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"Criminal Cities: Capitalized Postcolonial Crime and the Contemporary Novels of London, Belfast, Bombay, and Johannesburg"

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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By Molly Slavin

This dissertation brings together the fields of postcolonial literary studies, urban studies, and cultural studies to develop an analytical framework called "capitalized postcolonial crime." "Capitalized postcolonial crime" is a reading strategy or prism that examines the nexus of colonialism, predatory capitalism, and neoliberal economics in contemporary capital cities to argue that crimes in literature act as tightly-packed symbols of imperial legacies through which we can view the malignant residues of empire in the twenty-first century. By moving from the former imperial center (London) to the capital of the United Kingdom's most visible contemporary colony (Belfast), to the largest city in the former "jewel of the crown" of the British Empire (Bombay/Mumbai), and finally to a city established as a result of a gold rush on the outskirts of empire (Johannesburg), "Criminal Cities" interrogates literary depictions of crime and criminality to think through lingering imperialisms in our contemporary world. By analyzing the writing of Zadie Smith, Ian McEwan, Stuart Neville, Lucy Caldwell, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Chandra, Ivan Vladislavić, Lauren Beukes, and Phaswane Mpe, I make the case that these writers utilize depictions of crimes such as murder, terrorism, home invasion, and theft to ask the reader to think about imperial legacies and neocolonial formations such as racism, institutional violence, gentrification, and other relevant urban issues, ultimately putting forth a case for taking seriously the figuration of crime and criminality in contemporary postcolonial urban texts.

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Introduction: Criminal Cities in a Postcolonial World

Colonialism and imperialism have not settled their debt to us once they have withdrawn their flag and their police force from our territories. For centuries the capitalists have behaved like real war criminals in the underdeveloped world. – Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Behind every great fortune there is a crime. – Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*

In the opening scene of the second episode of Netflix's 2016 television series *The Crown*, soon-to-be Queen Elizabeth II, newly arrived in Kenya on a tour of her Commonwealth holdings, gives a speech on an airfield to an assembled group of tribal leaders and other important dignitaries. It is 1952, and the British Empire is gasping for air, hence the need for her tour; in Kenya specifically, the Mau Mau is mounting its insurgency and British rule is becoming threatened. Elizabeth's speech, in part, addresses her audience by saying this, "Little more than fifty years ago, Nairobi was a savage place, the home of wild animals, and uninhabited except for the occasional band of nomadic herdsmen. Now, it is a modern, vibrant city, a striking tribute to the men and women of all races, who have made it a great center of commerce and finance."

Elizabeth's plea to her colonized subjects, who amass on the edge of the airfield and watch the speech with narrowed, suspicious eyes, hinges on her convincing them that, despite her token acknowledgement of the work of people "of all races," it was really the white architects of the British Empire who brought this society into the "modern, vibrant" world. Chief among those achievements, Elizabeth suggests, is the construction of a capital city, Nairobi, where before only meaningless herdsmen dwelled. This, the about-to-be-crowned queen insinuates, is what really matters for a city – that it become "modern, vibrant," un-savagized, an engine of economic growth, a marketplace for buying and selling. And the only way, the Queen suggests, to create this vitally important addition to the

modern world was imperialism. It is the British, with their capitalism and their industry and their free markets, who had to come to this "savage place" and domesticate it, normalize it with "commerce and finance" so that it could become a capitalized city worthy of the name.

Missing from Elizabeth's narrative, and from the episode ("Hyde Park Corner") in general, is the reality of imperialism. For years, the British had consolidated their rule in Kenya by exploiting local labor, levying immense taxes, and relying on violence to curb dissent. Motivated by years of bloody and inegalitarian rule, the Mau Mau Uprising began in Kenya in 1952, the same year Elizabeth is depicted as giving her speech on an airfield in Nairobi. To put down the uprising, the British established martial law and a detention system so brutal it has been argued it took its inspiration from the Holocaust. Caroline Elkins writes, "during the Mau Mau war British forces wielded their authority with a savagery that betrayed a perverse colonial logic: only by detaining nearly the entire Kikuyu population of 1.5 million people and physically and psychologically atomizing its men, women, and children could colonial authority be restored and the civilizing mission reinstated" (xv). Yet Elizabeth papers over her empire's crimes and normalizes its brutal rule as providing an outlet for capitalist expansion, providing no window for the Kenyans to hold the British accountable for their actions.

Though Kenya, and most other British holdings, gained independence throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a similar gesture of erasure of past injustice continues to occur in contemporary postcolonial societies. Cities initially created or sustained by the British Empire – London, Belfast, Bombay, and Johannesburg will be this dissertation's key examples – are built on the unpunished, unprosecuted crimes of capitalism and colonialism, but these legacies are glossed over in order to normalize various elements of the contemporary neoliberal world order. Rather than acknowledging vicious colonial histories

and their legacies that have substantially shaped our present world, popular narratives instead celebrate unbridled capitalism in the form of wealthy entrepreneurs in developing companies, unregulated globalized accumulation of capital, bootstrapping ideologies, and atomized individualism as normal, even desirable, aspects of contemporary life. This dissertation will argue that the novel, as an art form and a popular discourse, resists neocolonial and neoliberal discourses and unearths the ways in which crimes and inequalities of the present act as reminders of injustices of the past. By inaugurating the analytical term "capitalized postcolonial crime," defined as crimes committed in the contemporary era that, when analyzed through a postcolonial lens, reveal unreparated historical crimes of empire and associated capitalism, I uncover intertwined histories of colonialism and capitalism through a sustained examination of crime in the city, that *locus classicus* of modernity.

Depictions of crime in contemporary literature draw attention to the imperial roots of twenty-first century cities. Moradewun Adejunmobi writes, "by studying the locations of cultural production, we can investigate the changing dynamics of power. Although such dynamics pertained to colonialism a few decades ago, they are now more frequently invoked in relation to neoliberalism" (137). Cultural productions of the present – novels – outline the contemporary and historical contours of power by their insistence on the political nature of how crime is centralized and depicted. Theodore Martin writes, "the formal conventions of contemporary artworks allow us to envision the historical coherence of the contemporary world" (197). The contemporary urbanized world's neoliberal and neocolonial present can be made coherent by looking at how fiction links depictions of present-day crimes back to the historical realities of capitalism and colonialism.

As this dissertation will demonstrate, we see these imperial roots straining against the soil of contemporary postcolonial cities in the twenty-first century. I argue that we can view

the global city as a symptom of the ways the contemporary world has been shaped by financial capital and the legacies of imperial exploitation, racism, and the machinations of colonial and postcolonial elites. Empire and capital have created the present-day global city, and the motif of crime is a generative matrix for exploring these connections. Fiction that foregrounds depictions of crime maps these cities with attention to how empire structures the geographical, political, social, cultural, and imaginative lives of urban spaces. Counteracting Elizabeth's smooth storyline – her "now" eliding years of oppression and violence – contemporary novels depict present-day crimes to disrupt the narrative and draw readers' attentions to the violent histories and unpunished historical crimes of postcolonial cities. Rather than the sleek normalization of postcolonial cities as natural centers for enterprise and commerce, fiction centered on contemporary cities hinges on distressing episodes of violent crime to spur the reader into thinking about the elephant-in-the-room crime of imperialism.

Crime is typically described as a legalistic concept, as "what is or is not against the law" (Roth 8), but this formulation is tricky when discussing the crimes of imperialism, for the violence and oppression meted out by empire was, in fact, very much *not* against the law, but necessary for the structure and functioning of the imperial order.[1] Today, however, these legacies continue to do lasting harm, creating the need for some form of reparations for

[1] A parallel might be made here to Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, in which she explains that Nazi Adolf Eichmann's conduct during the Third Reich "was a crime only in retrospect, and he [Eichmann] had always been a law-abiding citizen, because Hitler's orders, which he had certainly executed to the best of his ability, had possessed the 'force of law' in the Third Reich" (24). Like Nazi Germany, cruelty and tyranny was a feature of the British Empire, not a bug, and certainly not a crime in the strict legalistic sense.

colonial crimes.[2] For this reason, I will be introducing the term *capitalized postcolonial crime* to refer to crimes committed in the contemporary era that, when analyzed through a postcolonial lens, reveal unreparated historical crimes of empire and associated capitalism. Through the prism of capitalized postcolonial crime, I examine the nexus of colonialism, capital, and neoliberal economics in cities girded by the legacy of empire and the increasing power of capital. I pursue this examination by looking at crime in novels set in London, Belfast, Bombay, and Johannesburg, all financial and political capitals which reveal the ways in which colonialism, capitalism, and now neoliberalism conspire to exacerbate religious, racial and economic divides; displace the idea of crime and criminality onto the dispossessed; and conveniently shroud a shameful history of inequality on the one hand and the crimes of empire and capitalism on the other.

Almost a century ago, Emile Durkheim noted that crime "consists of an action which offends certain collective feelings which are especially strong and clear-cut" (99). Jean and John L. Comaroff build on this notion of the collectivity or the social construction of crime by arguing that crime, in the twenty-first century, "has become *the* metaphysical optic by means of which people across the planet understand and act upon their worlds" (8, italics original). Understanding and processing crime collectively, through discourses like the novel, provides a matrix for thinking through the social ramifications of large historical processes like capitalism and empire. Capitalized postcolonial crime describes criminal colonialism, which invested in acquisition of property, profit, and capital through extortion, exploitation, and racial politics – a legacy still continued by today's global elites – as well as the crimes of the lumpenproletariat obliged to engage in petty graft and theft in order to survive in an

[2] I borrow here from writers like Ta-Nehisi Coates, who has made the case for reparations in a long-form article in the June 2014 issue of *The Atlantic*, as well as debates about British reparations to India raised by Shashi Tharoor and others.

unjust economic order. It is necessary we pay attention to both kinds of crimes to unearth the foundations of the contemporary global order. Crime in contemporary novels, then, acts as a prism through which one sees the malignant residues of empire.

I use the term "capitalized" in *capitalized postcolonial crime* for several reasons. One, in the sense of "capitalism" – as the financial capital which makes the economic system responsible for shaping our contemporary world possible. I take inspiration from Marx's initial elaborations of the subject, in which he argues that capital is a social relation ("Wage Labour and Capital") that, by its presence and utilization in the world, creates inequality between the classes, and that capital is money used to realize future financial transactions (*Capital Volume 1).* This financialization of human relations was exacerbated under imperialism, as humans were viewed as "human capital" and as means to the end of more profit and more capital.[3] The British Empire, organized as it was around capitalism and the pursuit of capital, reshaped global power relations around the possession of various forms of capital: financial, human, social, and cultural. Indeed, capital, as later thinkers like Fredric Jameson and David Harvey have further elaborated, is power, and very often those who have it (the nexus of capital and power) are not seen as criminal and those who do not are, relations which often mimic the power dynamics of colonialism and imperialism.

Because capital is often linked to power, the deployment of financial and human capital often went hand-in-hand with structures of land-based imperialisms that began in the Enlightenment era and persisted through the middle of the twentieth century and into the present day. Marx argues that "the modern history of capital dates from the creation in the 16th century of a world-embracing commerce and a world-embracing market" (65), pointing

[3] This is language that Sarah Brouillette, in *Literature and the Creative Economy,* has forcefully pointed out still circulates widely in conversations about creativity and capitalism.

to the linkages present between capital and imperialism, and Thomas Piketty notes that capital in Britain and France was "shaped by the turbulent history of these two leading colonial powers over the last three centuries" (120). Though it is important to note, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri do, that "European capital does not really remake noncapitalist territories 'after its own image,' as if all were becoming homogenous" (227), it is indisputable that capital, and the possession of it by certain European colonial powers, made colonialism and imperialism both possible and more lethal, leading to the criminal cities we encounter today: heterogeneous, but with common structures and similarities wrought by capital and colonialism. Even if not remade exactly in Europe's image, postcolonial criminal cities are pitted by the pockmarks of imperial rapacity and exploitation. As Theodore Martin writes, "the contemporary is unthinkable outside the context of capital" (19).

I also use "capital" in the sense that all of these cities are capital cities in their own rights. London is the governmental capital of England and the United Kingdom, as well as the (for now) financial capital of Europe, while Belfast is the political, cultural, and financial capital of the smaller region of Northern Ireland. While Bombay is not the politically-designated capital of India (this honor goes to New Delhi), it is certainly the financial, cultural, and emotional capital for many, as it is the largest city in India and the home of several of India's financial institutions, most famous writers, and the Bollywood movie industry. Similarly, though Johannesburg is not the administrative or political capital of South Africa, its status as the country's largest city, one founded because of the discovery of gold, and as the continent of Africa's current financial and economic capital, gives it the status of a central or capital urban space. Of course, many of these designations came about

because of the machinations of the imperial machine, the specific histories of which will be unpacked in each city's respective chapter.

Lastly, I use "capital" in the term *capitalized postcolonial crime* in the sense of capitalizing on something, on an opportunity. The presence of crime in so many contemporary postcolonial city novels offers a chance to capitalize on this presence, to make use of these depictions to examine what lies beneath and what loaded histories may be waiting to be unpacked. To summarize neatly, "capitalized" in *capitalized postcolonial crime* symbolizes:

- the histories of capitalism and imperialism and their relevance for contemporary crime
- how those histories shaped social and power relations in the past and through to the present day
- how financial capital takes over city life under neoliberalism
- how capitalism and colonialism shaped the cities it chose to create, expand, or otherwise inhabit
- the possibility of recognizing invisible, unspoken imperial legacies
- the persistence, even exacerbation, of inequalities after the end of colonialism

The term capitalized postcolonial crime will be used to refer to offenses against the law, depicted in contemporary postcolonial city novels, that hide deeper histories of capitalist and colonialist abuse and injustice.

Moving on to the second part of this term, I realize, of course, that there are debates over the use of the term "postcolonial," and that the word has a vexed history. Terry Eagleton, with characteristic dryness, observes, "There must exist somewhere a secret

handbook for post-colonial critics, the first rule of which reads: 'Begin by rejecting the whole notion of post-colonialism.' It is remarkable how hard it is to find an unabashed enthusiast for the concept among those who promote it." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak notes that "postcolonial/colonial discourse studies is becoming a substantial subdisciplinary ghetto" and warns that postcolonialism can "sometimes serve the production of current neocolonial knowledge by placing colonialism/imperialism securely in the past, and/or by suggesting a continuous line from that past to our present" (1). Graham Huggan critiques "postcolonial studies' fascination with the structural forms of colonial power," arguing that this "fascination" "has, at best, brought with it an inattention to cultural specifics and historical details" (20). Keeping these critiques in mind, I will use the term "postcolonialism" as a reading lens, a way to be attentive to how colonial and imperial legacies have continued to shape the cities of former empire as a form of neocolonialism. That said, the geographic range of the literature and cities I will be looking at – England to Northern Ireland to India to South Africa – runs the risk of a flattening, or in Huggan's words, "an inattention to cultural specifics and historical details." I will attempt to avoid this by considering the various permutations and adaptations imperialism and its capitalistic and criminal legacies took in each different city. This requires considering what other historical, political, and cultural structures have taken root in the decades since the era of decolonization. Because there is no "continuous line from that past to our present" (Spivak), the legacies of empire and capitalism have been interlaced in our present day with other structures that have emerged in the last fifty or sixty years, most notably neoliberalism, as a way to normalize their presence and continued influence.

A glance at the broad historical facets of neoliberalism (keeping in mind the specifics will present differently in each particular place) will help shed light on the relationship

between neoliberalism and its relationship with empire. Often portrayed as a sort of "capitalism to the max," or capitalism with the reins taken completely off, neoliberalism is typically credited as having been initially developed by Austrian economists Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises in the late 1930s. Hayek and von Mises viewed competition as a good in and of itself, and advocated for laissez-faire economics and withdrawal of the state from the public realm. Their theories gained global ground in the postwar era, contemporaneous with the collapse of European empires, and provided a pushback against the formerly ascendant statist Keynesian economic policies that advocated for strong social safety nets, provided for by relatively high taxes. The growth and further development of neoliberal ideas led, as David Harvey has written in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, to an economic, social, and political philosophy that "proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (2). Though imperialism and neoliberalism would seem to be diametrically opposed governing philosophies – one reliant on the state extending beyond its typically accepted boundaries, one advocating for almost total withdrawal of the state from all aspects of public life – an emphasis on "liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms" leads to societal effects that are in many ways similar to what happens under imperial rule: a fragmentation of community and a focus on individualism, alongside a wider rolling back of general welfare frameworks, especially for the most marginalized, leading to the aforementioned petty crimes of the lumpenproletariat. Neoliberalism's promotion of individual striving and endorsement of bootstrapping ideologies recalls earlier imperial rhetorics, like those espoused by Queen Elizabeth on her airfield in Kenya: neoliberalism, in this framework, takes its place as part of a long history of capital and empire's invisible, unprosecuted crimes.

Neoliberalism has not replaced land-based imperialism in a simple bait-and-switch, a one-to-one neocolonial replacement for past imperialism. Neoliberalism has, rather, transmuted itself into imperialism's ongoing, lingering crimes, allowing for an expansion in ways of thinking about crime, from the question of the legal code up to and including tolerated, normalized policies instigated by empire and exacerbated by neoliberalism. Colonial and postcolonial elites have adapted neoliberalism to suit their own purposes, both by degrees and by manifesting itself in different ways according to differing cultural urban contexts. One version of the philosophy, for example, has taken especially deep root in the former imperial power of Great Britain: George Monbiot has called Britain the country "in which neoliberal ideology has been most rigorously applied." Yet, because neoliberalism began to be developed around the time modern European empires were losing their territorial possessions at a rapid clip, it became full-fledged almost at the exact moment of widespread decolonization efforts. Though Europe, and specifically Britain for this dissertation's purposes, lost its landholdings, it has maintained a substantial amount of its influence over its former colonies through the propagation of neoliberalism and neocolonial capital. Monbiot writes, "Through the IMF, the World Bank, the Maastricht treaty and the World Trade Organization, neoliberal policies were imposed – often without democratic consent – on much of the world." Similarly, as James Ferguson points out, in the postcolonial world and specifically in Africa, "neoliberalism was… not very 'neo' at all. It was, in fact, largely a matter of old-style laissez-faire liberalism in the service of imperial capital… Across much of the continent, it has raised the specter of a kind of recolonization" (173). Thus, neoliberalism can be seen as an imperial legacy or as an aspect of neocolonialism, a way to maintain global European hegemony though, as Spivak clarifies, not in a "continuous line" from the British Empire to the present.

Though formal land-based European empires have for the most part ceased to be, Western powers continue their influence over their former colonial possessions, primarily now through economic and cultural mechanisms, in the phenomenon of neocolonialism. Spivak notes, "By neocolonialism I always mean the largely economic rather than the largely territorial enterprise of imperialism" (3), and asks her readers to

> learn to discriminate the terms *colonialism* – in the European formation stretching from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries – *neocolonialism* – dominant economic, political, and culturalist maneuvers emerging in our century after the uneven dissolution of the territorial empires – and *postcoloniality* – the contemporary global condition, since the first term is supposed to have passed or be passing into the second" (172).

Spivak's distinction between colonialism as land-based, neocolonialism as hinging on less tangible methods of control, and postcoloniality as a condition is a helpful way to begin to think about how I will use these and similar terms in the pages that follow. While "neocolonialism" is not synonymous with "neoliberalism" in this work, I understand neocolonialism as drawing heavily on the philosophies, mechanisms, techniques, and attributes of the neoliberal revolution in order to continue and in some ways morph a world order first activated by colonialism and capitalism. Neil Lazarus writes, referring to the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq and the sorry misadventure in Afghanistan, that, "conjoining violence and military conquest with expropriation, pillage, and undisguised grabbing for resources, these developments have demonstrably rejoined the twenty-first century to a long and as yet unbroken history, wrongly supposed by postcolonial theory to have come to a close *circa* 1975 [italics original]." Twenty-first century neocolonial developments, Lazarus writes, constitute "the history of capitalist imperialism" (15). What is

necessary, Lazarus argues, in the twenty-first century, is "to take central cognisance of the unremitting actuality and indeed the intensification of imperialist social relations in the times and spaces of the postcolonial world" (17).

This dissertation, while taking issue with Lazarus's claim that colonial history has been "unbroken" (Lazarus himself, for example, acknowledges that primacy of power has shifted from the United Kingdom to the United States), will track the history of what Lazarus terms "capitalist imperialism" and pay special mind to the "intensification of imperialist social relations in the… postcolonial world" by mapping the cities of the postcolonial world through literary depictions of capitalized postcolonial crime. Because crime, in the words of the Comaroffs, "has become constitutive of our world" and has "colonized our imaginations" (218), unpacking literary depictions of crime will help us more deeply think through our contemporary world and literature. It is important to note here that this dissertation will examine crime *in* fiction, not crime fiction. Though some of the novels selected (*The Twelve, Sacred Games*) may be considered part of the genre of crime fiction, it is the subject matter, rather than the novelistic genre, that I believe to be most ripe for excavation of imperial legacies. Robert Young has written that one of the key goals of the field of postcolonialism has always been "to locate the hidden rhizomes of colonialism's historical reach, of what remains invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken. In a sense, postcolonialism has always been about the ongoing life of residues, living remains, lingering legacies" (21). This dissertation will turn up what remains "invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken" by looking at how imperial legacies resonate through portrayals of crime in contemporary postcolonial cities.

Henry Giroux writes of American neoliberalism that its "central commitment" is "now organized around the best way to remove or make invisible those individuals and

groups who are either seen as a drain or stand in the way of market freedoms, free trade, consumerism, and the neoconservative dream of an American empire." He coins the term "*new biopolitics of disposability*" for this development (italics original), saying, "the poor, especially people of color, not only have to fend for themselves in the face of life's tragedies but are also supposed to do it without being seen by the dominant society" (175). Giroux further argues that people of color are often conflated with concepts of criminality (177), though the real crime, he contends, is that the poor "have been rendered invisible, utterly disposable, and heir to that army of socially homeless that allegedly no longer existed in color-blind America" (175). In making this argument, Giroux is picking up on Achille Mbembe's idea of necropolitics, or that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (11), which Mbembe situates as a legacy of various forms of colonialism and imperialism. Giroux, though writing of the American context and Hurricane Katrina in particular, articulates the damages done by adherence to neoliberal ideologies – forced invisibility of "nonproductive" actors and groups, intense focus on individual striving and effort as a means to merely staying alive, promotion of color-blind rhetoric. Mbembe's balder rhetoric posits that first imperial, and now neoliberal, regimes, hold the power of determining "who may live and who must die" (in a sense, "capital" punishment).

I argue that when we are attentive to contemporary literary depictions of crime, when we read through the paradigm of capitalized postcolonial crime, those crimes can explicitly or implicitly turn up the routine violence associated with present and past structures of neoliberalism and imperialism. Though the poor and other oppressed groups are often associated with crime in the public imagination (indeed, this is the only time they are allowed to become un-invisible), these portrayals are often red herrings, to borrow the

language of detective fiction, to get individuals to turn their attention away from the invisible, unprosecuted crimes of imperialism and now, neoliberalism. While the public's, or the individual reader of a novel's, attention is turned towards the attention-grabbing crimes and violence of the lower class – the murder of Felix in Zadie Smith's *NW*, the lingering remnants of the IRA in Stuart Neville's *The Twelve*, petty theft in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*, or drug use in Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City* – imperial legacies snake through the background of the city or novel, continuing their insidious influence and remaining unchecked. Naomi Klein has coined the phrase "disaster capitalism" for the phenomenon of "orchestrated raids on the public sphere in the wake of catastrophic events, combined with the treatment of disaster as exciting market opportunities" (6). Crime in contemporary cities often rings of disaster capitalism, in that it performs a similar function on a smaller scale: by directing reader's attentions to catastrophic events – violence, religious riots, paramilitary activity, stealing, drugs – legacies of imperialism and structures of neoliberalism are allowed to commit their crimes unabated. When we as readers are caught up in the drama of the home invasion in Ian McEwan's *Saturday,* for example, we are not attuned to the ways in which the invader is a result of a years-long insistence on "necropolitics" and "the biopolitics of disposability." By reconceiving of crimes in these novels as capitalized postcolonial crimes, we can turn up buried imperial legacies and neocolonial structures, which the authors point to in varying degrees of explicitness.

It is in the city where we see these capitalized postcolonial crimes most keenly expressed and played out, not least because it is in the city where imperial elites first entrenched themselves in power in contrast to those they were colonizing, setting up the initial structures of spatial, economic, political, and racial segregation. Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth,* famously drew a Manichean picture of a generic colonial city as divided

into the "'native' sector" and the colonizer's section of the city. The latter, according to Fanon, "is a sector built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed-of leftovers" (4). It is "a white folks' sector, a sector of foreigners" (4). By contrast, the "native" quarters, or the colonized section of the city, "is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people…It's a world with no space, people are piled on top of one another, the shacks squeezed tightly together" (4). This original crime of imperialism – the stark segregation of the "natives" and the "colonizers," with the attendant economic and social disparities – has never been reparated. The marginalized still, literally or metaphorically, live in the "native sector," where they are pushed to the margins, made invisible, ignored, while the oppressors, who now may be Europeans or may be local elites, retain control from their "sector of lights and paved roads," still determining who lives and who dies, via the tools of neoliberal economic policy.

Though the city is the site of neocolonialism, it is also the city that so often is the site of resistance to dominating systems of oppression; in Homi Bhabha's words, "it is the city which provides the space in which emergent identifications and new social movements of the people are played out" (170), giving agency to those in the "native sector" and pointing to ways in which new forms of imagining society may be expressed. In their introduction to *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis,* Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall write, "A city…is not simply a string of infrastructures, technologies, and legal entities, however networked these are. It also comprises actual bodies, images, forms, footprints, and memories. The everyday human labor mobilized in building specific city forms is not only material. It is also artistic and aesthetic" (8). This "artistic and aesthetic labor" – literature, among other forms of creative expression – can be an effective location through which resistance can be waged,

and alternate forms of societal organization can be articulated. Michel de Certeau writes, "the ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below,' below the thresholds at which visibility begins" (93), meaning that often defiance from everyday residents of the city goes unnoticed by those looking down from above; resistance to imperial legacies starts with the ordinary members of the postcolonial city who have too often been deemed "invisible." The "city" in this formulation is the city articulated and experienced by people like Zinzi December, a black-market odd-jobber in Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City*, or Leah Hanwell, a "slacker" resident of northwest London and one of the protagonists of Zadie Smith's *NW*. Largely because of their distance from the formal economy, Zinzi and Leah don't tend to be noticed by the movers and shakers of their respective cities, but they make use of David Harvey's theory of "the right to the city," which he says, "is far more than an individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city" (23). Their and others' moves to change the city by drawing attention to and resisting the imperial legacies that undergird their urban space work against dominant and normalized narratives of imperialism, neoliberalism, and mainstream discourses surrounding crime. People left out of mainstream discourses, like those popularly imagined to be criminal, are often symptoms of unpunished imperial legacies and symptoms of neocolonialism.

I have chosen to work with the novel for many reasons; its inherent heteroglossia, as initially theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin, lends itself well to discussions of literature in the city, and, as Ken Worpole has noted, the rise of the city was linked to the rise of the novel in European imperial contexts (181). Ian Watt, additionally, has written that the rise of the novel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was inextricably linked to the rise of imperialism and capitalism and their emphases on individualism, competition, and the market economy. Understanding the early novel as tied to the philosophy of capitalism and

its component parts can help lead us to an understanding of how the contemporary postcolonial novel is tied to the component parts of neoliberalism. With regards to crime, Joel Black in *A Companion to Crime Fiction* notes that "many of the most revered masterpieces of world literature are centrally concerned with the subject of crime" (76), citing such texts as *Moll Flanders* as examples of portrayals of crime *in* fiction, rather than crime fiction, helping to establish my precedent for looking at novelistic depictions of crime in this way. Moreover, the ways in which readers are asked to read crime in postcolonial literature situates the reader as a detective, which essentially necessitates long-form narrative in order to "figure out" the crime and its resolution. Looking for "clues" in the text is an integral part of close reading, and asking readers to think through capitalized postcolonial crime presents a challenge and grants agency to each individual reader.

