“IN SOME RESPECTS PECULIAR”: REPRESENTATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE BRITISH AND ANGLOPHONE NOVEL

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IN SOME RESPECTS “PECULIAR”: REPRESENTATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE BRITISH AND ANGLOPHONE NOVEL

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A Dissertation

Submitted to

the Graduate Faculty of

Auburn University

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Auburn, Alabama
August 9, 2008

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Doctor of Philosophy, August 9, 2008
(M.A., Auburn University, 2000)
(B.A., Southeastern Louisiana University, 1997)

267 Typed Pages

Directed by Paula R. Backscheider

This dissertation analyzes representations of citizenship in five British novels that were written over a period of 260 years. Read together, these novels chart the ways in which citizenship has been coveted, accepted, adapted, and rejected by different groups of people over time. As Lord Goldsmith recently acknowledged in his report on citizenship in Britain, the concept has been understood in many different ways in the country and over the centuries, but what his analysis fails to confront is the extent to which the designation has been racist, sexist, and classist since its earliest inception. This fact has had serious consequences for the British nation-state.

Certainly citizenship is consequential. The language used to discuss it in the West insistently foregrounds this fact, suggesting, as it does, liberation and justice. To talk about it, one must evoke matters as important as the rule of law, due process, equal protection, emancipation, freedom, privilege, and rights. Yet the rhetoric of liberation disguises an unsettling reality; citizenship is a category of identity that

carries with it certain disciplinary structures. It is not merely a politically descriptive condition; it is a conceit specific to a particular ascendancy. The juxtaposition of the liberatory and the disciplinary aspects of citizenship indicate what a very complicated category of identity it is.

The complicated nature of citizenship is the focus of this dissertation. In it, I trace the development of the concept of citizenship in five British novels that cover a time-span of nearly three centuries in order to illustrate the creation of what might be called the post-imperial subject. Each novel that I analyze reveals a different facet of a new form of political identity. Naturally, given their temporal distance, the novels are stylistically quite different from one another. Yet, in spite of their differences, they each describe the citizen in the process of *becoming*. My analysis of these texts illustrates the various gestures of a new form of political subjectivity, one with roots that reach back to the Enlightenment, but that rejects the ideal citizen posited by that model. The post-imperial subject foregrounds personal affiliative ties over national ones and indicates the liberatory potential of citizenship that is divorced from the symbolic work that the concept of citizenship has traditionally performed for the nation-state.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to my committee for their invaluable advice and seemingly endless patience. Truly, I have worked with the best. Thanks, also, to my wonderful friends Erin, Jessica, Joanne, Kim, Rhonda, and Shea for support, enthusiasm, bread, flowers, chocolate, and the odd glass of wine. Molly has helped me to maintain a sense of perspective (dogs do that), and I am grateful. Many thanks and much love to Jim for believing in my work; you inspire me with your intellect, wit, and intensity and you really do put up with a lot. Love to Walter; how I wish you were here to appreciate this accomplishment. And, finally, thanks to Mimi, for the most fantastic experience of my life.

Document formatted using Chicago Manual of Style

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Chapter I

"You Wear It Well": Citizenship and Belonging

What a deformed thief this fashion is.

—William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act III, scene iii

It has been said that writing on citizenship is now quite "fashionable."[1] Certainly, in the past decade, a proliferation of books and articles has been published that discuss the many ways that the meaning of the concept has changed in the aftermath of colonialism and with the development of a new world economy. As governments have struggled to determine who does and does not belong within their physical borders, and, in a more abstract sense, within their national families, critics have kept pace with commentary on these attempts. The most striking aspect of this claim is the use of the "fashionable." While it may seem unconventional to discuss a matter as consequential as citizenship in terms associated with a topic as ostensibly frivolous as fashion, the comparison is useful for many reasons. Clothing sends a message; it affects and reflects how individuals feel about themselves. It is connected in nuanced ways to one's self in the world and is related to issues such as class, race, and religion. Words such as "style," "design," "fit," and "trend" are all words that could be used to discuss both fashion and citizenship. To describe citizenship as a sort of garment that might be donned and doffed depending upon the political, social, and economic weather illustrates the flexibility of a legal status that is generally assumed to be rather inflexible. A discussion of citizenship in terms of fashion also seems somehow appropriate, given the old cliché of world-weary immigrants arriving in their new homelands in possession of no more than "the clothes on their backs."[2] Of course, it cannot be denied that different people "wear" their citizenship in different ways or that individuals may be stripped of the rights of citizenship for legal and political reasons.

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[1] See John Hoffman, *Citizenship Beyond the State* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 1; and Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, "Changing Citizenship in Europe: Remarks on Postnational Membership and the National State," in *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe*, ed. by David Cesarani and Mary Fulbrook (New York: Routledge Press, 1996), 17.

The British novelist George Eliot recognized the usefulness of the citizenship as garment metaphor in her final novel, *Daniel Deronda.* In it, a Jewish character laments the tendency of Jews in England to assimilate into English Protestant culture once they were granted the rights of citizenship and wonders whether a "fresh-made garment of citizenship [could] weave itself straightway into the flesh and change the slow deposit of eighteen centuries."[3] The line suggests an intimate connection between surfaces and depths, for it acknowledges that that which covers individuals also affects their identities. It indicates how there are many visible ways that a person's citizenship has both superficial and deep repercussions for personal identity. Further, it suggests that it takes time for an individual to become accustomed to wearing the new garment of citizenship.

Like fashion, different styles of citizenship come in and out of vogue. The concept of citizenship has been redefined throughout history in order to reflect the changing social and political needs of nation-states, but in its most basic sense, citizenship legally designates who is or is not a member of a state. Immigration problematizes this determination for important and often related reasons. Primarily, governments resist the extension of citizenship benefits to newcomers for fiscal reasons: the greater the number of citizens, the greater the public expenditure. There may be racist and nationalist reasons informing anti-immigration policies. Even when different groups of people are legally incorporated into a society, there are usually attempts made to distinguish among types of legal identity in order to restrict the rights of these groups. Just as with clothing, there are different categories of political membership, which governments sometimes tailor to fit the needs of disparate groups of people. But not always. More often, citizenship is best considered as a standard uniform that individuals are expected to wear with pride. Of course, as with all fashion, uniforms fit some better than others. The British government in particular has five uniform versions of citizenship that were established by the Nationality Act of 1981[4]: Citizen, Dependent Territories Citizen, Overseas Citizen, Subject, and Protected Person.[5] Peculiar to Britain—a nation that lacks a written constitution—is the fact that there are no specific rights legally attached to these designations, except by assumption, and, perhaps, through omission.[6]

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[2] This point is fully explored in Linda Grant's recently published novel entitled *The Clothes on Their Backs* (London: Virago Press, Ltd., 2008).

[3] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (1876; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 528.

However, it is difficult even for governments of nations with written constitutions to determine who should be entitled to wear the garment of citizenship. The delineation of which rights of citizenship individuals should be entitled to and to what degree they may participate as members of the polity is often difficult and usually controversial. As an indication of this, consider that one of the most important American icons of citizenship—the Statue of Liberty—features a poem at its base that announces to the world the country's willingness to welcome the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free," yet in recent years, the American federal government has proposed building a giant wall along its southernmost national border in order to keep out a significant number of those very masses. At the same time, several American state governments have begun to grant migrant workers limited political representation in elections, especially those involving state public school systems. Some migrant workers are even given access to state-subsidized medical care,[7] indicating that state governments, at any rate, are interested in fashioning a form of citizenship that would cover those workers who are essential to regional and local economies.

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[4] The Goldsmith Report, commissioned by Prime Minister Gordon Brown and issued in March 2008, suggests simplifying these designations.

[5] Ann Dummett and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects,Citizens, Aliens and Others* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, Ltd., 1990), 3.

[6] According to Dummett and Nicol, protected persons do not have the right to vote or to stand for public office, which implies that these rights are attendant to the other four designations.

Of course, because the very nature of citizenship implies the exclusion of some and the inclusion of others, debates about who should be included and with which rights are often fraught with racist, sexist, classist, and nationalist language. In fact, the modern nation-state seems to be predicated upon a certain xenophobic attitude. The most extreme example of this is Nazi Germany, but xenophobia is not always so obvious or violent. For instance, the language used in the immigration debate in the United States often evokes ideas of abjection and criminality. While the phrases "undocumented worker" and "guest worker" are sometimes used to discuss those people living and working in the country who lack the proper documentation that would indicate their legal statuses, more typically, such individuals are called "illegal aliens," revealing the xenophobic attitudes that underlie the immigration debate. Dummett and Nicol describe the ways in which state authorities evoke and even promote xenophobia "in the name of national interest."[8] They explain that while "pride in citizenship is historically associated with a belief in equality, freedom and self-government ... it can be distorted into a very different sort of belief—that a 'citizen' is naturally and properly superior to an 'alien,' that inequality between citizens and aliens is a part of the proper order of things, that aliens have no natural right outside their own states."[9]

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[7] Recently, and quite controversially, the University of Kansas offered in-state tuition rates to the children of registered guest workers. In California, a recent ballot initiative would allow parent guest workers to vote in local school board elections. It is important to note that these rights are extended by the states and not the American federal government. This situation reflects the increasing power of the states.

This same kind of exclusionary language is evoked even among citizens within a nation-state because of the fact that, in most Western democracies, different "categories" of citizens enjoy varying degrees of legal equality. It is interesting to note the ways in which the Western, nation-state paradigm of citizenship has enabled governments to fashion garments that have simply not been good fits for several categories of people: most notably women, racial and social minorities, the economically disadvantaged, and nonwestern, former colonials. This speaks to another important issue associated with the concept: how do nation-states ensure equal rights for all of its citizens? Can they? Is it in their best interests to do so?

It may be that the garment of citizenship is just too restrictive to fit modern individuals. Western ideas of citizenship can be traced all the way back to Antiquity. The Greeks considered only those men who were both propertied and educated to be citizens. Aristotle defined a citizen as "one who has a share in the privileges of rule"[10] and definitively excluded women and former slaves from this privileged position. The Romans borrowed heavily from the Greeks in their definition of citizenship but developed a somewhat abstract quality of duty to the state, which formed an early foundation for contract theory. In the Early Modern era, the word “subject” was preferable to citizen, reflecting the influence of feudalism. The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century created, for the first time, an interest in an individual’s relationship to God and to the State, an idea that provided a solid foundation for Liberal Humanist philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, men who would later examine the relationship between rational individuals and their political environments. This relationship eventually resulted in the social contract.[11] Once the concept of state sovereignty was solidified, the road was paved for discussions in the eighteenth century that resulted in modern versions of citizenship, discussions that assumed a “culturally homogenous population, within [the] framework of a strong and unitary national state.”[12] This is clearly no longer the case. Twenty-first century nation-states are more visibly diverse than ever before, populated by different groups of people who have a wide variety of needs that may not be met by the uniform types of citizenship that are (sometimes) made available to them.

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[8] Dummett and Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens,* 11.

[9] Dummett and Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens,* 11.

[10] Qtd. in Bryan S. Turner, *Citizenship and Capitalism, Controversies in Sociology* 21, ed. by T. B. Bottomore and M. J. Mulkey (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 14.

However, is it possible to alter the *prêt à porter* garment of citizenship to fit citizens of the post-modern world? Or will individuals need to create political identities independent of the traditional edifices of citizenship? What might this bespoke citizenship look like? Some theorists believe that the many examples of extra-citizenship rights that are extended in democracies throughout the world indicate the erosion of the power of the nation-state as well as the need to dispense with the model of territorially bound theories of the concept. Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal offers one such paradigm, which she refers to as "postnational." This model suggests a more fluid idea of membership to a geopolitical structure and a rather loosely defined idea of what a nation-state should be. In a postnational world, "universal personhood replaces nationhood; and universal human rights replace nation rights,"[13] an attitude suggested by the Geneva Conventions and the Charter of the United Nations, both of which confer rights upon individuals based not on exclusive membership to a particular polity, but on the belief that all individuals are entitled to humane treatment and equality. Soysal argues that by extending rights to individuals based on where they happen to find themselves, rather than on constitutionally prescribed definitions of who is entitled to the various rights and privileges offered by a state, citizenship could be reconfigured as a viable paradigm for a modern, globalized world. Perhaps if the garment of citizenship were refashioned in this way, as a more loosely flowing article rather than the fitted form that is the current trend, individuals would enjoy greater freedom of movement and be able to adopt personal senses of civic style that are unique and flattering to all.

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[11] This discussion of the history of citizenship comes from T. H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class,” in *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950) and Dawn Oliver and Derek Heater, *The Foundations of Citizenship* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

[12] Stuart Hall and David Held, “Citizens and Citizenship,” in *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques (New York: Verso Press, 1989), 187.

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[13] Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, "Towards a Postnational Model of Membership," *The Citizenship Debates*, ed. by Gershom Shafir (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1998), 195.

Chapter II

Fashioning the Post-Imperial Subject: Political Identity and the Conceit of Citizenship

In an essay entitled “Step Across This Line,” the novelist Salman Rushdie explains that the most precious book he owns is his passport. Born in India to Muslim parents (who eventually immigrated to Pakistan), he is a naturalized British citizen[1] who currently lives in New York City. Rushdie is truly a citizen of the world, yet it is his British passport that allows him such mobility and which arguably kept him alive during the 1990s.[2] His unique circumstances position him as a very modern sort of citizen, one with a large number of affiliative ties, and he is clearly aware of his good fortune, explaining, “my passport has indeed done its stuff efficiently and unobtrusively for a long time now, but I have never forgotten that all passports do not work in this way.”[3]

And, of course, they do not. Rushdie’s praise for his British passport reveals his understanding of what he is entitled to as a legal citizen of that country and even beyond British shores. The document affords him many luxuries. It announces him as a citizen of the United Kingdom, and, as such, he can travel the world with a certain amount of confidence that his progress will not be impeded. He can enter and depart all of the nations of the European Union with ease and be assured of a cordial greeting virtually[4] anywhere else in the world that he visits. It is a very useful document. The value that Rushdie places on it reflects a variety of issues that concern contemporary scholars of citizenship. These concerns include: freedom of movement; the effects of multiculturalism; and the status of former colonial subjects. Rushdie's statement sheds light on these issues as well as on some of the most practical implications of citizenship, but it also evokes questions about disparities of "freedom" and "equality" among citizens *within* any given state.

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[1] He received a knighthood from the Queen of England in June of 2007 in recognition for his services to literature.

[2] In February 1989, the Ayatollah Kohemeni of Iran issued a *fatwa*, or death sentence, against Rushdie in response to what was considered to be the blasphemous tone of Rushdie’s novel, *The Satanic Verses*. The author was placed under the protection of British security forces and lived in virtual seclusion until the death sentence was rescinded by the Iranian government in 1999.

[3] Salman Rushdie, “Step Across This Line,” (lecture, The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, New Haven, CT, Yale Law School, Levinson Auditorium, February 25 and 25, 2002). Repr. in *Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002* (New York: Random House, 2002), 367.

Certainly citizenship is consequential. The language used to discuss it insistently foregrounds this fact, suggesting, as it does, liberation and justice. To talk about it, one must evoke matters as important as the rule of law, due process, equal protection, emancipation, freedom, privilege, and rights. It has been described as a gift[5] and confers certain coveted, valuable benefits that often must be earned.[6] Yet the rhetoric of liberation disguises an unsettling reality. Citizenship is a category of identity that carries certain disciplinary structures. It is not merely a politically descriptive designation; rather, it is a conceit specific to a particular ascendancy. Through this conceit, an individual is provided with a sense of identity that is posited as liberatory, but the identity it confers is actually quite limited. Citizenship is best understood as an Ideological State Apparatus, which Louis Althusser describes as a category of identity that is constructed predominantly through ideology. It is one of the primary means by which "*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*."[7] Once interpellated as citizens, individuals present themselves as subjects to the dominant ideology and assume their proper roles in the political structure. Althusser describes the behavior in this way:

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[4] Given Rushdie's unique history, there are certainly places where he would be unwelcome. However, the grounds for refusing him entry are not connected to his British citizenship.

[5] The website of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services website confidently asserts that "citizenship is one of the most coveted gifts that the United States government can bestow" (http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.).

[6] A recent Green Paper presented by British Home Secretary Jacqui Smith to the British Parliament stipulates that would-be citizens of the United Kingdom must earn the rights of citizenship over a five-year transitional period through good behavior and productivity.

> The individual in question ... participates in certain regular practices which are those of the ideological apparatus on which 'depend' the ideas which he has in all consciousness freely chosen as a subject. If he believes in God, he goes to Church to attend Mass, kneels, prays, confesses, does penance ... and naturally repents and so on. If he believes in Duty, he will have the corresponding attitudes, inscribed in ritual practices 'according to the correct principles'. If he believes in Justice, he will submit unconditionally to the rules of the Law, and may even protest when they are violated, sign petitions, take part in a demonstration.[8]

Following along these lines, if a person believes herself to be a citizen, then she will enact the practices of citizenship and uphold the principles of her country's government. She will vote, serve on juries and in the military, obey laws, etc. However, by performing the expected behaviors of citizenship, individuals submit to the dominant ideology and actually give up freedoms that they might otherwise enjoy. In this sense, citizenship, at least as it is currently experienced, is a form of subjection and circumscription. Rushdie's claim, although celebratory, suggests his awareness that personal and affiliative ties can be superseded by a seemingly inconsequential piece of paper, one bearing a stamp of origin and a recent photograph: namely, a passport.

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[7] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards and Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 173. Emphasis in original.

[8] Althusser, "Ideology," 167.

The juxtaposition of the liberatory and the disciplinary aspects of citizenship indicate what a very complicated category of identity it is. The complicated nature of citizenship is the focus of this dissertation. In it, I trace the development of the concept of citizenship through five British novels that cover a span of nearly three centuries in order to illustrate the creation of what might be called the post-imperial subject. These include, in order of discussion, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818); Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* (1769); George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876); Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990); and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981). Each novel that I analyze reveals a different facet of a new form of political identity. Naturally, given their temporal distance, the novels are stylistically quite different from one another. Yet, in spite of their differences, they each describe the citizen in the process of *becoming*. My analysis of these texts illustrates the various gestures of a new form of political subjectivity, one with roots that reach back to the Enlightenment but that rejects the ideal citizen posited by that model. This post-imperial subject foregrounds personal affiliative ties over national ones and indicates the liberatory potential of citizenship that is divorced from the symbolic work that the concept of citizenship has traditionally performed for the nation-state.

Additionally, through their depictions of ways that citizenship has been experienced by different categories of people over time, the authors of these novels reveal some unsettling assumptions about the ideal citizen. My analysis explains how British citizenship has always been and continues to be racist, sexist, classist, elitist, and, of course, nationalist. Through this analysis, I trace the development of the concept of citizenship and explore the ways that it has been used by governments symbolically to propose, perpetuate, and proliferate a specific political status quo, one that privileges a certain category of individual: primarily the white, Christian man. Anne McClintock argues that all nationalisms are both gendered and raced. Therefore, they are "all … invented and all are dangerous ... in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to the technologies of violence.[9] The consequences of this have been to institutionalize the racist and sexist behaviors that have eroded a sense of community and national cohesion; however, another consequence of this situation is that it has caused marginalized individuals living in these societies to consider new forms of political identity. I am interested in how these authors have imagined the potential of citizenship, even while acknowledging the limited versions of it that have been experienced by different categories of people over time. My investigation is concerned with the many ways that the creators of these novels challenge the subordinate positions that their characters inhabit.

This dissertation will address some of the most salient issues in citizenship studies, concerns that form the very heart of modern political and social identity. At issue is the question of participation: who can participate as a citizen and to what extent can they do so? I am concerned with how politically sanctioned injustice affects the status of the nation-state, in particular, the British nation-state. I chose these novels specifically because they feature characters whose civic participation is frustrated by both legal and social constraints. All of them depict the anger of citizens who are marginalized by the very institutions that should offer them access and protection. In this way, the novels reveal how institutionalized inequality structures the lives of all of the characters, compromising communal belonging and loyalty.

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[9] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995), 352.

In my analysis of each novel, I raise and answer the following questions about the political identities of characters: to which nation-state do I belong? why do I belong there? what is the most important aspect of my citizenship? what is the nature of the nation's duty to me as a citizen? what do I owe this nation-state as a citizen? These questions are important because they structure not only individual identity, but also the identity and continuity of a nation-state. As I discuss each text, answers to these questions create snapshots of citizens living in three epochs of English history, snapshots that illustrate the tensions that exist in different periods of time between civic and personal identity.

Reading these images with and against each other reveals the limitations and flaws of British patriality, a word I use intentionally to emphasize the patriarchal nature of citizenship. First, through a discussion of *The History of Emily Montague,* I illustrate how British citizenship has always been gendered as male through an explanation of *coverture*, a legal distinction through which women were denied the most basic rights of citizenship during the eighteenth century. The novel is important to my project because it indicates the implications of this situation not only for women, but also for other marginalized groups of citizens who will lay claim to British citizenship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Interestingly, in spite of their subordinate status, the women in *Emily Montague* long for the right to participate in the public sphere in meaningful ways, yet the only way that they are able to do this, once they are married, is through their husbands. As women, they simply had no other recourse. And, because so many marginalized groups of citizens are first feminized, *The History of Emily Montague* is a useful starting point for my work since other minority groups have inherited the legacy of this legal distinction.

In different ways, *Daniel Deronda*, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and *Midnight's Children* all illustrate how marginalized individuals attempt to resist the interpellating effects of citizenship in order to fashion new and unexpected political identities in the imperial and post-imperial worlds. My analysis of *Daniel Deronda* illustrates a break from the British tradition of Ciceronian citizenship, a paradigm of political identity that foregrounds duty over rights. Daniel Deronda, Eliot's most perfect citizen, is haunted by a sense of duty and struggles to find some meaningful project to which he can dedicate himself. However, he is simply uninterested in dedicating his life to public service in England. Instead, when he discovers that he is a Jew, his affiliation with the Jewish people supersedes his connection to the British nation-state. When she sends this perfect citizen away from the nation-state in which he has been raised, Eliot announces the birth of a new form of political identity, one that refuses to participate in the ways expected of a citizen.

This movement paves the way for a discussion of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and a character that might be considered a deeply uninterested citizen. However, this character functions as a means through which Kureishi can illustrate how "bad citizenship" can be a type of political agency, even if it looks like apathy. Finally, although it comes before *The Buddha of Suburbia* chronologically, I conclude this dissertation with an analysis of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* because it dramatically presents the creation of a modern citizenry and illustrates the ways in which the categories of political identification left in place by the British colonial presence were ill-suited to the governance of a nation-state as diverse as India. The main character, Saleem Sinai, is "born" a citizen at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, along with the massive and diverse population of that newly independent state. But in another, equally dramatic episode, Saleem violently "becomes" a citizen of Pakistan. His dual identities—one created through a metaphor of birth, the other created through a metaphor of death—illustrate the teleological progression of modern political identity.

Together, the chapters of this dissertation chart the trajectory of this progress, with each chapter illustrating a different gesture of the post-imperial subject. The women's desire for political independence in *Emily Montague*; Daniel's sense of duty in *Daniel Deronda*; Karim's ostensible apathy in *The Buddha of Suburbia*; and Saleem's syncretic impulses in *Midnight's Children* are all facets of a new political creature whose subversive potential evokes Mary Shelley's Creature in *Frankenstein,* a text that I discuss below. All of these texts feature characters that function as *loci* of resistance to the dominant political status quo. All of them indicate how various marginalized categories of people resist the symbolic functions of citizenship in order to fashion meaningful political identities for themselves out of the scraps made available to them.

Contemporary criticism of citizenship reflects the fact that the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen the recognition and accommodation of different types of collective identity that often appear to be overtaking the importance of national affiliation. Technology and immigration, as well as increasing economic and political interdependency, have given rise to terms such as "globalization," "cosmopolitanism," "denationalization," and "postnationalization," all of which suggest the possible irrelevance of attaching political identity to the nation-state. Postwar theorists of citizenship seem especially preoccupied with how ethnicity, multiculturalism, consumerism, and globalism impact and influence citizens and shape attitudes about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Certainly, these factors have altered the meaning of the concept of citizenship over time. To complicate the matter further, citizens of any given nation-state are subject to a vast array of local, national, and international law, all of which compete for allegiance with personal, religious, and ethnic affiliations.

The effects of this competition are profound. Yasemin Nuhuoglu Soysal argues that "recontextualizations of 'nationness' within the universalistic discourse of human rights blur meanings and boundaries attached to the nation and the nation-state" even while "the idea of the nation persists as an intense metaphor."[10] Given what she sees as the limits of the nation as a foundation for the concept of individual citizenship, Soysal claims that, in the modern world, national citizenship is "inventively irrelevant." John Hoffman's argument against national citizenship is even more strident. He maintains that the state "as an institution claims a monopoly of legitimate force" and, because of the "coercion and constraint" that the state must exercise on individuals in order to dispatch "conflicts of interest," the state itself is, therefore, "a barrier to citizenship." [11] Yet, in spite of the ring of truth to these sorts of pronouncements, challenges to the nation-state paradigm of citizenship belie the fact that, in very important ways, it has never mattered more whether a person is a citizen of, say, Canada or Sudan. As Salman Rushdie's claim indicates, in spite of globalism, the lingering effects of imperialism and colonialism (as well as neo-colonialism/imperialism), the rise of the multinational corporation, and the proliferation of extra-national political alliances, national citizenship is still one of the defining features of modern identity. Yet, as Rushdie's own life reveals, it is a legal distinction that is certainly complicated by all of these factors.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it has become increasingly clear that the concept of citizenship and what it means to be a citizen of a particular nation-state is in flux, but perhaps at no other time since its modern inception have the terms “citizen” and “citizenship” been as consequential as they are today. And, although the concept of the nation-state itself as an internationally recognized, sovereign, geopolitical edifice is itself in a period of reorganization, these novels reveal the fact that this paradigm remains useful because national identification still seems to be an important part of individual identity. A central argument to my own discussion is that citizenship has always been a socially and politically contentious concept, dependent upon necessary exclusions by which to delineate membership. Further, it is a conceit that demands submission to the dominant political system. However, these novels reveal the fact that there are a variety of ways that a person who is excluded from the polity can assert a political identity and demand rights from both within and without the system of nation-state. In this sense, the novels reveal how characters have adapted the concept of citizenship in order to fashion new identities that are consonant with personal affiliations. These characters, therefore, deny the disciplinary function of citizenship by making their own concerns primary to the concerns of the nation-state.

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[10] Yasemin Nohoglu Soysal, "Toward a Postnational Model of Membership," in *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, ed. Gershon Shafir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 210.

[11] John Hoffman, *Citizenship Beyond the State* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 173.

The term “nation-state” is useful because of its specificity. I am investigating a concept that came to maturity in the late eighteenth-century and that has held as an essential element a belief that citizens should have an identity affiliated with a sovereign body with fixed borders. This affiliation goes beyond mere geography to encompass emotional and patriotic elements, as well. In order to illustrate the changes in attitudes about citizenship and its affiliation with the nation-state as they have occurred over time, I am particularly interested in shifting attitudes about active citizenship, a model of citizenship described by Roman philosopher Cicero and encouraged by politicians well into the twenty-first century.[12] It was crystallized by John F. Kennedy, in his 1961 inaugural speech, when he appealed to American citizens to "ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country,"[13] and it remains the ideal, if not the real, archetype of citizenship for most democracies. Attitudes about the responsibilities of citizenship reveal important details about the lives of citizens: for instance, their feelings about voting, military and public service. It also reveals the ways in which ordinary citizens are affected by disconcerting national projects like imperialism and ethnic cleansing.

Political theorist Charles Tilly argues that citizenship:

> designates a set of mutually enforceable claims relating categories of people to agents of governments. Like relations between spouses, between coauthors, between workers and employers, citizenship has the character of a contract: variable in range, never completely specified, always depending on unstated assumptions about context, modified by practice, constrained by collective memory, yet ineluctably involving rights and obligations sufficiently defined that either party is likely to express indignation and take corrective action when the other fails to meet expectations built into the relationship.[14]

This description emphasizes the mediated quality of citizenship by pointing out the complicated nature of the transactions that are conducted among various categories of people and agents of government. The language suggests how vast, flexible, and ostensibly impersonal the concept can be. However, by using personal relationships as examples of the mutually enforceable bond that is created by the legal ties of citizenship, Tilly makes it clear that citizenship is truly an intimate affair, one with important consequences for personal identity. His definition illustrates that, while citizenship is a legal designation, one with benefits emanating from the nation-state, it also provides the potential for a sense of belonging, which might be a function of national affiliation. Citizenship, then, is created in the confluence of nation and state. It is within this space that different groups of people exist, each asserting its distinction from the others, while simultaneously insisting upon what they all deserve in common.

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[12] It is the aim of the Crick Report, a study of the attitudes of British citizens regarding national identity and political participation that was conducted in 1998. It concluded that there were "worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life" in Britain. More recently, the Goldsmith Report noted that British citizens were not especially interested in political participation.

[13] John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Speech, Washington, D.C., 20 January 1961 http://www.americanrhetoric.com /speeches/jfkinaugural.html (accessed January 2, 2008).

[14] Charles Tilly, *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 253.

By exploring in literature the nature of the often ambiguous relationship between agents of a government and various categories of people, I trace the development of the post-imperial subject using the legal theories of T. H. Marshall, Sylvia Walby, and Yasemin Nohoglu Soysal. Additionally, I use the approaches of Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, Stuart Hall, and Fredric Jameson to discuss how the concept of citizenship is used by these authors. I also reference M. M. Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism to explore the ways in which the novel is an especially suitable genre through which to trace the evolution of this particular concept. My analysis of these novels examines the reasons why the idea of citizenship has been accepted, adapted, coveted, and rejected by different categories of citizens over time and indicates the ways in which the rights and duties of citizenship are recontextualized and reevaluated by individuals as a result of competing affiliative ties that may come to supersede the primacy of the nation-state. In this way, the dissertation charts citizenship as a modality that characters work with and against in order to fashion new types of political identities.

While it is impossible to ignore claims that the paradigm of national citizenship is outmoded, my primary focus here will be on the ways that characters in these novels operate within and against the nation-state paradigm of citizenship. The texts that I investigate reveal the fact that citizenship is an important aspect of identity, one which encompasses not only the civil and political, but also the social. I am particularly interested in the ways in which different groups of citizens within a modern nation-state view their own political statuses.

Read together, the novels suggest how the concept of citizenship and its desirability becomes fraught with tension and ambiguity as the centuries pass, revealing individualized (although fictionalized) consequences of adherence to the nation-state model of citizenship. These novels reveal what Raymond Williams refers to as emergent "structures of feeling" in their representative cultures. For instance, in Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*, the female characters want to fulfill the duties of citizenship even though they are legally disenfranchised. Their desire to be "good citizens" indicates Brooke's concern that limiting the rights of married women would be bad for England. In this way, Brooke demands a reassessment of the distribution of political power in such a way that would include women. Her attitude reflects the immediate influences of the architects of modern citizenship: philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. However, by pointing out the ways that these philosophies failed women, Brooke anticipates debates about the expansion of civil rights that will persist well into the present century. In the nineteenth-century, an era marked by a proliferation of technological advances and expanding imperialism, novels such as George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* feature English characters who leave England to found nations that will accommodate non-English, non-Christian needs.

By the twentieth-century, the longing for citizenship status is dramatically challenged as characters dispute received concepts of who should be allowed to enjoy the rights of citizenship and what the duties of both citizens and nation-states should be. Contemporary British novels like *The Buddha of Suburbia* reflect the desire for a worldly, ethnically inclusive concept of British citizenship that would replace the conventional paradigm imagined by Locke and others. These texts also reflect the complexity of governance in a multicultural society, revealing the long-term political and social consequences of colonialism in contemporary England. As an extreme example of how the Western concept of citizenship has continued to colonize the political identities of former colonized individuals even after independence, I conclude with a discussion of citizenship in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, a novel that features two dramatic examples of the ways that the post-imperial subject is born.

Because the focus of my analysis is primarily on citizenship in Great Britain, it makes sense to look at the ways in which the concept has developed in this particular nation-state. For an analysis of this history, I rely upon the work of the British sociologist T. H. Marshall, who outlined the dissemination of three distinct categories of citizenship rights in his influential lecture series "Citizenship and Social Class." Marshall begins his discussion by explaining that "Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed."[15] Yet, Marshall acknowledges that most citizenship theory to date had assumed a culturally and socially equal and homogenous society, something that was increasingly untrue even in the 1950s. Although, as his title suggests, the lecture focused on class conflict in the evolution of citizenship rights, Marshall's work is relevant to this project because it provides an historical analysis of the dissemination of these rights to different categories of people. Critics argue that his paradigm "enabled the concept of a 'society' to be deconstructed, so that it became possible to examine the extent to which full membership was accorded to all who lived within its boundaries."[16] Through this deconstruction, the institutional sources of inequality and inequity are laid bare and the true relevance of citizenship is revealed to be contingent not only upon class, but also gender, ethnicity, and religion.

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[15] T.H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1950), 28-29.

Several contemporary theorists argue that the value of Marshall's paradigm is limited, because his focus is very English, very much of an era (the years immediately following World War II, during the development of the British welfare state), and very much concerned with the political lives of white men. However, Marshall's work is useful to this project because, although his work does not directly deal with sex and race, as my project does, his paradigm allows me to explore the consequences of the evolution of citizenship rights along with its attendant inclusions and exclusions. I, like Sylvia Walby, consider Marshall's paradigm important since, "[it] opens the way to discuss the degrees of citizenship obtained by different social groups at different times."[17] It is also interesting to consider how, in a world that is increasingly influenced by the rise of multinational corporations, organizations such as the United Nations, and political alliances like the European Union, Marshall's bundles of rights continue to evolve.[18] Martin Bulmer and Anthony Rees argue that

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[16] Martin Bulmer and Anthony M. Rees, "Conclusion: Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century," in *Citizenship Today: The Contemporary Relevance of T.H. Marshall*, edited by Bulmer and Rees (London: University College of London Press, 1996), 269.

[17] Sylvia Walby, "Is Citizenship Gendered?" *Sociology* 38, No. 2 (May 1994), 381.

[18] For instance, the preamble to the United Nations Charter affirms a "faith in fundamental human rights ... in the equal rights of men and women and of nations," yet several member nations severely

“Marshall’s original distinctions … for all their imperfections, still have a robust usefulness. Their deployment, moreover, throws into stark relief, just as it did in Marshall’s day, the contrast between inequalities of class, income, race and gender and the egalitarian aspirations ... [that are] embedded in the concept of citizenship.”[19] So, while in some ways dated, Marshall’s paradigm is still a useful tool in contemporary studies of citizenship. Considered with more recent models of citizenship, those that reflect the weakening of the nation-state as the sole source of authority, Marshall’s paradigm remains a viable tool for investigating emergent sources of political, civil, and social power.

It is particularly useful to a discussion of those categories of people who have been legally excluded from many of the rights of citizenship. For instance, in 1769, when *The History of Emily Montague* was published in England, certain classes of citizens, regardless of sex, enjoyed only partial rights. The vast majority of citizens who did not own property were denied the vote until the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1850, which enfranchised many. However, it was not until 1928 that women in England were granted full voting rights. Stuart Hall and David Held illustrate these limitations when they identify the tension that exists between “formal” and “substantive” rights. They write, “the citizen may formally enjoy ‘equality before the law.’ But, important though this unquestionably is, does he or she also have the material and cultural resources to choose between different courses of action in practice?”[20] This is a question that has haunted—and daunted—

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restrict the rights of women citizens in violation of this legally binding agreement. In time, international pressure may cause the repressive laws of such nations to change.

[19] Bulmer and Rees, “Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century,” 283.

[20] Stuart Hall and David Held, “Citizens and Citizenship,” in *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s,* ed. Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques (New York: Verso Press, 1989), 178.

governments for centuries, and it is one of the most important issues in citizenship theory today. It suggests what is at stake in any discussion of citizenship. What, exactly, does it mean to be entitled to abstract principle? How do the symbolic meanings of citizenship function in the real world of the citizenry?

Not surprisingly, given its alignment with a sense of both history and nationality, citizenship has been a consideration in many important novels. Even as the genre has evolved in response to political and cultural change, so has the idea of citizenship. As the novels I investigate show, it is, as Hall and Held point out, "difficult to hymn the praises of liberty, when massive numbers of actual individuals are systematically restricted—for want of a complex mix of resources and opportunities—from participating actively in political and civil life."[21]

The term "active citizenship" is a buzzword in citizenship studies, but it is really quite ambiguous. What does it mean to be an active citizen? It is usually discussed in rather general terms, but it becomes no less ambiguous when specific behaviors are named. There are some things that citizens are required to do by law: for instance, paying taxes and serving as jurors when called. There are some things citizens in Western democracies are expected to do, like voting and serving in the military.[22] At its most extreme, the idea of an active citizenry conjures up images of jingoistic nationalists, singing aggressively patriotic songs in the streets. However, the duties performed by active citizens are not always as assertive as this, nor are they usually so clearly symbolic or nationalistic. The idea of civic participation is especially important to a discussion of citizenship, because, by evoking this concept, we begin to see the potential uses to which a citizen's participation can be put by the government. We can also see how citizenship is a disciplinary conceit that regulates the behavior of the polity and makes citizens easier to govern. In this sense, the idea of active citizenship has an ironically repressive function.

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[21] Hall and Held, "Citizens," 179.

[22] In some democracies, like Israel, military service is mandatory through conscription. In others, when a draft is in force, military service is a legal requirement.

Indeed, one of the most enduring debates in citizenship studies has been the ever-shifting emphasis that is placed on the rights of citizens, as opposed to their duties. The Greeks debated the idea of entitlement but stressed membership and participation in the polity over the attendant rights of citizenship. Similarly, the Romans stressed duty over right and required that all citizens be public citizens,[23] the fullest expression of which was as a soldier or politician. In the West, the emphasis on duty over rights prevailed throughout the Middle Ages and into the Early Modern Period, perhaps because of the fact that these societies were relatively small and homogenous.[24] However, since the Enlightenment, Western political philosophy has given priority to the idea of Liberal Individualism. According to Adrian Oldfield, this idea suggests that all individuals have "not only ontological and epistemological priority, but moral priority as well."[25] Therefore, individuals are, in a sense, sovereign and require protection from anything outside of or within the state that threatens this sovereignty. Since World War II, Western citizenship has been viewed as a status that confers rights, rights which protect citizens from dangers both inside and outside of the nation-state in which they reside. Yet without a sense of civic duty—political participation, adherence to the laws of the land, and a certain amount of civic altruism—there would be no societies and, therefore, no citizens. But where does this sense of duty come from? How does a nation-state instill this sense of duty in its citizens? To what uses can this sense of duty be put by governments? Answers to these questions are made especially difficult by the fact that diverse modern populations have diverse interests and concerns that are not always connected to the nation-state in which they reside. This suggests how difficult multicultural societies are to govern and how difficult their citizens are to control. Both economic inequality and the desire to protect traditional values from the influences of the dominant culture often compel immigrants to live in communities of their own, where they can maintain distinct identities. As the 2005 riots in France illustrate, there are often tensions between minority and mainstream communities within nation-states.

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[23] Therefore, women and slaves were not considered citizens.

[24] While the Romans certainly had a vast empire, regions were broken down into small administrative units and conquered peoples were usually allowed to retain their own languages and customs. While it is true that individuals living in the far-flung regions of the Roman Empire were considered to be citizens of Rome, they had strong local allegiances which took precedence over allegiance to Rome *per se*.

[25] Adrian Oldfield, "Citizenship and Community: Civic Republicanism and the Modern World," in *The Citizenship Debates*, ed. Gershon Shafir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 77.

This isolationist tendency makes it especially difficult to assess "how individuals come to be positioned and to understand themselves as the subjects and objects of democratic governance."[26] This is complicated by the multiplicity of affiliations that construct the identities of modern citizens. Race, religion, class, gender are all factors that create affiliative ties that may supersede national identity. Donna Haraway, writing about gender in particular, suggests the political consequences of this when she writes, "Identities seem contradictory, partial, and strategic. With the hard-won recognition of their social and historical constitution, gender, race, and class cannot provide the basis for belief in 'essential' unity. ... [G]ender, race, or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. And who counts as 'us' in my own rhetoric? Which identities are available to ground such a potent political myth called 'us?'"[27] Citizenship is posited as one of these identities—a category of identification that is ostensibly neutral in terms of gender, race, and class—yet its ability to "ground" relies upon certain disciplinary functions in order to foster a sense of social cohesion. Social cohesion is, therefore, created through subjection. However, because the political structures that designate citizenship are themselves racist, sexist, and classist, it is often difficult to convince minority groups that it is in their best interests to embrace the discipline. This situation results in a predictably segregated society.

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[26] Susan Condor and Stephen Gibson, "'Everybody's Entitled to Their Own Opinion': Ideological Dilemma of Liberal Individualism and Active Citizenship," *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 17 (2007): 116.

In Britain, recent attempts to deal with the issue of social cohesion have given rise to a flurry of reports, recommendations, and, not unsurprisingly, controversy. Notably, in 1998, the publication of the report of the Advisory Group on *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* (also called the Crick Report) described what the advisory group felt were "worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life."[28] The report concluded that what was needed to bolster the flagging British democracy was "a common citizenship with democratic values."[29] In order to achieve this goal, the advisory group recommended the implementation of citizenship education in schools in order to instill a greater sense of democratic belonging among young British citizens. However, the report has been criticized for being racially insensitive. It certainly seems to assume a particular category of British citizen: namely, a white one. Although the report acknowledges that white British citizens must become tolerant of different ethnic groups, it also insists that ethnic minorities must assimilate to British ideals of citizenship. Though controversial, the report has had a lasting impact on citizenship education within the British school system. As the dominant ideological state apparatus, it is perhaps not surprising that the education system would be a primary means through which to transmit the parameters of "common" British citizenship. Althusser argues that this is because the education system "takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most 'vulnerable,' squeezed between the family State apparatus and the educational State apparatus, it drums into them, whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology."[30] Education, then, serves the dominant ideology by teaching citizens how they should behave.

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[27] Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge Press, 1991), 155.

[28] United Kingdom, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*. Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, (London, QCA: 1998), 8. Hereafter referred to as the Crick Report.

[29] QQCA, "The Crick Report," 8.

This revival of citizenship education is a good example of the paradox that Derek Heater has identified in current debates about citizenship. He notes that, because of an increased interest in the value of democracy, "interest in the subject and status [of citizenship] is now greater than it has been for some two hundred years or more."[31] However, at the same time, citizenship "might appear to be disintegrating as a coherent concept for the twenty-first century."[32] There are several reasons for this. Possibly, it is because, as Hall and Held argue, "the expansion of citizenship may run counter to the logic of citizenship, which has tended to absorb

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[30] Althusser, "Ideology," 155.

[31] Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship* (New York: New York UP, 2004), 145.

[32] Heater, *A Brief History*, 145.

‘difference’ into one common universal status—the citizen.”[33] Clearly, as the Crick Report reveals, young people in Britain seem especially resistant to the idea of a “common universal status.”

The novels that I read here each reveal a heightened interest in the construction of a citizenry that is often, but not always, at odds with a divided sense of national loyalty created by colonialism and an expanding sense of the world. What becomes clear when reading them together is that the idea of a “common universal status”—what Homi Bhabha refers to as the myth of the “many as one”—has preoccupied writers for centuries. And, although I do not devote an entire chapter to analyzing Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, I begin with it here because it can be read as a sort of fulcrum for a discussion of citizenship in the modern era. Written on the heels of the Enlightenment, when the real-world effects of the philosophies of writers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau were beginning to be felt, the novel serves as an exploration of those revolutionary ideas. Particularly, because the Creature defies categorization, the novel addresses the circumstances of those individuals who were forbidden the “natural” and “unalienable” rights envisioned by John Locke and others. Victor Frankenstein’s Creature, a figure of problematic origin, is a useful lens through which to examine social attitudes about almost any subaltern category, and critics have long mined this rich character in order to illustrate issues related to gender, race, and imperialism.[34]

Clearly, the Creature is a metaphorically rich character, but I am particularly interested in reading him as a wanderer or vagrant, because this category of person has been historically very difficult for governments to deal with humanely. It happened that while Mary Shelley was writing *Frankenstein* in 1816 and 1817, London was experiencing an unprecedented influx of homeless people, many of whom were reduced to begging. The situation can be traced back to 1814, when several militia regiments returned from the Napoleonic wars. After living under the protection of the military for over a decade, the dismantled troops were forced to find work and shelter in an economically depressed England, and large numbers of them clustered, along with their families, in major cities like London. These cities were ill-prepared to meet the needs of so many people. Their swelling numbers wreaked havoc on the already weakened social welfare system of the state. On 8 June 1815, the Right Honorable George Rose called attention to "the state of mendicancy in and about the metropolis"[35] during a speech in the House of Commons. He explained that, by conservative estimates, there were around 15,000 indigents in and about the city of London. Of these, over nine thousand were children.

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[33] Hall & Held, “Citizens,” 187.

[34] The Norton version of the text illustrates the sheer variety of topics that can be discussed through the novel. These include Gilbert and Gubar’s “Mary Shelley’s Monstrous Eve”; Gayatri Spivak’s “*Frankenstein* and a Critique of Imperialism”; and Anne K. Mellor’s “Possessing Nature: The Female in *Frankenstein*.”

