shifts in class control over the festival.[312] However, by conditioning the lower classes to adopt respectability values while simultaneously assigning reputation values as fundamental to their nature, this discourse upholds teleological narratives of European

civilization and legitimizes colonialism.[313] Rather than developing an autonomous world outside European standards, the discourse only allows Trinidadians to escape or succumb to their Afro-Creole nature. The respectability-reputation binary therefore symptomizes colonial ideology's dominance in Trinidad by restricting social behavior into a rigid dichotomy.[314]

Antonio's duel demonstrates the endurance of the reputation-respectability binary in Trinidadian Carnival today. In *Midnight Robber*, in a far-future Caribbean society on another planet, these values persist in a way space and time do not alone weaken. While Granny Nanny technically abolishes the class structure, as mayor, Antonio possesses a degree of wealth and power unavailable to most Marryshevites, identifying him as middle to upper class. Quashee (or Quashie), meanwhile, whose name is a Jamaican term for slave, stands for the lower class.[315] Thus, following the ideology of the respectability-reputation binary, while Antonio fails to meet European standards of conduct, Quashee falls victim to his own Creole-African nature. Both men, however, become victims of the reputation worldview by defending their honor and masculine pride; Quashee loses his life, and Antonio exiles himself.[316] Therefore, even in this far-future society on another planet, Toussaint's Carnival retains the tension between respectability and reputation, demonstrating the historical endurance of colonial values as well as the illusion of a completely utopian worldmaking project.

While Antonio's duel demonstrates the perpetuation of colonialist narratives and identities, Granny Nanny's control over the festival reflects contemporary political and economic problems in the Caribbean. In one scene, when Tan-Tan watches a recording of the terrifying Carnival character, Mancrab, her eshu explains that such technologies

existed "'before people make Granny Nanny to rule the machines and give guidance'" (30). Tan-Tan's eshu assures her that while technology has the capacity to produce frightening monsters, Granny Nanny oversees their operations and provides protection to humanity. This passage demonstrates Toussaint's Carnival's appropriating the Marryshevites' mythology to consolidate power. The novel is filled with allusions to Caribbean history, including Toussaint's connection to the slave rebellion in Saint Dominique, Granny Nanny's to Nanny of the Maroons, the Marryshow Corporation's to T.A. Marryshow and the fight for Grenada independence, and New Half-Way Tree's to the intersection between Kingston Harbor and Spanish Town. While these historical references provide Toussaint with a connection to their Caribbean ancestry, Granny Nanny's control and sanitization of this history empties these references of political power. As a result, historical references which once signified rebellion and freedom now maintain the status quo. In the Mancrab example, Tan-Tan's eshu reframes a performance warning of the dangers of technological power to one valorizing Granny Nanny, who represents that very power. Granny Nanny therefore weaponizes the Marryshevites' nostalgia for their cultural past to provide paternalistic (or in this case maternalistic) oversight, creating a sense of dependency that quells the possibility of dissent. As the narrator explains, Granny Nanny "had been designed to be flexible, to tolerate a variety of human expression, even dissension, so long as it didn't upset the balance of the whole" (10). While Toussaint's Carnival retains many of the customs, performances, and events of their ancestors' Carnival on Earth, Granny Nanny therefore co-opts the festival as a form of appeasement and political indoctrination. While Carnival indeed holds cultural

and historical value, it also serves the interests of Granny Nanny by pacifying the public through a state-sanctioned time of revelry.

Granny Nanny's role in Toussaint demonstrates a key difference between the world models of colonialism and globalization, and the contemporary challenges Carnival faces as a poetics and political strategy. While colonial and class conflict primarily shape Carnival's history into the twentieth century, after Trinidad's independence in 1962, Carnival became a cultural commodity controlled and regulated by the state. In 1987, the Carnival Development Committee formed to provide legitimacy to the state as the keeper of the nation's cultural knowledge. As Scher argues, the state saw the control of Carnival as instrumental to reinforcing state sovereignty.[317] As a result of this state control, as Carnival increasingly became a symbol for Trinidadian identity on a global scale, the event also endured criticism for participating in neoliberal policies.[318] As literary historian Richard D.E. Burton argues, "Carnival has been exoticized and commodified for foreign consumption, and Trinidadians allegedly confront it as tourists in their own land, estranged from the very festivity that is supposed to embody the quintessence of what it is to be Trinidadian or even of what it is to be West Indian, or black."[319] With Trinidadian Carnival's spread across the globe as a cultural export, this critique of the festival's commodification and co-option of cultural nostalgia has only become more pronounced.

By directly mirroring Trinidad Carnival's commodification and control by the state, Granny Nanny's authority over Carnival's festivities demonstrates the way the state and global market shape Trinidadian identity. As Burton suggests, due to the ubiquity of Carnival within Trinidadian society, these transformations have changed not only the way

Trinidadians relate to Carnival, but the way they relate to themselves. Thus, when Tan-Tan encounters a Carnival lacking Granny Nanny's presence in New Half-Way Tree, she notices their differences, observing that "nothing could be completely right about Carnival in this shadow land of New Half-Way Tree. Everyone here was in exile; this could only be a phantom of the celebration they would have had on Toussaint" (314). While Toussaint's Carnival draws from post-independence Trinidad, New Half-Way Tree resembles Jamette Carnival's working class festival. Tan-Tan's observation therefore demonstrates her ignorance of the history of Carnival, both in Toussaint and the reality outside the novel. As a migratory tradition transported between continents on Earth and worlds in *Midnight Robber,* Carnival is most representative of diasporic groups like exiles who have been separated from their homeland. Indeed, as Scher argues, "Carnival was established early on in the migration experience."[320] Therefore, Tan-Tan's discomfort in what ought to feel like a familiar event demonstrates her indoctrination into Granny Nanny's tamer and more sanitized version of Carnival. However, Tan-Tan soon observes that "Carnival was bringing people together on New Half-Way Tree" (315). Just like in Toussaint, Tan-Tan watches the steel pan bands and witnesses the Old Masque shows with familiar figures like the Midnight Robber. Despite the removal of Granny Nanny's influence, then, Tan-Tan recognizes familiar markers of cultural identity. Neither Tan-Tan nor the text claims New Half-Way Tree's Carnival as more authentic than Toussaint's. Rather, Granny Nanny's absence and New Half-Way Tree's greater emphasis on bodily labor and toil alters this Carnival's contextual meaning in comparison to its counterpart. Rather than acting as a form of social and political control, New Half-Way Tree's Carnival allows its people to momentarily "forget all their troubles" (316).

Thus, while in Toussaint Carnival acts as a momentary time of dissidence to maintain the status quo, in New Half-Way Tree the festival provides a reprieve from the toil and hardship of daily life. In including these two versions of Carnival drawing from distinct eras of Trinidad's history, Hopkinson argues for the festival's polysemous societal function; neither affirming nor subverting the authority of colonialism and globalization, Carnival does both simultaneously.

Despite Carnival's incredible political potential to subvert the status quo, Hopkinson's science fictional setting makes clear the obstacles inherent in this practice. While Trinidadian Carnival has changed dramatically in its migration to the Caribbean, it retains significant connections to colonialist values and conceptions of identity. Specifically, the prevalence of violence through the reputation-respectability binary poses a problem to Hopkinson's politics. Moreover, the transformation of Carnival under Granny Nanny's rule reflects the conditions of globalization in a post-1962 independent Trinidad, in which the state controls Carnival as a cultural commodity.[321] Most importantly, Carnival's contingent temporality makes it a powerful weapon against teleological world models, but also makes permanent change impossible. Therefore, before Hopkinson can build new emancipatory subjectivities, she must contend with Carnival's entrenchment in the structures of colonialism and globalization.

Contingency and Continuity

Hopkinson's solves Carnival's problem of contingency through the science fictional principle of continuity, which makes the present and imagined future compatible within the same temporal frame. While Carnival positions itself against teleological

world models, its temporality also serves as an obstacle toward creating lasting change. Although critics disagree on the precise relation between Carnival and hegemonic world models, most assume clear boundaries between worlds with only a temporary disruption during the festival. Some critics, such as Richard D.E. Burton, argue instead that Carnival acts as a "'ritual of intensification' in which the forces that govern 'ordinary' life are expressed with a particular salience, clarity, and eloquence." [322] Under this interpretation, Carnival does not fundamentally differ from ordinary time, but rather intensifies its attributes as a distorted mirror. This interpretation allows for Carnival not only to parody other world models, but to replace them with its own. Supporting this assertion, in their discussion of the suppression and decline of Carnival practices in Europe, critics Peter Stallybrass and Allon White argue that rather than disappearing, Carnival practices instead transformed, migrated, and diffused throughout the mainstream culture.[323] Rather than existing separately, then, Carnival's world model has the potential to influence the surrounding culture even outside of festival time. Therefore, Carnival's contingent temporality may not be an obstacle, but the ideal weapon for toppling teleological world models.

While Burton's intensification interpretation fulfills Carnival's political potential, he does not specify how Carnival might overcome its inherently temporary conditions. Despite his lack of a viable roadmap, Burton's argument aligns with the recent call by scholars to conceive of Carnival practices as not merely a playful inversion or subversion of existing subjectivities, but as producing new subjectivities.[324] Such critics express a desire to develop Carnival poetics from an irruption into existing world models to a world-building practice of its own. To accomplish this, however, Hopkinson must

contend with the limitations of Carnival's world model. Science fiction's temporal framework, I argue, provides Hopkinson with the means to accomplish this goal without abandoning the principle of temporal contingency. By adopting a science fictional temporality of continuity, Hopkinson successfully upends the hierarchical relationship between the present and imagined future, integrating them into the same ontological space. In doing so, Hopkinson constructs a world model allowing for continuity between Carnival time and ordinary time, insisting on the Caribbean's position in the present and possession of a world.

As opposed to realist novels, which must maintain an ontological separation between narrative worlds, Hopkinson conceives of science fiction as disrupting this hierarchy. Realist fiction may include dreams or fantasies to reflect upon the primary diegesis, but their ontological position must remain subordinate to the primary story world to ensure a sense of fidelity with reality. Therefore, in a realist novel, an imagined future—especially one containing impossible or inaccurate events—functionally serves as metaphor. In contrast, non-mimetic genres such as science fiction accommodate both possible and impossible events. For Hopkinson, science fiction creates a dialogue between the present and imagined future. For example, in *Midnight Robber*, as an imagined future for a Caribbean society, Toussaint contains only distant connections to European colonialism. As Hopkinson explains, "part of what I was trying to do was to imagine how Caribbean culture might metonymize technological progress if it was in our hands: in other words, what stories we'd tell ourselves about our technology—what our paradigms for it might be."[325] Thus, as a fictional thought experiment, Toussaint and New

Half-Way Tree narrativize a possible future in which Caribbean society functions without Europe's hegemonic influence.

At the same time, however, Hopkinson makes clear that science fiction's invented futures always relate directly to the present. As Hopkinson states, "Science fiction isn't so much about projecting into the future; it's about turning a lens onto the present."[326] In other words, Hopkinson is less interested in predicting future events than in using an imagined fictional world to speak about the present. While the novel's narrative takes place on another planet in the far future, its conditions reflect problems of identity formation under colonialism and globalization. Thus, science fiction allows Hopkinson to experiment with historically contingent events while keeping her narrative anchored to the present reality. In terms of its world-building strategy, science fiction therefore develops a continuous present and future temporal framework. The events of *Midnight Robber* take place in an imagined future, but this world equally constructs itself out of the present. Unlike existing hegemonic world models which rely on hierarchies, however, science fiction's multiple temporalities lack hierarchical divisions, instead producing a flat ontology. Thus, for Hopkinson, science fiction builds narrative worlds with separate but continuous temporalities.

Through *Midnight Robber*'s form, Hopkinson provides a metafictional commentary on science fiction's temporality, demonstrating how continuity solves Carnival's problem of contingency. The novel includes "anansi stories" existing alongside, but separate from, the primary story world. While these sections retain a sense of continuity with the rest of the novel through the preservation of a single narrator, Granny Nanny, these passages appear in bold and operate under different generic

conventions and styles, signaling a separate narrative world from the primary diegesis. As such, the anansi stories do not necessarily reflect the actual events of the novel; rather, they operate as mythologized versions of Tan-Tan's experiences within the public consciousness. Through her treatment of the novel's two diegetic levels, Hopkinson constructs a metafictional account of science fiction's aesthetic value. Creating a dialogue between the present and imagined future, science fiction develops a continuous temporality which eliminates hierarchical distinctions between realities. Similarly, as imagined versions of actual events in the novel, the anansi stories act as an alternative reality for Tan-Tan. Tracking the level of interaction between diegetic levels therefore reveals Hopkinson's embracing a science fictional temporality of continuity, in which the primary and secondary narrative worlds share the same ontological space.

The novel's structure shifts from the temporality of colonial world models, to traditional Carnival poetics, finally to science fictional Carnival poetics, demonstrating the political value of Hopkinson's revised Caribbean worldmaking strategy. The first anansi story, "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief," adopts the moralistic conventions of a fable, offering an origin story which aligns closely with the style of Tan-Tan's Robber speech. While this anansi story preserves the truth of Tan-Tan's exile, it romanticizes Antonio as a father, ignoring his responsibility for his sexual abuse and their exile. For example, the text represents Antonio's love for Tan-Tan using excessively sentimental language: "If anything make Tan-Tan cry, for him is like bitter rain falling over the whole moon and him couldn't take no pleasure in him life until he make she happy again" (80). As a mythologized account of the primary diegesis, "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief" idealizes the conditions of Tan-Tan's life in Toussaint, deliberately overlooking

Antonio's flaws. In developing a fictional narrative world which distorts the conditions of the primary diegesis, Hopkinson uses a fabricated reality to speak about the novel's present. Indeed, the story's moralistic lesson about the importance of telling the truth highlights Tan-Tan's use of Robber speech to disguise her past.

Hopkinson does not commit to science fiction poetics in "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief," refusing to provide the anansi story with a material reality of its own. At the end of the story, the narrator admits, "Tan-Tan ain't too like it [the anansi story]. It always make she mind run on how she daddy steal she away from her home" (90). Unlike the fabricated version of Tan-Tan in the anansi story, the real Tan-Tan cannot ignore her father's responsibility for their exile, and her guilt and shame in response to his abusive behavior. Thus, while this passage creates a dialogue between narrative worlds, the text establishes a clear ontological hierarchy separating them. "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief" therefore aligns with the logic of dominant world models, which impose an ontological division between otherwise interconnected regions. While Tan-Tan's mythical origin story provides her with comfort, its distortion of real events only symptomizes her trauma. By repressing Tan-Tan's feelings of guilt and shame, this anansi story perpetuates Tan-Tan's crisis of modernity.

The next anansi story, "Tan-Tan and Dry Bone," begins to establish a more dynamic connection between narrative worlds that reflects the principles of Carnival poetics. In the story, Tan-Tan helps an old man, Dry Bone, only to unknowingly become his slave. Tan-Tan resolves this problem when she remembers her ability to "make up any kind of story" when playing masque as a child, and tricks Dry Bone into making himself vulnerable to Master Johncrow, who devours him (209). As another moralistic

fable, the text makes the story's message explicit. Representing the weight of Tan-Tan's trauma, the heavier Dry Bone gets, the more her problems and responsibilities feel overwhelming. As the text states, "And Tan-Tan feel Dry Bone getting heavier and heavier, but she couldn't let go. She feel the weight of all the burdens she carrying: alone, stranded on New Half-Way Tree with a curse on her head, a spiteful woman so ungrateful she kill she own daddy" (201). We might conclude, then, that rather than extending Tan-Tan's narrative into the primary diegesis, this narrative intrusion offers a metaphorical version of the novel's events. In other words, "Tan-Tan and Dry Bone" does not occupy a science fictional reality existing continuously with the primary story world, but instead resides on a secondary diegetic level. Rather than bringing this narrative world into the present, the narration instead preserves this diegetic level as metaphor. This hierarchical diegesis resembles the conventions of realism, which accommodates multiple diegetic levels only as metaphor, as opposed to science fiction, which makes them material in the present.

Despite these issues, "Tan-Tan and Dry Bone" creates an uncertain relation between the novel's two levels of diegesis, allowing for the possibility of subverting this ontological hierarchy. Unlike "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief," the events of this anansi story do not directly contradict the primary diegesis. Even further, while the novel presents this tale as another narrative intrusion, references to this anansi story appear in the primary diegesis. For example, after Janisette's first attack against the douen, the narrator notes, "Everywhere she went she brought trouble, carrying it like a burden on her back" (274). This passage refers to the anansi story in the form of a simile—"like"—maintaining the possibility that "How Tan-Tan Learn to Thief" exists only as metaphor.

However, the increasing relevance of the anansi stories to the central narrative, coupled with a lack of conflicting continuity, signals a more dynamic relationship between these narrative worlds. While certainly a hierarchy remains in place, "Tan-Tan and Dry Bone" subverts this arrangement and starts to collapse the boundaries between narrative worlds. Preserving the tension between the novel's two diegetic levels, this anansi story employs traditional Carnival poetics by refusing the certainly of a clear separation between narrative worlds. Despite ending in triumph, however, Tan-Tan again does not enjoy hearing this story, drawing attention to Carnival's aesthetic limitations. While embracing uncertainty allows for a more productive dialogue between narrative worlds—specifically, Tan-Tan confronts rather than denies her trauma—by necessity "Tan-Tan and Dry Bone" ends without resolution. Still seeking to cleanse her soul, Tan-Tan decides, "Maybe she would even go find this Papa Bois, oi?" (212). While Dry Bone dies, the text's continued references to him suggest that this event—as well as the trauma it represents—lingers unresolved even after its end. Moreover, while Tan-Tan employs the Carnival principles of performance and storytelling to defeat Dry Bone, she also solves her problem through violence, suggesting that her use of Carnival poetics still requires revision. Thus, while "Tan-Tan and Dry Bone" successfully shifts the anansi stories' world model from a colonial to Carnival temporal framework, it carries over the poetics' problems of violence and irresolution.

Unlike previous anansi stories, which could be dismissed as dreams or metaphor, the final one, "Tan-Tan and the Rolling Calf," establishes an undeniable continuity with the primary diegesis, finally adopting a science fictional temporality. The narrative begins, however, with the uncertain temporality, "One time…" (290). Refusing to

integrate the story with the previous narrative events, Granny Nanny explicitly introduces the tale as an anansi story, creating the expectation of another fable divorced from the reality of the primary diegesis. In the story, Tan-Tan saves a baby rolling calf after an encounter with a woman, Sadie, who fears her reputation. While the narrative frames this scene as an anansi story both textually and through the narration, the transition back into the primary diegesis lacks the clear divisions of the previous examples. Indeed, after the transition, the text implies temporal continuity a few weeks later: "Yes, the rolling calf pup had overnight eaten every leaf in a six-metre circle…" "In the weeks since Tan-Tan and Tefa had been looking after the pup, she had grown quickly" (296). While the first anansi story explicitly separates itself from the primary diegesis, and the second creates a sense of ontological uncertainty, the third clearly establishes temporal continuity as an example of metalepsis, suggesting that the narrative worlds share the same ontological space. Significantly, the text does not merge these diegetic levels or collapse their differences. Rather, through Hopkinson's careful progression, now the anansi stories constitute a separate narrative world existing contemporaneously with the primary diegesis, allowing for meaningful contact and continuity between them. This revised world model employs a science fictional Carnival poetics which joins Carnival's principles of contingency, fluidity, and play with a science fictional continuity of experience.

Hopkinson's science fictionalization of Carnival through the novel's form addresses both the problems inherent in the festival's historical development and acts as a response to the crisis of modernity. Unlike "Tan-Tan and Dry Bone," which ends in death, "Tan-Tan and the Rolling Calf" is a story about the preservation of life. Rejecting

the prevalence of violence in Carnival practices, "Tan-Tan and the Rolling Calf" acts as a reminder of Tan-Tan's responsibility: "'When you take one life, you must give back two'" (174). Saving the rolling calf baby allows Tan-Tan to work out this problem in a mythic space, and yet this narrative world—and Carnival aesthetics themselves—do not dissolve by its end. Rather, this temporal continuity allows Tan-Tan to preserve this experience within the primary diegesis, anticipating and preparing her for her narrative resolution. Finally, Hopkinson locates a representational strategy to extend Carnival time's conditions beyond the temporal limits of the festival, allowing for the possibility of building new subjectivities. By representing this transition from colonialism to traditional Carnival poetics to Hopkinson's revised science fictional Carnival aesthetics through form, *Midnight Robber* stands as both an argument for and example of the necessity of constructing new world models in the age of globalization.

Science Fictionalizing Carnival Subjectivities

While *Midnight Robber*'s form demonstrates the value of a science fictional temporality, what does living within this new world model look like? Critics generally turn to the novel's ending for an example of a new Carnival-produced subjectivity. However, while Tan-Tan's son, Tubman, seems to offer a utopian solution to the crisis of modernity, the text ultimately remains skeptical of this figure's political potential. At the end of the novel, after Tan-Tan gives birth, Granny Nanny reveals to whom her narration addresses: Tan-Tan's son, Tubman. Despite the physical and ontological separation between the novel's two worlds, Granny Nanny tracked Tan-Tan across the dimension veil through her pregnancy. The novel seems to frame this revelation as positive. During

Tan-Tan's childhood, while her parents largely neglected her, as a force of protection and knowledge, Granny Nanny took on the role of her guardian. The novel's ending crystalizes this association in Tan-Tan's naming her son Tubman, after "the human bridge from slavery to freedom" (329). Critics generally reinforce this optimistic reading of Tubman as a new form of subjectivity.[327] Whether in terms of gender or technology, Tubman's fluid and hybrid identity allows him to act as a bridge between worlds, potentially uniting Toussaint and New Half-Way Tree.

While Tubman's ability to navigate between worlds seems to suggest his embodying the principle of temporal continuity, the figure advances rather than replaces Granny Nanny's hierarchical world model. Some critics acknowledge that although Tubman seems to emblematize an optimistic future, he merely offers a compromise between embodied labor and disembodied surveillance.[328] More than a mere compromise, however, the novel's ending reveals Granny Nanny's surveillance system finally colonizing Tan-Tan's embodied existence, reinforcing the ontological hierarchy between worlds. As the narrator explains, "When Granny Nanny realize how Antonio kidnap Tan-Tan, she hunt he through the dimension veils, with me [her eshu] riding she back like Dry Bone" (327). The word "hunt" forms a predator-prey relationship between Granny Nanny and Tan-Tan, revealing the eshu's sinister intent. Moreover, the eshu compares her bond with Tan-Tan to Dry Bone's riding her back. Tan-Tan's relationship with Dry Bone was entirely negative, with the former acting as slave labor for the latter. This comparison, therefore, signals a similarly exploitative relationship in which Granny Nanny extracts value from Tan-Tan. Thus, while Tan-Tan's eshu appears at the end of the novel as her savior, the language within this scene instead points to Tan-Tan's reincorporation into an

oppressive political relationship. Rather than upending the hierarchy between worlds, the ending inflates this power imbalance.