To conclude, I wish to point out that the concept of capitalized postcolonial crime is not limited to the four cities of London, Belfast, Bombay and Johannesburg, or specifically to the cities of the late British Empire, but resonates throughout the world in multiple scenes of colonial and capitalist modernity. To demonstrate how capitalized postcolonial crime is global in scope (which will also be examined in this dissertation's coda), I want to turn briefly to an historian of slavery in the American South. In Edward E. Baptist's 2014 book, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism,* Baptist argues that the Northern states of the fledging U.S.A. were not as far removed from the horrors of slavery as they are often portrayed themselves to be; indeed, the North did not become wealthy *in spite* of slavery, but *because* of it. Even though slavery was illegal above the Mason-Dixon Line, the benefits of the imperial African slave trade directly impacted the economic development of the North. "Slavery," writes Baptist, "had been one of the engines of colonial economic growth [for the British]" (3); with the expansion of slavery to the United

States, "new plantations within U.S. borders could fill the role of the British sugar islands, to which northeastern merchants had lost access in the American Revolution" (11). Though the North presented itself as the moral side of the nation, clean of the crime of slavery, the "cotton made by enslaved U.S. hands was essential to industrialization" (316) and "the Northern economy's industrial sector was built on the backs of enslaved people" (322). As the South "sank into subordinate, colonial status within the national economy" (410), the North continued to enjoy the wealth generated by slavery, wealth that helped the United States become an imperial power as it expanded westward and into the Caribbean and Pacific. Though slavery was a crime and its expansion was "consciously chosen, a crime with intent" (188), the North was able to take advantage of its benefits as a constitutive element of society; though slavery was illegal in the North, its presence just south of the Ohio River allowed for the crime to become integral and essential to the development of a society and economy.

I bring up the example of American slavery because it is a sharp demonstration of the concept of capitalized postcolonial crime; slavery, as a colonial and capitalist venture, was key and central to the American nation-building and imperial project, as were various other imperial machinations to the particular cities where they were situated. The system of chattel slavery has been formally ended, but as reparations for black Americans have never been formally instituted, its invisible legacies continue to haunt American public life and result in the continued subaltern status of black people in the United States, as Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* and Ava DuVernay's documentary *13th* demonstrate. Much like American slavery, British imperialism may have formally ended in the years immediately following World War II (for the most part), but its legacies endure in the capitalized postcolonial crimes present in the city novels of its former colonies. Imperialism and slavery have not

been neatly bookended and set onto the shelf of history; rather, we must ask ourselves how our continuing to tolerate the routine, normalized violence of imperialism and slavery will be judged by future societies. I fear they will treat our acceptance of capitalized postcolonial crimes much the same way we look at our ancestors' slavery and imperialism.

Chapter Outlines

My project begins in London, as the former imperial center and (at least pre-Brexit) current hub for immigration from all over the Commonwealth and the world. Taking John McLeod's plea that we treat London as a postcolonial city seriously, I begin by considering Ian McEwan's 2005 novel *Saturday,* a *Mrs Dalloway*-inspired account of a man named Henry Perowne's perambulations about the city of London on February 15, 2003, the day of the United Kingdom's largest protest against the impending invasion of Iraq. Perowne's home is broken into by a man named Baxter, in a scene portrayed as reminiscent of debates surrounding immigration to London in the immediate decolonization period of the British Empire. This crime of home invasion, I argue, carried out as it is on a day casting Britain's neocolonial misadventures into the forefront, disrupts the quiet domesticity of Perowne's upper-middle-class life to call attention to and ironize Perowne's own status as a beneficiary of systems of imperialism and colonialism. I turn from *Saturday* to Zadie Smith's *NW* (2012), a novel concerning the friendship between two London women, one Jamaican and one Irish, that turns on the fulcrum of a violent murder. Working with Paul Gilroy's theory of postcolonial melancholia, I make the case that these London crimes are redolent with meaning for London's transition from the center of the world to merely the center of a much-shrunken United Kingdom.

As London has adjusted (or failed to adjust, as in the cases of these novels and in Brexit) to its twenty-first century role as a postcolonial, rather than an imperial, city, Belfast

across the Irish Sea is making a somewhat similar transition from colonial and imperial to postcolonial city. Taking novels published after the 1998 Good Friday Agreement as my case studies, I outline the ways in which Troubles-era violent crimes have been transmuted into neoliberal structures in the twenty-first century. By looking at Stuart Neville's *The Twelve* (2010) and Lucy Caldwell's *Where They Were Missed* (2006), I consider how contemporary crimes in Belfast hearken back not only to the colonial Troubles conflict, but to deeper imperial histories as well. The Good Friday Agreement, though marking a significant shift in the relationship between Catholics and Protestants in Belfast and in Northern Ireland more generally, as well as the relationship between Belfast and London, has not fundamentally changed the spatial, political, or economic structure of the city. The situation of Northern Ireland – what Seamus Deane calls "a contemporary colonialism" in his introduction to *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* – is still one of colonially-enforced division and contemporary crimes which may be traced back to these centuries-old partisan divides.

Taking up the quintessential novelist of postcolonial Bombay, Salman Rushdie, I look at his two main novels of the city – *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) – to track the evolution of crime and its changing meanings in the city. Because the sorts of crimes depicted in *The Moor's Last Sigh* are strongly reminiscent of those found in *Midnight's Children,* I make the argument that Rushdie is constructing a city wherein many of the same problems, borne of imperialism and assisted by a rise in right-wing fundamentalist movements, carry through from 1981 to 1995. I conclude this chapter by considering Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2006), an epic of violence which eerily predicts the 2008 Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist attacks in the city, to further develop my claim that fundamentalism in the form we see it in contemporary Bombay is a link in a larger chain stretching back to the colonial British Empire.

From Bombay, "Criminal Cities" travels to Johannesburg, as the final example of the geographical reach of the former British Empire in this dissertation. Taking Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City* (2010) and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001) as the two most prominent examples, but also touching on writing from Ivan Vladislavić, I argue in this chapter that, as apartheid began to be recognized as a crime by the international community and then South Africa itself, that system of clear-cut rules and structures was discarded in favor of the more fluid and neoliberal system of criminality. This, in turn, opened the door for contemporary South African writers to deploy depictions of crime in their writings to point to ways in which apartheid and empire's legacies are still felt in contemporary Johannesburg. By shedding light on the ways in which discourses and conversations on crime map and undergird the contemporary South African city, Lauren Beukes and Phaswane Mpe use their novels to spur readers into thinking about the larger systems that structure the post-apartheid urban environment.

I include a coda to close out the project, based on a short reading of Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017). As the first mainstream Anglophone novel dealing with the contemporary refugee and migrant crisis, *Exit West* is a particularly resonant entry into the discourse of capitalized postcolonial crime because of the ways in which refugees from the formerly colonized world are so often treated as criminals for merely existing, for being a "drain" on public resources. *Exit West*'s movement from an unnamed city in the Middle East to London and eventually a new city north of San Francisco maps the world by its cities and the ways refugees and postcolonial migrants imprint upon them. Foregrounding the experience of subjects who move from city to city and are too often rewarded with criminalization for their troubles, *Exit West* is a natural bookend to a dissertation that asks

readers to consider deeply the larger structural issues inherent in the ways we talk about empire, postcoloniality, and crime.

"Criminal Murder, Criminal Bombing, and Criminal Violence": London and the Neoliberal Loss of Community[4]

While on a recent trip to London, a friend and I decided to take advantage of the uncharacteristically beautiful English weather and go for a picnic in Hampstead Heath. We bought some picnic supplies at a Marks & Spencer near her home in Hackney, took the London Overground service from Hackney Central to West Hampstead, and purchased some light reading at a small bookstore once off the train. After eating and relaxing in the sun for awhile, I pulled out my phone, Google Mapped the distance, and, realizing we were not far from Kilburn and Willesden Green, suggested we take a walk to the areas in which Zadie Smith set her novels *White Teeth* and *NW*. My friend readily acquiesced, as she used to live near the area, and we started on what would become our 3-mile journey through northwest London.

As we progressed from the rambling and wild growth of Hampstead Heath to the quiet, tree-lined confines of West Hampstead to the busier and louder Kilburn High Street, we began to notice that Kilburn was a place where multiple definitions of what it means to live in a contemporary English city coincide with each other, making for a more interesting and textured experience than we had seen in other parts of London. Kebab shops rubbed up against almost impossible ye olde English pubs, and a fruit stall run by a woman wearing kente cloth was set up in front of a pub that proclaimed itself to be London's #1 spot for watching IRFU (Irish Rugby Football Union). Multiple ways of doing business abounded as well, from staples of British life like Boots stores to open-air market stalls selling CDs (in a digital music age) to buskers playing music or performing for change. We continued to

[4] See also "Nowhere and Northwest" (2015), an article I published in the *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*.

meander down Kilburn High Street, eventually ending up in Willesden Green and then doubling back to take the Overground back to Hackney.

Our trip made one thing abundantly clear: though the area is expansive enough to include many definitions of what it means to live in this particular place at this particular time, the postcolonial northwest London of Zadie Smith is not the London of Boswell, Johnson, Dickens, or Woolf. Multiple geographies are visible in NW, layered on top of and next to each other, negotiating with other geographies and narratives to form a multidimensional urban fabric. Many of these geographies, as I hope is clear from my description of the scene above, are based on capitalism and imperial legacies, and some of them might even shade into the category of "criminality," such as unlicensed busking or perhaps the selling of pirated music. More acutely, the area is populated by those descendants of the *Windrush* or recent immigrants from South Asia or West Africa who are, all too often, pegged as "criminal" in the urban setting by passersby, shopkeepers, or the police. Capitalism, imperialism, and criminality all exist together in the same urban geography.

If, as Homi Bhabha says, the city is where "the perplexity of living is most acutely experienced" (243), this particular corner of London, due to its capacity to be many things to many people, is an especially well-suited place from which to explore that perplexity. Marxist geographer Doreen Massey, writing about just this corner of the world, notes that "while Kilburn may have a character of its own, it is absolutely not a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everybody shares" (153). She notes that the high street is littered with IRA graffiti, advertisements for shows from Irish and South Asian celebrities, and Middle Eastern-owned businesses. Of course, these multiple identities coexist in large part due to the historical legacies of the British Empire, even if the casual observer is not

necessarily attuned to the ways in which these historical factors are continually woven into a seemingly casual street scene. As Luke Gibbons writes of James Joyce's Dublin, "various characters go about their business, seemingly oblivious to the forces that are orchestrating their lives" (141). Similarly, the urban literary subjects in the novel city of London operate without any explicit awareness of why their lives and their spaces are shaped in the ways they are.

Imperial legacies are not only visible in stereotypically "multicultural" parts of the city. For example, consider a 2006 article author Monica Ali wrote for *The Guardian.* In the 1930s, Virginia Woolf took a series of walks around the still-imperial capital of London in order to generate material for articles that would later be published in *Good Housekeeping.* Now published as *The London Scene: Six Essays on London Life*, the essays cover subjects such as "The Docks of London," "Oxford Street Tide," and "Abbeys and Cathedrals." Hoping to "catch at thoughts and feelings, the immediate perception of things," Ali retraced some of Woolf's steps for an article titled "After Woolf." What she observed encapsulates not only how the city and its relation to the world have changed since the days of high imperialism, but also how imperial and postcolonial processes have catalyzed those kinds of changes.

Ali cites Woolf's entry into the city, via the Thames River, nearly 75 years ago, by noting London's "pencil-shaped chimneys of factories," then brings it back to 2006 by writing, "I look at the London before me and see no factory chimneys. The spires and domes are humbled by the glass towers, smoky, clear and pallid green. Red buses splash across London Bridge. Cranes, one white, one blue, make their majestic swings at distant building sites." Ali goes on to note that Woolf's industrial, imperial London is gone, replaced by a gentrified, sleek, commercial metropolis, full of joggers, bankers, and Starbucks franchises. Legacies of the empire are still present in the city, though. Ali notes, "The foods

continue to come from the pastures of the whole world but appear, as if by some miracle, served with fine linens and deferential smiles…. Chefs on a break smoke cigarettes and speak their languages, Polish, Russian, Portuguese… When I stop for iced latte I am served by an Indian and pay a girl from Belarus." No longer does the empire materialize in London in the form of heavy industry and material goods; now the primary legacies of empire are human beings and the neoliberal economy's service-oriented industries. The gleam and gloss of the new London covers up the crimes that run rampant under the service: banking practices run outside standard regulations (this article was written pre-Great Recession), potential underpayment of immigrant workers, etc.

Ali and Woolf are discussing what is typically called central London, but the connections between that area and Zadie Smith's northwest London are clear. John T. Parry notes the conjunctions between "colonialism, imperialism, and modern systems of production and trade" (210), all of which may be noted in multicultural, gentrifying northwest London as well as service- and banking-economy oriented central London. Though they do not necessarily exist in a simple cause-and-effect relationship, imperial legacies have mediated and amplified the United Kingdom's increasing reliance on evolving neoliberal economic policies to create the London we see today. This London's literature, especially that of the twenty-first century, often insists on the importance and prevalence of various forms of crime as ways to negotiate these capitalist and imperialist legacies. As stated in the introduction, the term "capitalized postcolonial crime" refers to crimes committed in the contemporary era that, when analyzed through a postcolonial lens, reveal unreparated, or unaddressed, historical crimes of empire and associated capitalism. Capitalized postcolonial crime, in this context, is caught up in a web of white Britons' postcolonial anxieties surrounding the "Other," which the literature ironizes via depictions of home invasion and

murder; both forms of crime are caught up in their own webs of neoliberalism and imperial legacies.

In this chapter, I show that Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, set in posh and affluent Fitzrovia, inhabits a space similarly ideologically determined as that which Zadie Smith depicts in *NW*, which takes the previously mapped neighborhoods of Kilburn and Willesden as its setting. While there are many differences between the two novels and the sections of the city each novel inhabits, I demonstrate that both use instances and discourses of capitalized postcolonial crime to come to terms with the city that imperialism and neoliberalism has created. In the case of *Saturday,* readers are presented with a capitalized postcolonial crime analogous to Britain's neocolonial adventure in Iraq, while in *NW,* we encounter a crime that dramatizes the experiences of black and brown people on Britain's own domestic soil. By looking at these two novels in tandem, I demonstrate how capitalized postcolonial crime manifests in Britain's neocolonial and racist adventures both at home and abroad.

"There Is No/An Alternative": The Creation of Neoliberal and Neoimperial London

In the video for their 1985 single, "A Pair of Brown Eyes," the members of the band The Pogues run through the streets of a futuristic, dystopian London. Though many elements of London life are present and recognizable, from the Tube to the National Gallery and ordinary local pubs, the city is also plastered with giant, Big Brother-esque posters of Margaret Thatcher's face. These posters are everywhere: inside subway carriages, on the walls of ordinary buildings, the interiors of private homes. The posters are composed and positioned in such a way that it seems like Thatcher's eyes are constantly on the viewer, no matter which way he or she may turn, though there is an extended scene where a group of people graffiti over her eyes so that she may no longer watch over her citizens. Moreover,

most people in this version of London have some sort of eye covering, whether those be blindfolds, sunglasses, or masks, to suggest either that the majority of the inhabitants of the city are blind to her presence even as she casts a shadow over their daily lives or that they are trying to evade and resist her omnipresent view.

While perhaps a bit heavy-handed, The Pogues's music video is a useful jumping-off point for beginning to theorize the criminal city (by which I mean a city marked by capitalized postcolonial crime) of London. Though the London of the video is dark and ominous, no direct crimes or acts of violence are committed, even as the viewer is half-expecting them; rather, the Pogues suggest, Thatcher's presence is itself the crime we are anticipating. Though contemporary literature tends not to explicitly acknowledge Thatcher's connections to the imperial systems that played a large role in creating her ideology and policies, much of the literature set in the contemporary city subversively links Thatcher's neoliberal revolution, capitalized postcolonial crime, and the empire's legacies.

It is generally agreed that, with Margaret Thatcher at the helm, the United Kingdom actively rolled back the postwar Keynesian consensus that had endorsed strong social programs, a mixed economy rather than pure free marketism, and vigorous government action. This "welfare capitalist" economic structure, spurred to creation by the 1942 Beveridge Report, had created the socialized National Health Service, invested in community projects and development, and implemented massive educational reforms, among other socially-oriented schemes. These economic and social reforms occurred in tandem with the severe contraction of the British Empire and significant immigration to the former imperial center from the former colonies; both of these developments had a hand in tremendously re-envisioning the British social landscape. Thatcher's dismantling of this welfare state in the late 1970s and 1980s, moreover, coincided with a rising sense of dissatisfaction from the

postcolonial immigrants and their first-generation British offspring, as well as an uptick in the rates of crime (especially violent crime). Though these trends are historically correlated, it is an oversimplification to claim causation. Yet, the interplay between postcolonial anxieties, a decaying social net, and a sense of rise crime is key to understanding how these forces worked together each other to create the grid that underlies the city that we see today. As historian Frederick Cooper notes, "we can probe the continued traces today of colonial histories while still acknowledging that these histories are not reducible to a colonial effect" (32). In this chapter, I will take these traces and treat them alongside the crumbling of the postwar economic consensus and the rise in acts of and anxiety over crime to consider how postcolonialism, crime, and neoliberalism work as a generative matrix in the contemporary city of London.

In the British context, neoliberalism is generally thought of as a suite of economic policies favored by Margaret Thatcher which has led to increasing inequality, a fetishizing of business and capital, gentrification, a fraying of social services and collective bargaining associations, the deindustrialization of the North, the reconstruction of urban spaces based on market imperatives, and a general replacement of the importance of community with the importance of the individual. "Freedom" and "globalization" tend to be buzzwords, as do "competitiveness," "flexibility," and "entrepreneurship." Manfred B. Steger and Ravi K. Roy note that in the 1970s and 1980s United States and United Kingdom, "an entirely new breed of liberals sought a way forward by reviving the old doctrine of classical liberalism under the novel conditions of globalization" (9). Classical liberalism was indeed one of the main economic theories purveyed by the British Empire at its height, but it is incorrect to simply make a one-to-one translation to the contemporary era and merely call neoliberalism the economic policy of a neoimperialism. Instead, I argue that Thatcher-introduced, New

Labour-modified neoliberalism works in a postcolonial London context to create a city notably marked by both processes, resulting in strong instances of capitalized postcolonial crime.

In *The Making of London: London in Contemporary Literature,* Sebastian Groes frankly states, "If you want to understand London, you have to understand money" (12). He makes a more specific claim later in the same book, writing that during the Thatcherite "turning point" in the 1980s, writers have used their skills to "resist and reverse the increasing fragmentation of the metropolis" (251). My argument builds off Groes's insight, as well as Sarah Brouillette's that "literature can operate as a site of resistance… [against] the excesses and inequities of neoliberal capital" (13), by arguing that contemporary literature, specifically *Saturday* and *NW*, obliquely critiques the space capitalized postcolonial crime has made. This criticism is not on the surface in the way of the Pogues music video; much like the presence of imperial legacies and contemporary neoliberal processes, imaginative critiques of the city are only apparent upon the unpacking of the novels.

I use the term "resistance" to refer to these imaginative critiques of the city. While McEwan and Smith critique their city via textual creations, both the characters in their novels and the novel itself may be engaged in acts of resistance. "Resistance" may seem like a reductive term, in that it is often interpreted to imply a rigid resistance/subordination binary within which acceptance implies subordination and there are no other options. Saba Mahmood has noted that what academics often call "resistance" might not truly be radical actions, but rather an assertion of a subject's right to participate in neoliberal and imperial processes (9). By "resistance," I do not necessarily mean the very active, conscious actions often implied by the term (though it can be active and conscious), nor do I mean a neoliberal individualist claiming of the right to be in the public sphere. By "resistance," I mean that the

novels engage in resisting the vision proffered by empire and neoliberalism by offering up a textual critique of the city portrayed in that same novel's pages. Individual subjects in the novels may also engage in acts of resistance, even if they are unconscious of these actions. Much as actors in the city are sometimes, but not always, attuned to the historical, political, and other factors that shape their spatial landscape, subjects in the novel may be un/aware of their role in imaginative visions of resistance, and how they are intrinsically tied to various forms of capitalized postcolonial crime.

It might make sense to argue that, in a neoliberal society, crime will naturally go up; neoliberal capitalism creates a system of such intense competition that, to borrow the old phrase, "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." However, while the late 1970s and 1980s (the time of Thatcher's earliest national prominence) saw an increase in crime, despite her tough-on-crime rhetoric, crime has been going down in the United Kingdom since that heyday. However, what is most interesting about this information is that people across the country overwhelmingly *feel* as though crime is increasing.[5] This increase in anxiety over and perception of "ordinary" crime works against a more insidious backdrop of capitalized postcolonial crime. Both *Saturday* and *NW* take one or more crimes as key moments in their narratives; other contemporary British novels as wide-ranging as Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), and Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* (2015) take crime as a central concern of their works to illustrate something larger about society.[6] As Heather Worthington writes, "The genre [crime fiction] deals with that which disrupts society, often in the process revealing that society's ideologies, while what

[5] For a full-length report on this, see Ian Cobain's 31 August 2014 article for *The Guardian,* "Tough Case to Crack: The Mystery of Britain's Falling Crime Rate."
[6] For an excellent reading of *Never Let Me Go* as a crime novel, see Mark Seltzer's chapter, "Playing Dead: Crime as a Social System" in Bran Nicol, Patricia Pulham, and Eugene McNulty's *Crime Culture: Figuring Criminality in Fiction and Film.*

constitutes crime can itself be determined by ideology and politics" (160-161). Though none of these novels, *Saturday* and *NW* included, are crime novels as such, the presence of crime in them can help us to more closely examine the deeper ideologies (capitalized postcolonial crimes) at work. As Bran Nicol, Patricia Pulham, and Eugene McNulty write, "Modern culture shapes or even produces forms of criminality" (3). If we take this to be true, what is it that the novel is doing to show us about the forms of criminality that are being produced in contemporary British society?

My discussion of the novel builds on the framework established by Ian Watt. Watt famously theorized that "the rise of the novel" was tied to the development of capitalism, urban life, individualism, imperialism, and other social processes (1957), and many of the novels he cites as paradigmatic of the novel's "rise" feature crime prominently (the best example of this being Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*). Though many scholars have poked holes in his theory through the years, calling it too simplistic or too teleologically-minded, Watt's bundling of these historical developments and the ideologies linked to each of them remains a generative way of understanding how these elements are linked in the British context, particularly surrounding discussions of capitalism and economics. Dominic Head, in *The State of the Novel*, references Watt by noting that "we should be accustomed to seeing the relationship between ideology, economics, and the form of the novel" (34). Scholars such as Sarah Brouillette (*Literature and the Creative Economy*) continue to engage in this sort of scholarship by taking economic ideologies like Thatcherism and New Labour and thinking about the ways in which they play out in contemporary literature.

Dominic Head points out that Thatcherism and the novel are intrinsically linked, in that there is a "presumed renaissance of the novel in the post-consensus period, coincident with the rise of Thatcherism" (11). Though Head does not buy into the idea that

Thatcherism produced an explosion of creativity from writers in the late twentieth century, he does acknowledge a linkage between neoliberal economics and the novel form; and why not? Both reading a novel and engaging in neoliberal economic processes are often best understood as individualistic activities; both negotiate multiple voices or entities to present one voice or entity as primary; both are usually thought of as teleological in nature, in that a novel has a beginning, middle, and end, and neoliberal economics engages in a process leading to the accumulation of more wealth.[7] While this is of course a very broad formulation, it is a useful starting point from which I will built throughout this and subsequent chapters, especially when I bring in the portrayal of capitalized postcolonial crime in *Saturday* and *NW*; the crimes in these texts, even, are largely personal and individualistic in nature, pointing to a conjoining of logics of the novel form and a neoliberal age.

Sebastian Groes notes that the "changing character" of London is often due to "*laissez-faire* attitudes," which in turn lead to "an increasingly divided world of haves and have-nots" (*The Making of London* 2). Alexander Beaumont observes that "the disaggregating effects of Thatcherism were most visible in urban areas" (11). But what have all these things to do with the empire and its legacies? Thomas Piketty notes that Britain, as a "leading colonial and financial [power] in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries," has a history that is "indispensable for studying what has been called the 'first globalization' of finance and trade (1870-1914), a period that is in many ways similar to the 'second globalization,' which has been under way since the 1970s" (28). He further notes that Thatcher proposed to

[7] This idea, though commonly held, obviously does not hold up under even the most cursory of inspections; novels certainly do not have to be teleological in nature, and neoliberal economic policies lead to boom and bust cycles, most clearly seen in the global recession of 2008. Yet, my point here is that the narrative or most commonly understanding of each is that they are progressive and teleological in nature.

"return to pure nineteenth-century capitalism" (98) upon her election, further doubling down on the idea that Thatcher's neoliberalism was, in part, an attempt to return to the Empire's economic policies and structures.[8] Her famous proclamation "there is no alternative" to neoliberalism is often understood to refer to Thatcher's power and grasp over British economic and political scenes, leaving no room to brook dissent.

What effects do Thatcher's imperially-inflected politics, such as her handling of the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland, her favoring of economic policies initially tested by the formal British Empire, and foreign policy adventures such as the Falklands War, have on the criminal city today? Imperial economic policies which had been heavily reliant on free trade, market-oriented capitalism, and deregulation of essential industries experienced a resurgence during the Thatcher and later, Tony Blair years.[9] This resurgence coincided with a growing unrest in British cities, particularly London, as well as a return to an attempt at imperial glory, in the guise of Tony Blair's cooperation in the American-led invasion of Iraq. Importantly, Anna Marie Smith notes that "Thatcher explicitly recognized that Britain's decline had taken place in a post-colonial context" and thus went on to "[phrase] her conception of the national 'mission' in suitably neo-imperial terms" (4). While Thatcher should be held primarily responsible for the creation of the criminal city, Tony Blair's role as prime minister in the latter years of the twentieth century and into the early years of the twenty-first did a great deal to maintain and strengthen the policies Thatcher originally implemented. The combination of Britain's growing neo-imperialism and commitment to

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[8] Literary critic Julian Wolfreys (*Writing London)* and cultural critic Bill Schwarz (*Memories of Empire* trilogy) have also articulated ways in which Thatcher and many of her policies are legacies of imperialism.

[9] See P.J. Cain, "Economics and Empire: The Metropolitan Context"; Martin Lynn, "British Policy, Trade, and Informal Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century"; D.K. Fieldhouse, "The Metropolitan Economics of Empire"; Patrick K. O'Brien, "Inseparable Connections: Trade, Economy, Fiscal State, and the Expansion of Empire, 1688-1815"; and many others.

neoliberal economic policies in the Thatcher years and after created a city which Nora Plesske calls "post-Fordist, postcolonial and postmodern" (353), a city where the gaps between rich and poor are both blatantly evident and premised at least in part on imperial racial logics, where the market economy is worshipped at the expense of a social safety net, and where community ties are displaced in favor of the valorization of the individual, replicating the imperial logics referenced above. This hyper-competitive, self-focused, racially tense city creates a perfect context for an intense anxiety about crime, and a way for capitalized postcolonial crime to assert itself.

Both Ian McEwan and Zadie Smith grapple with the legacies of imperialism, the presence of crime, and the effects of neoliberal economics in their respective works. Sebastian Groes yokes the two together in *The Making of London* as examples of authors in whose work history and myth are "buried beneath the surface of the text" (9). Excavating this history and figuring out the ways in which their texts respond to it is a key element of this project. We will begin with Ian McEwan's *Saturday*. As Groes points out, the author's subject material often "[gives] voice to an anxiety about social, cultural, and moral declines after the end of Britain's imperial power had become vividly apparent" (6); in *Saturday*, McEwan uses capitalized postcolonial crime to give voice to that anxiety.