The official responses to this crisis were especially harsh. In addition to transporting indigents to the colonies and incarcerating them in work houses, a common approach to vagrancy was to issue removal orders to those found guilty of the crime. Individuals were repatriated to their "natural" counties, usually determined by place of birth. Although this was one of the most common punishments for vagrancy, it was not a new approach to the situation. The British government has had little tolerance for what many scholars refer to as "masterless" migrations; the earliest attempt to address the movement of the poor was a statute issued in 1388 that included a provision for returning those who were "unable to serve or labour" to their places of birth.[36] This policy remained in place for centuries. In 1765, William Blackstone discussed removal orders in his *Commentaries*, where he explained that "all persons, not so settled, may be removed to their own parishes, on complaint of the overseers, by two justices of the peace, if they shall adjudge them likely to become chargeable to the parish, into which they have intruded: unless they are in a way of getting legal settlement."[37] This insistence on place of birth as the primary way of determining one's "natural" site of affiliation was to have a lasting effect on British culture and politics and would become further entrenched during the colonial period and beyond. Enoch Powell, the controversial twentieth-century political figure,[38] disputed this claim when he famously argued that "The West Indian or Asian does not, by being born in England, become an Englishman. In law he becomes a United Kingdom citizen by birth; in fact he is a West Indian or an Asian still."[39] However, generally speaking, the principle of *jus soli*[40] has long been one of the primary means by which a person's homeland is determined. Powell's overtly racist claim suggests his interest in the distinction between nation and state, but it also suggests the complexity of affiliating birth and belonging.

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[35] C.J. Ribton-Turner, *A History of Vagrants and Vagrancy and Beggars and Begging* (London: Chapman and Hall: 1887), 216.

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[36] Ribton-Turner, *Vagrants and Vagrancy,* 59.

[37] William Blackstone, *Of The Rights of Persons*. Vol. 1 of *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, (1765; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 352.

[38] Powell was famous for giving the infamous "River Tiber" speech, in which he claimed that immigration would eventually result in racial violence in Great Britain.

[39] Enoch Powell, *Reflections of a Statesman: The Writings and Speeches of Enoch Powell* (London: Bellew Publishers, 1991), 393.

[40] The right of the soil. This is a legal principle by which a person claims citizenship based on where they were born. It is often juxtaposed against the legal principle of *jus sanguinis*, by which a person claims citizenship "by the right of blood," indicating a biological relationship to a parent (traditionally a father).

In spite of how obviously problematic they were, these sorts of statutes continued to be enforced throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially after the Industrial Revolution, when the alleged need to regulate the poor came to be linked with British economic success. For instance, in 1729, businessman and frequent Parliamentary consultant Joshua Gee argued, using language that curiously evokes an image of Frankenstein's stateless creature, that the government must take a hand in regulating and employing the poor. He complains that "numbers of sturdy beggars, loose and vagrant persons, infest the nation, but no place more than the City of London and parts adjacent. If any person is born with any Defect or Deformity, or maimed by Fire or any other Casualty, or by any inveterate Distemper which renders them miserable objects, their way is open to London, where they have free Liberty of showing their nauseous sights to terrify people."[41]

Mary Shelley would have been quite aware of the presence of these "miserable objects," even though she was away from London for a good part of these years. The problem was international in scope. Wherever she traveled, she would have encountered the homeless. Foreign newspapers carried accounts of the crisis in London, and letters from home kept Shelley informed about current events while she was abroad. One letter, from Fanny Imlay Godwin to Mary Shelley, illustrates an ongoing concern for the skyrocketing numbers of homeless individuals and the related problem of unemployment; it reads in part, "they say that in the counties of Staffordshire and Shropshire there are 26 thousand men out of employment—and without any means of getting any."[42] Elsewhere, Fanny responds to her sister's request for news about the state of England and explains the reasons for the postwar social crisis that the nation was experiencing: “it is the peace that has brought all this calamity upon us. ... [D]uring the war the whole continent was employed in fighting and defending their country from the incursions of foreign armies. .... England alone was free to manufactor [sic] in peace ... our manufactories [sic] in consequence employed several millions, & at higher wages than were wanted for our own consumption, since peace is come foreign parts are shut—and millions of our fellow countrymen are left to starve.”[43]

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[41] Qtd. in Ribton-Turner, *Vagrants and Vagrancy*, 187.

[42] Fanny Imlay Godwin to Mary Godwin, London, July 29, 1816 and August 1, 1816, in *The Clairmont Correspondence: Letters of Claire Clairmont, Charles Clairmont, and Fanny Imlay Godwin Vol I 1808-1834*, ed. Marion Kingston Stocking (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 55.

Upon Mary Shelley’s return to London, she would have seen the effects of the crisis first hand. It is unlikely that a woman as sensitive as she would have been unmoved by the plights of the apparently unwanted people who were literally at her doorstep. Her own financially precarious circumstances might have made these individuals all the more haunting. Victor Frankenstein’s Creature, considered in light of this unfolding social crisis, seems affiliated with the traveling poor of England, who were valued nowhere and claimed by no one. His ambiguous origins suggest the complexity of aligning place of birth with a political and personal sense of belonging. The Creature’s frustrated attempts to enter into the social and political discourse of the human world reveal the fissures in the nation-state paradigm of citizenship. Created in a fit of ambition, he is the product of hubris and great irresponsibility. As such, the Creature is a powerful metaphor for all of those political subjectivities created through colonialism. He also indicates the ways in which the linkage between citizenship and birth has been problematized by colonialism, diaspora, and postcolonial immigration, a concern that Gayatri Spivak must have had in mind when she claimed that “Empire messes with identity.”[44]

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[43] Fanny Imlay Godwin to Mary Godwin, London, July 29, 1816 and August 1, 1816. In Stocking, *Correspondence*, 54.

I consider *Frankenstein* to be an important starting point for this project because the Creature is the ultimate migrant, a wandering figure that is often the object of social scorn and derision. Unemployed and unemployable, the most sublime of “aliens,” the Creature’s origins are fantastic and impossible. He resists categorization and, therefore, can function as a metaphor for almost any category of subaltern person. He is created by a man, almost in a man’s image, but, at least superficially, he is not like conventional ideas of what a man is or should be. However, his capacity to reason causes him to maintain that, although he is reviled, he remains entitled to the most basic human rights: the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When he detains Victor on the mountain in Chamonix, he asserts the “mutually enforceable claims” that relate him to Victor, who is, for all practical purposes, the origin and source of his citizenship. The Creature’s language has the character of a contract; he makes demands on his creator and, when these demands are not met, he retaliates with passion and power. In short, he demands to be covered in the cloak of citizenship as a protection from the “fatal prejudice” that precludes any sort of happiness; yet he discovers that this garment is sadly inadequate and cannot accommodate his large stature.

Colene Bentley and others argue that Mary Shelley was interested in establishing the foundations of an ideal political community in the novel through the presentation of a character who understands what he is entitled to and who is forced to demand these rights on his own behalf. In this way, the Creature possesses the sort of political subjectivity imagined by the Liberal Humanists, who believed that citizens should have the right to seek redress in courts of law and to determine their own affiliations. Bentley is especially interested in the Creature's sensitive understanding of the proper channels of justice and explains that "the creature must solicit Victor primarily as a citizen rather than a parent"[45] because he has painfully learned that "sympathy is a limited social resource."[46] The appeal to Victor as a citizen illustrates Shelley's own desire to "interrogate the basis and boundaries of established social groups."[47]

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[44] Gayatri Spivak, *Outside In The Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 226.

Although the Creature is ultimately tragic and powerless, alone and unprotected throughout his life, he maintains a sense of longing for the rights of citizenship and is even anxious to fulfill the attendant duties. His attitude about the concept is much more progressive and inclusive than the ideas of citizenship that prevailed when the novel was published for the first time in 1818. Frankenstein's Creature longs for a place in human society; his desire to be an active part of the human world reflects an especially vigorous type of citizenship espoused by Cicero. The Creature seems to feel that a sense of community can be achieved only if one is committed to performing the duties and responsibilities that constitute an active civic life.

It might be argued that his inclination for public service runs in the family. Victor—the Creature's ostensible father—tells Walton that the Frankenstein family was one of the most distinguished in the republic of Geneva and that "his ancestors had been for many years counselors and syndics" (18). Fred Randel explains that

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[45] Colene Bentley, "Family, Humanity, Polity: Theorizing the Basis and Boundaries of Political Community in *Frankenstein*, *Criticism* 47:3 (Summer 2005): 327.

[46] Bentley, "Family, Humanity, Polity," 327.

[47] Bentley, "Family, Humanity, Polity," 327.

Swiss syndics were not merely low-level administrators, but rather "Chief executives, the apex of political authority in Geneva."[48] Victor's own father, Alphonse Frankenstein, spent his youth "perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country" (18), filling "several public situations with honour and reputation" (18) before finally serving in this prestigious position. He retires only because he wishes to devote himself to what he perceives to be the ultimate civic duty: fatherhood. Victor acknowledges his father's sense of reproductive responsibility, explaining that Alphonse felt he had a duty to "[bestow] on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to posterity."[49] Victor's father then "relinquished many of his public employments, and devoted himself to the education of his children" (19).

Perhaps Alphonse's time would have been better spent in government. His son's flawed education sets him upon a disastrous path, which leads to the creation of the Creature and, eventually, the destruction of nearly the entire Frankenstein family. Victor's description of his own reproductive efforts is punctuated by references to political disasters and suggests a belated awareness that his project was unnatural. As he pursues "nature into to her hiding places," he begins to feel the gravity of his mission. It consumes him, and he explains the consequences of this mission to Walton as a cautionary tale against the dangers of unchecked ambition. He insists that "if no man allowed any pursuit whatsoever to interfere with the tranquility of his domestic affections, Greece had not been enslaved; Caesar would have spared his country; America would have been discovered more gradually; and the empires of Mexico and Peru had not been destroyed" (33). His claim acknowledges the fact that these events were caused by precipitous decisions made by people who gave little thought to long-term consequences. He even apologizes to Walton for “moralizing in the most interesting part of my tale” (33), although this is his ostensible reason for telling the story.

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[48] Fred V. Randel, "The Political Geography of Horror in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," ELH 70 (2003): 474.

[49] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, (1818; repr., New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 18. Future citations in text.

The Creature’s component parts construct a useful metaphor for the various categories of people who are united together under the aegis of the nation-state. The bones that Victor collects from charnel houses become the constituent parts of a new body, which will possess independent desires, interests, and concerns that Victor neither anticipates nor accommodates. On that “dreary night in November,” Victor Frankenstein “[beholds] the accomplishment of [his toils]” (34). “The spark of being” that transforms the lifeless matter that he has collected into a living creature is, he immediately understands, a “catastrophe.” He explains his feelings about the event: “I worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body” (34). He had “desired it with ardour that far exceeded moderation, but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart” (34). Astonished by what he has created, Victor flees the room, eventually collapsing into a fitful sleep that is the precursor of an apparent psychological breakdown.

The “breathless horror and disgust” that Victor feels when the Creature comes to life is a useful image to have in mind when considering how disadvantaged groups are created by the very cultures that come to revile them. Such groups are a necessary part of any nation-state, a situation that Anne McClintock recognizes when she explains that “nations are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind but are historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed.”[50] Therefore, she argues, “nations are contested systems of cultural representation that limit and legitimize peoples' access to the resources of the nation-state."[51] Victor Frankenstein's late-night toils lay bare the process by which this contested system is created. His response to the Creature's dull yellow eye that gazes upon him in anticipation is predictable. Given the nature of the system, how else could he have reacted? In the same way that the agents of the English government were unable to find humane solutions to homelessness in London during the early part of the nineteenth century, Victor seems ill-equipped to deal with the reality of the living, breathing individual that he has created. In this sense, he is merely perpetuating the system of subjection upon which the nation-state is predicated.

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[50] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 353.

Frankenstein's Creature, that nameless migrant, is the product of a fantastic birth that is described in terms suggesting as much political spectacle as scientific miracle. Indeed, as he toils in his workshop of "filthy creation," Victor Frankenstein seems intent upon creating an *ur*-electorate. He relates his feelings to Robert Walton using highly idealistic words, explaining his belief that "a new species would bless [him] as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to [him]. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as [he] should deserve theirs'" (32). Not only does his language make him sound a bit like a Romantic George Washington, who as early as 1778, was referred to as the "Father" of the newly founded United States of America,[52] it also indicates that Victor, like his own father, considers procreation to be an aspect of civic duty. In this sense, his desire to found a strange new polity is a project that Alphonse Frankenstein may likely have understood and even endorsed.

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[51] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 353.

[52] Henry Franklin Graff, ed., *The Presidents: A Reference History,* 3rd ed. (New York: Scribner Books, 2002), 20.

Yet Victor Frankenstein produces a singular figure that is destined to be deprived of the rights of the society into which he is born. The Creature's "illegitimate" origins position him as a liminal figure, beyond the reaches of culture and even law. The "fatal prejudice" that the Creature fears suggests his acute awareness of identity politics, which is often predicated on what is seen and, therefore, "known." This awareness makes him especially concerned with his outward appearance, something he knows to be truly astonishing. His unfortunate appearance is a result of Victor's shortsighted desire to finish the Creature as quickly as possible. In order to achieve this, he makes some disastrous decisions. Victor is hampered by the "minuteness of the parts" that make up a human body and resolves, "contrary to [his] first intention, to make the being of a gigantic stature; that is to say, about eight feet in height and proportionably large" (32). His outsized creature, that "filthy creation" and "great object" with its "dull yellow eye" and "straight black lips," bears an eerie resemblance to the human form. The Creature refers to himself as a "filthy type" of human, "more horrid from its very resemblance" (88). Outwardly, of course, he does not seem to be human, but his capacity to reason and his great sensitivity suggest otherwise. He curses Victor for his irresponsibility in endowing him with intellect and sensitivity and groans: "Unfeeling, heartless creator! you had endowed me with perceptions and passions, and then cast me abroad an object for the scorn and horror of mankind" (94).

Bentley explains that the Creature's improbable origins mean that he is "unaffiliated with others: he is given the aspect of a person but not that of a citizen, for he is neither naturalized nor socialized into any particular community.[53] Mary Shelley may have been interested in affiliating the Creature with those similarly displaced and disenfranchised individuals who were camped outside of her doorway. And, although the novel is set on the Continent, several episodes in the novel echo pieces of legislation that attempted to deal with the homeless crisis in England.

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[53] Bentley, "Family, Humanity, Polity," 327.

For instance, after the Creature's birth, he wanders, alone and disoriented, through the countryside in search of food.[54] He eventually discovers a fire "left by some wandering beggars" (69). The scene vividly illustrates the Creature's first lesson in cause and effect—he burns himself when he "thrust[s] his hand into the live embers, but quickly [draws] it out again with a cry of pain" (69)—but it is also worthy of note that the fire itself would have been illegal in England at this time. A statute dating from 1766,[55] passed more to discourage vagrancy than to encourage environmental conservation, forbid individuals from using wood that did not belong to them, and the offense was punishable with a large fine. The Creature very quickly learns that wood fuels the fire and quickly "busied [himself] in collecting a great quantity of wood, that [he] might dry it, and have a plentiful supply of fire" (69), a luxury that would have cost him a fine of forty shillings plus court costs (for the first offense).

For his part, when the Creature takes over his own narration (spoken to Walton through Victor, of course), he focuses on his education, which he describes as a kind of political awakening. He claims that his tale will chart the "progress of my intellect" (75). This progress begins, predictably enough, with his infancy. The Creature is initially helpless and confused and behaves much like any newborn.

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[54] If he had been wandering around England, he would have been guilty of vagrancy. Legislation at the time considered vagrants to be "all persons wandering abroad and lodging in barns and other out-houses, not giving a good account of themselves" (Ribton-Turner, *Vagrants and Vagrancy*, 32).

[55] This was a provision to the vagrancy act and was entitled, "An Act for The Better Preservation of Timber Trees, and of Woods and Underwoods; and for the further Preservation of Roots, Shrubs, and Plants, (6 Geo III, C.48).

Overwhelmed by a “strange multiplicity of sensations,” he “saw, felt, heard, and smelt, at the same time” (68). The strong light “pressed upon [his] nerves” (68), and it takes him several days to distinguish his various senses. Once he has mastered them, he begins to tell “a narrative of self-development deeply entwined with his emerging consciousness of social order.”[56] Bentley argues that the Creature’s “attentiveness to the cottagers allows him to apprehend the rules that govern their social world and to make use of that knowledge to achieve certain ends.”[57] This knowledge, the Creature imagines, will eventually make him acceptable to the cottagers, when he finally reveals himself as one who would like to live among them. In this way, his education helps him to understand and learn the rules of his position in the social order, and he recognizes that, in spite of his stature and strength, his position will be subservient to all members of the DeLacy family.

His immediate understanding of this role is a result of his awareness that he is utterly different from them. The Creature “long[s] to join” the DeLacey family, but understands that, gentle though they may be, they will be unwilling to accept a figure of such “unnatural hideousness” (89) as himself. He yearns for human company and explains that “the more [he] saw of them [the DeLacey family], the greater became [his] desire to claim their protection and kindness” (89). He has faith that he can move them through an appeal to the father of the family, a person he knows to be compassionate and fair. Through the DeLaceys, the Creature has learned of the “strange system of human society” along with the “division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty; of rank, descent, and noble blood” (81). He comes to understand the depth of his predicament for, lacking both descent and riches, he is destined to remain a social outcast, explaining that “a man might be respected with only one of these acquisitions, but without either he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave, doomed to waste his powers for the profit of the chosen few” (80). But his desire for company is so strong that he would happily assume even the lowest position in their society. When, at last, he seeks an audience with old Mr. DeLacey, he passionately pleads his case before the blind man, expressing his desire to be united with some “friends,” who are “kind, but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless, and, in some degree, beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster” (90). The old man reassures the Creature, explaining: “I am poor, and an exile; but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature” (91), a kind enough sentiment, but one that positions the Creature outside the realm of Mr. DeLacey’s compassion since he is not exactly a “human creature.”

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[56] Bentley, “Family, Humanity, Polity,” 328.

[57] Bentley, “Family, Humanity, Polity,” 328.

The old man’s words could easily have been spoken by the Creature himself, so clear is his desire to be of service to the human world. In spite of the difficulties that he experiences in that world, he has very definite and rather enlightened ideas about civic life, which he attributes to the benevolent influences of the DeLacey family. The Creature realizes that his introduction into human society through the cottagers has given him a rather liberal view of the social world and speculates that if his first “introduction to humanity had been made by a young soldier, burning for glory and slaughter, I should have been imbued with different sensations” (87). Instead, he recognizes injustice when he encounters it and simmers with rage when he reads of “men concerned in public affairs governing or massacring their species” (87) He prefers “peaceable law-givers” to ambitious autocrats. The Creature desperately wants to be a useful citizen and sincerely believes that he can convince his cottagers that he will be a loving and useful member of their small society, persuading himself that “when they should become acquainted with [his] admiration of their virtues, they would compassionate [him] and overlook [his] personal deformity. Could they turn from their door one, however monstrous, who solicited their compassion and friendship” (88). Of course, they do turn him away from their doorstep, and violently too. Yet even this experience, painful though it is, does not compel him to eschew community.

He is, in fact, learning to behave as a citizen. While his plan to join the DeLacey family ultimately fails, he does learn that if he is to survive his encounters with humans, he will have to be an active participant in their world. However, he understands that his mere presence is offensive to that world and decides to form his own community populated by those who are like himself. To that end, he demands the creation of a female companion as a “right.” In this way, as Belsey, Lanser, and others note, he exercises his political agency and indicates his ability to argue on his own behalf when he confronts Victor in Chamonix. As skilled as any well-trained barrister, the Creature argues when Victor refuses to listen to his tale: “How dare you sport thus with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind” (65). Later, he rebukes his creator for refusing to make an agreement with him and insists: “you are in the wrong ... and instead of threatening, I am content to reason with you” (98). He continues: “What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself: the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me” (98-99).

His recognition of what is enough to satisfy his own needs suggests just how much he has learned from the DeLacey family. The Creature was impressed by their moderation and notes that, during the depths of their poverty, Agatha and Felix often "suffered the pangs of hunger ... for several times they placed food before the old man, when they reserved none for themselves" (74). He considers them to be model citizens and attempts to emulate them. His inclination to moderation indicates that he remains concerned about others, even while he seeks to fulfill his own needs and desires. In this way, his civic awareness becomes clear, which marks him as a potentially ideal citizen.

However, he is never actually able to become a citizen because he can never win the affections of anyone in the novel. Yet, it cannot be said that he is entirely outside of the realm of human social and political experience. Bentley explains that "as a community seeker, Shelley's monster is never wholly alien to the novel's representative groups; instead, he comes to share perceptions in common with them, and thus he occupies the position of insider and outsider simultaneously."[58] This position—one that is neither completely a part of nor entirely abject from the polity—is a liminal space within human culture. But unlike the productive space imagined by Homi Bhabha—an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications [that] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy"[59] —the Creature's power is limited to violence, a situation that dramatically forecloses any chance he may have of "becoming one among my fellows" (51). His liminal position raises questions about what is takes, beyond legal terms, to be recognized and treated as a citizen.

He attempts to achieve this status when he petitions Victor Frankenstein for a companion. The Creature's understanding of the "rights of man" (and woman) drives him to demand that Victor create a female creature of "the same species" as himself and with “the same defects” (97). He insists that Victor make a female companion for him “with whom [he, the Creature] can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for [his] being” (98). The Creature commands it of Victor, arguing: “This you alone can do; and I demand it of you as a *right* which you must not refuse” (98, emphasis added). As Susan Lanser points out, this demand indicates that the Creature considers himself to be entitled to certain natural rights. He thinks of himself as a citizen, if not of Geneva or of England, then of the world. As such, he believes that he should be fully entitled to the attendant rights of the status. Even Victor acknowledges the Creature’s political situation while he works on the female creature. It dawns on him that she, too, may believe herself to be entitled to certain privileges, and, although the male Creature has “sworn to quit the neighborhood of man,” (114), she has not. As he works, Victor realizes that “she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with the compact made before her creation” (114). In other words, Victor acknowledges the political rights of the female that he is creating and fears that she may not be easily governed. Therefore, Victor—the Creature’s creator, protector, and judge—violently destroys the fruits of his efforts, with disastrous results. His action strips the Creature of his putative rights, and the resulting violence seems inevitable.

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[58] Bentley, 'Political Community," 336.

[59] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 4.

Prowling about in secret and driven away whenever he is detected, the Creature is likened to the former soldiers who were wandering the streets of London in the early nineteenth century. When he vents his anger at Victor after the destruction of the female creature, his language evokes the plights of these individuals. He tells Victor that he has “endured toil and misery” as he “crept along the shores of the Rhine, among its willow islands, and over the summits of its hills. I have dwelt many months in the heaths of England, and among the deserts of

Scotland. I have endured incalculable fatigue, and cold, and hunger, do you dare destroy my hopes?" (115). Unfortunately, all of his wandering turns out to be so much wasted effort. The Creature's demands are not met, and he is left alone, outside of human society and deeply resentful. In spite of the careful way that he approaches Victor and presents his case to him, in spite of his willingness to abide by the rules of human society, he is unable to *become* a citizen of any polity, and the results of his exclusion are disastrous. The novel makes a harsh pronouncement against this sort of exclusionary politics. Like the returning soldiers who found themselves barred and forcibly removed from the society they had so recently aided, the Creature functions as a visible reminder of the repercussions of this social and political failure. He is ultimately powerless, forced to disappear into the "dark and the distance" without another word.

However, it is impossible to deny that the Creature is an emotionally affective (as well as effective) character. In spite of his many crimes, he is a sympathetic figure, one who demands the attention of the reader/judge and whose violence is all the more sad because of its inevitability. Unable to work within the political system, he resorts to the worst that humans are capable of—psychologically motivated, physically violent, revenge. When he claims that he is malicious because he is miserable, it is impossible not to feel that his victims somehow had it coming. Herein lies the power of the novel. The empathy that it provokes suggests that the reader becomes aware of the injustices that are committed in the name of progress, for Victor initially begins his project with ideas of social and scientific progress in mind. Yet he does not assume responsibility for his Creature. He is not a dutiful founding father; he an irresponsible agent of government. His failure is emblematic of the failures caused by the exclusionary nature of citizenship, and the Creature serves as a lost chance to rectify some of the political wrongs committed by ostensibly Liberal governments. The plight of the Creature shows that, like her mother Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley was clearly interested in the idea of the vindication of the rights of the dispossessed.

Like *Frankenstein*, the other novels I consider here feature characters that experience discord as a result of their origins. All of the important characters in these texts struggle with competing identities and yearn for a sense of completeness that often seems unlikely or even impossible to achieve. While my primary focus is on the legal situations of these characters, the fact that the concept of citizenship is and has always been transected by a sense of national affiliation, which is itself cross-sectioned transected by ethnic and religious connections, makes it impossible for me to discuss legalities without also considering these factors. This is especially true as the novels progress through time and the idea of a homogenous citizenry becomes impossible.

The novels trace a trajectory that reveals the restructuring of Enlightenment ideals of citizenship. They suggest the disjunction between these ideals and the realities of the post-modern world, where it is questionable that an individual can naturally be expected to belong exclusively to one national family. Although quite different from each other, these novels all suggest the limitations of the Enlightenment concept of citizenship, particularly as the nation-state becomes subject to increasingly diffuse global influences and pressures. Through an analysis of depictions of "citizen" and "citizenship" in these novels, I hope to illustrate how the meanings of these terms have changed over time and how these changes illustrate the emergence of a new geopolitical force that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri refer to as "the multitude" in their important work, *Empire*. This new force is made up of "new figures and subjectivities [that] are produced in the conjuncture of events in the universal nomadism, in the general mixture and miscegenation of individuals and populations, and in the technological metamorphosis of the imperial biopolitical machine."[60] I refer to the individuals who comprise this new force as post-imperial subjects because I believe that this concept of subjectivity is created in and through the reality and legacy of imperialism. Like the vast numbers of homeless soldiers who crowded into British cities after the Napoleonic Wars, like the nameless Creature, like the former Commonwealth subjects who immigrated to Britain in the wake of post-colonial independence movements, the multitude effects a "masterless migration" in search of justice and better lives.

The novel is an especially well-suited literary form through which to chart the shifting valences of citizenship. As a genre, it came into being concurrently with British concepts of citizenship, and it was developed, in part, by women writers—visible minorities in the English literary scene—to become a genre through which a multiplicity of voices could be heard commenting on a variety of social, political, and cultural issues. This era also saw the birth of what Jürgen Habermas calls "the public sphere," which he describes "as the sphere of private people come [sic] together as a public."[61] Habermas argues that, in places like coffee houses, literary and intellectual salons, and the print media, individuals and groups met and interacted, giving rise to bourgeois society, a situation that helped to make Parliamentary debate possible.

Since novelists are so intimately engaged with representing the eras in which their works are set, it makes sense that the genre is particularly engaged with contemporary political issues, even if only below the surface of the extant narrative.

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[60] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 61.

[61] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*: *An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1989), 27.

Writing specifically on Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, Susan Lanser argues that "the novel, through its (re)distribution of speaking bodies, engages the pressing eighteenth-century question of who shall participate in civil society, in what ways, and with what rights, of who shall have public power and whose interests shall be recognized and served,"[62] a claim that might be made of any politically engaged novel. Lanser is particularly interested in the fact that the English novel appeared at roughly the same time that the writings of philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke were beginning to alter the political landscapes of France and England. She writes, "it is of course during the period coextensive with the emergence of the English novel that the meaning of a body politic shifts from a sovereign headship who confers rights according to particular stations to a legislative body representing citizens by whose consent that body governs and whose 'natural' rights it is designed to protect."[63]

M. M. Bakhtin is mindful of this when he writes, "Since it [the novel] is constructed in the zone of contact of incomplete events of a particular present, the novel often crosses the boundary of what we strictly call fictional literature—making use first of a moral confession, then of a philosophical tract, then of manifestos that are openly political, then degenerating into the raw spirituality of a confession, a 'cry of the soul' that has not yet found its formal contours."[64] This cross-pollination of genres yields an effective voice of dissent against existing structures of feeling, while also revealing emergent ones.

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[62] Susan Lanser, "The Novel Body Politic," in *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture*, ed. by Paula Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 483.

[63] Lanser,"The Novel Body Politic,"483.

[64] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 33.

However, it is important to note that the realist novel, the primary focus of analysis in this work, has long been associated with both nationalism and imperialism, and there are some obvious reasons to discuss the ways in which the novel and the nation-state share a symbiotic relationship. In terms of history, the rise of the novel coincides with the appearance of the modern nation-state,[65] a fact that has caused many critics to investigate the ways in which the novel legitimates nationalism and imperialism. Benedict Anderson's paradigm of the inception and dispersal of nationalism throughout the West posits the importance of the novel to the birth of national consciousness; he argues that the novel illustrates "the 'national imagination' at work in the movement of a solitary hero through a sociological landscape of fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside."[66] For Homi Bhabha, the realist novel offers a national vision that fosters the myth of the "many as one," which forms the basis of modern nationalism. He explains that, in the realist novel, the "recurrent metaphor of landscape as the inscape of national identity emphasizes the quality of light, the question of social visibility, the power of the eye to naturalize the rhetoric of national affiliation and its forms of collective expression."[67] It is important to bear this in mind when discussing the ways in which representations of active citizens in literature may serve as models to create active participants in disturbing nationalist projects, such as imperialism. However, as my project will ultimately show, the realist novel is also a means through which authors can subvert dominant modes of discourse in order to present more positive ways of being.

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[65] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Press, 1983)*;* Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel* (New York: Verso Press, 1999); Patrick Brantlinger, *Fictions of State: Culture and Credit in Britain 1694-1994* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1996); Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures in 18th Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2006); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin Press, 1979) and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

[66] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 30.

[67] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 143.

The novel, according to Bakhtin, allows for *dialogism*, or a multiplicity of voices expressing a range of often competing ideologies. Bakhtin's discussion of the novel and its use of dialogism both reveal how useful a medium the genre is through which to voice dissent and the need for social change. He argues that the inherent hetereoglossia of the novel provides a space for the discourse of various characters, discourse that is tested and judged by its readers. It is this space that was exploited by early women novelists and that contemporary writers use in order to vet competing viewpoints on a wide range of issues. Beginning with the earliest novels, where writers such as Aphra Behn and Sarah Scott discussed slavery and women's rights, the trend is continued today by authors such as Hanif Kureishi and Monica Ali, who raise issues about the subaltern status of immigrants in England and the roles of the marginalized in modern British culture.

Nancy Glazener writes of Bakhtin's theory of discourse in the novel: "Discourses [are] products of discrete but inextricable social formations, [which] depend so much on their interrelationships for their intelligibility that they are ultimately significant only in relation to the entire complex of language use. Discourses cannot be tailored semantically to the expressive intentions of an individual without betraying the social fabric from which they have been cut."[68] Glazener's claim echoes Fredric Jameson when he writes in "Metacommentary":

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[68] Nancy Glazener, "Dialogic Subversion: Bakhtin, The Novel, and Gertrude Stein," in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, 2nd ed. ed. by Ken Kirschkop and David Shephers (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 155.

“The work of art therefore proves to unite a lived experience of some kind, as its content, with an implied question as to the very possibilities of the Experience itself, as its form.”[69] The idea is more fully discussed in *The Political Unconscious*, in which Jameson argues that texts ought to be read as socially symbolic acts. Bakhtin argues that the “shifts of boundaries between various strata (including literature) in a culture is an extremely slow and complex process. Isolated border violations of any given specific definition ... are only symptomatic of this larger process, which occurs as a great depth. These symptoms of change appear considerably more often in the novel than they do elsewhere, as the novel is a developing genre; they are sharper and more significant because the novel is in the vanguard of change.”[70] Citizenship is one aspect of culture that we can watch unfold over time in novels, revealing important changes in how the concept is regarded and valued.

The novels I analyze here illustrate a tradition of social commentary, stretching from the eighteenth century into the present, to reveal the consequences of social, political, and legal inequality. They expose the relationship between political subjectivities constructed in response to inequality and the fate of the nation-state. In other words, these novels reveal the connections between the welfare of a people and the health of the nation-state. They also point to the need for a broader definition of who “we, the people” actually are.

Most crucially, these novels engage the issues of citizenship as it relates to gender, class, race, religion, and ethnicity. I look specifically at moments when the nation-state intrudes upon the lives of characters. These are moments when characters are forced to consider the political implications of their positions in their respective societies. From a legal point of view, the Creature is not unlike the women characters in the first novel that I discuss, Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*. These women measure their own legal identities against both cloistered Catholic nuns and Huron Indian women in Canada and realize that they come up short. Like the Creature standing outside the DeLacey's cottage, mesmerized by what he sees inside, these women understand that they lack the most basic human rights. Through these contrasts, both Shelley and Brooke suggest something about the social consequences of legal inequity. Writing nearly twenty years before the woman who is today recognized as the mother of modern feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft, Frances Brooke argues in favor of women's participation in civil and political society. In this way, she joins a tradition of British writers who were engaging in what Moira Ferguson calls "feminist polemic," which she explains as writing that "urge[s] or defend[s] a pro-woman point of view which includes resistance to patriarchal values, convention, and domination, or a challenge to misogynous ideas."[71]

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[69] Fredric Jameson, “Metacommentary,” *PMLA* 86, 1 (1971): 17.

[70] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 33.

Brooke's novel reveals how the allegedly gender-neutral word "citizen" has actually been gender biased in substantive ways since its inception. Specifically, the novel challenges Enlightenment thinkers who argued for equality in the state, yet pointedly ignored the state of women. Ruth Lister writes that while there is nothing inherently masculine about the concept of citizenship, both liberal and republican traditions of citizenship have managed to exclude women, often intentionally.[72] The Republican tradition demands an active, public citizenship that was contrary to the private labors that women in the eighteenth century pursued. The Liberal tradition focused on the elevation of the male property owner as the head of the household and family at the expense of women's rights. This situation was legally encoded through the *coverture* laws that prevailed during the eighteenth century, which provided married women with civil and legal identities only through their husbands. These laws essentially rendered married women as property, lacking even the most basic human rights.

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[71] Moira Ferguson, "Feminist Polemic: British Women's Writing From the Late Renaissance to the French Revolution," *Women's Studies International Forum* 9 (1986): 452.

[72] Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives,* 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 3*37.*

Unlike Frankenstein's Creature, who makes a violent demand to have his case heard by his creator/judge, Victor Frankenstein, married women during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and part of the twentieth) were unable to make some of the most basic claims of citizenship or to enjoy even the simplest rights that the status confers. They were unable to speak for themselves in courts of law. Frances Brooke, like other women writers of the day, found this situation untenable. *The History of Emily Montague* illustrates Brooke's own dissatisfaction with the legal identities allowed to married women and explores the possibilities for the improvement (if not the resolution) offered by the companionate marriage and a broadening notion of the roles that women could assume in British political life. The author's insistence that women should be given civil and political identities of their own offers an interesting connection to Mary Shelley's novel, in which a character of questionable status demands the most basic citizenship right, the right to defend one's own self in the presence of authority. Brooke's novel entertains the possibility that "women cannot be citizens in any meaningful sense as long as they live under the shadow of the state."[73] This is because "they are necessarily underrepresented in the state, and the public/private divide works against their participation in the political process."[74] However, Brooke also seems interested in using the private realm as a stand-in for the public and, in so doing, suggests that women could be politically engaged and productive citizens within the context of the modern nation-state.

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[73] Hoffman, *Citizenship Beyond the State*, 3.

The next chapter addresses the legal situation of Jews in England during the nineteenth century through an investigation of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. One of the most striking and interesting aspects of this novel is how engaged it is with the outside world. Unlike *The Mill on the Floss* or *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda* begins outside of England and ends with a momentous journey away from that country. Aware of the limitations placed on Jews in England, the title character announces his determination to leave his home in order to investigate the possibility of founding a Jewish state in Palestine, one that may offer social, political, and economic freedoms that English Jews lacked at this time. While the ending is potentially problematic and may be read as Eliot's failure to think beyond the prevalent political structures of the time, Deronda's mission does not seem to be aligned with British nationalism in particular, and might even be read as a critique of imperialism. In fact, the conclusion is quite open-ended, possibly indicating Eliot's sense that there was no clear answer to the so-called "Jewish Question" in England.

This novel is especially interesting for my purposes since the title character is such a perfect citizen, in the Ciceronian sense of the term. Daniel longs for "some external event, or some inward light, that would urge him into a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy" (365). He desires most of all to be dutiful, a facet of his personality that is mentioned again and again in the novel. However, crucially, Daniel's sense of duty is not attached to the nation-state. Instead, he intends to align himself with the Jewish, rather than the English, people (in spite of his repeated claims throughout the novel that he is an "Englishman"). His solution to the problem of "wandering energy" is, ironically enough, to wander. Instead of staying put in England and working on behalf of the extant Jewish community there, he intends to set forth on a journey to Palestine to discover what can be done to form a Jewish state there. While the novel prefigures Jewish Zionist ambitions, it is set during a time when Parliament and the British people were dealing with the Jewish Question and trying to determine what role Jews would assume in British social and political life. As such, the novel was written in one of those zones of "contact of incomplete events of a particular present," and it presents an interesting discussion of the legal and social aspects of citizenship set against this historical backdrop.

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[74] Hoffman, *Citizenship Beyond the State,* 3.

The nineteenth century was an important one for the Jews in England.[75] Their population in 1800 was approximately 15,000, concentrated mostly in London; however, by the middle of the century, this figure had risen to about 35,000 because of an influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. In 1872, when George Eliot began thinking about the novel that would become *Daniel Deronda,* Anglo-Jews had been legally emancipated only since 1835. Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters received civil and political rights earlier, in 1828-1829. The Anglo-Jewish community during this period recognized that their own emancipation was likely only a matter of time and, in the meantime, enjoyed a relatively tolerant society where many Jews could and did prosper. However, in order for this prosperity to continue and expand, it was essential that Jewish people be granted admission to British universities and to all professions. In 1825, legislation passed that repealed a law of 1609 requiring foreign-born individuals wishing to become naturalized British citizens to receive the Sacrament of the Church of England, a law which was obviously odious to Jews.[76] Dennis Grube argues that this law suggests that the debate over the Jewish Question was not entirely about rights; rather, he explains, it was really a debate about English national identity.[77] It indicated that the dominant structure of feeling of in the culture at that time was the preference for ideal English citizens to be Christians and not Jews.

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[75] This discussion of Jewish emancipation comes from M. C. N. Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain: The Question of Admission of the Jews to Parliament, 1828-1860* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1982); Abraham Gilam, *The Emancipation of the Jews in England 1830-1860* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), and David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture 1840-1914* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

The English government was, however, more tolerant of religious diversity than either Germany or France throughout the nineteenth century,[78] but these types of discriminatory laws suggest the consequential ways that the Anglo-Jewish community was legally disadvantaged throughout the era. Jews were not admitted to the legal Bar until 1833, and they were unable to fill municipal offices until 1828, when the requirement that officials swear the mandatory oath was rescinded.[79]

In addition to political barriers, Jews were not admitted to retail trade unions in the City of London until 1830. The prohibition forbid them from conducting trade in what was the most lucrative and important center of business in England. The Church of England held a monopoly on marriages until 1836, when the Civil

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[76] Salbstein, *The Emancipation of the Jews*, 45.

[77] Dennis Grube, "Religion, Power and Parliament: Rothschild and Bradlaugh Revisited," *History* 62, 35 (January 2007): 22.

[78] French Jews were given equal citizenship rights in 1791 provided that they were fully assimilated. Napoleon was an advocate, of sorts, for Jewish emancipation. In a meeting with Jewish leaders who offered Napoleon their support, he declared that Judaism was a religion, not a nation, the conventional wisdom being that "Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals" (Rubin, 11). Jews were fully emancipated in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867 and in 1870 in Germany; however, this coincided with an upsurge in anti-Semitism in these areas.

[79] A similar oath prevented the Baron Lionel de Rothschild from taking his Parliamentary seat as a representative of London in 1847. It was not until the passage of the 1858 Jewish Disabilities Act that he was allowed to swear a non-Christian oath on the Old Testament and assume his elected post.

Marriages Act allowed non-Anglicans to marry either in their own places of worship or in registry offices. The most prestigious universities in England, Cambridge and Oxford, did not grant degrees to Jewish students until 1854 and 1856, respectively. There were ways around these discriminatory practices,[80] but once Catholics and Quakers were given legal and political rights, Anglo-Jews increasingly lobbied for the same rights as other Dissenters. However, the possibility of full citizenship was not wholeheartedly embraced by the entire Jewish community in England in large part because of concerns about what it might mean for Jewish identity. Abraham Gilam explains that "Civil and political emancipation compelled Anglo-Jewry to define its identity: Was participation in public life compatible with Jewish loyalties? Would integration lead to excessive acculturation or perhaps even to the repudiation of Judaism? Did the public and legislators seriously expect ... a relaxation to the ancestral faith in exchange for civil rights?"[81] Moses Montefiore, a wealthy Jewish businessman and onetime proponent of Jewish emancipation, expressed his concern in 1837 when he wrote, "I am most firmly resolved not to give up the smallest part of our religious forms and privileges to obtain civil rights."[82]

Daniel Deronda is set during this period of public debate, and its discussion of duty makes an especially interesting juxtaposition to the way that duty is treated in a chapter discussing political apathy in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Although he was born and raised in South London, Kureishi is generally considered a postcolonial writer,[83] and his work reflects a concern for multiracial identities and identity politics that engage the legal, social, and political complexities of ethnic groups living in contemporary London. The lines of his well-received first novel reflect this: “My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories.”[84] Kureishi’s work “suggests that the dogma of nationalism is in conflict with the reality of today’s multicultural England. He demands that we accept the inherent contradictions of a pluralistic society within England. ... [T]old from his Anglo-Asian perspective, his stories proclaim that as individuals reinvent their identities, so too must nations.”[85] Through the presentation of an ostensibly apolitical protagonist, Kureishi’s novel suggests how modern citizens have become wise to the ways in which civic virtue has come to be associated with nationalist agendas. Karim assumes none of the basic civic responsibilities associated with citizenship: he does not serve in the military and, apparently, does not vote. While he acknowledges that there are inequities in British society, he is not moved to do anything about them. Instead, he floats in and out of political theater, but he does not seem especially moved by the roles that he performs. In fact, Karim does not actively seek out the politically engaged roles that he receives; rather, he is cast in them simply because of his race. In this sense, Karim allows himself to become a political statement for the individuals who, quite literally, direct him. However, he is not oblivious to this fact. Importantly, Karim is aware of the ways in which his friends and family members are politically engaged and admires their social commitment, but not enough to join them at protest rallies. In fact, his apathy seems to function as a commentary on how fruitless political participation can be in the modern world.

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[80] For instance, a law that required voters to swear the oath of allegiance before casting their votes was often ignored by pollsters. This lapse allowed Jews to cast their votes in elections even before Jews were legally emancipated.

[81] Gilam, *The Emancipation of the Jews in England*, 38.

[82] Qtd. in Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews*, 48-49.

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[83] Kureishi’s mother is English; his father was Pakistani. However, even this claim is confused since Kureishi senior was born in Bombay, but emigrated to London as a young man. His remaining family moved to Pakistan following Partition in 1947. The author’s father never actually lived in Pakistan and, to my knowledge, did not visit there in his lifetime. Hanif Kureishi has spent time in Pakistan with family and documented his extensive visit there in his essay, “The Rainbow Sign.”

[84] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (New York: Penguin Press, 1990), 3.

[85] Kenneth C. Kaleta, *Hanif Kureishi: Postcolonial Storyteller* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 3.

Given the title, one might assume that the novel would focus specifically on life in the London suburbs, and the novel does begin there; however, it is only when the main characters leave the suburbs for the city itself that the novel truly begins. In this way, the suburbs function as a symbolic site, a place that is on the margins of the action, just as the main characters are themselves marginalized. These symbolically distant outposts, together with the diverse communities of individuals that inhabit central London, reflect the changing face of England, indeed of all of Europe, and complicate Benedict Anderson's concept of national identity forming around the idea of an "imagined political community" that is relatively homogenous. In this way, Karim Amir, an Asian-English citizen of the suburbs, is representative of those Asian and Caribbean immigrants who, although they could become legal citizens of England, could not become "English" even "by virtue of sustained exposure to English scenes, institutions, traditions, or places."[86]

Kureishi's novel is especially important given that, in many ways, the twentieth century is the century of the naturalized citizen. The difficult period of decolonization, which occurred mostly during the middle of the century, left many former colonials in between States. Former colonial powers were forced to deal with their erstwhile subjects, resulting in an influx of newly naturalized citizens in places like London and Paris. Ved Mehta explains the effects of naturalization on new citizens in a recent essay: “few of those who are born and die citizens of the same country ... ever consciously commit themselves to their own citizenship, but we who change citizenship by choice must commit ourselves to the history and heritage, the pride and guilt of our adopted land.”[87]

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[86] Ian Baucom. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 21.