Not only does Tubman's birth extend Granny Nanny's power, but the novel's ending also exemplifies her co-opting the Marryshevites' historical and cultural traditions. While earlier, the 'Nansi Web signified the "Grande Nanotech Sentient Interface," now the acronym stands for the "Grande Anansi Nanotech Interface." (10, 328). Critics have interpreted the addition of "Anansi" as an indication of Granny Nanny's ability to change.[329] By adopting the trickster figure's persona, Granny Nanny acknowledges the value of Carnival poetics. Within the context of the passage, however, the use of "Anansi" constitutes yet another example of a hegemonic institution co-opting, and therefore nullifying, alternative cultural models. Even her name, Granny Nanny, which recalls the historical figure, Nanny of the Moors, exemplifies this strategy of incorporating cultural and historical signifiers of anti-hegemonic resistance into the very structure of hegemony. Thus, Granny Nanny's addition of "Anansi" into her name is not new, but rather continues her political strategy of retaining a fluid identity capable of accommodating local customs and traditions. Read in this context, Tubman's fluid and hybrid identity does not challenge the established order, but rather strengthens Granny Nanny by extending her power across worlds. Thus, while Tubman offers a potentially utopian solution by building a new fluid and hybrid subjectivity capable of navigating between temporal scales, the novel undercuts this optimism by acknowledging that this solution only bolsters Granny Nanny's power and the hegemonic world model she represents.

While Tubman ultimately fails to challenge Granny Nanny's world model, Tan-Tan's revised Robber Queen character best demonstrates how Hopkinson uses a science fictional Carnival poetics to build new sustainable subjectivities. Tan-Tan's revision of Carnival aesthetics through her gendered inversion of the Midnight Robber, rejection of violence, and incorporation of a science fictional temporal framework endow Carnival with the capacity to renew its political value under globalization. While Tan-Tan is fascinated by Carnival traditions, when her mother gives her a Robber Queen costume, her eshu tells her, "'Time was, is only men used to play the Robber King masque'" (28). When Tan-Tan questions why, her eshu responds, "'Earth was like that for a long time. Men could only do some things, and women could only do others. In the beginning of Carnival, the early centuries, Midnight Robbers was always men. Except for the woman who take the name Belle Starr, the same name as a cowgirl performer from America. The Trini Belle Starr made she own costume and she uses to play Midnight Robber'" (29). In this passage, Tan-Tan's eshu demonstrates the restrictive gender roles on which Carnival's colonial origins base themselves. However, the passage also shows how privileging contingency arms Carnival with the ability to change. As a female version of the Midnight Robber, the Robber Queen character provides Tan-Tan with a model to critique Carnival's gender politics while remaining firmly within the tradition. Later, after Ione invokes the Midnight Robber's name to scare Tan-Tan into obedience, she instead reacts in defiance: "The Midnight Robber, the downpressor, the stealer-away of small children who make too much mischief. The man with the golden wooing tongue. She would show him. She would be scarier than him. She would be Robber Queen" (48). Notably, Tan-Tan does not vow to subvert the Midnight Robber's persona, as Carnival

poetics usually operate. Rather, she adopts the Midnight King's attributes, including intimidation and playful language, as a model for her Robber Queen character. Thus, Tan-Tan seeks to outdo rather than undo the Midnight King as a symbol for both Carnival's problems and possibilities. While this approach later exhausts its potential, at this point in the narrative the Robber Queen allows Tan-Tan to honor Carnival's traditions and critique its problems.

The Robber Queen allows Tan-Tan to subvert and revise a traditionally male character, but initially her gender reversal does not challenge the gender binary itself. In fact, along with the Midnight Robber character, Tan-Tan adopts the same reputation values, in particular violence, which led to Antonio's and Quashee's downfall. Later in the novel, Janisette confronts Tan-Tan with a gun, shooting one of the douen, Gladys. Tan-Tan reacts in anger: "A rage came on her, a fire in she belly. She forgot fear, forgot reason" (270). As a result of her anger, and Janisette's accusations of Tan-Tan as a slut and murderess, Tan-Tan attempts to shoot her with a rifle. The text notes, "with a surge of joy she pulled the trigger, *blam!* just as Chichibud's clawed hand forced the rifle down towards the ground" (271). In this example, Tan-Tan takes pleasure in the idea of doing violence to Janisette. While Tan-Tan immediately feels guilty for attempting to kill her stepmother, calling herself a monster, this passage demonstrates the dangers of the Robber Queen character's use of traditional Carnival poetics. In modeling the Robber Queen as a more powerful version of the Midnight Robber, Tan-Tan perpetuates colonialist reputation values. Janisette, meanwhile, invokes respectability values by casting Tan-Tan as the sexually promiscuous aggressor rather than the victim. This scene, therefore, marks an important limitation to the Robber Queen. Despite the character's

potential to subvert the established order, the Robber Queen inherits the Midnight Robber's penchant for masculine violence, and thus the reinforcement of colonial ideology.

Not only does the Robber Queen reinforce colonial values, but as a product of colonialism the character soon becomes a symptom of rather than a response to the crisis of modernity. When Tan-Tan confronts a woman mistreating her son, the text intercuts Tan-Tan beating her with memories of her father's rape. The text reads, "Is like a spirit take her. A vengeance had come upon here, it was shining out from her eyes strong as justice" (244). Structurally, then, Tan-Tan displaces her desire to confront and resolve her father's injustice onto this woman, who is available to be punished. While inhabiting the past and present worlds simultaneously empowers Tan-Tan, she is unable to commit fully to revenge. As she beats the woman, she remembers her father's violence—"*Please Daddy, don't hit me no more.*"—and immediately, "just so, anger left Tan-Tan" (244). Although Tan-Tan strives to outdo the Midnight King's violence and intimidation, early on she encounters an unwillingness to commit fully to this goal. Rather, as a crisis of modernity, the interaction between Tan-Tan's two worlds leaves Tan-Tan momentarily paralyzed and without a solution to reconcile them.

In these passages, then, Tan-Tan's Robber Queen acts as a safety valve for life's hardships. Rather than addressing personal or societal trauma, her Carnival character either offers a temporary release from or even perpetuates the crisis of modernity. To unlock the Robber Queen's worldmaking potential, Tan-Tan must address Carnival's entrenchment in colonial structures through its treatment of violence. Tan-Tan does not accomplish this until the end of the novel, during her final confrontation with Janisette.

While in their last encounter Tan-Tan almost loses control of herself, overcome by anger and grief, here she acts out of self-defense. Motivated by the desire to protect her future child, Tan-Tan evades Janisette's grasp (319). The text prompts an expectation for violence—"power coursed through Tan-Tan, the Robber Queen's power"—only to qualify the sentence with "the power of words," thus rejecting violence. Rather, for the Robber Queen, performance and speech serve as more appropriate weapons to effect meaningful change. As a "woman-of-words," the Robber Queen successfully inspires change and makes herself visible through language rather than violence (246). Whereas Tan-Tan's gendered inversion of the respectability-reputation binary supports colonial ideology, her turn to performative speech, as she channels her creole identity through language, offers an alternative that remains consistent with Carnival poetics.

Despite this progress, Tan-Tan's reliance on Robber speech symptomizes her trauma in response to the crisis of modernity. After witnessing a woman mistreating her son, while Tan-Tan successfully uses performative speech to resolve the conflict, the text reminds the reader of her problem of identity: "She was, *somebody* was speaking out loud. Words welled up in the somebody's mouth like water. Somebody spoke her words the way Carnival Robber Kings wove their tales, talking as much nonsense as sense, fancy words spinning out of their mouths like thread from a spider's behind: silken shit as strong as story" (245). Despite her rhetorical skill, Tan-Tan attributes responsibility to the Robber Queen rather than herself, while using the Carnival character to absorb the guilt and trauma she refuses to confront.[330] Indeed, as the text notes, "And for once, Bad Tan-Tan was quiet" (246). While suppressing Bad Tan-Tan seems positive, her continued reliance on the Good-Bad Tan-Tan dichotomy symptomizes her inability to resolve the

crisis of modernity. Tan-Tan's unwillingness to talk about the Robber Queen with Melonhead supports this assertion: "No words to speak about Tan-Tan the Robber Queen. That was another self, another dimension" (311). As an extension of Carnival's practice of performative storytelling and linguistic hybridity, the Robber Queen succeeds in making visible her identity, but at the same time Tan-Tan remains shackled by the crisis which produced this subjectivity.

In addition to the Robber Queen's storytelling prowess intensifying Tan-Tan's split identity, her reliance on mythmaking exaggerates rather than reconciles the divide between her two worlds. As the text notes, "What a thing those Tan-Tan stories had become, oui! Canto and cariso, crick-crack Anansi back; they had grown out of her and had become more than her" (299). In other words, Tan-Tan's Robber Queen character exceeds the bounds of her individual control, becoming a communal experience. The text continues, "People loved them [anansi stories] so, there must be something to them, ain't? Something hard, solid thing other people could see in her; something she could hear and know about herself and hold in her heart. *Know you is a no-good waste of space*" (299). While as a social product the Robber Queen could empower Tan-Tan, instead this character only contributes to Tan-Tan's guilt, reminding her of her lack of agency. As an example of Carnival as a worldmaking practice, the Robber Queen offers Tan-Tan an alternative ontological framework which may or may not conform to reality, but nevertheless provides value through mythic storytelling. As a product of the crisis of modernity, however, the Robber Queen leaves Tan-Tan without a resolution to her pain and trauma.

To make performative speech a useful counter to the crisis of modernity, Tan-Tan must address the character's inherent liminal occupation between worlds. In other words, Tan-Tan must respond to the crisis of her conflicting position between temporalities. During Carnival in New Half-Way Tree, after a performance with the Midnight Robber in which she again delivers her mythologized origin story, "Tan-Tan blinked to find herself just a woman in a costume once more" (317). Whereas earlier Tan-Tan's split identity served as a source of confusion, now she begins to understand how to differentiate between her two selves. In recognizing the Robber Queen as a performance, Tan-Tan starts to reclaim the character as more than just a symptom of her trauma, but now as a source of empowerment. Importantly, Tan-Tan does not reject the Robber Queen as inauthentic or hierarchically inferior. Rather, becoming aware of the boundaries between her two selves and worlds, and establishing a sense of continuity between them, puts Tan-Tan in a position to claim a sense of agency.

By joining her two identities within a continuous ontological space, while preserving their differences, Tan-Tan renews Carnival poetics toward productive ends. The text affords her the opportunity to exert this agency through Robber speech after Janisette arrives. Whereas earlier Tan-Tan's mythic origin story largely acts as an escapist fantasy, in this encounter she incorporates her own experiences through a creole dialect into her epic narrative:

> *Her beauteous mother,*
> *Was another,*
> *Not this Janisette with she fury-wet lips and she*
> *vengeance.*
> *Tan-Tan Mamee Ione, the lovely; Tan-Tan woulda do*
> *Anything to please she,*
> *But she wasn't easy.*
> *Her pappy,*

Was never happy with all he had oui?
He kill a man on Toussaint, leave he family to wail,
Then he grab his little girl and flee through plenty
dimension veil
And bring her here, to this bitter backawall nowhere.
People, she was seven.
Them say the Robber Queen climb the everliving tree.
I tell you, that little girl was me. (322)

In Tan-Tan's Robber speech, she carefully begins describing her experiences in the third person ("*Her beauteous mother*"), retaining the separation between identities. However, whereas earlier the Robber Queen's mythic origins differ significantly from Tan-Tan's traumatic past, now she incorporates true events into her Robber speech, including her exile. Retaining the generic style of this poetic form, Tan-Tan does not collapse her two identities into a single self, but rather navigates productively between them. In the last sentence, when Tan-Tan reveals her identity, her statement, "I tell you, that little girl *was* me," frames her identity crisis as a temporal conflict between her past and present self (322, emphasis mine). Dispensing with the metaphorical language which defines the earlier anansi stories and Robber speech, Tan-Tan makes explicit the connections between her two identities. No longer simply allegorizing Tan-Tan's trauma as a part of the distant past or the nebulous time of the "everliving tree," the Robber Queen now asserts her place in the present. As a result, Tan-Tan successfully defends herself, and even convinces Janisette of her innocence. In this moment of self-recognition, Tan-Tan proclaims a productive and seamless connection between these two identities and temporalities through her present embodied existence.

Tan-Tan's strategic use of her two selves and worlds constitutes a radical reorientation of the condition of the crisis of modernity. Rather than restricting Carnival poetics to Carnival time, adopting a science fictional temporality extends this practice

into ordinary time. Before Tan-Tan reveals the truth about her pregnancy, the text reads: "Could the Robber tell the rest? Rough with emotion, her cracked voice came out in two registers simultaneously. Tan-Tan the Robber Queen, the good and the bad, regarded Janisette with a regal gaze and spoke" (325). In this scene, Tan-Tan seems to succumb to the imposition of multiple temporalities upon the subject. Precisely by attuning herself to these conditions, however, does Tan-Tan begin to emerge from them. Unlike in previous examples when Tan-Tan attributes her Robber speech to a second voice, suppressing her own, here both aspects of her identity operate *simultaneously*, regardless of conflict. Mirroring the noel's use of metalepsis to establish a flat ontology between narrative worlds, Tan-Tan establishes a dynamic connection between her two separate identities. In contrast to Granny Nanny's world model, which imposes conflicting temporalities upon the subject as a hierarchical form of ontological control, Tan-Tan adopts a science fictional temporality in which her two worlds exist continuously in a flat ontology, allowing for meaningful contact between them. Embracing both the good and bad aspects of herself, Tan-Tan finds the courage to face Janisette. Whereas previously she sought to suppress the "Bad Tan-Tan," now she learns to celebrate both aspects of her conflicting identity. The text reinforces this later, when Tan-Tan "stood in the rain of money, just being Tan-Tan, sometimes good, sometimes bad, mostly just getting by like everybody else" (326).[331] In preserving and making visible all aspects of her selfhood, regardless of contradiction, Tan-Tan successfully builds a new subjectivity capable of thriving under the conditions of the crisis of modernity.

In terms of the conditions of Tan-Tan's new subjectivity, Hopkinson preserves Carnival's contingent world model while shifting its temporal coordinates to the present.

Doing so allows the subject to carry over the principles of Carnival poetics into ordinary time, forming a dynamic and productive dialogue between temporalities. In the above passage, the simultaneity of Tan-Tan's voices signals a rejection of dominant world models' temporal separation. Keeping consistent with Carnival's contingent world model, Tan-Tan preserves the differences between her two selves—each representing a different world—while shifting them to the same temporal plane. After admitting the truth, Tan-Tan declares, "'For the first time, I defend myself, Janisette'" (325). Through the construction of her new subjectivity, Tan-Tan assuages her guilt, while forcing Janisette to confront her own complicity in Antonio's death and Tan-Tan's suffering (326). Tan-Tan accomplishes this by insisting upon a continuity of experience that does not allow anyone, even Janisette, the comfort of a separate ontological zone. As the answer to critics' call to extend Carnival principles beyond the festival itself, Tan-Tan's revised Carnival poetics allow for precisely this flow between worlds. Utilizing both Tan-Tan's experiences and the Robber Queen's weaponizing of language, she successfully renews Carnival poetics toward productive ends.

Having finally reconciled the conflict between her two identities, Tan-Tan's building a new subjectivity provides a model for those living under the crisis of modernity. Tan-Tan seems to follow Antonio's advice, as they flee Toussaint, "'You ever hear people say the only way out is through?'" (71). Rather than replacing or resisting the crisis of modernity, Tan-Tan builds a new subjectivity within and through its conditions. However, while Antonio follows this principle to escape his problems, Tan-Tan confronts them. Rejecting the idea of a utopian solution to the crisis of modernity, Hopkinson insists that any new subjectivity must contend with the immanent conditions of the crisis

itself; that is, rather than searching for a solution outside existing world models, one should work their way to a more productive world model from within. Hopkinson's revised science fictional Carnival poetics incorporates a temporal dimension of continuity which reorients the subject from an object of exploitation into an active agent capable of making productive change.

Mirroring Tan-Tan's building a new sustainable subjectivity, Trinidad's Carnival has similarly undergone a transformation in the last few decades. With Carnival's migration across the globe, as well as the festival's recognition as a marker of Trinidadian identity, globalization does not only limit the formation of postcolonial identities, but opens up the possibility for new ones to emerge. As a curious consequence of Carnival's commercial and cultural power, younger female masqueraders have more recently undertaken influential roles within Trinidad's and New York's Carnivals. As Scher notes, these younger masqueraders, predominantly women of color, show no interest in reviving older Carnival characters and traditions as commodities in a global market because they "have no relevance to their contemporary experiences and do not even have nostalgic value."[332] Unlike older figures such as Fuzzy Davis, these masqueraders appear unaffected by the cultural, economic, and political pressures of the crisis of modernity. As the "heart of the mas'," these women primarily organize and manage the lime, or the party. In influencing the start and end times of the parade, as well as the network of social relations surrounding the festival, these masqueraders find ways to subvert the state's commercializing tactics, often by disrupting the "official geography of the festival."[333] Indeed, despite outcries of their destroying the festival, these figures most visibly adopt Carnival's contingent temporality. Their emphasis on the lime,

including the unruly and spontaneous power of social relations, demonstrates the way Carnival operates through a contingent temporality based on human perception.

In addition to contingency, however, the younger masqueraders' concern with the contemporary, rather than the past or imagined future, also demonstrates their adoption of a continuous temporality; that is, they do not imagine themselves as nostalgic relics of the past or tourist attractions for the future global economy, but rather as an ongoing part of the present. Of course, these masqueraders only have the opportunity to overcome the crisis of modernity due to Carnival's success within the global market, demonstrating that economic pressures remain as relevant as ever. Even given this limitation, however, this example demonstrates one possible way for the postcolonial subject to build new subjectivities. Rather than attempting to turn back the clock to a nostalgic past or speed up to an inevitable capitalist future, the subject attunes herself to the material conditions of the present, including the cultural and economic power of the lime. In doing so, the younger female masqueraders empower themselves and insist on the Caribbean's possession of a world. Indeed, as *Midnight Robber* suggests, the only way out is through.

Despite this political potential, the ending to *Midnight Robber* acts as a reminder that adopting the logic of "the only way out is through" also foregoes the possibility of revolutionary change. The revelation that Granny Nanny has succeeded in spreading to New Half-Way Tree through Tan-Tan's unborn child suggests that the ontological separation between worlds provides an obstacle only to the subject, while hegemonic structures are capable of flowing freely between them. Thus, while Tubman is "the human bridge from slavery to freedom," this bridge is only available to Granny Nanny. Those in New Half-Way Tree remain without a mode of travel to Toussaint, while only

those who face punishment or desperation may journey from Toussaint to New Half-Way Tree. The novel's ending therefore provides a sobering warning that while Hopkinson builds a world model for living productively under the crisis of modernity, importantly she does not—and cannot—undo the conditions of the crisis itself. Despite this, the novel's renewed version of Carnival poetics allows for a future response to this new development. Having fought for a degree of agency through a new world model based on the principles of contingency and continuity, Tan-Tan is in a position to address these changes. The novel's ending is therefore a reminder of the endless flexibility of hegemonic world models, and of the necessity to continue to adapt one's aesthetic and political strategies in response to global conditions.

Chapter 4: The Crisis of Unknowability and the Galaxy in Samuel R. Delany's *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*

Introduction

After surviving a planetary catastrophe in Samuel R. Delany's space opera, *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* (1984), Rat Korga dismisses his loss, saying, "'All that's gone? Is that all? . . . Now I'm not as frightened as I was" (162).[334] However, after equipping himself with technology to compensate for neural "jamming" impairing his free will, Rat seems to understand his loss more fully: "'I had a world. But it is as true to say I never had a world. You have given me . . . possibility of a world? What world will you give me?" (164). After recovering his cognitive abilities, Rat finally understands the experience of losing a world. On his planet, Rhyonon, Rat lived as a slave with his cognitive reasoning technologically impaired, limiting his ability to imagine belonging to a world. Now that he cognitively registers what it means to possess a world, Rat requests a new one. This passage therefore seems to suggest that despite the planetary scale's immensity and complexity, the subject can apprehend its meaning through cognitive reasoning and intuition.

Despite becoming aware of the importance of worlds, however, Rat's language suggests an inability to comprehend their complexity. After making his plea, Rat turns his request into a demand: "'. . . now you *must* give me a world. Or I may take ten, thirty, or a hundred. And then what would you do with me?" (164). A world implies both the immensity of a physical planet as well as complex interconnections between its people, cultures, environments, and technologies. Therefore, while on a human scale a demand such as "give me a drink" seems commonplace, the demand "give me a world" implies

access to and mastery of the totality of signs and physical materials which comprise entire planets. Intensifying the absurdity of his demand for a world, Rat says he "may take ten, thirty, or a hundred." Because the concept of taking a world already transcends everyday experience, taking ten, thirty, or a hundred appears just as reasonable. Due to this absurd juxtaposition between scales, two characters, Marta and Japril, dismiss the demand as a sign of Rat's developing language skills. Thus, despite Rat's grasping his absence of a world, the text implies his lack of comprehending the complexity of this loss or worlds themselves.

While *Stars* concerns itself with humanity's cognitive limitations, however, this passage also highlights our yearning to draw meaning from large-scale objects despite their incommensurability with human experience. Because planets far out-scale humans, they appear to us as unknowable; that is, while Rat grasps the importance of having a world, the overwhelming immensity and complexity of these large-scale objects exceed the capacity of human knowledge. Marxist critic Fredric Jameson refers to this epistemological issue as the "unknowability thesis," which asserts the impossibility of understanding the radical Other. Referencing Stanislaw Lem's science fiction novel, *Solaris* (1961), Jameson states that "in imagining ourselves to be attempting contact with the radically Other, we are in reality merely looking in a mirror and 'searching for an ideal image of our world.'"[335] In other words, the unknowability thesis forecloses the possibility of escaping anthropocentrism.[336] While Lem resigns himself to anthropocentrism, *Stars* seeks a meaningful relationship with the other while maintaining their unknowability. Thus, rather than retreating into existential isolation, *Stars* embraces differences in race, gender, sexuality, and even species. To represent the galaxy as a

cultural touchstone for unknowability, Delany must therefore reconcile its absolute otherness with his political goal of empathizing with the other.