"No Such Thing As Society": The Withdrawal from The City in *Saturday*

Henry Perowne, the protagonist of Ian McEwan's 2005 novel *Saturday*, is a very specific type of man. He is a middle-aged white neurosurgeon, with a loving wife, intelligent and beautiful children, and a successful career. He lives in London, runs long-distance races, enjoys cooking, visits his mother in an elderly care facility. Besides his prowess in the medical field, there is very little to distinguish him from the masses of other upper-class white men who populate posh districts of north and central London. His very lack of

distinguishing features is, in itself, remarkable. In other words, he is exactly the type of man to whom Margaret Thatcher's rhetoric and policies were meant to appeal – the archetypal, almost mythical, "typical" white English man. Perowne, even a decade and a half after Thatcher's removal from power, is well within her ideological grasp.

Perowne has no strong stances in his intellectual life, either. We are told, on the very first page, that as he wakes up at 3:40 in the morning, he is not disturbed "even by the state of the world." This general indifference to the world around him continues throughout the novel; though he is living in London on February 15, 2003, the day of a large anti-Iraq war protest (in fact, many British media sources from the *Daily Mail* to the BBC claimed that this protest was the largest protest of any kind in London's history), he has no strong feelings one way or the other on the impending invasion. He does not appear to be interested in, or even aware of, debates surrounding economic and social justice; as we shall see, they simply never seem to occur to him. At one point, reaching something approaching empathy and identification with another human being different from him, he is idling at a red light, observing three women dressed in burkas on the sidewalk, trying to find an address. He broods, initially: "He can't help his distaste, it's visceral. How dismal, that anyone should be obliged to walk around so entirely obliterated. At least these ladies don't have the leather beaks. They really turn his stomach" (125). However, the instant the light turns, he thinks, "He's caught himself in a nascent rant. Let Islamic dress codes be! What should he care about burkas?" (126). The very second Perowne allows his mind to wander and to let a strong opinion enter his head (however ethnocentric and distasteful), he catches himself and shuts it down. This is Henry Perowne: a good neoliberal subject, benefitting from Thatcherite economics, checked out from his surrounding community, and reliant only on himself, his family, and his immediate work associates.

Yet, as seemingly distanced from larger society as Henry Perowne is, his Saturday is witness to two earth-shattering capitalized postcolonial crimes, one public and one private. Henry encounters both these crimes in one day's time, for *Saturday* takes the form, much like Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, of the lived experience of twenty-four hours in London. While *Mrs Dalloway* shifts viewpoints and perspectives throughout the text, *Saturday* does not, excising the strong heteroglossic and multilayered present in the earlier novel and bending the experience of the city much more strongly in favor of one individual. Nevertheless, McEwan clearly asks his readers to draw parallels between his own novel and Woolf's; both novels feature a plane as a key plot point, both deal with the trauma of war, both depict characters dealing with mental health issues who later commit violent acts, both turn on the preparations for a party later that evening. But while *Mrs Dalloway* is commonly understood as a modernist celebration of the city, *Saturday*'s relationship to the city is not quite so clear-cut, in part due to the massively different city London is in 2003 as compared to the same urban space in 1925. Both temporal Londons are haunted by war, imperialism, runaway capitalism leading to inequality, but the transition is from imperial to neo-imperial, liberal to neoliberal city. Even Perowne's irresponsible rumination, "As a Londoner, you could grow nostalgic for the IRA. Even as your legs left your body, you might care to remember that the cause was a united Ireland" (34) seems quaint and old-fashioned; neoliberal London is not nearly as concerned with nationalist protest and old-fashioned imperial wars. 2003 London is more neoliberal and neo-imperial in nature, marked by issues from postwar Commonwealth immigration to huge gaps between rich and poor to the neo-imperial, capitalized postcolonially criminal war in Iraq (as opposed to the Northern Irish Troubles, which Perowne seems to think were more clear-cut and comprehensible). Even the name of the novel is neo-imperial in nature; Britain is in the "Saturday" of its empire, attempting one last

gasp of imperial glory in the form of the invasion of Iraq and subsequent exploitation of its natural resources in the service of capital. Yet, Perowne's lack of ability to engage with his surroundings is a key element of tension in the text.

Saturday begins with Henry Perowne waking "some hours before dawn" and going to stand at his bedroom window. He is unsure what wakes him, but he takes the opportunity to look out over the city in the quiet hush of the early morning.[10] He thinks, looking out "towards a foreshortened jumble of facades, scaffolding and pitched roofs," that "the city is a success, a brilliant invention, a biological masterpiece – millions teaming around the accumulated and layered achievements of the centuries, as though around a coral reef, sleeping, working, entertaining themselves, harmonious for the most part, nearly everyone wanting it to work" (3). This rather utopic vision of the city has been read as Perowne's wholehearted, modernist endorsement of the city,[11] and it is fair to say that Perowne's rhapsodic view of the "brilliant invention" smacks of the urbanophile modernists. This criminal city, however, is a rather more complex depiction of London than a straightforward love, and in order to fully understand how *Saturday* inhabits its neoliberal and capitalized postcolonially criminal space, it is necessary to distinguish the relationship between the author McEwan and his literary creation Perowne.

It is surprising how many literary critics have understood Perowne's worldview in *Saturday* as being in lockstep with McEwan's or the novel's own. It is true that Henry Perowne and Ian McEwan share many biographical details in common, from living in Fitzrovia to some of the more specific elements of each's families. In a 2005 interview, Laura

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[10] As Perowne can see the BT Tower from his window (2), easily within his eyesight would be the Gherkin/St. Mary Axe; this detail is important to note for the *NW* section of this paper.

[11] See Sebastian Groes, "Ian McEwan and the Modernist Consciousness of the City in *Saturday*," and Sarah Brouillette, *Literature and the Creative Economy*.

Miller of *Salon* also notes, "One of the many things they [Perowne and McEwan] share is a complicated attitude toward the invasion of Iraq." Yet, this is by no means indicates that Perowne is meant to be read as a one-to-one translation of McEwan, nor that we are to understand McEwan as endorsing Perowne's viewpoint; this is a work of fiction, after all. Indeed, in the same *Salon* interview cited above, McEwan tells Miller, "Most of the novel is fiction, an entire invention, but I decided to use whatever was to hand." Yet, in his assessment of the novel in *The New York Review of Books,* John Banville seems unwilling to entertain any possibility that Perowne and *Saturday* may have divergent opinions on the world Henry Perowne inhabits. Banville points out, correctly, that, "owning things is important to Perowne, an unashamed beneficiary of the fruits of capitalism." He notes, moreover, "the politics of the book is banal," that "*Saturday* has the feel of a neoliberal polemic gone badly wrong," concluding, straightforwardly, "*Saturday* is a dismayingly bad book." Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace seems similarly attached to the idea that Henry Perowne and Ian McEwan can be closely conflated. She notes, "the novel seems to imply that the author endorses Henry's perspective" (466), saying, "McEwan's novel explicitly acknowledges neither an evolving story about Britain's imperial past nor the contested public debate about its multicultural future" (469), regretfully deciding that "as Henry looks out over the city of London, he fails to register the momentous social, political, and cultural changes that have swept across England in the wake of England's imperial greatness" (467). In Kowaleski Wallace's and Banville's views, then, McEwan, like Henry, is not interested in engaging with questions of empire, neoliberal economics, or the contemporary city.

On the contrary, Perowne's very obliviousness to the political, social, and historical factors that surround him – what Kowaleski Wallace calls his "[failure] to register" events in postwar British history and what Banville calls "a neoliberal polemic gone badly wrong" – is

in itself what gives the novel a subtle power to critique the legacies of the empire and Thatcher. Sarah Brouillette points to "the intimate links between author, character, and reader" and wonders if these links "may be precisely the point of this mode of narration" (184). The close links are indeed the point, though not in the way Brouillette means; the attentive reader is meant to unpick these seemingly close links in a way that the blinkered Henry cannot or will not. Though Perowne is clearly very good at his job and intelligent enough to become a renowned physician, he seems to lack the critical thinking capabilities that lead to his failure to yes, fully take in "London's vibrant multicultural scene" (Kowaleski Wallace 465) or to ask "what does England become in the wake of its imperial greatness?" (Kowaleski Wallace 466). As I will continue to demonstrate, Henry is not a bad man, or even an unintelligent one; he is simply a product of his neoliberal city, which carries with it a certain inability to be able to be critical of his surroundings and his place within them, much like the blindfolded individuals pictured in "A Pair of Brown Eyes." Though he is "an habitual observer of his own moods" (4), he is constitutionally unable to move outside his assessment of himself to an assessment of the world around him. He is the neoliberal's obsession with the individual taken to its most logical conclusion, and thus, to the careful reader, McEwan, via his distance from his protagonist, is able to use Henry's experiences of the city and the capitalized postcolonial crime he encounters to offer up thoughtful critiques of the neoliberal city.

After we read Perowne's thoughts on the city, we learn that he does not enjoy reading – his poet daughter, Daisy, believes him to have "astounding ignorance… poor taste and insensitivity" (4) – and that he also has no time for religion or spirituality. We also learn that he works so consistently as to have little room for much else in his life. Gary Becker and other University of Chicago economists have pointed to the fact that, in a neoliberal age, the

capitalist spirit engulfs all of life, and this certainly seems true for Perowne, for he notes to himself, "profoundly asleep at nine thirty on a Friday night – this is modern professional life" (5). Yet, Perowne does not seem at all inclined to question why he needs to work so hard, or why he has so little time to or interest in reading literature or engaging with questions of a spiritual or theological nature – he simply accepts, as a received and unquestioned notion, that his life is full of work and that even sex with his wife must be "snatched… form the jaws of work" (22-23). Without work, the reader learns, "Henry and Rosalind Perowne are nothing" (23) – a troubling statement, and one McEwan seems to be aware is problematic, but that Henry does not. Like a true neoliberal, he has no time for subjects, such as literature or history or religion, that are not inherently "useful," only leaving room for science and work. Troubling as this may seem, it does not seem to bother Henry. Given that he has little to no time outside the hospital for even his own family at times, of course it does not occur to him to become an involved citizen, to engage with the community, to join civic organizations or volunteer or run for low-level political office. Perowne's method of being in the world is profoundly individualistic, with the only people outside himself he engages with being coworkers or family members. He is Margaret Thatcher's aphorism brought to life: "There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families." Indeed, Perowne tries his hardest to cut himself off from the city at large, living as he does behind front doors that come equipped with "three stout Banham locks, two black iron bolts as old as the house, two tempered steel security chains, a spyhole with a brass cover, the box of electronics that works the Entryphone system, the red panic button, the alarm pad with its softly gleaming digits" (37). Lest the reader miss the point, McEwan continues, "Such defences, such mundane embattlement: beware of the city's poor, the drug-addicted, the downright bad" (37). Such

an intense level of security reflects the larger societal anxiety over an increase in crime, but, as we will see later, the existence of such security doesn't make much difference.

While standing on his balcony, Perowne sees a plane on fire descending to the ground. It occurs to him, late, that "there's something he should be doing" (16), yet he does nothing but continue to watch the plane fall out of the sky.[12] He goes downstairs to turn on the news, and finds his son, Theo, a blues musician, in the kitchen coming in after a late night. There is a hint here of a capability in Perowne to open up outside himself and his work – he notes that music has the ability to remind him of a "buried dissatisfaction in his own life, of the missing element" (28)[13] – but this thought is quickly banished by the more pragmatic need to attend to the material catastrophe he has just witnessed. The news, however, does not cover the plane crash, instead going over topics such as Hans Blix, the UN weapons inspector who was unable to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq; antiwar protests scheduled for that day in London; and "a tennis championship in Florida disrupted by a woman with a bread knife…" (29). Though the plane story is not covered, the image of it burning in the sky, alongside the three selected news stories (all related to crime in their own way), lends a veneer of fear and danger to the day, casting a pall over what should have been a nice day culminating in a family dinner party and a welcoming home of his daughter, Daisy, from Paris.

Ultimately, this mood of danger and militarism makes sense for twenty-first century London. Steger and Roy have pointed out that the "pronounced neoconservative impulse in foreign affairs" exhibited by many neoliberal leaders is in conflict with a "neoliberal vision of

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[12] Contrast the catastrophic plane crash to the plane's skywriting in *Mrs Dalloway,* which has the ability to bring all the citizens of London together in wonder.

[13] Later in the day, when Perowne goes to listen to Theo's band rehearse, he is momentarily moved by the communal powers of music, one of the only moments in the text where it seems Perowne has the ability to move beyond himself and his immediate surroundings.

establishing a single global free market" (45). In the British context, Steger and Roy refer to Thatcher's decision to get involved in the "chauvinistic" (45) Falklands War, but the foreign affairs principles espoused by Thatcher can also be understood in the Blairite/New Labour context. Brouillette writes that New Labour essentially continued Thatcher's governing philosophies but with a twist, developing a "Third Way" between full-bodied Thatcherism and the welfare capitalism of the traditional Labour party (3). This "Third Way" can be seen in Blair's decision to piggyback onto a neoimperial, neoconservative, American-led invasion of Iraq. This "Third Way" is not quite full-fledged imperialistic, in that Britain did not lead the invasion, but it is close; the economic context of 2003 London is not quite Thatcher's full dream, but it is close. What is interesting about the city McEwan is working with is that it combines elements of neoliberal economics – consistent work, capitalist accumulation, and a focus on the individual and the family for Henry Perowne – with decidedly neoconservative military positions – the impending war in Iraq. The contemporary context of London has fused two seemingly incongruous political philosophies to create a new kind of urban space, one where both economic and political legacies of empire live comfortably next to each other, much as New Labour created the Third Way out of neoliberalism and welfare capitalism.[14]

While sitting with Theo in the kitchen, Perowne reflects on "a recent Sunday evening" when "Theo came up with an aphorism: the bigger you think, the crappier it looks"(35). When asked to expand on this idea, Theo says,

[14] Of course, the decidedly imperial overtones of the Iraq War should be taken into account here. This is most explicitly voiced in the novel by Daisy, who tells her father, "when the Americans have invaded, they won't be interested in democracy, they won't spend any money on Iraq, they'll take the oil and build their military bases and run the place like a colony" (191).

> When we go on about the big things, the political situation, global warming, world poverty, it all looks really terrible, with nothing getting better, nothing to look forward to. But when I think small, closer in – you know, a girl I've just met, or this song we're going to do with Chas, or snowboarding next month, then it looks great. So this is going to be my motto – think small. (35)

This is, succinctly, a horrifying life philosophy. Yet, it is perfectly in line with the context McEwan's characters are operating within. Unsurprisingly, Banville takes issue with this excerpt (as well he should), noting that "we assume, mistakenly" that "Perowne, or McEwan, will challenge [it] as vapid and self-serving." When neither author nor protagonist does, Banville concludes, "think small" might "also be, amazingly, the motto of McEwan's book."

This seems to me a drastically one-dimensional reading of this text. Indeed, as Banville points out, Theo's refusal to engage with concepts like world poverty and focus instead on going snowboarding is juvenile and morally bankrupt, though perhaps expected from an 18-year-old; that same reader, however, would be rightfully dismayed at his father's lack of challenge to such an adolescent mindset. Indeed, his father, "remembering this now," switches the conversation from geopolitical events to asking, "How was the gig?" (35). This memory and ensuing conversation, in particular, highlights the disconnect between Henry Perowne as subject and *Saturday*'s goals as a novel; while Perowne is oblivious and blinkered, the novel is anything but. This conversation and others like them, as well as the capitalized postcolonial crimes that take center stage in the novel, serve to draw the reader's attention to the construction of contemporary London and the troubling ways neoliberal subjects inhabit the city – primarily by withdrawal from critical engagement with the community and full

absorption in private, individual lives.[15] Dominic Head, in *The State of the Novel: Britain and Beyond*, claims that McEwan's "deluded (and even solipsistic) narrators… must be seen in the context of a society in which communal possibilities are fast evaporating" (35). With that in mind, let us return to summarizing the remains of Perowne's day.

As the novel and the day proceed, Perowne heads out to play squash with an American colleague, Jay Strauss. En route, he nearly drives through the antiwar protest, but it is a narrow miss; however, soon after crossing the protestors' route, he gets into a minor car accident with three men, named Baxter, Nark, and Nigel.[16] Baxter is clearly the ringleader of the small troupe, and Perowne diagnoses Baxter (correctly) with Huntington's Disease. Baxter, distressed at losing face in front of his cronies, leaves the scene of the crime, but the scene has been set for the rest of Perowne's Saturday. This scene neatly melds together the two major crimes that *Saturday* explores: the neoliberal, personalized home break-in Baxter will perform later that evening, and the neoconservative, imperialistic, public capitalized postcolonial crime of the impending invasion of Iraq.

After the squash match, Perowne goes to buy fish for the family dinner that evening, visits his mother in an elderly care facility, and goes home to begin cooking for the evening. He drives everywhere, in a city with a renowned and efficient public transportation system, further highlighting his individualistic method of being in the city, and never has sustained

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[15] To be fair, some critics are aware that the novel "does not simply endorse Perowne's view of things," as Martin Ryle writes in "Anosognosia, or the Political Unconscious: Limits of Vision in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*" (26). Ryle notes that McEwan is "voicing his narration in Perowne's consistently reasonable-sounding tones, while expecting us to resist and question his views" (27). For other thoughts along these lines, see Christina Root, "A Melodiousness at Odds with Pessimism: Ian McEwan's *Saturday*," Molly Clark Hilliard's "'When Desert Armies Stand Ready to Fight': Re-Reading McEwan's *Saturday* and Arnold's 'Dover Beach,'" and sections of Alexander Beaumont's chapter on *Saturday* in *Contemporary British Fiction and the Cultural Politics of Disenfranchisement.*

[16] Slyly, McEwan names the pub on the street the Jeremy Bentham (93), calling to mind neoliberal philosophies of utilitarianism, surveillance, and control.

engagement with anyone outside of his family or work. Throughout his day, he believes numerous times he sees Baxter's BMW out of the corner of his eye, but for the most part is able to brush away or ignore the image.

As Perowne drives about the city, he consistently allows himself to revisit personal memories. The tension between Perowne's and *Saturday*'s understandings of the city is brought to a head as Perowne reminisces about the time he met Prime Minister Tony Blair, at a gala to celebrate the opening of the Tate Modern.[17] He and Rosalind somehow break away from the party and end up in a deserted gallery full of Rothkos. As they move into the next room, it is empty save for an exhibit consisting of a low pile of bricks and, inexplicably, the prime minister and his entourage. The narrator tells the reader:

> The Perownes had come in on an oddly silent moment. Blair and the director smiled and posed for the cameras, whose pictures would also include the famous bricks. The flashes twinkled randomly, but none of the photographers was calling out in the usual way. The calmness of the scene seemed an extension of the Rothko gallery next door. (145)

The oddness of the scene is taken further when the museum director, who knows Rosalind, waves the Perownes over to meet the prime minister. To Perowne's surprise, when Blair shakes his hand, "Blair was looking at him with recognition and interest. The gaze was intelligent and intense, and unexpectedly youthful. So much had yet to happen" (145). Blair and Perowne then have this conversation:

> He [Blair] said, "I really admire the work you're doing."

[17] This is another point of comparison between *Saturday* and *Mrs Dalloway,* as the prime minister attends Clarissa Dalloway's party.

Perowne said automatically, "Thank you." But he was impressed. It was just conceivable, he supposed, that Blair with his good memory and reputation for absorbing the details of his ministers' briefs, would have heard of the hospital's excellent report last month – all targets met – and even of the special mention of the neurosurgery department's exceptional results. Procedures twenty-three per cent up on last year. Later Henry realized what an absurd notion that was. (145)

Neoliberal rhetoric aside – the care aspect of Henry's profession has been brushed aside in favor of discussion of "targets," "results," and procedures going up – the scene is fascinating in its revelation of McEwan's mindset, rather than the ambivalent Perowne's. The prime minister goes on to say to Perowne, "In fact, we've got two of your paintings hanging in Downing Street. Cherie and I adore them" (145-46).

"No, no," Perowne said.

"Yes, yes," the Prime Minister insisted, pumping his hand. He was in no mood for artistic modesty.

"No, I think you – "

"Honestly. They're in the dining room."

"You're making a mistake," Perowne said, and on that word there passed through the Prime Minister's features for the briefest instant a look of sudden alarm, of fleeting self-doubt. No one else saw his expression freeze and his eyes budge minimally. A hairline fracture had appeared in the assurance of power.

> Then he continued as before, no doubt making the rapid calculation that given all the people pushing in around them trying to listen, there could be no turning back. Not without derisive press tomorrow.
>
> "Anyway. They truly are marvellous. Congratulations." (146)

And thus the scene ends. Though Perowne does not take that any further than wondering "if such moments, stabs of cold panicky doubt, are an increasing part of the Prime Minister's days, or nights" (146), I read this scene as being full of larger implications. Though Perowne does not recognize the monumental significance in his remark, "You're making a mistake," or in Blair's momentary self-doubt, the novel is telegraphing to the reader that, in fact, Blair is making a mistake. The novel's viewpoint is that his backpacking onto an American neo-imperial war is doomed to failure; his attempt to drag Britain away from Saturday and to the Wednesday of imperial greatness, will not succeed. His being party to the illegal and capitalized, postcolonially criminal invasion of Iraq, going hand in hand with his neoliberal economic crimes as it does, will not end well. With subtle moves like this one and others, *Saturday* undermines the neoliberal city by challenging the neoliberal subject's experience of it: in other words, by calling our attention to Blair's public crimes, we are able to engage in modes of critique against them.

And as for the private capitalized postcolonial crime structuring the novel, the climactic scene of *Saturday* has, rightfully, received a large share of critical attention. As Perowne is cooking fish stew for the evening's get-together, various members of his nuclear family start trickling in – first, his daughter, fresh off the train from Paris, followed by his father-in-law, John Grammaticus, then Theo. Rosalind is last to arrive, and she is escorted by none other than Baxter, who has a knife to her ribs, having broken in past the house with its multitude of locks against "the city's poor, the drug-addicted, the downright bad" (37). He

has Nigel with him, and the two force the family members to take out their cell phones and put them on the table, thus severing their even-nominal connections to the outside city. Baxter begins the violence of the evening by breaking Grammaticus's nose, and follows up by forcing Daisy to strip. When she is naked, it is revealed to everyone in the room that she is pregnant, much to Henry's surprise. Made uncomfortable at the sight of a pregnant woman, Baxter casts about for a new object of ridicule and lands on a proof copy of Daisy's volume of poems, *My Saucy Bark* (the title being an allusion to a Shakespeare sonnet). He tells her to read a poem, and Nigel follows up by saying "Let's hear your dirtiest one. Something really filthy" (228). Her grandfather calls out to her to "do one you used to say for me" (228) (the reader is aware that Grammaticus would give the child Daisy pocket money for each canonical poem she learned by heart and recited to him), and she understands him immediately, opening her book but reciting from memory Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach." Here again, McEwan distances himself from Perowne and Perowne from the reader; the reader can suss out fairly early that she is reading "Dover Beach" (especially as the poem is printed as an appendix to the novel), but Henry is none the wiser. When she finishes, Baxter is elated, charged up by the effects of the poetry, and newly susceptible to persuasive words from Perowne. Perowne tells him he has papers on a promising treatment for Huntington's Disease upstairs, and, fresh from the effects of the poetry recital, Baxter is talked into following him upstairs. Once there, Perowne and Theo work together to overpower Baxter and throw him down the stairs, knocking him out cold.

This scene has produced almost as many different reactions as there are interested literary critics. Martin Ryle is of the opinion that "we can read this homosocial melodrama as related metaphorically to the novel's theme of war, terrorism, and antiwar protest," with Baxter acting as the terrorist and Perowne positioned as homeland security actor (28); he

also says, "the Baxter plot discloses and stages an anxious concern with the question of relative privilege" (29), thus drawing the two strands of neoliberal and neoconservative forms of capitalized postcolonial crime and policy together nicely. Michael L. Ross agrees with Ryle's first contention, saying, "*Saturday* reflects the susceptibility of the nation to assaults by predatory forces sited both within and far removed from its increasingly porous borders" (82), reminding us of the novel's (post)colonial themes. Richard Brown sees Baxter as a corollary to *Mrs Dalloway*'s Septimus Smith, whose violent suicide disrupts Clarissa's party, while Molly Clark Hilliard points to the "genuine resonance" between Arnold's period and our own (183). Sarah Brouillette argues that this scene paints Baxter as an "underclass criminal" who is "softened by his encounter with a canonical poem, thus paving the way for the Perownes' final triumph over him" (198), though she also points to Henry "[putting] himself in Baxter's position" the second time Daisy recites the poem as one of the few times Henry is able to move outside his immediate self and family (192). Elaine Hadley, in perhaps the most sustained critique of the "Dover Beach" scene and its aftermath, says, "'Dover Beach' is thus genealogically linked to *Saturday* through their representation of a shared faith in the liberal cultivation of the self as in itself a good" (94). I concur with Brouillette's reading of the crime scene as being deeply, almost imperially, concerned with power dynamics, and tend to agree with Hadley's assessment of both texts being focused on the individual, but disagree with her claim that *Saturday* wholeheartedly endorses the liberal individualistic perspective. Yet, I disagree with Alexander Beaumont's claim that this individualistic philosophy means that *Saturday* is a liberal, rather than a neoliberal, text (147). *Saturday*, is rather, both a neoliberal text and one invested in working against neoliberalism,

in that its portrayal of two significant capitalized postcolonial crimes in London work against the city Thatcher et al have helped to create.[18]

To further illustrate my point, I turn, again, to Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace. Taking into account the "Dover Beach" scene, the injury of Baxter, and the follow-up scene where Perowne goes to the hospital to stitch up and heal Baxter, she asks

> Could his point really be to suggest that, when confronted by those who hate us, the West need only resort to its wits, its encyclopedic knowledge of science, and to hold out hope of a 'cure' in order to distract those who would otherwise seek to harm us? That, in the end, we will easily overpower those who invade the sanctity of our homes, and that it will then be our obligation and duty to 'fix' whatever injuries they've received in the process? (476).

Kowaleski Wallace is of the opinion that, "as absurd as this line of thinking is, it seems warranted, given the climatic scene of the novel" (476). However, I maintain the answers to these questions are more complicated. Though by "he," Kowaleski Wallace means McEwan, I argue that this is not the novel's point, but rather that of Perowne and the neoliberal system into which he and many other subjects have been interpellated. This is, quite literally, the imperial fantasy – that "they" are out there, "they" hate "us," "they" want to do violence to and commit crimes against "us," but it is all okay, because "we" are smarter than "them,"

[18] In many ways, Arnold and his fellow "sweetness and light" Victorian liberals can be seen as a sort of predecessor of Margaret Thatcher. The selection of Matthew Arnold for this scene, and moreover, this particular poem, is highly ideologically charged. With Arnold's class-oriented worldview and emphasis on refinement and culture, resonances between Perowne's and Baxter's relative subject positions abound; moreover, "Dover Beach," a poem about the loss of faith and England's shifting position in the world, has clear parallels to Perowne's 2003 London. The first lines of the final stanza: "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another! for the world, which seems / To lie before us like a land of dreams, / So various, so beautiful, so new, / Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light…" similarly folds in Perowne's withdrawal from the world and reliance only on his love and his family.

"we" have more than "them," and if "you" just let "us" try to help "you," "we" can swoop in and, after performing necessarily violent crimes of our own, "we" can begin to fix "you." Perowne is unaware that he thinks like this, but I read the novel's focus on the capitalized postcolonial crimes in his Saturday as being absolutely clear on the fact that he does view the Other with this type of imperial gaze.

As Perowne and Theo push Baxter down the stairs, Baxter locks eyes with Henry. He has an expression on his face "not so much of terror, as dismay" (236). As he continues to fall,

> Henry thinks he sees in the wide brown eyes a sorrowful accusation of betrayal. He, Henry Perowne, possesses so much – the work, money, status the home, *above all* [italics mine], the family – the handsome healthy son with the strong guitarist's hands come to rescue him, the beautiful poet for a daughter, unattainable even in her nakedness, the famous father-in-law, the gifted, loving wife; and he has done nothing, given nothing to Baxter who has so little that is not wrecked by his defective gene, and who is soon to have even less. (236)

This, then, is the crux of the matter and the deep, underlying capitalized postcolonial crime that undergirds the city: the city Perowne inhabits creates such vast gulfs between rich and poor, healthy and sick (especially in a neoliberal age where cuts to the National Health Service on which Baxter surely relies are an ever-more-present reality), privileged and not, that they have become completely insurmountable. Perowne has everything that matters in the criminal city, *above all* the family, and Baxter has nothing.