This sense is quite evident in Kureishi’s work (including his stage and film work). Although he is generally considered to be a “world writer,” Kureishi's fiction is soundly rooted in the tradition of the English novel. The author has admitted that, in spite of his success in film and on stage, his favorite genre is the novel because it is so flexible. A number of critics consider his comic sensibility to be in the same tradition as Jonathan Swift and Henry Fielding. These influences are apparent in his novels, especially in their often satirical engagement with issues facing underprivileged classes in London. Like these authors, Kureishi is especially interested in revealing inequities and injustices that exist in English culture, and he is nearly obsessed with the lingering effects of Thatcherism on English society. Kenneth Kaleta explains that while “undeniably irreverent, Kureishi’s perspective is based on a traditional English blending of political freedom and cultural identity ... his point of view resents and respects; then it satirizes English successes as well as English failures. This is the tradition of English satire.[88]

Kureishi is obviously influenced by the writers who preceded him. His use of the novel form reveals his reverence for the tradition, but he also acknowledges that *The Buddha of Suburbia* sits somewhat uncomfortably on the shelf of “great” English novels because of its graphic sexual descriptions and explicit language. However, the novel is clearly about more than the coming of age of a sexually curious young man from South London. During his journey from the suburbs to central London, Karim encounters political ideas and politicized individuals who force him to consider his social and political identity in 1970s Britain. Additionally, this novel joins a new tradition of English writing that challenges received ideas about "proper" Englishness and England. Specifically, this novel is useful for me because it illustrates a new type of citizen, one with psychological and legal connections both to a specific urban environment as well as to some other, more ephemeral locale that is rooted in a distant but pervasive familial past.

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[87] Ved Mehta, “Naturalized Citizen No. 984-5165,” in *Away: The Indian Writer as an Expatriate*, ed. Amitava Kumar (New York: Routledge Press, 2004), 234.

[88] Kaleta, *Hanif Kureishi*, 34.

Finally, I conclude with a chapter on Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, a novel that begins with the explosive birth of both the protagonist and the entire population of the newly independent India. The coming of age of this character is closely aligned with the fortunes of that nation-state, in both positive and negative ways. Through Saleem Sinai, Rushdie comments upon the violence of Partition, the failures of successive Indian governments, the repressive policies of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, as well as many of the other social and political scandals that shaped the nation. It is a wonderfully dense novel, a fantasy of Indian politics, history, and society. Importantly, it engages one of the most important facets of post-imperial subjectivity: hybridity. Saleem's intense preoccupation with what he calls "chutnification" suggests the many rich and rewarding possibilities of multiculturalism; however, Saleem's own existence as a hybrid citizen—he is a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Christian—is fraught with danger throughout the novel. His fear is the legitimate fear of the marginalized, and his physical and mental conditions reflect the ways in which this sense of fear creates individuals who are necessarily uneasy.

These novels, from Brooke to Kureishi, are all political in the sense that they are, as Bakhtin would say, "dialogic." They all deal with the often fraught relationship between nation-state and subject (not always citizen). A few of the novels were written during or set in periods of social change or crisis. *Emily Montague* was written shortly before the American Revolution and is set during the period just after French Canada had been added to Britain's growing overseas empire; *Daniel Deronda* is set at a time when the British Parliament was debating the legal status of Jews living in the country; *The Buddha of Suburbia* concludes on the night that Margaret Thatcher's Tory government was voted into power. *Midnight's Children*, the novel with which I conclude the dissertation, begins at the moment when the nation of India is "born," at the stoke of midnight on August 14, 1947, and charts the progress of that nation-state through its first thirty years, ending during a political crisis called "the Emergency." Set, as they are, in these politically charged moments, these novels raise critical concerns about the nature of citizenship. The novels suggest that the "many as one" concept is a politically convenient way of insisting upon a homogenous citizenry that would be easy to govern. It is more honest to say that this claim is really a wish that the citizenry be the many as male, the many as white, the many as Christian, and the many as straight. By denying the myth of the "many as one" and insisting upon the complexity of identity, these writers join a tradition of novelistic inquiry and dissent that raises questions about injustices and inequality.

In profound ways, these novels convey something about how ideas and ideals of citizenship have changed over time. Through an investigation of them, I hope to answer a number of questions about the concept. Some of these are: What have novelists in the past and present done with the idea of citizenship? What is the relationship between the novel and citizenship (both were nascent in the eighteenth century, the point at which I begin my analysis)? How do these specific authors depict the changing values of citizenship? How does the study of citizenship provide a better understanding of the evolution and current state of the novel? It is possible that this work will elucidate some questions such as: why and how does citizenship matter? How has citizenship been adapted for local uses? How appropriate is this Western concept to the political entities left in place after colonialism? How has the globalization that has been brought about by technology and an increasingly interdependent world economy affected the legal edifice of citizenship?

Citizenship is an important aspect of modern identity, one that is experienced both nationally and internationally. It is filtered through every branch of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—and at its every level—national, regional, and local. It is affected by both personal and bureaucratic concerns and encountered in both private and public domains. Few legal distinctions are as consequential. Yet, as Frankenstein's Creature illustrates, it is a distinction that can be fraught with inequity and controversy. The novels that I discuss here illustrate the ways in which different categories of people have understood and reacted to this distinction. Together, they suggest the complexity of political identity in an increasingly diverse world and indicate the need for a more inclusive paradigm of citizenship in order to accommodate different subjectivities than the one assumed by Liberal-Humanist philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Like Mary Shelley's symbolically rich and politically loaded novel, these novels all feature characters that "go forth and prosper," and, in the process, reveal the unsettling actualities of the legal and social situations in which they live. In so doing, the novels unclothe the myth of the many as one, which insists upon a uniformity of political identity that is often at odds with the real needs, desires, and experiences of the characters. My analysis of these novels reveals how the conceit of citizenship works symbolically to uphold a particular status quo. It suggests how these novelists were aware of the disciplinary nature of citizenship and deployed their characters as functions through which to critique the uses of this symbolic work.

Through their words and actions, these characters fashion statements of dissent that unclothe the inadequacies of citizenship as they encounter it. They also articulate shifting attitudes about the meaning of citizenship for different categories of people over time and answer questions raised during their respective centuries about whether citizenship is to be primarily a rights-bearing or duty-bearing designation. In this way, the novels serve as a set of responses to one of the most salient issues in the field of citizenship studies: What should citizens and their governments expect from one another? It is a more complicated question than it seems, since national projects like imperialism, colonialism, and war require citizens to make complicated moral and ethical decisions that may be at odds with their other affiliative ties. And, it is a question that governments are often hard-pressed to answer.[89] However, the novels here suggest that the conceit of citizenship is viable, but only if individuals are able to foreground affiliative ties other than the nation-state that confer the designation of citizenship upon them. Each of these texts illustrates facets of a new sort of political creature, one that appropriates the conceit of citizenship but adapts it for new purposes. The facets of the post-imperial subject described by these texts comprise a conceit of their own, a conceit that might present citizens with new possibilities that would enable them to leave behind old tyrannies, even those that look a lot like freedom.

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[89] The inadequate responses at all levels of the American government in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina suggest how even wealthy, industrialized nations are sometimes ill-equipped to anticipate and provide for the most basic needs of their citizens.

Chapter III

"In Some Respects Peculiar": Women and Citizenship in Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*

Mary Wollstonecraft's unfinished and posthumously published novel *Maria, or The Wrongs of Women* vividly illustrates the degree of legal and political oppression faced by British women during Wollstonecraft's lifetime. The novel is an unflinching indictment of this situation and illustrates the legal enslavement of British women through the institution of marriage.[1] It critiques the situation that female citizens have experienced since the earliest inception of the concept of citizenship; this novel also suggests how the legal system envisions the ideal British citizen, one that is unquestionably male. In another context, Ruth Lister explores the historical exclusion of women from the concept of citizenship and explains that "the universalistic cloak of the abstract, disembodied individual has been cast aside to reveal a definitely male citizen and a white, heterosexual, non-disabled one at that."[2] This "ideal" is a concept that Kathleen Jones argues needs to be understood by contemporary theorists of citizenship as they reconsider the term to fit modern usage.

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[1] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman* (1798; repr., New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc, 1975). Wollstonecraft's final, unfinished novel deals with the plight of a married woman who has been confined to a private madhouse by her husband. Chapter seventeen of the novel is a polemic against the injustices Maria has endured when her case is heard in the courts. In this segment, Wollstonecraft's own attitude about the legal status of women, a common theme in her non-fiction writings and private letters, becomes clear. In a letter written to the court when she becomes "convinced that the subterfuges of the law were disgraceful," Maria explains her situation. She writes, "Married when scarcely able to distinguish the nature of the engagement, I yet submitted to the rigid laws which enslave women, and obeyed the man whom I can no longer love" (130).

[2] Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 68.

Jones maintains that, “polity that is friendly to women and the multiplicity of their interests must root its democracy in the experiences of women and transform the practice and concept of citizenship to fit these varied experiences, rather than simply transform women to accommodate the practice of citizenship as it has traditionally been defined.”[3] This claim is especially important given that citizenship is experienced through participation in the civic and political arenas of society, arenas from which women have been historically excluded.

Wollstonecraft’s ideas are shared by eighteenth-century novelist, playwright, translator, critic, and journalist Frances Moore Brooke. The daughter of a clergyman (and eventually the wife and mother of clergymen), Frances Moore moved to London in 1748 to become a member of that city’s literary society. By the time of her death in 1789, she had been quite successful. Her social circle was wide, and Brooke was friends with the leading actors of her day and on cordial terms with Samuel Johnson (if not with David Garrick, with whom she maintained acrimonious relations stemming from a series of professional slights, including his refusal to produce her early plays).[4] Her marriage to the Reverend John Brooke took her to Canada, the setting for most of her second novel, *The History of Emily Montague*, which is considered to be the first Canadian novel. During her lifetime, Brooke earned a reputation as a well-educated woman with a lively mind. She was proficient in writing both fiction and nonfiction. The subjects of her writing in *The Old Maid*, a periodical she wrote from November 1755 through July of 1756, range from theater criticism to marriage to what she perceived as the religious hypocrisy following the Lisbon earthquake.[5] All of her accomplishments illustrate that Frances Brooke was a woman with a variety of interests on which she could write with authority.

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[3] Kathleen B. Jones, “Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity,” in *The Citizenship Debates*, ed. by Gershon Shafir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 221.

[4] Biographical information on Frances Brooke comes from Paula Backscheider and Hope Cotton, Introduction to *The Excursion*, by Frances Brooke (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997) ix-xlix; and Lorraine McMullen, *An Odd Attempt in a Woman: The Literary Life of Frances Brooke* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983).

The History of Emily Montague, published in 1769, is made up of 228 conversational letters that focus on the romantic adventures of six characters. Although once dismissed by critics as a sentimental novel, *The History of Emily Montague* is more complex than it initially appears. It is not a mere sentimental novel, nor is it a simple courtship tale. Frances Brooke is profoundly interested in the circumstances of women in British society, and her characters make harsh pronouncements about the injustice of the subordination of women. While romance is undoubtedly its primary focus, the novel also features accurate and interesting descriptions of and commentaries on the French and Hurons in Canada; the sublime Canadian landscape; the social world in which the English and recently vanquished French interact; and the wonder and magnificence of England with its gardens, religion, culture, etc. These ostensibly background descriptions provide an important contrast to the ongoing discussion of the advantages of the companionate marriage, and it is through these descriptions that Brooke's own ideological perspectives become clear. Jodi Wyett accounts for the novel's popularity throughout Brooke's lifetime by explaining that the "novel may have had particular resonance for female readers who sought ways to participate in and even question the eighteenth-century economic, social, and political power structures."[6] Katharine Rogers argues that because Brooke was "a woman of feeling who tempered sensibility with good sense and pathos with humor, [she] helped women not only by expressing feminine experience but by creating a climate in which feminist issues could be raised."[7] Following Susan Lanser's discussion of politics in the eighteenth-century novel, Brooke's work "engages the pressing eighteenth-century question of who shall participate in civil society, in what ways, and with what right [sic], of who shall have public power and whose interests shall be recognized and served."[8]

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[5] Backscheider and Cotton, Introduction, xii-xv.

[6] Jodi Wyett, "'No Place Where Women Are of Such Importance': Female Friendship, Empire, and Utopia in *The History of Emily Montague*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 16, no. 1 (October 2003): 38.

Among the pronouncements that Brooke makes in this novel are very direct jibes at the limited civil rights of women. However, in spite of its generally cautious critique of the civil and political situations of British women under British law, Brooke can be just as strident as Wollstonecraft. For instance, early in the narrative, one of the principle characters, Colonel Ed Rivers, describes the Huron political system to his sister Lucy, notes the importance of women in choosing leaders and concludes, "in the true sense of the word, *we* are the savages, who so impolitely deprive you of the common rights of citizenship, and leave you no power but that of which we cannot deprive you, the resistless power of your charms."[9] He continues, "I don't think you are obliged in conscience to obey laws you have had no share in making" (38), a striking statement even in the twenty-first century and one that powerfully sums up the compromised nature of British women's citizenship in the eighteenth century.

British sociologist T. H. Marshall claims that "citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are *full members* of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed."[10] Yet even as contract theorists were considering citizenship, and its attendant rights and duties, women were being excluded from the enjoyment of civic life. Linda Kerber argues that "the revolutionary generation of men who so radically transgressed inherited understandings of the relationship between kings and men, fathers and sons, nevertheless refused to revise inherited understandings of the relationship between men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and children. They continued to assert patriarchal privilege as heads of households and civic actions."[11] The new idea of citizenship that men such as Locke and Rousseau envisioned suggests a public role for citizens, one at odds with the private roles assumed by most women in the eighteenth century. Although they could and did work in the public, most women could not participate in social functions without a father, brother, or husband present. More consequentially, women were not allowed to enroll in colleges or universities and were passed over in favor of brothers by inheritance laws.

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[7] Katharine Rogers, "Sensibility and Feminism: The Novels of Frances Brooke," *Genre* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 171.

[8] Susan Lanser, "The Novel Body Politic," in *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century English Novel and Culture,* ed. by Paula Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 483.

[9] Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague* (1769; repr., Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Inc., 1995), 38. Future citations in text.

There is a specific but, in England,[12] infrequently used term to designate female citizens. However, definitions of the term "citizeness" suggest only gender distinction; usages described in the *Oxford English Dictionary* do not denote any attendant rights, responsibilities, duties, or privileges that would apply to women. This is probably not a mere omission. Since the earliest use of the word, women and slaves have been excluded from most of the benefits of citizenship. Feminist critiques of liberal humanist conceptions of citizenship note that Locke and Rousseau, in their discussions of the individual, posit a male subject.[13] Although there are moments in his writings when Locke assumes marriage between equals, elsewhere he asserts male dominance within the family, something that Carol Pateman argues is prevalent in the writings of most Enlightenment philosophers."[14] The individual implied by these philosophers is abstract in many ways, but one thing is certain, and this is the sex of the individual: it is resolutely male. These writers used a Cartesian conception of subjectivity, which, by equating women with the body instead of the mind, suggested that women had diminished reasoning capabilities.[15] Ruth Lister writes that "fundamentally still it has been the very identification of women with the body, nature and sexuality, feared as a threat to the political order that has rendered them ineligible."[16] Anne McClintock argues that women are "excluded from direct action as national citizens ... [and] subsumed symbolically into the national body politic as its boundary and metaphoric limit."[17] Therefore, she maintains, "nationalism is ... constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power."[18]

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[10] T. H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 28-29. Emphasis added.

[11] Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right To Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 9.

[12] In Revolution-era France, the term was commonly used; however, as both Mary Wollstonecraft, an eye-witness to the Revolution, and Marie-Olympes des Gouges, the French feminist who would eventually be guillotined, noted, women's rights in France were not advanced by the overthrow of the monarchy and the resulting political sea-change.

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[13] Carol Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 25.

[14] Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 27.

[15] This discussion of the Cartesian conception of subjectivity comes from Susan Bordo, "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought and the Seventeenth-Century Flight From the Feminine," in *The Flight to Objectivity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997).

[16] Lister, *Feminist Perspectives*, 72.

[17] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995), 354.

[18] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 355.

Through this line of thought, we can see that women were simply considered unfit to engage in a relationship as complicated as the one that existed between the state and the individual, an idea that resonates through the writings of almost every major political and legal philosopher of the eighteenth century. Because women have been excluded from participation in the Social Contract, their citizenship rights are, therefore, abridged.

This construction of citizenship is a good example of the effects of what is generically referred to as patriarchy; however, Gail Rubin's "sex-gender system" is a more useful term here. Rubin argues that "the term 'patriarchy' was introduced to distinguish the forces maintaining sexism from other forces"[19]; however, sex/gender system "refers to the domain and indicates that oppression is not inevitable in that domain, but is the product of the specific social relations which organize it."[20] For instance, one of the novel's most direct pronouncements against the political position of European women occurs in the eleventh letter in *The History of Emily Montague*, which is sent from Rivers to his sister Lucy in England. Here, Rivers compares the political lives of Huron women in Canada with English women. He writes, "the sex which we have so unjustly excluded from power in Europe have a great share in the Huron government; the chief is chose [sic] by the matrons from amongst the nearest male relations, by the female line, of him he is to succeed" (37). Rivers then continues by evoking the generosity with which he believes that women judge men. He explains that "women are, beyond all doubt, the best judges of the merit of men; and I should be extremely pleased to see it adopted in England: canvassing for elections would be the most agreeable thing in the world, and I am sure the ladies would give their votes on much more generous principles than we do" (38). Extending their "generous principles" to the judgment of merit was, of course, something that women were legally unable to do at this time. In the eighteenth century, married women lacked even the most basic of rights provided by the rule of law, a concept that was developed during this century and that provided equal and protected access to the court system, where civil and criminal grievances could be heard and redressed.

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[19] Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex: *Toward an Anthropology of Women,* ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 204.

[20] Rubin, "Traffic," 167-168.

Using Marshall's paradigm of citizenship—a paradigm that traces the dissemination of civil, political, and social rights in Britain from the Enlightenment to the middle of the twentieth century—we can see that in the eighteenth century, married women were denied basic civil rights since they were not recognized by the courts except through their husbands and because they were legally required to forfeit their properties to their husbands upon marriage. Further, English women were denied political rights until well into the twentieth century. In fact, Sylvia Walby argues that women did not gain basic civil rights, those first generation rights that include "the right of access to education; to own property; to terminate a marriage; to bodily integrity ... the right not to be beaten by a husband; to professional employment; to sit on juries; to join the police,"[21] until after they had achieved political rights. Access to social rights has been earned even more slowly, since so many social rights are contingent upon a person's status as a worker, and, historically, many women have worked in their homes and were not officially recognized as workers. Marshall does acknowledge that during the formative period of civil rights "the status of women, or at least of married women, was in some important respects *peculiar*”[22]; however, he has virtually nothing else to say on the matter.

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[21] Sylvia Walby, "Is Citizenship Gendered?" *Sociology* 28, no. 2 (May 1994): 385.

It is this peculiar status that Frances Brooke foregrounds in *The History of Emily Montague*. What becomes clear in the statements about women’s rights that Rivers makes throughout the novel is that the codified subordination of women is dangerous to the nation. Brooke, like many other eighteenth-century English writers, uses the domestic sphere as a stand-in for the public sphere in order to illustrate how a more progressive attitude about women’s roles and rights would foster a more productive and proficient society. Brooke is especially critical of the abridgment of women’s most basic of rights: civil rights. More than anywhere else, it is through the absence of civil rights that the real status of female citizens, especially married female citizens, becomes apparent.

The History of Emily Montague is unusual in its blending of sentimentality and rich descriptions for ideological purposes as well as for its use of journalistic essays to make specific thematic points. The novel’s themes suggest some of Brooke’s lifelong preoccupations: the desirability of a companionate and self-chosen marriage as opposed to an arranged one; the need for a more comprehensive approach to women’s education; equality between the sexes; and expanded civil rights for women. Throughout the novel, the plight of British women is juxtaposed against the relatively liberated lives led by Native American women in North America. For instance, Ed Rivers explains that Huron women “acquire a new empire in marrying; are consulted in all affairs of state; chuse [sic] a chief on every vacancy of the throne, are sovereign arbiters of peace and war” (16). He notes that Native American women have greater mobility than English women. A Huron husband is content for his wife to “ramble five hundred miles, without asking where she is going" (52), while it is "highly improper for two [English] women to go to Quebec alone" (57).

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[22] Marshall, “Citizenship,” 18. Emphasis added.

The descriptions of the limited freedoms of British women, compared with the relatively unrestricted freedoms of Huron women, are most often voiced by Ed Rivers, the character in Brooke's novel who is depicted most consistently as the conventionally "ideal" citizen. He is an active citizen aware of duties and responsibilities to the State, and, of course, he is a man. However, in spite of this obvious point, in many ways Ed Rivers is feminized. He has no fortune of his own and few prospects in England, a disadvantage that compels him to leave his family and seek a sufficient income abroad. His close friend offers him financial support, which Rivers promptly declines "since [he] is too fond of independence to accept favors of this kind even from him" (295). The line reads very much like the rejection of a suitor. Rivers' feminized situation becomes even more apparent later in the novel when he learns that he has been promised in marriage to the daughter of a wealthy relative (who turns out to be Emily Montague, the woman he is already in love with). Even after his marriage, Rivers' financial dependence on his father-in-law is clear; Colonel Willmott's contributions make the difference, for the Rivers family, between living a quiet (and inexpensive) life in the country and the ability to have "the variety of amusements" that "may prevent the languor to which all human pleasures are subject" (402).

Rivers also illustrates an understanding of the dangers of a marriage that is tainted by disparities in power when he explains to his sister that "Equality is the soul of friendship: marriage, to give delight must join two minds, not devote a slave to the will of an imperious lord; whatever conveys the idea of subjection necessarily destroys that of love, of which I am so convinced, that I have always wished the word OBEY expunged from the marriage ceremony" (204). By "feminizing" Rivers in these ways and by aligning him emotionally and financially with women, Brooke establishes him as a stand-in for women, who are, as Rivers explains, "the sex we have so unjustly excluded from power in Europe" (37). It is through this character that Frances Brooke tests the possibility of extending civil and political rights to British women, which was a subtle yet acceptable manner in which to illustrate the consequences of the prevailing system as well as testing the possibilities of a more equitable legal and social system.

Writing nearly twenty years before the woman who is today recognized as the mother of modern feminism, Mary Wollstonecraft, Frances Brooke argues in favor of women's active participation in civil and political society, and in so doing, joins a tradition of British writers who were engaging in what Moira Ferguson calls "feminist polemic," which she explains as writing that "urge[s] or defend[s] a prowoman point of view."[23] In fact, Brooke directly addresses the issue of the subordinate status of women's citizenship in this novel, and, although Ferguson herself does not name Frances Brooke specifically as an early British feminist, Barbara Benedict argues that Brooke's novels were, in fact, subversive. She explains that "Brooke defends sentiment against the tyranny of custom, law, privilege, and patriarchy."[24] Brooke is adamant on several points. For instance, one letter establishes a relationship between happy marriages and a stable political environment. It reads:

> I mean marriage; the restraints on which in almost every country, not only tend to encourage celibacy, and a destructive libertinism the consequence of it, to give fresh strength to domestic tyranny, and

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[23] Ferguson, "Feminist Polemic," 452.

[24] Barbara Benedict, "The Margins of Sentiment: Nature, Letter, and Law in Frances Brooke's Epistolary Novels," *Ariel* 23, (1992): 7.

> subject the generous affections of uncorrupted youth to the guidance of those in whom every motive to action but avarice is dead; to condemn the blameless victims of duty to a life of indifference, of disgust, and possibly of guilt; but, by opposing the very spirit of our constitution, throwing property into a few hands, and favoring that excessive inequality, which renders one part of the species wretched, without adding to the happiness of the other; to destroy at once the domestic felicity of individuals, contradict the will of the Supreme Being, as clearly wrote in the book of nature, and sap the very foundations of the most perfect form of government on earth. (366)

This statement suggests what Brooke must have considered the dire consequences of subordinating female citizens, and it is especially critical of a legal distinction applied to married women known as *coverture*. Throughout the eighteenth century, English law distinguished between single and married women by designating a married woman as *feme covert*, a civic entity that was virtually invisible to the courts. Linda Kerber describes the effects of this legal designation: "By treating married women as "covered" by their husbands' civic identity, by placing sharp constraints on the extent to which married women controlled their bodies and their property, the old law of domestic relations ensured that—with few exceptions—married women's obligations to their husbands and families overrode their obligations to the state."[25] Even William Blackstone made note of the "civil death" experienced by married women at the hands of English law, although he also proclaimed that the "female sex" is a "favorite" of the laws of England.

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[25] Kerber, *No Constitutional Right*, xxiii.

In *The Sexual Contract*, Carol Pateman writes: "Sexual difference is political difference; sexual difference is the difference between freedom and subjection. Women are not party to the original contract through which men transform their natural freedom into the security of civil patriarchal right."[26] She continues, "women were self-evidently not free persons, and therefore were no more eligible for the vote than children."[27] Indeed, Blackstone explains that, while the old laws of England allowed husbands to give their wives "moderate correction" that is in the "same moderation that a man is allowed to correct his servants or children,"[28] the law during the "politer reign of Charles the second" doubts this right; however, Blackstone continues, "the lower rank of people, who were always fond of the old common law, still claim and exert their ancient privilege: and the courts of law will still permit a husband to restrain a wife of her liberty, in case of any gross misbehavior."[29]

It is difficult to believe that Frances Brooke, in close touch with the London literary scene during her five-year stay in Canada (1763-1768), would have been unaware of the publication of William Blackstone's four-volume work, *The Commentaries on the Laws of England,* between 1765 and 1769. Brooke was a woman who was very much interested in commenting upon the ideas of her time in her own writings, most notably in *The Old Maid.* There, Brooke was clearly concerned with engaging controversial issues and often used the persona and fictional adventures of Mary Singleton in order to make her own positions on issues clear, something she also does in her novels. In terms of timing, Blackstone's volume on the rights of individuals was published just four years before the publication of *The History of Emily Montague*, in 1765, and the subsequent volumes were published through 1769. Brooke's novel often reads like a reaction to some of the legal issues described by William Blackstone in this first volume of *The Commentaries*, the volume that deals explicitly with the relations between individuals.

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[26] Kerber, *No Constitutional Right,* 6.

[27] Kerber, *No Constitutional Right,* 6.

[28] William Blackstone, *Of the Rights of Persons,* vol. 1, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 432.

[29] Blackstone, *Commentaries,* 433.

In his discussion of municipal law, also referred to as the rules of civil conduct, William Blackstone curiously anticipates Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* when he writes that the rules of moral conduct "regard man as a creature, and point out his duty to God, to himself, and to his neighbor, considered in the light of an individual,"[30] while municipal or civil law "regards him also as a citizen, and bound to other duties toward his neighbor, than those of mere nature and religious: duties, which he has engaged in by enjoying the benefits of the common union; and which amount to no more, than that he do contribute, on his part, to the subsistence and peace of the society."[31] It is a complex expectation with potentially unsettling consequences, the kind of demand that causes ordinary citizens to participate in unprincipled national projects like imperialism. A good example of this comes late in the novel, when Ed Rivers decides that the role best suited for himself is to become nationally useful and explains that he means, "like a good citizen, to serve at once myself and the public, by raising oaks, which may hereafter, bear the British thunder to distant lands" (338-339).

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[30] Blackstone, *Commentaries,* 119.

[31] Blackstone, *Commentaries,* 119.

Tellingly, Blackstone begins his discussion of “great relations in private life” with the relationship between master and servant. This section is followed by an explanation of the legal relationship that exists between husband and wife. Blackstone writes that the relationship between husband and wife is “founded in nature but modified by civil society: the one directing man to continue and multiply his species, the other prescribing the manner in which that natural impulse must be confined and regulated.”[32] According to English law, marriage is a civil contract that renders the husband and wife “one person in law.”[33] Yet, in spite of this conflation, Blackstone considers women to be great “favorites” of the laws of England, especially because the severity of punishment meted out by their husbands is moderated by civil law. His opinions about the legal abridgment of the rights of married women reflect the dominant attitudes of the era.

Novels such as *The History of Emily Montague* illustrate how consequential, beyond even emotional and financial concerns, marriage actually was in the eighteenth century. The legal relationship that existed between husbands and wives helps to explain why marriage was such an important consideration in so many eighteenth-century novels. Marriage could be a dangerous proposition for women.[34] After 1620, when the courts began to intervene in upholding marriage contracts, the concept of a separate estate for married women came to be upheld in the judicial system,[35] but otherwise, the judiciary was not of much practical use for women in the eighteenth century. In fact, two years into the century, Parliament curtailed the ability of women to have their bills for divorce heard by the courts yet continued to hear those initiated by men of rank.[36] A couple continued to be considered "one person in law" once married, and women ceded property to their husbands upon marriage until well into the nineteenth century.[37] The children of a couple were considered to be the property of the husband. Women who fled their husbands were entitled to nothing from the household; they could even be legally compelled to return to their marital homes.[38] Before 1857, legal divorce was possible only for the wealthiest of citizens.[39] However, although divorce was sometimes possible, it was a humiliating and difficult process, especially for women. Brooke contrasts this with the Huron Indians in Canada when Rivers describes the relatively liberated lives led by Huron women. Although their lives were arduous, Rivers explains that these women were able to indulge in "great libertinism" (37) before marriage, and he describes how they could end their marriages should they become unhappy with their spouses, since “as the *Great Spirit* formed us to be happy, it was opposing his will, to continue together when otherwise” (37).

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[32] Blackstone, *Commentaries,* 119.

[33] Blackstone, *Commentaries,* 430.

[34] Mary Wollstonecraft illustrates these dangers quite vividly in *Maria*.

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[35] Paula Backscheider, "Endless Aversion Rooted in the Soul': Divorce in the 1690-1730 Theater," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 37 (1996): 103. Backscheider explains that this reflects a shift in policy; during a brief period in the seventeenth century, a few aristocratic women were able to use their influence to have their divorce bills heard by the courts: most notably, Mary Wharton in 1690 and the Countess of Anglesey, Catherine Darnley Annesley, in 1700/01.

[36] Birte Siim, *Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain, and Denmark* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 79-80. It was not until the passage of the Married Woman's Property Act of 1882 that wives were legally able to maintain ownership of their property after marriage. Until the passage of this act, women could retain rights only to property acquired before their marriages.

[37] Rosemary O'Day, *The Family and Family Relationships, 1500-1900* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994*)*, 109.

[38] Kerber, *No Constitutional Right,* 13.

[39] O'Day, *Family,*160.

Barred from access to the law, not to mention educational opportunities and most professions, their movements restricted by convention and propriety, eighteenth-century English women lived, at best, as second-class citizens, or, more accurately, as residents. Although the companionate marriage created a greater sense of equality within marriage, in the eyes of the law, women retained a subordinate status. It is perhaps no coincidence that early feminist movements coincide with the rise of the companionate marriage, and this coincidence illustrates why *Emily Montague* is such a compelling portrait of the disparity between male and female citizens.

Throughout *The History of Emily Montague*, characters engage the situation of female citizens illustrated in Blackstone’s *Commentaries* and harshly criticize the codified civil and political situations of women in England. And, since the relationship between husband and wife is so intricately bound up with civil identity, the central concern of the novel is the superiority of the companionate marriage over marriages arranged for political or economic advantage. If this novel has a moral, it is that the choice of marital partner is serious and should be a personal decision. One of the final letters of the novel praises the virtues of the companionate marriage; Arabella Fermor writes to Emily Montague: “The very idea that love will come after marriage, is shocking to minds which have the least spark of delicacy: to such minds, a marriage which begins with indifference will certainly end in disgust or aversion” (399). This important theme of the novel is traced through the courtship of three couples. Two of them meet in Canada; one marries there, while the other (Rivers and Emily Montague) marries in England. A third couple meets and marries in England.

The many, varied correspondents, as well as the geographical distances that separate them, allow Brooke to explore a wide range of topics in addition to courtship. The political and social backdrops described in the letters provide commentary on the love affairs of the characters. Additionally, the pattern of correspondence provides an implied judgment on the situations of the characters. Most of the novel's letters are sent from Canada to England, and the recipient of the majority of them is Lucy Rivers, the character who seems least likely to be happy in her marriage. Lucy receives a total of ninety letters, yet she writes only three. This imbalance limits Lucy's voice and emphasizes her predicament. Her brother announces his concerns about her marriage to Captain Fitzgerald, explaining that Temple's "affection is meer [sic] passion, and therefore subject to change" (340). Lucy's husband is probably the wealthiest of all of the characters, but he is also the least morally principled and the least likely to enjoy Lucy's company once the novelty of marriage has disappeared. Rivers fears that "dissipation, and a continued round of amusements at home, will probably secure my sister all of Temple's heart which remains; but his love would grow languid in that state of retirement" (340). In this sense, Lucy's relative silence suggests that her public voice, one that would have been audible only through her husband at this time, would be as stifled as her marital contentment is likely to become.

Conversely, the frequency of other correspondents suggests their increased levels of audibility. For instance, besides Ed Rivers, who writes seventy-eight letters and receives eighteen, the other principle letter writer is Arabella Fermor, who writes a total of seventy-four and receives twenty-nine. Her letters are by far the most erudite and interesting, reflecting Arabella's lively and intelligent mind. She also has the widest range of correspondence. While the title character, Emily Montague, writes mainly to Ed Rivers and Arabella Fermor, Arabella writes to virtually everyone, even corresponding with the rakish John Temple. Importantly, she is the character who is most aware of the political benefits conferred through a well-chosen marriage.

It is perhaps odd that Emily Montague writes and receives so few letters, given that she is the title character; however, it is possible that Frances Brooke constructed the novel in this way as a comment on the civil identities that women in England experienced under *coverture*. Emily Montague's right to appear in court and to tell her own story there existed only through her husband, Ed Rivers, so it makes a certain amount of narrative sense that the history of Emily Montague is told mostly through the letters of the man she eventually marries. One gets the sense that Ed Rivers will be a much more advantageous intermediary for Emily Montague than John Temple will be for his wife Lucy.

However, it is through Ed Rivers that Frances Brooke makes some of her most striking statements about the political lives of women. As the stereotypical sentimental hero, there is little about Rivers to suggest an advocate of women's rights. Yet Katharine Rogers argues: "What distinguishes Rivers from the stereotype [of the overly sentimental hero] is that he not only loves women but respects them as independent beings; he sees them as people rather than sexual objects, and even notices that they are unjustly treated under the law."[40] Rivers' discussion of Native American women in relation to European women presents a powerful comparison between the social contract both groups become party to. Since, in many ways, he is aligned more with women than with men, he acts as a sort of surrogate rights-bearer for women, testing the idea that women could be productive citizens, perhaps even more reliably than men, because "they are both by nature and education more constant, and scarce ever change the object of their affections but from ill treatment" (206).[41]

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[40] Rogers,"Sensibility," 162.

Throughout the novel, Rivers consistently suggests an alternative to the prevailing sex/gender system, one in which women and men are equals. In a number of letters he expresses his preference for being around women who consider and present themselves as equal to men, women who are capable and confident. He criticizes his friend Jack Temple for his "narrow and pedantic" preferences in love, exclaiming quite forcefully, "custom has done enough to make the life of one half of our species tasteless; but you would reduce them to a state of still greater insipidity than even that to which our tyranny has doomed them" (86-87). Later, after Temple has married Lucy Rivers, Ed admonishes Temple about his preference for beauty rather than substance. He writes, "Impartially speaking, I believe the best natured women, and the most free from envy, are those who, without being very handsome, have that *je ne scai* [sic] *quoi*" (227). And, from other discussions of the women he finds attractive, it is clear that Rivers believes that the most interesting women are those who can charm through their intellect.

Katharine Rogers explains that "sentiment in *Emily Montague* appears sometimes as an excessive regard for emotional susceptibility, but also as a simple respect for subtle but important feelings—a respect which was particularly valuable to women because in the real world their feelings were habitually overruled in favor of order or family convenience."[42] For instance, early in the novel, Emily Montague refuses to marry Captain Clayton. She has been engaged to him for quite some time; however, after he inherits a large sum of money, his mother reconsiders the prospects of the match and “talks something of an offer of a citizen’s daughter with fifty thousand pounds, and the promise of an Irish title” (122). Emily is upset by the situation, yet she is also apparently relieved to be free of him. Although Captain Clayton is quite wealthy, Emily cannot go through with the marriage because she does not consider herself to be on equal footing with him in terms of both estate and feeling. Both are equally important to her. Arabella, speaking of Emily Montague’s decision to reject Clayton, explains that Emily has dealt with the situation “with the genuine spirit of an independent Englishwomen, who is so happy as to be her own mistress, and who is therefore determined to think for herself” (117). This is a nice description of a rather progressive idea of citizenship, evoking as it does the independence of Emily’s thought and action. Robin Howells believes this is a strong feminist statement on Emily’s part, one often overlooked by critics.[43] Her decision to marry for love over affluence suggests that she is a woman aware of the finality of the marriage contract. Unlike the woman who will eventually become her sister-in-law, Lucy Rivers, Emily is swayed neither by great passion nor the prospect of a splendid income and a “coach and six” (69). Instead, her independent spirit will lead her to marry for love and domestic happiness. In this sense, she behaves not merely as a “citizen’s daughter,” but as a citizen in her own right, one with determination and good sense.

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[41] In this passage, Rivers is referring to spousal affection, but it is tempting to think that Brooke may have considered women to be naturally more constant citizens.

[42] Rogers, "Sensibility," 161.

Yet, in spite of the great promise suggested early in the novel by such powerful claims, the ending of the novel seems to be, at least superficially, a reversal of this powerful attitude. Throughout most of the novel, characters proclaim the superiority of the Native American sex/gender system as opposed to the British one; however, in the end many of the characters seem to endorse “English” over

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[43] Robin Howells, “Dialogism in Canada’s First Novel: *The History of Emily Montague*,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 20 (1993): 441.

"profligate" French and Native American values, both in word and in deed. Yet it is important to remember that, as Susan Lanser has written, a writer's "discursive authority ... is produced interactively; it must therefore be characterized with respect to specific receiving communities." [44] Elsewhere, Lanser identifies three constraints upon the novel's formation of a body politic: "disjunctions between the claims of speaking voices and the workings of the plot; through the circumspection of movement to the domestic and private realm, and through the ways in which the novel permits or even encourages a separation of personal empathy from political entitlement."[45] Here, all three constraints are evident.

Importantly, while some characters do back down from the more strident statements they have made about the plight of women, the rhetoric of Ed Rivers remains fairly consistent throughout the text. After his sister informs him that she has married his friend Temple, Rivers writes a letter to the newlyweds with marital advice. In it, he lists a series of quotations on marriage from Madame De Maintenon, whose published letters he has been reading during his travels.[46] He soundly rejects one of her claims—"'Your sex is more exposed to suffer, because it is always in dependence: be neither angry nor ashamed of this dependence on a husband, nor or any of those which are in the order of Providence'" (203)—when he tells his sister, "do not, however, my dear, be alarmed at the picture she has drawn of marriage; nor fancy with her, that women are only born to suffer and obey" (204). He counters this idea of subservience in marriage with a more positive opinion of marital relations, arguing instead “that we [men] are generally tyrannical, I am obliged to own; but such of us as know how to be happy, willingly give up the harsh title of master, for the more tender and endearing one of friend” (204).

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[44] Susan Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 6.

[45] Lanser, *Fictions*, 15.

[46] The letters of the second wife of Louis XIV were published in multiple volumes in 1756.

Ed Rivers is in many ways a rather straightforward character to assess, unlike the flirtatious and lively Arabella Fermor. Throughout the novel, Arabella is consistently outspoken on a variety of issues, yet, in some ways, her opinions seem erratic. On one hand she insists: “I think no politics worth attending to but those of the little commonwealth of women: if I can maintain my empire over hearts, I leave men to quarrel for everything else” (100); however, on the other, she declares that “if Emily and I marry our present lovers, she will certainly be more exquisitely happy than I shall; but if they should change their minds, or any accident prevent our coming together, I am inclined to fancy my situation would be much the most agreable [sic],” explaining that “I should pout for a month, and then look about for another lover” (198).

Arabella recognizes the frequency with which she changes her mind and admits that “indeed my ideas are generally a little pindaric”[47] (250). However, she considers this to be acceptable and even appropriate.[48] Arabella’s desire to “maintain [her] empire over hearts” rather than to obtain a civil identity outside of her marriage raises questions about those earlier claims. Her erratic discourse renders her unreliable in some ways. Yet it makes narrative sense to have the principle male character voice the more extreme ideas about the roles of women in society rather than the coquettish Arabella. And, importantly, Arabella Fermor’s voice remains quite powerful throughout the novel. At one point, she contrasts her attitudes about romantic love with Emily Montague’s. She explains: “Emily and I, however, differ in our ideas of love: it is the business of her life, the amusement of mine: ‘tis the food of her hours, the seasoning of mine” (197). Arabella compares herself to a man, and explains that Emily “loves like a foolish woman, I like a sensible man: for men, you know, compared to women, love in about the proportion of one to twenty” (197).

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[47] A Pindaric Ode is known for its elaborate and irregular metrical structure.

[48] Arabella Fermor anticipates Walt Whitman’s wonderful lines: “Do I contradict myself? Very well then, I contradict myself. I am large; I contain multitudes.”

Such statements are in keeping with her role as a coquet, a role clearly indicated by Frances Brooke’s choice of name for this character. Arabella Fermor was the real-life woman who inspired Alexander Pope’s Belinda in his poem “The Rape of the Lock.” Like the real life Arabella, the fictional character is a lively and celebrated wit. Brooke’s Arabella is also a character with a wide range of attitudes about marriage and philosophy. In one letter, she claims that she will “marry a savage, and turn squaw ... never was anything so delightful as their lives” (52). She admires how much liberty Native American women have to travel wherever they wish to go until she attends the wedding of a Huron couple and realizes that the marriage has been arranged by the parents of the couple. Shocked, Arabella exclaims, “Dear England! where liberty appears, not as here among the odious savages, wild and ferocious like themselves, but lovely smiling, led by the hand of the Graces. There is no true freedom anywhere else. They may talk of the privilege of chusing [sic] a chief; but what is that to the dear English privilege of chusing [sic] a husband?” (59). Later, she writes, “one must marry, ‘tis the mode; everybody marries” (72). However, when Emily Montague is granted the reprieve from her marriage to Captain Clayton, Arabella congratulates her, explaining that Emily “will at least have the pleasure of being five or six months your own mistress; which, in my opinion, when one is not violently in love, is a consideration worth attending to” (77). She also associates her own decision to marry Captain Fitzgerald with “playing the fool” (251).

Symbolically, Arabella Fermor represents some important ideas of the era. She is, like her real-life model, a coquet, a very worldly and sophisticated woman in the tradition of William Congreve's Millamant in his play *The Way of the World* and of Harriet in George Etherege's play *The Man of Mode*. Congreve's Millamant is a feisty, outspoken individual who refuses to be married to a man she does not love. She claims that she will "never marry unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure."[49] Even when she accepts the proposal of the man she does love, Mirabell, she has a lengthy list of conditions that her lover must meet. She demands that she must have "liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters ... to wear what I please, and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste ... come to dinner when I please; dine in my dressing room when I'm out of humor, without giving a reason. ... And, lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in."[50] These demands sound much like Arabella Fermor when she declares that she "intend[s] to compose a code of laws for the government of husbands, and get it translated in all the modern languages" (230). She explains that she is "amazingly learned" (250) and believes that the world would be a better place "if people spoke all the truth, and painted themselves as they really are: that is to say if all the world were as sincere and honest as I am; for, upon my word, I have such a contempt for hypocrisy, that ... I have always appeared to have fewer good qualities than I really have" (250).

Arabella's inconsistencies suggest the many contradictory roles that women then (and now) perform. Her claim that "'tis a mighty wrong thing ... that parents will educate creatures so differently, who are to live with and for each other" (197) anticipates Mary Wollstonecraft's own ideas about the relationship between education and a happy marriage and family. Yet Arabella can be a frustrating character. For instance, it is difficult to think of her as the spokesperson for women's rights when she explains to Ed Rivers that "nothing can be more pleasing than an *awakened* English woman; of which you and my *caro sposo* have, I flatter myself, the happy experience; and I wish with you that the character was more common: but I must own, and I am not sorry to own it, that my fair countrywomen and fellow citizens (I speak of the nation in general and not of the capital) have an unbecoming reserve, which prevents their being the agreeable companions, and amiable wives, which nature meant them" (283-284).

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[49] William Congreve, *The Way of the World*, in *Six Restoration Plays*, ed. John Harold Williams (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), 366.

[50] Congreve, *The Way of the World*, 367.

This passage might be read as indicative of Arabella's return to English soil and values, yet it also strongly suggests her understanding that the customary roles of these "fair countrywomen" are at odds with their natural desires. Echoes of this are heard in Etherege's play *The Man of Mode* when Harriet explains to her lover that "My eyes are wild and wandering like my passions, and cannot yet be tied to rules of charming."[51] Importantly, even away from the "wilderness" of the New World, Arabella is still enough of a coquet to praise Madame Des Roches, Ed Rivers'old Canadian flame, for refusing a good match and declaring her intention to remain unmarried. Arabella writes, "Tis a mighty foolish resolution, and yet I cannot help liking her the better for making it" (400). Even after her own marriage, she remains a spirited and engaging woman, a force to be reckoned with.

Characters in *Emily Montague* are socially symbolic; that is, they function as representatives of certain ideologies. Interestingly, at the end of the novel, all of the principle characters are married and the women's names have, naturally, changed.

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[51] Sir George Etherege, *The Man of Mode*, in *Six Restoration Plays*, ed. John Harold Wilson (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959), 137.