Unlike the city, nation-state, and world, the galaxy is far removed from daily experience, and therefore seems least relevant to a study of globalization. While representations of the galaxy have long been imagined in science fiction, currently human civilization resides only on Earth, and our exploration of the Milky Way remains limited by constraints of technology and its enormous scale. Although a thorough exploration of the galaxy currently exists only in fiction, through critical and popular discourses on anthropogenic climate change, nuclear power, and global biodiversity, we have recently come to see our species as a geologic force and the planet as a human-dominated space.[337] Therefore, while humanity currently remains limited in its galactic footprint, as our species expands its spatial presence and influence, fiction becomes a vital tool for registering our changing understanding of the universe, while imagining new ways of forming relationships with it.

Under the crisis of scale, humanity is rethinking not only its relation to the planet, but its relation to the cosmos, as well. The term cosmopolitanism, which translates to "citizen of the world," derives from the Greek *kosmos,* or cosmos. Thus, the universalizing tendency under cosmopolitanism to imagine a common humanity is cosmic at its root. Similarly, efforts to conceive of the cosmic scale often draw from the language of cosmopolitanism. For example, the short film shown at the American Museum of Natural History, *Passport to the Universe* (2005), compares humanity's growing awareness of the universe to the freedom of international travel. In "revealing wonders never before visible," actor Tom Hanks narrates, "we are becoming citizens of

the cosmos."[338] The idea of being a citizen of the galaxy, or developing a political affiliation with billions of lifeless stars, seems as absurd as Rat Korga's demand for a world. However, the cosmic scale draws out the problem of representing immensity latent on a planetary scale.

While reconciling our own influence on a planet that vastly out-scales us defines the problem of the Anthropocene, on a galactic scale we encounter the impossibility of comprehending the totality of information contained within it. Thus, while the galactic scale may borrow from cosmopolitanism a desire to escape the confines of the nation-state, to travel, and to return home with greater knowledge, the experience of the "cosmic citizen" is unique in encountering a crisis of unknowability; that is, the absolute otherness of the universe impedes the development of a meaningful relationship with it. Thus, while the term "citizen of the galaxy" sounds purposeful, it only draws attention to humanity's deep anxiety in response to the concept of unknowability. In fact, despite its publication sixteen years earlier, *Stars* offers a critique of Nalo Hopkinson's representation of the world scale in *Midnight Robber*. While Hopkinson includes Toussaint and New Half-Way Tree as physical planets, *Midnight Robber* is far more interested in these worlds as political units with cohesive and consistent identities. Conversely, Delany takes on a galactic perspective, exposing worlds as exceeding the scope of human understanding. Rejecting the impulse to scale down the galaxy to a human perspective, Delany seeks out a representational style which captures the immensity and complexity of the galactic scale.

Delany represents the galaxy through the form of the space opera, a subgenre of science fiction which emerged in the 1920s and 1930s. While space operas contain the

trappings of science fiction, such as ray guns and spaceships, critic Darko Suvin dismissed the genre for its lack of investment in cognition, referring to it as a Western set in space."[339] Traditional space opera adopts an aesthetic of "pulpy romantic displacement" and the "heady escapist stuff," or in other words a desire for adventure without discomfort.[340] While spaces operas operate through a high degree of unpredictability, the genre treats galactic space as commensurate with human experience, and represents the galactic scale as a knowable object. For this reason, despite the genre's non-mimetic setting and subject matter, its attitude toward representation draws from the realist tradition. Writing in the 1980s, Delany therefore critiques the traditional space opera's realist lens, while rejuvenating the genre through the aesthetics of postmodernism and the New Wave in science fiction. Rejecting any realist attempt to represent unknowable objects like the galaxy, Delany's cognitive space opera privileges difference and desire as fundamental to meaning-making. By responding to cultural discourses about the galaxy, *Stars* defines the galactic citizen as one who locates meaning through a political relationship with unknowability.

Set in the distant future when humans have spread across the galaxy, *Stars* follows Marq Dyeth, an "industrial diplomat" who manages cultural and technological exchanges between planets and species, and Rat Korga, the only survivor of a Cultural Fugue, a planet-destroying phenomenon with inexplicable causes. Beginning with this event, the novel tracks Rat's rescue from Rhyonon and their trip to Marq's home-world, Velm, where they form a sexual relationship, hunt dragons, and attend a formal dinner party. Throughout the novel, Marq and Rat must reconcile their own experiences with the incredible diversity, complexity, and immensity of the galaxy, which includes over six

thousand two hundred inhabited worlds (68). Indeed, as critic Carl Freedman argues, *Stars* is "one of the *biggest* books you have ever encountered," not in length, but in its focus on radical diversity on a galactic scale (xii). At both a personal and galactic scale, *Stars* confronts the crisis of unknowability and the question of what it means to be a citizen of the galaxy.

While Delany's cognitive space opera critiques realist space operas of the 1920s and 1930s, his representational strategy offers a model for critiquing any realist approach to unknowability. At the time of *Stars*' publication in 1984, the crisis of unknowability reached a critical point within mainstream culture. Popular attempts to bridge the epistemological divide between humanity and the universe, such as astronomer Carl Sagan's television series, *Cosmos* (1980), seek to reorient humanity in a universe that vastly outscales us. Along with fictional works such as Stanley Kubrick's film, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and Carl Sagan's novel, *Contact* (1985), cultural imaginings of the cosmos during this era often form a causal link between human cognition and the wonders of the universe. In doing so, such works overcome the problem of the galaxy's unknowability by generating a sense of sublime awe in response to human technological achievements. Reducing the unknowability thesis to an obstacle to humanity's epistemological dominion over the universe, this cultural tradition draws from the space opera in its realist approach to objects which resist representation.

The impulse to approach the crisis of unknowability from a realist perspective has not waned since *Stars'* publication, but has only spread through cultural and philosophical discourses. For example, a branch of philosophy known as object-oriented ontology addresses this problem from a realist perspective.[341] Object-oriented ontologists

seek what Levi R. Bryant calls a flat ontology, which treats the subject like any other object. In recognizing the autonomy of objects outside of their relations to humans or nonhumans, object-oriented ontology argues for a "context-free" understanding of objects, meaning that they cannot be reduced to their relations to other objects.[342] By invoking the tropes of early space opera, however, object-oriented ontology casts itself as a version of realist science fiction in the critical field. In doing so, the philosophical discourse inadvertently makes itself an object of critique for Delany's science fiction, thus revealing the dangerous political consequences of a "context-free" philosophy. Unlike realism, science fiction does not treat the unknowability thesis as an obstacle to representation, but rather embraces postmodern difference as the basis for meaning-making.

To make the case for the galactic citizen's political relationship with unknowability, I first analyze the history of the unknowability thesis within cosmological and cultural discourses through the 1980s, and define the crisis of unknowability as the realist treatment of otherness as an obstacle to meaning-making. I then provide an overview of the space opera tradition while tracking Delany's critique and renewal of the genre through New Wave aesthetics of cognition and self-reflexivity, as well as postmodern difference. At this point, I provide several readings of Delany's *Stars*, which responds to the crisis of unknowability through a political engagement with otherness. As a model citizen of the galaxy, Marq Dyeth rejects normative conceptions of selfhood, favoring instead desire for the radical other. I conclude by discussing the speculative turn in philosophy as a modern form of realist science fiction in the critical field, and

demonstrate the way Delany's cognitive space opera critiques the political dangers of any realist approach to unknowability.

The Science Fictional Sublime and the Crisis of Unknowability

While the unknowability thesis has persisted within cosmological and cultural discourses through the present, the tension between unknowability and scientific positivism took new form during the 1980s. Cultural representations of the galaxy attempted to resolve this tension through the aesthetic of the science fictional sublime, which generates a sense of awe in response to the universe's unknowability through a positivist, scientific pursuit of knowledge. Rather than forming a meaningful connection with the radical other, however, this combination of scientific optimism and religious awe paradoxically aggrandizes the self and alienates the other. In widening the representational gap between self and other, the science fictional sublime endures in the present as a crisis of unknowability for the subject.

Delany's *Stars* registers scientific and cultural debates about humanity's capacity to apprehend the universe. For example, the novel introduces the idea of "fuzzy-edged concepts" whose enormous scales make certainty impossible. As Marq observes, with "six thousand two hundred inhabited worlds with human populations over two hundred and under five billion, 'population' itself becomes a fuzzy-edged concept" due to the inexactness of birth and death rates and legal distinctions of personhood (68). Thus, while locally population seems quantifiable, on a galactic scale this concept loses its definitional certainty and becomes impossible to calculate objectively. As another example, while Clym explains the world Rhyonon, Marq "thought, as I always do when

someone begins that way about a world: what can you say that's not contradicted or obliterated by any continental plate, geosector, county, horizon-to-horizon bit of beauty, monotony, or horror?" (68). Similar to population, the scale of the galaxy makes any categorical statement about what constitutes a world impossible, since exceptions always exist. Thus, by deconstructing the objectivity of any apparently fixed phenomenon, fuzzy-edged concepts present themselves as unknowable. While objects such as worlds and Cultural Fugue lend themselves to endless epistemological study and analysis, on a galactic scale their unknowability registers as a fundamental property. Thus, *Stars* transforms unknowability from an epistemological problem to an ontological problem.

By framing knowledge-production as an ontological issue, Delany draws attention to the way the galactic scale inhabits a qualitatively different mode of being than ordinary existence. Supporting this, in *Stars*, the immensity and complexity of the galaxy do not simply pose philosophical problems, but result in material catastrophes due to the possibility of Cultural Fugue, or the process by which "the socioeconomic pressures reach a point of technological recomplication and perturbation where the population completely destroys all life across the planetary surface" (66). Thus, while in reality globalization metaphorically destroys worlds at a local scale, these same socioeconomic and technological forces literally destroy worlds at the scale of the galaxy. Appropriately, however, because no singular explanation for Cultural Fugue exists, the phenomenon itself becomes another "fuzzy-edged concept" whose true nature remains indeterminate.[343] While concepts like population and worlds also allow for epistemological study and knowledge-gathering, on immense scales they set ontological limits to their knowability. By transforming the unknowability thesis from an

epistemological to an ontological issue, *Stars* sets firm limits to humanity's capacity to know, while asserting that on a galactic scale some phenomena elude comprehension.

Delany's inclusion of "fuzzy-edged concepts" as ontologically unknowable phenomena draws from historical accounts of cosmological objects and spaces within the scientific community. Even with historical cosmological discoveries prior to the twentieth century, a narrative persisted in which major cosmologists attributed gaps in knowledge to the universe as an absolute principle, rather than to limitations in humanity's technology and cognitive abilities.[344] For example, in the eighteenth century, astronomer William Herschel provided groundwork for the persistence of the galaxy's unknowability narrative into the twentieth century, beginning the "construction of the heavens" by conceiving of the Milky Way as a stratum of stars in motion.[345] Herschel wrote that "[T]he utmost stretch of the space-penetrating power of the 20 feet telescope could not fathom the Profundity of the milky way, and the stars which were beyond its reach must have been farther from us than the 900^{dth} order of distances."[346] Similarly, Herschel's diagram of the "Unfathomable" Milky Way expresses not only the limitations of humanity to observe the cosmos, but the resistance of the cosmos to human observation. Despite providing the first observational evidence for the existence of multiple galaxies, for Herschel, the imagined scale of the Milky Way limits knowability. In the mid-nineteenth century, astronomer William Struve echoes this notion of the Milky Way's unknowability by repeating Herschel's depiction of the universe as "fathomless," in which the best telescopes could not probe the depths of the universe, even claiming that "space is permeated with some absorbing material that diminishes our view of the universe."[347] Thus, even in the mid-nineteenth century, when the growing importance of

photography and the work done by Herschel and Struve spurred speculation of the galaxy as a concrete object with observable dimensions and properties, the Milky Way's unknowability narrative persisted.

Through *Stars,* Delany reflects cosmological attitudes toward the galaxy as an unknowable object, as well as cultural anxieties about the cosmic scale during the 1980s. While *Stars* features a number of "fuzzy-edged concepts" whose ontology eludes knowability, the novel also represents human attempts to make these phenomena familiar. For example, while trying to communicate his sense of loss after his separation from Rat, Marq recollects a memory of a childhood alien encounter. Climbing a wall, Marq "suddenly saw a brownish stalk, on the end of which were five or six transparent globes, packed and backed with dim foil, each of them folded within dark membranes, which closed and opened, now over one, now over another, so that—I suddenly realized—I was gazing at an alien gazing at an alien gaze" (393). In this passage, Marq lists his observations before realizing that these details do not simply arise from his own perspective. Instead, for Marq, observing the alien as a symbol for the abstract other also involves observing himself from the other's point of view. Marq recognizes that "the reality struck me in that complex a set of terms," as well as the dialectical relationship between self and other (329). As Marq explains, this encounter motivated him to become an Industrial Diplomat and negotiate a diversity of alien identities and cultures as his profession (329). Thus, rather than viewing the other as unknowable, Marq self-reflectively inhabits both his and the alien's perspective. In doing so, Marq bridges the gap between the familiar and unfamiliar, responding to the unknowability thesis through radical empathy with the other.

Despite the productive impact of Marq's strategy for confronting the other, his memory also expresses the ontological limitations of interpreting the self-other binary as a dialectical relationship. At two other points in the novel, the text notes that "the alien is always constructed out of the familiar" (133, 184). Thus, any effort to make the other knowable only reveals aspects of the self. While Marq indeed expresses a desire to form a meaningful relationship with the alien other, his strategy therefore limits him to an exploration of selfhood. Consequently, his encounter grants him a reflection of his own career ambitions rather than an effort to more fully inhabit the alien's point of view. Similar to Jameson's analysis of Lem, Marq's alien encounter falls into the trap of anthropocentrism. As an alternative form of unknowability, the text introduces the Xlv, the only species besides humans to develop interstellar travel. Unlike Marq's memory of the alien, the Xlv appear resistant to knowability, disrupting the self-other dialectical. Marq notes that "the Xlv are truly alien," "*no one* has managed to establish any firm communication with" them, and later calls the Xlv "a complete question mark" (87, 130). While Marq tries to explain the unique cultures, modes of communication and thought, and physiologies of other species, he treats the Xlv as unknowable. Appropriately, in several instances the text links the Xlv with Cultural Fugue, treating each as a possible culprit for Rhyonon's destruction (87).[348] By connecting the Xlv with Cultural Fugue, the texts further categorizes the species as unknowable. Despite Marq's efforts to draw meaningful connections with the other, the Xlv exposes his strategy as incapable of confronting the truly alien, creating a sense of existential isolation. Through Marq and the Xlv, Delany acknowledges the problems of anthropocentrism and existential isolation which may make the unknowability thesis an insurmountable obstacle.

In addition to demonstrating the impossibility of viewing the other outside the lens of the self, the galactic scale disrupts the self's own perspective. For example, Marq's employer, a jellylike alien, points out that he is "not from around here," implying that "on such a cosmic scale, you couldn't possibly know what 'here' is like" (62). As an Industrial Diplomat, Marq constantly experiences unfamiliar cultures and societies, and thus finds himself in a constant state of disorientation and dislocation. On a cosmic scale, this disorientation not only disrupts his understanding of unfamiliar locations, however, but also his idea of "here." Despite this confusion, Marq insists that "after a while an ID has seen more of this sort of thing than anyone could care to, and thus his experiences prepare him for alien encounters." (62). Becoming accustomed to experiencing the unfamiliar therefore does not detract from Marq's confusion. In fact, as an Industrial Diplomat, Marq's disorientation and dislocation in response to the cosmic scale articulates the experience of unknowability. His efforts to make sense of unfamiliar environments, as well as his inability to fully know the cosmic scale with any degree of exactitude, precisely identifies how the crisis of scale manifests in the galaxy as a crisis of unknowability.

By putting in tension the subject's desire to form a connection with the alien other and the universe's absolute unknowability, *Stars* registers cultural narratives about cosmology through the 1980s. Following Edwin Hubble's famous debate with Harlow Shapely, the term "galaxy" finally came into dominant usage during the 1950s.[349] For the first time, the Milky Way was not synonymous with the word, "galaxy," and a common language existed to describe these distant stellar systems. At the same time, a number of other scientific breakthroughs, in particular, Einstein's general theory of relativity in

1915 and Hubble's discovery of the universe's expansion in 1929, significantly altered humanity's conception of the cosmos.[350] During the 1970s and 1980s, discoveries such as dark matter and dark energy both expanded our knowledge of the universe while creating new uncertainties.[351] According to historian of science Helge S. Kragh, quoting Steven Weinberg, the standard view since the 1970s was, "and presumably still is," that "the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless'"[352] Thus, even as the picture of the universe was becoming more clear, cultural narratives continued to divide human and galactic scales into separate ontological zones, emphasizing their incompatibility.[353] Whether the universe is unknowable or pointless, its order of difference from human existence registered as an epistemological, philosophical, and existential problem that continues today.

In response to this uncertainty, cultural imaginings of the unknowability thesis leading into the 1980s transformed to resolve the tension between scientific positivism and ontological unknowability. Astrophysicist and science communicator Carl Sagan's series, *Cosmos*, produced by PBS in 1980, provides a useful touchstone for cultural attitudes toward science, as well as the dialogue between scientific thinkers like Sagan and the general public. *Cosmos,* which won two Emmys and a Peabody Award and was broadcast to over 500 million people worldwide, demonstrates an interest in scientific education in television. A sequel to the series by Neil deGrasse Tyson started airing in 2014. Through a series of ten episodes, Sagan pilots the fictional "Spaceship of the Imagination" through the cosmos, as he aims to establish science not only as a legitimate but superior mode of thought. Taking on a "cosmic perspective" therefore involves

accepting science as an effective means of accessing knowledge and understanding the universe.

Sagan positions his "cosmic perspective" in reaction to anti-science rhetoric, but in doing so he ironically supports the unknowability thesis in a new form. In the episode, "Shores of the Cosmic Ocean," Sagan says,

> The size and age of the cosmos are beyond ordinary human understanding. Lost somewhere between immensity and eternity is our tiny planetary home, the Earth. For the first time, we have the power to decide the fate of our planet and ourselves. This is a time of great danger. But our species is young and curious and brave. It shows much promise. In the last few millennia, we've made the most astonishing and unexpected discoveries about the cosmos and our place within it. I believe our future depends powerfully on how well we understand this cosmos in which we float like a mote of dust in the morning sky.[354]

Sagan constantly oscillates between a positivist, scientific attitude toward the universe, and one which resembles religious awe. While Sagan admits that "the size and age of the cosmos are beyond ordinary human understanding," in the same moment he extols the virtues of science to make "astonishing and unexpected discoveries." Sagan ends this statement with a poetic image, signaling both our small role and the universe's sublime beauty which outpaces our understanding of it. Paradoxically, Sagan simultaneously supports the unknowability narrative while insisting on science's power to demystify the universe.

Sagan ultimately resolves this tension by attributing the wonders of the universe to the wonders of science. While the universe remains unknowable, science reveals the beauty of its unknowability, thus reifying itself as an essential tool of humanity. In doing so, Sagan's brand of science borrows from religious rhetoric, experiencing the universe through feelings of awe and wonder often associated with God. In fact, Sagan's insistence on the acceptance of science resembles faith-based arguments for the

acceptance of religion. Referring to Sagan's statement, "evolution is a fact, not a theory," critic Thomas M. Lessl argues that *Cosmos* naturalizes evolution beyond dispute. Therefore, "with evolution no longer regarded as a mere human construct, but now part of the natural order of the cosmos, evolution becomes a sacred object against which human actions can be weighed."[355] In other words, while most scientists would privately agree with Sagan's comment, its rhetoric is non-scientific, uncritical, and religious in tone.[356]

Sagan's "cosmic perspective" therefore involves sanctifying science as the natural order. In doing so, the unknowability thesis persists as a consequence of humanity's evolution. Therefore, the feelings of awe and wonder at the unknowability of the universe only become possible, according to Sagan, through the scientific method. At the end of the first episode, Sagan states, "We have a choice: We can enhance life and come to know the universe that made us or we can squander our 15 billion-year heritage in meaningless self-destruction. What happens in the first second of the next cosmic year depends on what we do, here and now with our intelligence and our knowledge of the cosmos." By framing humanity's cosmic purpose through the language of cognition, Sagan uses an evolutionary model of the universe to impose a teleological narrative on humanity. Our genetics reinforce a moral duty to pursue vital questions about the universe. Sagan therefore offers a counter-narrative to the universe's supposed indifference to humanity: "Because the cosmos is also within us, we're made of star-stuff. We are a way for the cosmos to know itself." Thus, Sagan reasserts humanity's primacy by eliminating the barrier between us and the cosmos. Although his language seems liberating, rather than dislodging humanity from a privileged position, Sagan

instead reinforces anthropocentric principles to justify a teleological obligation to understand the universe.

Sagan's rhetorical strategy of representing the unknowability thesis as a product of science resembles what critic Istvan Csicery-Ronay Jr. calls the "science-fictional sublime," which entails "a sense of awe and dread in response to human technological projects that exceed the power of their human creators."[357] While *Cosmos* stands as a prominent example of the science fictional sublime in non-fiction, this program was not alone in its attitude toward the universe. The ending of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), in which the Star Child emerges both as a consequence of human evolution and the awe-inspiring unknowability of the universe, perfectly encapsulates Sagan's attitude in a single image.[358] Sagan would himself write his own science fiction novel, *Contact* (1985), later made into a Hollywood film starring Jodie Foster, which ends with a sublime journey through the Milky Way that is as much a product of alien evolution and intelligence as it is the mysteries of the universe itself.[359] The "tears in rain" monologue at the end of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) juxtaposes otherworldly cosmic events with life's small scale. Finally, in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1986), the novel's prose breaks down as an A.I. system transcends into a superconsciousness. The science fictional sublime therefore apprehends the galactic scale by placing the unknowability thesis within the domain of human knowledge. In doing so, this aesthetic creates a crisis of unknowability for the subject; that is, through its realist approach to the galaxy, the science fictional sublime claims access to unknowable objects and spaces. Rather than confronting the galaxy as its own ontological space, the science fictional sublime uncritically scales human experience up, instilling a false sense of

epistemological ascendency that, by the very definition of the sublime aesthetic, inevitably vanishes.