To Perowne's credit, he seems to have at least a fleeting understanding of this, which is perhaps why he goes to the hospital to operate on Baxter. Yet, at the end of the novel,

when he has returned home after operating and gone once again to stand on his balcony, thinking about history and the future, he momentarily acknowledges his complicity in the day's crimes, if not the composition of the city overall. He thinks to himself, "twenty hours ago he drove across a road officially closed to traffic, and set in train a sequence of events" (288), but follows up by closing off his mind off to Baxter's situation and chalking it up to his "dim, fixed fate" (289). There is no acknowledgment of the ways in which the neoliberally-decimated National Health Service has failed an ill man like Baxter, or that a less individualistic, more communitarian society might at least have found a way to ease a dying man's last days. No, thinks Henry, it is only to be fate: no one is at fault, least of all himself. There is no villain, only fate.

The final lines of the novel are heartbreaking in their simplicity. As Henry goes back to bed and draws close to Rosalind, he kisses the nape of her neck. "There's always this, is one of his remaining thoughts. And then: there's only this. And at last, faintly, falling: this day's over" (289). In the final moments of his Saturday, after twenty-four hours whose events should have served to shock Henry out of his neoliberal complacency, he ends his day by concluding, "there's only this." As Christina Root has pointed out, the echo of James Joyce's "The Dead" is clear in the "faintly falling"; yet, while Joyce's final paragraph is often read as a universalizing, communitarian gesture, I read *Saturday*'s "faintly falling" as Perowne's reinscription of individualistic neoliberal ethics. Alexander Beaumont disagrees, pointing to what he sees as communitarian strains in the book. He claims, "the novel attempts to retain its early endorsement of the city right up to its conclusion" (142). The city is, or should be, a place of interdependency, of community, of multiplicities of experience – much as it is in *Mrs Dalloway*, for example. Henry Perowne's neoliberal London is none of those things. Though Beaumont writes that Perowne whole-heartedly believes "he must

attend to his obligation to those with whom he shares urban space" (142), it is not fair to say that Perowne has this understanding of the city. Rather, Perowne has a fleeting sense of what Beaumont terms "civic duty" (142), but only because he feels a personal sense of duty to Baxter – not because Baxter is first and foremost a fellow citizen with whom Perowne is to share urban space. It is, then, *Saturday*'s awareness that a subject like Perowne would not move out of his complacency that constitute its version of resistance. Perowne's inability, to the very end, to realize his position in the city and complicity in various crimes – and *Saturday*'s knowledge of the fact that its protagonist is fundamentally unreliable – may seem a failure on the part of McEwan, but it is, rather, a larger indictment on the capitalized postcolonial crimes of the neoliberal city of London.

"Today This is Brent, Tomorrow it Could be Britain": A Claiming of the City in *NW*

The criminal city Zadie Smith's 2012 novel *NW* portrays would, on the surface, appear to exhibit few to no similarities with the one in *Saturday*. One novel shows glossy central London as experienced and understood by a wealthy white middle-aged man; the other depicts a simultaneously decaying and gentrifying northwest London via multiple changing perspectives, from an Irish Protestant woman (Leah) to a young black man (Felix) to the Irish Protestant woman's best friend, a woman of Jamaican ancestry first named Keisha and then Natalie. *Saturday*, though hearkening back to a Woolfian or Joycean treatment of 24 hours in the city, remains relatively conventional in narrative style; *NW* consists of five sections, narrated by the three above characters in vastly different styles. Different as their subject matters and form may be, *Saturday* and *NW* should be understood alongside each other for their varied treatments of capitalized postcolonial crimes committed in the same city, while simultaneously urging the reader to acknowledge their and our complicity in neoliberal, neoimperial systems and processes.

NW is deeply, intrinsically concerned with the city and with narrative form. *NW*'s London, far more than *Saturday*'s, is a city where wealth meets poverty at sometimes jarring angles. As Boyd Tonkin of *The Independent* writes, it is in *NW* that "the spectacular collisions and disjunctions of a divided city enact its author's doubts about what kind of novelist she is – and how the novel might make sense of these jagged splits and rifts." These "jagged splits and rifts" are visible not only in the content of the novel, but in its forms, divided in perspectives and narrative styles as it is. The first section ("Visitation"), Leah's, is told in a modernist stream-of-consciousness; the second ("Guest"), Felix's, in a straightforward third-person narration (what Alexandra Schwartz of *The Nation* calls "downright retro"); the third ("Host"), Natalie's, in 185 short, numbered vignettes; the fourth ("Crossing"), also Natalie's, as a geographically marked chronicle of a nighttime walk through NW; and the fifth ("Visitation"), also Natalie's, in much the same style as Felix's. *NW* can be seen as "a hotchpotch in five parts," as Christian Lorentzen notes in the *London Review of Books*, or, more scathingly, as "[falling] so far short of being a successful novel, though it contains the makings of three or four," in the opinion of Adam Mars-Jones for *The Guardian*. Ruth Franklin of *The New Republic* is so annoyed as to exclaim, "We get it! The form reflects the content…The story of a fragmented existence must be told in fragments. But there is something that feels a little too pat about it, too literal, too tidy about its untidiness." However, Ron Charles writes of in *The Washington Post*, "If *NW* is difficult to enter, it's not more difficult than moving into any new neighborhood: at first, you can't imagine you'll ever learn your way around the winding streets, but soon this strange habitat feels like home." Reading *NW* as both novel and city interpellates the reader into the narrative of the novel's criminal city and its correlating messages about urban life. In short, it allows one to participate in Zadie Smith's London, in all its messiness, crises, and inequalities.

This is a city where opportunity, in the form of two young black men named Felix and Nathan, is lost, and where neoliberal ideologies coalesce in a space inhabited largely by postcolonial immigrants and their offspring. David Marcus in *Dissent* argues, "*NW* seeks to render not only the cognitive disorder of postmodern experience but also the social and psychological disorders of postmodern – that is, post-welfare state – capitalism" (70). He further comments, "While set in the same neighborhood as *White Teeth, NW* is no longer concerned with the ambiguities of identity but with the clear, determined aspects of inequality: those determinacies born out of where we live and what we do" (70) (though he also notes that the characters are "also given the freedom… to narrate this determinacy in their own way" [72]). That determinacy of "where we live," alongside the historical legacies we must negotiate as a consequence of geography, is a central concern of the novel. Even the titular gesture of *NW* draws attention to the centrality of place to the novel, as well as a particular kind of imperial bureaucracy as established and put in place by the Royal Mail. "NW" stands for the postcode of northwest London; while in most of the rest of the United Kingdom, postcodes can be traced to the city to which they relate ("CF" for Cardiff, "LE" for Leicester), London postcodes relate to the area of the city ("NW" for northwest London, "SE" for southeast London, and so on). Thus, Smith draws the reader's attention almost immediately to the fact that this novel will focus on London, but a specific area of London – not the center of London, but the northwest portion of the city, a place thought by many to be extra, unimportant, or even criminal; a nowhere (NW) in the context of the capital of the former largest empire in the world. *NW*, in the eyes of both the neoliberal powers that be and the imperial technologies that shaped London and its colonies, simply does not matter and is not important – a far cry from Henry Perowne's Fitzrovia. Indeed, *NW* is cleanly

rooted in the part of the city Zadie Smith most firmly identifies with (Lauren Elkin of *The Daily Beast* calls her "the Bard of Willesden Green"), much as *Saturday* is for Ian McEwan.

Important as well are how Smith's characters inhabit that location, and how they draw cartographies that mediate between the weight of history, myth, and personal lived experience. Unlike in *Saturday,* multiple maps or narratives constitute the novel city of *NW*; Anne Enright notes "though it remains absolutely rooted, stuck to the map, contexts change and narrative styles shift." By narrating (in markedly different styles) the lives of many characters, but most specifically those of two women, Zadie Smith maps her home neighborhood, revealing another version of London, as well as its corresponding set of capitalized postcolonial crimes. Her two main characters, Leah Hanwell and Natalie Blake, must negotiate between the weights of personal, familial, and societal expectations to develop their own geographies for living in twenty-first century London, rather than hewing to the cultural scripts of imperialism and neoliberalism.

Natalie and Leah, as residents of NW, dwell on what many people would consider the periphery of London. Smith herself, in a *New York Review of Books* blog post titled "The North West London Blues," describes the geography of walking through Willesden to the market as being not "like walking a shady country lane in a quaint market town ending up in a perfectly preserved eighteenth-century square," and "not even like going to one of those Farmer's Markets that have sprung up all over London at the crossroads where personal wealth meets a strong interest in artisanal cheeses." She describes the market, rather, as being "still very nice," the type of place that sells "cheap bags… CDs of old time jazz and rock 'n' roll… umbrellas and artificial flowers… ornaments and knick-knacks and doo dahs…" as well as "French breads and pastries" and cheese "of the decently priced and easily recognizable kind." This is not a recognizably English village, nor is it Perowne's Fitzrovia,

but its residents do not see themselves as peripheral: for instance, an *NW* character named Felix

> considered the tube map. It did not express his reality. The center was not "Oxford Circus" but the bright lights of Kilburn High Road. "Wimbledon" was the countryside, "Pimlico" pure science fiction. He put his right finger over Pimlico's blue bar. It was nowhere. Who lived there? Who even passed through it? (190)

To the residents of NW, then, central London is nowhere, and Willesden is central. The tension between these conceptions will unfold through the novel, as Leah and Natalie figure out ways to resist the centrally determined myth of the city by incorporating their maps into the central narrative. It is important to note, as Lauren Elkin does, that in many ways, *NW* is "a novel of mobility"; the characters are often moving throughout the city, usually by foot or public transportation (Elkin further notes that "public transport comes to signify a refusal to buy in to the upwardly aspirational values of Thatcherite Britain"; compare this to Henry Perowne's driving). This mobility helps to move the narration forward and more firmly entrench the reader into Zadie Smith's London, while simultaneously ironizing the Thatcherite emphasis on upward mobility by pointing out ways in which some people, like Felix and Nathan, will be constantly rendered immobile by the pressures, crimes, and systems present in neoliberal London.

Even though Willesden and Kilburn are geographically close to central London, a cognitive map is in place that insists that places like Willesden and Kilburn are somehow not really, truly "English" in the way of the village or of Fitzrovia. This map is false, of course; there is no such thing as "true" English or British stock, and "the land now known as the United Kingdom has in fact played host to a great many foreign migrants," meaning "all the

inhabitants trace their origins to some other place" (Paul 64). As Salman Rushdie says when writing of "a dream-England" of test matches and Enid Blyton, "of course the dream-England is no more than a dream" (18). However, this cognitive map has succeeded in many ways in pushing itself to the forefront of the myth of England, claiming that people like Henry Perowne, things like high tea, and spaces like Trafalgar Square are English, while people like Keisha Blake, things like meat patties, and spaces like Kilburn are just somehow not. Kathleen Paul notes that "modern Britain is still plagued by past perspectives that categorized some Britons as more British than others" (xiv). This cognitive map is distilled in words attributed by Leah's mother to Margaret Thatcher: "Today this is Brent. Tomorrow it could be Britain!" (48).[19] Leah and her mother both understand Thatcher's implication; Brent, the borough in which Kilburn and Willesden Green are located, is somehow outside Britain, not part of the narrative of prosperous, well-to-do, "typical" English people. The presence of people in such a place is verging on the criminal. Leah's and Natalie's maps of northwest London provide ways to push back against this narrowly-defined cognitive map as each articulates her experience of living in the city by moving through the space and time of London.

It is critical to remember, as Bill Schwarz says, "centres, clearly, are as much imaginative and political as they are geographical constructs" (158). The fact that these two women experience the city from a "marginal" location should not make their geographies any less relevant to our understanding of the city, especially considering, as Gyan Prakash says, that "the city can be understood as a subset of multiple urban practices and

[19] This comes on the heels of Leah ostensibly also quoting Thatcher by saying, "Anyone over the age of thirty catching a bus can consider himself a failure" (48). Neither of these quotes has ever been attributed definitively to Thatcher; in fact, both could be purely apocryphal. Both quotes, however, fit the left's constructed myth of Thatcher.

imaginations" (7). Over thirty years before Prakash, Raymond Williams instructed readers to remember that London "is plural and various" (147). Rather than trying to conform to some kind of established narrative about what it means to exist in and experience London, Natalie's and Leah's geographies chart new ways forward, away from any imaginative center, reinforcing the necessity and validity of a city being a place of plural and various maps and understandings. To riff on the well-known Yeats line, the presence of multiple narratives does not mean things fall apart, even as it does mean the center cannot hold under the weight of other maps. In many ways, London has always been a plural place lacking a center; though Henry Perowne may be oblivious to this multiplicity, in the novel city of *NW,* Leah and Natalie are adding their maps to a centuries-long chorus.

Christine Sizemore has written about women writers as mapping a "female vision of London." Smith's two women certainly do find their ways through the city and mark their spaces in different ways than men. However, Leah and Natalie's mappings of northwest London are also interesting to consider in the light of postcolonial geographies of the city because both women are considered "other" or "elsewhere," both in the context of Kilburn/Willesden and in the contexts of greater London, England, Britain. Leah is an Irish Protestant whose mother is from Dublin, meaning she is outside the mainstream both in the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland, while Natalie is the daughter of Jamaican immigrants living in what is still largely imagined as a predominantly white city. Neither of the two women belong to a dominant narrative of the myth of London, especially living as they do in the highly diverse areas of Willesden and Kilburn.

With Leah and Natalie, Smith wedges into a tradition of postcolonial writers remapping the city of London in their own image. John McLeod sees postcolonial writers as working against dominant conceptions of London by offering "alternative and revisionary

narratives of subaltern city spaces which do not easily succumb to the demands of authority" (4). Ashley Dawson notes that postcolonial writing can be seen as resistance to "insular representations of national identity" (7). Leah and Natalie draw on the space and history of London to make their maps effective; as John Clement Ball says, "any postcolonial 'me' who ventures to write about contemporary London has all that expansive history and geography – which 'made' the city and the self – temptingly close at hand" (4). If maps are, as Benedict Anderson says, "institutions of power" (163), Leah and Natalie's imaginative mapping of their space reflect reactions against attempts to impose power over their experiences and their lives. Different characters, by their presences and experiences, as well as the effects they have on their surroundings, remake the city, myth, and map of London. By practicing place, in Michel de Certeau's formulation, these actors can make their own space, as space is "actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it" (117); Leah and Natalie, along with the other characters in *NW* and much as Smith does in "The Northwest London Blues" can take a "nowhere" place and create a space by articulating it via movement and language.

The writing of postcolonial women writers and subjects, then, can be seen as active ways to chart their ways of living in and experiencing the city, a way of defining their own geography instead of accepting received notions. Henri Lefebvre asks, "How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can ever be given in answer to this sort of question" (85). Leah and Natalie, spurred by experiences of capitalized postcolonial crime, contribute their own maps of the city to the conversation and inscribe their own understandings of their given space into a larger understanding of northwest London.

Much more important than their gender, ethnic, and religious identities, however, are the lives each individual chooses to lead and what this says about the geographies each woman defines in her space. Both women are deeply influenced by their understandings of both time and space, topics that are inextricably linked together. Leah struggles to navigate her own path for herself, outside of the demands of her husband and mother, both of whom wish her to, so to speak, become a good neoliberal, normative subject and move on with her life to the supposed next, progressive step of having children. Natalie must work against dominant narratives about what is expected of her as a Blake and, more generally, as a Jamaican from Caldwell, so that she may become the Thatcher-esque upwardly mobile and successful lawyer she wants to be. Each woman's relationship to her space and understanding of time influences how she makes decisions, which in turn defines her geography, her way of being in and shaping London. Each woman develops both an individual and a more communal map of London, with very different purposes and results, though both continually take the presence of capitalized postcolonial crime into consideration while they do so.

When readers first meet Leah Hanwell, she is "In a hammock, in the garden of a basement flat. Fenced in, on all sides" (3). She is not doing anything much, just lolling about in the summer heat. Adam Mars-Jones thinks this opening is "reminiscent of *Ulysses*," and indeed the narrative style echoes the techniques modernist stream-of-consciousness; however, Leah, unlike Bloom, is "fenced in," hammocked away from her city. The action in the novel begins with, essentially, a crime, when a young woman named Shar rings the doorbell to Leah's flat, startling her out of her lethargy. Shar seems to be controlled by Nathan Bogle, Leah and Natalie's former classmate, in a scheme that involves going around to different houses in the neighborhood and asking for money under the pretext that her

mother has been taken to the hospital and she has no cab fare to get there (again a focus on mobility about the city). Leah's choice to answer the door, let Shar in, and give her money is the catalyst for a scene in which we learn a great deal about Leah's sense of loyalty to her space, as well as her lack of a sense of urgency about time. Smith tells us that Leah lets Shar into her home because, "Leah is as faithful in her allegiance to this two-mile square of the city as other people are to their families, or their countries" (6). This early awareness of Leah's relationship to her space colors our impressions of her experience of the city throughout the rest of the novel. She adheres to northwest London, the place in which she grew up, never branching too far away from the Caldwell housing estate in which she first met her childhood friend Natalie (in fact, on page 14, Leah demonstrates she can point to the flat in which she was born). Except for her stint at university, Leah never has protracted experiences outside NW anywhere in the novel, and a crime that comes to her[20] is the first motor for readers to learn more about Leah and her life.

Our early image of Leah as hammocked and "fenced in" is also a good gateway to explore how Leah experiences time, and what this means for her personal cartography of London. While her mother seems incredibly anxious for Leah to have a baby, referencing Leah's "ticking clock" (20), Leah does not share her mother's concern. Her husband, too, feels a keen sense of urgency, reminding Leah of her age (thirty-five) because he is concerned that they have been trying and failing to get pregnant (23). Leah, on the other hand, flatly "fears the destination" which has "something to do with death and time and age" (27). She thinks to herself, "I am eighteen in my mind I am eighteen and if I do nothing if I stand still nothing will change I will be eighteen always. For always. Time will stop. I'll

[20] This property crime (stealing) is, it is strongly implied, made necessary by the lack of "legitimate" employment in the neighborhood.

never die. Very banal, this fear" (27). She has no desire to engage with progress, asking "Why must love 'move forward'?" (28) and "Why won't everybody stay still?" (85). While clearly a desire to stay young, this desire to live out of time also suggests a refusal to live in the neoliberal, postmodern age; by checking out of society and withdrawing from forward movement, refusing to undertake the traditionally feminine role of pregnancy, Leah is articulating a desire to live outside the space of the market economy and of the forward progression of postcolonial history.[21] This, in and of itself, is viewed by many as a form of crime against nature or gender.

Her desire to live outside time has a direct effect on her mobility in her space. If Leah's cartography of London were to be viewed on Google Maps, it would be heavily concentrated in the shadows of the Caldwell housing estate tower where she has spent the vast majority of her life. There may be a few juts out into central or south London, but the map would reflect the reality that Leah admits to herself, that she, "born and bred, never goes anywhere" (55). In fact, the text of a Google Map, inserted without context on page 41 (within Leah's narrative section, so logically, readers can assume it applies to her), directs her only from the NW8 postcode to the NW6 postcode. Her individualistic geography through both time and space, is self-contained, immobile, fenced in, hammocked. Referencing a line from a song Leah hears in the first few pages of the novel, Alexandra Schwartz says, "Leah cannot figure out how to see herself as the agent of her own experience, or to use a phrase she overhears on the radio, 'the sole author of the dictionary that defines me.'" It is certainly true that Leah's personal geography lacks this sense of agency or authorship.

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[21] In *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development,* Jed Esty similarly ties arrested adolescence to resistance progressive logics of imperialism and capitalism, albeit in a modernist age. Like the recitation of "Dover Beach" in *Saturday, NW* contains some rich linkages between the age of high imperialism and the twenty-first century.

Leah and Natalie, though they have been best friends since childhood, are completely different people. Known as Keisha in childhood (readers never know exactly why she changed her name, but it probably has something to do with her professional aspirations), the differences between the two are obvious in their early childhoods. As the two are writing down their future career goals, Leah writes down "manager," while Keisha opts for "doctor or missionary" (205). Natalie's intensely upwardly mobile mindset contrasts sharply with Leah's complacency, and the differences between the two mappings of the city become more and more obvious as the two grow up, apart, and back together.[22] As adults, their various experiences and reactions to the capitalized postcolonial crimes they are presented with also mark their personal divergences.

Natalie's experience of space is, fittingly, an almost 180-degree turn from Leah's. Like Leah, she spends some time away at university and returns to London soon after. However, unlike Leah, Natalie lives in many different areas in the city before eventually returning home to NW. When she finally does return, with her husband in tow and a family soon on the way, she buys a flat that is "twice the size of a Caldwell double," a far geographic and imaginative cry from Leah living still so near to the towers where the two grew up. While Leah "passes the old estate every day on the walk to the corner shop" and "can see it from her backyard," Natalie "lives just far enough to avoid it" (70). If there is a gentrified section of Kilburn, complete with the Caffe Nero my friend and I saw, this is where Natalie lives; this is Natalie's map of living in the city, as opposed to Leah's. Natalie

[22] Interestingly, Natalie is something like a far more successful version of Leah's husband, Michel. While Natalie embodies the "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" narrative, Michel desperately wants to be a part of that story, but seems unable to be. He spends much of his day attempting to trade stocks on the Internet, interpellating himself into the neoliberal narrative of the importance of entrepreneurship, but he is unsuccessful, setting up Leah's life for further contrast with Natalie's.

adheres to the neoliberal dream of what should be done to postcolonial places like Kilburn; they should be homogenized, gentrified, monetized, with the poverty and crime that also occupies the neighborhood out of sight and out of mind.

With regards to time, Natalie's cognitive map is also vastly different from Leah's. Natalie's narrative section is peppered with the phrase "That was the year…" followed by various popular culture references, like "It was the year people began to say 'living the dream'…" (301). This gives readers a sense Natalie is always highly clued into the passage of time, especially as it relates to the individual's experience; this would make sense for someone keyed into a neoliberal logic that favors individualism, progression, and accumulation over time. Readers watch Natalie develop in her narrative section over a span of many years, while all of Leah's section takes place while she is thirty-four, almost thirty-five. As we do with Leah, we get a sense of how Natalie is defining herself against her family (her older sister, Cheryl, is expelled from school, gets pregnant young, and is a general headache to her parents), but what is different about our sense of Natalie's relationship to her family is that extra dimension of time and how it allows us to get a more complete sense of her. As a teenager, Natalie sticks closely to the trajectory her mother has outlined for her; she is a loyal member of the church, studies hard, does not get into much typical teenage mischief. She is, however, already beginning to chafe against her mother's expectations of her and is beginning to define her own life. She is aware that "Marcia Blake had her own plan: enrollment in a one-year Business Administration course at 'Coles Academy,' really just a corridor of office space above the old Woolworths on the Kilburn High Road" (228). Natalie, however, has her own ideas; namely, going to university and breaking free of the space of NW and the towers that represent her only experience of the world. She is set on mapping her space in a different way than what her mother expects, and she succeeds;

Natalie's Google Map, when set against Leah's, would be far more busy, chaotic, and involved. Natalie's individual cartography of the city is a reaction against expectation, much like Leah's, but formulated in a much different way. As Bill Schwarz says, "cartographies are not innocent" (157); there is a reason people, and these women, map their spaces and experience their cities in the way that they do.

Both women, then, chart personal geographies through the city in reaction to individual or familial pressures, but they also map the city in response to larger societal expectations. The novel has a strong communitarian bent, being about a part of a city as much as it is about two individual women, unlike the individualistic *Saturday*. Leah and Natalie grew up in a space imagined to be un-English but that holds tower blocks named after, in Anne Enright's words, five "giant[s] of English philosophy: Smith, Hobbes, Bentham, Locke, Russell," and as such, they are acutely aware of the multiple pressures and expectations heaped on women like them, from their neighborhood. (While the names of the towers are an authorial move on Smith's part, Enright tells us that "the names are only slightly less amusing than the titles of real tower blocks in Kilburn, which are named for Austen, Dickens and Fielding.") The towers are a resonant symbol for a class narrative in *NW* – built on the remnants of empire, named for philosophers implicated in imperial and neoliberal projects, yet casting doubt on those very principles via providing social housing those who have been most negatively affected by those projects. Leah and Natalie not only chart personal geographies, but structure the city around them in such a way that they resist predetermined central social narratives.

The tower blocks, with their names uneasily coinciding against their location, provide an instructive example for one way in which dominant geographies, like those of the five giants of English philosophy, can lie alongside geographies that are outside the mainstream,

like those mapped by people who live in Caldwell, or, in Thatcher's crude formulation, geographies made by people who belong to Britain and those who belong to Brent. People's imaginative geographies through time and space can interact with city geography in a way that carries both individual and communal forms of resistance in order to insist that these narratives matter, too; by injecting their maps in the city, Leah and Natalie resist the notion that somehow, Brent is not Britain.

A more expansive delineation of this idea may be seen when Natalie and Leah, along with Natalie's children, take a trip to a church in Willesden. From one of the first lines in the scene, Smith shows how Leah and Natalie exist alongside a more dominant geography. Natalie is lagging behind, anchored down by her children, and Leah looks at her: "The buggy is empty, Spike is in her arms, Naomi is tugging at her t-shirt. Gulliver, about to be pinned to the ground by Lilliputians" (76). The classic of English literature (though Swift is technically Irish) is prominent enough to poke its head out and exist alongside Leah and Natalie struggling along the motorway, seeing "Kennedy Fried Chicken. Polish Bar and Pool. Euphoria Massage" (76). The geography of the city certainly does not line up with a myth of London, England, or Britain as articulated by Thatcher and people like her, as we can see from the businesses that line the motorway, but myths of what should be central to London and to England still abound in cultural imagination.

The group keeps progressing toward the church, Leah insisting over Natalie's questions that they are heading in the right direction. In response to Natalie's, "'This can't still be Willesden. Feels like we're in Neasden already," Leah responds, "The church is what *makes* it Willesden. It marks the parish of Willesden" (76), establishing the importance of this church to the geography of the area, anchoring it definitively in the local urban fabric. They continue to walk, mapping a geography and charting a course towards the church, seeing,

"To their right a foreclosed shopping arcade and a misconceived office block, empty, every other window broken. To their left, a grassy island nestled inside a dual carriageway. Intended as a green oasis, it is a fly-tipping zone. A water-logged mattress. An upturned sofa with ripped cushions, foully stained" (77). This geography is hardly Smith's "shady country lane in a quaint market town" or her market "where personal wealth meets a strong interest in artisanal cheeses." This is, in the popular imagination, Brent, not Britain.

As the group picks its way along such debris, they finally spot "an ancient crenellation and spire, just visible through the branches of a towering ash" (77). Reaching their destination, "the full improbability of the scene is revealed. A little country church, a medieval country church, stranded on this half acre, in the middle of a roundabout. Out of time, out of place" (77). They have found themselves "in another century, another England" (77). The church, so seemingly "out of time, out of place," is nonetheless an intrinsic part of the community – "it marks the parish of Willesden." Although the church is hardly part of their daily lives (Natalie admits that it is "crazy" she did not know about it, because she "must have driven by it hundreds of times" [78]), the church is still part of the geography of the city, sticking around, a bit of "Britain" firmly anchoring and definitively making this bit of Brent.

But unlike the tower blocks, which loom over the community, and are clearly inelegant additions to the geography, the church offers a different model for how spaces can more fluidly incorporate geographies of both centrality and "nowhere." Leah and Natalie look at the gravestones, which are "massive tablets, covered in ivy, in lichen, in spots of yellow mold and moss" (78). Natalie picks up a leaflet, which informs her that the "parish [was] founded in 938… nothing of the original church remains…present church dates from around 1315… Cromwellian bullet holes in the door, original…" (80). The vicar, too, is a

throwback; "he is as he would have been in 1920 or 1880 or 1660" (80). Yet, while he fits the anachronistic setting of the church, "his congregation is different. Polish, Indian, African, Caribbean" (80). There is, too, a Black Madonna on display in the church, which one of Natalie's children thinks is "mummy" (81). The Madonna, Natalie reads, was "destroyed in the reformation and burned" (82), and no explanation is given as to where this twenty-first century Madonna has come from ("wait is this the original then? 1200s? Can't be. Very craply written…" [82]). Geographies of "nowhere" intermix with geographies of centrality in this space. This scene demonstrates that it is possible to layer contemporary realities over central myths and expectations, and, moreover, that the definition of London *is* many Londons; the city has never been one myth, one narrative, one map.[23] Much as London's postcode system demonstrates, "London" is composed of many constituent elements and cannot subscribe to one monolithic cartography.