Their new initials are noteworthy. Lucy Rivers becomes Lucy Temple when she marries the reformed rake John Temple. Much is made about how perilous the marriage may become as Lucy ages and the initial passion of marriage wanes; however, Captain Fitzgerald assures Ed Rivers that Lucy is, fortunately, possessed of a "variable nature" which will likely keep Temple amused. The alteration of her initials suggests this changeable nature. Conversely, Arabella Fermor, who marries Captain Fitzgerald, retains her original initials, indicating that she will not change much after her marriage. Ever the coquet, she explains to Emily that she is a "coquet even in friendship" (373) and that while she is "extremely in love" with her own husband, she is "as fond of attracting the attention of the dear creatures [men] as ever" (373). Her coquettish behavior is not altered by her new status, a fact emphasized by the retention of her maiden initials.

However, Emily Montague's married monogram might be an indication of Brooke's attitude on the importance of the companionate marriage. Emily's new initials—ER—are significant because they affiliate her with Queen Elizabeth I, whose own ER, Elizabeth *Regina*, appeared on coins, portraits, and seals throughout her reign and came to be associated with what Roy Strong has called the "cult of Elizabeth."[52] Strong explains that the pageantry that came to be a vital aspect of Elizabeth's reign functioned as a substitute for the Roman Catholic pageantry that was absent after the Reformation, but it also came to indicate the symbolic power of the English nation-state. Louis Montrose argues that this cult served to emphasize "the circumstantial fact that the body politic of English Kingship was incarnated in the natural body of an unmarried woman."[53] This fact "ensured that gender and sexuality were foregrounded in representing the Elizabethan state and in articulating its relations with other states and with its own subjects.[54] Jürgen Habermas explains that the aristocracy required the publicity of "self-representation."[55] Elizabeth's initials functioned as self-publicity because, like her many portraits, they associated her rule with the divinity of church icons. Her identity as the "Virgin Queen" further emphasizes this connection. Elizabeth, a figure closely identified with the English nation-state during her lifetime and beyond, did not marry. Francis Bacon observed upon her death that:

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[52] Strong discusses this in *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1977).

[53] Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 115.

> the reigns of women are commonly obscured by marriage; their praises and actions passing to the credit of their husbands; whereas those that continue unmarried have their glory entire and proper to themselves ... even those whom she [Elizabeth] had raised to honour she so kept in hand and mingled with one another, that while she infused each the greatest solicitude to please her she was herself ever her own mistress.[56]

Like the virgin queen, Elizabeth, Emily has "imagined [herself] absolute mistress of [her] own actions" (396) and, in order to continue thus, resists the pressures to marry for social and economic reasons. Emily is hesitant to marry Sir George—an alliance that would have been materially and socially advantageous—because she does not love him and believes that "marriage is seldom happy where there is a great disproportion of fortune" (77). She is, at this point in the novel, much like the princess Elizabeth was before she ascended the throne: in no position to refuse a good match. However, this is exactly what Emily does; she exerts her will and refuses Clayton, much to the surprise of her social set. Arabella congratulates Emily when for the delay of the nuptials and explains that it is her friend’s good fortune to be able to remain her own mistress until a wedding date is settled.

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[54] Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, 115.

[55] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*: *An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought, trans.Thomas Burger (Cambridge MA: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989), 8.

[56] Qtd in Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth,* 16.

When she finally rejects Sir George outright, Emily describes her intense relief to Arabella: “there is no saying what transport I feel in being freed from the insupportable yoke of this engagement” (130). Arabella applauds her decision with high praise; she writes, “a woman who is capable of acting so nobly, is worthy of being beloved, of being adored, by every man who has a soul to distinguish her perfections” (128). Later, Arabella is even more effusive when she joyfully announces the news to Lucy Rivers: “My Emily is now free as air; a sweet little bird escaped from the gilded cage. Are you not glad of it, Lucy? I am amazingly” (132).

Emily Montague, like the monarch whose initials she shares, is free to decide for herself who, or whether, to marry. Elizabeth I acknowledged the wisdom of the words that her ambassador to Scotland, James Melville, had to say on the subject. “Your majesty thinks, if you were marrie’d you would be but Queen of England; and now you are both King and Queen.”[57S] Elizabeth, of course, remained unmarried. Emily Montague, however, does not remain her own mistress for long. Her marriage to Ed Rivers places her in juxtaposition to the woman whose initials she shares because, although Emily possesses a queenly air even after her marriage, she is not her own mistress. *Coverture* prevented this possibility. However, she is married to a man of her own choosing, a man who is the most enlightened character in the text and who does nothing to disturb Emily’s queenly mien. Still, she is encaged within

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[57] Qtd. in Clark Hulse, *Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 75.

the confines of marriage. In this way, Brooke indicates Emily's great fortune in being married to man as progressive as Ed Rivers, while also illustrating the limitations of the institution to which she is now bound by English law.

Other than Ed Rivers, it is William Fermor, the aristocratic father of the outspoken Arabella, who consistently espouses some of the more progressive ideas about women. Although in many ways he is a traditionalist, he has raised his daughter to be a strong-willed and self-possessed young woman and appears to be in favor of allowing women to speak their minds on subjects as important as education and marriage selection. For instance, in one letter he writes, "This might be brought as an argument of the inferiority of women's understanding to ours, as they are generally greater talkers, if we did not consider the limited and trifling educations we give them; men, amongst other advantages, have that of acquiring a greater as well as sublimity of ideas" (242). He continues, "Women who have conversed with men are undoubtedly in general the most pleasing companions, but this only shews [sic] what they are capable of when properly educated, since they improve so greatly by that accidental and limited opportunity of acquiring knowledge" (242). Later, he wonders what the English families who remain in Canada will do with their daughters should the Catholic convents be abolished. They "will be at a loss where to educate their daughters, as well as where to dispose of those who do not marry in a reasonable time" (272). It is clear that Brooke's choice of William Fermor as the author of such lines is not at all arbitrary. As an apparent benefactor of patriarchy, he is the character least likely to endorse women's citizenship rights, but, coming from him, such a claim has an especially powerful effect.

Juxtaposed against his daughter's erratic words, Fermor's claims illustrate the power of dialogism. From its earliest pages, Brooke's novel exploits the inherent dialogic quality of the genre to debate the issue of the status of female citizens of

England. Her characters reject and accept marriage proposals and reflect upon the merits of a companionate marriage. They endorse other, non-English, political and social ideas and consider the weaknesses in their own political and social systems. In doing so, these characters shed light on the consequences of an unhappy union in a society where, after marriage, women became, in the eyes of the courts, "one in law" with their husbands.[58] According to Lawrence Stone, it is the rise of the companionate marriage, so much a concern of the letter writers in *Emily Montague*, that "demanded a reassessment of power relations between the sexes since it depended on a greater sense of equality and sharing."[59] Brooke's preoccupation with the circumstances of these six characters suggests the dynamic relationship that exists between the productivity of citizens and the smooth functioning of a modern state. For instance, Ed Rivers explains late in the novel that he "believe[s] we country gentlemen, whilst we have spirit to keep ourselves independent, are the best citizens, as well as subjects, in the world" (339). He continues, "the man who has competence, virtue, true liberty, and the woman he loves, will chearfully [sic] obey laws which secure him these blessings, and the prince under whose mild sway he enjoys them" (339). Such claims illustrate Mikhail Bakhtin's claim that "the activity of a character in a novel is always ideologically demarcated: he lives and acts in an ideological world of his own ... he has his own perceptions of the world that is incarnated in his actions and his discourse."[60] Robin Howells explains that in reading *The History of Emily Montague*, "when we attempt to find an authorial voice

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[58] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1977), 332.

[59] Stone, "The Family," 336.

[60] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 335.

... we find a complexity of voices. We find not a static position but a dynamic and complex debate. That the men are more radical reflects the limitations on what a female in the period might respectably say. ... [I]t shows that the internal dialogue functions too as a dialogue with the norms of readership."[61]

Brooke balances the discourse so that the novel does not read as a strictly didactic work or even a political treatise, which was a complicated endeavor that reveals much about her skill as a writer. Her inclination to do so illustrates Lanser's claims that "if Frederic Jameson is right to claim that a political unconscious structures the novel, then it seems that the sometimes unreconcilable tensions between voice and plot in the eighteenth-century novel structure not so much a politics as the contest around whether a politics should exist."[62] She continues, "this enactment of rights at the private level may be a particular necessity for realizing the movement of women's bodies precisely because a sexual contract underwrites the social contract and must be subverted if the social contract is to include women as a full part."[63] In this sense, Brooke's insistence that a companionate marriage is preferable to an arranged marriage, consistent throughout the entire text and articulated by all of the principle characters, is especially important.

A close reading of the novel suggests that Brooke is using the domestic sphere as a metaphor for the public sphere. In a letter from Ed Rivers to Arabella Fermor's husband, Rivers writes, "there is nothing of which I am more convinced than that ... those passions which make the happiness of individuals tend directly to the general good of the species" and "the beneficent Author of nature has made the public and the private happiness the same; man has in vain endeavored to divide them; but in the endeavor he has almost destroyed them both" (366). The novel illustrates the dynamic relationship that exists between the public and the private spheres, which is summed up by Ed Rivers when he writes: "Happy ourselves, we wish not to destroy the tranquility of others; intent on cares equally useful and pleasing, with no views but to improve our fortunes by means equally profitable to ourselves and our country, we form no schemes of dishonest ambition; and therefore disturb no government to serve our private designs" (339). Such words suggest the importance of a body politic that includes both men and women.

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[61] Howells, "Dialogism," 442.

[62] Lanser,"Body Politic," 494.

[63] Lanser,"Body Politic," 496.

Frances Brooke carefully balances the radical with the prosaic, which reveals the power of the novel to depict, as Raymond Williams would say it, both dominant and emergent structures of feeling. And, just as the novel continues its development, so does the concept of citizenship. Bakhtin writes, "since it [the novel] is constructed in a zone of contact of incomplete events of a particular present, the novel often crosses the boundary of what we strictly call fictional literature—making use first of a moral confession, then of a philosophical tract, then of manifestos that are openly political, then degenerating into the raw spirituality of a confession, a 'cry of the soul' that has not yet found its formal contours."[64]

Howell's dialogic reading of the novel offers this summation of the effect: "Free trade, sociability, free intercourse between the sexes and love itself are all presented in terms of variety and exchange. Variety and change is repeatedly declared by the protagonists to be that which attaches their desires."[65] And dramatic changes in the ways that women could participate as equal citizens attracted at least a few of these characters. Moreover, Frances Brooke's depiction of marriage in the novel suggests a model of citizenship that sociologist T. H. Marshall would not identify until 1949, a blending of civil, political, and social rights that represent a progressive concept of citizenship. This ideal of citizenship privileges independence and self-possession over the servitude insisted upon by *coverture*. Arabella's description of Emily Montague as possessing the "genuine spirit of an Englishwoman who is so happy to be her own mistress, and who is therefore determined to think for herself" (65) prefigures a facet of political subjectivity to which all marginalized people could ascribe.

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[64] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 33.

[65] Howells, "Dialogism," 447.

In this way, Brooke's novel, along with novels by women such as Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, Sarah Scott, and Charlotte Smith, participates in a body of work that substantively contributes to the development of the novel. In addition, these works present skillful and forceful critiques of the situation of women in outspoken manners that would give way in the nineteenth century to "more tempered though equally justifiable feminist responses."[66] This novel foreshadows by more than twenty years Mary Wollstonecraft's demand that women have a "civil existence in the State, married or single."[67] By anticipating this demand, Brooke's ultimate contribution far exceeds mere sentimentality; her efforts for her fellow countrywomen may not have been recognized or celebrated in her own time, but they stand today as a powerful statement against the inadequacies of the developing concept of citizenship while also imagining and testing its inherent possibilities.

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[66] Ferguson, "Feminist Polemic," 461.

[67] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,* ed. Miriam Brody (1792; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1992), 267.

Chapter IV

"'Something More Than an Englishman'": Ciceronian Citizenship in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*

In *The History of Emily Montague,* Frances Brooke is especially interested in the idea of active citizenship, and her strong, reasonable female characters function as rebukes to the prevailing political system by calling attention to the fact that denying women the rights associated with citizenship also prevents them from performing meaningful public service. Active participation has been an important aspect of citizenship since its earliest inception, and ideas about whether citizenship is primarily a matter of responsibility or entitlement has long been debated. The ideal citizen was described by Roman philosopher Cicero, whose writings served as foundational texts for Enlightenment theories of citizenship. He maintained that citizens should be active in politics and the military and should dedicate themselves to public service for the duration of their lives. He argues: "we are not born for ourselves alone, but our country claims a share of our being." [1] It is, according to Cicero, the citizen's "duty to respect, defend, and maintain the common bonds of union and fellowship subsisting between all members of the human race,"[2] and the patriotic citizen "will dedicate himself unreservedly to his country, without aiming at influence or power for himself; and he will devote himself to the nation-state in its entirety in such a way as to further the interests of all."[3] Cicero is concerned that citizens have courage, "steadfastness, temperance, self-control, and considerateness for others."[4] He explains that "the private individual ought first, in private relations, to live on fair and equal terms with his fellow citizens, with a spirit neither servile and groveling nor yet domineering; and second, in matters pertaining to the state, to labour for her peace and honour; for such a man we are accustomed to esteem and call a good citizen."[5] It is, according to Cicero, "our duty to respect, defend, and maintain the common bonds of union and fellowship subsisting between all members of the human race."[6] In order to facilitate this fellowship, the Roman philosopher believed that citizens must commit themselves to a lifetime of civic duty. Historically, this meant political participation, military service, and paying tax; however, the notion of civic duty has come to encompass a number of other, seemingly unrelated, types of activities, such as political participation, volunteerism, entrepreneurship, and even consumerism.

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[1] Quintus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. by Walter Miller (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), 23.

[2] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 153.

Of course, public service can sometimes be problematic. For instance, the particular type of public service that Frances Brooke's characters espouse is disturbing because it is aligned with British imperialism. In fact, imperialism and colonialism cast long shadows across the novel. It is set, of course, in a British colony. The title character's income derives from interest on family investments in

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[3] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 89.

[4] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 101.

[5] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 127.

[6] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 153.

India.[7] Her love interest—Colonel Ed Rivers, Brooke's most ideal citizen—is, after all, in Canada to find a source of income by purchasing land through the *seigniorial* system. It is through this character that the most obvious connection is made between active citizenship and imperialism. Once he returns to England, Rivers announces that he means "like a good citizen, to serve at once myself and the public, by raising oaks, which may hereafter, bear the British thunder to distant lands" (339). This discomforting alliance between civic duty and imperialism suggests an attitude about British foreign interests that is consonant with Brooke's own colonial adventures and illustrates the ways in which ordinary citizens were impacted by and participated in the imperial project. Even though Brooke is clearly interested in the extension of rights to the disenfranchised, she seems quite unconcerned about the precarious situations of indigenous peoples in those places affected by imperialism. In this sense, the novel reveals its own creation within that "zone of contact of incomplete events of a particular present"[8] that Bakhtin identified. Brooke's failure to provide a critique of Rivers' determination to "bring British thunder to foreign lands" suggests that she was either unaware of, unconcerned about, or even in favor of the consequences of the arrival of this thunder. Her lapse indicates the potential flaws with Ciceronian citizenship and reveals the ways in which political identity constructed in tandem with the nation-state can be problematic.

However, this is not to say that the idea of an active citizenry is necessarily imperialist or even nationalist. While Frances Brooke was unhappy with the ways in which women were denied the most basic rights of citizenship, she was clearly committed to the nation-state paradigm of citizenship and seemed concerned that, by denying women of rights, the British nation itself would suffer. The nineteenth-century British novelist George Eliot revisits the concept of civic duty in her final novel *Daniel Deronda* and suggests the potential for a Ciceronian citizenship that is detached from the nation-state. In his important critical analysis of the text, William Baker argues that the work is a "great prophetic novel."[9] Although he means this in terms of how Eliot presents Jewish characters, the statement is even more apt than Baker intends. The novel does more than challenge anti-Semitic attitudes and negative artistic representations prevalent in Victorian society; it also reconsiders the classic Ciceronian association of duty with citizenship, a prevalent paradigm of Western citizenship since the Enlightenment,[10] through its analysis of modern ideas of personal and political identity. In it, Eliot reevaluates the notion of duty to the nation-state by illustrating how fraught the connection can be in a heterogeneous world. In this way, Eliot interrogates the notion that active citizenship would necessarily assist British nationalism and introduces the possibility of a political identity that is not limited by geography, history, or tradition. While Eliot's vision of citizenship is flawed in many ways, her prototype suggests a model of postnational citizenship proposed by contemporary political theorists like Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal and John Hoffman.

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[7] Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague* (1769; repr.,Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Inc., 1995). Future citations in text.

[8] M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 33.

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[9] William Baker, *George Eliot and Judaism* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg Press, 1975), 245.

[10] For instance, the preamble to the American Constitution, one of the most important political statements of the Enlightenment, evokes, but does not directly state, the importance of national duty and active citizenship. It reads: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America" (http://www.ushistory.org/documents/constitution.htm).

Eliot's career-long interest in the theme of duty makes Cicero's paradigm especially appropriate. Her novels often thematize duty. Many of her most famous characters are veritable paragons of virtue,[11] characters who are examples of what might be termed "ideal citizens." These individuals recognize their responsibilities to things outside of themselves and put what they perceive to be the best interests of others above their own needs. Several of Eliot's characters, especially her heroines, make decisions with a mind toward communal, if not national, affiliation. For instance, in *Middlemarch*, Dorothea Brooke shuns the frivolity of the landed gentry in favor of a more equitable division of property. She insists that "it is better to spend money in finding out how men can make the most of the land which supports them all, than in keeping dogs and horses only to gallop over it."[12] Dinah Morris rejects Seth Bede's marriage proposal because "it has pleased God to fill [her] heart so full with the wants and sufferings of his poor people" that she feels called to "minister to others, not to have any joys or sorrows of [her] own."[13] These characters exemplify an overwhelming concern for what they perceive to be duty. Eliot's novels are often constructed around the pursuit of duty and the sacrifices it often demands; they reflect an especially Ciceronian attitude about the role of individuals in society.[14] And, while Eliot's characters are mostly concerned with personal rather than public responsibility, there is a sense in which her novels, like so many novels by women writers of the previous century, reveal the interconnectedness of these two realms.

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[11] Dorothea Barrett, *Vocation and Desire: George Eliot's Heroines* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989). Barrett refers to characters like Romola, Dorthea Brooke, and Dinah Morris as "beacons."

[12] George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1872; repr., ed. by Bert G. Hornback, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.), 8-9.

[13] George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1859; repr., ed. by Carol A. Martin, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 34.

Her famous poem, "O May I Join the Choir Invisible," written in 1867, foregrounds the theme of duty as well. Prefaced by a quotation from Cicero that ruminates on the pain caused by the separation of death,[15] the poem itself is a meditation on the possibility of the dead living on in the memories of the living. It begins, "O May I join the choir invisible/Of those immortal dead who live again/In minds made better by their presence,"[16] suggesting that living an inspiring life is a means to achieving immortality in a specifically secular sense. Living a dutiful life provides a model of behavior that is detached from human institutions like religion, government, and the nation-state. Instead, the poem showcases duty as a personal and communal value with far-reaching effects and consequences. This idea is more fully developed in *Daniel Deronda*, which is a full-lenth study of a character whose sense of duty is detached from the nation-state in which he has been raised and of which he considers himself to be a member.

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[14] Gordon Haight explains that Eliot was well-versed in Latin literature and read Horace, Virgil, and Cicero in Latin. George Eliot's and George Henry Lewes' library, now housed in the Dr. Williams' Library in London, includes both Cicero's *Epistulae ad Familiares* and *De Officiis*.

[15] From Cicero's letter to Attius in Rome. It reads: *Longum Illudtempus, Quum Non Ero, Magis Me Movet, Quan Hoc Exiguum* (It is a long journey, and when you went away again, which you will have to do very quickly, I should be unable to let you go without great pain).

[16] George Eliot, "O May I Join The Choir Invisible," (1867), in *A Victorian Anthology,1837–1895*, ed. by Edmund Clarence Stedman (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1895), Bartleby.com, http://www.bartleby.com /246/302.html (accessed October 12, 2007). Lines 1-3.

Daniel Deronda is an exploration of duty through the depiction of a Jewish man with ties to the English aristocracy. His varied affiliative ties position him as an especially modern sort of character, and his connection to the Jewish community suggests Eliot's interest in writing about the unfolding discussion of the so-called "Jewish Question." It is an especially timely analysis since the issue of whether and how Jews would be accepted in Christian England was a matter of intense public debate at this time because of the increasing numbers of Jews immigrating to the country as a result of persecution abroad. Their population in 1800 was approximately 15,000, concentrated mostly in London; however, by the middle of the century, this figure had risen to about 35,000 because of an influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. By this time, the Jewish community had grown so large that it was impossible to ignore. And although the literal question in public debates was which legal rights would be given to Anglo-Jews by the British government and when, the figurative question was the extent to which devout Jews would be accepted by the Protestant English.[17] The discussion reflects a distinction that can be made between cultural and legal citizenship. Renato Rosaldo explains that cultural citizenship "refers to the right to be different and to belong in a participatory sense."[18] These debates, however, reveal the extent to which mainstream British society was uncomfortable with such a large group of non-Christians its midst, an "internal other" within the British nation-state.[19]

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[17] Dennis Grube, "Religion, Power and Parliament: Rothschild and Bradlaugh Revisited," *History* 92, no. 305 (January 2007): 21-38, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/history/v049 /305.1grube.pdf (accessed February 22, 2008).

[18] Renato Rosaldo, "Cultural Citizenship and Educational Democracy," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (August 1994): 402, http://www.jstor.org.spot.lib.auburn.edu/view/08867356/ap020037/02a00110/0pdf (accessed March 1, 2008).

[19] Grube, "Religion, Power and Parliament," 22.

The "Jewish Question" was a common theme in popular literature of the time. Anthony Trollope's explicitly anti-Semitic novels *The Way We Live Now* (1875) and *The Prime Minister* (1876) are examples of texts that fictionally explore what was at issue in the "Jewish Question" and debate the extent to which Jews living in England would be tolerated by English society. *Daniel Deronda*, a novel that Michael Ragussis calls "the most celebrated philo-Semitic novel written in England,"[20] depicts the ways in which the Jewish community in London was separate from mainstream English culture; however, it also skillfully presents the debate within the Jewish community about whether or not this separatism was positive or negative.

Further, the novel raises questions about the efficacy of the modern nation-state— the very source of contemporary citizenship itself—through its examination of what Homi Bhabha refers to as the "progressive metaphor of social cohesion—the many as one."[21] In so doing, *Daniel Deronda* prophesizes the emergence of a new type of citizen, one with a multiplicity of loyalties that are not necessarily affiliated with the nation-state, which provides legal and political identity. Instead, this new sort of citizen expresses contingent loyalties and constructs political identity in ways that deny the authority of the nation-state. Yet Eliot's attitude about this new sort of political identity and its consequences is not entirely celebratory. In fact, this work suggests the potential ramifications of a citizenry with conflicting affiliative ties, reflecting Eliot's own concern for what imperialism might mean for English social and political life.

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[20] Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question and English National Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 240.

[21] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 142.

Published in 1876, *Daniel Deronda* is an appropriate final novel for the career of such a complex and nuanced artist. Still, the focus of this most cosmopolitan and international novel marks a bit of a departure for Eliot. With its careful portrait of spiritual visionaries looking hungrily toward the East and its detailed descriptions of the drama of the European gaming table, Eliot seems to be interested in exploring more controversial issues without entirely abandoning the aesthetic principles laid out in her artistic manifesto, “The Natural History of German Life” (1856). There, Eliot explains that art closely representing real characters can encourage ethical behavior in its audience, and *Daniel Deronda*, in spite of its more international setting and concerns, was clearly meant to be instructive and inspiring, while also engaging important issues that would be of consequence both in England and abroad.

Eliot’s use of realism, the dominant literary tradition of the time, suggests that she was interested in working within that tradition to consider ethical ways of dealing with the “Jewish Question,” but her answer to this question is ultimately somewhat mysterious, possibly because of the parameters of the genre. Perhaps the real problem with the novel’s resolution lies with what some critics have argued is Eliot’s tendency to conservatism,[22] which is manifest by her inclination to distrust “any effort to realize abstract ideals or to interfere with the natural development of institutions.”[23] This situation is often at odds with her inability “to reconcile herself to the merits of quietism,” and her novels generally indicate her vacillation between conservatism and progress. Referring to Eliot's "uneasy feminism," Evan Horowitz argues that "Eliot's politics ... were stretched across the gap between intentions and actions. In many areas, her intentions were progressive and often quite radical, but she could rarely see a way to translate those intentions into action."[24]

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[22] See especially Evan Horowitz, “George Eliot: The Conservative,” *Victorian Studies* 49, no. 1 (Autumn 2006): 7-32, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/victorian_studies/v049/49.1horowitz.pdf (accessed November 30, 2007).

[23] Horowitz, “George Eliot,” 23.

This inclination is important to have in mind when reading *Daniel Deronda*, especially when assessing Daniel's sense of civic duty and the mission that results from this aspect of his personality. The plot resolves itself in a way that might suggest a potential collusion with British imperialism. A great deal of recent criticism of *Daniel Deronda* has focused on George Eliot's use of realism and the ways in which this genre reinforces cultural hegemony and provides a justification for imperialism. Given the genre's affiliation with the nation-state, it makes a great deal of sense that *Daniel Deronda* has been so interesting to critics. Its author made plain that her intention in writing the novel was to challenge "the usual attitude of English Christians towards Jews."[25] Its unconventional protagonist makes decidedly unexpected choices throughout the text, resisting the sort of conclusion that would have been popular with Eliot's audience. Its conclusion foreshadows a British Zionist attitude that would reach its apotheosis in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which formed the legal foundation for the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

The novel features some of the most exotic images in all of her work, and the controversy it provoked at publication emphasizes its timely topic and themes.[26] It is divided into two intersecting stories: Gwendolen Harleth's courtship and marriage to the dissipated aristocrat Henleigh Grandcourt and Deronda's own encounter with a young Jewish woman and, through her, his increasing connection to the Judaic tradition. Often, the plots seem to diverge, but Eliot's narrative is very skillfully intertwined, foregrounding the plot involving title character without ignoring the various subplots that offer productive commentary on the central story. The novel ends with Daniel's marriage to a Jewish woman, Mirah, and the announcement that the couple plans to travel to Palestine to look into the possibility of founding a Jewish state there. However, while many critics have noted that Daniel's professed desire to found a Jewish nation is problematic,[27] the ending does suggest that Eliot was, at last, interested in exploring the potential for agency through her character. It is important to note that at no point in the novel does Deronda indicate that his mission is in any way aligned with British national issues. In fact, his connection to English society wanes as his love for Mirah and her brother grows. This point suggests Eliot's own attitude about the nature of citizenship in the age of imperialism.

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[24] Horowitz, "George Eliot," 24.

[25] In a letter to the American novelist Harriet Beeches Stowe, Eliot explained her intentions in writing a novel with prominent Jewish characters.

[26] For useful discussions of the reception history of *Daniel Deronda*, see J. Russell Perkin, *A Reception History of George Eliot's Fiction* (Ann Arbor, MI & London: University of Michigan Research Press, 1990) and Amanda Anderson, "George Eliot and the Jewish Question," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 39-61.

The two sections of the novel have been read by critics as sitting uneasily together, most infamously by F. R. Leavis, who suggested that the Jewish section of the novel be eliminated and the plot resolved in a marriage between Gwendolen

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[27] For instance, see Susan Meyer, "Safely to Their Own Borders: Proto-Zionism, Feminism, and Nationalism in *Daniel Deronda*." *ELH* 60 (1993): 733-758; Edward Said, "Zionism From the Standpoint of Its Victims," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. by Anne McClintock, Amir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 15-38; and Bernadette Waterman Ward, "Zion's Mimetic Angel: George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*." *Shofar* 22 (Winter 2005): 105-115.

Harleth and Daniel.[28] However, Patrick Brantlinger and others have noted that the mutually illuminating halves of the novel serve as finely crafted cultural criticism, directed primarily at the English propertied classes.[29] J. Russell Perkin explains that, in *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot is more critical of English society than she had been in her previous novels, and he considers the novel to be a "social critique, an examination of the metaphorical bases of English culture, and an attack on anti-Semitism"[30] For him, the novel is not only a "scathing indictment of the state of English society in the 1860s," it also "uses the idea of national unity to present an alternative that combines a rationalistic view of the universe with a faith in the possibility of human community."[31] In a similar vein, Patrick Brantlinger argues that "the narrative solidly identifies the downward progress of worldly empire with the English 'half,' whereas the Jewish 'half' ... represents visionary growth and progress."[32]

The novel's critical attitude might be explained by a few factors: most notably, as Nancy Henry has argued, the influence of Eliot's colonial investments on her artistic imagination.[33] The author of *Daniel Deronda* is clearly interested in exploring the ways in which globalizing forces like imperialism and immigration impacted English identity. Henry argues that in *Daniel Deronda*, “Eliot continued the project of representing the increasing permeability of English society, its Englishness leaking out while other influences seeped in.”[34] But Henry does not believe that Eliot’s investments are indicative of her support for British imperialism. Rather, she argues, they “fragmented her sense of English identity,”[35] causing her to see the world as a more interrelated place. These investments compelled Eliot to consider the effects of an internationally connected world on England and Englishness and suggest a twenty-first-century attitude about political identity, one that is intensely aware of the world beyond English shores. This concern is consistent with her previous work and its preoccupation with the web of affiliations that connect place, affection, vocation, and duty. However, in *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot specifically considers the impact of economic globalization and imperialism on national identity. A careful reading of the novel reveals Eliot’s interest in the ways in which colonialism constructs identity, for both the colonized and the colonizer, an important issue in contemporary postcolonial criticism. Additionally, Eliot seems especially concerned that British imperial interests would fragment national identity and split affiliative ties in such a way that citizens would become unfettered free-agents, able to attach and detach their loyalties at will. In short, they would become citizens of the world, a condition that Eliot seems to regard with a certain amount of (characteristic) caution.

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[28] For discussions of Leavis' criticism of *Daniel Deronda,* see Perkin, "A Reception History," and Irene Tucker, *A Probable State: The Novel, The Contract, and the Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 35.

[29] Patrick Brantlinger, "Nations and Novels: Disraeli, George Eliot, and Orientalism," *Victorian Studies* 35.3, (Spring 1992), 269.

[30] Perkin, *Reception History,* 64.

[31] Perkin, *Reception History,* 64.

[32] Brantlinger,"Nations and Novels," 269.

[33] Nancy Henry, *George Eliot and the British Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 136.

In most respects, Daniel Deronda is a perfect Ciceronian citizen. He meets the minimal standards for Roman citizenship: he is male, wealthy, and well-educated. However, it is his pervasive sense of duty that marks him as the Ciceronian ideal. As soon as he digests the news that he is Jewish, Daniel announces that, although he cannot erase his “Christian sympathies,” he considers it his “duty—it is the impulse of [his] feeling—to identify [him]self, as far as possible, with [his] hereditary people, and if [he] can see any work to be done for them that [he] can give [his] soul and hand to [he] shall choose to do it.”[36] He continues, “now, you [his mother] have restored me my inheritance—events have brought a fuller restitution than you could have made—you have been saved from robbing my people of my service and me of my duty” (662). Although he has long been unsure of what his specific mission should be, he is haunted throughout his life by a sense of duty, explaining “Since I began to read and know, I have always longed for some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude—some social captainship, which would come to me as a duty, and not be striven for as a personal prize” (750). Significantly, however, Daniel’s sense of duty is not really connected to his sense of himself as an Englishman, although he repeatedly proclaims himself to be an Englishman throughout the novel. Instead, as Horowitz notes, for Daniel “duty follows from feeling, and it makes choice possible. Deronda does not choose his duty; he does not rely on ideas of intentions or judgments. Instead, he feels his duty. And, feeling it, he knows what it is he must choose.”[37] This is an important distinction, since, if we read Daniel’s sense of duty as being strictly Ciceronian, then we could easily assume that his project his connected to his sense of himself as an Englishman.

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[34] Henry, *George Eliot and Empire,* 136.

[35] Henry, *George Eliot and Empire,* 138.

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[36] George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (1876; reprt., New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 661. Future citations in text.

[37] Horowitz, “George Eliot,” 28.

Still, he exhibits all of the characteristics that the Roman philosopher admired. Deronda is exactly the kind of man whom Cicero claims should "put aside all hesitation [and] enter the race for public office and take a hand in directing the government; for in no other way can a government be administered or greatness of spirit be manifest."[38] He could easily pursue this path in England. With his fortune, abilities, and connections, Daniel could follow in his uncle's footsteps and be "at [Sir Hugo's] elbow and pulling with [him]" (176) as a member of the British Parliament. However, his sense of alienation from English society—a result of his erroneous belief that he is illegitimate—and his decision to affiliate himself with the Jewish people propel him away from England and into the unknown lands of his ancestors. Although Daniel is not interested in a career in Parliament, he is clearly concerned with the idea of vocation, which also aligns him with the Ciceronian ideal. The Roman philosopher believed that citizens bear a responsibility to recognize the intellectual gifts they are endowed with and to use them for the benefit of the state. He writes, "above all we must decide who and what manner of men we wish to be and, what calling in life we would follow: and this is the most difficult problem in the world."[39] In particular, Cicero focuses on those people who are born with "marked natural ability, or exceptional advantages of education and culture, or both, and who also have time to consider carefully what career in life they prefer to follow."[40] For this lucky sort, the natural inclinations should be considered, "for we try to find out from each one's native disposition ... just what is proper for him; and this we require not only in case of each individual act but also in ordering the whole course of one's life; and this last is a matter to which still greater care must be given, in order that we may be true to ourselves throughout all our lives and not falter in the discharge of any duty."[41]

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[38] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 75.

[39] Cicero, *De Officiis* 119.

[40] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 121.

Daniel's determination to be dutiful is expressed throughout the novel, most poignantly when he learns from his mother that she "relieved [him] from the bondage of having been born a Jew" (627). To her surprise and dismay, the news makes him happy. His studies with Mordecai Cohen have prepared him for it, and his feelings for Mirah make the news highly desirable. He does not seem concerned at all about what this means for his identity as an Englishman. Here, nationality functions as a sort of custodial parent, something Daniel can separate himself from in order to pursue his desire to be dutiful.

His natural affinity for public duty is expressed in language that evokes Eliot's earlier work. When Daniel discusses with Gwendolen his intention to travel to the East, his description evokes the language of Eliot's poetic paean to duty: "Oh, May I Join the Choir Invisible." Deronda intends to "awaken a movement in other minds" (803),[42] suggesting the sort of secular immortality described in this poem.

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[41] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 123.

[42] He also awakens a movement of a different sort in Gwendolen's mind, who, as a result of her interaction with him, resolves to live a selfless life. Upon learning that he and Mirah will marry and depart England, Gwendolen gratefully declares to Deronda that "it should be better ... better with me ... for having known you" (805). She restates this sentiment again, on his wedding day, when she writes that "it shall be better with me because I have known you" (810).

The idea of the dead enduring through the memory of the living is also a very Jewish way of thinking about the afterlife.[43] Because the faith is predicated upon the covenant that exists between the Jewish people and their god, there is particular interest in the terrestrial as opposed to the celestial.[44] Rewards and punishment are, therefore, aspects of the earthy life. Good behavior in this world is important, but not because of the promise of supernatural compensation. Rather, it is simply a part of the covenant: a duty imposed upon the faithful. For Jews, a life well lived is a life well remembered, and in the remembrance exists the potential for inspiring others.

Perhaps the most poignant example of this can be found in Mordecai's dying words. He claims, "Death is coming to me as the divine kiss which is both parting and reunion—which takes me from your bodily eyes and gives me full presence in your soul. Where thou goest, Daniel, I shall go? Is it not begun? Have I not breathed my soul into you? We shall live together" (811). These words echo the language of the poem's concluding lines: "May I reach/That purest heaven, be to other souls/That cup of strength in some agony."[45] Mordecai's "purest heaven" achieved, he leaves the world assured that his spiritual descendant will carry out his plans. Importantly, he associates England with his dying body, something to be left behind in order to achieve his otherworldly desires. He downplays the importance of his birthplace, arguing that "England is the native land of this body, which is but as a breaking pot of earth around the fruit-bearing tree, whose seed might make the desert rejoice"

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[43] There are many ideas about the afterlife in the Jewish tradition; reincarnation is one of them. Mordecai refers to this when he explains to Daniel that: "In the doctrine of the Cabbala, souls are born again and again in new bodies till they are perfected and purified" (540). His faith that his mind will live on through Daniel comes from this tradition.

[44] For instance, there is not a reference to an afterlife in the Torah, the most important Jewish text.

[45] Eliot, "Choir Invisible," lines 36-38.

(497). The line is a reference to the Old Testament Book of Isaiah, part of which prophesizes the destruction of those nations that were the enemies of the nation of Israel, as well as the restoration of the Jews to their ancestral homeland. Mordecai's claim is a specific reference to Isaiah 35, which reads:

> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
> the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
> like the crocus
> it shall blossom abundantly,
> and rejoice with joy and singing.
> The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
> the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
> They shall see the glory of the Lord,
> the majesty of our God.[46]

Daniel, presented as a sort of Moses figure in the novel, becomes the means through which the seeds of Mordecai's dreams are born abroad. His prophetic mission is to restore the nation of Israel, but it is Daniel who will enact this plan. In pursuit of his duty to the Jewish people, Daniel will bear the seeds of the dying man's dream; however, he will not completely shatter the pot of his own Englishness in order to do so, suggesting the permeability of English identity. His sense of duty to people does not necessitate a rejection of the culture in which he was raised. He intends to maintain both aspects of his identity, and there are practical reasons for doing so.

Daniel Deronda desires a communal existence, but he seems strangely distant from the community that he inhabits as a child and young man and also the Jewish community that he chooses to affiliate himself with. Because of Daniel's dual affiliation with England, as well as an as yet unfixed and unfounded nation-state that will accommodate his newly discovered people, the novel suggests a new attitude about the political loyalties of citizens. By using Cicero's ancient attitude about citizenship in such a modern way, the novel looks forward to a new sort of political individual. Daniel's status as "something more than an Englishman" reflects Eliot's own attitude about English national identity in a world where global influences touched even ordinary citizens. While some critics have argued that his refusal to reject his adopted identity once he learns the truth of his birth is an avowal of the superiority of Christian England, others find his departure from England to be a rejection of the English Protestant aristocracy that he had known from childhood.

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[46] 35 Isaiah 1-2 (New Revised Standard Version).

It is in this way that the novel redefines Ciceronian citizenship. By sending Daniel away to serve his own ancestral people, rather than the British crown,[47] Eliot suggests that this most important feature of the ideal Ciceronian citizen—an abiding sense of duty to the state—is impossible in post-industrial, imperial England. Crucially, Daniel's loyalty is not to the nation-state in which he was raised, but he does not completely reject his identity as an Englishman. He explains to Joseph Kalonymos:

> I shall call myself a Jew ... but I will not say that I shall profess to believe exactly as my fathers have believed. Our fathers themselves changed the horizon of their belief and learned from other races. But I think I can maintain my grandfather's notion of separateness with communication. I hold that my first duty is to my own people, and if

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[47] Rachel Hollander, "Daniel Deronda and the Ethics of Alterity," *Literature Interpretation Theory* 16 (2005): 75-99. Hollander argues that the Jewish half of the novel's plot "serves to interrupt and call into question the structures of community out of which the realist novel develops" (76).

> there is anything to be done towards restoring or perfecting their common life, I shall make that my vocation. (725)

He maintains a sense of being in-between both English and Jewish culture, which positions him as a liminal citizen, one who is concerned with performing the duties associated with citizenship, but who chooses for himself the nature of his affiliation and allegiance. In other words, his determination to act is based upon strong feeling as opposed to doctrine. This is a radical distinction. By affiliating citizenship with feeling as opposed to location, Eliot raises the possibility that an individual's emotions are a more relevant determination for citizenship than soil. In her final novel, Eliot maintains Cicero's concept of an active, dutiful citizenry but locates the source of loyalty outside of the boundaries of the nation-state. Or, rather, because Deronda does not deny the efficacy of the nation-state paradigm, Eliot suggests the potential of liminal citizenship, a paradigm of thought that rejects pure geography as the determination of citizenship in favor of affiliative ties that can be determined by individual citizens.

Of course, it is because Deronda is an Englishman first, not a Jew, that he is able move so fluidly across the world stage. And he is not just any Englishman, but rather the ward and purported son of a wealthy, aristocratic member of the English Parliament. As such, he possesses a great deal of cultural and literal capital. Unlike Mordecai Cohen—a poor, consumptive Jewish scholar who can only dream of making the journey to Palestine—Deronda is able to embark upon this journey and to fund it with the fortune left to him by his Jewish father.

Further, Daniel's origins circumvent the typical legal channels through which a person is declared a citizen of a particular nation-state: namely, place of birth. Like Moses, he is "adopted," but it unclear whether his adoption was conducted through proper legal channels. The murky circumstances of his adoption raise the important question of whether he is a legal citizen of England in the first place. His political identity is muddied even before his true identity is revealed to him. He claims English citizenship not through *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*—the two most common determinates of citizenship in the nineteenth-century and now—but through affiliative ties that may not be at all legal. His political identity, then, is very modern in the sense that his desires supersede those factors that have historically been considered primary.

Yet even his sense of himself as an Englishman is contingent. Daniel's mother attempted to impose a sense of national identity on her son in order to thwart her own father's dedication to duty. She asked Sir Hugo to raise Daniel as an Englishman so that her son would not become the model Jew envisioned by her own father. Although she abandoned her son to Sir Hugo, she did so in order to exert some control over the boy's destiny and identity. The Princess says to her son, "it was my turn to say what you should be" (634), and what she wanted him to be was a Christian English gentleman. But her plan is only a nominal success. Daniel proclaims himself to be an Englishman and is generally considered to be a gentleman, yet these are not positions that he seems to inhabit naturally. Leonora is reluctant for her son to follow the path intended for him by her father, but she confesses his identity to him because she feels a powerful obligation to the dead, which is also an obligation to her ancestral people. The Princess explains to Daniel that her father desired "a grandson who shall have a true Jewish heart. Every Jew should rear his family as if he hoped that a Deliverer might spring from it" (662). In response, Daniel again states his desire to perform his duty; he tells his mother, "we are set in the midst of difficulties. I see no other way to get any clearness than by being truthful—not by keeping back facts which may—which should carry obligation within them—which should make the only guidance towards duty" (663). He continues, "your will was strong, but my grandfather's trust which you accepted and did not fulfill—what you call his yoke—is the expression of something stronger, with deeper, farther-spreading roots, knit into the foundations of sacredness for all me" (663). Her confession reveals a path that Daniel has been looking for his entire life. Through his mother, an "unwilling instrument," the greatest wish of Daniel's grandfather is fulfilled by a more than willing grandson.

It is worth noting that Deronda is only able to determine the nature of his duty when he learns that he is a member of a marginalized minority group. Marc Wohlfarth argues this is because it is only "the discovery of his Jewish origins [that] allows [Daniel] to resacralize his life."[48] The narrative supports this claim; shortly after Daniel's meeting with his mother, the narrator explains that Daniel "had gone through a deep tragic experience which must for ever solemnize [sic] his life and deepen the significance of the acts by which he bound himself to others" (667). He seems dedicated to the idea of cultivating a relationship with the Jewish people, even if his own Jewish mother is incapable of accepting the affection that he is eager to share with her. She explains that she is not "a loving woman. ... [I]t is a talent to love—I lacked it" (666). Daniel is a loving and affectionate person and is immediately anxious to form an association with his native people. Yet the newfound knowledge of his identity does not cause him to reject the culture in which he was raised. Never once does he indicate his willingness to deny his identity as an English Christian. However, the decision to maintain his English identity cannot be read as a celebration of English nationalism. Even before he learns that he is "something more than an Englishman"[49] (720), his relationship with England and English society is ambivalent. He simply does not seem to belong.

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[48] Marc E. Wohlfarth, "Daniel Deronda and the Politics of Nationalism," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 53, no. 2 (September 1998): 200.

This is an interesting point, especially when considered alongside Homi Bhabha's ideas of cultural liminality. For Bhabha, a nation is a narration, a fallacy of unity that is made to seem natural through its insistence that a people have a shared origin, a common history, a mutual tradition. These narratives deny the fact that identities are crafted by the "complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of 'the people' or 'the nation' and make them the immanent subjects of a range of social and literary narratives."[50] Bhabha explains that "the linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes, most commonly signifies a people, a nation, or a national cultural as an empirical sociological category or a holistic cultural entity."[51] But, this equivalence ignores the liminal spaces within the nation itself, places where the nation itself is "alienated from its eternal self-generation, [and] becomes a liminal signifying space that is *internally* marked by the discourses of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference."[52]

Daniel has been raised as an Englishman, trained to celebrate the hallmarks of Englishness, but even before he learns of his Jewish identity, he suggests the instability of national designation. While his sense of himself as an Englishman is foregrounded throughout the novel, something he falls back on when necessary, it is often more of a practical concern than anything else. He is the one member of Sir Hugo Mallinger's family who knows a detailed history of the Christian abbey that is Sir Hugo's ancestral home—a fact that marks him as the custodian for this ancient bastion of Englishness and, also, perhaps, Christianity—but, in spite of how comfortable he seems there, this place does not belong to him, and this is not only because he is a Jew. Daniel's affection for the abbey is especially important because it is the site where, at the age of thirteen, the age at which Jewish men officially take responsibility for their religious lives, Daniel "[became] acquainted with his first sorrow" (421). Here, he incorrectly surmised that Sir Hugo must be his own father. This event is the source of shame that Daniel feels over what he assumes to be his own illegitimacy, and it causes him to construct an identity around a mistaken assumption of his origin. While he is posited as a more appropriate owner of the abbey than the man who stands to eventually inherit it, Henleigh Grandcourt, Daniel is merely passing through the place, his comfort there an attitude. The linkage of place and affection, juxtaposed with the idea of sorrow, suggests Eliot's rather unconventional attitude about national identity. Instead of associating a specific geographic site with the development of a sense of nationalism or patriotism, she instead associates geography with the development of affection—for people, ideas, and community—which forms the core of Daniel's sense of duty to the Jewish people.