Stars demonstrates the way the science fictional sublime rejects cognition and self-reflection in favor of uncritically aggrandizing human knowledge. For example, the text highlights the way the statistical anomaly of Rat Korga as the sole survivor of Rhyonon inspires awe. However, one character, Japril, notes that while the question of survival is impossible to prove definitively, "whether the phenomenon is fuzzy or not, a growing number of people. . . consider Rat Korga the single survivor of a totally depopulated world" (159). Thus, despite the impossibility of conclusiveness, the galaxy considers Rat the only survivor. As a fuzzy-edged concept himself, Rat symbolizes the unknowability of the conditions of his own survival; just as concepts such as world, survival, and population elude concrete measurements, Rat's very existence inspires awe.

While *Stars* does not condemn sublime awe as an aesthetic response to unknowability, the novel indicates the way the science fictional sublime prevents the possibility of empathizing with the other. As Marq and Rat walk through a male-only run, or an area reserved for sexual encounters, a woman recognizes Rat, and says,

> "'May I touch you? Please! You've survived a world—" and to both sides she turned her eyes momentarily, as lights swept back beside us, dark as Rat's in half-light, before she stepped forward.
>
> Rat stepped forward too.
>
> "Please, I want to touch you—or you to touch me. That would be better—" She seemed to remember herself. "With your friend, if you like." (217)

As the woman admits, her sexual attraction to Rat stems from his surviving a world. Serving as a symbol for the unknowability of worlds, Cultural Fugue, and survival, Rat inspires fascination and desire. Her fragmented and abrupt sentences, represented through the em dash, convey a sense of desperation and urgency which borders on awe. Because

Rat exceeds language's ability to contain him, she struggles to communicate clearly, abandoning or changing thoughts mid-sentence. However, rather than responding to the beauty of the non-human world, she reacts to the unknowable power of the cultural and technologically phenomenon, Cultural Fugue, which Rat represents.[360] Therefore, the woman's reaction draws precisely from the science fictional sublime.

While this example of the science fictional sublime does not seem to constitute a problem, Rat's reaction demonstrates the way an uncritical treatment of unknowable objects ultimately disregards the autonomy of the other, counter-intuitively undermining the core goals of epistemological inquiry. When Rat expresses his desire to find only males, she responds, "'But you—" She stepped closer. 'I thought perhaps you'd be—you would understand. Because of what you've survived. I need you to. . ." (277). Although the woman eventually exits the run, her dialogue demonstrates the way the science fictional sublime ultimately serves the interests of the subject rather than the object. Her statement, "I need," which she repeats again later, expresses her intention to use Rat to fulfill her own desires rather than to respect his wishes or his otherness. Despite the implication otherwise, Delany does not reject the subject-object binary. Indeed, as Marq's "perfect erotic object," Rat serves as the object of his desires (166). Instead, this example demonstrates the science fictional sublime's treatment of difference as an obstacle toward the fulfillment of desire. Despite her fascination with Rat's otherness, the woman does not critically examine Rat or his desires. Instead, in the same way the science fictional sublime only reveals a fascination with humanity's own achievements, the woman's behavior implies a sense of ownership over Rat as an unknowable object. By highlighting

this problem in *Stars,* Delany calls for a reexamination of the subject's engagement with unknowability.

Stars represents the way this crisis of scale impacts the subject, who feels a constant sense of disorientation and dislocation in response to constant reorientations in space and time. The novel's title foregrounds the disorientation produced by the galaxy's incompatibility with the human scale. Participating in a ritual of respect on the Thant family's home planet, Zetzor, Marq says, "'We're planning to pluck out the best stars out of the sky and stuff them in our pockets. . . so that when we meet you once again and thrust our hands deep inside to hide our embarrassment, our fingertips will smart on them, as if they were desert grains, caught down in the seams, and we'll smile at you on your way to a glory that, for all our stellar thefts, we shall never be able to duplicate'" (123). In this passage, Marq's behavior, specifically his embarrassment, takes on the disposition of a child caught in the act of a minor crime. By emphasizing his childish audacity, Marq shows respect for the Thants. The logic of the ritual, however, follows from a crisis of scale. Functioning through scalar collapse, the childlike logic of the "stellar theft" aggrandizes the Thants by positioning them beyond Marq's perspective, emphasizing the incommensurability between the subject and the cosmos. Thus, the title of Delany's novel refers to a crisis of scale which reveals the subject's insignificance relative to the galaxy. For Delany, then, scaling does not bridge the ontological space between scales, but instead reminds us of their absolute differences.

Similarly, Delany draws attention to the extreme relativity in scale to dramatize the subject's experience of the crisis of unknowability. At several points in the novel, characters emphasize the large-scale degree of complexity which comprises individual

planets through the phrase, “a world is a big place” (85, 89). However, Santine also claims that “worlds can be small places” (283). Contradicting her own statement, Santine later says, “Universes *are* small, no matter how big worlds are” (288). Of course, worlds may be large relative to the subject, but miniscule compared to the size of the universe. These statements therefore avoid contradiction because scales are not stable sites of meaning, but processes of relative comparison between places. The galaxy’s very immensity, however, puts into question the value of scale-making itself. As Marq notes, “…I don’t have any *real* concept of how a billion differs from a million. Or a thousand. At least not in real terms. No human does” (101). While ordinarily the subject does not confront these large-scale numbers, within the galaxy immensity and overwhelming complexity become commonplace. Therefore, while scalar relativity does not ordinarily pose a problem to the subject, on a galactic scale this reality forestalls the meaning-making process itself. While explaining his experiences before and after his rescue, Rat comments that on his world, “it was always assumed there was nothing about me to know. Here, everyone seems to know everything” (233). Despite this opposition between knowing nothing and knowing everything, Rat says that the feeling “is much the same.” Similarly, at the scale of the galaxy, the overwhelming complexity and diversity of information leads to a collapse of scale; that is, as a process of comparison, scale loses its value in differentiating between orders of experience. Instead, the subject experiences life in the same position as Rat. Unmoored from his world, as well as from the very concept of world, Rat possesses no mechanism to differentiate between types of places, people, and ideas, leaving him disoriented and dislocated. In other words, Rat undergoes a crisis of scale.

Thus, while the science fictional sublime has changed in form, it typifies the aesthetic experience of uncritical, non-cognitive awe in response to the galaxy as a human invention. Despite supporting the unknowability thesis, the science fictional sublime ultimately validates science as an objective method of understanding the universe. In consequence, the science fictional sublime paradoxically distances the subject from apprehending unknowable objects, intensifying her sense of disorientation as a crisis of scale. While this cultural tradition became dominant in the 1980s through programs like Sagan's *Cosmos*, the unknowability thesis survives into the present through realist traditions such as object-oriented ontology, a philosophical discourse which attempts to access the ontology of objects outside human experience in spite of their unknowability. A Forbes article from 2016 titled "Physicists Must Accept That Some Things Are Unknowable" alludes to the anxiety that "the total amount of information accessible to us in the Universe is finite, and hence, so is the amount of knowledge we can gain about it."[361] Even today, we are still obsessed with the problem of unknowability and our need to overcome, through science, philosophy, and cultural traditions, its absolute limits to epistemology.

Science Fiction and the Cognitive Space Opera

As an aesthetic response to the galaxy as a figure of unknowability, the science fictional sublime creates a problem of representation for Delany, who seeks a depiction of the galaxy which respects its otherness without succumbing to anthropocentrism.[362] At the time of *Stars'* publication in 1984, the near-future had long since become science fiction's dominant setting. *Stars*, however, takes the far future of the galaxy as its setting

and subject matter. In fact, *Stars* is the last major work of science fiction Delany has written, marking a turning point in his career.[363] Delany's interest in space opera is particularly relevant given that *Stars* (and *Nova* before it) anticipates the resurgence of this sub-genre in the 1990s with writers like Vernor Vinge, Iain M. Banks, and Peter F. Hamilton.[364] As a political and aesthetic response to early space opera, *Stars* applies to the genre a cognitive and self-reflexive lens drawn from New Wave science fiction, pioneering the cognitive space opera tradition popular today. Simultaneously, Delany adopts the postmodernist movement's rejection of master narratives, subversion of totalities, and celebration of difference.[365] Thus, while early space opera responds to the galaxy's unknowability uncritically, Delany updates the sub-genre with the rhetorical and stylistic innovations of the New Wave and postmodernism. Through Delany's science fictional treatment of the galaxy, he represents the radical other by celebrating its otherness as the foundation for meaning-making, locating a satisfactory response to the crisis of unknowability.

During space opera's development in the pulp era of science fiction in the 1920s and 1930s, texts like E.E. "Doc" Smith's *Lensman* series and David Lindsay's *Voyage to Arcturus* popularized the subgenre. Space operas represent far futures in which humanity progresses technologically to the point where interplanetary travel is common, and the galaxy becomes a space of chance encounters and overwhelming diversity.[366] Coining the term in 1941 in reference to "soap opera" radio and serial television shows often sponsored by soap commercials, writer Wilson Tucker antagonistically identified space opera as "the hacky, grinding stinking, outworn space-ship yarn or world-saving" stories.[367] According to critic Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., space operas operate on what

literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin calls the "adventure chronotope," which contains an abstract connection between space and time, meaning that while distance and diversity stage the genre's chance encounters and pursuits, the specific locations and historical time periods are arbitrary.[368] Science fiction author Alastair Reynolds echoes this point, noting that the genre's rise "paralleled the increasing obsolescence of the Earth-based adventure story, as developments in travel and cartography rendered less and less of the earth unknowable and therefore offering scope for adventure tales of the 'Lost World' variety."[369] Thus, as the Earth became a knowable space, adventure stories migrated to the cosmos. Rather than seeking to demystify the universe through a scientific lens, traditional space operas treat the universe's unknowability as a source of uncritical fascination.

Despite the space opera's waning in popularity since the 1950s, Delany maintained an interest in the genre due to its focus on unknowability. The majority of Delany's science fiction was published in the 1960s and 1970s, when the "New Wave" rose to prominence.[370] Delany has shown resistance to classifying himself with the movement, however, because while New Wave writers like Thomas M. Disch and J.G. Ballard were interested in the near-future, Delany's major science fiction during this era, *Babel-17* (1966) and *Nova* (1968), were "basically space-opera."[371] According to Delany, "the New Wave just wasn't interesting in space opera, no matter how well written. Nor should they have been."[372] While during the 1930s, hallmarks of space opera such as faster-than-light travel and instant communication seemed possible, by the 1950s such imaginary inventions lost credibility. By this time, the space opera had fallen into disrepute "not only for its aesthetic failings but also for its ideological tendencies: its

quasi-fascistic fascination with supermen and super-weapons, its abiding racism, sexism and class bigotry, as well as its juvenile wish-fulfillment fantasy."[373] Uncritical of its science, aesthetics, and ideology, the space opera's relative disappearance during the 1950s signals the science fiction community's rejection of the genre's treatment of the tension between the unknowability thesis and the evolutionary narrative of scientific progress.[374] In fact, despite Delany's insistence otherwise, his science fiction adapts the New Wave's cognitive focus to a historically non-cognitive genre.[375]

In the prologue to *Stars,* Delany foregrounds his cognitive science fiction aesthetic in response to traditional space opera. The title, "A World Apart," foreshadows Rat's later encounter with Marq. Within the context of the prologue, however, the title also acts as a metafictional commentary on the act of reading. Beginning a work of science fiction, the reader expects the reality of the novel to exist a world apart from their own. However, while the prologue announces this distance between reader and text, Delany also refuses to clearly contextualize Rat's world. Throughout the prologue, the narrator, Marq, provides expository information, largely within parentheticals, which explains Rhyonon's cultural and linguistic differences relative to his own. Similarly, the traditional space opera relies on a "a familiar home base against which to contrast exotic worlds," which can either be Earth itself, or a space station or colony which stands in for Earth, Delany refuses to provide this stability.[376] However, because Marq's own world differs significantly from the reader's, his exposition only disorients the reader further. For example, while comparing Rat's finger to the thickness of a broom-handle, Marq clarifies, "for the technology of that world still made lathes, lasers, bombs, and brooms" (4). While Marq's clarification would orient a member of his own world, it only further

disorients the reader, whose familiarity with brooms nullifies the value of this clarification. Thus, in Marq's very efforts to condition the reader to Rhyonon's reality, he instead defamiliarizes the reader and dislocates their sense of place.

By subverting space opera tropes, such as the familiar home base, Delany self-reflexively critiques and applies a cognitive lens to the genre. According to Csicery-Ronay Jr., self-reflexivity is an aspect latent in the form of the space opera. Csicery-Ronay Jr. uses the term "cosmic space" for the chronotope of the space opera, in which the setting's vast, sublime space allows for the inclusion of "ontologically pluralized fictional universes" while using science and technology to rationalize any contradictions between these universes. Because of this, space operas often have a metafictional quality, self-reflexively commenting on science fiction's narrative strategies and possible worlds.[377] Therefore, Delany renews overlooked conventions embedded in the space opera.[378] According to Delany, "there are too many space-operas…in which there is no cognitive thrust at all."[379] In other words, despite pioneering the early days of science fiction, space operas lack the empirical lens which defines the genre for critics like Darko Suvin.[380] *Stars* therefore represents Delany's attempt to return space opera to its cognitive and self-reflexive origins in science fiction.[381]

In addition to revising space opera through the lens of self-reflexivity and cognition, Delany's interest in the sub-genre demonstrates his theories of science fiction as the genre of misrepresentation. At the beginning of the novel, before Rat agrees to become a slave, the text describes his face, "the ideogram of incomprehension among whose radicals you could read ignorance's determinant past, information's present impossibility, speculation's denied future" (3). On a surface level, the narrator, Marq,

describes Rat's state of mind following his Radical Anxiety Termination procedure. In taking away Rat's ability to make new kinds of decisions without instructions, the procedure literally makes him ignorant of the past, disables his ability to decipher information in the present, and denies him the capacity to imagine possible futures. However, because this statement comes at the beginning of the novel, before the narrator's explanation of Rat's procedure, the reader must interpret the language through genre expectations. Critics commonly categorize science fiction as a form of speculative fiction which imagines possible futures. By rejecting this statement through "speculation's denied future," Delany implies his science fiction novel has a different relationship with the future. In the last chapter, I discussed the way Nalo Hopkinson draws from Delany in her development of a science fictional temporality which puts the present in dialogic tension with an imagined future. In this passage, the fragmentation of Rat's past, present, and future directly correlates with his loss of autonomy and cognitive abilities. Delany therefore demonstrates the folly of reducing science fiction either to its relation to the past, present, or future, insisting on their interdependence.

This passage reflects Delany's theories of science fiction as a genre which deliberately misrepresents reality.[382] Many theories of science fiction derive from Darko Suvin's famous description of science fiction as the genre of "cognitive estrangement," which combines a rationalistic lens with a referent that differs in some significant way from reality.[383] For Delany, however, science fiction and realism undergo different modes of representation.[384] As opposed to realism, science fiction "consciously and conscientiously *mis*represents the world."[385] This tendency, while one of the genre's defining qualities, has made it susceptible to the critique of science fiction as an escapist

genre with no relevance to contemporary reality. Responding to this objection, Delany asserts, "Science fiction is not about the future; it uses the future as a narrative convention to present significant distortions of the present."[386] For this reason, judging a science fictional text based upon the accuracy of its supposed predictions of the future mischaracterizes the genre.[387]

Just as science fictional worlds are not about the future, neither should they be reduced to metaphors for our present. Delany notes that "the catch-all term metonymy [does not] exhaust the relation between the given and science fiction's distortions of the given."[388] In other words, while a science fictional world distorts the present, these distortions exceed the scope of the present alone. While science fiction indeed draws from our contemporary reality, as Delany notes, "both the significance of the distortion [of the present] and the appropriateness of the [narrative] convention lie precisely in that what we know of present science does not *deny* the possibility of these distortions eventually coming to pass."[389] While metaphor would collapse a science fictional world with the present, maintaining this representational separation achieves what Delany calls a "relationship of contestatory difference" between present and future.[390] Rather than attempting to predict the future or reduce the present to metaphor, science fiction "establishes, maintains, expects, exploits, subverts, and even—occasionally, temporarily—grandly destroys" an imagined relationship between the present and future.[391] Science fiction, therefore, is interested neither in the present nor future, but the dialogic tension between the two.

Through his science fictional strategy of misrepresentation, Delany provides a solution to the crisis of unknowability. By creating meaning through the relation between

present and imagined future, science fiction offers a model for meaning-making as a dialogic process of negotiating difference. Drawing from the postmodernist celebration of difference, Delany emphasizes how the unknowability thesis does not present an obstacle to meaning-making, but makes the process possible. At the end of the novel, Marq discusses the experience of arriving on a world at dawn: "if your mind turns in such aubadinal directions, you become intensely aware of how arbitrary a concept dawn is" (335). At the scale of a planet, dawn is a matter of choice rather than an absolute concept. Marq explains that one's concept of world depends upon "a transformation of signs, their appearances, their meanings" (337). Leaving a world at dawn involves seeing the "geographical order, if not the more entailed connections lent by ecological or social factors…shatter, fragment, and to realize that its solidity was always an illusion" (338). Dawn is therefore a fuzzy-edged phenomenon whose meaning depends on context rather than essence. At the scale of the galaxy, even as a metaphor dawn can stand for anything from beginnings to death, depending on the specificity of a world's geology, history, and culture (338). Thus, at a galactic scale, concepts which otherwise seem stable become fuzzy-edged, exposing their instability and dependence on the perspective of the observer to contextualize their meaning. Because fuzzy-edged concepts like dawn lack intrinsic value, Delany suggests that they are unknowable, and therefore do not exhaust their meaning.

However, as this passage suggests, dawn's unknowability is the source of its value to the observer, and therefore makes meaning-making possible. Rather than discarding dawn as a useless concept, Marq insists that "such a metaphor is a point of contact from which consistency can be constructed."[392] According to Marq, dawn

contains no inherent meaning, but drastically changes depending on context. This instability, however, does not create an obstacle to meaning-making, but rather makes it possible. Referring to other fuzzy-edged concepts, Marq adds, "But are you ever more aware of the shifts, the displacements, the uncertainties that, together, make up what we call meanings, than you are when you are on no world, but rather half-asleep on some freighter or shuttle between them, or relaxing on some station circling above dim scimitars of dawn and evening, the bright and black alternates of day and night on the planetary disk below, while you search for some morning lost light-years away?" (339). Adjusting one's perspective to the galactic scale, as Marq does when viewing dawn from space, exposes the instability and unknowability of all objects and concepts. Instead of viewing fuzzy-edged concepts as a representational hurdle, however, Delany treats them as indispensable for knowledge-production. Becoming aware of the shifts, displacements, and uncertainties, Marq realizes that without contextual difference, concepts like dawn would not possess any value. Therefore, unlike realism, which treats unknowable objects as a problem, Delany upholds the unknowability thesis as an ontological principle that provides the foundation for meaning-making.

Thus, as a non-realist genre, science fiction does not claim direct access to unknowable objects, but rather creates meaning through the representational gap between information and disinformation. Delany's strategy of misrepresenting reality therefore makes possible meaningful contact with the unknowable.[393] In contrast, science fictional realism assumes a knowable universe and therefore fails to apprehend unknowable objects. Discussing the way "the universe is overdetermined," a common phrase in *Stars*, Delany claims that the codic system, or the senses, language, and ideas we use to

perceive the world, are redundant. Even further, the universe, which for Delany is made up of these codic systems, is itself overdetermined.[394] Therefore, it is impossible either for language to exhaust all its possibilities in representing an object, or for language to exhaust the object itself.[395] For Delany, misrepresentation in science fiction functions as a narrative strategy to confront language's inability to accurately "represent 'the world' in any comprehensive, exhaustive way."[396] Delany's stance toward overdetermination reveals his investment in acknowledging the limits of representation to map the cosmos. Unlike a realist representation of the galaxy, which would either deny the unknowability thesis or treat it as a barrier to knowledge, Delany adopts a science fictional strategy of misrepresentation which frames the unknowability thesis as the very basis for meaning-making.

Delany's celebration of unknowability recalls my discussion of cultural representations of the galaxy leading up to the 1980s, including the science fictional sublime. While both include the science fictional sublime in different forms, traditional space opera and Sagan's *Cosmos* are realist in their claims to objective knowledge about the universe. Rather than reducing narrative worlds to metaphors of the present, the traditional space opera offers an uncritical celebration of the wonders of the galaxy. Thus, any theory which reduces science fiction to a realist form inevitability weakens the genre's capacity to represent estranging objects. For example, critic Seo-Young Chu locates science fiction on the same spectrum as realism, in which "'realism designates low-intensity mimesis, while 'science fiction' designates high-intensity mimesis."[397] Science fiction operates by literalizing figurative elements in order to make real but non-immediate phenomena available for representation. To apply Chu's definition to *Stars*,

one may interpret Cultural Fugue as literalizing current fears of the consequences of globalization, in which the threat of the annihilation of culture becomes the literal annihilation of the population (66). Such a reading, while supported partially by the text, nevertheless reduces Delany's science fictional devices to their relevance to our contemporary reality alone. Despite Chu's insistence otherwise, her definition of science fiction is functionally identical to allegory, in that both genres use fictional worlds to speak about the present. However, science fiction's narrative worlds depend equally on developing their own fictive world-building elements as they do their relevance to the present. Precisely because the genre does not operate through realism, science fiction can put an imagined future in dialogue with the present in order to represent unknowable objects.

Through his definition of science fiction, Delany critiques early space opera, and by extension any realist representation of objects beyond ordinary experience. By operating through misrepresentation, science fiction celebrates unknowability without claiming access to the object in-itself. While the New Wave and postmodernism provide Delany with the representational tools to for his cognitive space opera, his solution also creates a new problem: how does making unknowability the basis for meaning-making resolve the crisis of unknowability? Rather than resigning herself to the crisis of scale, the citizen of the galaxy must develop a new relationship with unknowability. Through *Stars*, Delany creates a language to express what it is like to inhabit this disorienting position.

Desire, Difference, and the Citizen of the Galaxy

Marq Dyeth's job as an Industrial Diplomat provides a model for living productively within the disorienting conditions of the crisis of unknowability. By representing the unknowability thesis not as an obstacle but as a force of desire from which meaning-making can begin, Delany successfully navigates between the pitfalls of anthropocentrism on the one hand and realism on the other. As a result, Delany celebrates local differences in race, gender, sexuality, and species at an individual scale, as well as the large-scale differences in the galaxy.