This scene opens the question of how Leah and Natalie might be able to chart geographies modeled on that of this ancient country church. Christian Lorentzen notes that "layering is Smith's technique here"; how can Natalie and Leah layer their experiences on top of what's expected or central? There are, of course, their individual geographies already outlined, those of being upwardly mobile or quietly complacent, of existing individually outside of societal contexts. Yet, these are not wholly effective ways to add their cartographies to the larger map of London to form fully effective visions of resistance. Natalie's constant mobility and attempts to keep moving, keep achieving, tear her way through the geography of contemporary London, hit a roadblock when she is used by her

[23] The website for Smith's probable source for the church may be found here: http://www.shrineofmary.org/. Consulting the website makes it clear how this church has built itself over time by including, rather than destroying, the remnants of the past. Thanks to Jenny Bledsoe for directing me to this website.

employer to act on a jury, solely for racial reasons. Natalie's "innocence and pride" (278) is shattered by this experience, which proves to her that although she has not gotten "romantically involved with the star tenants of criminal sets," has "done good work" and "wait[ed] for [her] good work to be noticed" (278), this is not enough. Her neoliberal geography of moving through time and space at a rapid speed will fail in a world full of imperial legacies that views her as not central, as criminally Other – of Brent, not of Britain.

Likewise, Leah's strategy of remaining hammocked in space and cut off from time has not worked for her, either. Her limited geography has made her completely insular and detached from the "real world," neoliberal as that term may be. She has a job for which she is highly over-qualified, she takes birth control pills to prevent a pregnancy (about which she must lie to her husband), and she allows herself to be taken advantage of by scammers such as Shar. Compared to her friend, Leah's geography is too limited, but it suffers from the same failings as does Natalie's. Both chart a geography as if each were an individual, not as if each were a member of a larger community; like Henry Perowne, prioritizing monoglossia over heteroglossia. In these models, neither layers herself organically into the city, as does the church; rather, Natalie's high-powered rip through London and Leah's steadfast refusal to engage are both cartographical failures because neither take into account the context of the city as a whole or are alert to other geographies. This is not to say that the women must bow to central narratives or societal expectations, however. The model of the church, of layering on both time and space, is a way to chart a communal geography that does neither, and it is a model both Leah and Natalie attempt at various points, providing each with a more nuanced form of resistance to geographies of centrality. Natalie and Leah each have experiences that break the binary of either hyper- or underactive mapping, and each of these experiences center around an overlapping experience of a horrible violent crime. This event

ruptures the narrative of the novel of the city, and provides a juncture for understanding the capitalized postcolonial crimes that have structured the city.

Near the end of the novel, Natalie has a fight with her husband because he has just discovered she has been conducting trysts throughout the city via an account she has registered on a website under the email account KeishaNW@gmail.com.[24] She leaves their home, going, in answer to her husband's shouted inquiries, "'Nowhere'" (355). (Nowhere, as noted earlier, might be interpreted as NW.) In the following narration, Natalie very explicitly maps her space by walking through the streets of northwest London. Smith allows readers to track her movements by giving particular sections of the narrative titles like "Willesden Lane to Kilburn High Road," "Shoot Up Hill to Fortune Green," "Hampstead Heath," etc. Natalie, through her wanderings, stays true to the geography of constant mobility she has mapped out through the novel, but this time in a very non-neoliberal move, her mobility has no apparent purpose and she confines herself to NW.

Through her rambles, Natalie does not move through the city as an intensively driven, individual agent. She becomes part of the city, layering her map on top of the existing city geography, rather than blazing through it unheeded. Readers are told, "Walking was what she did now, walking was what she was. She was nothing more or less than the phenomenon of walking. She had no name, no biography, no characteristics" (360). Michel de Certeau has written that "[walkers'] bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" (93). By walking, Natalie creates a text, a map; she is

[24] Interestingly, Frank's anger reads in context as directed more about the email account than at the implications of his wife being registered on a sex website. He asks her, "What is this? 'KeishaNW@gmail.com' What the fuck is this? Fiction?...Who *are* you?" (353-354). Natalie has not only registered under the childhood name she has attempted to leave behind by renaming herself "Natalie," but has firmly aligned herself with the neighborhood of her childhood to which she has only recently returned, rendering her fictional to her husband.

fully a part of the city, of it but not directly challenging centrist narratives as she has done in her past geographies. Rather, she is making the city her own by the act of walking, melding into her surroundings rather than ripping through them. She challenges myths and centrality by limning the city's geography with her own, by engaging with it and taking it into account instead of moving only as an individual subject. Luke Gibbons has written of walkers in *Ulysses* that, "Instead of closing off the past, the effect [in flaneur-style walking] is to re-activate contact with the vestigial traces of the fallen and defeated, barely discernible under the encrustations of habit and conformity" (157). By using her walking to re-activate this sort of contact with the city, Natalie is able to more fully insist on the inclusion of Brent in London, destabilizing the geography of the city to create her own map.

Natalie, early in her walking, is briefly prevented from traveling down a road because of a crime investigation into the recent stabbing of Felix, causing her to need to reroute. As she turns around, she encounters an old schoolmate named Nathan Bogle (who insists on reverting to history and calling her Keisha throughout their time together).[25] It seems likely that Nathan has just been involved in the stabbing, though it is not made entirely clear.[26]

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[25] To consider: Keisha takes on the name "Natalie," which sounds like "Nathan" and allows her to share Nathan Bogle's initials. There is no indication anywhere in the novel that she has named herself after a family member, or a beloved author, or an admired schoolmate, or anything like that; we have no context at all for why Keisha chose "Natalie." There is no space to explore this here, but are readers being asked to Natalie and Nathan as somehow parallel or linked?

[26] Though this analysis is primarily focused on the relationship between Natalie and Leah, a quick word about Nathan and Felix is necessary. We learn about Nathan that he was a hugely promising football player before falling into a life of drugs and the street; complementarily, Felix had had a rough life before recently making the decision to "improve" himself and become a "productive" member of society. Nathan articulates the position of young black men like himself and Felix by saying, "There's no way to live in this country when you're grown. Not at all. They don't want you, your own people don't want you, no one wants you. Ain't the same for girls, it's a man ting. That's the truth of it right there" (376). The city has no use for them, or for Michel, even as they try to play the neoliberal game, and so too often they are swept into a life of crime.

Nathan desperately wants to leave the immediate area, and so the two set off together, Natalie still aimlessly, Nathan seemingly with the purpose of getting away from the crime scene.[27] They continue along northwest London's streets, working themselves into the geography of the area while building their own specific maps in the process.

The two move past the Caldwell tower blocks, pointing out to each other where each grew up (Natalie: Locke, Nathan: Russell) (363). Nathan offers Natalie some kind of drug, and she accepts, adding to the sense of dreamy unreality that pervades this scene of mapping. They pause in a cemetery whose defining characteristics are "one spindly Victorian lamppost" and a rumor that Victorian criminal Arthur Orton is buried there (367), which once again draws the reader's attention to the centrality of crime to the text. As they keep walking, it occurs to Natalie that "she couldn't resist this display of the textures of the world; white stone, green turf, red rust, gray slate, brown shit. It was almost pleasant, strolling to nowhere" [NW] (372). As she gets more and more comfortable mapping her city by becoming part of it, they begin to leave "the world of council flats" behind and move onto "Victorian houses" (372). Natalie and Nathan have conducted my friend and my ramble in reverse, going from Kilburn to Hampstead Heath, which is quite a long walk; yet, Natalie still feels no urgent need to build a cartography for a reason. She is nowhere ("NW"); as de Certeau says, she writes a text but lacks a place due to her walking (103). She is simply walking along, for walking is what she does now.

When they reach their last stop, Natalie suddenly says, "Hornsey Lane… This is where I was heading" (383). She admits to herself, via free indirect discourse, "That was true. Although it could be said that it did not really become true until the moment she saw the

bridge" (383). Natalie climbs onto a bridge and looks through a barrier of railings. What she sees is as follows:

> The view was cross-hatched. St. Paul's in one box. The Gherkin in another. Half a tree. Half a car. Cupolas, spires. Squares, rectangles, half moons, stars. It was impossible to get any sense of the whole. From up here the bus lane was a red gash through the city. The tower blocks were the only thing she could see that made any sense, separated from each other, yet communicating. From this distance they had a logic, stone posts driven into an ancient field, waiting for something to be laid on top of them, a statue, perhaps, or a platform. A man and a woman walked over and stood next to Natalie at the railing. Beautiful view, said the woman. She had a French accent. She didn't sound at all convinced by what she'd said. After a minute the couple walked back down the hill (384).

Natalie's map of London certainly does not match neatly with the central, dominant myth of London. For one, it is broken up and incomplete: "cross-hatched" and "impossible to get any sense of the whole." She observes what is commonly thought of as the center of the city,[28] rather than being a part of it, and the bus lane, a symbol of the spatial mobility on which Natalie prides herself, is "a red gash through the city." Her center is the tower blocks, "the only thing she could see that made any sense." They have "a logic," and she likens them to the image of "stone posts driven into an ancient field," another instance of layering in the city geography. Marcus notes that "in the puzzle-piece streets of Northwest London, we

[28] The Gherkin is quite a new building, especially when considered in the context of St. Paul's. Completed in 2003 and opened in 2004, it replaced the Baltic Exchange, which was irreparably damaged by a Provisional IRA bomb. Postcolonial layering is happening all over the city of London, not just in its elsewheres.

realize that there is very little that provides coherence but the estates themselves" (71). It is these estates (and, to some extent, the values of the bygone era of welfare capitalism that they represent) that provide the logic for organizing Smith's novel and city, they are, in Lorentzen's words, the "hooks on which Smith can hang her portrait of North-West London." It is a capitalized postcolonial crime which has spurred Natalie to get here and complete her portrait.

The image of the towers allows Natalie's Brent, what many people think of as not being Britain, to be seen as the only logical element in the city, reordering London legible to Natalie. Here is a place where Natalie's map takes precedence; Natalie is able to define her center, which is one the French woman she overhears does not appreciate, but that center intermixes with other myths or images associated with the central myth of what London, England, Britain, is or has been or should be. It is "impossible to get any sense of the whole" because there is no centrally-determined whole; the central myth of London is not the whole, and should not be understood in this way. London is a series of maps laid next to each other, not one dominant image that is easy to pinpoint. When Natalie pauses and articulates her geography, she turns the NW space of nowhere into the place of northwest, incorporating her map into London's centrality as a form of resistance.[29] Moreover, what she sees, particularly the Gherkin, is itself built on a site of postcolonial protest/crime, as the Gherkin was built over the Baltic Exchange, which was destroyed by an IRA bomb. Henry Perowne in *Saturday* likely studies this building as well during his early-morning scan on his balcony ("As a Londoner, you could grow nostalgic for the IRA" [34]); both individuals see this building, albeit from vastly different viewpoints, driving home the point that these two novel cities inhabit the same spatial London.

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[29] See earlier comments on Michel de Certeau.

Natalie's method of arriving at this site is, in itself, a method of resistance. Walking is a fundamental form of resistance for moving through the city; walking without a consumerist or specific purpose is not passive, but an active form of inscribing oneself into the city in ways not accounted for by imperial or neoliberal practices.[30] Moreover, the act of a woman walking at night is subversive, as Rebecca Solnit notes by saying, "Women have routinely been punished and intimidated for attempting that most simple of freedoms, taking a walk…" (233). Even her act of walking while female (especially at night) is subversive, but Natalie compounds that by adding additional layers to her mobile critique of the neoliberal city. Though "the veneration of the pedestrian as key to accessing the city, and to 'reading' it, has been a mainstay of critical commentary," according to Leo Mellor, Natalie is doing more than reading and accessing the city here. By creating a map and forcing it into the city, Natalie acts as a heteroglossic walker by inserting her map among others and instantiates resistance by her very mobility, which previously had only been used as a way to key into a neoliberal system of profit and self-improvement. In Gibbons's words, she occupies a "marginalized relation to the city… at once part of, and yet detached from, official space" (140). By inhabiting this interstitial space, Natalie negotiates a method of resistance.

Yet, there is no denying that this scene could easily be read in dark terms. The railings through which Natalie looks are constructed, in part, to prevent people from jumping off into oblivion, another kind of nowhere. In fact, Natalie envisions that kind of nowhere very vividly: she notes, while lost in her reverie, that "she had the sense of being in the country" (384). Although Natalie is a "city child" who "had always been naïve about country matters" (384), she briefly toys with the idea of going to the country and "merging,

[30] For instance, compare the active, communitarian act of walking to Henry Perowne's driving, which is a passive, environmentally destructive, individualistic act.

first with the grass underneath her, then with the mulch under that" (384). She decides that "nothing less than a break – a sudden and total rupture – would do. She could see the act perfectly clearly, it appeared before her like an object in her hand…" The fantasy leaves her when "the wind shook the trees once more and her feet touched the pavement," rendering her dream of that total break, of merging with the country "an act, a prospect, always possible" (385). It is the hard material reality of the city sidewalk that saves her: Natalie is, certainly and surely, a city creature, one who must merge with the city geography rather than the grass and the mulch of the country. It is in the city that she must build her map in the face of opposition, rather than in some mythical, unattainable countryside.

Natalie's brief dream of merging with the landscape echoes Leah's fantasy, which she has back in the layered-with-history church, of sinking into the past. She visualizes her gravestone among the many older tombs, and as she leans against a grave, she envisions the following:

> A lady in gathered skirts is clutching something to her body, a featureless lump, something she has been given, maybe, and two young boys in frock coats reach out for her on either side. She is no one. Time has eaten away all detail: no name no date no knees no feet no explanation of the mysterious gift – (79)

As Natalie sees herself melding into the space of the city, so Leah sees herself melding into the time of the city. Her layering is accomplished through her preferred method of mapping the city – by staying still in space – but she connects with the city by dipping back into time and engaging with history more so than with space. Much as Natalie mostly explores space through her northwest London ramble, but occasionally dips into layering with time, so does Leah mostly engage with time, but also briefly with space by leaving her hammock and

exploring a new part of the city, where time is dense and experienced through a multitude of different, not necessarily novel-city-esque, maps. Time and space are linked together and cannot be considered separately, as a person's understanding of one concept will necessarily influence her understanding of the other.

As previously discussed, the history and truth surrounding the Black Madonna in the church is not at all clear. Although the leaflet tells Leah and Natalie that the Black Madonna was "destroyed in the reformation and burned" (82), it is unclear who committed this act – a Cromwell, certainly, but "Different Cromwell? Doesn't say" (82). If the Madonna was destroyed, there is no way that the one currently in the church can be the original, but the leaflet indicates it has been there since the 1200s. Amidst this slippery conception of time and while Natalie is trying to figure out the chronological specifics surrounding the statue, Leah has an intense encounter with the monument – perhaps a vision, perhaps a hallucination, perhaps a revelation.

It begins when she passes the Black Madonna, who is holding the Christ Child. The sign tells her that the Christ Child's hands are "big with blessing… but to Leah there seems no blessing in it. It looks more like accusation" (81). Leah imagines that the child is reaching out for her, reaching "out to stop any escape, to the right or to the left" (81). Leah, who has been living outside the demands of time and who has been mapping stasis, has now built herself a map where she is directly confronting time, where certain realities cannot be escaped. As a large part of Leah's story is her lack of a desire to get pregnant, it is especially resonant that it is a child who confronts her conception of time in this cartography.

As Natalie reads from the leaflet, Leah hears the Black Madonna speak to her. The Madonna asks Leah, "How have you lived your whole life in these streets and never known me? How long did you think you could avoid me? What made you think you were exempt?"

(83). The Black Madonna directly confronts Leah's lack of engaging with the space that surrounds her, her community. The Madonna continues by telling Leah:

> I am not like those mealy-mouthed pale Madonnas, those simpering virgins! I am older than this place! Older even than the faith that takes my name in vain! Spirit of these beech woods and phone boxes, hedgerows and lampposts, freshwater springs and tube stations, ancient yews and one-stop-shops, grazing land and 3D multiplexes. Unruly England of the real life, the animal life! Of the old church, of the new, of a time before churches. Are you feeling hot? Is it all too much? Did you hope for something else? Were you misinformed? Was there more to it than that? Or less? If we give it a different name will the weightless sensation disappear? Are your knees going? Who are you? Would you like a glass of water? Is the sky falling? Could things have been differently arranged, in a different order, in a different place? (83).

By mapping space and arriving at the church, Leah is able to have an encounter with the Black Madonna, which in turn is a gateway to Leah experiencing the time of London more fully and deeply. Jarred out of her hammock, forced to experience the time of London in real depth, she communes with the Black Madonna who is of the England both of tube stations and ancient yews. The Black Madonna challenges myths of centrality by claiming to be older "even than the faith that takes my name in vain," by claiming to have always been here, to have always been a part of England. Her apostrophe to England and her multitude of questions both forces the reader to directly confront Leah's relationship to myths of England and forcibly challenges her to question her way of being in the world. The map the Black Madonna assembles and the way she draws Leah into that map, forcing her to

participate, confronts dominant geographies and builds, instead, one of many possible cartographies of elsewhere and resistance.

Being confronted with her own anxieties about time, being forced into a place where she cannot escape, allows Leah to become involved with a chronological cartography of the world around her, rather than just her own personal understanding of what time means. She and Natalie are pushed by crime to move beyond one-dimensional, individualistic cartographies of their space and construct layered, nuanced maps of the space and time of London once they allow themselves to engage with their surroundings and layer themselves into the city through space and time. These maps are, in turn, a way of asserting a vision of London that does not have to match up with dominant geographies or mythological conceptions of what matters in England or London. Their geographies, both individualistic and communal, map visions of London that constitute the novel city of *NW*. By practicing layering, the two are able to create new, textured wayfinding tools, by working with what surrounds them, as Henry Perowne was never able to completely do.

No discussion of the way Leah and Natalie map their city would be complete without a word about the final scene, which is where the story of Felix's stabbing comes full circle. The last section of the novel opens some time after Natalie's fight with her husband and subsequent late-night journey through the streets of London. Her husband is clearly still very angry with her, and leaves her for the day with the children. Natalie takes them shopping but receives a phone call from Leah's husband, who is upset because he has discovered Leah's birth control pills. Leah, in response to his anger, goes outside and drops herself into her hammock, where she refuses to move or speak. Leah's husband asks Natalie to come over and talk to Leah for him, and Natalie obliges.

In the last few pages, both Leah and Natalie return to their individualistic conceptions of cartography, space, and time. Leah lies in her hammock without speaking. Natalie tries to speak to her, but is "wasting her time" (398). She is once again blindly moving, without consultation to her surroundings. Leah is only shaken out of her silence when Natalie's son jumps into Natalie's lap. Leah turns to Natalie and says, "'Look at you… Mother and child. Look at you. You look like the fucking Madonna'" (399).

This allusion to Leah's encounter and the subsequent chronological map she made of London is the trigger that sets off each woman's final monologues. Leah tells Natalie she doesn't understand why she leads the life she leads, why Shar is addicted to drugs and Leah is not, why that "poor bastard on Albert Road [Felix]" (400) was stabbed and she was not. Natalie gives her the following reasons:

> "Because we worked harder," she said, laying her head on the back of the bench to consider the wide-open sky. "We were smarter and we knew we didn't want to end up begging on other people's doorsteps. We wanted to get out. People like Bogle – they didn't want it enough. I'm sorry if you find that answer ugly, Lee, but it's the truth. This is one of the things you learn in a courtroom: people generally get what they deserve" (401).

This answer is patently untrue, but it is a return to Natalie's preferred method of mapping and understanding the space around her. When confronted directly with the capitalized postcolonial crimes of her city, she disengages from the world and removes the context from her cartography, as she seems to be talking about a fiercely driven, mobile way of living in the world that would apply to herself but not to Leah. She speaks of only her life, her experience, and disregards other individuals' maps of the city in favor of her personal mobility through the space of London. She is paying no mind to the determinacy of where

we live, to echo David Marcus. It is much like Leah's exclamation when she finds out about Felix's death via the television news. The news anchor has told the reader where Felix was born and grew up, and Leah yells, "He was murdered! Why does it matter where he grew up?" (104). Of course it matters. Place, and where one is from, matters deeply, and Leah should know that better than anyone. Place, and the capitalized postcolonial crimes interlocked into that space, work together to create the city Smith inhabits and shapes. Felix has been central to the entire story, not an elsewhere; he, his neighborhood, and the crime which ends his life, is the hinge on which everything turns, much like NW's relationship to the greater city of London.

Leah, like Natalie, has returned to her individualistic geography, hammocked in her backyard and attempting to exist outside the realities of time. These returns to individualistic conceptions of the geographies of space and time lead to the immensely damaging final page, in which Leah and Natalie call the police to report on Nathan Bogle stabbing Felix, even though they only have circumstantial evidence to consult. Although their individualistic geographies can be seen as sites of resistance against personal expectations and a way to articulate their own ways of living in the city, it is only when the two women engage fully with the capitalized postcolonial criminal space around them that they are able to truly become involved with and map alternatives to the city, producing fully realized geographies of elsewhere and resistance that insist on being incorporated into the city, insist on gaining the recognition that Brent is Britain, insist on articulating what others think of as nowhere into what they know is northwest. Sadly, their failure to do so at the end of the novel and their reversion to less complex cartographies has deeply negative and potentially catastrophic effects, as they may have initiated the process that will send an innocent man to jail,

especially once readers take into account Nathan's articulation of the understanding of a black man in contemporary English society.

The ending of *NW*, much like the climatic scene of home invasion in *Saturday*, has received a tremendous amount of critical attention. Lauren Elkin writes that "Smith runs out of steam toward the end; the scene between Natalie and Leah seems curiously staged and plotted in a novel that prefers to meander." Rachel Cooke, while using the same "running out of steam" metaphor, additionally notes that "Leah and Natalie retreat shufflingly to a position previously held up by the novel for our disapproval (the idea that people get what they deserve)." But perhaps, the staging and plotting and retreating is for a purpose; the reporting of this crime is the catalyst is the part of the novel where Leah and Natalie move back into their predetermined positions, where they fully buy into neoliberal notions and see it as their duty to be caught up in networks of complicity and blame. Alexandra Schwartz is cognizant that this is not Natalie's best self, writing "Natalie sounds tough, decisive, lucid. If only we believed her bluff," while David Marcus notes "there is nothing pleasing or satisfying about the end, even if some kind of justice is served." I think it is clear that Smith knows her end is not pleasing or satisfying; she has not "run out of steam." Rather, I think that, like *Saturday, NW* is arguing "strenuously," to borrow a word from Ruth Franklin, against its own conclusion. Smith has allowed her two main characters to, however briefly, put forth a different, perhaps more just, model of NW, but almost as soon as they do, Smith takes away that vision in favor of one overly insistent on neoliberal notions of "discipline and punish," to appropriate Foucault. This rather cruel rendering of the criminal city, so close to the end of the novel, sets up an ending that calls the reader's attention to the realities of mapping a place like NW: realistically, to the outside world, NW is still seen as nowhere, Brent rather than Britain, criminal. This disquieting conclusion is perhaps the only

one that makes any sense for the argument the novel is making as a whole: while Leah and Natalie make NW into northwest, into place, many still view it as a nowhere, and the people within it as nobodies, left behind by the criminal city. Much like in *Saturday*, the imaginative resistance offered by *NW* is oblique, needing to be excavated by the reader. *NW*, for a moment, offers a fruitful vision of what the city could be but at the end, like Henry Perowne, Leah and Natalie drop out of resistance and back into their predetermined ways of being.

John McLeod writes, "Since the end of the Second World War, the urban and human geography of London has been irreversibly altered as a consequence of patterns of migration from countries with a history of colonialism…" (4). These changes in "urban and human geography" have come about through material realities like McLeod's "patterns of migration," but also through the ways in which creative works have charted new imaginative geographies, making it possible to push back against dominant conceptions of history and create new definitions of what is important and central. In *NW,* Zadie Smith temporarily achieves this move through her narrative gestures in charting the lives and experiences of Leah Hanwell and Natalie Blake in their "elsewhere" location. By mapping their home neighborhood, they demonstrate the potential to turn what is viewed by many as a "nowhere," NW, into a place; by inscribing their cartographies on their place, they are, however briefly, the latest in a long series of Londoners who have turned nowhere into northwest, who have claimed their right to have their "marginal" or elsewhere stories, their Brents, taken into account of a larger picture, of Britain. Although, in the closing pages of the novel, the characters discard these narratives in favor of easier cartographies and narratives, for at least a time, their geographies of elsewhere articulate resistance to myths of centrality and demonstrate the necessity of an image of London as many maps,

cartographies, and narratives. Neither *Saturday* nor *NW* engages in explicit, chanting-in-the-streets type literary resistance, but in their own methods, they present routes of resistance, however briefly, in all their power.

In my recounting of the walk through London with which I opened this chapter, I briefly noted that my friend and I, after our time in northwest London, took the Overground back to her home in Hackney. When we walked from the train station to her flat, we passed the famous theatre – built as a music hall – the Hackney Empire. Hackney, situated in east London, used to be a fairly down-at-the-heel type place, but in recent years, has seen a surge of gentrification; I counted multiple brunch spaces, expensive gyms, and multiple boutiques on our short walk. Yet, the symbol perhaps most resonant of the neoliberal city's transformation has to be the Hackney Empire – once a music hall, intended for cheap entertainment for the working poor, now an art house theatre, hosting hip bands, film festivals, and expensive acts like Bill Bryson, who we saw was to perform that night. Imperial and neoliberal processes have worked together to turn the Hackney Empire from the kind of place beloved by Victorian working-class Londoners to the type of place frequented by those benefitting most from the neoliberal city's regime. Similarly, these processes have worked throughout the literary texts discussed in this chapter. Clarissa Dalloway, Henry Perowne, the cast of *NW* characters, my friend in Hackney, all inhabit the same city: the specifics of the times and places may be different, but in the end, pointing to connections between an age of high imperialism and our own neoliberal era, capitalized postcolonial crime undergirds them all.

"The City's Invisible Borders Remained the Same": Belfast and Post-Agreement Fiction

Robert McLiam Wilson's 1996 novel *Eureka Street* is often held up as one of the quintessential novels of the Troubles, the violent conflict in Northern Ireland that consumed the region from 1968 to 1998. Alternately narrated by best friends Jake Jackson, a Catholic, and Chuckie Lurgan, a Protestant,[31] the novel follows their lives around Belfast in the years immediately preceding the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which brought a measure of peace to the city and to Northern Ireland in general. Though the two young men often engage tangentially with the Troubles – Jake is constantly ready to argue about any political points, and Chuckie uses the violence to turn a profit by developing an entrepreneurial scheme revolving around the selling of dildos – the most concrete example of the type of violence associated with the civil unrest occurs with a break from either Jake or Chuckie's narration. About halfway through the novel, the narration moves to an omniscient point of view to give the reader a depiction of an explosion in a sandwich shop in the Belfast city center. After the violence, Wilson writes

> So, thus, in short, an intricate, say some, mix of history, politics, circumstance and ordnance resulted in the detonation of a one-hundred-pound bomb in the enclosed space of the front part of a small sandwich shop measuring twenty-two feet by twelve. The confined space and the size of the device created a blast of such magnitude that much of the second floor of the front part of the building collapsed into it and out onto the

[31] Chuckie's name, amusingly, is pronounced like "tiocfaidh ár lá," or "our day will come," a phrase commonly used among Irish republicans.