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[49] When Daniel Deronda meets Joseph Kalonymos in Mainz, the old man asks him if he is now "no longer angry at being something more than an Englishman," referring to the earlier rebuff.

[50] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 140.

[51] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 140.

[52] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 148.

This raises interesting questions about his habit of referring to himself as an English citizen when faced with difficult questions and situations. He does this, for instance, when asked to decide upon a vocation for himself. Instead of discussing a specific profession, he claims that he means to “be an Englishman, but [also] to understand other points of view” (183): an odd and possibly evasive response. However, his answer suggests an awareness that his English identity is something performed as if it were a profession. It indicates his interest in the interstitial spaces of culture, those places where, Bhabha explains, “the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.”[53] It also calls to mind Bhabha’s claim that “political empowerment, and the enlargement of the multiculturalist cause, come from posing questions of solidarity and community from the interstitial perspective. Social differences are not simply given to experience through an already authenticated cultural tradition; they are the signs of the emergence of community envisaged as a project—at once a vision and a construction—that takes you ‘beyond’ yourself in order to return, in a spirit of revision and reconstruction, to the political *conditions* of the present.”[54]

Daniel is drawn to the Jewish community in London even before he learns of his own Jewish identity and becomes interested in it at a time when he is also yearning for a meaningful vocation that would help him belong to some community, something outside of and larger than himself. He desperately wants to be a good citizen, but he cannot quite summon up the enthusiasm required to perform civic duties for England. When he discovers his true heritage, his ties to the Jewish people supersede what might be an easier and more obvious career choice for him. This presents a variation on the idea of British citizenship as a uniform and unified entity. Instead of finding characters that yearn for political inclusion, here we encounter an individual who is a functioning part of the polity—indeed, the sort of person who would likely become a productive British public servant—yet Deronda desires more than this. Therefore, he rejects the easy and obvious path for a far more difficult one, one that will take him away from his comfortable and familiar home.

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[53] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 2.

[54] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 3.

Daniel leaves England to look into the possibility of founding a Jewish nation in the East. The Hebraic tradition firmly supports the idea of the nation-state. In fact, Barry Rubin claims that "long before [the] concept could be expressed" the Jewish people invented the world's first nation,[55] which was a geopolitical entity based on the following principles: "a people bound together not just by a common ruler, religion, or ancestry, but also by a culture, ideology, and set of mutual obligations creating a community consciously resolute to preserve its solidarity."[56] Daniel's reliance upon this paradigm suggests that he is very much his grandfather's progeny; he, like his grandfather, is the kind of man who "bind[s] love with duty; for duty is the love of law; and law is the nature of the Eternal" (722). Deronda's attitude is a very nineteenth-century one in that he looks to the conventional structure of the geopolitical entity that is the nation-state as the most desirable goal for his people, yet even once he announces his dedication to the pursuit of this goal, he is reluctant to bind himself completely to this new structure. He intends to make "them" (his people) a nation again "though they too are scattered over the face of the globe" (803), but he also plans to return to England "some time." Even when Deronda learns of his Jewish heritage and fixes on a vocation for himself, he withholds his complete allegiance. He acknowledges the usefulness of the geopolitical structure, even as he departs the one in which he has lived his whole life. In this sense, he figuratively shrugs off England in a manner similar to the way that he physically shrugs off Joseph Kalonymos in the Frankfurt synagogue, dismissing the gentleman's question about Daniel's maternal family name with a succinct, "I am an Englishman" (368).

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[55] Barry Rubin, *Assimilation and Its Discontents* (New York: Random House, 1995), 5.

[56] Rubin, *Assimilation,* 5. Rubin explains that "modern nomenclature obscures this fact by replacing the national name—Hebrews or Israelites—for Jews, which seemingly refers only to religion" (5).

This pronounced repulse of Joseph Kalonymos, the man who will turn out to be the custodian of Daniel's own non-English heritage, reflects a difficult fiction of nineteenth-century England: English cultural purity. This moment suggests Robert Young's claim that "in the nineteenth century, the very notion of a fixed English identity was doubtless a product of, and a reaction to, the rapid change and transformation of both metropolitan and colonial societies which mean that, as with nationalism, such identities needed to be constructed to counter schisms, friction and dissent."[57] Eliot's depiction of citizens in this novel reflects a very modern attitude in the sense that it does not demand or even expect a strict connection between religious and ethnic affiliation and political loyalty, reflecting Young's idea that "today's self-proclaimed mobile and multiple identities may be a marker not of contemporary social fluidity and dispossession but of a new stability, self-assurance and quietism."[58] He continues, "the need for organic metaphors of identity or society implies an organic paradigm so beloved of the nineteenth century quickly developed alongside one of hybridity, grafting, or forcing incompatible entities to grow together (or not): to that extent, we still operate within its legacy of violence or corruption."[59]

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[57] Robert J.C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995), 3-4.

[58] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 4.

[59] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 4.

Daniel’s intention is to maintain contingent relationships with both England and the geopolitical structure that he intends to create. However, he is neither an inflamed English nationalist nor a passionate Zionist. In fact, his Zionist plans reflect more of a fulfillment of his personal dream to be useful than a burning sense of Jewish nationalism. He explains to Gwendolen that Mordecai’s ideas “have attracted me so much that I think of devoting the best part of my life to some effort at giving them effect” (802). He describes the “task which presents itself ... as a duty” to “[restore] a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre” (802). Yet his description of the plan suggests his distinction from it. It is something that he is doing for his people, for “them,” as he says again and again in this passage.

Eliot herself does not seem satisfied with this altruistic separatism. The novel suggests that a nation-state populated by people with a multiplicity of ethnic and religious ties will weaken the structure of the nation-state, possibly rendering it useless. In a pivotal scene, Mordecai Cohen, a native-born citizen of England,[60] raises some of the novel’s most pressing concerns:

> Can a fresh-made garment of citizenship weave itself straightway into the flesh and change the slow deposit of eighteen centuries? What is the citizenship of him who walks among a people he has no hearty kindred and fellowship with, and has lost a sense of brotherhood with his own race? It is a charter of self ambition and rivalry in low greed. He is an alien in spirit, whatever he may be in form; he sucks at the blood of mankind, he is not a man. Sharing in no love, speaking in no subjection of the soul, he mocks it all. (528)

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[60] However, he would have lacked many of the key benefits of citizenship because of his religion.

The passage is especially revealing, not only because it implies a decidedly Ciceronian attitude about transience and duty, but also because it raises some of the most enduring questions about the nature of citizenship: is it merely a status, something that can stitched together like a garment, or is it an aspect of identity, something that is "deposited" into the fiber of a person or a people? If citizenship is a "fresh-made garment," easily taken off and on, what cultural significance, if any, can it have? What will happen to the nation-state if individual rights take precedence over any sense of community? Is it possible to create a sense of community among diverse individuals? Is it desirable? Most of these questions are irrelevant in a homogenous society, but in a society as obviously multifaceted and complex as the world that Deronda inhabits, they suggest the complexity of political identity in a modern, imperial nation, an important concern of this novel. By raising these questions, Eliot emphasizes the many nuances of modern political identity and participates in a tradition of novelistic inquiry into the consequential nature of the status of citizenship. Like Frances Brooke and Mary Wollstonecraft, George Eliot challenges the idea that citizenship can be worn casually. However, Eliot does not seem to believe that one must choose citizenship over religious, cultural, and ethnic affiliations. Mordecai's questions indicate Eliot's commitment to community, while also raising the possibility that multiculturalism in England would not necessarily fracture English culture. Rather, it would foster, in the words of Jonathon Sacks, the current chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, the "dignity of difference." [61] Sacks argues that Jewish particularism is divinely ordained and considers the Jews to be "the litmus test for the importance of difference."[62] Mordecai's contention here is that the Jews could and should retain their distinction even while enjoying the benefits of citizenship. In this way, Eliot implies that national citizenship need not be at odds with cultural values and that various groups of people could live together harmoniously in English society.

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[61] Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London: Continuum, 2002).

The narrative structure of *Daniel Deronda* further reflects a sense of the interrelatedness of seemingly disparate elements of society. The multi-plot technique was one that Eliot employed throughout her career, and the subplots in her novels are often sites where commentary is made upon the main plot. For instance, in *Middlemarch*, Lydgate's marriage to Rosamond Vincey functions as a reflection of Dorothea Brooke's relationship with Causabon, enacting the long-term consequences of marital incompatibility. In *Daniel Deronda*, the various subplots are especially meaningful, illuminating the action of the main plot while also deflecting controversy away from it, all the while revealing the linkages between apparently dissimilar elements of English society.

One important, if often overlooked, subplot fully enacts the interracial relationship that occurs only superficially in the main plot. The marriage between the Christian Englishwoman Catherine Arrowpoint and the German Jew Elijah Klesmer functions as a stand-in for the marriage between Daniel Deronda and Mirah Lapidoth. In several ways, Catherine Arrowpoint functions as a double for Daniel Deronda. Like him, she has had "every advantage" (45), and they are temperamentally quite similar. Daniel's "inborn lovingness" is a trait that Catherine shares. She is "always thinking of others" (104) and is characterized by a "certain mental superiority ... an exasperating thoroughness in her musical accomplishments, a fastidious discrimination in her general tastes" (52), phrases that might also be used to describe Deronda. Both are musically accomplished, intelligent, and morally upright. In fact, these characters function as moral touchstones in the novel, casting aspersions on the mores of upper-class English society.

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[62] Sander L. Gilman, *Multiculturalism and the Jews* (New York: Routledge Press, 2006), i.

Daniel and Catherine travel in the same type of well-heeled social circles, although they rarely interact with each other. They both strive to rise above the pettiness that surrounds them, and neither seems entirely content with the narrow and shallow environments they inhabit. Most obviously, they both fall in love with and marry accomplished Jewish artists, decisions that provide them with direction. Significantly, while both of them are considered to be dutiful individuals, their dutiful natures are expressed in unexpected ways. Catherine, too, is an ideal Ciceronian citizen. Like Daniel, her feelings delineate her choices. To that end, the rich but untitled Catherine Arrowpoint rejects her parents' demand that she marry a member of the English aristocracy and instead elopes with her Jewish music teacher. Shortly before Daniel's story is introduced, the heiress makes her desire to marry Klesmer known to her parents. They are shocked and inform her that a marriage to such a person will "never do" (246). The Arrowpoints then prevail upon their daughter to consider her duty, a word that is repeated ten times in two pages worth of text.

Catherine's claim that Klesmer is a genius, like Tasso,[63] is met with her mother's accusation that "there is no sting in *that* sarcasm, except the sting of undutifulness" (246). Mrs. Arrowpoint informs her daughter that "a woman in [Catherine's] position has serious duties. Where duty and inclination clash, she must follow duty" (246). She continues: "it is a woman's duty not to lower herself" and later insists that her hitherto silent husband "tell [his] daughter what is her duty" (247). Catherine's response to this diatribe is that she "feel[s] at liberty to marry the man [she loves and thinks] worthy unless some higher duty forbids" (247). She then proceeds to do exactly that.

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[63] Mrs. Arrowpoint is very proud of the biography she has written on the poet.

Crucially, Catherine's parents associate her duty with the "nation and the public good" (247). Her mother claims that Catherine has "lost all sense of duty" and has forgotten that as an only child and as a daughter, it "lies with [her] to place a great property in the right hands" (246), meaning not into the hands of a foreigner and, most especially, not into the hands of a Jew. Her father tells her that a "man like Klesmer can't marry such a property as yours. It can't be done" (248). But Catherine is unwilling to allow her parents' conservatism to determine her path. Instead, her feelings for Klesmer determine the proper course of action for her, or, as Horowitz argues, "Choice ... is more like a recognition than a decision. We discover, at key moments, what our choice must be."[64] Catherine's response announces her attitude about her parents' class-bound sense of duty and denies the possibility that her choice of marital partner could be of national concern:

> I can't see any public good concerned here. ... Why is it to be expected of an heiress that she should carry the property gained in trade into the hands of a certain class. That seems to me a ridiculous mish-mash of superannuated customs and false ambition. I should call it a public evil. People had better make a new sort of public good by changing their ambitions. (247)

Catherine refuses to deliver her family's estate "safely" into the "right hands" through marriage with a man bearing "that ordinary stamp of the well-bred

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[64] Horowitz, "George Eliot," 28.

Englishman" (102), perhaps to "an unexceptional Irish peer, whose estate wanted nothing but drainage and population" (91). Instead, she defies her parents, rejecting the "suppressed vivacity" of an English husband (111) for a love-match with a musical genius. Klesmer is described as a man "fit to stand by the side of Leonardo da Vinci" (102). His bearing and sense of style are especially striking when he appears in a party of English country people that includes Catherine's father, whose "nullity of face and perfect tailoring" suggest great superficiality. Commenting on the contrast, the narrator remarks: "We English are a miscellaneous people. ... [O]ur prevailing expression is not that of a lively, impassioned race, preoccupied with the ideal and carrying the real as a mere make-weight. The strong point of the English gentleman pure is the easy style of his figure and clothing. ... [H]e also objects to looking inspired" (102). Elijah Klesmer's attire is decidedly not English, and this difference underscores the fact that he does not belong with such mediocre and superficial minds. National affiliation, here, is associated with fashion and style, not with any depth of passion. Divorced from the affections of genuine community, English nationalism has become a sort of costly and fashionable garment.

Catherine Arrowpoint's preference for Klesmer over the sort of man that her parents would have her marry suggests that her sense of duty is not attached to the superficial trappings of English nationalism, and it marks her refusal to perpetuate the myth of English purity. Importantly, this marriage is a happy one. The Klesmers are a popular couple in London social circles, and the union is eventually accepted even by the Arrowpoints. Because Catherine is not punished by Eliot for rejecting her parents' conservative attitude, the novel can be read in the context of other domestic novels written by women that explore the connection between private happiness and the public welfare. This move may indicate that Eliot was beginning to reject her own tendency to conservatism.

Additionally, this discussion of duty sheds light on Daniel Deronda's consistently articulated desire to be dutiful. When Catherine Arrowpoint refuses to marry into the English aristocracy, she denies what her society would consider to be her duty. Instead, she pursues what she considers to be her own personal duty: to marry for love, not for the sake of property. Deronda also refuses to pursue the duty that would be expected of a man raised in such "exceptional circumstances." He does not dedicate himself to the English public good, but in no way does he eschew duty or responsibility to community. For Deronda, it comes down to one simple fact; the English are simply not the chosen people.

Elsewhere in the novel, the English public good is associated with another marriage, this one far unhappier than the Arrowpoint-Klesmer union. Gwendolen Harleth chooses to marry not because of strong feelings, but because of her family's reduced circumstances. The marriage is a disaster. Gwendolen is encouraged by her Uncle Gascoigne to persuade her new husband to stand for Parliament. He argues that "A man in [Grandcourt's] position should make his weight felt in politics" and "I am thinking of your husband's standing in the country. And he has now come to that stage of life when a man like him should enter into public affairs" (551). Gascoigne believes that "he was acquitting himself of a duty here, and giving something like the aspect of a public benefit to his niece's match" (551). This connection between Gwendolen's marriage and the public good is ironic. Given his position in society, Grandcourt should be the ideal citizen in the text, but he is cruel and manipulative, inclined to mistreat animals and women; he is certainly not suited for public life. Juxtaposed against Daniel Deronda's burning desire to enact some social captainship, Grandcourt's *ennui* is all the more striking. The aristocrat is often bored, interested only in leisure pursuits: hunting, yachting, gambling. The narrator explains that "his importance as a subject of this realm was of the grandly passive kind which consists in the inheritance of land" (584). There is little doubt that he would be a terrible public servant and, indeed, there are few characters in all of Eliot's fiction less inclined to civic duty than the languid Henleigh Grandcourt. His "toneless drawl," (331) "flaccid bearing," and lack of vitality reinforce his moral deficiencies; Deronda refers to him as a "a remnant of a human being" (404).

Grandcourt's own sense of duty is limited to the domestic realm, and he seems convinced that duty is something that is due to him, not something that he himself must perform. Like the Princess Halm-Elberstein, for Grandcourt, love implies the subjection of women. He considers marriage to be a "contract where all the ostensible advantages were on [Gwendolen's] side" (669). His one advantage in the marriage was his ability to "use his power to hinder her from any injurious self-committal or unsuitable behavior" (669), and he feels "perfectly justified in taking care that [she] should fulfill the obligations she had accepted" (669). To that end, he forces his wife to accompany him on a seemingly endless yachting trip, impressing upon her the necessity of the duty that he believes she owes him, suffocating her with this sense as they voyage around the blue Mediterranean on his well-appointed yacht.

His tyranny is turned against him, however, when he embarks upon what will be his final voyage. Walking toward the boat, Grandcourt feels exhilarated by his power over his wife. His enjoyment is heightened by the knowledge that he "was ruling that Gwendolen should go with him" and that she has obeyed (681). But the narrator makes it clear that his tyranny will be punished, offering this description of the couple as they make their way toward the boat: “This handsome, fair-skinned English couple manifesting the usual eccentricity of their nation ... moving like creatures who were fulfilling a supernatural destiny—it was a thing to go out and see, a thing to paint” (681). It is an interesting image, one that emphasizes the consequences of a sense of duty that is misplaced or abused and perhaps one that is meant to provide commentary on British imperial ambitions. Further, it emphasizes Eliot’s interest in exploring the consequences of a pursuit of duty that is hidebound or misplaced, whether that conceit of duty be personal or national.

Yet in spite of Eliot’s commitment to exploring moral alternatives to the inadequacies that existed in her world, the novel falls short of providing a genuinely satisfying resolution to the so-called “Jewish Question.” The fact that *Daniel Deronda* has inspired controversy since its publication and that it continues to provoke strong critical reactions is proof of this fact. Contemporary criticism of the novel has emphasized what is perceived as Daniel’s aggressive proto-Zionism as an indication of his participation in the advancement of British imperialism, citing this as George Eliot’s own contribution to British imperialist ideology. Yet Nancy Henry and others have pointed out that in order to make this connection, one has to assume, first, that Zionism is “a form of British imperialism,”[65] and, second, that George Eliot endorsed the conflation, a theory that Henry denounces based on Eliot’s general reluctance to support the colonization of Palestine once it seemed to be getting off the ground.[66]

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[65] Henry, *George Eliot and Empire*, 117.

[66] Henry, *George Eliot and Empire*, 117. Henry relies upon Eliot’s letters as support for this claim, arguing that “her reluctance to celebrate early signs of its [the colonization of Palestine] actual occurrence suggests that she distinguished between the idea of Jewish nationalism and the practices of religious (mostly Christian) colonizers” (117).

Certainly, it is important to consider *Daniel Deronda* in terms of its and its author's engagement with empire. Indeed, Gayatri Spivak argues that "it should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representations of England to the English."[67] Following Edward Said's reconsideration of the ways in which the Victorian canon endorsed and even celebrated imperialism—most notably his reading of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*[68]—many critics have indicted *Daniel Deronda* as a novel that "reveals a continuity with an imperialist ideology, a belief in white superiority over dark races, and a certain distaste for the Jews."[69] Reina Lewis, for instance, argues that although the novel presents Jewish characters in a relatively favorable light, Eliot "replicates many of the fundamental Orientalist tropes of difference and otherness"[70] and positions the Jews as "England's Orientalized Other."[71]

Since the publication of Said's seminal *Orientalism* in 1978, perhaps the most conspicuous concern of critics of the Victorian novel is determining the extent to which Victorian novelists created and perpetuated nationalist propaganda as well as imperialist ideology through their work. This is because, as Said himself later put it in *Culture and Imperialism*, the realist novel is "*the* aesthetic object" through which to study “the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experience” in British and French cultures,[72] since “as a cultural artefact of bourgeois society [the novel] and imperialism are unthinkable without each other.”[73] Further, Said maintains that one of the principal purposes of the European realist novel was “almost unnoticeably sustaining the society’s consent in overseas expansion.”[74] Erin O’Connor summarizes the argument made by critics about the ways in which the realist novel is associated with imperialism. She explains: “Under the guise of realism, the argument goes, the nineteenth-century British novel, more than any other cultural form, generated an insularity so tightly sealed that it has refused to reveal its foreign policy to even the finest critics.”[75] Postcolonial criticism, therefore, seeks to describe “a literary history that can illuminate the imperialist underpinnings of narratives that often neither know they have such underpinnings, nor care.”[76]

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[67] Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," in *Race Writing and Difference*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 262.

[68] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Random House, 1994).

[69] Susan Meyer, "Safely to Their Own Borders: Proto-Zionism, Feminism, and Nationalism in *Daniel Deronda*," *ELH* 60 (1993): 750.

[70] Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995), 192.

[71] Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, 201.

Specifically, the realist novel has been associated with the production of “consistent subjects who are the origin of meaning, knowledge and action.”[77] Catherine Belsey argues that this is “the work of ideology,”[78] and even though her work is focused on a discussion of capitalist ideology, this claim has been productively used to investigate imperial ideology as well.[79] According to Belsey, the "production of consistent subjects" is performed through the "[suppression of] the relationship between language and subjectivity,"[80] and the effect of it is to make the destinies of individuals seem to be a natural result of character.[81] In the classic realist novel, subjectivity is posited as something essential, rather than a linguistic construction. The enigma that Belsey argues is a necessary element of a realist novel precipitates "disorder which throws into disarray the conventional cultural and signifying systems."[82] But the need for narrative closure prevents chaos from prevailing. As the plot of a realist novel resolves—or, as the enigma dissolves—order is reestablished and reaffirmed. In this way, the grand narratives that uphold patriarchy, nationalism, racial hierarchies, and class distinctions are reified and naturalized. Thus, realism posits essentialism through narrative expectation. Belsey argues that:

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[72] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* xii.

[73] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 71.

[74] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 12.

[75] Erin O’Connor, “Preface for a Post-Postcolonial Criticism,” *Victorian Studies* 45, no. 2 *(*Winter 2003): 218.

[76] O’Connor, “Preface,” 218.

[77] Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (New York: Routledge Press, 1980), 67.

[78] Belsey, *Critical Practice,* 67.

> Initially (and continuously) constructed in discourse, the subject finds in the discourse of the classic realist text a confirmation of the position of autonomous subjectivity represented in ideology as

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[79] See Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form." *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1990) 44-71; Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean,, 1492-1797* (London and New York: Methuen Press, 1986); Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin, *Decolonizing Fictions* (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1993) for examples of this comparison.

[80] Belsey, *Critical Practice*,, 72.

[81] Belsey argues, through Roland Barthes, that "Classic realism tends to offer as the 'obvious' basis of intelligibility the assumption that character, unified and coherent, is the source of action" (73).

[82] Belsey, *Critical Practice*, 70.

> ‘obvious.’ It is possible to refuse that position, but to do so ... is to make a deliberate and ideological choice.”[83]

According to this analysis, the British realist novel functions, intentionally or not, as a means by which knowledge about the English subject and its colonial “other” is created, perpetuated, and naturalized. Further, Belsey argues, because one of the conventions of the genre stipulates that the creators of realist novels must remain invisible—removed from the action of the plot—the novel “effaces its own existence as text” and “seems merely to transcribe a series of events, to report on a palpable world, however fictional.”[84] The reader, then, is called upon to judge the “‘truth’ of the text, the coherent, non-contradictory interpretation of the world as it is presented by an author whose autonomy is the source and evidence of the truth of the interpretation.”[85]

Nancy Henry argues that this kind of understanding of the ways in which novels work accounts for the tendency for critics to assume that, starting with Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, “economic imperialism and colonization are part of the novel’s content from the start.”[86] And, she notes, this trend, one that has seemingly (and alarmingly) “transcended the need for proof,”[87] ignores the possibility that some novels intentionally, if covertly, subvert ideology. Patrick Brantlinger agrees that arguments in support of the nation-state and the novel forming a “two-way ideological street" are "too abstract to account for the complex way novels have often been resistant to, and sometimes critical of ... nationalism."[88] Some novels "carry multiple, contradictory ideological valences."[89] Mikhail Bakhtin, of course, argues that it is through the use of multiple discourses that novels are, of all literary genres, uniquely suited for subversion. It is their dialogic quality that makes them so critically rich.

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[83] Belsey, *Critical Practice,* 83-84.

[84] Belsey, *Critical Practice,* 68.

[85] Belsey, *Critical Practice,* 69.

[86] Henry, *George Eliot and the British Empire,* 124.

[87] Henry, *George Eliot and the British Empire,* 123.

Certainly, many realist novels do function as propaganda for British imperialism; however, to make that claim of an entire genre denies the possibility that some do not. While *Daniel Deronda* does not represent a departure from Eliot's interest in realism, it does test the boundaries of the formal realism that Eliot had previously advocated. Eliot was adamant about working within the tradition of the realist novel, a tradition that often served to naturalize racist and imperialist attitudes through its production of knowledge. Yet, Eliot does seem to be aware of this problem, and one section of the novel suggests that she was keenly concerned with the ways in which memory distorts "reality." On the tour of the Mallinger family abbey, Daniel is asked by his uncle to provide commentary on its "various architectural fragments." Deronda seems to be entirely in his element, confidently pointing out interesting details and features. In the cloister, the one part of the abbey left untouched by Sir Hugo's "improvements," he stops to admire the intricate carvings of leaves upon a capital. Daniel indicates the "delicate sense which had combined freedom with accuracy in the imitation of natural forms" and wonders aloud “whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through the real objects” (422).

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[88] Brantlinger, "Nations and Novels," 255.

[89] Brantlinger, "Nations and Novels," 261.

His query suggests something very interesting about Eliot’s use of realism. On the surface, the comparison suggests that the representation of the leaves and actual leaves can be mutually exchanged. However, in the very next paragraph, Daniel is asked if he could love another home as well as he loves the abbey. His response reveals Eliot’s attitude about memory and representation. Deronda explains: “I carry it [the abbey] with me. ... To most men their early home is no more than a memory of their early years, and I’m not sure but they have the best of it. The image is never marred. There’s no disappointment in memory, and one’s exaggerations are always on the good side” (422). His answer acknowledges a relationship between memory and representation and admits the potential for fabrication, exaggeration, and narrative distortion. It indicates that Eliot herself understood what was at stake in representation.

Rachel Hollander considers *Daniel Deronda* to be “a unique moment, both formally and thematically, in the history of the British novel ... a manifestation of the epistemological and ethical crises confronted by Eliot and others at the end of the nineteenth century.”[90] Specifically, this crisis highlighted the limits of the novelist to know “the other,”[91] but also to create the other. It was a crisis that, as David Grube points out, signified the battle for British identity.[92] As Sander Gilman explains, the various ways that the Jewish Question has been debated in British society have served as “models” for dealings with the other minority groups that would eventually enter into “the world of high culture and as part of a political power notion of the multicultural.”[93] Clearly, Eliot was concerned with the ways Jews were represented in this novel, an anxiety that is apparent in the letters that she wrote during the composition and publication of the novel. Eliot took great pains to depict the London Jewish community in a favorable light. By locating some of the Jewish narrative elements in the subplots, Eliot was able to make points about mainstream English culture that would have been intolerable to her largely Christian audience had they been foregrounded in the main plot.

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[90] Hollander, “The Ethics of Alterity,” 75-76.

[91] Hollander, “The Ethics of Alterity,” 76.

[92] Grube, “Religion, Power and Parliament,” 22.

This tactic suggests both Eliot’s sensitivity to and discomfort with prevailing attitudes about Jews in British society and indicates her desire to challenge them in a number of clever ways.[94] Her Jewish characters, especially Mirah Lapidoth, Mordecai Cohen, and, of course, Daniel Deronda, were almost unanimously celebrated by Jewish scholars and critics at the time of its publication,[95] even if Christian critics expressed more mixed opinions.

Throughout the novel, Eliot often uses the anti-Semitic inclinations of her characters in order to highlight their flaws and failings. These instances function as commentary upon prevailing English attitudes about Jews. For example, Gwendolen has blatantly anti-Semitic thoughts after a visit to a pawnshop leaves her convinced that she has not gotten a good deal for her jewelry. She complains: "these Jew dealers were so unscrupulous in taking advantage of Christians unfortunate at play" (19); however, Gwendolen's gambling is regarded with scorn from the very first pages of the novel, so her complaint here functions mostly as a commentary on her own selfishness and narrow worldview. Other examples suggest simple ignorance. At one point, the novel's narrator explains that "Deronda, like his neighbors, had regarded Judaism as a sort of eccentric fossilized form which an accomplished man might dispense with studying" (363). Importantly, his encounter with Mirah causes him to realize that "Judaism was something still throbbing in human lives" (363). This change of heart manages both to position Daniel as an Englishman, with typically English attitudes about Jews. It also suggests his ability to admit his own ignorance and prejudice and to correct his erroneous beliefs.

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[93] Sander L. Gilman, *Multiculturalism and The Jews* (New York: Routledge Press, 2006), xiii.

[94] Certainly, the novel has some unpleasant moments, and Eliot’s depictions of some characters are reliant upon clichéd ideas about Jews. For instance, although kind, the Cohen family is coarse and excessively interested in money. Even the youngest son, Jacob, is described as being an overly enthusiastic bargainer. Additionally, Daniel’s greatest concern in his search for Mirah’s mother and brother is that they will be unscrupulous or unsavory individuals, something he seems to consider inherent in certain Jews. His fear is realized in the particularly unsettling depiction of the Lapidoth patriarch, who is a conniving and deceitful man.

[95] Indeed, because she was so sensitive to negative criticism, reviews of *Daniel Deronda* by Jewish critics were among the only ones that George Henry Lewes encouraged Eliot to read.

More recently, criticism of the novel has focused less on the representation of Jewish characters and more on interpreting the Zionist mission that Daniel embarks upon at the novel's end. Many are disturbed by Eliot's profound silence in considering the people who already inhabited the land that Daniel seeks to recover for the Jews: the Palestinians. Edward Said argues that, in *Daniel Deronda,* "the East is partly a habitat for native peoples (or immigrant European populations), but also partly incorporated under the sway of Empire"[96] and claims that Eliot ignorantly treated Palestine as a vast empty space,[97] patiently waiting for the return of the Jews

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[96] Said, *Culture and Imperialism,* 63.

[97] Edward Said, "Zionism From the Standpoint of its Victims," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives,* ed. by Anne McClintock, Amir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 22.

(or European settlers). Given this fact, it is unsurprising that criticism of *Daniel Deronda* is so prolific and contradictory. Bernadette Waterman Ward questions Eliot's understanding of the consequences of Daniel's journey to the East and claims that "*Daniel Deronda* does not, as a novel, seriously embrace the larger international struggle in which the character Daniel would be engaged were he to enter upon political Zionism."[98] She believes that his sense of duty to Jewish nationalism reveals the unsettling fact that "Eliot does not recognize that national self-determination by its nature divides different peoples and involves them in larger international rivalries. Daniel, indeed, never refers his mild and sweet moral insights to his political life. He adheres, even at the end, to a value system that is in fact personal and domestic. ... And so Daniel becomes neither very political nor very religious."[99]

Others regard Daniel's mission as being consistent with "the English nationalist values and politics that the novel would otherwise seem to criticize."[100] However, Eliot seems to have taken great pains to discredit imperialist ideology at a number of points in the text. For instance, Mr. Bult, the erstwhile suitor of Catherine Arrowpoint and "expectant peer" is described as a party man with "strong opinions concerning the districts of the Niger" and who "spoke with decision of affairs in the South Seas" (241). This man, with his "suffusive pinkness of a healthy Briton" (241), is marked as a dullard, without much to recommend himself other a title. Klesmer refers to him as a "political platitudinarian as insensible as an ox to everything he can't turn into political capital" (245). Eliot's language suggests disdain for the sort of individual who would profit from the exploitation of foreign lands and the people who reside there. Like the "fair-skinned couple," Gwendolen and Henleigh, moving with picturesque slowness toward a doomed boat, the healthy pink individuals who supported British imperialism would be punished for their immoral acts. Eliot's concern for what colonial expansion would mean for England is made even more clear at the end of the novel, where the narrator explains, "Expansion, we know, is a very imperfect measure of things; and the length of the sun's journeying can no more tell us how far life has advanced than the acreage of a field can tell us what growths may be active within it" (705). Such language seems to rebuke those who misused Lord Salisbury's claim in 1861 that the sun would never set on the British empire.[101]

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[98] Bernadette Waterman Ward, "Zion's Mimetic Angel: George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda,*" *Shofar* 22 (Winter 2005): 114.

[99] Waterman Ward, "Zion's Mimetic Angel,"114.

[100] Hollander, "The Ethics of Alterity," 90.

Of course, it is unclear whether or not Daniel's proto-Zionist ambitions were plans that Eliot would herself have endorsed. Like other clever instances of authorial or narratorial disapproval—for instance Gwendolen's complaint about Jewish pawnbrokers juxtaposed against the narrator's disdain for the gambling that drove Gwendolen into the pawn shop in the first place—Daniel's mission may very well be something that George Eliot could neither support nor even envision. Daniel, Mirah, and Mordecai do not ever actually leave England, at least in terms of the novel's extant narrative. Mordecai dies just as the trio prepares to set out, and the final lines of the novel describe his poignant death, not the survivors' departure. Unlike several of Eliot's other novels, Nancy Henry observes that there is no postscript to *Daniel Deronda,* so the reader is left uncertain about exactly what happens to the couple; therefore, a great deal of criticism is based upon a certain amount of speculation.

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[101] Lord Salisbury complained that the £1.5 million spent on colonial defense by Britain in 1861 merely enabled the nation "to furnish an agreeable variety of stations to our soldiers, and to indulge in the sentiment that the sun never sets on our Empire." Salisbury later became the architect of British imperial expansion in Africa, although he was known as an "unenthusiastic imperialist." He never seemed particularly convinced that the costs of imperialism—in terms of military and political capital as well as actual pounds—outweighed the benefits.

In fact, Daniel's plan has been vague all along, and even he seems to realize that he might not achieve very much in the East, but perhaps "at the least, [he] may awaken a movement in other minds, such as has been awakened in [his] own" (803). Desiring to be "as explanatory as he could," he explains to Gwendolen that the purpose of his journey to the East, a trip that will last "for some years" (802), is "to become better acquainted with the condition of my race in various countries there" (803). His ultimate plan is to restore "a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe" (803), but he does not seem to have a definitive plan of action.

The language here isn't even original; rather, it echoes the speech made by Mordecai at the Banner and Hand, where Daniel's political awakening occurred as he listened to his mentor's impassioned defense of Jewish nationalism. Mordecai's vision of a Jewish homeland is inflamed, evoking images of fire, heat, and growth, but his speech is notably lacking in detail. Against the objections of his fellow philosophers, he argues:

> what is needed is the seed of fire. The heritage of Israel is beating in the pulses of millions; it lives in their veins as a power without understanding. ... Let the torch of a visible community be lit! Let the reason of Israel disclose itself in a great outward deed, and let there be another great migration, another choosing of Israel to be a nationality whose members may still stretch to the ends of the earth, even as the

> sons of England and Germany, whom enterprise carries afar, but who still have a national hearth and a tribunal of national opinion. (536)

At no point in the debate does Mordecai discuss the complexities of uniting a people who have been scattered around the globe, nor does he explain how or even when the "great migration" would begin. Daniel's own language echoes this passage, with its acknowledgment of the imperial projects that have scattered British interests (and citizens) all over the globe, but it, too, lacks specificity and a great deal of Mordecai's emotional energy.

Daniel is, without doubt, impressed by his friend's passion and intellect, but he is not without a certain amount of reserve when he considers both Mordecai's religious intensity. Daniel recognizes what he considers to be Mordecai's "greatness." He turns the word over in his mind and affirms that this is the case: "Yes ... that was the word which Deronda now deliberately chose to signify the impression that Mordecai made on him" (545). Yet he acknowledges "the more negative spirit" within himself, suggesting reservation and doubts about the Zionist scheme. Still, he chooses to affiliate himself with Mordecai, "however erratic some of [Mordecai's] interpretations might be" (545), looking to older man's "visionary excitability" (513) as a model for "the complete ideal shape of that personal duty and citizenship which lay in [Daniel's] own thoughts like sculptured fragments certifying some beauty yearned after but not traceable by divination" (512). His enthusiasm for this man is often discussed in terms of an excessive idealism and as an effect of Daniel's desire to discover his own origins. Mordecai insists, as a matter of faith, that Daniel must be a Jew, and Deronda responds to this claim with a kind of desperate, youthful hope. It gives him a concrete lead to pursue in his search for identity. The narrator describes Daniel's sense of wonder when contemplating the possibility that he might be a Jew: “That young energy and spirit of adventure which have helped to create the world-wide legends of youthful heroes going to seek the hidden tokens of their birth and its inheritance of tasks gave [Daniel] a certain quivering interest in the bare possibility that he was entering on a like track—all the more because the track was one of thought as well as action” (515). However, his youthful exuberance does not necessarily make him an earnest Zionist.

After their visit to the Banner and Hand, Deronda promises Mordecai that he will do “everything [he] can in conscience do to make [Mordecai’s] life effective” (540) and claims that “in the poise of his sentiments he felt at one with this man who had made a visionary selection of him” (546); however, his thoughts do not dwell for long upon the promise of a new Zion. Instead, he soon becomes preoccupied with the idea of reuniting Mordecai and Mirah, the woman Daniel is beginning to love. Deronda long considers the minutiae of this plan, musing over the many practicalities that a reunion between Mordecai and Mirah would entail. First, he determines to engage Mrs. Meyrick as “his chief helper”; next, he decides that the best place for the “healthy lodging” of a “consumptive patient” (546) would be in Mrs. Meyrick’s own neighborhood, Chelsea. Then, he contemplates “a prospective arrangement for giving a furnished lodging some faint likeness to a refined home” (546) and begins to consider which of his own furnishings can be spared for his friends. The mental leap from nation founding to interior design raises questions about Daniel’s role as an ardent Zionist. But more telling is the regimented way that Daniel proceeds with this plan, going from quarter to teacups in the span of a few lines.

For Daniel, this regimented way of making plans is limited to small-scale projects. In spite of his claim to object “to schemes only definite in their generality and nebulous detail" (546), in matters of consequence, he rarely manages to make definitive plans and often seems to stumble across ideas that he later adopts as his own. Deronda is described as lacking direction at several points in the novel. Long before he knows of his own heritage, the narrator explains that Daniel waits for "some external event, or some inward light, that would urge him into a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy" (365). However, Daniel is discouraged and wonders, "how and whence the needed event to come?—the influence that would justify partiality, and make him what he longed to be but was unable to make himself—an organic part of social life, instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit, stirred with a vague social passion, but without a fixed local habitation to render fellowship real" (365). He does not even outfit himself and his new wife for the journey to Palestine; instead, Sir Hugo and Lady Mallinger take the "trouble to provide complete equipment for Eastern travel" (810).

Deronda is especially unclear about a career path. Raised in a rich and productive intellectual environment, under "exceptional" circumstances, he is given every opportunity. He is educated at elite British schools—Eton and Cambridge—and presented with a variety of educational and vocational choices not open to all young men at the time. Although he sacrifices his own chances of receiving honors at school in order to help a friend, Daniel is not permanently damaged by this, since he can rely upon his "uncle's" wealth and position. Because of this wealth, he has time to examine his natural abilities before he commits himself to a career. But he is always noncommittal. Eventually, he explains to his uncle that he wants to "be an Englishman, but [also] to understand other points of view. And ... to get rid of a merely English attitude in studies" (183). While this statement reflects Daniel's outward thinking, it is also strikingly vague.

Change is a recurrent theme throughout this text, and the novel famously begins when Gwendolen Harleth loses at the roulette table, just as she later gambles on marriage to Henleigh Grandcourt and loses. Although he disapproves of gambling, Daniel appears to come upon his own vocation largely by chance. Indeed, most of the major decisions of his life may seem to be a function of luck and synchronicity. He happens to be rowing on the Thames in time to save Mirah Lapidoth from drowning. Through her, he is drawn into London's East End in an attempt to discover the whereabouts of her family. There, he stumbles into the bookshop where Mirah's lost brother works and begins a spiritual relationship with him. This newfound interest in Judaism causes Daniel to visit a German synagogue, where he runs across Joseph Kalonymos, the custodian of his spiritual inheritance. Later, his dying mother, suffering from an uncharacteristic attack of conscience, sends for Daniel to reveal the truth of his identity to him. The fact of his birth allows him pursue a romantic relationship with Mirah, who has declared that she could only marry a fellow Jew. Most of these potential tricks of fate are made possible because of Daniel's variable nature, so it is difficult to take him very seriously when he announces that he intends to travel Palestine to found a nation.

Certainly, it is true that his commitment to founding a Jewish homeland increases once his own Jewish identity is revealed, but even then he does not articulate a specific plan of action, nor does he mention connections with other proto-Zionists with whom he might ally himself. This may be a result of Eliot's commitment to realism and her refusal to imagine a realistic plan for him, which would have been necessary at this time since few Jews were seriously considering a return to Palestine. But again, his refusal to renounce his English citizenship is consequential. His dual sense of identity—English and Jewish—allows him to float between the two positions, enjoying the benefits of both communities. His contingent relationship with both cultures allows him to attach his loyalty to either, or, one must suppose, to neither.

We can also see this ambiguous tendency in Gwendolen as well, who, until she determines to change her nature, is set upon a path of pain and near annihilation. Throughout the novel, Gwendolen Harleth's inability to find some satisfactory vocation is juxtaposed against Daniel Deronda's own search for a meaningful project to embark upon. Gwendolen begins the novel as a wanderer, a status Daniel himself assumes at its conclusion (while she remains behind in England). Deronda's stable childhood is held responsible for the fact that his "disposition was one in which everyday scenes and habits begat not *ennui* or rebellion, but delight, affection, aptitudes" (169). In contrast, before they settle into Offendene, Gwendolen and her family have "wandered from one foreign watering-place or Parisian apartment to another" (23). Gwendolen is described as a "citizen of the world," a circumstance which the narrator holds accountable for her inability to feel strong affection. The narrator argues that "a human life ... should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth ... for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection" (22). This striking statement suggests Eliot's attitude about the kind of fluid identity that a life spent wandering would entail. This is further emphasized by the fact that Gwendolen is resolutely punished in the novel.

Like Daniel's mother, Gwendolen is not naturally loving, and she finds it very difficult to feel deep emotion, especially for men. She "object[s], with a sort of physical revulsion, to being directly made love to" (70), and, while Gwendolen reconciles herself to the inevitability of having a husband, she worries about what marriage would mean to her sense of freedom. Her primary objective in life, at least initially, is to be allowed to do exactly as she pleases. Early in the novel, she claims that she “wants to do what pleases [herself]” (69), but this desire is thwarted when she is forced into marrying in order to save her mother from financial ruin. Her uncle assures her that she “will find in marriage a new fountain of duty and affection” for “marriage is the only true and satisfactory sphere of a woman” (143), a claim that is belied by the reality of her horribly unhappy relationship with Henleigh Grandcourt. Gwendolen admits to Daniel that she is “not very affectionate” (417) and is gently admonished for it. He tells her that “affection is the broadest basis of a good life” (417). When Gwendolen seems surprised that he does not care more about “‘ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and all that,’” Daniel explains that “to care about *them* is a sort of affection. ... Call it attachment, interest, willingness to bear a great deal for the sake of being with them and saving them from injury. Of course it makes a difference if the objects of interest are human beings; but generally in all deep affections the objects are a mixture—half persons and half ideas—sentiments and affections flow in together’” (417).

Unlike Mirah Lapidoth, who is “capable of submitting to anything when it takes the form of duty” (438), Gwendolen is often unsure of what her duty is and appeals to Daniel to help her discover what it might be. It is only at the end of the novel—after she has been widowed by Grandcourt and abandoned by Deronda—that she resolves to undertake this duty. It is set out for her by Daniel, her moral guide, whose advice is vague but significant. Although she has been left only a small amount of money and a cottage in unfashionable Gadsmere, Daniel tells Gwendolen that she must not despair; rather, she should consider her life to be “a debt” that she must repay by making the lives of her mother and sisters comfortable. He explains to her that "it is a duty that cannot be doubtful ... other duties will spring from it" (769). As she fulfills them, she will become "the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born" and "find her life growing like a plant" (769). In short, he advises her to embrace the notion of community and to become an affectionate participant in it, even at the risk of sacrificing her own happiness. His advice, vague though it is, conveys the important point that a commitment to community would provide her with roots and stability: a very Ciceronian conceit.