The dragon-hunting scene demonstrates the way forming a meaningful connection with the other involves relinquishing realist claims at accessing unknowability. During their stay on Marq's home-world, Velm, he decides to take Rat dragon-hunting. This activity appears to conflict with the novel's message of confronting the other through empathy rather than violence. However, the passage upsets the reader's expectations when Marq fires his radar-bow, and rather than harming the dragon, he instead inhabits its body:

> I pulled—*click-click*—and threw myself through myself—
>
> —doubled in one sense, skewed in four others, my wings under-thundered gray sand in a dragon's eye. (246)

While Marq's encounter with alien during his childhood led primarily to a re-examination of selfhood, in this passage he also fully embodies the perspective of the dragon. Experiencing the world as both himself and the dragon simultaneously, and observing the absolute differences in being, Marq resolves the confrontation with the other through radical empathy. By doubling his sense of self, Marq creates contact with the other without erasing its otherness. While Marq locates points of comparison between them, he nevertheless insists that "knowing the dragon's body from the inside is an adventure of a

different order" (247). Through a desire to empathize with the other, Marq therefore bridges their experiences, learning what it is like to be a dragon without erasing its otherness.

Despite this optimistic message, Delany appears to entertain the possibility of accessing the other, contradicting his theories of science fiction. However, the novel makes clear that dragon-hunting is in fact an act of translation mediated by technology. Thus, to approach an understanding of a dragon's phenomenology, Marq relies on analogy rather than the fantasy of direct knowledge. For example, while cataloguing their phenomenological differences, Marq experiences the dragon's three drives: the drive for flight which "humans mistake for sex"; the "yearning for a variety in tastes" which is not simply hunger, and finally a "gentle bodily urging for certain kinds of motion" (247). While reducing reality to language risks a descent into anthropocentrism and a retreat into the self, for Delany, understanding the inseparable connection between thought and world instead results in radical empathy with the other. In this example, Marq's translation of the dragon's experience through analogies of sex and hunger do not capture its phenomenology with perfect accuracy. However, in locating the differences between their two modes of being—such as the drive for flight or sex—Marq discovers a point of contact from which experiential understanding can take place. Thus, metaphor does not provide a substitute for the object, but makes Marq's experience as a dragon possible.

Similarly, Marq's use of technology to mediate his experience facilitates his understanding of the dragon's order of being. In the passage, "'The radar bow hooks on to a pretty complete mapping of the dragon's cerebral responses and, after a lot of translation, plays it back for your own cerebral surface'" (248). By mediating the meeting

between self and other, this technology communicates the dragon's experience directly to Marq's brain. The translation of the dragon's experience for Marq reminds the reader of their absolute differences, but also of embracing those differences rather than ignoring them or treating them as an obstacle. Thus, while Rat initially mistakes the dragon for an enemy, Marq instead says, "'She's our best friend in the world'" (242). The dragon-hunting passage therefore teaches us meaningful contact with the radical other only takes place through celebrating difference as the basis for experience. Therefore, Rat's revelation, "'It's like reading,'" enhances rather than diffuses the awe he experiences dragon-hunting because reading and textuality are not simply metaphors but his mode of experiencing reality.[398] As opposed to a flawed compromise for indirectly confronting the unknowability of the other, analogy becomes the very basis for experience. For Delany, the unknowability thesis is not an obstacle we must overcome indirectly, as it is for realist fiction, but makes contact between the self and other possible.

The novel returns to the necessity of difference for meaningful contact in the epilogue. On the morning the Sygn takes Rat Korga away, Marq Dyeth's mind wanders to memories of other mornings. In one, he observes a red giant, "the largest known object in the galaxy," through the viewing canopy of a ship (330). The enormous scale of the red giant, which lies far beyond ordinary human experience, poses a problem of representation. General Information supplements Marq's experience with a factual understanding of the red giant, providing its approximate size and mass. This explanation continues almost uninterrupted for nearly a page, using Earth's solar system as a point of comparison to put the red giant, Aurigae, in context with objects presumably more familiar to those present on the ship. For example, "'The smallest of those mottled dark

spots [on the surface] which you can see in the glow are large enough to absorb the planet Jupiter without visible disturbance—indeed, if Jupiter were at the stellar surface, it would take up a space one-one hundredth as many seconds of an arc as your own little fingernail when looked at from arm's length'" (331). Here, GI not only uses Jupiter but one's fingernail as familiar scales to put Aurigae's immensity in context. By scaling the red giant down to human terms rather than respecting its ontological differences from humanity, however, this explanation fails to provide an experiential understanding of the cosmic scale. Making this problem worse, as a character later comments, GI's commentary constitutes "Solarcentric chauvinism" which excludes those unfamiliar with Earth's solar system. Therefore, GI not only fails to bridge the experiences between subject and object, but risks alienating both. By reducing the red giant to facticity alone, GI's explanation ignores the role of experience and therefore fails to represent the object's otherness in a meaningful way.

While this apparent failure to understand the red giant risks a descent into anthropocentrism, Marq recovers meaning by respecting, rather than seeking to overcome, its otherness. Marq accomplishes this through a discussion with an alien woman who relies on a translation device to communicate. The text does not merely employ this technology as a science fictional device to make their conversation possible. Rather, the mediation of their conversation through this device allows meaningful understanding between them to take place. The alien woman, who lacks binocular vision and translates light into ultrasound waves to "see," describes her experience of the red giant: "it sounds like one of my home world's dawns, only much vaster, harmonious, resonant" (333). Through metaphors of sound, the woman therefore translates her

experience for the reader. Marq, who privileges his sense of taste, instead describes the red giant as "at once both bitter and sweet…it casts me out of myself, then hurls me back like a suddenly encountered odor from childhood that, as I name it, I only then realize I have mistaken for some other, and I am forced to contemplate all the possibilities that, in their shadings and subtleties, must be as varied as the red and black variegations on that star itself, and thus I am struck with the notion of something so large it might as well be infinite, so old it might as well be eternal" (333-334). Similar to the woman, Marq relies on metaphors of smell to communicate his feelings witnessing the red giant. Both, therefore, use differing forms of figurative language to bridge the representational gap between their differing perspectives. In this explanation, Marq acknowledges the red giant's unknowability while simultaneously finding meaning in this experience. Drawing attention to his "mistaken" comparisons drawing from his life, Marq instead embraces the object's unknowability. The awe he experiences in response to the red giant's spatially and temporally enormous scale does not glorify human agency or scientific mastery, but emerges in the experiential gap between his senses and the object's mode of being.

Just as embracing difference makes possible Marq's experiential understanding of the red giant, so too does this principle establish meaningful communication with the alien woman. Despite experiencing reality through different sensual modes, the woman replies, "That is precisely the way it sounds to me," leaving Marq to "wonder what, precisely, precision was on the other side of that steel disk. That she and I had both found something matutinal to contemplate, for whatever our vastly different reasons, in that huge fire, seemed the most stupendous of cosmic accidents and was, finally, where all the real wonder lay" (334). Marq's remark suggests that precision, belonging to the domain

of facticity, is inapplicable here, since their shared experience of the red giant does not value exactitude. Instead, due to their vantage point in space, their observation that the red giant resembles dawn has no factual basis. However, because access to the red giant's being is impossible, Marq and the woman find meaning in their collective interpretation, which draws from the differences between each other and the star itself. Marq's "wonder," then, does not emerge from a realist privileging of facticity, or a sublime departure from cognition, but from a postmodern science fictional celebration of difference.

If embracing unknowability through desire is essential for meaning-making, this principle also provides a model for building productive subjectivities. Through his job as an Industrial Diplomat, Marq Dyeth best exemplifies the way being a citizen of the galaxy involves a political relationship with unknowability. As an ID, Marq comes in constant contact with diverse cultures and societies, and must use diplomacy to negotiate their differences (159). While the Web, due to their affiliation with the Sygn, similarly prizes heterogeneity, its privileging of locality leads to a distaste for excess interstellar travel and interconnections between distant planets. Consequently, the Web considers IDs a "necessary evil" due to the importance of interplanetary communication, regardless of the value of local difference (84). While IDs seem to impose a hierarchical order on the diversity of planetary societies, however, Marq's behavior instead demonstrates his celebration of unknowability. Rather than seeking to normalize the "odd creations of our epoch," Marq instead approaches their encounters with respect for their unknowable differences (92). In other words, rejecting the impulse to approach his job by erasing difference or treating it as an obstacle toward communication and meaning-making, Marq

treats unknowability as an object of desire which makes meaning-making possible. Marq therefore demonstrates that no normative citizen of the galaxy exists. Rather, *Stars* rejects citizenship as a model for prescribed behavior, and instead insists on celebrating difference as the only essential quality to life on a galactic scale.

Marq's relationship with Rat most clearly exemplifies Delany's rejection of traditional notions of citizenship and celebration of difference as necessary for meaning-making. The differences between the two, including background, family, height and appearance, and personality do not create conflict between Marq and Rat, but rather become the source of their desire for each other. In fact, Marq implies that unknowability makes desire possible. Commenting on his inability to imagine his perfect erotic object to a nearly perfect degree of accuracy, he says, "Which I guess is what desire is all about" (170). Later, Marq notes that "your perfect erotic object remains only in recognition memory; and his absolute absence from reconstruction memory becomes the yearning that is, finally, desire" (183). In other words, desire emerges in the representational gap between subject and object. While realist approaches seek solutions to the unavoidable lack of absolute knowledge, Delany instead celebrates unknowability for making desire, and meaning-making itself, possible.

By making unknowability not only an ontological principle but a requirement for human knowledge, Delany presents his argument for confronting the radical other. Rather than accepting anthropocentrism, Delany makes the unknowability thesis an imperative for epistemological inquiry across categories of difference such as culture and species. Thus, Delany avoids the problem of anthropocentrism by celebrating difference at all scales. On an individual scale, differences in race, gender, sexuality, and species become

sources of desire. At the scale of the galaxy, "fuzzy-edged phenomena" like dawn become sources of awe. The citizen of the galaxy, therefore, must develop a political relationship with the unknowable universe.

Critiquing Realist Science Fiction and Speculative Realism

Realist approaches to unknowability do not merely fail to form a meaningful connection with the absolute other, but have dangerous political consequences. Understanding these ethical stakes, Delany's cognitive space opera provides the groundwork to critique contemporary realist representations of unknowability. In the Afterword to *Stars*, Delany emphasizes the personal stakes of representing the cosmic scale. Responding to the postmodernist notion of the "fragmentation of the subject" under Fredric Jameson, in which the unified subject was either lost with the rise of global capitalism in the 1960s, or was always an illusion, Delany argues,

> …any time when there is such a notion of a centered subject, especially when related to the white, western, patriarchal nuclear family, not only was it an ideological mirage, it was a mirage that necessarily grew up to mask the psychological, economic, and material oppression of an 'other'—often (though not necessarily) a tyrannized member of the same family ('We are centered and healthy: he/she/it/they are not…') And I feel that the times and places where the 'fragmented subject' is at its healthiest, happiest, and most creative is precisely at those times where society and economics contrive (1) to make questions of unity and centeredness irrelevant, and (2) to distance that subject as much as possible from such oppressions. (355)

While Jameson takes the former position, in which the dissolution of the self has led to the "alienation of the subject" in the modernist sense, Delany rejects the very idea of unity as a constructed illusion which conceals the oppression of the other. In *Stars*, Delany refuses to ascribe unity to the self, the family structure, concepts, and objects, instead locating meaning through difference. Delany's denial of objects' "essence" or

internal unity outside of their relations, and his retaining the subject in the subject-object relation, have political as well as philosophical consequences.

As a philosophical tradition interested in accessing objects on non-human scales, object-oriented ontology, as well as speculative realism more generally, shares with science fiction an interest in studying unknowability.[399] In fact, speculative theorists commonly draw from cosmic imagery to elucidate their theoretical assertions. The cover of Quentin Meillassoux's *After Finitude,* for example, is filled with stars and bright interstellar gas, while Ian Bogost claims that "the alien isn't in…the galactic far reaches. It's *everywhere*"[400] (133). Finally, in his discussion of "hyperobjects," Timothy Morton makes constant use of cosmic imagery as a reference point.[401] Rather than a superficial connection, these cosmic references allude to the tradition's study of unknowability in objects. In his discussion of hyperobjects, Timothy Morton states that "Because they so massively outscale us, Hyperobjects have magnified this weirdness of things for our inspection: things are themselves, but we can't point to them directly."[402] This "weirdness" extends to objects on every scale. Object-oriented ontology thus transforms unknowability from an epistemological principle to an ontological principle. For object-oriented ontologists, then, cosmic imagery shares with space opera an interest in ontological unknowability.

In addition to their mutual focus on the unknowability thesis, speculative realism shares with space opera its uncritical use of the science fictional sublime and realist approach to unknowability.[403] For example, in his proof of the absolute necessity of contingency, Meillassoux invokes the aesthetic of the science fictional sublime:

> If we look through the aperture which we have opened up onto the absolute, what we see there is a rather menacing power—something insensible, and capable of

> destroying both things and worlds, of bringing forth monstrous absurdities, yet also of never doing anything, of realizing every dream, but also every nightmare, of engendering random and frenetic transformations, or conversely, of producing a universe that remains motionless down to its ultimate recesses, like a cloud bearing the fiercest storms, then the eeriest bright spells, if only for an interval of disquieting calm.[404]

Normally restrained in terms of syntax and word choice, Meillassoux's proof, a human invention which provides access to knowledge about the universe, reveals a cosmos of dreams and nightmares, which can produce anything from the "fiercest storms" to the "eeriest bright spells" to absolutely nothing. This passage's poetic style resembles the science fictional sublime in attributing a wondrous, unknowable universe to human knowledge. Even Meillassoux's statement about "destroying both things and worlds" recalls the world-ending tropes of space opera. However, Meillassoux is not satisfied with this proof of unreason, but rather shows a desire to absolutize scientific discourse to claim objective knowledge about the world. In his rejection of correlationism, or the conflation of self and world in philosophy, Meillassoux's proof assigns unknowability as a positive characteristic of the object.[405] The tendency in speculative realism to draw from cosmic imagery and sublime language therefore relates to their assertion of ontological unknowability as a consequence of human cognition.[406]

By drawing from the imagery and language of previous models of science fictional realism, speculative philosophy makes itself susceptible to Delany's critique. Unlike Delany's cognitive science fiction, speculative realism employs language and imagery which resemble realist space opera and the science fictional sublime in their paradoxical celebration of the unknowability thesis as a product of human knowledge.[407] Despite its differences from space opera, speculative realism, like all realist traditions, treats unknowability as a barrier to knowledge. For example, Harman argues that though

real objects "withdraw" from each other and themselves, we access them indirectly through their sensual qualities.[408] Science fiction, meanwhile, does not claim access to the object in-itself, and instead represents the contestatory *difference* between present and imagined future. For object-oriented ontologists like Harman and Bryant, the "context-free" nature of objects grants them an autonomous reality outside of human observation. This argument does not deny the importance of historical, social, and cultural factors in humanity's understanding of objects, but these factors are not essential to the objects themselves. Rather, as Harman contends, the object itself "has a unified reality that is autonomous from its wider context and also from its own pieces."[409] Thus, object-oriented ontology seeks to decouple the object from its historical context.

This act of de-historicizing, however, itself takes place in a specific time and place. Quentin Meillassoux introduced the concept of correlationism in 2008 in response to the idea in post-structuralism and postmodernism that the world cannot be conceived of outside thought. Meanwhile, in an effort to consider reality outside of thought, and to oppose the human subject's privileged position, Bryant proposed a "flat ontology" model in 2011.[410] These arguments arrived during the height of critical discourses about the Anthropocene, when humanity became increasingly aware of its impact upon the planet in the form of phenomena like climate change, as well as of the necessity to see ourselves as inside the world, rather than in a privileged position outside it. Noting the fundamental irony in humanity's reaction to our position in the world, Timothy Morton claims "we are no longer able to think history as exclusively human, for the very reason that we are in the Anthropocene."[411] Especially for critics such as Morton, object-oriented ontology offers an ethical framework for tackling global issues. Thus, while object-oriented

ontologists seek to downplay the importance of historical context, critics such as Morton nonetheless draw from this context when rhetorically advantageous, demonstrating the limitations of any context-free worldview.

Historicizing object-oriented ontology as a response to critical theory in the age of the Anthropocene reveals how this philosophy attempts to avoid the problem of the "fragmentation of the subject" posed by Jameson. For Bryant and Harman, while the subject is no longer a viable concept, their unity is preserved in objects. By granting objects an autonomous reality, however, object-oriented ontologists risk subjectifying objects. As a result, critics have frequently charged object-oriented ontology with adopting notions of "panpsychism," or the idea that everything has life.[412] While Bogost recognizes this issue and instead offers polypsychism as a viable alternative, others like Harman indeed subscribe a sense of agency to objects usually associated with the subject. Thus, rather than removing the subject, object-oriented ontology transfers all qualities traditionally associated with subjects, such as agency and autonomy, to objects. While Delany responds to Jameson's "fragmentation of the subject" by arguing for a positive interpretation of the dissolution of unity, object-oriented ontology rescues the very notion of unity by ascribing it to objects rather than subjects.

While object-oriented ontologists would argue that rather than removing the subject, they merely reassign them as objects, by ignoring historical context, this model nevertheless allows for dangerous political consequences. For example, Bogost discusses an "image toy" displayed on the website for the OOO symposium in 2010, which displays a series of randomized Flickr images based on the key words, "object," "thing," and "stuff."[413] As Bogost explains,

> The trouble started when Bryant, one of the symposium speakers, related to me that a (female) colleague had showed the site to her (female) dean—at a women's college, no less. The image that apparently popped up was a woman in a bunny suit. I never saw the image, nor did Bryant (given the millions of photos on Flickr, it's unlikely that the same one will be drawn twice), but the dean drew the conclusion that object-oriented ontology was all about objectification (I'm told that she asked why Playboy bunnies would be features at a philosophy conference). Given the apparently objectified woman *right there on the webpage*, the impression was an understandable one, even if unintended (and certainly unsupported by OOO thought itself)…Seeing the website as a justification of sexist objectification was an unfortunate but understandable interpretation.[414]

While Bogost ultimately changes the search query to prevent future objectifying images from appearing, he does so reluctantly because "the change also risks excluding a whole category of units from the realm of being! Are women or girls or sexiness to have no *ontological* place alongside chipmunks, lighthouses, and galoshes?"[415] As Bogost indicates, object-oriented ontology does not endorse objectifying images. However, this example reveals the problem with an ethos of de-historicization. The interpretation of the woman in a bunny suit as objectifying is not incorrect, despite Bogost's insistence otherwise, because the image's meaning necessitates historical context. While Bogost cites this incident as merely an unfortunate accident, instead it reveals a problem within object-oriented ontology: in de-historicizing objects, object-oriented ontology values only the existence of objects, and possesses no mechanism to critique them. A "flat ontology" therefore must by necessity equalize all ideologies because this model makes no hierarchical distinctions in valuing only the idea that "all objects exist."[416]

As a result, Levi Bryant's argument for a "heteroverse of different types of autonomous and irreducible objects ranging from quarks to tartigrades to ecosystems, groups, institutions societies, humans, burritos and so on" is also an argument which equally permits sexist language and behavior, since such objects equally exist.[417] By

removing historical context, these critics put all objects—quarks, tartigrades, burritos, and objectified photos of women—on the same ontological footing, ignoring the political reality which contributes toward their meaning. For Delany, because relations define objects, we cannot ignore their historical and political dimensions. While for object-oriented ontologists, this context-dependent model is unacceptable, for Delany, doing away with notions of unified and centered subjects—as well as objects—also means doing away with the logic that facilitates the oppression of the other. Rather than searching for a path around "the fragmentation of the subject" as a threat to unity, Delany instead embraces disunity as an aspect of being.

Thus, as citizens of the galaxy, developing a political relationship with the galaxy has ethical as well as philosophical consequences. Because Delany's project is science fictional rather than realist, he is in a unique position to respond to this apparently absurd relationship between the subject and galaxy. Rather than speaking about objects themselves, Delany deliberately misrepresents reality as a strategy of putting the present in conversation with an imagined future. Attributing an object's unknowability to its fundamental instability provides a break from object-oriented ontology, which represents objects as unified. For Harman, this type of thinking "overmines" the object by reducing it to a set of relations, since an "object is anything that has a unified reality that is autonomous from its wider context and also from its own pieces."[418] Delany, however, does not correspond to Harman's definition of "relationism" because he does not reduce an object to its relations. In *Stars*, the unknowability thesis grants that objects exceed their observable qualities or relations and thus cannot be reduced to our understanding of them. At the same time, Delany argues for the impossibility of defining an object outside

its context. Delany thus denies an object what Harman calls a unified essence, since an object's instability ensures that it will change depending on context.[419] By denying the existence of an essence, Delany makes possible the breakdown of an object. For citizens of the galaxy, this breakdown—the uncertainty and limits of any concept—is necessary for meaning-making to take place.

While science fiction misrepresents reality, realist traditions such as the science fictional sublime, traditional space opera, and speculative philosophy treat the unknowability thesis as a barrier to knowledge. Object-oriented ontology attempts to overcome this barrier by removing the subject and granting the object "context-free" unity, even if this strategy risks permitting a logic which ironically facilitates the oppression of the other. By operating through science fiction, however, Delany celebrates the unknowability thesis as the basis for meaning-making, and in doing so confronts—rather than ignores—the sociohistorical conditions which ground the subject's encounter with reality. As absurd as the question seemed at the beginning of this chapter, Delany makes a case for developing a political relationship with the unknown as fundamental to being a citizen of the galaxy.

While Delany published *Stars* in 1984, before arguments of postmodernism's obsolescence became popularized, this application of Delany's science fictional critique to contemporary philosophical debates demonstrates the endurance of postmodernism's legacy and political value today. Thus, while this dissertation began with the premise that contemporary authors face a representational problem due to the exhaustion of the previous literary period's aesthetics, it ends with the resurgence of postmodern politics to address contemporary cultural and philosophical problems. This is possible because the

generic turn does not respond to postmodernism directly, but rather to the problem of representation under the crisis of scale. Because of this, as Delany's critique of realist science fiction demonstrates, postmodernism's aesthetic strategies remain relevant today.

As a practical phenomenology, this dissertation contends that authors employ genres most applicable to the representational problems generated by individual scales. Because the galactic scale lies so far beyond human experience, and therefore resists knowability, postmodern difference remains a useful aesthetic tool to examine this representational problem and explore solutions through genre. While Delany employs postmodernism as a periodizing term, similar to Mark McGurl's suggestion that modernism has now been institutionalized as a genre of literary minimalism, through market and literary influence, today postmodernism may also have transformed into a genre, free from specific historical ties.[420] Regardless, Delany, and all of the novelists in this dissertation, stand as examples of the generic turn as a representational response to the crisis of scale, as well as a theoretical resource which produces new subjectivities through a practical phenomenology. Whether by unseeing the global city, inhabiting the contradictory ideology of the neoliberal nation-state, claiming agency amid conflicting temporalities, or celebrating the absolute unknowability of the universe, the novelists in this dissertation all contend that apprehending the crisis of scale demands a consideration and understanding of genre.