> street. There were fourteen people in the sandwich bar. There were five people in the beauty parlor upstairs when it collapsed and twelve on the street in the immediate vicinity of the flying shrapnel and collapsing beauty parlor. Thirty-one people in all, of whom seventeen stopped existing then or later and of whom eleven were so seriously injured as to lose a limb or an organ. (225)

The clinical detachment with which Wilson describes the violent event, the crime, is underscored by the later assessment of the root causes of the violence. "For the men who planted the bomb knew it wasn't their fault," Wilson writes sarcastically. "It was the fault of their enemies, the oppressors who would not do what they wanted them to do. They had reasonably asked to have their own way. They had not succeeded. They had then threatened to do violent things if they did not get their way" (228). The impersonality of this summation of an extraordinarily complex historical reality continues as Wilson writes, "When this had not succeeded, they were forced to proceed with extreme reluctance to do those violent things. Obviously it was not their fault" (228). In answer to the question, "What had happened?" Wilson's narrator answers, "A simple event. The traffic of history and politics had bottlenecked" (231). It's inexplicable, the narrator says. It's just a confluence of incomprehensible people carrying out incomprehensible violence. This is nothing but a universal story about why violence is bad and murder is to be condemned. It's a simple event. In the telling, Wilson's narrator denies and forgets the knotted history of imperialism that has led his characters to this point in this city.

But this, of course, was 1996. Today in the Belfast city center, one could easily be forgiven for thinking the city's rough and violent past is behind it. Stunning, well-kept Victorian and Edwardian architecture lines the grand streets, people flit in and out of shops,

and as if in direct challenge to the temperamental Irish weather, Parisian-esque cafes offering deals on carafes of wine abound. Sidewalk campaigners urge pamphlets on the dangers of gentrification on pedestrians, an issue born of capitalism which would have been unthinkable even twenty years ago in the city of *Eureka Street*, and gleaming tourist attractions like the *Titanic* exhibition are seemingly everywhere you look. Walking around for just twenty minutes, I heard, in addition to English, at least four different languages from people who could have been either tourists or residents.[32] After a few minutes of perambulation, one is left with an image of a bustling, happening city, one that has rebounded from the religious and political violence of the past with a vengeance.

Scratch a little deeper under the surface, though, and one begins to realize that ostensible rebounding is a little forced, slightly contrived. Take, for instance, the rebranding of Belfast's neighborhoods into "quarters" – the city center, Cathedral Quarter, Queen's Quarter, Titanic Quarter, and Gaeltacht Quarter. When asked if it bothers anyone that there are five, rather than four, quarters to the city, my tour guide rolled his eyes. "It drives me absolutely fecking *mad*," he said through gritted teeth. Though it irritates him that no one can count, he continued, what annoys him even more is the artificial way in which the city has been divided and labeled. "These have nothing to do with neighborhoods or districts," he explained. "These quarters have no bearing on the actual areas of the city; the lines are just drawn arbitrarily. Sure, it's just for the tourists – Belfast itself is not this city."

Belfast revealed its "actual" self when I pulled out my phone to Google Map my way to the Divis Tower, a housing estate located at the bottom of the Falls Road, a famous Catholic and republican area of the city. (The Falls Road and its parallel, the Protestant and

[32] One is reminded of Sinead Morrissey's poem "Tourism," especially the lines, "the Spanish and Dutch are landing in airports / and filing out of ships. Our day has come" (14), with the wry acknowledgment of the republican slogan cited earlier in this chapter.

unionist Shankill Road, are notably not branded as being included in any of the quarters of the city.) I typed "Divis Tower" into the destination box, changed my settings to "walking," and hit the button, expecting to be given straightforward walking directions to the tower. I did, indeed, receive directions, but I also received a shock, for Google Maps had automatically corrected the "Divis Tower" I had typed in to "Patrick Rooney, August 14, 1969."

Patrick Rooney was a nine-year-old child who was the first child to die in the Troubles when he was shot dead by the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the Divis Tower on August 14, 1969. It's unclear why typing "Divis Tower" into Google Maps automatically corrects to his name and death date – a rogue Sinn Feiner coder at Google? Hackers? A glitch in the Matrix? – but the message is clear: this digital Google Map acts as a new iteration of an old pattern, that of Belfast remembering its past and its crimes through technologies and narratives of mapping. In *Belfast: An Illustrated History,* Jonathan Bardon cites the 1611 Plantation Commissioners report, which reads, "The towne of Bealfast is plotted out in good forme, wherein are many famelyes of English, Scotch, and some Manksmen already inhabitinge…" (13). Since this initial "plotting" and plantation, Belfast has always been mapped, and those maps, like the report which specifies "English, Scotch, and Manksmen" have settled among the indigenous Irish, necessarily contain a political charge: whether politically via census maps, colonially with Ordnance Surveys,[33] or poetically by such works as Ciaran Carson's *Belfast Confetti* (1989), the charting of space in Belfast is

[33] Though the Ordnance Survey is typically thought of as the colonialist project reaching its zenith, as it deals with rationalizing and standardizing Irish place names and geography to fit the imperial mold, Cóilín Parsons points out, "many of the Survey's employees saw in this project the possibility of defining a new abstraction – nation – and preserving what was thought to be unique to the Irish people" (3). With the introduction of this nationalist philosophy, the legacy of the Ordnance Survey becomes more complex and multi-dimensional.

redolent with social, cultural, economic, and literary critiques. Just in April 2017, the *Irish Times* announced a new project, "Mapping the North," which purports to use GIS technology to examine demographic shifts in Northern Ireland from 1971 to 2011.[34] Through these various mappings, Belfast understands and presents itself not as the city of the shiny artificial quarters, but a city divided into the Falls and the Shankill, a city of housing estates inscribed with deep meaning, a city of Patrick Rooneys and other historical crimes. Scratch just a bit below the surface, and the polish comes off. Stuart Neville's *The Twelve* (2010) and Lucy Caldwell's *Where They Were Missed* (2006) present aesthetic responses to Belfast as palimpsest, offering one narrative on the surface and another buried deeper by imperial and colonial history, violence, capital, and crime.

The killing of Patrick Rooney is a potent reminder that Belfast, as a city, is simultaneously colonial, postcolonial, and imperial, to adapt Spivak's terms cited in the introduction for this particular urban space. After the 1921 Partition of Ireland, Belfast and Northern Ireland remained under British colonial control, unlike the newly postcolonial country to the south. British forces and agents of the British state in the form of the Royal Ulster Constabulary occupied the city and, especially at the height of the Troubles, killed residents of the city as part of the functioning of imperial power; however, with the dissolution of most of the British empire, Northern Ireland started to be presented, on the surface, as one-fourth of the ostensibly egalitarian country known as the United Kingdom, which is still engaged in imperial ventures across the globe, making the city also engaged in

[34] This project was announced because of a "renewed focus" on demographics in Northern Ireland brought about by Brexit – another recent event with strong imperial histories to be excavated. The link to the project may be found here: http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/maps-show-divided-communities-in-northern-ireland-1.3033931

current imperial and neocolonial projects. Especially with the peace accords of 1998, known as the Good Friday Agreement, which gave Northern Ireland a great deal more autonomy from London, the line between (post)coloniality and neocolonialism in Belfast has grown ever more blurred, and, blended with the Agreement's "commitment to economic change" (Heidemann 1), neoliberal logics and technologies of unfettered capitalism have simultaneously entered the narrative of the contemporary city and its experiences of colonialism and the Troubles. This chapter will look at post-Good Friday Agreement novels set in Belfast and its attendant capitalized postcolonial crimes, which for Belfast will be defined as contemporary offenses against the law that, when excavated for historical and literary content, call attention to Belfast's tripartite and overlapping status as a colonial (in that it remains part of the British Empire) postcolonial (a contested term for Northern Ireland, but used to refer to the fact that political power has been devolved and civil rights granted after the movements of the 1960s), and neocolonial/imperial (continuing an imperial project after the devolution and accords of 1998) city. I argue that Lucy Caldwell's *Where They Were Missed* and Stuart Neville's *The Twelve* draw on the histories buried within these crimes to excavate contemporary issues such as neoliberalism, neocolonialism, continuing segregation, and more.

"A Contemporary Colonialism": The Situation of Belfast

In her 2015 novel *The Bones of It,* Kelly Creighton writes, "In Northern Ireland, you can't go around imagining that everyone identifies as Irish," imagining one character's objection: "Here, Klaudia, love, watch who you're calling Irish around here. Some of us are British, ya know!" (8). The many divisions in Northern Ireland and Belfast – from republican to nationalist to unionist to loyalist – can fairly neatly (though not always) be mapped onto each other: Irish = Catholic = republican, while British = Protestant = unionist. Each of

these binaries may be traced further back, to centuries-old systems of British imperialism that divided a population and encouraged the two main groups[35] to view each other as ethnically, religiously, economically, morally, culturally, and socially different. These imperial divisions have led to various ways of understanding the conflict and demographics of Northern Ireland and Belfast. Ian McBride writes, "the antagonism between unionists and nationalists has variously been viewed as an ethnic conflict, a clash of cultures, an anticolonial struggle, or a terrorist campaign; some think it is about national self-determination, and others see it as an expression of religious sectarianism" (14). As we shall see, there are various models for understanding and deconstructing Belfast, but some narratives are more prominent than others in the popular story about the city. For example, the city is upfront about pre-Troubles imperial violence while the capitalized postcolonial crimes produced by the more recent history of the Troubles are more hidden; in contemporary Belfast, Birte Heidemann claims, "the city's colonial history" is carefully acknowledged, but the same city "turns silent when it comes to Belfast's recent past" (2). What do we do with this seeming gap in the historic record, and how might literature work to negotiate this simultaneous remembering and amnesia?

Belfast's rise as a city occurred after the British plantation of what we would today call Northern Ireland, when the British Empire encouraged the migration and settlement of English and Scottish Protestants into the heavily Gaelic and Catholic northeast of Ireland. In the nineteenth century, Belfast established itself as a site of industry and manufacturing, primarily known for its linen mills and shipbuilding (both industries indelibly linked to the

[35] There are, of course, other groups in Northern Ireland – the Scottish Presbyterians historically have troubled this binary, and more recently, the nation and city has seen an influx of Chinese and Indian migrants – but most novels that deal with contemporary Belfast deal largely with these two communities.

British imperial project themselves). Tensions promulgated by the original plantation of the land were exacerbated in the urban space of Belfast, as Protestants were favored in the industrial labor market and Catholics largely left out. With the partition of Ireland into the Republic and the North in 1921, Belfast, despite its fairly large Catholic population, was made the capital of the new statelet of Northern Ireland. Partition also established a Parliament at Stormont, "a Protestant Parliament for Protestant people," in the potentially apocryphal words of Lord Craigavon, the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. In this "Protestant state," with the withdrawal of a more explicit form of empire, capitalism was wielded as a tool for privileging Protestants and leaving Catholics at an economic disadvantage.

Even after southern Ireland gained its independence from Britain, first via Home Rule and later by full severance from the rapidly-shrinking British Empire, the North and Belfast remained part of the United Kingdom. The colonial roots of such a political arrangement manifested themselves in the violence of the Troubles, which raged in varying forms of intensity from the 1920s up to 1998 (with the periods of most protracted violence beginning in the 1960s), with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. Though the Good Friday Agreement is far from perfect, its democratic nature (it was voted on through a series of referendums) and its power-sharing and devolution models have allowed for an overwhelming amount of "buy-in" from the population of Northern Ireland, leading to a sharp decrease in paramilitary and extralegal, as well as police and British, violence.[36] Though there have been sporadic flare-ups since 1998, the Good Friday Agreement is typically taken to be the "formal" end of the Troubles, leading to investments of European Union money

[36] The efficacy and continuing legal status of the Good Friday Agreement has recently been called into question by Brexit.

in the country and the rebranding of Belfast into the tourist destination depicted at the start of this chapter. The Agreement's "neoliberal agenda" (Heidemann 7) has gone a long way towards a cosmetic erasing of the Troubles past and a papering over of Belfast's troubled history in the interest of putting forth a gentrified and sanitized version of the city.

Even under this gloss, however, divisions still remain. As Maureen E. Ruprecht Fadem writes, "The roots of the contemporary Troubles are not found, as widely believed, in protracted tribal mentalities or cultural hostilities. They are located in the ways colonial discourse came to be enunciated and reified" (17). For this reason, Seamus Deane writes, "We are not witnessing in Northern Ireland some outmoded battle between religious sects that properly belong to the seventeenth century. We are witnessing rather the effects of a contemporary colonialism that has retained and developed an ideology of dominance and subservience within the readily available idiom of religious division" (8). Others disagree with this framework – Justin Quinn, for instance, writes that "there is no clear and consistent line between colonized and colonizer" (99), and Edna Longley directly contradicts Deane by saying of the work cited above, "Field Day understandably favours theorists who might help to insert Northern Ireland/Ireland into the colonial/post-colonial frame (especially its simpler models)" (28), while noting that "uneven civic development in the British Isles [and] European contexts" (28) might trouble the strict binary Deane has set up. However, even if the paradigm may not be as clean-cut as Deane would lead the reader to believe, it is true that the divisions first enunciated by empire remain, at least, in the cultural and literary imagination of the city, even if the reality on the ground is more complicated after the power-sharing of the Good Friday Agreement. Regardless of these reforms, Protestants retain most of the economic and social power in Northern Ireland, and the country will be forced to Brexit along with the rest of the United Kingdom even though a

majority of the Northern Irish population voted against the measure, given that they must follow what the more populous England votes to do. This "contemporary colonialism" entrenches and thrives upon the remaining imperial legacy of religious/economic/national division, and the contemporary capitalized postcolonial crimes that may be traced back to it.

Belfast occupies a unique space in this imperial mindset, as Northern Ireland in general has a distinctive relationship to Anglophone postcolonial discourses: as Birte Heidemann argues, "its status as Britain's first and, arguably, last colony sets it apart from the rest of the colonial experience" (18) and Deepika Bahri similarly notes the vexed placement of Irish in postcolonial studies, writing, "the Irish case nevertheless remains an uncomfortable solecism for postcolonial studies" (58). When we telescope in on Belfast, as the capital of the "statelet," the narrative as a place apart becomes even more distinct. John Whyte writes, "it should not be assumed that Belfast is typical of Northern Ireland as a whole," noting, "the exceptional degree of segregation of Belfast" (33-34). Not only that, the city as a concept has a troubled space in Irish studies generally, which often privileges the rural or pastoral over the urban: Nicholas Allen and Aaron Kelly note that "urban space threatens the social cartographies and restrictive spatial visions of Irish nationalism and unionism, both rooted in a rural idealism that limits representations of place and society in Irish culture" (8), and Eamonn Hughes points to "the valorisation of the rural and suspicion of the city which runs through Irish culture" (148). Belfast, Hughes holds, has a reputation as being "mad, bad, and dangerous" (147) (recalling, of course, Lady Caroline Lamb's description of Lord Byron). Moreover, the novel has been given less attention than poetry, particularly that written by Seamus Heaney and other members of the Belfast Group. For these reasons – its extreme segregation, its tenuous place in the Irish studies canon, its reputation as violent, and its oft-disregarded novelistic tradition – Belfast is the perfect site

through which to discuss imperial legacies and their production of capitalized postcolonial crime.

On the fiction scene, Northern Ireland has built a name for itself on the strength of its thriller and mystery writers. Eamonn Hughes writes, "the major response to Northern Ireland on the part of novelists has been in the form of the thriller" (6) and Aaron Kelly agrees, saying that the thriller is "the dominant fictional mode of representing the North" (1). Belfast specifically fits nicely into this paradigm; for example, Adrian McKinty and Stuart Neville subtitle their anthology *Belfast Noir,* "the noirest city on earth." The Northern Irish thriller, Joe Cleary theorizes, became popular in the 1970s and 1980s as "the conception of Northern Ireland as essentially a 'security problem' was in the ascendant and the thriller might be read therefore as a literary analogue to the many other law-and-order discourses that dominated writing about the North in this period" (120-121). The Northern Irish thriller novel continued in this essentially conservative vein for some years; as Patrick Magee writes in his monograph,[37] most of the authors of Troubles fiction are "actually witting or unwitting 'players' in the propaganda war... [these texts facilitate] the belief that British imperial involvement in Ireland is a noble enterprise" (v). Contemporary Belfast novels, drawing on this tradition, continue to churn out internationally-recognized novels in the thriller or mystery mode, but somewhere along the way, the Northern Irish thriller changed from hewing to the imperial party line to presenting more nuanced readings of the situation of the city. Now, Kelly writes, "the struggle over what constitutes a crime is a political struggle conducted by conflictual social agents" (5), opening the door for Belfast novels that

[37] IRA man Patrick Magee, who was arrested for his involvement in the plot to bomb Brighton's Grand Hotel while Margaret Thatcher was staying there, completed his doctorate while in Long Kesh prison by writing and submitting *Gangsters or Guerillas? Representations of Irish Republicans in "Troubles Fiction."*

trouble the traditional conception of the thriller, or novels about and concerning crime, as being overly concerned with punishing the uppity, political troublemakers and maintaining law and order.

Stuart Neville's *The Twelve* is easily classified as a traditional thriller; Lucy Caldwell's *Where They Were Missed* is not. What the two novels have in common, however, is that crime drives each plot. Both novels turn on crimes committed, punished, and unavenged, using these portrayals of crime in the "mad, bad, and dangerous" city of Belfast to goad readers into thinking about larger imperial structures and histories that lie under the surface of the city. Both novels challenge the triumphalist neoliberal narrative that has overtaken Belfast in the post-Good Friday Agreement era, demonstrating how imperial legacies have been transmuted into contemporary economic discourses to continue to shape their city. Neville and Caldwell, who were raised Catholic and Protestant respectively, use their mirror images of the city to continually make gestures towards the past while simultaneously circling around the specifics of history; these novels are, to borrow the words of Birte Heidemann, "framed by a façade of denial and forgetting" (44). This denial and forgetting manifests itself in contemporary city structure and residential patterns and in portrayals of crime.

Like Europeans in Johannesburg afraid of Africans, many communities of Protestants in Belfast "fear Catholics are intent on driving them out of the area… leading them to adopt a siege mentality" (Heatley 33). This mutual distrust between the two communities is due to the legacies of imperialism and the Troubles, but also to the more contemporary issue of crime which is tied up in these historical narratives. With the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, former paramilitaries, both Catholic and Protestant, had few links to social organizations or job networks and frequently turned to "Ordinary Decent Crime" (ODC) rather than political violence. In the pre-Good Friday Agreement era, Sabine

Wichert argues, "the ODC rate… remained comparatively low precisely because people distinguished clearly between ordinary and political crime" (185). With the markers removed between ODC and political violence, the crime rate in Belfast increased after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, though the crime currently committed in the city has very clear links to imperial and Troubles history, with new neoliberal twists.

Organised crime in Belfast is different from such crime elsewhere due to the way it continues to feed off and contribute to the remnants of violence from the Troubles. The Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force released a pamphlet, "Confronting the Threat to Northern Irish Society from Serious and Organised Crime," which notes that while "organised crime is a worldwide phenomenon" that is "entrepreneurial and follows high profit, low risk activities" (5), in Northern Ireland, that crime is primarily "racketeering… smuggling… and drug dealing that is… financing the rump of paramilitarism that stands between Northern Ireland and the decent society we are striving to create here" (12). Foregrounded in the pamphlet is the warning that organised crime "drains public finance by preventing revenue reaching the Exchequer" (4). Organised crime in Northern Ireland and Belfast is not only "financing the rump of paramilitarism" in this narrative, but it also functions as its own neoliberal state, taking money that should be rightly redirected to the Keynesian welfare state. As Jon Moran has written, "this demonstrates how central crime has been to the peace process and the demobilisation of paramilitaries" (xiv); the Good Friday Agreement may have led to a decrease in political crime, but to an uptick in (at least reported) organised ODC with overtones of Troubles-era imperial legacies.

In *The Twelve,* Stuart Neville uses depictions of crime, both ODC and Troubles-related incidents, to demonstrate how imperialism did not wither away with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and how neoliberalism has not been the panacea for Belfast

that many European Union funders and backers might imagine. Lucy Caldwell, in *Where They Were Missed,* uses a young girl's experience of crime over the border in Donegal to demonstrate that, even when violence may seem removed or far from Belfast, capitalized postcolonial crime has ramifications all over the postcolony. While Neville presents a universalizing of Belfast as the answer to the city's ills – he, like McLiam Wilson in *Eureka Street,* advocates distilling the conflict down into simple, humanistic terms – Caldwell's novel forces the reader to consider that it might be in the specificities of Belfast that the clue to reparating capitalized postcolonial crime might truly lie. Though the novels operate in a context of colonialism that is not "one-size-fits-all" (Longley 30), they nevertheless work with the traces of colonialism to excavate the past so that they may "[expose] present-day inequalities" (Heidemann 252); in so doing, they adopt vastly different frameworks for overcoming the legacies of colonialism.

"Times Change, Even if People Don't": Stuart Neville's *The Twelve*

Gerry Fegan, protagonist of Stuart Neville's 2010 thriller *The Twelve*, is a former IRA man who has been recently released back onto the streets of Belfast after serving time in the Maze prison for the murder of twelve individuals, carried out at the behest of various IRA commanders. He is haunted by the ghosts of those he has killed – three British soldiers, two each of Ulster Defense Regiment and Ulster Freedom Fighter paramilitaries; a policeman; and four civilians unfortunate enough to have been in the way when Fegan set out to kill his targeted victims. The twelve ghosts follow Fegan around, demanding retribution in the form of killing those who ordered or otherwise orchestrated their murders. Fegan becomes convinced that the only way to rid himself of these ghosts is to enact justice in the way his victims are asking, and so he takes off on an avenging tour of Belfast, murdering those – politicians, lawyers, and others – who had ordered the murders of the original twelve. The

revenge Fegan engages in on behalf of his victims highlights how imperial legacies have mapped the contemporary neoliberal city of Belfast and points to the gaps that exist in the self-satisfied neoliberal narrative.

As Fegan carries out his crimes, we encounter former IRA paramilitaries who, in a post-Agreement era, have turned into capitalist investors wrangling London money earmarked for development and tourist attraction schemes. Fegan's first present-day victim, the IRA-man-turned-developer/politician Michael McKenna offers the observation: "The Brits are throwing so much money at this that I almost feel bad taking it off them. Almost" (8), indicating how money from London, intended as reparations for the Troubles, instead has merged with the leftovers of the Troubles-era purveyors of violent crime. The ghosts that haunt Fegan and who he must destroy, then, act as spectral reminders of colonialism and the Troubles – entities once thought dead that are back in less-tangible, more ethereal, shiftier form, constantly present and reminiscent of the physical violence of the late twentieth century.

Aaron Kelly has written of the Northern Irish thriller that, despite what preconceptions readers may hold, in Northern Ireland and Belfast, "the putatively ungraspable and penumbral conspiracy, which ultimately foreshadows and obsessively stalks these texts is none other than the seemingly vast inscrutable logic of the global conspiracy of global capitalism itself" (164). This emphasis on the "global conspiracy of global capitalism" can also be seen in the work of Joe Cleary, who has written that in some newer thrillers "the North is now to be redeemed not by the British security forces but by the energies and excitements of global capital" (141) – for Cleary, it is no longer British security forces controlling the North, but global capitalism. The effects of these investments of global capital in the contemporary novels of Belfast, *The Twelve* included, are threefold. First, they

are a form of neocolonialism, a capitalist way for the British to keep exerting control over the city and its technically devolved governance; second, the cash flow has constituted a city that is unrecognizable to Gerry Fegan but normalized for most of its inhabitants, spurring him to commit ostensibly-ODC that hearkens back to the more imperially-influenced crimes he has committed in the past; and, last, the neoliberal capital investments made in Belfast – in the form of money earmarked for tourist attractions, or community arts schemes, or street beautification plans – are universalizing gestures, in that they erase the specificities of Belfast's history and specific struggles in an effort to present a face of a "normal" city, a place where people would like to visit and live and work and play, something like a northern Barcelona, seemingly free of the colonial and sectarian baggage of the past.[38] By placing Gerry Fegan at the center of *The Twelve*, Neville allows his readers to occupy both the gritty Belfast of old and the contemporary neoliberal Belfast with the shining new face. We see how Fegan's capitalized postcolonial crimes expose the colonial sectarian rifts that underlay his original murders, as well as the continuing imperialism and neocolonialism – in the form of normalized foreign capital investment – that persist in structuring his city. Readers, in short, see how Belfast can simultaneously be mapped as the city of the five gleaming quarters, as well as the city of Patrick Rooney, a confluence that goes unnoticed by most.

In her review of *The Twelve*, Nicola Barr writes, "We may be 15 years into a ceasefire in Northern Ireland, but the country is still in transition, still coming to terms with its history." Anna Mundow writes of lingering effects of the Troubles that "Belfast in the new millennium may be a business opportunity, not a terrorist target, but organized crime and intimidation persist. There is even the odd bombing." Noah Adams chimes in, noting that

[38] This was written before the recently-revitalized independence movement in Barcelona had taken off; my instinct to select Barcelona as a tourist example was apparently redolent in more ways than one!

Neville "writes about the aftermath of The Troubles – the crime that continued, the demand for revenge, the tensions within the police and the paramilitaries," but that the "tense history of violence….isn't always visible on Belfast's surface." The idea that there is a dangerous, violent Belfast lurking under the aggressively marketed-as-normal contemporary streets is a common characteristic of the crime and thriller boom in Northern Ireland, sometimes referred to as the genre of Emerald Noir.[39] Emerald Noir frequently engages with imperial legacies, both in the Republic and in the North of Ireland: William Meier and Ian Campbell Ross note that "the subject of crime in Ireland since 1921 also reveals ways in which twentieth-century Irish crime continues to be marked by its colonial past" (15) and Sarah Weinman writes that as we recede from the Good Friday Agreement, "the ground beneath the feet of peace began to shift, coinciding with the mini-boom in Irish crime fiction." In an ostensibly peaceful city, the hiccups of a violent, colonial Troubles past coexist alongside neocolonial investment and gentrification to map a city still working through its imperial legacies via capitalized postcolonial crimes.

When we first meet Gerry Fegan, he is exceedingly drunk in a shabby Belfast pub and in the company of the ghosts of his twelve murder victims. We are told the ghosts follow Fegan everywhere, that he knows tonight they will follow him "through the streets of Belfast, in his house, up his stairs, and into his bedroom" (3). He is haunted by their presence and the sounds they make to remind him of his violence towards them, despairing, "it was the civilians whose memories screamed the loudest" (4). We seem to have a protagonist tortured by his actions, stuck in a rut and attempting to move forward against the tide by engaging in vigilante criminality, a fairly standard revenge story. If he can kill

[39] The term can be applied both north and south of the border, but given the subject matter of this chapter, I use it to refer to the North and Belfast.

those who made him kill in the first place, the logic goes, the crimes will be put to bed and Fegan will have some sense of closure, giving the novel the impression of crime being solely an individual's problem. But *The Twelve* also presents a novel of Belfast with crimes that cry out to be mined for continuing structural imperialisms and neocolonialisms, pointing to deeper structures inherent in the criminal city.

Fegan is, at least at some level, troubled by his past and the man he was while he was in the IRA. His thought, "they called people like him political prisoners. Not murderers of thieves, not extortionists or blackmailers. Not criminals of any kind, just victims of circumstance" (9), bothers him greatly, for Fegan concludes while in the Maze Prison that there is no difference between him and an Ordinary Decent Criminal; he tells politician McKenna darkly, "There's no respecting what I've done" (11). Reflecting his prison-acquired belief system, the ghosts begin to haunt him while he is in the prison; Fegan tells his prison mentor, a former member of a Protestant paramilitary group named Ronnie, that he has spoken to the prison psychiatrist about the presence of the ghosts and the psychiatrist has told him that they are "guilt… a manifestation" (198). Though Fegan is not so sure of the psychiatrist's assessment, he does want some form of absolution when released, as Nicola Barr points out. It seems to be a rather simple formulation at the start: "the more he kills, the quieter the voices in his head become, the greater his chances of a peaceful night's sleep" (Barr). But as Fegan pursues his goal more and more in earnest and the ghosts take center stage in the novel, we begin to move from the divided Belfast of Patrick Rooney and bodily, physical violence to a deeper understanding of how that Troubles-inflected city is mapped in the same space as the contemporary Belfast of the shiny neoliberal five quarters.