While this sacrificial image is certainly disturbing, it suggests how important Eliot considered the notion of duty to be. The importance of duty, affection, and community in this novel cannot be understated, but interpretations of what Eliot is doing with the idea of community in an increasingly globalized and industrialized world are varied. Dorothea Barrett explains that "the broad international setting of *Daniel Deronda* and the consumerism which characterizes it preclude any feeling of community, much less the kind of community that can be described as an organic mesh."[102] This new world is one "that anticipates the alienated settings of modernism" and one in which families "are fragmented or malformed."[103] Suzanne Graver suggests that the novel foregrounds "the possibility of human community" and celebrates the union of the individual with the group through Daniel's affiliation with his native people.[104] These conflicting interpretations ignore an important political reality: the Jews, at this time, were scattered throughout the world, separated from one another as a result of diaspora. Daniel hopes to carve out a political community for his people—a nation-state where they could live together again—but this resolve is not initially connected to his own Jewishness; when he promises to help Mordecai investigate the possibility of founding a Jewish state, Daniel does not know that he is himself a Jew. Rather, his willingness to help stems from the affection that he feels for Mordecai and Mirah. Later, when his mother explains to him the mystery of his identity, these same feelings cause him to be pleased to learn that he is a Jew.

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[102] Barrett, *Vocation*, 163.

[103] Barrett, *Vocation*, 163.

[104] Suzanne Graver, *George Eliot and Community: A Study in Social Theory and Fictional Form*, (Berkeley, CA: 1984), 1.

When Daniel accompanies Mordecai to the Banner and Hand, he witnesses his friend's impassioned defense of Jewish nationalism. Mordecai argues, "unless nationality is a feeling, what force can it have as an idea?" (525). His friends counter this claim and argue that nationality in Europe is dying out because "the whole current of progress is setting against it" (525). But Mordecai is steadfast, maintaining that "the life of a people grows, it is knit together and yet expanded, in joy and sorrow, in thought and action" (526). Ever practical, his friend Gideon, "a rational Jew," (527) counters Mordecai's idealism by declaring: "A man's country is where he's well off" (527), an idea that Daniel Deronda, in spite of his claims to support Mordecai's nationalist ideals, seems to endorse.

Ultimately, Daniel's modern attitude is expressed most profoundly through his refusals: his refusal to profess the Jewish faith and his refusal to renounce his English identity. These refusals reflect a new type of Ciceronian citizenship, one that privileges duty but does not preclude ethnic or religious affiliation. Importantly, Daniel announces that he intends "to maintain [his] grandfather's notion of separateness with communication" (725), even while he "holds that [his] first duty is to [his] own people" (725). While this could be read as a contradiction, it seems more likely that Eliot is illustrating the possibility of a Ciceronian attitude about citizenship that is not conventionally communitarian and certainly not nationalist. In fact, because his conscience "included sensibilities beyond the common" and was "enlarged by his early habit of thinking himself imaginatively into the experience of others" (511), Daniel is attracted to community more than anything else, but he is no patriot. He easily severs whatever sense of duty he may have to England, the place he considers to be his native home, and attaches it instead to a new and, for him, uncharted land. The ease with which he accomplishes this suggests that he will wear the "fresh-made garment of citizenship" of the place that is most convenient for him at any given time; however, what distinguishes it from mere fashion is the affection, the sense of "hearty kindred and fellowship" he feels for Mirah and Mordecai and, through them, the Jewish people.

For him, even though a sense of duty is clearly foregrounded, it is attached to a fluid idea of citizenship, one that is more global than local in nature. This idea presents a challenge to nationalism, associating it with outdated ideas of public duty. It is a challenge that Eliot deals with in a gingerly fashion, recognizing both the potential that is represented in this sort of citizenship, but also the dangers. In the end, Daniel is himself ambivalent about what this new paradigm of citizenship might mean. Although he is speaking of architecture, his words on the restoration of the abbey are relevant to a discussion of nationalism. He explains to Gwendolen that: "To delight in doing things because our fathers did them is good if it shuts out nothing better" (417). Just as he will not allow tradition to stand in the way of architectural progress, his attitude about nationalism suggests that he would not see traditional ways of thinking about citizenship foreclose the potential for true community.

This complex novel raises a number of questions about citizenship in the modern world. Certainly, there is a sense that Daniel is prepared to maintain the Ciceronian ideal by emphasizing his sense of communal duty over his entitlement to specific rights. However, he doesn't actually do anything, so it is difficult to determine whether Eliot was a true proponent of active national citizenship, or even of Zionism. It does seem unlikely, however, that he will intentionally "bear the British thunder to distant lands" (Brooke 339), especially as he seems entirely unconcerned with British affairs at the novel's end.

Additionally, Daniel's unwillingness to embrace fully either English or Jewish culture reflects Yasemin Soysal's "postnational model" of citizenship,[105] a model that rejects the classical model in which "citizenship invests individuals with equal rights and obligations on the grounds of shared nationhood"[106] in favor of a model in which "the individual transcends the citizen," and, thus, universal personhood becomes the basis of community membership.[107] Yet, Eliot does not celebrate this liminal state. In fact, she seems concerned that being neither one thing nor the other will result in very little action. Daniel's ability to take on and off the "garment of citizenship" without rejecting the importance of communal affection suggests Eliot's interest in reevaluating nineteenth-century attitudes about the nature of the concept. However, at the end of the novel, Daniel's community has dwindled down to just one person, Mirah, and is, therefore, smaller than at any other point in the text. While Eliot does not jettison the notion of political duty, she refuses to attach it securely to the nation-state. Instead, in the character of Daniel Deronda, we are offered a dutiful political actor whose fluid identity allows him to deny the importance of geography and history while also embracing community. In this sense, Deronda is, indeed, “something more than an Englishman,” but what such a person is or means remains to be seen.

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[105] Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, "Toward a Postnational Model of Citizenship," in *The Citizenship Debates*, ed. by Gershon Shafir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 194.

[106] Soysal, "Postnational Citizenship," 194.

[107] Soysal, "Postnational Citizenship," 194.

Chapter V

“More Beige Than Anything”: Political Identity in Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia*

George Eliot’s investigation of the impact of colonialism on English identity in *Daniel Deronda* reveals the economic, political, and cultural fissures created by globalization and indicates the ways in which personal interests can come to supersede national identity. Once Daniel learns that he is a Jew, his affiliations with the Jewish people come to dwarf any sense of loyalty that he might have to the British government. The result of this is that his English citizenship becomes a sort of garment that could be taken on and off as necessary. In this way, the novel depicts a new sort of citizen. Daniel Deronda is a new political figure and is noteworthy because his love of community outweighs his love for country. His civic and ethnic concerns are at odds with one another, and he chooses ethnic over national affiliation. The novel raises the possibility that British colonialism would necessarily foster a fluid sense of being in the world and indicates how the free-floating citizens created as a result of imperialism might result in a “body politic that refuses to be representative.”[1] The individuals within such a body politic would possess a multiplicity of loyalties that could be deployed and employed in unpredictable ways, making governance difficult, if not impossible. While *Daniel Deronda* illustrates how a desire to perform civic duty can be an important aspect of personal identity, in important ways it marks the last gasp of a particular way of foregrounding the responsibilities of citizenship over the rights long considered to be attached to the concept. Indeed, in that novel, we can already see the seeds of change. Daniel's sense of himself stems from his desire to perform some "social captainship," and he is only able to begin his life when a suitable vessel presents itself to him.

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[1] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 88.

For Deronda, to deny the importance of social duty is to be morally degenerate, like Henleigh Grandcourt, or to become psychologically wrecked, like Gwendolen Harleth. However, while his interest in duty is clearly associated with the social, rather than the personal, his ultimate mission is not intended to benefit England, in spite of his repeated claims that he is an Englishman. And although his desire to found a Zionist state is ultimately quite problematic, it does not appear that he intends to align his mission with English imperial interests. Rather, Daniel is determined to use his many gifts to benefit his own chosen people. In this way, he uses his public and private identities in concert to investigate the founding of a Zionist nation-state. Eliot clearly saw a connection between public and private identity, and her final novel reflects upon the interconnectedness of the two realms through its insistence upon the pursuit of social duty; however, it certainly is not a straightforward celebration of English nationalism. If Deronda's Englishness has value, it is only as a means through which to accomplish a specific goal.

This sort of socially committed character is not so readily found in the contemporary novels that I discuss here. In fact, active citizenship is not a common theme in very much current literature. This situation might be attributed to the fact that modern political identity is often fractured by a number of competing elements, which can result in a less active citizenry. Citizenship scholars theorize that this fracturing could signal an end to the long-standing association between citizenship and nation-state. Because populations are not as homogenous as they may have once seemed, national affiliative ties are less obvious and powerful. Benjamin Barber argues that because citizens of modern nation-states are "divided by private faith, by race and gender, by class and ethnic origins, by geography and origins [they] have been compelled to fashion an artificial civic faith, a faith in the common, to make up for their absent common cultural heritage."[2] This artificial faith can be both divisive—excluding groups in order to maintain the fiction of cultural purity—and hollow, creating a sense of heritage that is too much of a fiction to be a rallying point. Homi Bhabha recognizes this tendency when he explains that "the very concepts of homogenous national cultures, the consensual or contiguous transmission of historical traditions, or 'organic' ethnic communities—*as the grounds of cultural comparativism*—are in a profound process of redefinition.[3]

The consequence of this is that the bonds that attach individuals to the nation-state have become frayed over time, which causes the connections between public and private affiliations to seem less natural and appealing. As a result, citizens become less motivated to perform the duties of citizenship. Declining rates of military service and consistently low voter turnouts are obvious indications of this trend. Clearly, modern citizens have concerns and interests that take priority over a sense of loyalty to the nation-state. T. K. Oomen recognizes this complicated state of affairs when he argues that Western Europe, the birthplace of citizenship, "has become or is becoming its graveyard."[4]

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[2] Benjamin R. Barber, "Blood Brothers, Consumers, or Citizens?" in *Cultural Identity and the Nation-State*, ed. by Carol C. Gould and Pasquale Pasquino (New York: Rowman &Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 57-58.

[3] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 5. Emphasis in original.

[4] T. K. Oomen, *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1997), 4.

The social captainship that Daniel Deronda dreamed of pursuing is regarded very differently in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as individual success has come to be privileged over the public good. A different sort of citizen can now be found in British literature, one more concerned with specifically personal issues than the welfare of the nation-state. While it is clear that there is a connection between political stability and personal comfort—the current political situation in Iraq is but one example of this—representations of active citizens in British literature have become increasingly rare since the end of the Second World War.

British novelist Hanif Kureishi explores the intersection and the interstices of the political realities of citizenship with a modern sense of national identity in his first novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). A humorous and seemingly irreverent look at suburban and urban British life, Kureishi's novel presents a witty but often bleak portrait of London in the 1970s, depicting not only the fashion, music, and theater scenes, but also the less glamorous aspects of the region, such as white, suburban, middleclass Chiselhurst and economically disadvantaged Brixton. But the novel's often flippant tone belies the seriousness of its content. Written during the waning years of Thatcherism, the novel is concerned with the impact of that political ideology on the concept of citizenship. And although the novel concludes on the eve of Thatcher's tenure in office, Kureishi is clearly interested in interrogating the effects of the conservative political climate of that era from the perspective of one who has lived through it and experienced its social repercussions.

Bart Moore-Gilbert argues that Kureishi "belongs to a tradition of inquiry into the 'state of the nation' and meanings of 'Englishness' which reaches back well into the nineteenth century."[5] Kureishi is especially interested in multiculturalism, and while his most recent novels are less obviously political and interested in race and ethnicity,[6] his early plays, screenplays, and novels are explicitly engaged with race and the place of Asian citizens in Great Britain. In his essay "Something Given: Reflections on Writing," Kureishi explains that when he began writing *The Buddha of Suburbia*: "I knew—my excitement told me—that I had material for a whole book: South London in the 70s, growing up as a semi-Asian kid; pop, fashion, drugs, sexuality."[7] This novel about a "semi-Asian kid" is indeed a romp through the suburbs and metropolis of 1970s England; however, it is also a critique of youth, race, sexuality, drug culture, theater, and family in this era. The novel chronicles less a clash of cultures—English and Asian—than the protagonist's reconciliation of these two elements of his cultural identity. In his acceptance of these elements of himself, the main character, Karim, both celebrates and denigrates cultural practices associated not only with British but also with minority cultures.

These issues provide the backdrop for *The Buddha of Suburbia's* main action and reveal the cultural divisions that existed in 1970s England. The main character narrates the novel, which begins with a tongue-in-cheek celebration of his (almost) English identity:

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it

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[5] Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Hanif Kureishi,* Contemporary World Writers Series, ed. by John Thieme (New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 3.

[6] I say "less obviously about race" because although not thematized, the protagonists of these novels are Anglo-Asian.

[7] Hanif Kureishi, "Something Given: Reflections on Writing," Hanif Kureishi, http://www.hanifkureishi.com/something_given.html (accessed on February 3, 2006).

> were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care — Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored. Or perhaps it was being brought up in the suburbs that did it.[8]

Karim is the son of an Indian immigrant and a native-born Englishwoman[9] whose unhappy marriage ends early in the novel, when Karim's father, Haroon, begins a romantic relationship with another white woman, Eva Kay, the social-climbing suburbanite who yearns for a more exotic life than the one she lives in the South London suburbs. Throughout the novel, Karim attempts to navigate the disparate worlds represented by his English and Asian family members, adapting his behavior as necessary in sometimes humorous and often disturbing ways. His wry attitude suggests an awareness of the social and political climate of the time, and apparently small details reveal the discomfort he often feels as a minority citizen of England. For instance, he explains that his younger brother Amar calls himself Allie "to avoid racial trouble" (19). His father learns a new word everyday because "you never know when you might need a heavyweight word to impress an Englishman" (28). His cousin Jamila comes to hate her mentor for encouraging her to read political writings while "forgetting that she [Jamila] was Indian" and for wanting to "eradicate everything that was foreign in her" (53). Karim himself avoids school after he becomes sick of "being affectionately called Shitface and Curryface, and of coming home covered in spit and snot and chalk and woodshavings" (63).

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[8] Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), 3. Future citations in text.

[9] Like Kureishi himself. In fact, there are many autobiographical elements in the novel. For instance, Kureishi grew up in Bromley; his father was an English civil servant; and Kureishi was a fixture of the London theater scene in the 1970s.

Karim Amir is the ostensibly apolitical heart of a deeply political novel, a figure that reveals the unsettling consequences of asserting the individual over the social. The resolution of this character's existential crisis illustrates the burgeoning power of those whom Edward Said and Homi Bhabha call the "unhomely" to deny the fetishism of identity. The text suggests the ways in which Homi Bhabha's theories of mimicry and hybridity function as strategies that might allow for the creation of a new type of citizen, one whose identity is formed in the interstices of society and whose source of political power emanates from the periphery of the state rather than from its center. But rather than present a naively enthusiastic depiction of this new sort of political identity, Kureishi's novel suggests the potentially weakening effect that this individual might mean represent for the concept of citizenship and the efficacy of the nation-state. Karim's journey from the suburb to the city and the narration of his personal, professional, and sexual experiences reveal some of the most salient issues in contemporary citizenship studies: the ascent of multicultural citizenship in the international arena, the legal and social status of migrants, the political implications of passive citizenship, the reputed demise of the nation-state as the locus of political power, and the potential return of this power to the city. The novel provides insight into attitudes about citizenship expressed by first-wave immigrants and their British-born children and suggests how affiliative ties have come to be more closely associated with London (and its suburbs) than with the British nation-state. Additionally, it offers a possible explanation for those "worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life"[10] that the

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[10] United Kingdom, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools*. Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (London, QCA: 1998), 8. Hereafter referred to as the Crick Report.

Crick Report would identify in the British polity in 1998, a full eight years after the publication of *The Buddha of Suburbia.*

Like Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, *The Buddha of Suburbia* interrogates the notion of civic duty and its connection to citizenship. But unlike the nineteenth-century novel, instead featuring a protagonist who is almost aggressively dutiful—Daniel Deronda—in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the main character Karim is politically passive, ostensibly uninterested in little other than sex and music. He seems to be completely unaware of his identity as a citizen of England and is almost entirely unconcerned about the rights and duties attached to the status. Although his father is a low-level English civil servant, Karim is uninterested in considering his father's career as a personal connection to the British government. He is entirely unsuited for military service or public duty and, to further emphasize his disdain for civic participation, it does not appear that he even casts a vote in the pivotal election that concludes the novel. His apathy is all the more notable because the 1970s were an especially volatile period in British history. Serious labor disputes throughout the decade had practically crippled the country, leading to the election of the Tory government in 1979.[11] The era was also marked by serious racial discord, which culminated in the Brixton Riots of 1981. Karim's identity as a visible minority in the very white suburb of Bromley makes his ostensible apathy all the more surprising.

There are a number of reasons for it. He is only seventeen when the novel begins and as self-absorbed and undisciplined as the most stereotypical seventeen year old. However, to focus on his youth would be to miss the point that Kureishi is making with this figure. Karim is a character that is more powerful when considered as a function rather than as a fully developed psychological portrait. His political apathy should be read as a response to this particularly divisive period in British politics and as a reaction to the racial divisions that were both created and exploited by governmental policies crafted during the era. Like a modern Jane Austen, Kureishi engages urgent political issues through silence in a way that is similar to Susan Lanser's explanation of how the eighteenth-century British novel, through its "(re)distribution of *speaking* bodies ... engages the pressing ... question of who shall participate in civil society, in what ways, and with what rights ... of who shall have public power and whose interests shall be recognized and served."[12] Karim's political silence is symptomatic of the era in which he lives. Surrounded as he is by the spiritually bereft and the fruitlessly political, his affect reveals his fear that political participation could be disappointing and pointless. But his silence also censures those who accept the status quo, for while Karim is a likable enough fellow, he is also rather frustrating. One of Kureishi's particular skills as a writer is to make his audience care for the character, even while feeling intensely angry with him.

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[11] The Conservative Party held a slim majority of Parliamentary seats after the general election in 1970; the majority was lost in 1974, only to be regained in 1979.

Besides, Karim is not as apolitical as he seems. For instance, he explains that while he is supposed to be studying for his A-levels, he instead watches television, listens to music, and reads "Norman Mailer's journalism about an action-man writer involved in danger, resistance and political commitment" (62). His appreciation for Mailer's "action man writer" stops short of personal inspiration, but his readings indicate that he is politically aware, if not politically committed, himself. At the age of seventeen, he feels lost already, full of "wild hopes" (68) for success, but also "ready to retire" (63), telling himself that "you didn't have to do anything. You could just drift and hang out and see what happened, which suited me fine, even more than being a Customs Officer or a professional footballer or a guitarist" (63).[13] Karim repeatedly calls attention to his passivity and explains that he resists confrontation whenever possible, even when faced with blatant racism, announcing: "I was, as a militant, a real shaker and trembler. If people spat at me I practically thanked them for not making me chew the moss between the paving stones" (53).

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[12] Lanser, "The Novel Body Politic," 483. Emphasis added.

Through Karim's ostensible apathy, Kureishi challenges Margaret Thatcher's insistence that entrepreneurialism and consumerism could save Britain from economic collapse, and his apolitical affect foreshadows the pessimistic attitude about the efficacy of political engagement that would prevail in the aftermath of Thatcher's ascendancy. Even when Karim moves to London and sees some success there as an actor, *The Buddha of Suburbia* questions the possibility of personal growth and a developing sense of civic identity in a world in which there is "this capitalism of the feelings [where] no one cares for another person" (215). And Karim, for all of his self-interest, is a loving and concerned friend.

Kureishi often discusses Karim's sense of himself as a citizen of England through the young man's many and varied relationships. For instance, when Karim learns that his white English girlfriend, Eleanor, has been having an affair, he muses about how he and other racial minorities in England "pursued English roses as we pursued England, by possessing these prizes, this kindness and beauty, we stared defiantly into the eye of the Empire and all its self-regard. ... We became part of England, and yet proudly stood outside it" (227). Stuart Hall has a similar take on "the English eye," which, he argues, "sees everything else but is not so good at recognizing that it is itself actually looking at something. It becomes coterminous with sight itself. It is, of course, a structured representation nevertheless and it is a cultural representation that is always binary. That is to say, English identity is strongly centered; knowing where it is, what it is, it places everything else."[14] In this way, the English eye fixes identity not only for itself, but also for its "others." Karim believes himself to be looking into this eye with a steady resolve; however, it is a moment of delusion. He does not "possess" this English rose at all, and it is likely that, as with the directors who cast him in roles based on ethnicity alone, Eleanor has chosen Karim as a lover because he is "exotic" and not, to her eyes, English. The scene suggests that his confrontation with this fixing English eye cannot amount to very much.

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[13] These were all professions were defining "Britishness" to the world at this time.

His challenge to the "eye of Empire" seems all the more tepid when Karim announces in the next paragraph that his plan for dealing with this situation is to send Eleanor a "dignified note" (227) to indicate his awareness of the affair. Thereafter, he sinks into "some kind of weird depression and sulk and social incapacity" (227), a description that could easily describe the lethargic political attitude that he maintains throughout the novel. His desire for Eleanor offers an interesting lens through which to consider Karim's engagement with a different "English eye," one that more accurately functions as an "eye of Empire": Margaret Thatcher.[15]

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[14] Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Dangerous Liasons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. by Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 173.

[15] Hanif Kureishi, "Reaping the Harvest of Our Self-Disgust," *Guardian Unlimited*, September 30, 1006, on-line edition. http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1884297,00.html (accessed October 5, 2007). In this essay, Kureishi argues that Margaret Thatcher was responsible for the eradication of Socialism in England in 1989, supplanting it with the Tory Party's interpretation of freedom: deregulation, the liberal market, and consumerism. He writes: "These days I don't often think about Margaret Thatcher, but I am aware that the world we inhabit now was partly brought about by what she and her party considered in the 80s to be freedom."

The novel challenges Margaret Thatcher’s insistence that it is an individual’s responsibility—not the responsibility of the state—to ensure their own health, happiness, and sense of well-being. During an interview in 1987, in which she infamously argued that “there is no such thing as society,” Thatcher complained that British citizens:

> have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand ‘I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!’ or ‘I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!’ ‘I am homeless, the Government must house me!’ and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbor and life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations, because there is no such thing as an entitlement unless someone has first met an obligation.[16]

Her distaste for the notion of society seems to be specifically targeted at immigrants from Commonwealth nations who came to England in the aftermath of decolonization. The British Nationality Act of 1948 granted permission to citizens of all Commonwealth members to settle and work in Britain, raising important questions about the rights that were due to the citizens of former British colonies and causing an influx of immigrants into the British Isles. By the 1970s, immigration had visibly and substantively changed the racial and ethnic makeup of the British population, especially in cities such as London. It was these individuals that Thatcher seemed to be eyeing with great trepidation. Many politicians argued that these new English citizens burdened the social welfare system of the state and helped to create an economic crisis that could only be alleviated by cuts to the public welfare budget. Kureishi's novel explores the roots of this conservatism and illustrates the ways in which Thatcher's policies were, in part, reactions against the influx of immigrants into the British Isles during the 1970s.

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[16] Margaret Thatcher. Interview with *Women’s Own* magazine, 23 September 1987. http://www.margaretthatcher.org/speeches (accessed November 1, 2007).

For Margaret Thatcher, individual responsibility superseded social welfare. She advocated a kind of active citizenship that she juxtaposed against passive, undeserving citizenship. For her, a citizen's obligations to the state are specifically commercial and entrepreneurial in nature, and the entitlements of citizenship were drastically diminished during her tenure as Prime Minister.

Kureishi's novel explores the consequences of Thatcher's call to individualism. Several scenes in the novel sternly, if obliquely, rebuke Thatcher's political ideology. For instance, Karim explains that his cousin Jamila became politically informed through the encouragement of her mentor, Miss Cutmore, who taught her about "equality, fraternity and the other one, I forget what it is" (53). The forgotten element is, of course, liberty. Karim's mental lapse is an allusion to Freidrich A. Hayek's book *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), a text so influential to Margaret Thatcher's political beliefs that at the 1975 Conservative Party conference where she was elected party leader, she banged it loudly on a table and stridently proclaimed "This is what we believe!" In this work, Hayek argued, against the classic assertion of contract theorists like Locke and Rousseau, that civilization is made possible by liberty, which is a fundamental requirement for the pursuit of individual wealth and growth. Karim's statement functions as a sly reference to Thatcher's privileging of liberty at the expense of social stability and racial inclusiveness and mocks her insistence that wealth should be regarded as the *sine qua non* of English society. In fact, Karim's forgetting of the word liberty seems to echo the Prime Minister's own refusal to acknowledge the lack of fraternity and equality in Britain during the decades that the Tory party was in power.

The *zeitgeist* of the Thatcher era is foreshadowed and lambasted throughout the novel, most obviously through the empty professional successes of both the protagonist and his father as well as the blatant unhappiness of Karim's ostensibly successful extended family. His Uncle Anwar and Aunt Jeeta would seem to fulfill Thatcher's mandate that citizens should "look after themselves." They have wholeheartedly dedicated themselves to running their grocery store but are utterly alienated from their community, steadfastly refusing to acknowledge their success or to enjoy the fruits of their hard labor. Karim says that "the idea of enjoyment had passed [them] by" (51). They live in a dangerous section of the city, where overt racism is tolerated by the police. The precarious existence of this couple—their insular attitudes as well as the racial unrest that surrounds them—illustrates the dangers faced by the ordinary, law-abiding citizens of a place whose leaders deny the very existence of society. Moldering away in Paradise Stores, "a dusty place with a high, ornate and flaking ceiling" (50), the couple works seven days a week from eight in the morning until ten at night and closes the store only one week per year. His aunt stations herself at the till that is "crammed into a corner by the door," while Anwar sits "expressionless" in an alcove, "unshaven, smoking, and wearing a rancid suit" on the lookout for shoplifters to berate (51).

Their work habits cause Anwar and Jeeta to be insular and isolated from what happens around them. Neither is particularly interested in politics. Karim "often asked Jeeta who the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain [was], or the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but she never knew, and did not regret her ignorance" (51). Her ignorance of these political figures, individuals whose policies affect her in consequential ways both as a citizen and as a business owner, reveals how disconnected she is from those agents of the government who mediate her citizenship. They suggest that Jeeta inhabits a space outside of culture, even though she and Anwar are models of industry. The couple is humorless and joyless, and they do little to make their lives more materially comfortable. If they had any money to speak of, Karim thinks, they "must have buried it, because they never bought any of the things people in Chiselhurst would exchange their legs for: velvet curtains, stereos, Martinis, electric lawnmowers, double-glazing" (51). Karim complains that they behave "as if they had unlimited lives: this life was of no consequence, it was merely the first of many hundreds to come in which they could relish existence" (51). They are simply oblivious to and uninterested in the world beyond their storefront.

However, this world is openly hostile to them. Their community is "full of neo-fascist groups" who parade through the streets by day with impunity, chanting inflammatory slogans and selling anti-immigration propaganda, and roam the streets at night, "beating Asians and shoving shit and burning rags through their letter-boxes" (56). Jeeta keeps buckets of water on hand in case their shop is bombed, while Jamila studies martial arts, "preparing for the guerrilla war she knew would be necessary when the whites finally turned on the blacks and Asians and tried to force us into gas chambers or push us into leaky boats" (56).

While Anwar and Jeeta imitate the hardworking capitalists rewarded by Thatcher, their participation in society is different from the “reciprocal business” of life imagined by the Prime Minister. Their circumscribed diligence mimics the entrepreneurial spirit that she lauded, providing a reflection of successful English business men and women that is “almost the same [as], but not quite” the ideal citizen imagined by Margaret Thatcher. In this way, the couple provides an example of hybridity, which Homi Bhabha describes as “a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something *different*—a mutation, a hybrid.”[17] Through their identities as shop owners, these characters together function as a statement of disavowal. Their shop is “the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory or ...a negative transparency.”[18] Their refusal to associate with or benefit from the society in which they live, even while performing a useful service for that society, reflects Kureishi’s disdain for the policies promoted by Thatcher.

Elsewhere in the novel, Kureishi illustrates the consequences of Thatcherism on English culture through a debate, of sorts, between the professionally successful Eva Kay and Karim’s father Haroon. Asked by a journalist to define her philosophy of life, Eva describes the importance of individualism in language reminiscent of Margaret Thatcher’s declaration that individuals must take care of themselves first. Eva explains: “I have come to believe in self-help, individual initiative, the love of what you do, and the full development of all individuals” (263). She believes that

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[17] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 111.

[18] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 112.

“we have to empower ourselves” (263) and then begins to berate the underprivileged, complaining: “Look at those people who live on sordid housing estates. They expect others—the Government—to do everything for them. They are only half human, because only half active” (263). Haroon listens quietly to his lover, until she is interrupted by the journalist who asks him for commentary on Eva’s claims. Haroon speaks simply for once, without the flourishes that have become essential elements of his performance as “the buddha of suburbia.” Even Karim is impressed by the solemnity with which his father responds. Haroon explains that in spite of all of the achievements of the West: money, the “domination of nature and the Third World” (264), advanced scientific achievements, “the bombs you need to make yourself feel safe” (264), the West is missing something essential. There is “no deepening in culture, no accumulation of wisdom, no increase in the way of the spirit. There is a body and mind, you see ... but there is a soul, too” (264). This lack, he claims “defeats me. But ultimately, it will defeat you” (264).

Haroon’s response is especially interesting given that he has recently quit his civil servant job and will, therefore, be reliant upon Eva’s income for support. One assumes that Eva will also provide financial support for Haroon’s ex-wife and possibly even his children. Allie suggests this possibility when he discusses the situation with Karim: “And what about him [Haroon] giving up his job? Don’t you think he’s insane? He’ll have no money. Eva will have to support him. Therefore Eva will have to support Mum. Isn’t that grotesque? And Mum hates her. We’ll all be parasites on her!” (269). Eva’s entrepreneurial enthusiasm and role as a financial provider positions her as a Margaret Thatcher figure. Her attitude about those who rely upon others for support quite possibly reflects the disdain she feels for those people who will become reliant upon her once she and Haroon marry. Importantly, the couple announces their engagement at a dinner hosted and paid for by Karim,[19]who is celebrating his winning of a role in a new political soap opera. The party is held on 4 May 1979, the date that Margaret Thatcher's conservative party was elected to office. Karim explains that by the end of the party, "everyone in the place seemed to have been told I was going to be on television, and who was going to be the next Prime Minister. It was the latter that made them especially ecstatic" (282). This event emphasizes the fact that Haroon's power in this relationship is reliant upon Eva's infatuation with all things "exotic"; it is precarious and could disappear in an instant. As a reflection of England during this time, the couple illustrates the consequences of privileging economic as opposed to spiritual or artistic success.

While the novel begins before this important election, Kureishi was clearly moved to write about the roots of the conservatism. His engagement with Thatcherism in *The Buddha of Suburbia* follows a precedent inaugurated when he began writing for the London stage and British film in the 1980s. The work that first brought him critical acclaim and that effectively launched his career was the screenplay for the film *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Released in 1985, just after Thatcher's Conservative government was elected to a second term,[20] the film tells the story of another successful entrepreneurial couple: a young Asian man and his white, former-skinhead boyfriend. This unlikely pair takes over the management of a failing laundry to become successful, if unconventional, businessmen. The unusual coupling serves as a critique of the pro-business legislation that Thatcher advanced at the expense of progressive social policies. Alexandra Barron argues that this film "uses the story of two lovers to create an allegory of Thatcher's England which unites some of the nation's most disparate groups: blacks and whites, the rising, entrepreneurial middle class and the working class, and the (ex)racist and the immigrant."[21] *The Buddha of Suburbia* functions in a similar way to reveal the consequences of Thatcher's refusal to acknowledge the very existence and importance of the disparate individuals that make up British society. The novel makes it clear that in order for the British government to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse citizenship, its leaders would have to acknowledge and accommodate that very diversity.

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[19] By way of Charlie Hero, Eva's son and a famous rock star. The money comes from the sale of a plane ticket purchased for Karim by Charlie.

[20] The film even features a voiceover of Margaret Thatcher reading from several speeches that focused on the importance of entrepreneurship to the rebuilding of the British economy.

Kureishi's autobiographical essay "The Rainbow Sign" established his interest in defining and exploring new ways of being British through his work. In it, the author describes a trip he made to Pakistan as a young man and his subsequent realization that he was not a Pakistani, but rather a new sort of British citizen, one whose identity was an admixture of English and Asian elements. He also recognizes the fact that it is not he (nor other second-generation Brits) who will need to surrender his own ethnicity and assimilate to English culture. Rather, it is mainstream Britain that will have to change. He writes: "It is the British, the white British, who have to learn that being British isn't what it was. Now it is a more complex thing, involving new elements. So there must be a fresh way of seeing Britain and the choices it faces: and a new way of being British after all this time."[22]

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[21] Alexandra Barron, "Fantasies of Union: The Queer National Romance in *My Beautiful Laundrette,*" *Genders Online Journal* 45 (2007), http://www.genders.org/g45/g45_barron.html (accessed December 1 2007).

This juxtaposition suggests something about the relationship between ethnicity and citizenship at this time in British political history. A great deal of Kureishi's early work was written in response to the infamous speech given by Enoch Powell in 1968, which heightened racial tensions by stressing the alleged dangers of immigration for British society. The so-called "River Tiber Speech"[23]—a speech that Kureishi argues "helped create racism in Britain and was directly responsible not only for the atmosphere of fear and hatred, but through [Powell's] influence, for individual acts of violence against Pakistanis"[24]—is often cited as one of the most incendiary speeches made in recent British history. In it, Powell suggested that although members of the Commonwealth might be legally entitled to the rights of English citizenship, they could never be proper English women and men because they would always be primarily affiliated with their native homelands. It seems possible that Gordon Brown had Powell's claims in mind when he explained in a speech of his own in 2006 that "there is always a risk that, when people are insecure, they retreat into more exclusive identities rooted in nineteenth-century conceptions of blood, race and territory."[25] Powell's insistence that English culture was threatened by immigration suggests Homi Bhabha's claim that this sort of impetus to nationalism is caused by a need to assert cultural dominance. Bhabha explains that cultural authority is created in opposition, reliant not upon cultural diversity but cultural difference. He argues that "the attempt to dominate in the *name* of cultural supremacy ... is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation."[26] The River Tiber speech provides one such moment of differentiation by positing an "us against them" approach to race relations. Kureishi engages Powell's racist nationalism and explores the ways in which disparate cultures in England could accommodate difference. In other words, he is interested in exploring the ways in which the groups that make up English society could learn to live together in harmony. His essay concludes that it is up to white British citizens to decide whether or not the new society that is created in the aftermath of colonialism is to be like the one envisioned by Enoch Powell, riven with social and racial strife, or one in which differences are accepted, embraced, and incorporated into the fabric of British society.

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[22] Hanif Kureishi, "The Rainbow Sign," in *My Beautiful Launderette and The Rainbow Sign* (Boston: Faber & Faber, 1986), 38.

[23] Powell was a Conservative MP. His speech was christened "The Rivers of Blood Speech" by the British press. In it, Powell predicted that if immigration controls were not put into place by the government, the rivers of England would be red with the blood spilled in race riots.

[24] Kureishi, "The Rainbow Sign," 12.

[25] Gordon Brown, "The Future of Britishness," (lecture, Fabian New Year Conference, Imperial College, London, UK, January 14, 2006), Fabian Society, http://fabians.org.uk/events/new-year-conference-06/brown-britishness/speech (accessed February 10, 2006).

The Buddha of Suburbia provides a critique of Powell's anti-immigration screed by presenting a second-generation Englishman, Karim, who generally sees himself as more stereotypically English than Asian. In one thematically rich episode in the novel, Karim announces that he "loved drinking tea and cycling" (62), both sedate, English pursuits. This unexpected declaration calls attention to his love of a beverage that has come to be more readily associated with old English dowagers than with young, biracial hedonists. However, Karim's unabashed enthusiasm for the drink reveals a great deal about his sense of ethnic identity and provides a challenge to Powell's racist claims. During a period in which he is supposed to be studying for his A-levels in "History, English and Politics," (62) he explains that he enjoyed riding his bicycle to the High Street to "see what blends they had. My bedroom contained boxes and boxes of tea, and I was always happy to have new brews with which to concoct more original combos in my teapot" (62). The moment provides some commentary on Thatcher's consumer values. Karim's acquisition of these blends is possible only through visits to the High Street shops where tea is sold, and his conspicuous consumption marks him as a dutiful and productive citizen. But more importantly, Karim begins the novel by describing himself as "an odd mixture of continents and bloods" (3), which is not a bad way to describe the English society that Margaret Thatcher claimed did not exist. The "original combos" of citizens that blended together in the London city streets are nicely captured in this image of tea. Karim's love of home-brews emphasizes his interest in mixtures and highlights the obvious fact that this most beloved "English" beverage is produced not in England, but in South Asia, one of the many examples of how imperialism altered British culture. The beverage is English only by adoption, acquired through an imperial act.

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[26] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 34.

Considered as a kind of cultural text, Karim's tea makes its appearance in a way that might announce English cultural authority, but that authority is compromised by the source of the text itself. A half-Asian man drinking what might reasonably be considered a half-English beverage calls attention to the complicated origins of both and debunks the myth of English cultural purity. Karim's discussion of tea functions as a "*double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority."[27] His enjoyment of the drink is almost English, but not quite, but then the drink itself is also not quite English. Read as a text himself, Karim reinforces the uncertainty of the episode; he is not only “semi-Asian” but also “semi-English,” affiliated with both colonized and colonizer; he, therefore, inhabits the sort of “interstitial passage between fixed identifications [that] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.”[28] As a site of ambivalence himself, his love of tea is, therefore, doubly equivocal.

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[27] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 88.

The episode provides some insight into why the words “English” and “Asian” are used in inconsistent and often contradictory ways throughout the novel. The protagonist maintains throughout the novel that he is an Englishman, even though his success as an actor has a direct relationship to his more exotic “Indianness.” His father, the “buddha of suburbia,” is an English civil servant by day, but becomes a teacher and guru of eastern spirituality by night on a suburban party circuit that is organized by a white Englishwoman. Both father and son rely upon fetishized ideas of ethnicity for their livelihoods. Like Daniel Deronda, Haroon Amir was sent to England to become an Englishman, “a qualified and polished English gentleman lawyer and an accomplished ballroom dancer” (24). But in his new guise as the buddha of suburbia, he travels around the South London suburbs instructing his followers on how to meditate and practice yoga in order to “reach [their] full potential as human beings” (13). When he achieves nominal fame as a spiritual teacher, Haroon jettisons his more conventional life, not to mention his wife, and instead cultivates his Eastern exoticism in order to break free from his suburban life. In a sort of reverse colonial gesture—one that also owes a bit to Margaret Thatcher’s entrepreneurial spirit—Haroon sells his fabricated ethnicity to become a financially successful spiritual guide.

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[28] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 4.

At the novel's beginning, Karim Amir is both attracted to and repelled by his father's notoriety. Before his reincarnation as the buddha of suburbia, Haroon had been resolutely English, but he still has a difficult time finding his way around London, a place he had lived in for over twenty years. Karim explains, "Dad had been in Britain since 1950. ... Yet still he stumbled around the place like an Indian just off the boat" (7). His appearance is posited as being specifically English. He spends Sundays organizing his dapper wardrobe for the week, methodically polishing his shoes, "about ten pairs" (47) of them, and coordinating his shirts, ties, and cuff links with almost obsessive care. But in his new career, his very ethnicity, something that would certainly work against him in his profession in the English civil service, functions as a commodity that allows him to move from Bromley to London, from the working to the middle class.[29]

However, his success is dependent upon an identity that he largely invents for himself. Karim recognizes that his father is playing up his exoticism and, initially, he can barely contain his scorn for this. Karim describes Haroon at one of his performances: "He was speaking slowly, in a deeper voice than usual, as if he were addressing a crowd. He was hissing his s's and exaggerating his Indian accent. He'd spent years trying to be more of an Englishman, to be less risibly conspicuous, and now he was putting it back in spadeloads" (21). Although Karim seemed uncomfortable with his father's obsessively English attire, he is even more confounded by the new clothes Haroon wears once he experiences fame as the buddha of suburbia and begins to emphasize and even invent a hodgepodge of Asian exoticism. Haroon's pride in his physical appears carries over to his new role as spiritual guide. He startles his son with his uncharacteristic and decidedly un-English manner of dress. On one excursion, Haroon sneaks out of his home wearing “what looked like a large pair of pyjamas. On top was a long silk shirt embroidered around the neck with dragons. This fell over his chest and flew out at his stomach for a couple of miles before dropping to his knees. Under this he had on baggy trousers and sandals. But the real crime, the reason for concealment under his hairy car coat, was the crimson waistcoat with gold and silver patterns that he wore over the shirt” (29). Haroon clearly understands that his success as a spiritual leader is directly connected to his ability to convince his audience that he is authentic. Ironically, this authenticity is a function of superficiality. He wears the kinds of clothes that his audience assumes is the garb of a Buddhist spiritual leader.

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[29] Charlie Kay/Hero will similarly use his own Englishness as a commodity, when he moves to New York and becomes a famous British punk rocker.

Karim watches his father with a mixture of disgust and humor and wonders whether or not Haroon “really did have anything to offer other people, or if he would turn out to be merely another suburban eccentric” (22). Haroon’s success is surprising to his son, who has always assumed that his father’s “guru business would eventually fall off in London” (279), but Karim acknowledges that his father’s success will likely continue for as long as “the city was full of lonely, unhappy, unconfident people who required guidance, support and pity” (279).

Still, his father’s mystical turn, and its clear reliance upon Haroon’s real and invented Asian identity, is an obvious frustration to Karim, who generally considers himself to be more English than Asian. He is sexually attracted to white men and women, and, when he considers why this might be, he remembers that his father once advised him not to date Muslim women because there are too many problems involved, “dowries and all” (74). He is aware that some people consider him to be wildly exotic, but he is often surprised by his own perceived exoticism. When Eva gushes, “Karim Amir, you are so exotic, so original! It’s such a contribution! It’s so you!” (9), Karim attributes her reaction to his clothing. He even feigns exoticism along with his cousin Jamila. Inspired by her political readings, they occasionally pretend to be foreign. Karim describes their act: “sometimes we were French, Jammi and I, and other times we went black American. The thing was, we were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it” (53).

He does not seem to find any genuine inspiration in his own ethnic heritage. In spite of his obvious interest in his father’s race and religion, Karim is often mystified by Muslim cultural practices. While he loves his auntie’s “hot kebabs ... coated with mango chutney and wrapped in chapati” (52), he is shocked when his Uncle Anwar begins to behave “like a Muslim” after years of living in England. In fact, throughout the novel, Asian characters are often more confounded by ethnic culture than English characters are. For instance, when Anwar wages a hunger-strike to coerce Jamila into marrying the man he has chosen for her, Karim explains to his uncle that arranged marriages are “old-fashioned Uncle, out of date. ... No one does that kind of thing now” (60); their discussion ends abruptly when Karim, overwhelmed by his uncle’s “irrationality,” gets angry and “kick[s] Uncle Anwar’s piss-pot quite vigorously so that a small wave of urine splashed against the overhanging bed-sheets” (60). His father’s and uncle’s behaviors are unsettling to Karim and cause him to wonder whether his father’s newfound Eastern spiritualism and Anwar’s insistence that his daughter enter into an arranged marriage are related. He wonders: “Perhaps it was the immigrant condition living itself out through them. For years they were both happy to live like Englishmen” (64).

Jamila’s arranged marriage is one of the few instances in the text when Karim is so troubled by a situation involving someone other than himself that he is actually compelled to do something. Of course, his assistance does not amount to much, but he does appeal to his father for advice on how to proceed. Haroon’s advice to Jamila on how to handle her predicament stops just short of being helpful. He explains, “Anwar is my oldest friend in the world. ... We old Indians come to like this England less and less and we return to an imagined India” (74). He continues:

> I believe happiness is only possible if you follow your feeling, your intuition, your real desires. Only unhappiness is gained by acting in accordance with duty, or obligation, or guilt, or the desire to please others. You must accept happiness when you can, not selfishly, but remembering you are part of the world, of others not separate from them. ... So, if you punish yourself through self-denial in the puritan way, in the English Christian way, there will only be resentment and more unhappiness. ... People ask for advice all the time. They ask for advice when they should try to be more aware of what is happening. (76-77)

These words apply as much about Haroon’s own position as they do about Jamila’s. Interestingly, they offer an interesting juxtaposition to Daniel Deronda’s consistently expressed desire to perform some social duty that would allow him to fully engage in the spirit of community. Karim’s response to these words is also of note. When his father speaks them, Karim feels “desolate and bereft, realizing he [Haroon] would leave us” (76). Haroon’s advice is virtually meaningless for Jamila, but the words are freighted with significance for Haroon and Karim, given that, at this point in the novel, Haroon is on the verge of leaving Karim’s mother to live with Eva Kay. As such, they illustrate what Ruvani Ranasinha describes as “Kureishi’s pervasive ironizing, skepticism and satirical human [that] underline[s] the extent to which his work is steeped in what might be regarded as English traditions of social criticism and political analysis through irony and satire.”[30] They suggest something about Kureishi’s attitude on both Christian and Muslim dogma and indicate a sense that all dogmatic impulses are dangerous. They also let Haroon himself off the hook, so to speak, as a husband and father. Jamila winds up doing exactly what Haroon advises her not to do: she accedes to her father’s demands and fulfills what Anwar believes to be a daughter’s duty.