Introduction

[1] *The Good Place.* "Chidi Sees the Time Knife." Directed by Jude Weng. Chapter 38. Written by Christopher Encell and Joe Mande. NBC. January, 2019.

[2] Roy Scranton, "Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene." *The New York Times Opinionator*, November 2013. https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/10/learning-how-to-die-in-the-anthropocene/

[3] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. (Oxford [England] ; Blackwell, 1990), 64.

[4] For an analysis of the effects of the fall of the Soviet Union on capitalism and liberal democracy, see Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York : Free Press ;, 1992.

[5] Critics have long sought to categorize scales according to the issues they represent. According to Neil Smith, "The urban represents the daily sphere of the labor market." "Geographical Scales within the World Economy Approach." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 5, no. 1 (1981): 3–11. "Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale" (1993, 71). Peter J. Taylor, meanwhile, considers the global scale the scale of reality, the urban scale the scale of experience, and the national scale the scale of ideology. "Geographical Scales within the World-Economy Approach." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 5, no. 1 (1981): 3–11.

[6] While other spaces, including the global, also appear throughout my dissertation, I focus specifically on these four scales. Scales such as the body or region would also be appropriate, but I have limited myself to these scales for the sake of length, and because they epitomize unique contemporary cultural and geopolitical issues.

[7] By genre, I do not refer to the Aristotelian division between poetic genres such as epic, lyric, and drama, but rather to commercialized popular genres such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, and romance. David Duff. *Modern Genre Theory* (Longman Critical Readers. Harlow, England ; Longman, 2000), 3.

[8] See David Foster Wallace. "E Unibus Pluram," *Oblivion*: *Stories.* New York: Back Bay Books, 2006.

[9] For "post-postmodernism," see Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Post-Postmodernism, or, The Logic of Just-in-Time Capitalism.* Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 2012. For "cosmodernism," see Christian Moraru, *Cosmodernism : American Narrative, Late Globalization, and the New Cultural Imaginary*. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2011. For "metamodernism," see Robin Van den Akker. *Metamodernism : Historicity, Affect, and Depth after Postmodernism*. London ; Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017. For "altermodernism," Nicolas Bourriaud, ed. *Altermodern.* London: Tate Publishing, 2009. For postirony, see, Lee Konstantinou. *Cool Characters : Irony and American Fiction*. Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press, 2016.

[10] See Theodore Martin, *Contemporary Drift: Genre, Historicism, and the Problem of the Present.* Literature Now. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

[11] China Miéville, "The Future of the Novel." See also Jeremy Rosen, "Literary Fiction and the Genres of Genre Fiction."

[12] For discussions of genre after postmodernism, see Tim Lanzendörfer: "Introduction: The Generic Turn? Toward a Poetics of Genre in the Contemporary Novel," Theodore Martin, *Contemporary Drift: Genre, Historicism, and the Problem of the Present*, Andrew Hobernek, "Introduction: After Postmodernism," and "Literary Genre Fiction" in American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010.

[13] Angus Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*. Cornell Paperbacks. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964, 64.

[14] See John Rieder, *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System*, Seo-Young Chu. *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?: A Science-Fictional Theory of Representation*, Jeremy Rosen, "Literary Fiction and the Genres of Genre Fiction," Tim Lanzendörfer. *The Poetics of Genre in the Contemporary Novel,* Thomas Pavel, "Literary Genres as Norms and Good Habits," and Paul Kincaid, "On the Origins of Genre."

[15] Neil Smith, "Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale," *Social Text*, no. 33 (1992): 54.

[16] Nirvana Tanoukhi, "The Scale of World Literature," *New Literary History* 39, no. 3 (2008): 613.

[17] Henri Lefebvre, quoted from Neil Brenner, "Global, Fragmented, Hierarchical: Henri Lefebvre's Geographies of Globalization." *Public Culture* 10, no. 1 (September 1997): 135.

[18] Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, *The Cultures of Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), xi. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford England: Blackwell, 1990). Roland Robertson, *Globalization* (London: Sage, 1992), 8.

[19] Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Third edition. 1 online resource (xvii, 323 pages) vols. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008.

[20] Edward W. Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions.* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2000), 152.

[21] Literary theorist Michael Hardt and sociologist Antonio Negri refer to this process of deterritorialization and decentering in *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), xii. For broader discussions of deterritorialization, see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, as well as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.*

[22] Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005), 62

[23] In "Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale," Neil Smith identifies ways scaling, or "jumping scales," can subvert capitalism's hierarchical structure. While scaling can indeed develop new sustainable subjectivities, as I discuss later, it is important first to establish the way scaling disempowers the subject.

[24] Bruce Robbins. *The Beneficiary*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 13.

[25] Ibid., 23.

[26] Ibid., 6.

[27] Bruce Robbins, "The Sweatshop Sublime." PMLA 117, no. 1 (2002): 85.

[28] Slavoj Žižek, *Trouble in Paradise: From the End of History to the End of Capitalism*. Brooklyn : Melville House, 2015.

[29] David Harvey, (*A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. 1 online resource (vii, 247 pages) : illustrations, maps vols. Oxford ; Oxford University Press, 2007), 64.

[30] Ibid., 15.

[31] Free Trade Agreements and Trading Blocs, Encyclopedia.com, and What Is The North American Free Trade Agreement? | NAFTA

[32] The first web browser, Mosaic, launched in 1993, followed by Netscape. Amazon and eBay would not come until 1995, and Google by 1998, followed by the burst of the dot com bubble at the end of the decade. Forbes, "A Very Short History Of The Internet And The Web."

[33] Camille Ryan, "Computer and Internet Usage in the United States: 2016."

[34] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*. 2nd ed. Information Age ; v. 1. Oxford ; Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

[35] For a historical analysis of cultural understandings of the environment, see Patrick Allitt, "A Climate of Crisis: America in the Age of Environmentalism."

[36] Wai-Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents : American Literature across Deep Time*. (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), 3.

[37] Mark McGurl, "The Posthuman Comedy." Critical Inquiry 38, no. 3 (2012): 533–553.

[38] See Samuel Cohen, "Fables of American Collectivity Circa 2005: Chris Bachelder's U.S.!, Lydia Millet's 'Oh Pure and Radiant Heart,' and George Saunders's 'The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil'" and the review by Publishers Weekly.

[39] Angus Fletcher. *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*. Cornell Paperbacks. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964, 7.

[40] All subsequent citations to *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* will be included in text. George Saunders, *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*. (1st Riverhead trade pbk. ed. New York: Riverhead Books, 2005), 1.

[41] Maudnewton.com. "Roy Kesey interviews George Saunders." Saunders explains, "The way I usually work is to try and find some little thing — a concept or a bit of dialogue or whatever — and then let a story grow from there, with as little preconception as possible. In this case, Lane Smith, who illustrated a previous book (The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip) suggested I try to write a story where all the characters were abstract shapes. So I tried that."

[42] George Saunders, "Why I Wrote *Phil*."

[43] For example, from the Publishers Weekly review: "Saunders delivers some very funny exchanges and imaginative set-pieces, but literally has to call in a deus ex machina to effect Outer Horner's final undoing. It's entertaining, but politics and war don't really work that way, allegorically or otherwise." Reviewer Beth Dugan is similarly critical of the novella's other deus ex machina: the arrival of Great Keller.

[44] Mark McGurl, referring Stephen Jay Gould, makes this point in "The Posthuman Comedy," 540. See Stephen Jay Gould, "Size and Shape," The Richness of Life: The Essential Stephen Jay Gould, ed. Steven Rose (New York, 2007), pp. 319–23.

[45] Michael Tavel Clarke and David Wittenberg. *Scale in Literature and Culture*. Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies; Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 2.

[46] Ibid., 3.

[47] Zach Horton, "Composing a Cosmic View: Three Alternatives for Thinking Scale in the Anthropocene," in *Scale in Literature and Culture*. Edited by Michael Tavel Clarke and David Wittenberg. (Geocriticism

and Spatial Literary Studies; Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 36.

[48] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London ; Verso, 2006.

[49] Angus Fletcher. *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*. Cornell Paperbacks. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964, 22.

[50] Ibid., 74.

[51] Fredric Jameson, "World Reduction in le Guin," *Archaeologies of the Future: the Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. (Verso, 2005), 271.

[52] Miéville explains his dislike for allegory: "My short answer is that I dislike thinking in terms of allegory—quite a lot. I've disagreed with Tolkien about many things over the years, but one of the things I agree with him about is this lovely quote where he talks about having a cordial dislike for allegory. The reason for that is partly something that Frederic Jameson has written about, which is the notion of having a master code that you can apply to a text and which, in some way, solves that text. At least in my mind, allegory implies a specifically correct reading—a kind of one-to-one reduction of the text." Geoff Manaugh, "Unsolving the City: An Interview with China Miéville."

[53] China Miéville, *The City and the City.* (New York, New York: Del Rey, 2009), 74.

[54] For texts on genre's formal flexibility and historical mutations, see David Duff, *Modern Genre Theory*, Paul Kincaid, "On the Origins of Genre," Tim Lanzendörfer, "The Poetics of Genre in the Contemporary Novel," Thomas Pavel, "Literary Genres as Norms and Good Habits," and John Rieder, "On Defining SF, or Not: Genre Theory, SF, and History."

[55] See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change,* and Michael Dear, *The Postmodern Urban Condition.*

[56] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London ; Routledge, 2004. For other discussions of hybridity, see Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* and Nezar AlSayyad, *Hybrid Urbanism*.

[57] Martin J. Murray, *The Urbanism of Exception*: *The Dynamics of Global City Building in the Twenty-First Century*. (Cambridge, United Kingdom ; Cambridge University Press, 2017), xi.

[58] Critics primarily consider genre fiction a category of popular fiction, known for mainstream appeal and a lack of literary value. I define genre fiction broadly as a category encompassing popular traditions such as science fiction, fantasy, detective fiction, mysteries, westerns, romance, gothic fiction, horror, and magical realism, among others. The generic turn carried over individual generic traditions, conventions, tropes, and styles into literary fiction, while texts by genre writers gained institutional acceptance into the canon of literary fiction.

[59] Other contemporary literary authors participating in the generic turn include Margaret Atwood, Michael Chabon, Colson Whitehead, Kazuo Ishiguro, Jonathan Lethem, Junot Diaz, Viet Than Nguyen, Gary Shteyngart, Cormac McCarthy, Jennifer Egan, Richard Powers, Chang-Rae Lee.

[60] Theodore Martin, *Contemporary Drift: Genre, Historicism, and the Problem of the Present.* (Literature Now. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 16.

[61] See Jeremy Rosen, "Literary Fiction and the Genres of Genre Fiction" and Tim Lanzendörfer, "Introduction: The Generic Turn? Toward a Poetics of Genre in the Contemporary Novel."

[62] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act.* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 141. Jadwiga Węgrodzka, *Popular Genres and Their Uses in Fiction*. (Transatlantic Studies in British and North American Culture, 2364-2882 ; Volume 23. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2018), 12.

[63] John Rieder, *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System.* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2017), 65.

[64] Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 141.

[65] John Rieder. *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System.* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2017), 65.

[66] Allegory becomes a genre, in fact, when texts such as Saunders' *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* self-reflexively alter conventions and attitudes in response to historical changes. Similarly, periodizing terms like postmodernism become genres when they lose exclusive ties to particular historical eras, and instead continue as an ongoing marketable and institutionalized discourse. The back cover of author David

Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004) refers to him as a "postmodern visionary" despite the novel's publication after the end to the postmodern era. As a marketing device, the back cover invokes postmodernism as a popular genre, demonstrating that this phenomenon is already taking place. David Mitchell. *Cloud Atlas (Movie Tie-in Edition).* Media Tie In edition. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2012.

[67] John Rieder, *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System.* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2017), 5.

[68] Seo-Young Chu. *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?: A Science-Fictional Theory of Representation.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010) 7.

[69] For discussion of genre's historical mutability and flexibility, see John Rieder, "On Defining SF, Or Not: Genre Theory, SF, and History," Thomas Pavel, "Literary Genres as Norms and Good Habits," and Paul Kincaid, "On the Origins of Genre."

[70] All four novels in my study have attracted a significant degree of critical attention, demonstrating their acceptance into the canon of literary fiction. However, while critics primarily categorize Karen Tei Yamashita's magical realism as literary rather than genre fiction, the other three novelists in my study, China Miéville, Nalo Hopkinson, and Samuel R. Delany, exemplify the trend of genre writers seeing their work elevated into the category of literary fiction.

[71] Tim Lanzendörfer. *The Poetics of Genre in the Contemporary Novel*. (Lanham : Lexington Books, 2016), 4.

[72] Emilio Sauri, "Mapping Postmodernism and After," In *Postmodern/Postwar and after : Rethinking American Literature*, edited by Jason Gladstone (Iowa City : University of Iowa Press, 2016), 118.

[73] See Mitchum Huehls, *After Critique: Twenty-First-Century Fiction in a Neoliberal Age.* Oxford Studies in American Literary History. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

[74] Dermot Moran defines phenomenology as "a radical, anti-traditional style of philosophizing, which emphasizes the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe *phenomena*, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer." Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London, Routledge, 2000.

[75] Benoit Mandelbrot, "How Long Is the Coast of Britain? Statistical Self-Similarity and Fractional Dimension." *Science* 156, no. 3775 (May 5, 1967): 636–38.

[76] For a list of major phenomenological texts, see Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations* and *Cartesian Meditations,* Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* Jean-Paul Sarrtre's *Being and Nothingness*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* and *The Visible and the Invisible,* Jacques Derrida, "*la différance*," and critiques of Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry.*

[77] While Derrida is not primarily known as a phenomenologist, as Dermot Moran argues, Derrida was highly influenced by and in dialogue with the writings of philosophers Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Moreover, Derrida's concept of *différance* and later development of deconstruction influenced phenomenological thought. See Jacques Derrida, "*la différance*" and *Of Grammatology*. Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology.* London, Routledge, 2000.

[78] Dermot Morant, *Introduction to Phenomenology,* (London, Routledge, 2000), 4.

[79] Broadly, however, the texts in my study agree with Heidegger's assertion of the hermeneutics of human existence and of the necessity of interpretation. In Miéville, the detective's interpretive powers are central to his job. These texts also draw heavily from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's focus on embodiment and the self as the absolute source of experience. As critic Derek Woods argues, "Merleau-Ponty holds out the possibility of a descriptive language capable of crafting an ontology suited to domains of scale that human senses are unable to perceive directly." While this descriptive language remains subjective to the experience of the subject, these texts similarly entertain a guarded optimism for the value in representation for subjectivity-building. Dermot Morant, *Introduction to Phenomenology,* 235. Derek Woods, "Epistemic Things in Charles and Ray Eames's *Powers of Ten,*" in *Scale in Literature and Culture,* (Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies; Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 77.

[80] Adam Moore, "Rethinking Scale as a Geographical Category: From Analysis to Practice." *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 2 (April 2008): 214

[81] Andrew Herod, *Scale* (London ; Routledge, 2011), 21.

[82] Michael Tavel Clarke and David Wittenberg, *Scale in Literature and Culture*. (Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies; Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 8.

[83] Neil Smith, "Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale." *Social Text*, no. 33 (1992): 55–81.

[84] For texts on immanent critique, see Fredric Jameson's explanation in *The Political Unconscious,* and David Harvey's "Introduction" in Sociological Perspectives: Vol 33, No. 1, "Critical Theory," p. 5 (1990)
[85] David Duff, *Modern Genre Theory*. (Longman Critical Readers. Harlow, England ; Longman, 2000), 2.

Chapter One

[86] China Miéville, *London's Overthrow* (London, UK: The Westbourne Press, 2012), 5.
[87] Ibid., 3.
[88] Ibid., 4.
[89] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. 2nd Ed. ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 345.
[90] All subsequent citations to *The City and the City* will be included in text. China Miéville, *The City and the City.* New York, New York: Del Rey, 2009.
91 Doreen B. Massey, John Allen, Steve Pile, and Open University, *City Worlds*. Understanding Cities; Understanding Cities (London, England: Routledge in association with the Open University, 1999), 128.
[92] David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2012), 104.
[93] Slavoj Žižek, "Denial: The Liberal Utopia." Lacan.com. http://www.lacan.com/essays/?page_id=397. Accessed
November 27, 2018.
[94] See Carl Freedman, "From Genre to Political Economy: Miéville's The City & The City and Uneven Development." or Jude Roberts, "Crosshatching: Boundary Crossing in the Post-Millennial British Boom."
[95] See Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History*, Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction*, and Ronald G. Walker and June M Frazer, *The Cunning Craft: Original Essays on Detective Fiction and Contemporary Literary Theory*.
[96] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. 2nd Ed. ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001. Doreen B. Massey *World City*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2007.
[97] The very term, global city, is hybrid, referring to the urban environment and to international space simultaneously.
[98] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. London, UK: Routledge Classics, 2004.
[99] Henri Lefebvre, Eleonore Kofman, and Elizabeth Lebas. *Writings on Cities* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).
[100] Doreen B. Massey, John Allen, Steve Pile, and Open University, *City Worlds*, 15.
[101] For a discussion of urbanization and globalization, see David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2012), 5. For a discussion of uneven development, see Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Third edition: (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), xi. According to Neil Smith, uneven development is "the geographical expression of the more fundamental contradiction between use value and exchange value" In other words, uneven development results from a tendency under capitalism toward growth and surplus value, but at the same time, toward the withdrawal of capital from the built environment so it can move elsewhere for higher profits. Gentrification is therefore merely a symptom of contradictions inherent in the structure of capitalism, which not only produces but is dependent on economic inequality to function.
[102] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. (Post-Contemporary Interventions. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 40.
[103] Ibid., 44.
[104] As Michael Dear argues, "As the boundaries between fantasy and reality become ever more blurred, the form of postmodern cities is increasingly determined by the demands of spectacle and consumption." Michael Dear, *The Postmodern Urban Condition* (Blackwell: Oxford, England, 2000), 8.
[105] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. (London, UK: Routledge Classics, 2004), 309.
[106] Ibid., 310.
[107] Nezar AlSayyad, *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001).
[108] For arguments linking globalization with hybridity, see *Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Globalization and Culture: Melange*, and Jonathan Friedman, "The Hybridization of Roots and the Abhorrence of the Bush."

[109] Unlike diversity or multiculturalism, hybridity posits that all cultures and identities are liminal and contingent rather than unified and fixed.
[110] Ibid., 9.
[111] Ibid., 54.
[112] Eric Bulson, *Novels, Maps, Modernity: the Spatial Imagination, 1850-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 130.
[113] While in Breach, Borlú exists in both cities simultaneously. He "heard conversation in both languages and a third thing, a mongrel or antique that combined them." In other words, Borlú hears a hybrid of both cities' languages, demonstrating Breach as a hybrid space.
[114] Ananya Roy, "'The Reverse Side of the World': Identity, Space, and Power." *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*. Ed. AlSayyad, Nezar (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001), 237.
[115] Ananya Roy, "'The Reverse Side of the World': Identity, Space, and Power," 240.
[116] For a discussion of disorientation providing resistance to one's social subjects, see, Johan Schimanski, "Seeing Disorientation: China Miéville's The City & the City."
[117] According to Michael Dear, "our geographies have radically shifted: from sidewalk intro traffic; from car to screen; from arcade to inside your head; from stasis to speed. Your postmodern, mobile/virtual gaze dwells in a phantasmagoria of the interior, a hyper-real society of spectacle. And yet you are still in place, no matter where your senses are." "The conflation between material and virtual worlds, between spaces of the screen and spaces of the street, is part of the postmodern condition that we are only now confronting." *The Postmodern Urban Condition* (Blackwell: Oxford, England, 2000), 210.
[118] See Ananya Roy, "'The Reverse Side of the World': Identity, Space, and Power." *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*. Ed. AlSayyad, Nezar (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001): 229-243, and Kathryne Mitchell, "Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15, no. 5 (1997): 533–53.
119 By epistemology, I refer to "the study of knowledge and justified belief." Epistemology investigates the way we gather, verify, and understand knowledge. As such, "epistemology is concerned with the following questions: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What is its structure, and what are its limits?" By phenomenology, I refer to "the study of the structures of experience, or consciousness." Phenomenology investigates the appearance of and the way we perceive phenomena. As such, phenomenology is concerned with the following questions: What phenomenon do I experience? How does this phenomenon appear? How do I experience this phenomenon? Matthias Steup. "Epistemology." In The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2018. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/epistemology/. David Woodruff Smith. "Phenomenology." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2018. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/phenomenology/.
[120] See Theodore Martin, *Contemporary Drift: Genre, Historicism, and the Problem of the Present*. Literature Now (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017) and Niall Martin, "Unacknowledged Cities: Modernity and Acknowledgement in China Miéville's The City & The City and Marc Isaacs' All White in Barking." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 6 (December 12, 2013): 710–24.
[121] See Johan Schimanski, "Seeing Disorientation: China Miéville's The City & the City." *Culture, Theory, and Critique* 57, no. 1 (April 4, 2016): 106–20.
[122] See Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History*, 34, and Ronald G. Walker and June M Frazer, *The Cunning Craft: Original Essays on Detective Fiction and Contemporary Literary Theory*, 1.
[123] Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History*, 62.
[124] Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction*, 20.
[125] While the tradition has had an enduring history, many Golden Age authors retired following World War II, and this tradition generally waned in popularity. Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History*, 97.
[126] Ibid., 40.