The same night we readers meet Fegan, he takes his first revenge victim, Michael McKenna, to the docks to commit his first post-Agreement murder. McKenna at first does

not realize why the two of them have made this excursion. He points out how the city has changed while Fegan looks on silently, musing, "They're calling it the Titanic Quarter now. Can you believe that?... There's a fortune being made out of that land. It's good times, Gerry" (20). This neoliberal, property-based development – "everybody's got their hand out" (20) – is a direct result of the Good Friday Agreement opening up the city for investment. The source of the money is echoed by the grim irony inherent in at least one of the quarters undergoing redevelopment, as McKenna points out: "But, Jesus, they're naming it after a fucking boat that sank first time it hit the water" (20). The neocolonialism of British and European money developing Belfast in its own image is operating under the shadows of past imperial-era adventures and failures, much in the same way Fegan's contemporary Ordinary Decent Crimes of murder echo the earlier colonially-inflected murders he committed for the IRA, or the way his ghosts are faint outlines of the people he has murdered.

McKenna soon realizes Fegan has taken him to the docks for violent purposes, and he tries to wheedle his way out of his impending murder by appealing to his and Fegan's shared past. He calls up a specific memory, "that time the Brits got us for bricking them" (21), and reminds Gerry, "You were never scared. Not of anybody. You stood your ground. You waited til you saw the whites of their eyes before you chucked yours" (22). Though Fegan tells him to stop, dreading the memories as they "cursed him" (22), McKenna senses a possible opening and keeps going, bringing up when the soldiers "got hold of wee Patsy, and he pissed himself all over one of them" (22). This brings a smile to Fegan's face, but the moment is ruined when McKenna reminds him that they joined the IRA the next day. The reminder of the IRA, and the crimes he committed for the organization, strengthens Gerry's resolve, and he once again tells McKenna, "That's enough" (23).

That tactic proving unsuccessful, McKenna tries guilt instead. "It was me got you in, Gerry," he says. "They'd have never taken you without me. Don't you forget that. You'd have been nothing without me, just another Catholic boy on the dole" (23). Far from this working to shame Gerry away from murder, this makes him double down: Gerry places the blame on McKenna, retorting, "That's right… I'd have been nothing. I'd have *done* nothing. And those people would be alive. That boy would be alive. He'd have a wife, children, a home, all of that. We took that away from him. You and me" (23). Fegan, no longer interested in memories of a boyhood spent acting out against British soldiers or reminiscences of the big man he became within the paramilitary organization, wipes away the specifics of the crime he committed and all hint of imperial or political context: to McKenna, Gerry's victim was "a fucking tout" who betrayed the anticolonial cause and "squealed to the cops" and "was dead the second he opened his mouth" (23), but to Fegan, he is a blank slate of a human who should have had a family and a home. Just before he pulls the trigger on McKenna, Fegan mutters to himself, "Jesus, I promised myself I'd never do this again" (23), right before he does.

This scene of crime, of ostensibly non-political Ordinary Decent Crime, indicates to the reader that *The Twelve* will not be a typical Troubles thriller. The events on the ground seem shorn of political and historical context; Edward Hargreaves MP, Minister of State for Northern Ireland, says when told of the murders, "So, it's not political. Let's try and keep it that way, shall we?" (50). Though the Troubles are always present in the background, serving to highlight and give context for character development and the map of the city, twenty-first century Gerry Fegan is not a man with any political convictions or acting on behalf of any kind of political or military group. He has wiped out any specificities about the twelve murders that landed him in jail. Gerry Fegan, republican nationalist, no longer exists; the

crimes of imperialism have been seemingly rinsed away by prison time and the Good Friday Agreement. In their place, supposedly, are universalized Ordinary Decent Murders, committed against a backdrop of a city rife with neocolonial foreign investment borne of past colonial crimes. Because Gerry is deeply uneasy with the new city in which he finds himself, and lacks knowledge of how to adapt himself to this new world, he resorts to actions that he has performed in the past, but, fit for a city of universalizing neoliberal investment, he removes all notions of what might be specific to Belfast or to Northern Irish colonial history from them. *The Twelve,* rather than solving the problem of "Gerry Fegan The IRA Man," sets out to solve the mystery of what Belfast has become.

Though the degree and intensity of the neoliberal and capitalist imperialism depicted in *The Twelve* is new, Belfast has long been a site of imperial investment and globalizing currents, giving the lie to the exuberant proclamations of economic miracles that have exploded across the city in the post-Agreement era. Kelly points out that "Belfast's street names… actually bespeak the return of the repressed of precisely such new languages produced by the globalization of capital, for, more often than not, they signify the outpost of empire, networks of world economy, a global experience of violence and disruption" (107), and, giving truth to this observation, Fegan lives at what is still called Calcutta Street.[40] Gerald Dawe points out that the past of the city, specifically with regards to industrialization and globalization of capital, "is inextricably linked with the British imperial project" (203) and Tom Paulin echoes him, saying that "deep in the city's culture memory is the experience of the linen trade" (239), with its imperial and global associations. But foreign and imperial

[40] The most famous example of Belfast street names evoking "outpost of empire, networks of world economy, a global experience of violence and disruption" is likely the Holyland, a network of streets named Jerusalem Street, Palestine Street, Damascus Street, Carmel Street, and Cairo Street.

investment has taken on in a new intensity in the postcolonial city; the Good Friday Agreement, with its focus on ending the conflict, works to drive home the "key ideological message" from "both the Irish and British states" that "peace dividends are to be achieved through conventional economics. A dropping unemployment rate, additional and religious mixed middle-income employment and a vibrant city-centre nightlife are meant to show that Belfast is 'booming' in a different way" (Shirlaw 101). Economics are held to be the panacea, the accompanying fundamentalist narrative the idea "only neoliberalism can fix it." This faith in economics and neoliberalism account for the shiny city I saw on my walking tour, but what might seem all well and good on the surface – tourist attractions, nightlife, even employment rates – conceal deeper histories that are unearthed through a reading attentive to capitalized postcolonial crime that may not be evident to those post-Troubles Belfast residents who walk the city every day.

For example, Brendan Murtagh and Karen Keaveney argue that Belfast, in the post-Good Friday Agreement era, is gentrifying at a rate similar to post-apartheid South Africa. Though divisions in Belfast exist as they did in the Troubles era, the logic that brings the city to this point is different: "The pattern of private-sector investment and the differentiation of economic centres specialising in exclusive shopping, high-priced accommodation and new arenas of entertainment have further polarised the city" (198). We see such gentrification in *The Twelve*, shortly after Fegan has been released from police custody for the shooting of Michael McKenna (charges are ultimately dropped), and he is being driven home by his "human rights" lawyer, another former IRA man named Patsy Toner who has, like McKenna, reinvented himself for an era of "peace." They drive along the Lisburn Road, and "designer boutiques, restaurants and wine bars passed on either side. Students and young professionals crossed at the lights. *They think the city belongs to them now*, Fegan thought" (36).

He sees a young woman cross the street, and Fegan "wondered if she was even born when they scraped the body parts off the streets with shovels" (36). Fegan, not part of this twenty-first century scene, is "angered at his own bitterness. The quiet after weeks of clamour disoriented him… he found the clarity disorienting" (36). Released into a city he does not recognize, Fegan still lives in a space the young professionals cannot see, a place where "the eleven [remaining ghosts] were there somewhere, just beyond his vision, waiting" (36), where he finds the lack of Troubles violence "disorienting," rather than calming or soothing. Fegan's unease at the sleek Belfast of wine bars is not just the disquiet of a man so recently incarcerated attempting to find his way back into modern urban life; it is a gesture to the reader that something still snakes under the surface of the city that is invisible to those who live in a gentrified Belfast and think the city belongs to them.

Patsy Toner and Fegan meet with Vincie Caffola, who ordered the execution of two of Fegan's remaining ghosts (the Ulster Defense Regiment soldiers) outside the old Celtic Supporters Club in west Belfast, where "tricolours and footballs decorated the sign above the entrance, but the paint flaked away to expose rotting wood" (36). The republican/ Catholic stronghold of west Belfast has been forgotten in the eager rush to redevelop the city with foreign investment capital, leaving the remnants of the IRA, like Vincie Caffola, to lurk in buildings of rotting wood. Unlike McKenna and Toner, Caffola has not reinvented himself for the Good Friday Agreement: he tells Fegan, "I don't like what's going on. Supporting the peelers, sitting at Stormont, all that" (39). Caffola's unreconstructed republican mindset, at odds with the entry of Sinn Fein into the political process, gives readers a glimpse into the world that capital was supposed to sweep away, the world of colonial violence that was meant to be transmuted into neocolonial investment.

Caffola is of the staunch belief that the conflict in Northern Ireland will "never be over… not til the Brits get out" (38). Caffola is still firmly embedded in the viewpoint that sees Belfast as a straightforward "colonial crisis" (Deane 6); he approaches the world through a stark Irish vs. British lens. But he lives in a rapidly changing city, which even he acknowledges and is not pleased about: referring to a recent immigration boom, he tells Fegan in a particularly unsavory moment, "I swear to God, this place is getting so full of foreigners it won't be worth getting the Brits out" (39). Caffola's section of Belfast, however, has seen no benefit from foreign investment or immigration: he is locked into an older dichotomous imperial framework where the Brits aren't there to invest, they're there to occupy and kill, which comes to a head shortly before his death, when he and Fegan participate in a riot together, shortly after Michael McKenna's funeral.

Sabine Wichert has written of Northern Ireland and Belfast that "mobs, demonstrations, and paramilitaries can be seen as not so much extra-parliamentary but as functioning in place of proper democratic representation and access to power" (179). Caffola's west Belfast – rundown, decaying, haunted by the ghosts of the Troubles – bears no resemblance to the gentrifying city center that has been the major beneficiary of the peace process, and so a way to react to the new neoliberal order is via the demonstration turned riot, as a way to remind the world west Belfast is still here. This particular riot doesn't seem to have been politically motivated, but rather just a way to bring up old Troubles logics without the underlying political context – Patsy Toner tells Caffola and Fegan it began because kids "started chucking stuff" (84) – but Caffola is still delighted by the opportunity to engage in old-fashioned violence with the police. "Jesus," he grins, "we haven't had a proper ruck in ages. I wonder if we can get some petrol bombs rustled up quick" (84). This

disturbance and associated violence, like Fegan's murders, is a crime redolent with the colonial legacies still embedded in the city.

Though the actual riot is a bit disappointing – "It's not the Eighties any more," Caffola says, "Fuck, it's not even the Nineties. A few stitches, that'll be the height of it" (90) – it provides the necessary cover for Fegan to get Caffola away from the crowd and kill him for the revenge the two UDR ghosts seek. But Caffola's short time on the streets of *The Twelve* serves an important purpose. By introducing readers to a man who has not adapted by "cynically [retooling] their skills for successful careers" (Stasio), the text highlights an area of Belfast left behind by capitalist investment and allows us to see how the neocolonial twenty-first century city and the colonial city of Patrick Rooney can coexist. As Adrian McKinty and Stuart Neville write in the introduction to *Belfast Noir*, British governments increased their Troubles-era colonial hold on Belfast "in reaction to IRA bombings and shootings" (15); moreover, despite Britain's post-Agreement neoliberal endeavours in one of its last remaining colonies, "working-class areas [of the city] have seen little improvement" (18). Focusing on the city center for investment and encouraging the ensuing gentrification blatantly ignores the people and areas who were most deeply involved in the Troubles – the working-class areas of west Belfast, for the purposes of *The Twelve* – and reinscribes old imperial logics and urban patterns. The imperially-influenced violence of anti-police riots may not carry the same charge it did at the height of the Troubles in the '80s and '90s, but there is still a very deep frustration in those areas at the subtler neocolonialisms of redevelopment, gentrification, and lack of structural attention paid to the areas who were the most in the weeds of the Troubles. Though "Belfast was a different place now" and "metallic signs of prosperity towered over every corner of Belfast," "the city's invisible borders remained the same… The same lowlifes still fed off the misery they created,

deepening the divisions wherever they could. The same hatreds still bubbled under the surface. But the city had grown fat, learning to mask its scars when necessary and show them when advantageous" (129). This strategic showing and masking of scars mirrors Fegan's ghosts; they pop up when Fegan has to confront his past physical crimes and subside as he observes what his city has become.

The riot is an example of colonial legacies erupting through a capitalist cover-up of imperial scars. At the same time, more generally, the influx of peace process money has led to a flattening of the specifics of Belfast's history and what imperialism and later, Good Friday Agreement-inspired neoliberalism, has meant and done to this urban space. Michael McKenna's wake, for instance, is not held in his big house in the suburbs, because this doesn't "sit well with the party's socialist manifesto" – they hold the wake, instead, at his mother's house just off the Falls Road in west Belfast. Though this part of the city has not received much direct peace process funding, it has received some spillover from young people who can no longer afford to live in the gentrified city center: Fegan observes that "many of the street's newer residents would eye this gathering with apprehension," for "the property boom had driven the young middle classes into parts of the city they'd never contemplated before" (64). Of course, the papering over of west Belfast's past isn't altogether a bad thing – the breakup of the IRA community isn't necessarily something to mourn, and the presence of money has led to lots of opportunities for the city that hadn't existed in the Troubles era – but the Falls Road moving from its position as a republican stronghold and a home for unreconstructed republican nationalists like Vincie Caffola to a site instead for young professionals buying starter homes erases something, does away with the particularities of colonial history and ushers in a new framework of globalized capitalism that makes it possible to forget about local specificities and move instead toward Belfast as

just another site for globalized capital. As noted, Fegan no longer believes his crimes had any political meaning; just as his crimes are universalized in the twenty-first century, so is the narrative of Belfast the city.

By killing all the people who ordered his Troubles murders to, in turn, rid himself of the ghosts that remind him of his Troubles and colonial past, Fegan is participating in that erasure of community memory. To be clear, I do not wish to sound nostalgic for the times "when they scraped the body parts off the streets with shovels" (36); however, Fegan's actions in ridding himself of anyone who reminds him of the Troubles participates in globalized capital's project of minimizing the effects of Belfast's imperial and colonial violence in favor of a projection of a city that has safely shuttered its past and achieved closure to become just like any other city. The gesture is similar to Queen Elizabeth's "now" in the Nairobi speech cited in the introduction – now, Nairobi and Belfast are cities like any other, places of finance and commerce and business, where the colonial violence of the past is elided for the benefit of a new triumphalist narrative. The dangers to the ruling capitalist class of dredging up the past are made clear to Campbell, a British soldier acting as a mole in the remnants of the IRA: his government handler, upon hearing Campbell's plan to destroy the few old-school IRA leaders that remain, warns him, "Stormont will grind to a halt. We can't afford another two years of negotiations just to get back to where we are now. All the politics, all the money, all the work – all wasted" (336-337). Belfast has to keep running smoothly, has to keep the narrative of finance and investment and renewal going, has to ignore the imperial crimes of the past that are papered over by the present: under this framework, it is to the city's benefit to ignore the histories excavated by Fegan's crimes.

And in so doing, Fegan's participation in the project to universalize Belfast, to absolve it of its sins and make it into a city just like any other, has a twofold effect. By

looking for a kind of closure from the Troubles era, but by doing in ways that are strongly reminiscent of the Troubles and colonial past, Fegan simultaneously tries to erase community memory and works to reinforce it. He participates in "the history of capitalist imperialism" (Lazarus 15) while trying to put to bed "the ongoing life of [empire's] residues" (Young 21), trying to map a city divorced from his and its past crimes but not engaging in a nuanced way with the issues that marked this past. In this way, Fegan participates in ideologies similar to those of the narrator of *Eureka Street*, the novel which, for Heidemann, is a "transition text" that "anticipates certain political developments" like neoliberal "global capitalism, consumerism, or proto-cosmopolitanism" (64). *Eureka Street*'s status as a "transitional," or bridge, text, and its foreshadowing of future neoliberal developments, contributes to that same text's casting of the Troubles and colonial struggle in Belfast as just a simple humanitarian issue; it is deplorable that both sides are killing each other, with no political analysis or deconstruction. Peter Mahon writes that *Eureka Street* endorses a "rhetoric of sameness" (4), a philosophy that "both sides of the political divide in Northern Ireland are essentially the same" (3), a viewpoint of "human essentialism" (5). Cleary writes of the novel that "there is little attempt imaginatively to explore why the communities should be so divided in the first instance, why the cycle of violence should be so sustained, or why so concentrated in working-class districts" (141). *The Twelve*, by its main character's lack of attention to colonial and historical root causes of crime and its wish instead for the divisions and violence to be over and shelved, demonstrates neoliberalism and neocolonialism's potentials to gloss over, forget, push aside, and universalize the specificities of local spaces. *Eureka Street* begins by telling its reader, "All stories are love stories." This flattened understanding of the city and its myriad stories and their complexities can also be seen in *The Twelve*. With this trope of contemporary Northern Irish literature in mind, we

turn now to Lucy Caldwell's *When They Were Missed* for a different accounting of the criminal city.

"Leave the House to Clear the Air": Lucy Caldwell's *Where They Were Missed*

Unlike Neville's universalizing gesture, Lucy Caldwell's 2006 novel *Where They Were Missed* offers, as Hephzibah Anderson says, "a child's-eye view of how the political can have an impact on the personal," effectively particularizing the violence of the Troubles both for Belfast and one specific individual's story. The novel's "keen sense of place" (Anderson) rotates away from Neville's starkly divided city to muse on the specificities of the Troubles and elliptically demonstrate how its violence has shaped the city of Belfast. The novel, published almost a decade after the Good Friday Agreement, takes a look at Troubles-era Belfast through the lens of hindsight, demonstrating by its presence the hollowness of twenty-first century Belfast's triumphalist neoliberal narrative. The novel's initial gesture towards "a pathological syndrome of *memory loss*" (Heidemann 44, italics original), in that the narrative circulates around an event in the past without revealing its specifics, is eventually overcome by a forthright acknowledgement of past events and a firm desire to heal through remembrance; however, the gesture, while well-intentioned, may not go far enough.

Part 1 of *Where They Were Missed* is narrated by Saoirse as a six-year-old in Belfast. Her mother, a Catholic from Donegal in the Republic of Ireland, is married to her father, a Belfast native and Protestant police officer. Though they live on a Protestant street where Orangemen march and "the other children… go with their mammies and their daddies and their fold-down chairs and their crisps and flags to cheer the marchers on" (3), Saoirse, her younger sister, Daisy, and their mother all stay in the house during the marching season, the mother scolding the children, "I don't want you waving at the British Army. They've no business to be installing themselves in this street and I won't have you waving at them" (5).

The other children on the street torment Saoirse and Daisy, yelling at them, "Taigs! Filthy stinking Ta-igs!" (22), leaving the sisters to wile away the hours with themselves and their mother, an isolated island of Catholics and half-Catholics in a sea of hostile Protestants.

Saoirse's childhood in Belfast is abruptly interrupted when Daisy runs out into traffic and is killed, completely destroying her parents' already decaying marriage. Having had enough of Belfast, Saoirse's mother takes her remaining daughter out of the city and across the border to her home place of Donegal, leaving her husband, Saoirse's father, behind. Though the rest of *Where They Were Missed* takes place in Donegal, the city of Belfast is always in the background, like a simmering pot, waiting to boil back into consciousness. The second part of the novel, set in Gweebarra Bay in Donegal, picks up with Saoirse as a teenager living with her aunt and uncle, her mother no longer in the picture. While baking soda bread with her aunt, who runs a bed and breakfast, Saoirse slips back into memories of her childhood, thinking, "In Belfast, on Saturday mornings, my father would go down the Ormeau Road to the bakery to buy sodie farls…. Mammy'd fry the sodie bread on both sides so it was crisp, but not burnt, and she'd slip a sunny-side-up egg on top of it" (88). Lost in her reverie for a moment, she abruptly cuts herself off, thinking, "I don't like it when I remember things, like soda bread and the bakery on the Ormeau Road and Belfast" (88). This abrupt curtailment of memory is a consistent theme throughout the book.

But these and other memories pop up often enough in Saoirse's musings that, though she is in rural Donegal, Belfast figures as a present absence in her life, looming up so often that we may treat *Where They Were Missed* as a Belfast novel. Saoirse is marked as an outsider from the moment she reaches Donegal; as her aunt is registering her for school, a cleaning lady strikes up a conversation with her, and upon learning Saoirse is from Belfast, the woman crosses herself and says, "Ah, Heaven help us all. You'll be much better off out

of that hellhole" (138). Saoirse, from the start, is coded as having come from a criminal city so violent that the name of it is practically unspeakable; even uttering the name of the city causes a grown woman to cross herself to ward off the danger. She never really leaves Belfast and does not assimilate in Donegal: one teacher in particular always refers to her as "our little Protestant girl" (141), and when discussing a girl who has recently moved to the town from Sligo, Saoirse laments, "It doesn't seem to matter that I've lived here for nearly ten years; it doesn't seem to matter that I'm almost always up top of the class in Irish, or that I go to Mass just like the rest of them; none of it matters, because when it comes down to it, even after a couple of months – a matter of weeks, really – Clodagh Mulcahy is less of an outsider than I'll ever be" (116). Saoirse, even in Donegal, will always be a Belfast girl, even when over the border in the Republic. Moreover, her outsider status makes her a useful observer of the text's and Belfast's capitalized postcolonial crime. Saoirse must, in the words of the MacNeice epigraph, "leave the house to clear the air."[41] It's only by leaving Belfast that she can have the distance to fully understand it. However, she is never well and truly distanced from the city of her birth; it is the 1980s, we learn, and so it is the height of the Troubles, and being as close to the border as they are in Donegal, the capitalized postcolonial crime associated with the city Saoirse thinks she has left behind is bound to crop up in her daily life. *Where They Were Missed* is an effective exercise in remembering and confronting Belfast's "recent past" to trouble the contemporary neoliberal Belfast narrative (Heidemann 2).

[41] The epigraph to the novel is from the Louis MacNeice poem, "Selva Oscura," and reads, "A house can be haunted by those who were never there / If there was where they were missed. Returning to such / Is it worse if you miss the same or another or none? / The haunting anyway is too much. / You have to leave the house to clear the air." MacNeice himself, parallel to Saoirse, was born in Belfast and moved to Carrickfergus and eventually to England.

Eamonn Hughes, in his introduction to *Culture and Politics in Northern Ireland*, states that Northern Ireland is a place of "numerous borders" and that "the one between it and the Republic of Ireland is in many ways the least important" (2). The porous nature of that border contributes to its lack of importance, as does the artificial nature of the imperial boundary; the intangible borders between religion, nationality, and class that matter in Northern Ireland are created by first imperialism and now neoliberalism, as demonstrated in *The Twelve*.[42] The exchanges between the North and Saoirse's new life in Donegal are frequent: her boyfriend, Johnny Mahon, has two uncles in the Maze prison, "doing short sentences for possession of firearms and suspected paramilitary involvement" (93), and Malin Head, where a huge cache of arms intended for the IRA was discovered, is "only a couple of hours from us" (94). Though her aunt dismisses the IRA as only "a few fanatics terrorizing the country and giving Irish folk everywhere a bad reputation,"[43] *Where They Were Missed* subtly leads the reader into the deeper trenches of identity, imperial legacies, and capitalized postcolonial crime.

The first time readers meet Johnny Mahon, he calls Saoirse out of her house at 10:30 p.m. Though his matter seems urgent, he only drives her to his house to see his mother, on the way instructing her to look in the newspaper to figure out the evening's cinema schedule so she can tell anyone who asks they went to the movies together that evening. Once they reach Johnny's house, they only stick around for five or ten minutes before Johnny drives her home. To the reader, it is clear that Johnny is creating an alibi, but, true to the novel's overall gesture of circling around but not naming the core issues, Saoirse doesn't seem to

[42] Of course, the status of the border may well change as Brexit talks proceed.
[43] Notably, Saoirse replies by telling her aunt, "That's what my father says… but he says it about Ulster and the Protestants" (94), hinting at an initial gesture of universalism like in *The Twelve*.

fully grasp the position Johnny in which Johnny is putting her. She seems, mostly, like a teenage girl awestruck at her "luck," pointing to the gap Caldwell creates between a naïve narrator and her more worldly readers: "I don't know why Johnny chose me," she muses, "Johnny Mahon, whom most of the girls in school are after" (101). Her friend Bridget ungenerously probes, "Why'd he want to ask you out, then?" (101), and Johnny never seems to take her anywhere other people would see them – mostly they go on drives "nowhere in particular, just all over Donegal" (102), and no formal announcement of their coupledom is ever made. Saoirse just assumes, when they kiss for the first time, that "we were properly going out, then" (102).

While Johnny simmers in the back of readers' minds as an uneasy, potentially violent presence, Saoirse's father, who still lives in Belfast, is simultaneously attempting to rebuild his relationship with his daughter by periodically visiting Donegal. Shortly after Saoirse unwittingly gives Johnny an alibi for a yet-unknown reason, she is prompted by her burgeoning romantic relationship to ask her father how she and her mother met. "It's something I've always wondered about," she thinks, "him a Protestant and what's more an RUC man from the North, and her a Catholic girl from the Gaeltacht" (103). Her father tells her they met in Derry, in the summer of 1968, when her mother was marching for civil rights and her father was patrolling the demonstrations. Her father crashed a party in civilian clothes, and even though "Civil Rights was your mother's burning passion" (104), the two of them ended up in an unlikely marriage, a gesture on Caldwell's part to the "romance-across-the-divide" Belfast novels of earlier in the twentieth century. But neither Saoirse nor readers are given further details: we don't know who approached who at the party, how long the two were together before getting married, how they managed to overcome their vastly different worldviews and subject positions. In this way, the relationship between the Protestant RUC

man and the Catholic civil rights demonstrator girl is left spoken about but not filled in, present but incomplete, like the city of Belfast itself. *Where They Were Missed* asks us to consider what's missing in these narratives – a marriage, a teen relationship, and a city – and how these very omissions might gesture more clearly to a complete picture of capitalized postcolonial crime in Belfast, a picture that takes account of the city, warts and all.

Cleary articulates the fact that "recent Northern literature reflects this tentative balancing act of (a still dominant) Britishness and (a still emergent) Irishness" (76-77) and also points out that "there are remarkably few narratives that deal simultaneously with Northern and Southern society" (77). *Where They Were Missed* is one of the few novels that does deal simultaneously with both sides of the border to negotiate the vexed questions of British and Irish identity; moreover, Caldwell is able to achieve this "balancing act" by devoting over half of the narrative to Donegal, but keeping Saoirse's Belfast-bound father as a constant presence in her life. Her memories, her father's sporadic visits, and Johnny's mysterious behavior and family relationships keep the presence of Belfast bubbling in the background of the novel, though we aren't involved in the day-to-day life of the city beyond the first 80 pages. It is when Saoirse investigates her personal story and her family that she begins to uncover the gaps in her life story and a fuller picture of the overall history of Belfast. As Robert Young writes, "the postcolonial has always been concerned with a politics of invisibility: it makes the invisible visible" (23). Becoming attuned to the postcolonial situation and realities of Belfast, the city she knows but is full of invisibilities and gaps, clarifies mysteries in her life.

After Johnny uses Saoirse as an alibi and she has the strained dinner with her father, Johnny drops off the radar for a while. "I don't see or hear from Johnny for a couple of days," Saoirse says. "I ring the house three times, but his mam answers and says Johnny's

not in; the third time I ring I think I hear her stifle a sigh when she says she'll get him to give me a ring back, and so I don't phone again" (117). Johnny's unexplained upsets Saoirse, but she doesn't pursue it that closely; she seems to assume that he's dropped her for someone like Clodagh Mulcahy, someone more popular and less of an outsider. But when she is walking home from the shop one day, she sees a group of suspicious-looking men coming out of the neighbor's rundown barn, and Johnny is with them. Saoirse doesn't know what Johnny was doing there, who the other men were, or what exactly was going on at her neighbor's, but she feels a chill and is certain that something is not right; in some faint way, she is able to discern that her life and the order of things has been disrupted. In that vein, Karl Marx has written that "the criminal interrupts the monotony and security of bourgeois life" (53); though Saoirse does not yet know what Johnny's actions constitute, these actions have interrupted the "monotony and security" of Saoirse's life in Donegal, leading Saoirse deeper down the path of unpacking crime, circulations of capital, and the imperial legacies within.