Yet although Jamila marries Changez, the Indian man chosen for her by her father and his family, the marriage will not be the conventional one that Anwar hopes for. Changez himself sadly realizes that Jamila will never be a loving and dutiful wife and decides that the best way to deal with his new life is to try to adapt himself thoroughly to his new home. As his name suggests, he is ever willing to change and disdains those immigrants who refuse to assimilate. He explains that “to be accepted they [Asian immigrants] must take up the English ways and forget their filthy villages! They must decide to be either here or there: Look how much here I am!” (210). However, although Changez claims that the best route to social acceptance is assimilation, he is unable to successfully do this, at least not in very substantive ways. Instead, he spends his days walking around London with his Japanese lover, Shinko, “discuss[ing] their respective homelands ... which they missed desperately” (210). His and Jamila’s marriage will be more unconventional than anything Anwar can imagine, and its very unorthodoxy leads to Anwar’s surprising death. Once his father-in-law is buried, Changez assumes a more important role in Paradise Stores, bringing great change to the place as he modernizes the stock and management. But again, Changez's improvements are not necessarily lauded as progress, indicating Kureishi's interest in cultural commentary. As a "cultural translator," Kureishi works both with and against the cultures that he represents. Nothing is held up as an absolute good, and few cultural practices slip by without being critiqued.

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[30] Ruvani Ranasinha, *Hanif Kureishi*, Writers and Their Work, ed. Isobel Armstrong (London: Northcote House Publishers, Ltd., 2002), 10.

Interestingly, or, perhaps naturally, considering that it was the theater that gave Kureishi's his own artistic break, the world of the theater comes under a great deal of scrutiny in the novel. Certainly, it is his success in the theater that provides Karim with the economic potential and cultural capital that separates him from other undereducated young men. It is a career to which he is well suited, given his great capacity for mimicry. As an actor, Karim could theoretically portray anyone. However, Kamir's protean potential is not presented as a unquestionable good, nor do the scenes that feature his acting function in an entirely positive way. The audiences that watch him perform do not seem to realize that he is even acting. Rather, he is cast in roles not because he is a convincing actor, but because he looks the part. Significantly, the two directors that Karim works with, Jeremy Shadwell and Matthew Pyke, are the most unscrupulous characters in the novel, even though other characters seem to consider these men, at least superficially, to be well-meaning liberal artists.

In his seminal essay, "Signs Taken For Wonders," Homi Bhabha explains that in many nineteenth-century novels, the appearance of the English book is a repeated trope that "figures those ideological correlatives of the Western sign—empiricism, idealism, mimeticism, monoculturalism (to use Edward Said's term)—

that sustain the tradition of English ‘cultural’ authority.”[31] Hanif Kureishi plays with this tradition when Karim is cast in the role of Mowgli in an adaptation of Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*. At the audition for the play, he encounters this English book (which he knows from the Disney film), which is to play an important and symbolically rich role in his life. Its introduction into the narrative of the novel heralds an uncomfortable reality for Karim; the book is both a vehicle for Karim’s success as an actor and also the means through which he is exploited for the amusement of the audiences that he appears before in the ridiculous guise of Mowgli.

The director of the play, Jeremy Shadwell, auditions Karim and speaks “some words to [him] in Punjabi or Urdu and looked as if he wanted to get into a big conversation about Ray or Tagore or something” (140). Karim disappoints Shadwell when he fails to understand the language, so the director suggests that Karim “take a rucksack and see India,” that he travel to “Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Goa, and the Punjab” (141). Frustrated, Karim agrees that he will go, and Shadwell replies, “What a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to. If the pioneers from the East India Company could see you. What puzzlement there’d be. Everyone looks at you, I’m sure, and thinks, an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we’ll hear now from him. And you’re from Orpington” (141). He continues, “the immigrant is the Everyman of the twentieth century” and explains that Eva is “trying to protect you from your destiny, which is to be a half-caste person in England. That must be complicated for you to accept—belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism. Do you find it difficult? Please tell me” (141). The audition concludes when

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[31] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 105.

Shadwell declares that Karim will play the role of Mowgli: “You’re just right for him ... in fact, you are Mowgli. You’re dark-skinned, you’re small and wiry, and you’ll be sweet but wholesome in the costume” (143). However, Karim later learns that this costume is to be “a loin-cloth and brown make-up, so that I resembled a turd in a bikini bottom” (146). Karim is aware that he is being exploited by the director, yet he is unable to challenge the man in a direct way. He accepts Shadwell’s direction because he knows that his role will be recast if he does not. The scene suggests the systemic nature of racism, a force that exists throughout British society and at all levels. Whether dealing with the theater, the school system, or the government, minority citizens are vulnerable to white hegemonic power. Karim’s experiences in the theater suggest his vulnerability to this power, but they also illustrate the ways that he participates in it.

This “discovery” of a symbolically charged English book is important for several reasons. On its surface, it can be read, as Ruvani Ranasinha suggests, as a “mirror [on] the way society attempts to define racialized minorities in terms of reductive identities.”[32] This certainly seems the case during the scenes in which Karim rehearses *The Jungle Book.* Shortly before the play opens, he is informed that he will need to use a more “authentic” accent because Mowgli was born in India. Shadwell insultingly explains that Karim has been “cast for authenticity and not for experience” (147). Karim, however, discovers that he can amplify his presence on-stage to draw attention away from his castmates, while also undermining Shadwell’s insistence that Mowgli’s accent must be “authentic,” and, therefore, Indian. Karim “sent up the accent and made the audience laugh by suddenly relapsing into cockney at odd times" (158). It is an interesting moment in the novel, one that reveals a liminal space that exists between the authority of this particular English book and the reality of English identity. This episode gestures to Henry Louis Gates' theory of signifyin(g), a strategy usually associated with African American art, but useful here as well. Karim recognizes the potential for subversion in his performance. He is aware of the double-voiced quality of his performance. His send-up of the accent functions as one of Gates' description of subversive tropes that "luxuriate in the chaos of ambiguity that repetition and difference ... yield in either an aural or visual pun."[33] It suggests Karim's awareness of the ways in which his identity as an Englishman and as an English-Pakistani are both performative. This small, subversive act also positions Karim as a kind of trickster figure, having a laugh at the expense of his overly earnest and entirely misguided director.

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[32] Ranasinha, *Hanif Kureishi*, 70.

Still, the subversive potential of his performance is completely lost on his friends, who are embarrassed to see Karim wear the loincloth and brown paint. Although he receives excellent critical reviews of his performance of Mowgli, when the play opens, Karim's father complains: "That bloody fucker Mr. Kipling pretending to whity [sic] that he knew something about India! And an awful performance by my boy looking like a Black and White Minstrel" (157). Jamila reacts similarly, remarking that Karim's performance "was disgusting, the accent and the shit you had smeared over you. You were just pandering to prejudices ... and clichés about Indians" (157). Their refusal to read Karim's performance as subversive suggests the rich ambivalence of the scene and indicates Kureishi's own awareness of the complicated nature of artistic representation.

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[33] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 45.

Karim's encounter with the director Matthew Pyke is even more richly symbolic. He meets the *outré* director when Pyke attends a performance of *The Jungle Book.* While Karim's fellow cast-member Terry assumes that Pyke will be interested in him, since he can "provide working-class experience to give his [Pyke's] puerile political ideas some authenticity" (161-162), the director instead approaches Karim to perform in a new play that he announces is to be about class, "the only subject there is in England" (164). One actor complains, "If I weren't white and middle class I'd have been in Pyke's show by now. Obviously mere talent gets you nowhere these days. Only the disadvantaged are going to succeed in seventies' England" (165).

Matthew Pyke creates a semblance of democracy during the plays production, the action of which will be written around characters that the actors create themselves. To facilitate the process, Pyke insists that the actors tell the group the stories of their lives, concentrating "on the way you think your position in society has been fixed" (169). Pyke and his actors begin each day "with breakfast and essential gossip around the table" (168). He "fuses" the six members of the theatrical group during their daily rehearsals by having them "play 'feely' games where we stood in the centre of a circle with our feet together and eyes closed and just let ourselves fall. Weak and relaxed, we'd be passed around the group. Everyone touched us; we embraced and kissed" (168). While this type of play encourages a superficial physical intimacy between the group members, they remain strangely distant from one another throughout the production of the play. Jamila is highly critical of these games, arguing, with prescience, "you're not close to each other. It's fake, just a technique" (169). She turns out to be correct; the semblance of democracy belies the truth of the situation. Matthew Pyke is in charge of what happens to the actors onstage and, in many ways, offstage as well.

Karim discovers when he arrives at his first rehearsal that “two of us were officially ‘black’ (though truly I was more beige than anything)” (167). The play, although ostensibly quite different from Jeremy Shadwell’s production of *The Jungle Book*, hinges upon Karim’s ability to use his race, rather than his imagination, intellect, or talent, to construct a character. He confronts this reality early in the rehearsal period, when he thinks about the character that he wants to create for the play. Initially, Karim wants to base his character on Charlie Kay/Hero, Eva’s soon-to-be-famous punk rocker son; however, he is informed by Pyke that “we need someone from your own background ... someone black” (170). Karim is taken aback; he does not consider himself to be black and claims that he “didn’t know anyone black, though [he’d] been at school with a Nigerian” (170). Pyke clarifies the challenge; he encourages Karim to base his character on someone from Karim’s own family: “uncles and aunts. They’ll give the play a little variety. I bet they’re fascinating” (170). By asking for one of Shadwell’s stories of “aunties and elephants,” Matthew Pyke establishes Karim’s value as a fetishized exotic, cast not for his talent but because of his ethnicity. Karim rises to the challenge and uses material from the novel’s earliest crisis— Anwar’s hunger strike—to give Pyke the sort of character that he wants.

The proposed character is immediately denounced by the only other minority cast member, Tracey, a Caribbean English woman whose mother works as a cleaning woman at a house near the rehearsal space. Tracey complains that Karim’s characterization, “shows ... Black and Asian people ... as being irrational, ridiculous, as being hysterical. And as being fanatical” (180). She continues, “Your picture is what white people already think of us. That we're funny, with strange habits and weird customs. ... [Y]ou showed us as unorganized aggressors. Why do you hate yourself and all black people so much, Karim?" (180). When Karim attempts to defend the portrayal by pointing out that Anwar is only one man and, therefore, not necessarily representative of an entire people, Tracey tells him that "we have to protect our culture at this time" and that he is creating "white truth." His fellow cast members refuse to weigh in on the dispute since it is "between minorities." Finally, the director intercedes and tells Karim to "rethink" his character. Kureishi himself does not resolve the argument between the two, allowing the reader to judge the situation for herself.

Matthew Pyke's insistence that the play is to be about class elides the interconnectedness of race and class in British society. In this scene, this connection is revealed, along with the attendant dangers of such an elision. Also revealed in this scene is the tension that exists within the black and Asian British communities over the representation of race. While Karim cannot quite understand what the impact of his depiction of Anwar might be, Tracey will not recognize that she is advocating censorship. Or, if she does, her attitude suggests that it is more important to ignore the reality that men like Anwar exist rather than to put such characters out there to be a representative of Asian culture and judged by white-England. Matthew Pyke, the all-powerful (white, male) director, decides that Karim must begin anew and create a different character. Karim immediately decides to base his character on the newly arrived immigrant, Changez, who is, ironically, the only one who truly benefits from Anwar's return to tradition.

To develop his new character, Karim spends time observing Changez in the home that he shares with Jamila and her new communal family. Karim does this even after Changez informs him that he “can’t be using my character in your acting business” (185). Although there is some attempt to disguise the character, certain aspects of Changez’s character are too interesting to pass up: “[his] shambolic walk and crippled hand, and ... the accent, which I knew would sound, to white ears, bizarre, funny and characteristic of India” (189). This time, Karim is prepared for his colleagues to reject his new character—named Tariq—on the same premises that made Anwar so unappealing. However, Pyke praises his performance and refuses to acknowledge Tracey’s apparent objection to it. What seems to distinguish the Tariq character from the one based on Anwar is that Karim depicts Changez/Tariq with humor, as an object of fun. Karim is pleasantly surprised when, after his presentation, the director announces that the play will be developed around Karim’s character. In an instant, Pyke develops a storyline: “Tariq comes to England, meets an English journalist on the plane. ... This really quality upper-class crumpet. He is briefly among the upper classes because of her, which gives us another area to examine” (189). He continues with excitement: “We have class, race, fucking and farce. What more could you want as an evening’s entertainment?” (189). With these approving words, Karim exploits Changez by creating an English book of his own that relies upon stereotypical ideas about Asian masculinity in order to entertain white audiences. Karim oversees almost every aspect of the character’s development, from the accent to the wardrobe. In a nod to Morrissey’s “Bengali in Platforms,” Tariq wears “high white platform boots, wide cherry flares that stuck to [his] arse like sweetpaper and flapped around [his] ankles, and a spotted shirt with a wide ‘Concorde’ collar flattened over his [jacket] lapels” (220). Pyke believes that the Tariq character will be a “big laugh” (191), and, indeed, when the play premiers, Karim performs the role to great acclaim in front of “four hundred white English people” (228).

Audiences love him from the start. When the play tours the north of England, they “laughed at [his] jokes, which concerned sexual ambition and humiliation of an Indian in England” (220). Frustrated at being upstaged by Karim, his fellow castmate Carol threatens to quit the production. Meanwhile, Pyke is preoccupied with his new lover, a successful London barrister. Earlier, he gleefully boasted of his sexual escapades with a policewoman. Now, he enjoys a relationship with an individual even more closely associated with “the formal law, that pillar of our society” and marvels at her presence on “[his] very pillow” (220). The juxtaposition between Karim’s presentation of an emasculated Indian man and Pyke’s politically motivated sexual conquests illustrates the difference in power between these two men. It recalls Charles Tilly’s definition of citizenship as something that is mediated between citizens and agents of government.[34] Pyke’s sexual exploits with these agents of government are juxtaposed against Karim’s distance from such figures. Certainly, there is no reason why Karim would not be sexually attractive to these women; however, Pyke’s position as a white, wealthy director gives him the advantage over Karim. This situation emphasizes the fact that while Karim’s success as an actor is due to his successful colonization of Changez, Matthew Pyke’s more lucrative success in the theater is due to his successful colonization of Karim and people like him. Pyke’s success affords him the time and ability to become affiliated with representatives of the edifices of government and law. And, while he is not associating with these women in an official capacity,

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[34] Charles Tilly, *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 253.

Pyke's intense familiarity with them indicates the full extent to which Karim, physically and metaphorically isolated in the cold north of England, is marginalized.

Pyke makes a more disturbing sexual conquest once the play is enjoying a successful run in London's West End. Karim's successful development of the character Tariq leads to the most disturbing event in the men's vexed relationship. As a gift, the director "gives" his wife Marlene to Karim. Karim is informed of this arrangement shortly before Pyke invites him and his girlfriend/costar Eleanor to a dinner party at the Pyke household. The party quickly turns into an orgy, which culminates in Karim's being raped by Pyke. Although the scene is not narrated, breaking off just before the event, later Karim thinks: "It was while watching Puke as he rehearsed in his familiar blue tracksuit, the tight bottoms of which hugged his arse like a cushion cover ... that I first began to suspect that I'd been seriously let down. That prick, which had fucked me up the arse ... had virtually ruptured me. Now, I began to be certain, the fucker was fucking me in other ways" (219).

This scene is foreshadowed by an earlier episode in which Karim, still living in Bromley, attempts to visit his girlfriend Helen, but is thwarted by her father (whom Karim calls "Hairy Back"). After insulting Karim, Hairy Back lets loose the family dog, a Great Dane. The dog surprises Karim when, instead of biting him, it masturbates against him. Karim claims that the "dog was in love with [him]—quick movements against my arse told [him] so. Its ears were hot. ... The dog shuddered against [him]" (41), leaving Karim covered in "dog jissom." While this scene is narrated with some humor, it comes after a verbal altercation with "Hairy Back" in which Karim is told that Helen does not go out with "wogs" and "blackies." "Hairy Back" screams to Karim that he is "with Enoch. If you put one of your black 'ands near my daughter I'll smash it with a 'ammer! With a 'ammer!" (40). While the scene in which Karim is raped by Matthew Pyke is certainly more chilling, the scene with the dog emphasizes Karim's marginalized social position. Indeed, it illustrates the position that Karim assumes in Pyke's theatre troop, as a fetishized and exploited ethnic minority.

The focus on the theater reveals how the novel self-consciously pits the cultural arena against the political, suggesting the impracticality of political action while problematizing the world of culture as inherently racist. Karim's experience in the Pyke's play illustrates the effects of institutionalized racism on minority citizens in England. The connection is not clearly stated, but the similarity of the parallel rape scenes places the politically liberal Matthew Pyke on the same plane as the stridently conservative "Hairy Back." They imply a connection between high culture and racism, making it clear that minorities in England would be "fucked" by both the working and privileged classes. The scenes suggest the truly complicated nature of Pyke's claim that class is "the only subject there is in England" (164). This kind of technique is typical of Kureishi's work. By establishing a critical distance from the worlds of politics and culture, Kureishi "ironizes all political positions ... and questions all forms of subcultures, affiliation, and collectivities."[35] Even well-intentioned liberals are held up as objects of ridicule and as both witting and unwitting participants in discriminatory practices.

The analysis of the London theatre scene also illustrates what Kureishi seems to regard as the futility of political activism. Political participation, one of the hard-won benefits of modern, liberal citizenship, is mocked consistently throughout the novel. This mockery is most notable through two characters: Communist and actor Terry, as well as Jamilla, Karim's best friend, kind of cousin, and occasional lover.

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[35] Ranasinha, *Hanif Kureishi*, 64.

Karim desires both of these characters, furtively making love to Jamila in public restrooms and in the living room of the apartment she shares with her husband and propositioning Terry whenever the two are alone together. Neither relationship is resolved in a satisfying way for Karim. Terry uses him to solicit donations for the party from wealthy liberal thespians, and Jamila mocks him for being an actor.

Of the two, it seems that Jamila is the most influential in Karim's life. His cousin continually encourages him to become more politically aware; she admonishes Karim to become familiar with the "world of ordinary people and the shit they have to deal with—unemployment, bad housing, boredom" (195), arguing that if he continues to focus on the circumstances of his own frivolous life, he soon "won't understand anything about the essential stuff" (195). Karim admires his "cousin" and her engagement with political issues, but he does not seem capable of sharing her anger and forgets to attend her protest rallies. His own political action comes as a result of happenstance. He merely wanders into roles in politically engaged plays and programs, cast mostly because of his ethnicity. But in spite of his inability to rise to her challenges, Karim is impressed by her political commitment and claims that she is a "terrific person." Clearly, he is interested in her sense of social duty, yet he seems uninspired or unable to imitate her.

After the death of her father, he muses on the ways in which she has grown away from him and explains, "her feminism, the sense of self and fight it engendered, the schemes and plans she had, the relationships—which she desired to take this form and not that form—the things she had made herself know, and all the understanding this gave, seemed to illuminate her tonight as she went forward, an Indian woman, to live a useful life in white England" (216). In spite of this praise, Kureishi's treatment of the character is notable for what is missing in it. Jamila's politically engaged life results in very little real change. Karim realizes this after Changez is attacked by a gang who believe him to be a "Paki, not realizing that he was Indian" (224). When Karim asks what he can do to help, Jamila tells him about a protest rally that she is joining. Although he promises to attend, he explains that "we couldn't stop it: we could only march and make our voices heard" (225), not an especially rousing call-to-arms.

This instance is not the only example of Kureishi's mockery of political participation. The commune where Jamila and Changez live is happy and interesting, but it is not a terribly active place. Changez complains about the constant meetings: "They have them every five minutes. We have to sit time and time and discuss this thing and that thing, the garden, the cooking, the condition of England, the condition of Chile, the condition of Czechoslovakia. This is democracy gone berserk, *yaar*" (222). Disturbingly, by the novel's end, Changez has become the commune's domestic drudge, preparing made-to-order breakfasts for the rather ungrateful inhabitants and looking after the communal baby, Leila Kollontai. Much of Jamila's time is taken up with her various romantic relationships. In her final scene in the novel, she is as strong as ever, but "looked thinner and older, her cheeks were slightly hollow and her eyes more lined" (273). While she seems happy as a mother and in her new relationship with Joanna, her resolve to live a politically engaged life seems to have faltered. Jamila stalls as a character and does not even appear in the final scene of the novel, a scene in which Karim claims that he is surrounded by people he loves. This omission is all the more pointed since Jamila is the most ideal citizen in the novel. She votes, works, and is socially committed; however, her politically engaged lifestyle does not amount to much. Her engagement is ultimately fruitless. In this way, Kureishi shows the impossibility of political action and indicates that it might even be a delusion of enfranchisement.

Karim’s relationship with Terry is equally hollow. Although the two men become close friends during rehearsals for Karim’s first play, spending evenings together speaking of “inequality, imperialism, white supremacy, and whether sexual experimentation was merely bourgeois indulgence or a contribution to the dissolution of established society” (148), Karim is disappointed when, confronted by the director Shadwell’s racism, Terry says nothing in his defense. This causes Karim to surmise that Terry prefers “generalizations like ‘after the revolution the workers will wake up with unbelievable joy’ to standing up to fascists like Shadwell” (148). In spite of Terry’s expressed complaints about injustice and inequality, he is incapable of actual resistance on behalf of his own friend. Kureishi reveals such characters as weak, part of the problem of social inequality. Ironically, Terry becomes moderately famous as a character in a mediocre police drama, recognized by fans as the character “Sergeant Monty,” rather than as the politically minded actor Terry.

Shortly before he leaves to perform Pyke’s play in New York, Karim visits Terry at his home. In spite of his success, Terry lives in Brixton, in a rough neighborhood, that is “full of shebeens, squats, lesbian bars, gay pubs, drug pubs, drug organizations, advice centres, and the offices of various radical political organizations” (239). The meeting is loaded with emotional strife and angry sexual tension, which is precipitated by Terry’s jealousy of Karim’s artistic success compared with Terry’s own mainstream accomplishments. Karim makes this visit to say goodbye to his friend but also to bring Terry a donation to the party from Matthew Pyke, which Karim demanded from Pyke after his sexual encounter with the director. Karim’s frustration with Terry leads to a clumsy sexual overture, which is more of an expression of his need to humiliate his friend than an indication of his desire; however, when Karim looks at Terry and sees “such humanity in his eyes, and in the way he tried to smile—the possibility of pain, along with the implicit assumption that he wouldn’t be harmed” (241), he is unable to continue. The exchange is freighted not only with sexual tension, but also with a sense of failure on Karim’s part. It seems as if Terry’s interest in the Communist Party renders him impossibly distant from Karim, even though the two men clearly like each other.

Karim’s final scenes with Terry and Jamila both share a sense of closure. When he leaves Terry to go to New York, Karim thinks that he “wouldn’t have minded moving in with [Terry] and living in Brixton, but the time for that had probably passed” (242). The scene in which Karim has his last encounter with Jamila is equally tense. Changez tells him that Jamila “won’t be happy to talk to you, no, no, no, no. She’ll be happy to barbecue your balls and eat them with peas” (272). These uncomfortable conclusions suggest Kureishi’s own dissatisfaction with political resistance at this time, and it is significant that neither of these characters attend the party Karim throws to celebrate his new role as an actor on a “soap opera which would tangle with the latest contemporary issues ... abortions and racist attacks, the stuff that people lived through but that never got on TV” (259). He is to play the “rebellious student son of an Indian shopkeeper” (259), and it is important, of course, that, rather than the sort of direct engagement that Jamila and Terry advocate—forming active political affiliations and attending protest rallies—Karim will instead perform in a soap opera that would dramatize such participation.

There is, however, an indication that Karim has become politically aware if not politically active as a result of Jamila’s and Terry’s influences. Late in the novel, Karim discusses with Terry how much London has changed during his months in New York. His friend explains the state of the country to Karim, referring directly to the social and economic turmoil that existed to England in the run-up to the 1979 general election: “You may have noticed, Karim, that England’s had it. It’s coming apart. Resistance has brought it to a standstill” (258), something which Karim has noted himself. He explains, “I walked around Central London and saw that the town was being ripped apart: the rotten was being replaced by the new, and the new was ugly. The gift of creating beauty had been lost somewhere. The ugliness was in the people, too. Londoners seemed to hate each other” (258). This description of the city during one of the most politically unstable times in recent history suggests Karim’s bleak outlook, one shared by many citizens of England at that time. It indicates a new awareness of those things that Jamila had once accused him of being ignorant of: “the world of ordinary people and the shit they have to deal with—unemployment, bad housing, boredom” (195). While there is not a sense that Karim will become politically engaged, it does suggest a new awareness of the world around him and a certain amount of growth.

Much of his personal and professional growth takes place once he moves to London, which is an especially important place in the novel. Karim’s success is implicitly connected to the city, even as that city was experiencing some very dark times. This is a trend in Kureishi’s other fiction, in which London is often depicted as a place where a sort of radical personal freedom is possible for his characters, even if it is not always fully realized. The author’s interest in the city as a source of identity, possibility, and freedom suggests the primacy of the city to a sense of modern subjectivity. While the title of the novel suggests that the bulk of the action will occur in the suburbs, in fact, the most important scenes are set not in Bromley, but in London. Locating the most interesting elements of the plot outside of the suburbs reinforces Karim's status in a number of ways. The suburbs are located on the margins of culture, away from the locus of power. His suburban roots tie him to this periphery and illustrate his status as outsider in London. Karim's affiliation with the suburbs also associates him with the relative comfort that was to be found in the London suburbs at the time, the sort of economic success that Margaret Thatcher sought to expand throughout England. However, this particular kind of stability is marked in the novel as personally and creatively stifling.[36] Karim explains that "in the suburbs people rarely dreamed of striking out for happiness. It was all familiarity and endurance: security and safety were the reward of dullness" (80). It is notable, of course, that the suburbs were relatively homogenous, bastions of whiteness where Karim and his father are obvious minorities. Even here, his family lives on the very edge of suburban comfort. Once in London, however, Karim exclaims that "the city blew the windows of my brain wide open" (126). It "seemed like a house with five thousand rooms, all different; the kick was to work out how they were connected, and eventually walk through all of them" (126), yet in walking through some of these doors, Karim finds himself, like his father as the buddha of suburbia, reliant upon fetishized stereotypes of Indianness.

Gayatri Spivak reads this privileging of London rather than Britain as a source of geopolitical identity as "a challenge to the refusal of entry into the nation that is the lot of the migrant. If it can be said that in cities is the sublation of the nomadic and communal living of forest and village, we have guarded that anthropological fiction in words like politics and citizenship."[37] Such words go almost unmentioned in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, but in spite of the missing words, its author is interested in the ways in which national identity is constructed and maintained throughout the young adulthood of Karim. His coming of age story suggests the complexity of identity in the modern world, and it is significant that Karim's adult life begins only after he abandons the suburbs. As he packs up the last of his belongings before leaving Bromley, Karim fantasizes about London "and what [he'd] do there when the city belonged to [him]" (121). London represents a place where he will have artistic and personal freedom, a place where his race won't be as unusual. He thinks, "there were kids dressed in velvet cloaks who lived free lives; there where thousands of black people everywhere, so I wouldn't feel exposed" (121). This is, of course, wishful thinking, and the reality of what he encounters in London is not very different from some of his experiences in Bromley.

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[36] Interestingly, Kureishi grew up in Bromley and attended school there. Fellow alumni include David Bowie and William Brod (better known as Billy Idol, the pop-punk '80s rocker).

However, Karim is keenly aware of the ways in which his ethnicity is both an advantage and a disadvantage and tries to maintain a positive outlook. He explains that for minorities to be "truly free we had to free ourselves of bitterness and resentment" and wonders about how "this [would be] possible when bitterness and resentment were generated afresh every day?" (227). It is one of the novel's central question and is only barely answered at its conclusion. However, looking back, to a point in the novel when Karim and Charlie visit a music club and encounter the punk scene for the first time, Kureishi suggests an answer to this question, albeit a complicated one. Here, Karim finds himself "among the strangest audience [he'd] ever seen in that place" (129). Instead of the usual clientele, he finds "kids in ripped black clothes. And the clothes were full of safety-pins. Their hair was uniformly black, and cut short, seriously short, or if it was long it was spiky and rigid, sticking up and out and sideways, like a handful of needles, rather than hanging down. ... [T]he girls were in rubber and leather and wore skin-tight skirts and holed black stockings, with white face-slap and bright-red lipstick. They snarled and bit people" (129). He and Charlie "took in this alien race dressed with an abandonment and originality we'd never imagined possible. I began to understand what London meant and what class of outrage we had to deal with" (130). He realizes that "London was killing us as I heard, 'Fuck off, all you smelly old hippies! You fucking slags! You ugly fart-breaths! Fuck off to hell" (131). While this encounter with the punk scene is alarming to Karim, Charlie reacts quite differently, announcing to Karim: "That's it, that's it. ... [T]hat's fucking it. ... [T]he sixties have been given notice tonight. Those kids we saw have assassinated all hope. They're the fucking future" (131). When Charlie suggests that he and Karim must change to keep pace with these strange, new styles, Karim replies, "It would be artificial. ... We're not like them. We don't hate the way they do. We've got no reason to. We're not from the estates. We haven't been through what they have" (132).

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[37] Gayatri Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York: Routledge Press, 1993), 252.

In this moment, Karim recognizes that he does, in a sense, belong to England in a way that the punks reject. In his Cultural Studies analysis of punk culture, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style,* Dick Hebdige explains that punk culture found "positive meaning in ... a blatant disavowal of Britishness [which] amounted to a symbolic act of treason which complemented, indeed completed, the sacrilegious programme undertaken in punk rock itself."[38] But Karim is unable to disavow his Britishness, in spite of the fact that he must claim it and pursue it, and even in spite of the fact that it often either rejects or exploits him. His dogged insistence that he is an “Englishman born and bred” (3) reveals a pervasive fact of modern citizenship; it is something which is neither easily acquired nor easily lost. While *Daniel Deronda* suggests something that is fluid and malleable, *The Buddha of Suburbia* suggests a yearning for a durable and constant connection to some national group or structure that is larger than the individual.

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[38] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York: Routledge Press, 1979), 64.

But even though Karim seeks this sense of belonging, the novel raises important questions about the likelihood of this happening. Certainly, Karim’s sense of ethnic identity is compromised by the fact that he is as distant from his own past as George Eliot’s Daniel Deronda was ignorant of his own. Karim blames his father for this distance, explaining that since Haroon had “never shown any interest in going back to India” and “preferred England in every way” (212-213), Karim himself had never been interested enough in his ethnicity to explore it. This is emphasized by Karim’s mother, who, after seeing her son perform as an Indian character in Pyke’s play, exclaims: “But you’re not an Indian. You’ve never been to India. You’d get diarrhoe the minute you stepped off the plane” (232). She argues that her son is English: “who gave birth to you? You’re an Englishman, I’m glad to say” (232). Her words echo Karim’s own thoughts at the beginning of the novel when he declares himself to be an “Englishman born and bred, almost” (3). But he acknowledges his awareness that identity is not only something that is imposed upon a person, but also something that a person constructs. At Anwar’s funeral, Karim considers the Indian men performing the burial services to be “strange creatures ... in some ways these were my people. ... [I]’d spent my life denying or avoiding that fact” (212). This makes him feel “ashamed and incomplete at the same time, as if half of me were missing, and as if I’d been colluding with my enemies, those whites who wanted Indians to be like them" (212). He realizes that if he "wanted the added personality bonus of an Indian past, [he] would have to create it" (213).

This statement suggests Karim's awareness that his ethnic distinction can be considered an advantage. He recognizes the ways in which his ethnicity is a potential benefit and indicates his willingness amplify it, like his father does as the buddha of suburbia. In this sense, the novel shows how Karim Amir reconciles, or at least attempts to come to terms with, the discrepancy between his own perception of himself and the way that he is perceived by white English culture. As he attempts to reconcile these ideas, Karim fashions a position for himself in English society. But this is not to say that his position is one in which he is entirely comfortable or that he is ever entirely satisfied by it.

At the novel's end, Karim celebrates his own professional milestone and his father's recently announced engagement to Eva in a fancy restaurant, "in the centre of this old city that I loved, which itself sat at the bottom of a tiny island ... surrounded by people I loved [feeling] happy and miserable at the same time" (284). These words establish Karim's ambivalent attitude about his role as an English citizen living in London at this time in history and as a actor portraying the "rebellious student son of an Indian shopkeeper" (259). Both his mother and his cousin Jamila are absent from this celebration, which is significant since these characters represent the extreme poles of Karim's identity: his mother the most purely English, and his cousin the most radically Asian. Instead, Karim is surrounded by his father, a man who wails "Christian curses" from his "[renegade] Muslim mouth" while "masquerading as a Buddhist" (16); his fashion designer brother Allie; Jamila's *de jure* husband Changez and the Japanese prostitute Shinko; and Eva, Karim's English stepmother who prefers "exoticism" to traditional

Englishness. The feeling of contentment that Karim experiences in the presence of this disparate group of people suggests that he has embraced his own complicated sense of himself. Yet this scene takes place on the night of the general election of 1970, the election that brought the Tory party to power under Margaret Thatcher. The optimism that Karim seems to feel—he says, "I thought of what a mess everything had been, but that it wouldn't always be that way" (284)—is juxtaposed against the coming of Thatcherism and sounds rather hollow in light of this. It also raises the question of whether or not this is a truly happy ending to the novel. The novel concludes on the precipice of a very bleak era in British history. Under Margaret Thatcher's tenure as Prime Minister, the government gradually dismantled the British social welfare state and attempted to curtail the liberties of former colonial citizens living in England. These political upheavals led to such events as the Brixton Riots in 1981, an event that finally compelled the British government to consider how it could accommodate the diverse groups living in the country.

According to the 2001 British census, 4.6 million people living in the UK were ethnic minorities (or 7.9 percent of the population).[39] While these numbers are below those projected by Enoch Powell in his 1968 speech, it is clear that immigration has changed the face as well as the culture of Britain in significant ways. Kureishi concludes his essay "The Rainbow Sign" with ruminations on how the uncomfortable historical relationship between England and India (and eventually, England and Pakistan) continues to influence both nations. He writes, "The two countries, Britain and Pakistan, have been part of each other for years, usually to the advantage of Britain. They cannot now be wrenched apart, even if that were desirable. Their futures will be intermixed. What that intermix means, its moral quality, whether it is violently resisted by ignorant whites and characterized by inequality and injustice, or understood, accepted and humanized, is for all of us to decide."[40] Although he clearly seems to feel that the British government has failed to recognize and accommodate ethnic and religious difference, social diversity continues to be a concern for Kureishi in his work. In his recent introduction to the rebroadcast of the BBC version of *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi explained that in reviewing it again, the novel seems:

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[39] United Kingdom, Office for National Statistics, "The Census in England and Wales," 2001, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles (accessed November 7, 2006).

> almost naive in its innocence, in the desire of the Asian characters to fit in, to join England rather than have England change in order to accommodate us. It's as though we believed, I think, in the 70s, that there would be a day when all of this would no longer be a problem, when notions of immigration in Europe would be solved … and everybody would be the same. Quite clearly, this is not the case at all, and it's probably a rather naive view. *The Buddha of Suburbia* is an interesting indicator of how far we have come and how far we haven't come.[41]

The Buddha of Suburbia suggests the complexity of political identity in a diverse society where competing affiliative ties problematize a sense of belonging and where both individuals and groups feel alienated from their fellow citizens. The novel reveals the political difficulties involved with governing diverse populations with respect, but it also suggests ways in which individuals can experience their citizenship in ways that are unexpected and surprising. It may be that Karim is more political than he appears. As a “bad citizen,” he resists the interpellating effects of citizenship. In this way, Karim evades the disciplinary effects of the conceit and maintains a critical distance from those agents of government who mitigate his political identity. Therefore, apathy functions as commentary on a political climate that would not accommodate diversity. Karim’s claim to be more “beige than anything,” like his love of original blends of teas, speaks to the ways in which the concept of citizenship has been impacted by colonialism and immigration, but it also provides harsh commentary on the institutionalized racism of the structures of the British government. The novel vividly illustrates why the British must admit that its society has been radically altered as a result of colonialism. It suggests that the government must accommodate the needs of its new citizenry, for, while beige does not stand out starkly against a white background, it also refuses to blend into it.

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[40] Kureishi, "The Rainbow Sign," 38.

[41] Hanif Kureishi, Skycast Rebroadcast of *The Buddha of Suburbia*, YouTube.com, February 16, 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEqWnQryM4M (accessed December 25, 2007).

Chapter VI

“A Collective Failure of Imagination”: Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and the Legacy of British Citizenship

A thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

—Oscar Wilde

It has been argued that the futures of nation-states are determined by the manners in which they are born.[1] Beginnings are important and set the pattern, tone, and direction of development for a nation. Therefore, national founding narratives often assume the character of myths, conveying important national traditions and values that, according to Homi Bhabha, attempt to create a sense of national cohesion.[2] In this way, history and narration play important and defining roles in the lives of those individuals—those citizens—who must contend with the legacies of national founding. Feliks Gross explains that “the construction of the state at its very historical or prehistorical beginnings sets the direction of its development ... [that] decides the position and in consequence the fate of an individual, a subject or a citizen.”[3] The values established by these historical beginnings provide a system of social, political, and economic institutions and practices that structure the lives of the nation’s citizenry. However, when these values are partisan and exclusive, as they often are, the resulting systems are inherently flawed. It is even more of a problem for nations founded in the aftermath colonialism, where the structures of government that are left in place by the colonizing power often become the foundations upon which the newly independent nation builds its own political, economic, and social institutions. Therefore, the legacies of the colonizing power's own history become embedded in lives of the new nation's citizens. In fact, it might be said that these colonial structures of government have actually given birth to the citizens of many newly independent nation-states in the wake of colonialism. In this sense, former colonial powers continue to be important figures in the lineage of newly "born" postcolonial citizens.

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[1] Feliks Gross, *Citizenship and Ethnicity: The Growth and Development of a Democratic Multiethnic Institution*, Contributions in Sociology 128 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), xi.

[2] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 6.

[3] Gross, *Citizenship and Ethnicity*, 2.

Given how the edifices of citizenship that were constructed in the past remain consequential in the present lives of citizens, it is useful to consider how the birth of a nation has far-reaching effects on modern political identity. The words of founding figures often illustrate the values and goals of nations and provide indications of what sorts of polities will be accommodated within their geopolitical structures. They convey a set of stories about the nation that provides citizens with a sense that there is a shared national past that binds them all together in a national present. Homi Bhabha maintains that in this sense, the nation itself is a narration,[4] a fiction that attempts to provide a structure for cultural cohesion.

Victor Frankenstein's experience as a would-be founding father illustrates the consequences of this narrative drive. Before the Creature comes to life, Victor imagines his future success and muses that "a new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve their’s [sic]” (Shelley 32). His exalted language suggests the founding of a nation. However, when his subject comes to life, Victor is overcome by “breathless horror and disgust” (Shelley 34), and his dream of nation founding comes to an end. The singular figure that emerges from Victor’s laboratory inhabits a metaphorical and literal space that is beyond culture, beyond law, beyond nation. However, he craves inclusion more than anything else. To that end, he becomes familiar with the narratives of Western culture at the DeLacey cottage, but his cultural indoctrination there is incomplete because of his perspective: the margins of the DeLacey family culture.

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[4] Bhabha, *Location*, 142.

In her classic reading of *Frankenstein*, Margaret Homans argues that the Creature’s birth “circumvent[s] the normal channels of procreation” and, therefore, “violates the normal relations of family.”[5] However, his “unnatural” birth also circumvents the normal relations that are conducted between citizens and agents of governments. Victor is an irresponsible (founding) father who is unable to accommodate the needs of his child because of his own limitations. The individual that he creates cannot become a citizen because there is no place in human society that is willing to accommodate him. His political subjectivity is unattached to a particular locale; he inhabits, therefore, the marginal spaces of culture.

Although his attempts to join human society are very sad, the Creature’s fantastic birth suggests a transgression not only of the natural process by which individuals are born but also of the unnatural processes by which individuals are “born” as citizens: specifically through the principles of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*. The two principles function as the grounds on which most modern citizens can claim citizenship; one must make claims to political inclusion based on either the locality of birth or through one's lineage. However, the Creature cannot make claims based on either principal, so he must rely upon a claim to citizenship that transcends soil and blood. He asserts his sense of himself as an autonomous individual with the capacity to reason and judge—a type of political subjectivity that Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal refers to as "universal personhood"[6]—as the basis of his claims. He has no other choice. The locality of the Creature's birth has no bearing on his claims to citizenship, and his bloodline is indeterminate. He very much wants to participate in the human social order, but he is refused a position in this order because he so astonishingly "other." In this way, the Creature comes to represent the apparent impossibility of accommodating that which is considered to be "monstrous" by a culture; however, he also illustrates another way of considering the concept of citizenship.

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[5] Margaret Homans, *Bearing the Word: Language in Female Experience in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing*, Women in Culture and Society, ed. by Catharine R. Stimpson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 3.

The language that Victor Frankenstein uses to describe the creation of this would-be citizenry suggests that of another founding father, Jawaharlal Nehru, who on the eve of Indian independence, gave his famous "Tryst With Destiny" speech, in which he claimed that "at the stroke of midnight, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom."[7] The speech acknowledges the historical legacies of colonialism but looks to independence as a new golden age for India. In this way, the speech functions as a narration of the history of Indian independence that celebrates the fact of its liberation from colonial rule. Both the title and the language of the speech itself suggests that Indian nationalism was somehow inevitable. Nehru traces the inevitability back to the far reaches of time and argues that “At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and her failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again.”[8] Using language that evokes the pains of childbirth, Nehru explains that “Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.”[9] The future, Nehru argued, would be brighter than the colonial past. He announces that “The appointed day has come—the day appointed by destiny—and India stands forth again, after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free and independent.[10]

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[6] Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, "Towards a Postnational Model of Membership," in *The Citizenship Debates*, ed. by Gershom Shafir (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1998), 195.

[7] Jawaharlal Nehru, "Tryst With Destiny," Speech, The Constituent Assembly of India, New Delhi, India, August 14-15, 1947, http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/specials/parliament/Tryst%20with%20Destiny.pdf (accessed January 20, 2008).

Sounding much like the grateful species that Victor Frankenstein imagines would one day bless him as its creator, Nehru gives a benediction to his predecessor, the original creator and source of the new Indian polity, Mahatma Gandhi. Nehru claims that:

> On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the Father of our Nation, who, embodying the old spirit of India, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounded us. We have often been unworthy followers of his and have strayed from his message, but not only we but succeeding generations will

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[8] Nehru, “Tryst.”

[9] Nehru, “Tryst.”

[10] Nehru, “Tryst.”

> remember this message and bear the imprint in their hearts of this great son of India, magnificent in his faith and strength and courage and humility. We shall never allow that torch of freedom to be blown out, however high the wind or stormy the tempest.[11]

The speech illustrates Nehru at the height of his rhetorical powers, and it is clear that he was thinking of the mythic position that this speech would assume in Indian history. In this sense, Nehru is like Mohammad Ali Jinnah, his political counterpart and the "father" of the nation of Pakistan who, in slightly less eloquent terms, expressed his faith, on the eve of Pakistani independence, that the Pakistani nation would become a beacon of equality in the free world. He explained his hope that "in the course of time, Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state."[12] Both of these founding speeches illustrate the hopes and desires of two new nations that would emerge from a shared colonial past in order to accommodate the needs of large and unwieldy populations. Both indicate how the legacy of British colonialism would be an inherent part of Indian and Pakistani identity. And both men seem convinced that independence would signal the end of the relationship between Britain and the Indian subcontinent.

However, by positing the founding of the nation-states of India and Pakistan as historical inevitabilities, and by using Western political structures to fashion these geopolitical entities into independent nation-states, Nehru and Jinnah both unwittingly became participants in Western intellectual imperialism. Edward Said recognizes the "network of interdependent histories" [13] that is created in the aftermath of colonialism. He explains that after independence, "the triumphant natives soon enough found that they needed the West and that the idea of *total* independence was a nationalist fiction designed mainly for what Fanon calls the 'nationalist bourgeoisie,' who in turn often ran the new countries with a callous, exploitative tyranny reminiscent of the departed masters."[14] In this way, Said contends, "the imperial cycle of the last century in some way replicates itself."[15]

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[11] Nehru, "Tryst."

[12] Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Address before the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Lahore, Pakistan. 11 August 1947, http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/constituent_address_11aug1947.html. 15 January 2008.

The legacy and replication of colonialism are important concerns in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, a novel that examines the mythic birth of an independent Indian state in the aftermath of two hundred years of colonialism. The novel is important to my project because it suggests how the British conceit of citizenship adopted by the independent governments of Pakistan and India is a repressive structure that does not "fit" the needs of the very diverse population of the Indian subcontinent. In fact, Rushdie's novel reveals how the values that are attached to this conceit are in no way liberatory; instead, they have limited the freedoms of both Indian and Pakistani citizens and caused violent clashes between the nations since independence. Further, by rewriting the histories of the nations of India and Pakistan, Rushdie suggests the fictive quality of these narrations and illustrates how British history is firmly embedded in the stories that are meant to instill a sense of Indian national cohesion. In this sense, Britain continues to play a role in the lives of Indian citizens. This is established on the very first page of the novel when the protagonist announces that because his birth coincides with the birth of the Indian nation, he "had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, [his] destinies indissolubly chained to those of [his] country."[16] These images suggest how the Western paradigm of citizenship—a paradigm that shackles individuals to a particular nation-state—makes little sense in a multicultural setting. Further, the physical condition of Saleem Sinai suggests that the attempt to adapt this concept to India and Pakistan might even be a failure. Saleem, a figure who embodies the many ethnic and religious categories that comprise the Indian nation, believes that his "over-used body" is crumbling "into (approximately) six hundred and thirty million particles of anonymous, and necessarily oblivious dust" (37). His disintegration becomes an important image that illustrates the effects of social and political tensions in the text, but it also indicates the ways in which the Western concept of a national citizenry might not be powerful enough to contain diversity.