[127] Leroy Lad Panek, *Watteau's Shepherds* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1979): 23.
[128] According to George N. Dove, every detective story has four identifiable qualities: first, "the main character is a detective." Second, "the main plot of the story is the account of the investigation and resolution." Third, "the mystery is no ordinary problem but a complex secret that appears impossible of solution." Finally, "the mystery is solved," and must "be known to the reader." *The City and the City* meets all of these criteria. George N. Dove, *The Reader and the Detective Story*, 10.
[129] Peter Hühn, "The Detective as Reader: Narrativity and Reading Concepts in Detective Fiction," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 33, no. 3 (1987): 465.
[130] Julian Symons, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History*, 113.
[131] Ibid., 124.
[132] Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction*, 22.
[133] For a discussion of the connection between hardboiled fiction and modernism, see Scott R. Christianson, "A Heap of Broken Images: Hardboiled Detective Fiction and the Discourse(s) of Modernity." *The Cunning Craft.* An Essays in Literature Book. Eds. Ronald G. Walker and June M. Frazer, (Macomb, Ill.: Western Illinois University, 1990): 134.
[134] Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction*, xv.
[135] Ibid., 24.
[136] For example, anti-detective novels need not feature a detective or a crime.
[137] Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (University Paperbacks. New York: Methuen, 1987), 9.
[138] Other examples of postmodernist anti-detective stories include Jorge Luis Borges, "Death and the Compass," Alain Robbe-Grillet, "The Erasers," and Vladimir Nabokov, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*." Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction*, 32.
[139] Nor is this the novel's only reference to the visual medium of film. Borlú refers to the original crime scene as the "*mise-en crime*," literally the setting or place of the crime, in reference to the filmic term, *mise-en-scéne* (4).
[140] Theodore Martin, *Contemporary Drift, 100.*
[141] Julian Symon summarizes the story's logical problem: "Dupin could have seen only the front or the back of the letter, and therefore could not possibly have observed at the same time the 'large black seal' (on the back) and the address 'in a diminutive female hand' (on the front)." Julian Symon, *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History*. 41.
[142] For a discussion on the detective story and the reader, see Peter Hühn, "The Detective As Reader: Narrativity and Reading Concepts in Detective Fiction," and George N. Dove, *The Reader and the Detective Story.*
[143] According to Miéville, the United Nations is not a superordinate authority because it lacks the power to enforce its will. Miéville, China. *Between Equal Rights: A Marxist Theory of International Law* (Historical Materialism Book Series, 1570-1522; 6. Leiden; Brill, 2004), 151.
[144] China Miéville, *Between Equal Rights: A Marxist Theory of International Law*, 133.
[145] Miéville further explains how international law is a process: "International law is a relationship and a process: it is not a fixed set of rules but a *way of deciding the rules.* And the coercion of at least one of the players, or its threat, is necessary as the medium by which particular contents will actualize the broader content of competitive struggle within the legal form." Ibid., 138, 151.
[146] Ibid., 8, 132, 3.
[147] Ibid., 152, 280.
[148] Ibid., 288.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid., 304.
[151] Ibid., 58.
[152] Significantly, Smith claims that "evictees' immobility…traps them in the interstices of an urban geography produced and reproduced in such a way as to exclude them" The word "interstices" links the evictees' subject-position with the global scale, which similarly resides in the interstices between scales. However, while the global scale empowers organizations like Breach to exert control over the global city,

in this case the global scale traps the homeless and prevents their access to space. Neil Smith. "Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale," 58.
[153] Ibid., 78.
[154] "Smart London Plan," London.gov. Accessed 11/27/18. 14.
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/smart_london_plan.pdf
[155] "Smart London Plan," 43.
[156] Thomas Ermacora and Lucy Bullivant, *Recoded City: Co-creating Urban Future,* 13, 53, 57.
[157] Ibid., 71.

Chapter Two
[158] All subsequent citations to *Tropic of Orange* will be included in text. Karen Tei Yamashita, *Tropic of Orange*, (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1997): 85.
[159] See Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (120) and Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (3).
[160] See Gordon S. Smith, *Altered States: Globalization, Sovereignty and Governance* and Kees van Kersbergen, R. H. Lieshout, and Grahame Lock, *Expansion and Fragmentation: Internationalization, Political Change, and the Transformation of the Nation State*.
[161] See MCamericanpresident. *President Bill Clinton - Remarks on the Signing of NAFTA*. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3ooMrgXido.
[162] Jesús Benito Sánchez, Ana M. Manzanas, and Begoña Simal González, (*Uncertain Mirrors: Magical Realisms in US Ethnic Literatures*. Critical Approaches to Ethnic American Literature ; No. 3. Amsterdam ; Rodopi, 2009): 239.
[163] For a discussion of *Tropic of Orange* and postmodernism, see Robin Blyn, "Belonging to the Network: Neoliberalism and Postmodernism in Tropic of Orange."
[164] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (Revised edition. London ; Verso, 2006): 44.
[165] Ibid., 109.
[166] According to Anderson, official nationalisms were "an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or exclusion from an emerging nationally-imagined community." Examples of strategies of official nationalisms include "compulsory state-controlled primary education, state-organized propaganda, official rewriting of history, militarism…and endless affirmations of the identity of dynasty and nation." Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 101.
[167] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (United States: University of California Press, 1985): 172.
[168] Ibid.,, 120.
[169] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 7.
[170] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000): 95.
[171] The use of high-speed communications, information, and shipping technologies increased global cultural exchange, and influx of immigrant migrations created a "global village" which seems to transcend the necessity of the nation-state. Most significantly, through increased heterogeneity across material and immaterial global networks, globalization threatens the nation-state's ability to manage its border.
[172] See Hideaki Shinoda, *Re-Examining Sovereignty: From Classical Theory to the Global Age*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
[173] Jerry Everard, *Virtual States: The Internet and the Boundaries of the Nation State*. Technology and the Global Political Economy, (London ; Routledge, 2000): 89.
[174] Ibid., 86.
[175] Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*. University Seminars/Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lectures, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 29.
[176] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology*. (London; Longman, 1994), 7.
[177] Benedict Anderson argues that sovereignty emerges "in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm." Thus, sovereignty replaces divinity as the legitimating justification for state power. However, while forms of sovereignty prior to the nation-state appealed to external powers like God for their authority, the nation-state self-

legitimizes itself through narratives of state sovereignty. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 7.

[178] Kees van Kersergen, R. H. Lieshout, and Grahame Lock, *Expansion and Fragmentation: Internationalization, Political Change, and the Transformation of the Nation State*. 1 online resource (240 pages) : illustrations vols, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999): 12

[179] As Giddens argues, the League of Nations and the United States "rested upon a deep commitment to individual state sovereignty." Rather than posing a threat to the nation-state, international institutions legitimate the nation-state as the dominant political form. Despite the perceived threat between national and international scales, therefore, the two share a close history of mutual legitimation which continues today with the close relation between neoliberalism and sovereignty. Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, 258.

[180] "LEXIS®-NEXIS® Academic Universe - Document." Accessed March 27, 2019. http://ggallarotti.web.wesleyan.edu/govt155/goreperot.htm.

[181] George HW Bush argued that if NAFTA does not pass, "the biggest loser, of course, in my view will be the good ol' US of A. Democracy is on the rise in this hemisphere, anti-Americanism is waning, and I honestly believe democracy will be given a setback in those countries if we fail to pass this outstanding agreement." In other words, passing NAFTA will help spread American democracy. Paradoxically, Bush suggests invokes narratives of nationality and American imperialism to argue for a neoliberal international trade agreement. Vito Danelli, *Bush 41 Endorsing NAFTA 09/14/1993*. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_w3-YMBcb_M.

[182] MCamericanpresident. *President Bill Clinton - Remarks on the Signing of NAFTA*. Accessed March 27, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3ooMrgXido.

[183] Julie A. Erfani, *The Paradox of the Mexican State: Rereading Sovereignty from Independence to NAFTA* (Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 1995): 164.

[184] Julie A. Erfani puts forth a similar claim, arguing that "Salinas has redefined national sovereignty as being contingent on a strong world-competitive private economy whose vitality is *undermined* by a strong state." However, while Erfani argues that this redefinition of sovereignty undermines previous myths, I argue for an expansion of this definition which preserves the traditional principle of territoriality. Significantly, my argument introduces a contradiction in my redefinition of sovereignty, while Erfani's does not. Julie A. Erfani, *The Paradox of the Mexican State: Rereading Sovereignty from Independence to NAFTA*, 172.

[185] Giorgio Agamben, *Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 1998): 15.

[186] While *homo sacer* originally refers to a Roman figure who can be killed without punishment but cannot be sacrificed, today the modern state treats all people as the *homo sacer*, uniting politics with the biological, or unpolitical. Ibid., 82, 173.

[187] Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2005): 9.

[188] Ibid., 87.

[189] Joni Adamson, "Encounter with a Mexican Jaguar: Nature, NAFTA, Militarization, and Ranching in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands." Edited by Claudia Sadowski-Smith. *Globalization on the Line: Culture, Capital, and Citizenship at U.S. Borders* (1st ed. New York: Palgrave, 2002): 223, 225.

[190] Having dehumanized these immigrants and reduced them to bare life, however, they cannot be formally "sacrificed" according to Agamben, since sacrifice is included within the law. Rather, these desert terrains constitute zones of exception where the Border Patrol exerts absolute authority over bare life, legitimating the nation-state through its exception from the law.

[191] Giorgio Agamben, *Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 131.

[192] Ibid., 161-162.

[193] Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham : Duke University Press, 2011): 1.

[194] Maggie Ann Bowers, *Magic(Al) Realism* (The New Critical Idiom. London ; Routledge, 2004): 15.

[195] Ibid, 19.

[196] Jesús Benito Sánchez, Ana Ma. Manzanas, and Begoña Simal González (*Uncertain Mirrors: Magical Realisms in US Ethnic Literatures*. Critical Approaches to Ethnic American Literature ; No. 3. Amsterdam ; Rodopi, 2009): 106.

[197] Wendy B Faris. (*Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*. 1st ed. 1 online resource (xi, 323 pages) vols. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004): 1.

[198] Wendy B. Faris, *Magic(Al) Realism*, 103.
[199] Alberto Fuguet, "I am not magical realist." *Salon*. Accessed February 4, 2019. https://www.salon.com/1997/06/11/magicalintro/.
[200] Alberto Fuguet, "Magical Neoliberalism," *Foreign Policy* (blog). Accessed February 4, 2019. https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/17/magical-neoliberalism/.
[201] Using the Alejandro González Iñárritu film *Amores perros* (2000) as an example of McOndo, Fuguet claims, "It's the perfect NAFTA movie, clogged with maquiladora-made Nikes and Mexican rock. It's no fantasy theme park junk. It's the real thing."
[202] Wendy B. Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, 148.
[203] Jesús Benito Sánchez, *Uncertain Mirrors: Magical Realisms in US Ethnic Literatures*, 239.
[204] Maggie Ann Bowers. *Magic(Al) Realism* (The New Critical Idiom. London ; Routledge, 2004): 121-122.
[205] Wendy B. Faris, for example, argues that, "In magical realism, the focalization—the perspective from which events are presented—is indeterminate; the kinds of perceptions it presents are indefinable and the origins of those perceptions are unlocatable. That indeterminacy results from the fact that magical realism includes two conflicting kinds of perception that perceive two different kinds of event: magical events and images not normally reported to the reader of realistic fiction because they are not empirically verifiable, and verifiable (if not always ordinary) ones that are realism's characteristic domain. Thus magical realism modifies the conventions of realism based in empirical evidence, incorporating other kinds of perception. In other words, the narrative is "defocalized" because it seems to come from two radically different perspectives at once." Wendy B. Fairs, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, 43.
[206] See Eva Aldea, *Magical Realism and Deleuze: The Indiscernibility of Difference in Postcolonial Literature*, (Continuum Literary Studies, London ; New York: Continuum, 2012): 14.
[207] As Wendy B. Faris notes, "A common technique…is the narrator's use of a matter-of-fact and detached style to narrate fantastic events, presenting them without comment." Wendy B. Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, 94.
[208] Maggie Ann Bowers, *Magic(Al) Realism*, 98.
[209] Ibid., 84.
[210] Ibid., 84.
[211] David Foster Wallace, "E Unibus Pluram," *Oblivion*: *Stories* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2006), 67.
[212] Lee Konstantinou, *Cool Characters : Irony and American Fiction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 168.
[213] While in this example the text refers to the way Emi defies the Asian female stereotype, the statement applies to her character more broadly.
[214] Ibid., 237.
[215] David Foster Wallace, "E Unibus Pluram," 33.
[216] Mitchum Huehls, *After Critique: Twenty-First-Century Fiction in a Neoliberal Age*, (Oxford Studies in American Literary History. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 11.
[217] Ibid., 10-11.
[218] Rachel Adams argues that whereas Cold War postmodern novels like Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* represent transnational connections created by globalization as occasions for or manifestations of paranoia and political paralysis, post-Cold War novels like *Tropic of Orange* represent these same connections as "a shared perception of community" and thus as an opportunity for "innovative forms of mobilization," and new "political networks that bypass traditional coalitional categories." Rachel Adams, "The Ends of America, the Ends of Postmodernism," 12.
[219] Joe Cleary, "Realism After Modernism and the Literary World-System," *Modern Language Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 259.
[220] Jed Etsy and Colleen Lye, "Peripheral Realisms Now," *Modern Language Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 285. https://doi.org/10.1215/00267929-1631397.
[221] Fredric Jameson, "Antinomies of the Realism-Modernism Debate." *Modern Language Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 476.
[222] Ibid., 197.
[223] Stephen Slemon, "Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse," *Magical Realism: History, Theory, Community*. Edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora, 409. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995.
[224] Maggie Ann Bowers, *Magic(Al) Realism*, 83.
[225] Wendy B. Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, 17.

[226] Jesús Benito Sánchez, *Uncertain Mirrors: Magical Realisms in US Ethnic Literatures*, 239.
[227] Fredric Jameson, "On Magical Realism and Film." *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (1986): 301–25.
[228] For a list of critics who argue the former, see Esen Kara, "Rewriting the City as an Oeuvre in Karen Tei Yamashita's Tropic of Orange," Sue-Im Lee,. "'We Are Not the World': Global Village, Universalism, and Karen Tei Yamashita's Tropic of Orange," Elisabeth Mermann-Jozwiak, "Yamashita's Post-National Spaces: 'It All Comes Together in Los Angeles,'" and Gayle K Sato, "The Transpacific Gaze in Tropic of Orange." For a list of critics who argue the latter, see Robin Blyn, "Belonging to the Network: Neoliberalism and Postmodernism in Tropic of Orange," Ryan Brooks, "EL Gran Mojado vs SUPERNAFTA: Alternative Fictional Realities and the Fight for Free Trade," and Susanne Wegener, "SUPERNAFTA and the Language of Global Excess: Trade Zone Encounters in Karen Tei Yamashita's Tropic of Orange."
[229] See Mitchum Huehls, *After Critique: Twenty-First-Century Fiction in a Neoliberal Age*.
[230] Theodore Martin, *Contemporary Drift*, 8.
[231] J. A. Cuddon, M. A. R. Habib, Matthew Birchwood, and Martin Dines, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, (Somerset, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2012): 552.
[232] Ibid., 517.
[233] For this reason, Yamashita's formal technique also resembles postmodern bricolage, which refers to a text's intertextual construction by putting diverse elements in conversation to arrive at a new, subversive meaning.
[234] Ibid., 249.
[235] Stefano Tani, *The Doomed Detective*, 37.
[236] Ibid., 22.
[237] While hard-boiled fiction falls firmly within the modernist period, its reliance on moral relativism prefigures the themes and attitudes of postmodernism, including the postmodern anti-detective novel. See the previous chapter for a discussion of these genres.
[238] See Sue-Im Lee, "'We Are Not the World': Global Village, Universalism, and Karen Tei Yamashita's Tropic of Orange" and Gayle K. Sato, "The Transpacific Gaze in Tropic of Orange."
[239] Mitchum Huehls, *After Critique: Twenty-First-Century Fiction in a Neoliberal Age*, 78.
[240] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri define Empire as a decentralized and deterritorialized apparatus of rule that includes but has also replaced the nation-state as a modern form of sovereign power. Unlike the traditional nation-state, Empire is a network with no boundaries or territorial center that operates on all levels of the social order. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000): *Empire*, xi-xii.
[241] Ibid., 340.
[242] Robin Blyn, "Belonging to the Network: Neoliberalism and Postmodernism in Tropic of Orange," 192-193.
[243] Susanne Wegener, "SUPERNAFTA and the Language of Global Excess: Trade Zone Encounters in Karen Tei Yamashita's Tropic of Orange," 84-85.
[244] Ryan Brooks, SUPERNAFTA Vs. El Gran Mojado: Alternative Fictional Realities and the Fight for Free Trade," 12.
[245] Aristotle, and Peter Simpson. *The Politics of Aristotle*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997): 10.

Chapter Three
[246] All subsequent citations to *Midnight Robber* will be included in text. Nalo Hopkinson, *Midnight Robber* (New York, Grand Central Publishing, 2000): 247.
[247] Dean MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers*, (Routledge, New York, 1992), 158-159.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, (New World Diasporas, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 61. Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*. Cornell Paperbacks, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 208.
[250] Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 151.
[251] Ibid., 159

[252]Michaeline A. Crichlow and Patricia Northover, *Globalization and the Post-Creole Imagination: Notes on Fleeing the Plantation*, (A John Hope Franklin Center Book. Durham [NC]: Duke University Press, 2009), 1.
[253] See Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*. Cornell Paperbacks. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997.
[254] For a discussion of science fiction's resistance to definition, John Rieder, *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System*, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2017. See also Darko Suvin's influential definition of science fiction as the genre of "cognitive estrangement" in *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction : On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
[255] Pheng Cheah, *What Is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016): 30.
[256] By framing the contemporary problem of cultural and literary production in terms of scale, Ganguly affirms this dissertation's premise that globalization's impact on spatial categories introduces a problem of representation in literature.
[257] Debjani Ganguly, *This Thing Called the World: The Contemporary Novel as Global Form*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 85.
[258] Ibid., 2.
[259] Ibid.
[260] For a discussion of the way human awareness of larger and smaller time scales has increased since the modernist period, see Ursula K. Heise, *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative, and Postmodernism*. Literature, Culture, Theory ; 23. Cambridge, UK ; Cambridge University Press, 1997.
[261] For debates about modernity's relevance in this era, see Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press, 1992 and Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991. Despite their opposing conclusions, both theorists similarly treat modernity as a universal ideal which sweeps across the planet in an uneven but linear progression. For a discussion of the term, "posthistory," see Lutz Niethammer and Dirk van. Laak, *Posthistoire: Has History Come to an End?* London; Verso, 1992.
[262] Pheng Cheah. *What Is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, 217.
[263] Peter Worsley, *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 323.
[264] Ibid., 3.
[265] Ibid., 307-308.
[266] Ibid., 310.
[267] Ibid., 312.
[268] Ibid., 307.
[269] Ibid., 323.
[270] Arif Dirlik, "Spectres of the Third World: Global Modernity and the End of the Three Worlds." *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (February 1, 2004), 135.
[271] Ibid., 134.
[272] Peter Worsley, *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*, 308.
[273] Mark T. Berger, "After the Third World? History, Destiny and the Fate of Third Worldism." *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (February 1, 2004): 10.
[274] Fouad Makki, "The Empire of Capital and the Remaking of Centre–Periphery Relations." *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (February 1, 2004): 149–68.
[275] See Elizabeth Boyle, "Vanishing Bodies: 'Race' and Technology in Nalo Hopkinson's Midnight Robber." *African Identities* 7, no. 2 (2009 2009): 177–91, and Belén Martín-Lucas, "Posthumanist Feminism and Interspecies Affect in Nalo Hopkinson's Midnight Robber," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice/Études Critiques Sur Le Genre, La Culture, et La Justice* 38, no. 2 (2017 2017): 105–15.
276 W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (Champaign, Ill: Project Gutenberg. 1903): 3.
[277] Mark C. Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking: The Power of Popular Fiction*, (New York, United States: Fordham University Press, 2017), 29.
[278] Pheng Cheah. *What Is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, 195.
[279] While Hopkinson draws primarily from Trinidad's festival, she also uses elements from Jamaica's Jonkonnu festival.

[280] Michaeline Crichlow, "Carnival Praxis, Carnivalesque Strategies and Atlantic Interstices." *Social Identities* 16, no. 4 (2010): 400.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Milla Cozart Riggio, "Time Out or Time In? The Urban Dialectic of Carnival" *Carnival: Culture in Action : The Trinidad Experience*. Ed. Milla Cozart Riggio. Worlds of Performance. (New York: Routledge, 2004): 13.
[283] Andrew Pearse, "Carnival in Nineteenth Century Trinidad." *Caribbean Quarterly* 4, no. 3–4 (19560301): 184.
[284] M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. First Midland book edition. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984), 6. Riggio. "Time Out or Time In? The Urban Dialectic of Carnival," 20.
[285] Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 65.
[286] For example, in an effort to expand Carnival's festivities to other parts of the year, Trinidad's government held a Carnival-related event in September of 1994. However, as a result of the state's mistaking "enthusiasm for Dimanche Gras, an essential facet of Carnival, for enthusiasm for the costumes themselves," the event was a commercial failure. Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 136.
[287] Michaeline Crichlow. "Carnival Praxis, Carnivalesque Strategies and Atlantic Interstices," 404.
[288] Ibid., 407.
[289] Milla Cozart Riggio. "Time Out or Time In? The Urban Dialectic of Carnival," 23.
[290] Philip W. Scher. *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 94.
[291] This reading supports Scher's assertion that Carnival is a polysemous event capable of accommodating many different versions of itself with many different meanings. Philip W. Scher. *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 101.
[292] For example, while observing a training session for a fighting performance, Ione says, "'What make anybody want to labour so?'" (40). At the beginning of the novel, despite Antonio's statement that "'back-break ain't for people,'" a pedicab runner reminds him that the Marryshevites' dependence on technology comes at the expense of their privacy (8). Thus, while Toussaint's post-industrial society has improved citizens' quality of life, in return they sacrifice their individual identities as embodied beings.
[293] See Christopher A. Shinn, "Masquerade, Magic, and Carnival in Ralph Ellison's 'Invisible Man.'" *African American Review* 36, no. 2 (2002): 244-245.
[294] Jillana Enteen, "'On the Receiving End of the Colonization': Nalo Hopkinson's 'Nansi Web." *Science Fiction Studies* 34, no. 2 [102] (July 7, 2007): 262–82. Hyacinth M. Simpson. "Fantastic Alternatives: Journeys into the Imagination. A Conversation with Halo Hopkinson." *Journal of West Indian Literature* 14, no. 1–2 (November 11, 2005): 104.
[295] Emil Zobel Marshall, "Resistance through 'Robber-Talk': Storytelling Strategies and the Carnival Trickster." *Caribbean Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2016 2016): 210–26.
[296] Nancy Batty, "'Caught by A…Genre': An Interview with Nalo Hopkinson." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 190.
[297] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. Gerard Aching, *Masking and Power: Carnival and Popular Culture in the Caribbean*. (Cultural Studies of the Americas ; v. 8. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 15.
[298] Milla Cozart Riggio, "Time Out or Time In? The Urban Dialectic of Carnival," 15.
[299] Gerard Aching. *Masking and Power: Carnival and Popular Culture in the Caribbean*, 4.
[300] Michaeline Crichlow, "Carnival Praxis, Carnivalesque Strategies and Atlantic Interstices," 402.
[301] Additionally, because the festival involves feasts, physical competitions, and "licentious" behavior, Carnival poetics also draw attention to issues of embodiment, often through the grotesque. Richard Schechner, "Carnival (Theory) After Bakhtin." *Carnival: Culture in Action : The Trinidad Experience*, Ed. Milla Cozart Riggio. Worlds of Performance. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 5.
[302] Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*, 82.
[303] Richard Schechner. "Carnival (Theory) After Bakhtin," 5.
[304] Gerard Aching, *Masking and Power: Carnival and Popular Culture in the Caribbean*, 21.
[305] Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*, 202.
[306] Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 36.
[307] Andrew Pearse, "Carnival in Nineteenth Century Trinidad," 185-189
[308] Philip W. Scher. *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 42.
[309] Ibid., 53-54.

[310] Ibid., 45.
[311] Ibid., 31.
[312] For example, Richard Burton argues that during Jamette Carnival after 1850, Carnival become more "disreputable," swinging from respectability and reputation. Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*, 202.
[313] Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 34.
[314] In fact, as a dialectic, respectability and reputation each opposes and complements the other. Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*, 158.
[315] Ibid., 82.
[316] As critics have already noted, characters like Ione who express a distaste for labor, a value associated with domesticity and respectability, make themselves dependent on Granny Nanny, while distancing themselves from their own sense of embodiment. In doing so, they uphold the established order through a respectability worldview. See Elizabeth Boyle, "Vanishing Bodies: 'Race' and Technology in Nalo Hopkinson's Midnight Robber," *African Identities* 7, no. 2 (2009 2009), 177–91 and Erin M Fehskens, "The Matter of Bodies: Materiality on Nalo Hopkinson's Cybernetic Planet," *Global South* 4, no. 2 (2010 Fall 2010), 136–56.
[317] Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 134.
[318] Indeed, as I argued in the Miéville chapter, neoliberal nation-states consider the economic dimension to state sovereignty as significant as its political dimension.
[319] Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*, 208.
[320] Philip W. Scher, *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 86.
[321] Moreover, within Granny Nanny's globalized network, hybridity politics no longer poses a threat, as the Caribbean's transnational, hybrid, and plural ethnic and cultural identity now belongs, in part, to the state.
[322] Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean*, 157.
[323] Peter Stallybrass, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London: Methuen, 1986.
[324] For a discussion of the possibility of Carnival time extending beyond Carnival, see Michaeline Crichlow, "Carnival Praxis, Carnivalesque Strategies and Atlantic Interstices," 399–414. For a discussion of the way Carnival not only disrupts daily life but the values it affirms, see Milla Cozart Riggio, *Carnival: Culture in Action: The Trinidad Experience*. Finally, for a discussion of the way masking strategies reaffirm subjectivity, see Gerard Aching, *Masking and Power: Carnival and Popular Culture in the Caribbean*.
[325] Dianne D. Glave, "An Interview with Nalo Hopkinson." *Callaloo: A Journal of African-American and African Arts and Letters* 26, no. 1 (2003 Winter 2003): 149.
[326] Christian Wolff, "An Interview with Nalo Hopkinson." *MaComère: Journal of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars* 4 (2001 2001): 30.
[327] Alisa K. Braithwaite, for example, interprets the novel from a posthumanist perspective, and reads Tubman as a fusion between human and machine capable of creating a new community. Elizabeth Boyle, meanwhile, reads Tubman as both a female and male character whose slippage of identity provides a sustainable model of selfhood. Alisa K. Braithwaite, "Connecting to a Future Community: Storytelling, the Database, and Nalo Hopkinson's Midnight Robbe," In *The Black Imagination: Science Fiction, Futurism and the Speculative*, edited by Sandra Jackson and Julie E. Moody-Freeman, 81–99. Black Studies and Critical Thinking: 14. New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2011. Elizabeth Boyle, "Vanishing Bodies: 'Race' and Technology in Nalo Hopkinson's Midnight Robber." *African Identities* 7, no. 2 (2009 2009): 177–91.
[328] See Erin M. Fehskens, "The Matter of Bodies: Materiality on Nalo Hopkinson's Cybernetic Planet." *Global South* 4, no. 2 (2010 Fall 2010), 136–56.
[329] For example, see Kate Perillo, "The Science-Fictional Caribbean: Technological Futurity in Nalo Hopkinson's Midnight Robber and Beyond," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 56 (July 7, 2018), 14-15.
[330] As another possible source for the other voice, at the end of the novel the text reveals that through Tan-Tan's pregnancy, Granny Nanny has discovered a way to contact her. Thus, representing a "second limb," Granny Nanny may speak for Tan-Tan as this other voice (328).
[331] In addition to representing Good Tan-Tan and Bad Tan-Tan, the two registers in her voice also refer to Tan-Tan's unborn child, whom the narrator, Granny Nanny, addresses at the end of the novel.
[332] Philip W. Scher. *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation*, 110.
[333] Ibid., 111.

Chapter Four

[334] Samuel R. Delany, *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1986): 162. All subsequent citations to *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand*, which I refer to as *Stars*, will be included in text.

[335] Similarly, *Stars* reminds the reader at several moments that "the alien is always constructed of the familiar," suggesting that humans are incapable of considering objects outside our relation to them. Samuel R. Delany, *Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1986): 133-184.

[336] Fredric Jameson, "The Unknowability Thesis," in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York, New York: Verso, 2005): 111.

[337] Roy Scranton, "Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene." *The New York Times Opinionator*, November 2013. https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/10/learning-how-to-die-in-the anthropocene/

[338] The American Museum of Natural History, *Passport to the Universe*, New York, 2000.

[339] Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1979), 82.

[340] Jerome Winter, "Introduction," in *Science Fiction, New Space Opera, and Neoliberal Globalism* (Melksham, United Kingdom: University of Wales Press, 2016): 8.

[341] Object-oriented ontology is an offshoot of speculative realism, a philosophical movement whose creation is often credited to four major figures: Ray Brassier, Iain Hamilton Grant, Graham Harman, and Quentin Meillassoux. While we can consider object-oriented ontology a type of speculative realism, not all speculative realists are object-oriented ontologists. Even among themselves, object-oriented ontologists such as Levi R. Bryant, Graham Harman, and Timothy Morton differ in their approaches and methodologies, but these critics all agree on several basic principles: the rejection of anthropocentrism, which situates humanity in a unique position in the universe; the rejection of what Quentin Meillassoux calls correlationism, or the idea since Kant that "we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being," rather than considering them apart; and, finally, the removal of the subject in the subject-object relation. Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency.* trans. By Ray Brassier (London, United Kingdom: Continuum, 2006), 5.

[342] Graham Harman, *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy* (Alresford, Hants, United Kingdom: Zero Books, 2012): 252.

[343] Two galactic empires, the Family and the Sygn, provide differing explanations for the causes of and preventions for Cultural Fugue.

[344] Prior to the eighteenth century, a number of major cosmological discoveries helped to represent the Milky Way as a defined and potentially navigable space. Notable among these, the Copernican Revolution in 1543 moved the Earth away from the center of the universe, Galileo Galilei in the seventeenth century recognized the Milky Way as a cluster of stars, and Newton's infinite universe cosmology in the eighteenth century finally did away with models of the stars as a mere "backdrop" rather than concrete objects. Helge S. Kragh, *Conceptions of Cosmos, From Myths to the Accelerating Universe: A History of Cosmology* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2007), 61. Leila Belkora, *Minding the Heavens: The Story of Our Discovery of the Milky Way* (Bristol, United Kingdom: Institute of Physics Publishing, 2003): 10.

[345] His "map" of the heavens remarkably resembles the disk shape of our own galaxy. Ibid., 104, 100.

[346] Ibid., 117-118.

[347] Ibid., 158, 159.

[348] At the end of the novel, fears of Cultural Fugue forming at Dyethshome coincide with the arrival of a Xlv fleet (322).

[349] Initially, Hubble proposed calling these objects "extra-galactic nebula," since they reside outside the Milky Way, while Harlow Shapely suggested "galaxies." Of course, Shapely ultimately won this debate, although "galaxies" did not come into dominant usage until Hubble's death in the 1950s. Leila Belkora, *Minding the Heavens: The Story of Our Discovery of the Milky Way* (Bristol, United Kingdom: Institute of Physics Publishing, 2003): 321.

[350] The period leading up to and including the 1930s represented a revolutionary break in cosmology. In 1923, Edwin Hubble discovered stars within the Andromeda nebula, demonstrating it to be a galaxy distinct from the Milky Way. Finally, the "island universe" theory, which had fallen "into disfavor by the end of the [19th] century," achieved scientific and cultural consensus. Helge S. Kragh, *Conceptions of Cosmos, From*

Myths to the Accelerating Universe: A History of Cosmology (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2007), 245 100, 119. Belkora, 134. The largest post-1930s breakthrough in cosmology, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background in 1965, also led to the development of the Big Bang Theory. In addition, the detection of radio signals coming from the Milky Way in 1931 led to the development of radio-astronomy, which is responsible for the cataloguing of hundreds of galaxies and other celestial objects. Edward Harrison, *Cosmology: The Science of the Universe* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 127. In the 1970s and 1980s, mappings of local clusters of galaxies demonstrated a non-uniform distribution, giving us a clearer picture of the universe. Malcom Longair, *The Cosmic Century: A History of Astrophysics and Cosmology* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 200. 257-259.

[351] While the concept of dark matter was introduced as early as the 1920s, it did not become a major topic until the 1970s. In 1974, multiple groups of astronomers independently estimated that the universe is composed of 90-95% dark matter. Even with the addition of dark matter, scientists struggled to explain the universe's apparent accelerated expansion, which by 1998 was considered fact. Helge S. Kragh, *Conceptions of Cosmos, From Myths to the Accelerating Universe: A History of Cosmology* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2007), 213. 214. 232. Malcom Longair, *The Cosmic Century: A History of Astrophysics and Cosmology* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 250.

[352] Weinberg is referring specifically to the implications of an accelerating universe. For more see, *The First Three Minutes* (1977). Helge S. Kragh, *Conceptions of Cosmos, From Myths to the Accelerating Universe: A History of Cosmology* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2007), 237.

[353] In the 1970s, scientists speculated on the existence of black holes. These speculations would be supported in the 1980s and 1990s when infrared and sub-millimeter technology confirmed the existence of a supermassive black hole at the center of the Milky Way. At the same time, astronomers made a major discovery concerning the composition of all galaxies, including our own. Leila Belkora, *Minding the Heavens: The Story of Our Discovery of the Milky Way* (Bristol, United Kingdom: Institute of Physics Publishing, 2003), 362-363.

[354] *Cosmos,* directed by Adrian Malone, performed by Carl Sagan (1980; Los Angeles, California: Public Broadcasting Service, 2005), Bluray.

[355] Thomas M. Lessl, "Science and the Sacred Cosmos: The Ideological Rhetoric of Carl Sagan." Quarterly Journal of Speech 71, no. 2 (1985): 178.

[356] Related to this, a search for "Cosmic Citizen" on the internet yields results which overwhelmingly suggest a yearning for spiritual transcendence. For example, the radio show, "The Cosmic Citizen," is "a show for progressive religionists and spiritual people who are ready to find a spirituality worthy of an age of science and enlightenment."

[357] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 7.

[358] *2001: A Space Odyssey,* directed by Stanley Kubrick (Los Angeles, California: Stanley Kubrick Productions, 1968), DVD.

[359] Carl Sagan, *Contact* (United States, Simon and Schuster, 1985).

[360] As the text emphasizes, worlds must have a culture in order to exist, and Cultural Fugue is a socioecological phenomenon.

[361] Ethan Siegal, "Physicists Must Accept That Some Things Are Unknowable," *Forbes,* January 2016.

[362] Despite the ambitious scope of *Stars,* both Delany and the criticism surrounding him have little to say on the novel. Delany has stated that the Nevèrÿon fantasy series, written concurrently with *Stars,* required more labor and is more important to him.[362] In a letter to a friend in 1984, Delany clarified his ambivalence, writing, "I never thought it [*Stars*] was bad (just, occasionally, uninteresting and dull)." Samuel R. Delany, 1984: Selected Letters (Rutherford, NJ: Voyant, 2000) 186. *Starboard Wine,* a collection of essays on science fiction published in the same year as *Stars*, does not mention Delany's newest novel once. Additionally, *Stars* has attracted far less critical attention than works like *Dhalgren* (1975) and *Triton* (1976). Carl Freedman, ""*Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand:* Samuel Delany and the Dialectics of Difference," in *Critical Theory and Science Fiction* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 146-147.

[363] In the 1980s, Delany largely turned to criticism. His next novel, *They Fly at Ciron,* published in 1993, is a rewritten and expanded version of a fantasy novelette written in the 1960s. Delany has written a number of novels since then, and while many of them contain speculative elements, none are as invested in the science fictional settings and conventions of Delany's earlier works.

[364] Nor has the popularity of what writers and critics call the New Space Opera waned, with the publication of space opera novels by John Scalzi, Charles Stross, Elizabeth Moon in the 2000s to the present. An anthology, *The New Space Opera*, was published in 2007. Alastair Reynolds, "Space Opera: This Galaxy Ain't Big Enough For the Both of Us," in *Strange Divisions and Alien Territories: The Sub-Genres of Science Fiction.* Ed. Keith Brooke (New York, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 19.
[365] See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, and Ihab Hassan, *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*.
[366] Samuel R. Delany humorously refers to space opera as the genre which features a "spaceship-streaking, blaster-wielding, alien-encountering, planet-destroying sort of adventure." Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine*: *More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction,* (Pleasantville, New York: Dragon Press, 1984): 156.
[367] Gardner Dozois and Jonathan Strahan, "Introduction," in *The New Space Opera* (New York, New York: Harper Voyager, 2007), 2.
[368] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 218-220.
[369] Alastair Reynolds, "Space Opera: This Galaxy Ain't Big Enough For the Both of Us," in *Strange Divisions and Alien Territories: The Sub-Genres of Science Fiction.* Ed. Keith Brooke (New York, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 13.
[370] In terms of subject matter, the New Wave is characterized by a focus on the soft sciences, such as psychology and sociology, as opposed to the hard sciences of the Golden Age in the 1940s and 1950s, while also incorporating experimental modernist and postmodernist forms into the genre.
[371] Part of the reason for this is Delany's narrow definition of the movement. Delany considers the movement "a group of writers who were published in *New Worlds* magazine from about 1965 to about 1970." Delany's only short story in *New Worlds* was published over the objections of the editor, Michael Morecock. Samuel R. Delany, *Silent Interviews: on Language, Race, Sex, Science Fiction, and Some Comics* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 207-208.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Jerome Winter, "Introduction," in *Science Fiction, New Space Opera, and Neoliberal Globalism* (Melksham, United Kingdom: University of Wales Press, 2016): 2.
[374] As an avid reader and writer of science fiction criticism, Delany was well-aware of the creative shift away from space opera, a genre the majority of writers discarded as a relic of science fiction's less flattering origins. During the New Wave, despite notable exceptions like Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) and the film *Star Wars* (1977), space opera had largely fallen out of fashion. Nor did Delany's choice to write space operas go uncontested, but rather made him vulnerable to criticism. In a reading of Thomas M. Disch's short story, "Et in Arcadia Ego," which is composed largely of praise, Delany recognizes several moments in the story which directly parody his space opera. Delany states, "Such gibes, however well-intentioned, are in most cases more likely to make the other writer [Delany] dislike the work than thrill to it. But during that first hearing, I can honestly say, much of the direct parody of me dimmed under its stylistic bravado." Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine*: *More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction,* (Pleasantville, New York: Dragon Press, 1984): 164.
[375] In addition to *Babel-17* (1966) and *Nova* (1968), other major works by Delany like *Empire Star* (1966) and *Trouble on Triton* (1976) share the space opera sub-genre's interest in interplanetary and galactic scales.
[376] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 222.
[377] Ibid., 219.
[378] For Delany, this oversight happened as a consequence of the development of science fiction into a distinct genre in the 1930s. According to Delany, science fiction focused first on the far future in the 1920s and 1930s only to switch to the near future in the New Wave because, rather than being about the future, science fiction is fundamentally a way of reading. Therefore, when science fiction was new, it was more advantageous to use "bold, broad clearly visible rhetorical strokes" to distinguish the genre from other kinds of literature. Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine*: *More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction,* (Pleasantville, New York: Dragon Press, 1984): 156.
[379] Ibid., 191.

[380] Appropriately, Delany has suggested that the *Stars Wars* trilogy should be considered fantasy rather than science fiction for its lack of interest in rational justification for its fantastical elements. In a review of *Star Wars* in 1977, Delany praises the film's capturing of the galaxy's scale and diversity through special effects, but criticizes what he calls an "imaginative failure" to apply this same "variation and invention" to the film's largely white, male characters. Samuel R. Delany, *Silent Interviews: on Language, Race, Sex, Science Fiction, and Some Comics* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 81. Samuel R. Delany, "*Star Wars*: A Consideration of the Great New. S.F. Film," in *Cosmos: Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Star Publications, 1977): 33-38.
[381] For Delany, the "science" component of science fiction is important not necessarily for the sake of plausibility—and certainly not predictability—but for the way it expands the "aesthetic" options of a tale. Samuel R. Delany, *Silent Interviews: on Language, Race, Sex, Science Fiction, and Some Comics* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 81.
[382] Delany claims that "the conventions of poetry or drama or mundane fiction—or science fiction—are in themselves separate languages." Rather than defining science fiction through its generic qualities or conventions, then, Delany does so through the models we use to interpret its use of language. Ibid., 53.
[383] Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1979).
[384] For Delany, the reader's expectations—which are not represented in the text—are just as important in science fiction as any changes to reality. For example, in interpreting the sentence, "Then her world exploded," Delany explains that while "mundane" or realist fiction, which does not accommodate sharp breaks from reality, would interpret this line metaphorically, a science fictional text would encourage a literal interpretation, as well. Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine*: *More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction,* (Pleasantville, New York: Dragon Press, 1984): 88.
[385] Ibid., 157.
[386] Ibid., 26. Fredric Jameson echoes this claim: "SF does not seriously attempt to imagine the 'real' future of our social system. Rather, its multiple mock futures serve the quite different function of transforming our own present into the determinate past of something yet to come" Fredric Jameson, "Progress Versus Utopia, or, Can We Imagine the Future," in *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (New York, New York: Verso, 2005): 288.
[387] Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine*: *More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction,* (Pleasantville, New York: Dragon Press, 1984): 176.
[388] Ibid., 48.
[389] Ibid.
[390] Ibid.
[391] Ibid.
[392] Ibid.
[393] In addition to drawing from the New Wave's interest in stylistic experimentation, Delany also contributes to the postmodernist tradition through his celebration of difference as the basis for meaning-making. Finally, through the Sygn (or Sign), an empire which values local difference, Delany recalls the principles of the post-structuralism. Specifically, the Sygn recalls the movement's deriving meaning through relations, as well as Jacques Derrida concept of *différance*.
[394] Samuel R. Delany, *Silent Interviews: on Language, Race, Sex, Science Fiction, and Some Comics* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 24.
[395] While this realization can lead to a sense of powerlessness, Delany has elsewhere rejected the idea that because "the modern world—the object—is too complex to know completely, it must be of no account at all." Although for Delany science fiction does not try to predict—or accurately represent—the future, neither does this mean its objects of representation should be trivialized as fantasy or reduced to the mind alone. Samuel R. Delany, *Starboard Wine*: *More Notes on the Language of Science Fiction,* (Pleasantville, New York: Dragon Press, 1984): 191.
[396] Ibid., 157.
[397] Seo-Young Chu, *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?: A Science-Fictional Theory of Representation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010): 7.
[398] While on Rhyonon, Korga first realizes that he has a world after reading a database of literature (45); Marq compares the remapping of Korga's brain to unpacking a "text" (150); finally, in the epilogue, Marq's communication with an alien is only possible through translation.

[399] See Graham Harman, *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy*, Quentin Meillassoux, "Science Fiction and Extro-Science Fiction," and Brian Willems, *Speculative Realism and Science Fiction*.
[400] Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology: or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: 2012): 133.
[401] Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: 2013): 15, 31, 36, 79
[402] Ibid., 12.
[403] While differences between speculative realism and object-oriented ontology exist, their relative consensus on the essential role of unknowability leads to similar readings of science fictional texts. For this reason, I will use the term "speculative" to denote any narrative element whose unknowability is an ontological principle.
[404] Quentin Meillassoux, *Science Fiction and Extro-Science Fiction* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Univocal Publishing, 2015), 64.
[405] In other words, while the correlationists attribute the unknowability of the universe to the limits of human cognition, Meillassoux makes unknowability an absolute property of objects themselves. Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*. trans. By Ray Brassier (London, United Kingdom: Continuum, 2006), 53.
[406] While object-oriented ontologists such as Graham Harman differ is their treatment of correlationism, their models of the speculative similarly connect the ontological principle of unknowability with human knowledge. According to Graham Harman, while Meillassoux has a problem with the "notion that absolute knowledge of any sort is impossible," Harman sees this as inevitable and instead wants a more radical break from correlationism. Graham Harman, "brief SR/OOO tutorial," July 2010. https://doctorzamalek2.wordpress.com/2010/07/23/brief-srooo-tutorial/
[407] While for Meillassoux such descriptive writing is rare, object-oriented ontology more openly embraces this kind of prose. Morton perhaps best exemplifies the use of the "cosmic perspective" in his writing. In particular Morton's description of hyperobjects shares a relation to cosmic imagery, space opera, and the science fictional sublime: "I do not access hyperobjects across a distance, through some transparent medium. Hyperobjects are here, right here in my social and experimental space. Like faces pressed against a window, they leer at me menacingly; their very nearness is what menaces. From the center of the galaxy, a supermassive black hole impinges on my awareness, as if it were sitting in the car next to me at the traffic lights."
[408] Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object* (Alresford, Hants, United Kingdom: Zero Books, 2011): 49.
[409] Ibid., 116.
[410] Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2011): 246.
[411] Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: 2013): 5.
[412] Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology: or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: 2012): 10.
[413] Ibid., 98.
[414] Ibid.
[415] Ibid., 99.
[416] Ibid., 289.
[417] Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2011): 286.
[418] Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object* (Alresford, Hants, United Kingdom: Zero Books, 2011): 116.
[419] Ibid., 7.
[420] Mark McGurl, "The Posthuman Comedy." Critical Inquiry 38, no. 3 (2012): 550-551.

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