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[13] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Random House, 1994), 19.

[14] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 19.

[15] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 19.

Neil Ten Kortenaar explains that the novel explores such questions as "how to imagine the nation-state and its history in a world of transnational migration and markets; how to locate oneself in a world of intersecting languages and cultures."[17] Allen Carey-Webb ranks it among "the most important extended examinations of the dilemmas of emerging nationhood" and argues that it "makes an attempt to represent a national, postcolonial history to an international audience steeped in Orientalist ways of knowing about 'the East.'"[18] Jaina Sanga argues that, in *Midnight's Children*, the narrator/protagonist "is India, and his story, told by piecing together scraps and fragments, becomes the narrative of a nation that includes political struggles, selfish leaders, social and linguistic divisions, the Partition of India and Pakistan, the Bangladesh War, and the excesses of Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay Gandhi during the Emergency."[19] In this way, the novel becomes an investigation of the ways in which the public and private spheres inflect and influence each other and an inquiry into how Indian politics affects the life of one person who is representative of all of the citizens of India who were collectively born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947. Rushdie uses the novel as a vehicle for dissent,[20] as a means by which he could announce his distress at the ways in which the political edifices in India were creating legacies that would have lasting repercussions for generations of Indian citizens to come.

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[16] Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 3. Future citations in text.

[17] Neil Ten Kortenaar, *Self, Nation, Text in Salman Rushdie's* Midnight's Children (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 4.

[18] Allen Carey-Webb, *Making Subject(s): Literature and the Emergence of National Identity* (New York: Garland Publishing Incorporated, 1998), 146.

The novel begins in the contested territory of Kashmir—an area that has been claimed by both India and Pakistan since independence—with the story of Saleem's grandfather Aadam Aziz. Setting the beginning of the novel in a place that has been uneasily divided by the two nations emphasizes how the spectre of Partition hangs over both countries and their citizens. As a Muslim citizen of India, Saleem will necessarily be aware of the existence of Pakistan and its similar, yet crucially different, origins. In a nod to the importance of origins, he describes the courtship and marriage of his maternal grandparents, a relationship that is itself the result of a strategic partitioning.

Aadam Aziz, the local doctor, is called to the home of a wealthy but pious landowner to treat his sick daughter. The landowner refuses to allow Aziz to examine his naked daughter, but gives him permission to look at her affected body parts through a hole in a sheet held up by two attendants. The daughter, Naseem, becomes interested in Aadam and entices him in the only way she can: she feigns illnesses. Over the course of a few years, the doctor manages to see various parts of the girl and becomes fascinated by the disjointed images of her body. Saleem explains that gradually, Dr. Aziz "comes to have a picture of Naseem in his mind, a badly-fitting collage of her severally-inspected parts. This phantasm of a partitioned woman began to haunt him" (23). Although he has never seen her face, her body is "glued together by his imagination." When this fractured woman finally gets the "longed-for headache," the puzzle is complete, sort of. Saleem announces that "such historical coincidences have littered, and perhaps befouled, my family's existence in the world" (25). The marriage is never very happy. The unified figure of Naseem is not as romantic as the "phantasm of a partitioned woman" (23). Saleem claims that Aziz "made the mistake of loving [Naseem] in fragments" not realizing that the unified woman would be "transmuted into the formidable figure she would always remain, and who was always known by the curious title of Reverend Mother" (41).

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[19] Jaina C. Sanga, *Salman Rushdie's Postcolonial Metaphors: Migration, Translation, Hybridity, Blasphemy, and Globalization* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 88.

[20] Something that would earn him the enmity of the Prime Minister.

This imposing "ironclad citadel of traditions and certainties" rules the family from its cultural center, the kitchen. As a metaphor for the nation, the Reverend Mother manages to contain the divisive elements of the family only through strict discipline and adherence to traditional roles. The family is no democracy. Naseem's rule in the domestic sphere is autocratic and rigid; Saleem claims that "the domestic rules she established were a system of self-defense so impregnable that Aziz ... had more or less given up trying to storm her many revelins and bastions" (41). She is left alone "like a smug spider, to rule her chosen domain" (41). Her rule is alternately fair and unfair. She deprives her husband of food because he dares to suggest that she needs help in the kitchen. She refuses to speak to him for three years when he allows Nadir Khan to hide from the authorities in their basement. However, she restores Saleem’s position in the family when his true parentage is revealed, granting him the rights of abode and society in a move that seems like the extension of what might be called domestic citizenship.

Importantly, when she emigrates from India to Pakistan, she “[sets] her face against the past” (392) and reinvents herself as a hard-working capitalist. In a “strange show of independence,” she and her widowed daughter-in-law Pia purchase a home in Rawalpindi and acquire a petrol station that is successful because of the combination of Pia’s beauty and the Reverend Mother’s interest in comforting her customers with pink Kashmiri tea and solid advice. Saleem describes her transformation: “She sat in her glass confessional and solved the problems of the world” (393); however, she loses interest in her own family and leaves them to their own destructive devices. Without her intercession, the bitter divisions within the family culminate in its near-annihilation on the very day in 1965 when Pakistan and India embarked upon a second war for the disputed territory of Kashmir. In this way, Rushdie indicates the limitations of the traditional nation-state model of citizenship and suggests that this paradigm demands autocratic rulers, for without them, national cohesion is simply not possible.

Rushdie is clearly interested the myths of national identity. In the narration of his birth, Saleem describes the simultaneous birth of the nation of India. He explains there was a “new myth to celebrate, because a nation which had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us into a world which, although it had five thousand years of history ... was nevertheless quite imaginary; into a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will ... a collective fiction in which anything was possible” (130). Saleem Sinai is born, along with the other newly fashioned citizens of India, at the stroke of midnight on 14 August 1947. His birth is celebrated and publicized, but his identity is ultimately ambiguous, produced in and through struggle and confusion. Amina Sinai anxiously awaits the birth of her first child in the days leading up to Indian independence, and interspersed among descriptions of her labor are bits of information describing the events of 14-15 August 1947. Amina's labor begins just as "hundreds of miles away, M.A. Jinnah announced the midnight birth of a Muslim nation [Pakistan]" (129). She finds herself in room in Dr. Narlikar's Nursing Home that has "saffron walls and green woodwork" (132) and a "saffron-and-green carpet" (132), two of the three colors of the Indian flag. The facility is understaffed, since "many employees who have preferred to celebrate the immanent birth of the nation ... will not assist tonight at the births of children" (133). At the moment of their births, just as the nation of India "awakens to life and freedom" (134), Saleem and the child who will be his political and spiritual double, Shiva, both scream. "The nation long suppressed finds utterance" (134), along with the two children.

Describing the midnight of his birth, which is also the midnight of the birth of the modern nation of India, Saleem uses language that is reminiscent of the "birth" of Victor Frankenstein's Creature: "The monster in the street has begun to roar. ... And beneath the roar of the monster there are two more yells, cries, bellows, the howls of children arriving in the world, their unavailing protests mingling with the din of independence which hangs saffron-and-green in the night sky" (134). Saleem, ever aware of the history that India and Pakistan will continue to share even after independence, makes note of the events going on across the border when he breaks his narrative to explain that Jinnah was "secure in the knowledge that his Pakistan would be born in just eleven hours, a full day before independent India" (127).

Pakistan becomes India's "other" in the text, a nation that is born through the same monstrous process. The complicated births of these two nations are mirrored by the complicated births of Saleem and his *de facto* twin, Shiva. The boys embody the monstrous process by which nations and citizens are animated through the dramatic act of national founding. The behind-the-scenes machinations of nation building are replicated in the maternity ward at Dr. Narlikar's Nursing Home, where the boys are born, when Mary Pereira, the midwife who assists in the births of the two children—one from a wealthy Muslim family, the other the product of an affair between a poor Hindu woman and the outgoing British consul William Methwold—switches the name-tags on the infants' incubators. Her "own private revolutionary act" (135) robs Shiva of his rightful inheritance, while the impostor Saleem is revered in the Sinai home as "the Mubarak—he who is blessed" (131).

Interestingly, at his birth, Saleem is wrapped in a saffron-colored blanket, a color that represents the Hindu population of India in the national flag. Given the fact that the Sinai family is Muslim and would be better represented by the color green, symbolizing the Muslim minority of the nation, the saffron blanket is, in theory, the wrong one. However, the reader knows by this point in the novel that Saleem has been switched at birth with Shiva, so the color reinforces the narrative's exploration of hybrid identify. Saleem does not point out the significance of the blanket, nor, by this point, does he need to do so. The symbolism of the blanket becomes important later in the novel, when Saleem is "reborn" into the family after the truth of his identity is revealed. In this sense, he is born twice, at least in terms of political identity. For he is "born in the city of Bombay ... once upon a time" (1), but then he is later reborn in Pakistan, "legitimized" by the Reverend Mother after his parents learn of Mary Pereira's crime.

Carey-Webb argues that "Rushdie cannot start a postcolonial novel with the unproblematic birth of a unitary and complete 'Indian' subject but instead must explore the interrelationships and complexities inherent in the nationalist construction of Indian citizenship."[21] Through Mary's "private revolutionary act," Rushdie emphasizes how categories of identity are social constructions, not essential realities. This point is made especially clear when Padma admonishes Saleem for his treatment of Mary, arguing that he "might as well call *her* ... mother. ... She made you, you know" (137). However, the stories of the two children illustrate how consequential socially constructed categories of identity can be. It matters very little that the Muslim child Shiva is raised in a Hindu family while Hindu child Shiva is raised as a Muslim. What remains consequential, however, are the material conditions of each family. Shiva is disadvantaged by poverty, while Saleem is raised in relative comfort. Mary Pereira's interference in the "natural" order of things juxtaposes the natural process of birthing with the unnatural process of nation-building. Saleem claims that his specious origins, something that he considers to be an accident of history, ultimately "*made no difference*" (136), and this is true for him. Even after his origins are revealed, he remains the son of the Sinai family: "I was still their son: they remained my parents. In a kind of collective failure of imagination, we learned that we simply could not think our way out of our pasts" (137). He continues:

> So: there we were knees and nose, a nose and knees. In fact, all over the new India, the dream we all shared, children were being born who were only partially the offspring of their parents—the children of midnight were also the children *of the time*: fathered, you understand, by history. It can happen. Especially in a country which is itself a sort of dream. (137)

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[21] Carey-Webb, *Making Subjects*, 154.

The novel rests on this idea of a “collective failure of imagination,” for while India is, as Rushdie has written elsewhere, a kind of “imaginary homeland,” in many ways this imagined place functions for Saleem as a sort of unimagined homeland, one that is instead thrust upon the Indian people, creating their identities but also curtailing them at the same time.

Benedict Anderson argues that the idea of the modern nation is closely associated with the human imagination. He explains that ideas of nation, nationality, and nationalism have historically been difficult to define but proposes the following definition of nation: “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”[22] For him, the nation is an *imagined* political community because it is impossible for all of the members of even the smallest nation to personally encounter, let alone know, their fellow citizens except for the fact that “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”[23] It is this imagined communion that makes the nation. When Saleem contends that his family suffered from a collective failure of imagination, he is ostensibly discussing his parentage and the fact that he is not the biological child of his parents; however, neither of Saleem’s parents is the least bit interested in locating their biological child, even though it seems obvious that the child’s life might be unhappy. Parentage and lineage are less important than the immediate connection—the real, not the imagined connection—that exists between Saleem and his parents. This “failure” suggests that the idea of nation as an imagined community is a conceit that is predicated upon circumscribed categories of identity that are social constructions. By affiliating the nation with the institution of the family, governments assert the naturalness of these categories. But Rushdie insists upon the fluidity of identity and illustrates how all individuals are hybrids; all citizens are, in some sense, the products of switched name-tags and other accidents of history.

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[22] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Press, 2002), 6.

[23] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

The novel consistently foregrounds hybridity and the fluidity of personal identity. Saleem describes the ways in which individuals change and are changed by each other when he explains to Padma that “Things—even people—have a way of leaking into each other ... like flavours when you cook” (38). This process is also illustrated by the ways that individuals are transformed by people and history in the text. For instance, Saleem’s mother’s first husband, a fugitive from political assassins, takes refuge in the Sinai family basement and becomes the catalyst for multiple transformations. The couple marries in secret, and they continue to live in their hidden fortress until Nadir’s presence becomes known to the authorities. The “plump poet” Nadir Khan flees his subterranean hideaway and later reemerges as Qasim Khan, a Communist political candidate. His wife herself undergoes a name change at the request of her second husband, who insists that she leave behind Mumtaz[24]Aziz to become Amina Sinai. In this way, Ahmed Sinai recreates his wife, “thus becoming in a sense her father as well as her new husband” (73).

However, Amina later recreates Ahmed through a combination of hard work, partitioning, and magic. Her new identity takes some getting used to, as does the new husband, so Amina resolves to learn to love him in fragments. Like her father before her, Amina partitions her spouse and becomes enchanted by the phantasm of identity that is revealed by the process. Saleem explains that his mother “divided [her husband], mentally, into every single one of his component parts ... compartmentalizing him into lips and verbal tics and prejudices and likes ... because she resolved to fall in love with her husband bit by bit" (75). She is surprised to discover that there are "a million different things to love about every man!" (75), declaring, "at this rate ... there will always be something fresh about him to love; so our marriage just can't go stale" (76). Her fragmentary approach to love has an unintended consequence, for in isolating bits of her husband and "under the influence of a painstaking magic so obscure that Amina was probably unaware of working it," she transforms her second husband into her first. Ahmed, "his life worked upon by his wife," comes to favor Nadir Khan physically, if not temperamentally.

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[24] Her original name, Mumtaz, is noteworthy; it is also the name of the woman who inspired the building of one of the iconic symbols of India, the Taj Mahal, which was built as her tomb.

His transformation stands as an interesting metaphor for the nation. Homi Bhabha argues that the nation is predicated upon the myth of the "many as one,"[25] and this scene illustrates the sublated diversity of what seems to be a unified monolithic entity. Amina's dismantling of her husband into constituent parts illustrates that individuals are far more varied and complex than they seem on the surface. They are hybrids. So, too, are nations. Edward Said made this now obvious point in *Culture and Imperialism*, in which he argued that "all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic."[26] However, the nation-state model of citizenship privileges a uniformity of identity at the national level that belies the reality of hybridity. And, as Ahmed's magical transformation illustrates, cultures cannot bear much scrutiny; when their constituent components are isolated and observed, its carefully constructed edifice is necessarily altered.

Saleem Sinai expresses a sense of himself as a citizen of India that is complicated by a nexus of political, social, economic, linguistic, and religious forces contained both within himself and in the community. All of these facets of his identity are problematized by the complicated nature of his identity. He is a Muslim, a Hindu, and a Christian (through his biological father, William Methwold). At various times, he claims both Indian and Pakistani citizenship; however, through patrialineage, he could also claim British citizenship. For him, India is both a wide expanse of possibility and a narrow channel of dogmatic propaganda. Juxtaposed against India is the nation of Pakistan, the "land of the pure," a place that seems to represent a foreclosure of all political and individual possibility. The time Saleem spends there is marked by loss, destruction, and death and seems to stand as a warning to neighboring India of what could happen if national "purity" were to prevail over diversity and multiculturalism.

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[25] Bhabha, *Location*, 142.

[26] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Random House, 1993), xxv.

Saleem's complicated birth narrative(s) illustrates the novel's interest in the ways that individuals become citizens. Birth is, of course, only one way that an individual may legally become a citizen. Individuals can also claim citizenship in most nation-states through blood. Rushdie illustrates this possibility when Saleem narrates his journey to Pakistan. As his family travels by ship towards their new home, Saleem remembers other ships that he been aboard, but he decides that the American warships that he toured in the Bombay harbor don't count, "being merely tourism; and there was always the embarrassment of being in the company of dozens of highly-pregnant ladies, who always come on these tour parties in the hope that they would enter labour and give birth to children who qualified, by virtue of their seaborne birth, for American citizenship" (341).

Of course, individuals may also become naturalized citizens. However, legalities aside, Rushdie seems most interested in presenting the mental and psychological ways in which individuals become citizens. This process is not always an easy, a point Rushdie makes when Saleem describes his violent birth as a citizen of Pakistan. The Sinai family moves to the country in order to escape financial trouble. Once there, they establish themselves as productive citizens of that county. His father starts a new business manufacturing substandard cloth towels; his mother is expecting a child; his grandmother and aunt run a successful gas station; and his sister becomes a famous religious singer. The only member of the family who is adrift is Saleem. Driving aimlessly around the city, he begins to affiliate himself with the citizens of Pakistan, explaining that in the city of Karachi, “beset by illusionary sand-dunes and the ghosts of ancient kings, and also by the knowledge that the name of the faith upon which this city stood meant ‘submission,’ my new fellow-citizens exuded the flat boiled odours of acquiescence” (369), an odor he juxtaposes against the smell of the “highly-spiced nonconformity of Bombay” (369).

The languor that he feels is the result of his increasing sexual attraction to his sister Jamila. He confesses his feelings to her, but she finds the news repulsive. His confession seems to set off a chain reaction of destruction. His family is annihilated by a series of bombings. Saleem survives but is stricken by amnesia. As punishment for his desire, his sister enlists him in the Pakistani army, where he becomes a human tracker because of his prodigious olfactory abilities. It is in this state of amnesia, “emptied of history,” that he “learn[s] the arts of submission, and did only what was required of him” (419). “To sum up,” he explains, “I became a citizen of Pakistan” (419).

It is important to note that he does not become a citizen of Pakistan in a fit of nationalist enthusiasm. He discovers his citizenship on the battlefield, during a violent internecine war. This discovery is a function of trauma, amnesia, and subservience rather than commitment to community. His Pakistani national identity is, therefore, connected to his inability to remember anything more meaningful. It indicates not inclusion, but separation from loved ones. His childhood in Bombay has not prepared him for the stark realities that he experiences in Pakistan. The announcement is of interest because it illustrates Rushdie’s own awareness of what the “land of the pure” means both symbolically and literally. The moment of Saleem’s “becoming” is precipitated by incestuous love and familial annihilation. Juxtaposing this metaphorical birth of Saleem as a citizen of Pakistan against the narration of Saleem’s birth as a citizen of India is productive since it reveals the substantive differences between the two nations and their respective founding principles; however, it also reveals striking similarities. India, a nation whose multiplicity is “its most apparent and obvious fact,” is starkly different than Pakistan, “the land of the pure,” yet Saleem’s respective births as a citizen of the two lands suggests the volatile nature of India’s own geopolitical and cultural unity. His birth narrative suggests this precariousness. He explains that “if I seem a little bizarre, remember the wild profusion of my inheritance. ... [P]erhaps, if one wishes to remain an individual in the midst of the teeming multitudes, one must make oneself grotesque” (126), which is precisely what happens to him as a citizen of Pakistan: he is the disgraced brother of a famous sister, the “man-dog” assigned to a tracking and intelligence unit that is charged with the duty “to obey unquestioningly; to seek unflaggingly; to arrest remorselessly” (416).

His monstrous nose becomes the most important fact of his identity, and he uses this nose to sniff out Indian soldiers. Inevitably, of course, in his new role as a Pakistani soldier, Saleem encounters his childhood friends, dying together in a heap on a battlefield. He becomes convinced that “the purpose of that entire war had been to re-unite me with an old life, to bring me back together with my old friends” (446). Had his circumstances been different, he might have been among them in this heap, dying for the nation of India. Instead, he has been charged with the duty of hunting Indians for his new country. His encounter with his Indian friends reminds him of his connection to a more inclusive place where he enjoyed a greater sense of community; however, he seems to recognize that both India and Pakistan are narrative fictions that are not worth sacrificing his life for. This recognition seems to end his sense of submission, and he eventually breaks ranks and returns to India. However, his repatriation does not instill a new sense of Indian nationalism; indeed, he returns to India "without passport or permit ... cloaked in invisibility, to the land of [his] birth" (455). Weightless in Parvati's womb-like "basket of invisibility," Saleem crosses into India and feels haunted by the ghosts of his past. He becomes angry at his situation and discovers that his belief in Indian nationalism has faded even as his memory of it has returned. Something is being born within himself, he realizes, and he begins to understand who he is in a way that transcends national identity. He explains:

> Who am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each "I," every one of the now six-hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world. (458)

This diatribe adapts the conventions of English grammar to illustrate how other English disciplinary conceits can also be adapted. Although Saleem's new sense of himself will be problematized by its continued association with a very difficult time in Indian history, his newfound identity seems characterized by a kind of productive anger that lends him a critique of the nation and its government. He is not longer a dutiful citizen.

In fact, going back to a point in his childhood when he attempts to create a polity of his own, the Midnight's Children Conference, it becomes clear that Saleem's attitude about citizenship, though grounded in the notion of community, has been doubtful all along. After a failed childhood romance and the discovery that he has the gift of telepathy, Saleem retreats into his own mind, where he discovers the midnight's children, all of those children where were born, like him, during the midnight hour on 15 August 1947. He decides to form his own gang, a mental polity, "which [would] spread over the length and breadth of the country, and whose headquarters [were to be] behind [his] eyebrows" (247). Saleem finds that he "was not immune to the lure of leadership" (272). As the organizer and ostensible leader of the conference, Saleem decides that the children must decide "what we are for" (273).

This gang is structured using birth order, not religion or language, as its organizing principle. Recognizing that all of the midnight's children are endowed with extraordinary magical powers of varying degrees, Saleem determines that the desirability of powers is related to how close to the midnight hour a child was born. Born at the stroke of midnight, Saleem and Shiva have the most awesome powers—as far as Saleem and Shiva are concerned, anyway. Saleem has the ability "to look into the hearts and minds of men" (239), while Shiva's possesses the gift of war. The children born shortly after the stroke of midnight hour possess powers of transformation, transmigration, and transsexualization. These most magical of children include Parvati the witch, a boy from Kerala "who had the ability of stepping into mirrors and reemerging through any reflective surface in the land ... a werewolf from Nilgiri Hills ... from Calcutta a sharp-tongued girl whose words already had the power of inflicting physical wounds ... a boy who could eat metal ... a girl whose fingers were so green that she could grow prize aubergines in the Thar desert" (237). However, those born later in the hour have only nominal powers; Saleem claims that they were "little more than circus freaks: bearded girls, a boy with the full-operative gills of a freshwater mahaseer trout, Siamese twins with two bodies dangling off a single head and neck" (238). These children are all monstrous in some sense, which reflects Rushdie's attitude about the miraculous births of all citizens of India in that magical, monstrous moment of founding.

The Midnight's Children Conference (MCC) functions as a failed attempt to institute an Aristotelian citizenry based on friendship, or what Aristotle called *homonoia,* or concord. For Aristotle, governance was only possible on a small scale and in a place where there was a limited number of citizens who all participated equally in political matters, the exact opposite of India. Concord exists when citizens "agree about their interests, adopt a policy unanimously and proceed to carry it out."[27] When this fails, there is discord, which is exactly what happens with the MCC project. In spite of Saleem's desire that the children will make up a "loose federation of equals" (263) and assemble every midnight in the "lok sabha or parliament of [his] brain" (271), they are ultimately unable to create anything more than a children's club. The MCC functions as a reflection of India's Lok Sabha, but, in spite of their magical talents, the children are unable to accomplish anything meaningful, a possible reflection on the efficacy of the Indian Parliament during this time in Indian history. Saleem explains that "it is Kali-Yuga; the children of the hour of darkness were born, I'm afraid, in the midst of the age of darkness; so that although we found it easy to be brilliant, we were always confused about being good" (239).

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[27] Qtd. in Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 19.

Saleem’s sense of high-minded mission is dissolved by the discord that exists between himself and his alter-ego, Shiva, that other child of midnight who, together with Saleem, embodies the multiculturalism that exists in India. Saleem’s initial impulse is to be “fair” and to include Shiva in the conference, even though the two boys clearly do not like each other; however, this impulse gives way to Saleem’s desire to protect his own identity from Shiva once it becomes clear to him that Shiva is the natural-born son of Ahmed and Amina Sinai. The Midnight Children Conference gradually disintegrates, eventually becoming “a parliament composed entirely of half-grown brats” (306) and “in this way ... fulfilled the prophecy of the Prime Minister and became, in truth, a mirror of the nation” (306). The last days of the conference become the forum for an ideological struggle between Saleem and Shiva, with Saleem advocating an active-literal role for the children. He cries, “We ... must be a third principle, we must be the force which drives between the horns of the dilemma; for only by being other, by being new, can we fulfill the promise of our birth!” (306). Shiva, however, replies scornfully, “there is no third principle; there is only money-and-poverty, and have-and-lack, and right-and-left; there is only me-against-the-world!” (307).

Later in the novel, Saleem himself follows this mandate and betrays the other midnight children to the government when he is imprisoned and tortured in the Widow’s Hostel. As he narrates, Saleem begs for their (posthumous) forgiveness, but he has clearly, if sadly, come around to Shiva’s way of thinking: “Politics, children: at the best of times a bad dirty business. We should have avoided it, I should never have dreamed of purpose, I am coming to the conclusion that privacy, the small individual lives of men, are preferable to all this inflated macrocosmic activity. But too late. Can’t be helped. What can’t be cured must be endured” (518).

This claim suggests the novel’s most pessimistic message: Saleem realizes that the individual is more central than the group and also that, as Shiva earlier claimed, “the world is not ideas ... the world is no place for dreamers or their dreams; the world ... is things. Things and their makers rule the world. ... For things, the country is run. Not for people. ... When you have things, then there is time to dream; when you don’t, you fight” (307). This idea is foreshadowed earlier in the novel when Saleem describes Indian Independence Day as “a new myth to celebrate, because a nation which had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us into a world which, although it had five thousand years of history ... was nevertheless quite imaginary; into a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will—except in a dream we all agreed to dream. ... India, the new myth—a collective fiction in which anything was possible, a fable rivaled only by two other mighty fantasies: money and God” (129-130).

It is interesting to note that even during the narration of the formation of the MCC, Saleem is still conscious of what is happening in Pakistan, even though his magical powers cannot penetrate the borders of that nation. He explains, “if a similar miracle was worked across the border, in the newly-partitioned-off Pakistan, I have no knowledge of it; my perceptions were, while they lasted, bounded by the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Himalaya mountains, but also the artificial frontiers which pierced Punjab and Bengal” (235). In other words, Saleem’s talent functions only in India, the nation-state of his birth. However, Parvati the witch rescues Saleem later in the novel by using a magic trick that she performs in Bangladesh, suggesting that her own powers are not similarly geographically restricted.

Although eventually a failure, Eric Strand argues that Saleem’s MCC, his internal “gang,” functions as “a postcolonial sphere in which Indians of diverse classes and castes debate with each other as equals. The MCC is based on Saleem's idea that class differences can be transcended, that through appeals to rationality and common humanity, Indian citizens can debate issues of the common good in a privileged public space."[28] Language differences and religion are not necessarily barriers to understanding. Strand, however, points out that once Saleem finds himself defending his own socioeconomic privilege to the children, once he asserts his own interests and right to govern the group, "the democratic ideal of the public sphere turns out to be an untenable one, liked as it is to an ideology of capitalist individualism that Rushdie endorses privately but finds wanting publicly."[29] In this way, Rushdie, whether he intends to or not, points out the power of class difference, even when other, seemingly more significant issues of language and religion are erased, and illustrates the complexity of establishing a sense of political identity in a place as racially, ethnically, linguistically, and, especially, socio-economically diverse as India.

Rushdie's novel is not so much a novel about multiculturalism and hybridity as it is a novel that very consciously enacts these things. Saleem Sinai likens the telling of his life's story to pickle making, a process his calls "chutnification." At the end of the novel, he ponders his completed jars and asks, "what is required for chutnification? Raw materials, obviously—fruit, vegetables, fish, vinegar, spices. ... Cucumbers, aubergines, mint. But also: eyes, blue as ice ... fingers … and above all a nose capable of discerning the hidden languages of what-must-be-pickled, its humors and messages and emotions" (548-549). He continues, "there is also the matter of the spice bases. The intricacies of turmeric and cumin, the subtlety of fenugreek, when to use large (and when small) cardamoms; the myriad possible effects of garlic, garam masala, stick cinnamon, coriander, ginger ... not to mention the flavourful contributions of the occasional speck of dirt" (549). The art of "chutnification" is to "change the flavour in degree, but not in kind" (550). Saleem likens each of the completed thirty chapters of his story to jars of pickles, with one final jar yet to be filled. That empty jar represents the possibility of the future of India; however, it is important to consider that Saleem maintains to the end that his body is flying apart. He believes that it is unable to contain the myriad forces that have created him and the Indian nation-state. His belief that he is dying suggests that the final jar may remain empty.

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[28] Eric Strand, "Ghandian Communalism and The Midnight Children's Conference," *ELH* 72 (2005): 977.

[29] Strand, "Ghandian Communalism," 977.

Of particular relevance is the ways in which Rushdie's concept of hybridity is considered in terms of the rights of citizens. Since the eighteenth century, citizenship and nationality have been very closely associated. The question, then as now, is whether the nation should be defined by political or cultural criteria.[30] Pakistan, a culturally closed society, suggests the alternative, a nation defined almost exclusively by religious cultural criteria. The nation of India was founded upon more inclusive criteria in order to accommodate the many different cultural elements contained within the subcontinent. As *Midnight's Children* well illustrates, these issues have been and continue to be explosive and divisive. However, from its inception, its leaders have attempted to construct a nation that would encompass the plurality contained within its geopolitical borders. Rushdie celebrates this tendency without romanticizing it. He recognizes that his government has perpetuated great atrocities against its citizens. In fact, the novel was written during one such atrocity, the period in Indian history known as the Emergency, when Indira Gandhi assumed powers that virtually eliminated parliamentary power and effectively suspended the civil rights of Indian citizens for a period of twenty-one months.[31]

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[30] American immigration policies during the nineteenth century illustrate a political sense of nationalism: citizenship was granted to thousands of immigrants from all over the world with relatively few limitations (at least initially). Of course, once the requirement that immigrants be able to speak and write English was implemented, the United States began to use cultural criteria to define itself in a more explicit way.

Rushdie claims that "the stain of it [the Emergency] is on the book."[32] Certainly, Saleem's belief that he is dying is associated with the political deaths experiences by Indian citizens during this time. In his essay "The Assassination of Indira Gandhi," Rushdie explains that "At the heart of the idea of India there lies a paradox: that its component parts, the States which coalesced into the union, are ancient historical entities, with cultures and independent existences going back many centuries; whereas India itself is a mere thirty-seven years old."[33] Here, Rushdie acknowledges the ancient plurality of the subcontinent, something that he later refers to as India's "most obvious and apparent fact": its multitude. He writes, "For a nation of seven hundred million to make any kind of sense, it must base itself firmly on the concept of multiplicity, of plurality and tolerance, of devolution and decentralization wherever possible. There can be no one way—religious, cultural, or linguistic—of being Indian; let difference reign."[34]

The novel is, in its way, a celebration of difference, but it is also a critique of the narrative conceit that designated seven hundred million individuals as citizens of

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[31] This discussion of Indian politics comes from Robert L. Hardgrave Jr. and Stanley A. Kochanek, *India: Government & Politics in a Developing Nation*, 5th edition (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1993).

[32] Salman Rushdie, Interview conducted by John Haggenden (1983; repr., *Conversations with Salman Rushdie*, ed. by Michael R. Reder (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 38.

[33] Salman Rushdie, "The Assassination of Indira Gandhi," *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 41.

[34] Rushdie,"The Assassination of Indira Gandhi," 44.

India at the stroke of midnight on 15 August 1947. Saleem’s many rebirths dramatically illustrate how the Western concept of citizenship is unable to contain the multitudes of India, indeed of any multicultural nation. Saleem’s frequent border crossings imply how potentially meaningless geopolitical boundaries are in an interrelated world, suggesting the potential for a transcendent concept of citizenship that would allow these crossings to be conducted more easily. In short, Rushdie’s novel indicates how the Western concept of citizenship could be reconfigured as a more inclusive ideal, but only if it is severed from the limiting paradigm of the nation-state. Difference could then reign across national boundaries, and the narratives of “chutnification” could be celebrated as an unexpected legacy of the postnational era.

Afterword:

“To Touch the Future on Its Hither Side”: The Progress of the Post-Imperial Subject

> But this is the soul
> Prepared for you, these garments that glow
> In the dark and burn as fierce as coal.
>
> George Szirtes, from “Dressing”

The novels that I have studied here track the progress of a political figure that has been created in response to the legacies of British political and colonial history. This new political figure is, of course, “handcuffed to history” in much the same way that Saleem Sinai is; however, its destiny is not necessarily “indissolubly chained to those of [its] country.”[1] Rather, as these novels indicate, the relationship between citizen and nation-state weakens as the novels progress through time, suggesting a more fluid association between the two political entities. This new conceit is consonant with the “post-national” model of citizenship envisioned by Yasemin Soysal and others. It is an echo of what Homi Bhabha seems to have in mind when he claims that “the currency of critical comparativism, or aesthetic judgment, is no longer the sovereignty of national culture conceived, as Benedict Anderson proposes, as an ‘imagined community’ rooted in a ‘homogeneous empty time’ of modernity and progress.”[2] This situation exists because the narratives that “[drive] the engines of social reproduction” do not provide satisfying foundations for cultural and political identity that are also relevant to the sexualities, religions, classes, and ethnicities of modern individuals.[3] In other words, the nation-state paradigm of citizenship, largely reliant upon historical narratives to foster a sense of political belonging, fails to achieve a sense of national cohesion in the postmodern world. The mythic past is simply too problematic to be a rallying point; however, the past is, of course, something that constructs the political and social conditions of the present.

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[1] Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 3.

[2] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), 6.

The characters that I discuss here all contend with legacies of British national history. The women in *The History of Emily Montague* yield to the legacy of British patriarchy; Daniel Deronda witnesses the legacy of British anti-Semitism; Karim Amir contends with the legacy of British colonialism and racism; Saleem endures the consequences of British imperialism. All of these characters experience citizenship that is based on principles of social organization that appear to be natural as a result of being structured along a very old system of values, part of the mystical British past. In their own ways, these characters all navigate this system of values through their attempts to understand the psychological, social, and legal aspects of citizenship that structure their lives. They indicate the different ways that individuals have attempted to become citizens in different periods of British history, but they also demonstrate that when it is not possible to do this, individuals will look for alternative forms of political identity that might accommodate their diverse needs.

In *The History of Emily Montague*, the female characters are not truly citizens in the sense that they are not "full members of [their] community" [4] by virtue of their sex. Although their national affiliations are clear—they consider themselves to be English citizens—the women are barred from direct access to the legal and political institutions through which citizenship is experienced. Lacking the most basic rights of citizenship, the women consider alternative forms of political and social identity. For instance, in the wilderness of Canada, a place of intense beauty and rich potential, Arabella Fermor envies the Native American women she encounters there and likens them to the gypsies of Europe, explaining that she has seen "a fine old seasoned female gypsey [sic], of as dark a complexion as a savage: they are all equally marked as children of the sun" (Brooke 53).

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[3] Bhabha, *Location*, 6.

[4] T. H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 28-29.

Remembering Charles Tilly's definition of citizenship as a legal distinction that "designates a set of mutually enforceable claims relating categories of people to agents of governments,"[5] it is obvious that, through the principle of *coverture*, women's citizenship in the eighteenth century was twice mediated. Because the distance between a woman and her government was filtered through both bureaucracy and spouse (or father), her rights were, therefore, seriously compromised. These women are simply unable to enjoy the sunlight of freedom. The repercussions of this situation are seen quite starkly in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or The Wrongs of Woman*; however, Brooke's objections to the legal concept of *coverture* are no less strident. Her novel indicates that British society would ultimately suffer because of this legal distinction since, in depriving women direct access to the structures of government, the country could not expect to benefit from their active participation in the national arena. British society, comprised of those "savages, who so impolitely deprive[d] [women] of the common rights of citizenship" (Brooke 38), would itself suffer as result of this political injustice.

The novel insistently points out that no matter how earnestly women desired to participate in civic endeavors, their contributions were circumscribed by social convention and legal prohibition. Lacking the most basic rights of citizenship—those civil, political, and social rights described by T. H. Marshall in 1950—women in the eighteenth century were more rightly considered to be subjects. They inhabited a politically darkened space. Ed Rivers indicates his awareness of the situation when he argues that women should not be "obliged in conscience to obey laws [they] have had no share in making."[6] It is a powerful claim, made by a character whose financial circumstances position him as a feminized figure. Although Brooke stops short of promoting the sort of women's utopia described in Sarah Scott's *Millennium Hall*, she does insist that if a married woman's citizenship was to be mediated twice, then the only way a woman could become a citizen in a meaningful sense was if her intercourse with the government was mediated through a partner she had chosen for herself, based on shared values, common interests, and mutual attraction.

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[5] Charles Tilly, *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 253.

George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, however, features a character that is, at least superficially, as closely connected to the legal structures of government as a citizen can be. He lives with a Member of Parliament, after all, but he can also experience his citizenship in a very direct and meaningful way via his right to vote. As the ideal Ciceronian citizen—one that is male, wealthy, dutiful—he can become whatever he wishes to become. He seems especially interested in becoming a useful and dutiful citizen. Deronda is nothing if not committed to the common good, although his sense of what is "common" is altered once he discovers his true identity.

When Daniel learns that he is a Jew, he becomes affiliated with a group of marginalized citizens, and he, therefore, positions himself at a symbolic remove from the structures of government. Given that the novel was written at a time when the so-called "Jewish Question" was being argued in the British Parliament, Eliot's depiction of this character illustrates the consequences of those debates not only for the Jews, but also for Christian citizens of England. Instead of advancing dutiful individuals like Deronda, the debates illustrated Parliament's impulse to privilege frivolous (and Christian) "fair-skinned" couples like Henleigh and Gwendolen Grandcourt or Mr. Bult, Catherine Arrowpoint's erstwhile suitor. This man's "suffusive pinkness of a healthy Briton" marks him as a swine—dissipated and self-satisfied—without much to recommend himself beyond rank.

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[6] Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague* (1769; repr., Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Inc., 1995), 38.

Eliot implies that if individuals as worthy as Deronda were to be only reluctantly enfranchised because of religion and race, then their sense of civic duty would naturally become detached from the nation-state and reattached elsewhere. The consequences of this would be disastrous for English politics and culture. The novel is important because of its implication that the treatment of minority groups living within England was connected to the overall health of the English nation-state. However, it stops short of being truly radical. Although it harshly critiques the excesses of the English aristocracy, it does not overtly demand that all minority groups living in England be given the same rights as those pale and pink individuals whose "perfect tailoring" (Eliot 102) cloaks a wasted and lethargic citizenry. In fact, Eliot sends the Jewish characters away from England to found a nation of their own, and, although it is not clear whether she intended this to be a statement about the rightful place of Jews or the inadequacy of the English nation, the move is important because it indicates Daniel's awareness that his English citizenship could be used as a tool to help his people. Additionally, the novel illustrates Eliot's interest in the ways that the Ciceronian model of citizenship could be viable without necessarily compelling citizens to participate in unsettling nationalist projects like imperialism.

However, in the next century, this model of citizenship is jettisoned for one that appears to be indifferent to political and social participation. Political lethargy is one of the most obvious and striking themes of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia.* Its main character may be ostensibly interested only in sex and drugs, but, in much the same way that Jane Austen engaged the pressing issues of her day in veiled ways, Kureishi also slyly illustrates Karim's burgeoning sense of political identity. This character slowly develops a sense of himself as a citizen as he considers the important social and political issues that affect his life. Karim does not seem destined to be as politically active as his cousin Jamila or friend Terry; however, his journey from the suburban periphery to the urban center changes him. He becomes aware of the plight of the city that he loves, which he realizes is being "ripped apart; the rotten was being replaced by the new, and the new was ugly" (Kureishi 258). As this happens, his life functions as commentary on the ways in which British political institutions reinforce racial and social difference in order to perpetuate white, patriarchial hegemony.

The final pages of the novel illustrate Karim's understanding that he is clearly disadvantaged as a citizen as a result of his race. His developing political awareness illustrates the birth of a new sort of polity in twentieth-century England, one that makes clear distinctions between ethnic and civic affiliations. Karim is an Englishman, but he foregrounds a "funny kind" of Englishness for professional and economic advantage and resists interpellation through his multi-faceted identity: he is bisexual, biracial, and bicultural. His behaviors are, therefore, difficult to predict. Further, by refusing to be a truly active citizen, he resists the disciplinary functions of citizenship even as his connections to England and, especially, to London, remain crucial aspects of his identity. At the novel's end, he enjoys a moment of reflection in the "centre of this old city that [he] loves, which itself sat at the bottom of a tiny island" (284). This moment occurs, ironically, at precisely the same moment that Margaret Thatcher's political ascendency begins; however, the scene looks positively toward to the future, which suggests Kureishi's sense that individuals could survive the devastating social effects of Thatcherism.

Kureishi's novels are clearly and avowedly interested in exploring new ways of being British; however, unlike Salman Rushdie, who is overtly interested in syncretism, Kureishi's body of work is less concerned with thematically incorporating Pakistani culture into mainstream British culture. In *The Buddha of Suburbia,* characters function symbolically to illustrate how racial purity is impossible in post-imperial Britain, even for the Anglo-English, which is, in the words of Daniel Defoe, itself a "mongrel race."

This issue is one of Kureishi's particular interests. It is an interest that is also apparent in the work of the many contemporary writers that he has influenced, authors such as Monica Ali, Zadie Smith, and Meera Syal. Their work explores the lives of immigrants in an increasingly multicultural England and inspects the ways in which British identity is affected and enriched by the heightened diversity that immigration has brought to the British Isles. This trend indicates how the repercussions of colonialism cast long shadows over the nation's present. *The Buddha of Suburbia* illustrates how successful the country has been at incorporating ethnic groups into the fabric of the country; however, the novel clearly indicates that there is still much to be done. As the main characters struggle with racial violence, prejudice, and social marginalization, the message of the novel seems to be that Britain has become a new nation in the aftermath of colonialism, and the old national narratives will have to change in order to accommodate this difference.

In recent years, several critically acclaimed novels have attempted to answer the question of how individuals acquire a sense of political, social, cultural and national belonging in the aftermath of colonialism.[7] A number of them are set in former colonies and analyze the effects of the foundings (or births, I am tempted to say) of modern nation-states.[8] This propensity suggests a pervasive thematic interest in the construction of national identity. While this trend might be explained in a number of ways, I believe it is indicative of how individuals struggle with the legal and social ramifications of citizenship.

Citizenship is important. There is no getting around this fact. This fact is dramatically revealed by Salman Rushdie's personal circumstances. He is, in most ways, the prototypical modern citizen. He was born in a newly created political entity, India, in the very year of that nation's birth and became a naturalized citizen of England; his life was affected by one of the defining features of modern life: terrorism. Long before the events of 9/11, which effectively made terrorism a fact of existence for all citizens of the West, Rushdie experienced it in an all too intimate way. Throughout all of this, he has worn his citizenship in unexpected and surprising ways, never abandoning his sense of himself as an Indian or as a European, even though he has lived in the United States since 2000. In this way, he stands as a most salient modern figure, one who challenges the legacies of nation-founding, even while he experiences these legacies in dramatic ways. But he remains, for now anyway, legally tied to the British government by virtue of the passport that he values so much. It has cloaked him during some very cold periods. He is, unlike Victor Frankenstein's stateless Creature, a *citizen*. And, importantly, Rushdie's example indicates how individuals might subvert the nation-state paradigm of citizenship in order to fashion new kinds of political identity. His insistent poly-nationalism allows him to dwell, as Bhabha puts it, in the "beyond." It illustrates a potential form of identity that might be possible if the concept of citizenship can be wrenched from the nation-state. Individuals could then inhabit the "great beyond" in order to be "part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; *to touch the future on its hither side*."[9]

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[7] Linda Grant's *When I Lived in Modern Time* (New York: Penguin Press, 2000) and Tahmina Anam's *A Golden Age* (London: John Murray Publishers, 2007) are two recent examples of novels that focus on the ways in which political identity is often forged in and through national conflict. But while these novels are interested in what might be considered the production of modern citizens, others are less celebratory and reveal the real problems of nationalism.

[8] Dinaw Mengestu, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007) is a good example of this.

Read together, the novels that I discuss here point to a new way of thinking about citizenship that is less rigidly connected to the nation-state than the paradigm that emerged during the Enlightenment. While the earliest novels indicate a positive appraisal of the nation-state model of citizenship, even as soon as *Daniel Deronda*, the works suggest a shift away from British nationalism to a model that evokes Bhabha's more forward-thinking conception of political identity. This dissertation reveals the potential for adapting the current paradigm of citizenship for new purposes that are not necessarily aligned with national interests. Instead, this new conceit emphasizes the personal affiliations that provide individuals with meaning and direction over national affiliation. In this way, the concept of citizenship could be (re)fashioned from the scraps of the old in order to create new styles of political identity that would reflect the personal tastes of citizens rather than the rigid uniformity of nations.

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[9] Bhabha, *Location*, 7. Emphasis in original.

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