Troubled by the mysterious scene she has witnessed, Saoirse senses something deeper is going on with Johnny, but she tells the reader, "I don't know what to say or who to say it to" (119). The next night, however, the elderly neighbor, Manus, whose barn Johnny Mahon was sneaking around in comes over to Saoirse's aunt and uncle's for his tea. Saoirse, probing Manus, comes to realize that he believes the farmhouse is deserted and has been for years. After he tells Saoirse an old Irish legend about a seal-girl who leaves her husband for the sea, Saoirse observes, "He's quare superstitious, auld Manus, isn't he?... And when he told his story, I thought he was going to start crying a couple of times" (126). In response, her aunt informs Saoirse that Manus was reminded by the story of his own mother, who drowned when Manus was a baby; when Saoirse says she never knew that, and asks why no

one told her, her aunt responds, "in a funny voice," that "the past's the past" (127). But as we are constantly reminded by the events of *Where They Were Missed,* we as readers know this isn't true. Elements of Saoirse's past keep bubbling up in her present, in the way elements of Belfast's colonial and imperial past keep making themselves known as well through the prism of capitalized postcolonial crime. As Viviane Saleh-Hanna writes, "those who have lived in colonized realities can best describe the connections between history and the present" (12). Saoirse, as someone who has lived in Belfast, a contemporary colonized reality, is the perfect interlocutor to point out to her community and to her readers that it's not true that the past's the past; there are hauntings from both her and her city's past that will continue to crop up in the present and guide how imperial legacies and capitalized postcolonial crimes are figured in this particular narrative.

In an effort to discover more about her past, Saoirse turns to the local library's holdings on the Civil Rights movement in Derry in the late 1960s. This gesture, looking towards the past to fill in the gaps in her present, speaks to post-Agreement fiction's "insistence on looking back instead of forward" (Heidemann 65); however, in typically Caldwellian fashion, this looking back circles closer to the central questions without actually answering them. At first, the going is rough: "all of the girls in the pictures look pretty much the same," Saoirse complains, "all of them are young, and a lot of them have long, loose hair, and they all have similar expressions on their faces. Any of them could be my mother" (142). She keeps combing through the microfiche (this is, after all, the 1980s), but comes up empty again and again. Suddenly, though, she comes across, in "the smallest local newspaper" (143), a hit for May 1967, and a picture of sixteen-year-old Deirdre O'Conor, Saoirse's mother. Her initial jubilation gives way to dismay when she realizes that the story is not about Deirdre's work in the civil rights movement, but rather a simple human-interest

story on her mother winning a local beauty pageant, and being named the Rose of Donegal for the second year in a row. The official archive having failed her, she decides, reluctantly, to turn to her father for help uncovering the invisible missing elements of her and her city's past, and so she calls her father in Belfast, and he agrees to come to Donegal this weekend, because, as a matter of fact, "there's something he's been wanting to ask me himself" (144).

Saoirse's father takes her out to dinner, where she point-blank asks him about her mother and why her aunt and uncle have been whispering about Saoirse and her behavior for the past few days. "I need to know, Da, and you have to tell me," she says, "You have to! I'm not giving up, you know. I'm not" (144). Her dad chuckles, and when Saoirse, annoyed, asks what can possibly be funny, he responds, "Well, love, don't take this the wrong way now, but for all of your, shall we say, your Celtic upbringing, there's still a good wee bit of the Ulster Prod in you, you know" (145). Frustrated, Saoirse asks what he means, and he does an impression of her: "I'll not give in. No surrender! No surrender, eh?" (145).

With this reminder of her divided upbringing, between her "Prod" past and her "Celtic" present, he launches into a story about her great-grandfather, who was killed on the Somme while fighting "for God and Ulster" (145). He still has the telegram announcing his grandfather's death, he tells Saoirse, as well as a medal, and he offers to send the materials to Saoirse if she's interested in that part of her family's history. Saoirse, somewhat stunned, says, "Da, see, this is exactly what I mean… There's all of this – this stuff, you know? Like that happened and all. And I don't know any of it. And how am I supposed to… I don't know, you know, how am I supposed to do anything when I don't know any of it?" (146).

Saoirse's desperate plea to her father to fill in some gaps, to inform her of what she's missing, goes further than her own personal family history. Her vague memories of Belfast, her unclear recollections of how her sister died, are important to her in the present; she asks

how she is "supposed to do anything" when she doesn't know her past. She only knows "stupid things" about her mother, "like she was a Rose of Donegal two years running" (147). Saoirse, sensing that the true key to both her personal past and her personal present lies in the Civil Rights movement that brought her parents together, pressures her father for more information on this score, and in the telling of that narrative, we get more information not only about Saoirse and her family, but about the city she left behind and its colonial and imperial paradigm.

In her father's telling, the early days of dating Deirdre were like a whirlwind of youthful rebellion and romance and fancy. Saoirse, sensibly, wants to know how a "wee Catholic girl from round these parts" could possibly have started dating a Protestant policeman, and her father sighs, "it made it more – romantic, sort of thing… If someone told Deirdre what to do you'd almost be guaranteed she'd do the opposite, just to show she could" (147). Deirdre, reportedly, never told her parents about Saoirse's father, and her father admits to her that he has always wondered, "whether it would have been such a big deal if she had've said to her parents… I think that when she – left, when she came up north, it was her broke off contact with them rather than the other way round […] I think," he says, "Deirdre's family would have come round, if she'd given them the chance" (149).

But Saoirse, in her rush to find out more about her mother, doesn't pause on this point: she barrels ahead, asking her father more questions, and realizes, all of a sudden, that her father knows what happened to her mother. All of these years of everyone pleading ignorance, Saoirse realizes, have been false: "You know something, I go. You and Aunt Bernadette both. You know something you're not telling me" (152). But we still don't know the details, for her father, while acknowledging that he does indeed know where Deirdre is, abruptly changes the subject and asks Saoirse to come and spend the summer in Belfast with

him and his girlfriend, Pauline. But, he informs her, she would only come up "after the Twelfth, when things quieten down a bit" (153), driving home how the violence and crimes of the Troubles still structure everyone's everyday lives in the city. Suspicious because he has never invited her before, not even for a weekend ("Why on earth would I want to spend the whole summer in *Belfast*?" she thinks [153]), she presses for more information, which he finally gives her: he will be having a baby with Pauline, and that baby will be Saoirse's sister.

"And suddenly," Saoirse thinks, "there it is between us, like a ghost" (155). Her past in Belfast, the death of her sister, has abruptly loomed up from history to take its position between Saoirse and her father – a ghost from the past like those that haunt Gerry Fegan. Their lives have been lived through the gaps since Daisy's death, and this new baby, this new sister, won't be doing anything to fill in that missing, at least at first: Saoirse very firmly informs her father, her aunt, and her uncle that she will not be spending the summer in Belfast with her father and her soon-to-be half-sister. But the apparent absence of the city turns out not to matter a great deal, because Belfast and the violences and crimes related to the conflict there still find a way to burrow their way into Saoirse's life.

Via her friend Mairead, Saoirse learns that Johnny Mahon and his older brother Eamon have been arrested "for possession of firearms and on two counts of suspected paramilitary involvement" (159). They've been under surveillance for some time, along with two older men, and were finally arrested "when weapons and other suspicious items including ammonium nitrate were found with their fingerprints in a disused barn on the Dennehy [Manus's] farm" (159). Johnny had been working with his IRA-involved uncles and now he, by virtue of being eighteen years of age, looks set to be headed for jail himself. While all this is still registering with Saoirse, her uncle calls her downstairs, because there is a *garda* there to see her. Though he says he's there unofficially, it occurs to Saoirse that, the

way the room is positioned, with her facing her aunt and uncle and the police officer, it's "like I'm on trial or something, and it hits me: I am, sort of. Oh Jesus" (162).

Saoirse's trial calls to mind Foucault's observation that "we live in a society of disciplinary power" (237). Though Saoirse knows nothing of Johnny's activities, and her relationship with Johnny was shaky at best, she is still subject to the intrusion of the state and the treatment of her as a criminal. When questioned, the police officer is skeptical: "You knew nothing at all?" he asks. "And did you not guess anything? Were there no hints, no odd behaviour, nothing like that?" (163). What seems on one level a fairly innocuous line of questioning in fact positions Saoirse in a tenuous position: by failing to report on her boyfriend, this scene implies, she is in some way responsible for the potential violence that could have happened in the future. Be on the lookout, this structure warns, and if you see something, you Protestant Belfast outsider, say something. Stop bringing your city's divisions into our life here in Donegal.

Saoirse's status as an outsider worthy of suspicion is confirmed when the police officer gets up to go. On his way out, he tells Saoirse that Johnny said about her, "I needed an excuse for if I was seen around auld Dennehy's farm. And as a bonus who'd suspect anything of the daughter of an RUC man?" (163). Saoirse, stricken, hears Bridget's words anew: "Why'd he want to ask you out? Sure you've never even spoken to him before, have you?" (163). Suddenly, Bridget's suspicions seem valid, and the personal is telescoped out to the political. Saoirse's own experience, of being tangentially caught up in a criminal ring replete with colonial and imperial implications, is transported onto the larger, sociopolitical picture: she's never, in Donegal, ever been more than the strange daughter of a Protestant RUC man. Even when she crosses that flimsy border into the Republic, there is no way to break from Belfast. As her aunt says, "Who'd've thought it… I'm just an ordinary person…

trying to live an ordinary life. Is there no escape from it all? Is there no escape?" (165). No, the answer seems to be; you're caught in this grid, in this narrative, and it will always be there, looming like a shadow or an unspoken, invisible violence.

In an effort to break from this suffocating narrative Saoirse unwillingly finds herself in, she goes to the Public Records Office to learn more about her mother and fill in the missing parts of her own personal narrative, the parts that break from her years in Belfast. At the office, when she types in "O'Conor," "there's loads of O'Conors registered at the Gweebarra Parish Church" (167). The woman helping her says, "Well, you certainly belong here," but Saoirse admits, "I don't really know what to say to that" (167-168). She spends the day searching, and discovers that her mother and father were married when Deirdre was already pregnant with Saoirse; moreover, that Deirdre was only seventeen when she left her family to move to Belfast. She also discovers something else, but Caldwell obliquely circles around that discovery for awhile, forcing readers to wait to find out what is missing. Saoirse comes home and says to her aunt, "I found out about my mother," to which Bernadette responds, "Oh, Saoirse. Dear God, Saoirse. However did you –" (171), causing Saoirse to angrily demand, "Why didn't you tell me?" (171). The scene ends with Saoirse saying, "You've hidden it from me. All these years you've hidden it from me," and her aunt saying, "Let me explain" (171), leaving the reader still in the dark; we only pick back up the narrative later, when Saoirse is down on the beach, "just standing, letting the wind whip my hair about and snatch the water from my eyes" (172).

Though, as Heidemann writes, "post-Agreement writers are predominantly concerned with the private predicaments of their literary characters as opposed to a discursive reading of the political structures themselves" (256), the way Saoirse's "private predicaments" mirror larger "political structures" belie that false dichotomy, and serve to

drive home to the post-Agreement reader that Belfast cannot be so easily forced into a new, capitalist narrative. The sense that Saoirse's personal experience is a microscopic view of Belfast's larger issues of imperial legacies and capitalized postcolonial crimes is made concrete when she ends the chapter by telling the reader:

> It was my fault, you see. Why Daisy died; and then, why Mammy left. I've carried it inside me always, that knowledge, like a smooth cold pebble in my chest that makes me not able to breathe properly; and now, added to it, is the discovery that it was because of me, too, because she was pregnant with me, that Mammy left her family and home in the first place. Why Mammy left; why Daisy died; why Mammy left again. All of it, all of it: it was all me (174).

Saoirse's musings here make explicit her position within the narrative: she keeps finding herself at the center of events, much like Belfast the city itself does in the novel, even though the novel may seem, on the surface, to cast Saoirse as a lone outsider or Donegal as the more important hub of activity. Though it may be desirable to cast aside Belfast and its capitalized postcolonial crimes, there is no way to do this honestly or without repercussions.

We begin to fill in some holes in the next chapter, when we learn (obliquely, of course) that Deirdre, after a nervous collapse, was institutionalized shortly after arriving in Donegal with Saoirse those many years ago, and has been living in a house called La Retraite ever since. Saoirse goes to La Retraite to find her, and they have a fairly stilted conversation – notably, Saoirse tells her mother she's interested in studying history in college, because she wants to know more about "the past and that" (183). Her mother reacts by informing her, as Aunt Bernadette has done, that "the past is past" (183), an attempt to forbid Saoirse to excavate the scars of the past from the capitalized postcolonial crimes of her city; later, she tells Saoirse, over Saoirse's protestations, that "Belfast wasn't – a happy place" (187), and

instantly closes down. Saoirse, desperately pleading to learn more about her past, says, "There's so much to say. To talk about" (188), and in response, her mother "hisses":

> No there's not. There's nothing to say. I always knew you'd come and find me one day, and I always dreaded that day because I knew what you'd say. The past is past, I tell you, and talking about it doesn't help. You have to lay it to rest. Turn your back on it and leave it behind. (188)

Even over Saoirse's protests – she wants to tell Deirdre, "You can't leave your life behind… it trails behind you like a shadow and no matter how fast you jump or how suddenly you twirl around you can't trick it away" (189) – Deirdre refuses to engage, finally snapping at Saoirse, "You don't get it. I can't bear – I can't be with you, Saoirse. I can't be around you, seeing you every day, because when I see you, I can't forget" (189). If Deirdre's name, associated with sorrows, fits her well, Saoirse's, meaning "freedom," seems like a cruel slap in the face at that moment, for Saoirse has just learned that her presence is, to her mother, a kind of chaining to the past, a past which she refuses to confront. Saoirse tries to bring up horrible words Deirdre said to her when Daisy died, and Deirdre, livid, spits, "I can't be – be held to account, yes, *held to account*, for anything I may have said in – in anger, or in grief, you hear me?" (191).

Deirdre's absolute rejection of the past, of not doing anything with it but forgetting it, mirrors how adults in Saoirse's life refuse to let her return to Belfast. It calls to mind, as well, twenty-first century investors' motivations for projecting the city with which all these characters are concerned as a beautiful, bustling, capitalist haven, free of any kind of past or history. Returned from La Retraite, Saoirse confronts her aunt, uncle, and father, and ask why no one told her where her mother was or why they wouldn't let her go back to Belfast

and live with her father. "We didn't want more upheaval for you," her father says, "and other officers in my line of work were being targeted; their houses were being petrol-bombed, their cars were being booby-trapped: and I'd come up here, and I'd see the beach for you to play on, and fields to run around in, and everything peaceful and far away from – trouble. From the Troubles. From politics" (200). Saoirse responds, shortly, "It's been trouble all my life, Da. Politics. If that's your word for it" (200). Though moving her to Donegal may have made Saoirse safer from the more explicit manifestations of crime and violence, like the bombings associated with the Troubles, the capitalized postcolonial crimes that structure Belfast still manage to work their way into her life, over the porous, arbitrary border. Being physically removed from Belfast didn't keep imperial legacies from bubbling up in her life via Johnny Mahon's capitalized postcolonial crimes, and nor did that removal keep Saoirse from dredging up the past everyone is so insistent doesn't matter. Like Belfast being silent on its recent past, *Where They Were Missed*'s tangential entanglements with the city point to the crimes in the narrative of Belfast that will always force themselves, in some way, to be reckoned with, even as readers in 2006 wish to bury them in the past.

After the conversation with her aunt, uncle, and father, Saoirse decides to visit her father in Belfast for a week before school starts. Newly equipped with a driving license, she crosses the border at Derry, "where the cars slow to a crawl, queuing to get through the British Army checkpoint" (219). The architecture of the surveillance state is on display as the police pull over cars and search the hood and trunk; Saoirse remembers her aunt's warning, that "the soldiers'll rummage through your handbag before they let you over the threshold" (219). Her school friends' alarm seems validated, as well: when Saoirse tells them she'll be going to Belfast for a week, one says, aghast, "*Belfast*?" and others chime in, "Are you off your bap?" "But the bombs and all, are you not scared?" (214-215). But Saoirse's first view

of the city doesn't remind her of Daisy's death, or the Orange marches on her street, or anything about the violent past of her city: she takes in a view of the city, driving down into the valley, where "all of Belfast is spread out softly luminous below, and as the hill sweeps downwards, and the car gains its own eager momentum, I have the sensation of falling, in sudden relief, towards the city's gentle lights" (231).

Glenn Patterson has written of *Where They Were Missed* that, "it's remarkable how many Belfast novels include a view across the city. Usually Cave Hill is the vantage point, but this first novel by one of the city's rising stars ends with a homecoming from a different angle, the Craigantlet hills." David Brett has written that "Belfast is one of the few cities that can be taken in at a single view" (19). This view of the city is lovely, serene, and peaceful, but viewed as it is from a distance, up in the hills, it isn't real, true, genuine enough to be able to be taken at face value. Like *The Twelve*, it presents a universalized version of Belfast; it is just a city, like any other, with lovely lights and hills and valleys. It is as one-dimensional as Saoirse's father's wistful remembrances of the early days of dating Deirdre: "Sixty-eight and sixty-nine. It sounds like the worst kind of cliché now, but *then*… things seemed possible, then" (148). The youthful dream of love-across-the-barricades, the peaceful view of Belfast – these are all well and good, but to be able to reparate the crimes of colonialism fully, we must sit with some uncomfortable, specific truths.

It would have been quite easy, for example, for Saoirse to shrug off her friends' incredulity about Belfast. She could have made light or been ashamed of her part-Protestant heritage, as she's done in the past, but instead, she forthright says, "I can't be scared… I'm half from there. I can't be scared" (214). Similarly, when, on her way to Belfast, she stops at her father's home village of Greyabbey, she suddenly becomes "very conscious of the Southern touch to my accent, and of the Donegal registration plates on the car" (224). She

wants to tell the town, "I am a Greyabbey Pentland… I belong here, too" (224). "Maybe," she thinks, "you can never really get away from where you come from" (226).

Saoirse's eventual choice to go to Belfast for a week, to honor the request her father made earlier in the year, to lean into a part of her heritage she'd rather forget: all reflect a gesture towards becoming more comfortable in her skin, more at ease with the idea of being not-quite-one-thing-and-not-quite-another. Her insistence on memory, on exploring the past instead of shoving it aside, points to a possible future politics of healing and community. Though she's only just begun, the signal that she's ready to explore both aspects of her identity, lean into the nuances and crevices and gray areas, is a positive sign: perhaps this is where capitalized postcolonial crime can be reparated in Belfast, the city of both the five quarters and of Patrick Rooney.

However, this vision of the future is very individualist, and offers no particular strategy for large-scale cultural, economic, and political restructuring of the criminal city. While it may work very well for Saoirse, others do not have the "freedom" to make the choices she does. Moreover, as Cathal Goan has written about the Troubles, "there is no closure, it seems to me; at best, and with considerable effort, there is critical assessment and reassessment conducted with sufficient humility to recognize differing perspectives and truths, and generosity enough to concede the validity of others' memories and the fallibility of our own" (180). Even as Saoirse attempts to make gestures towards a healing through remembrance, this action will always be incomplete, insufficient, both for its individualist scale and for the lack of attention to the levels of trauma wrought by centuries of history, even as she attempts to recognize other "perspectives and truths" and explore the recesses of others' memory. Ultimately, the script that works on a very particular, local level may work well for one person, but there's no indication that Saoirse's embrace of her identity will

lead to the ceasing of the neocolonial occupation of the North, the economic redressing of years of discrimination against Catholics, or the large-scale cultural and political reorganization of society that would be needed for a true vision of reparated capitalized postcolonial crime. That said, Saoirse's openness to nuance and grayscale understandings of identity, not to mention the novel's attention to the specificities of Belfast, are possible in Belfast as they might also be in a different city in which imperial legacies have led to religious tensions and divisions: the criminal city of Bombay.

"As If Fiction and Real Life Were Anticipating Each Other": Bombay After Mumbai

In November 2008, over a period of four days, ten members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, an Islamic militant organization based in Pakistan, carried out twelve coordinated gun and bomb attacks in various locations around the city of Bombay. The stated goal of Lashkar-e-Taiba, which roughly translates to Army of the Righteous or Army of the Pure, in carrying out these and other terrorist attacks is to restore Islamic rule in India, putting these attacks firmly into ongoing conversations about religious fundamentalism and terrorism in the contemporary world. Arundhati Roy astutely notes in her article on the attacks in *The Guardian* that "there is a fierce, unforgiving fault-line that runs through the contemporary discourse on terrorism." One side, which she refers to as "Side A," holds that "terrorism, especially 'Islamist' terrorism, [is] a hateful, insane scourge that spins on its own axis, in its own orbit and has nothing to do with the world around it, nothing to do with history, geography or economics." "Therefore," Roy continues, "to try and place it in a political context, or even try to understand it, amounts to justifying it and is a crime in itself." Side B, on the other hand, "believes that though nothing can ever excuse or justify terrorism, it exists in a particular time, place and political context, and to refuse to see that will only aggravate the problem and put more and more people in harm's way. Which is a crime in itself."

Roy, by formulating not only terrorism as a crime, but various methods of interpretation and action as crimes or not-crimes, opens the door for critics to investigate the fundamentalist framework that makes these bomb blasts, and others like it, possible in the twenty-first century., The nuances of Roy's "Side B" are more resonant for a postcolonial understanding of the contemporary world; in other words, I hold that

ostensibly religiously-motivated nationalist and terrorist attacks always have deep historical and political roots, it is necessary to understand the context and culture that continues to produce such violence in the city. As Roy says, "We need context. Always. In this nuclear subcontinent that context is partition." Given the historic and religious tensions between Pakistan and India, formally instigated by the 1947 British Empire-engineered Partition that created the border between the two countries, it makes sense to jump immediately to the legacies of imperialism when thinking of the root causes of this tragedy; what may seem less obvious, at first glance, are the links between the religious fundamentalism of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the oddly-similar fundamentalism of the right-wing Hindu Shiv Sena, the legacies of the British Empire, and the neoliberal realities of India in general and Bombay in particular. Viewing these social, historical, and economic realities in tandem opens up the possibility of thinking of the city of Bombay as a palimpsest, a site where multiple vectors interplay in varying intensities to create a map of the city where different texts overlap with and speak to each other. A way of picking apart this palimpsest, I argue, is conducting a capitalized postcolonial crime reading: investigating how crimes committed in contemporary Bombay point to residues of empire like religious communalism, economic inequality, and still-present imperial histories that thread their way through contemporary city streets.

By referencing the petty and property crimes committed due to inequalities engendered by neoliberalism, and violence propagated by xenophobia towards ethnic, linguistic, and racial "others" brought about by Partition and the resultant right-wing Hindu and Muslim fundamentalisms, the capitalized postcolonial crimes of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) and Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2007) spur the reader into thinking about larger, un-redressed crimes of empire. "Capitalized postcolonial crime" refers to any contemporary offense against the law that

hearkens back to imperial and colonial legacies, when examined through the lens of postcolonial theory and neoliberal/neocolonial reality. In these three novels, many factors converge to produce these crimes: for instance, the crimes of fraud, bomb-making, and human trafficking in *The Moor's Last Sigh* come about due to the imperial legacy of the spice trade, contemporary neoliberal economic realities, and native Indian complicity in right-wing Hindu fundamentalist movement, while a plot to blow up the city in *Sacred Games* is similarly linked to currents of Indian right-wing movements, legacies of the imperial Partition, and contemporary crimes of complicity like police and governmental corruption. The threads in all these crimes, however, in a postcolonial reading, lead back to the legacies and ghosts of empire.

Moreover, viewing the November 2008 attacks at the level of city geography makes it hard not to think about the violence in the framework of neoliberal realities produced by imperial legacies.[44] Naomi Klein has written of "orchestrated raids on the public sphere in the wake of catastrophic events" (6), which, in the context of Bombay, happened with the neoliberalization of the economy on the heels of the rise of anti-Muslim terror attacks in the early 1990s. By "neoliberal," I am referring to a set of very specific individualistic, competitive, market-oriented policies enacted by the Indian government, which were able to be implemented while the public was riveted to such violent events as the rise of Shiv Sena and the destruction of the Babri Mosque. "Imperial legacies" is a phrase I use to refer to the lingering effects of empire in the contemporary postcolonial city, mixed with a hefty dose of native responsibility; as Achille Mbembe has written, "the general practice of power has

[44] Al-Jazeera English, with the help of its followers on social media, compiled a comprehensive map of the attacks. As of February 8, 2018, it could be viewed at this link: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1I6SuyXRZLDapOIK8ViEQ3j608Tw&hl=en&ll=19.079700497451075%2C72.84371149999993&z=10.

followed directly from the colonial political culture and has perpetuated the most despotic aspects of ancestral traditions, themselves reinvented for the occasion" (42). These imperial legacies can be tangible (in the sense of street names, railroads, monuments, institutions, schools, churches, etc) or more abstract (as in governing systems, patterns of residence and segregation, racial hierarchies, religious fundamentalisms, and, most pertinently for this study, economic structures). One of the most potent imperial legacies is neoliberalism, or an economic system based on a belief in competition, removal of state-imposed regulations and controls, and prizing of individualism at the expense of community: in many ways an amplification of the free trade policies espoused by the British Empire. Shashi Tharoor has written, "Empire was in many ways the vehicle for the extension of British social structures to the colonies they conquered. The socio-political constructs that the British made in their Empire were primarily reflections of the traditional, individualistic, unequal, and still class-ridden society that existed in England" (49). From the first years of British rule in India, the colonists imported a proto-neoliberal social structure. In India, neoliberalism is defined by encounter with global capital, as Rupal Oza has pointed out; this globalizing of the economy would not have been possible without the machinations of the British Empire. Reflecting the continuing importance of the empire on today's neoliberal, globally-oriented economy, most of the 12 sites that came under siege in 2008 are concentrated in the south of the city, which is currently the center of capital in Bombay and was the epicenter of British rule in colonial Bombay and contains many imperial monuments that hearken back to the days of imperialism, such as the Gateway to India, Fort George, and the Taj Mahal Hotel, site of one of the deadliest attacks.[45] These monuments act as centers of power both then and now.

[45] Arundhati Roy calls the Taj Mahal "an icon of the easy, obscene injustice that ordinary Indians endure every day."

Neoliberalism is also marked by increasing gaps between rich and poor. South Bombay remains wealthier than the city as a whole and also houses important financial institutions with global reach, such as the Reserve Bank of India and the Bombay Stock Exchange, which serve to exacerbate inequality. Last but not least, a key tenet of neoliberalism is the withdrawal of the state from economic regulations and controls, as well as the welfare of its general citizenry; the sites of attack in 2008 are intended for those who do not need, and categorically reject, governmental regulations on wealth, taxes, and earnings. The reasons why Lashkar-e-Taiba would choose to (in large part) attack this section of the city make sense when viewed through a lens attentive to continuing neocolonial capitalism; where imperial power was focused 100 years ago laid the foundation for where power will still be concentrated now. Under the rubric of capitalized postcolonial crime, the areas targeted in this terrorist attack were chosen not because Islamic rule in India would be restored if they were violently destroyed, but because of their roots in international trade, in shipping, and in the production of cotton, all of which can be traced back to British imperial power in India. This is not Roy's "Side A" in other words; there is context to be taken into account, the context of imperialism. Lashkar-e-Taiba's fundamentalist crimes of postcolonial terrorism are echoed in literature, specifically in the violence found in *Midnight's Children, The Moor's Last Sigh*, and *Sacred Games*; these literary fundamentalist echoes, when traced, allow the reader to excavate the invisible, covert imperial legacies from the headline-grabbing crimes of religiously-motivated terrorism. This means that the reader must be attentive in order to unearth the various elements of the palimpsestic postcolonial criminal city.

This chapter will demonstrate that certain literary portrayals of violence and crime in Bombay aim to spur readers into thinking about ways in which imperialism has lingered in

Bombay post-1947 to take on new life as contemporary crimes such as terrorism, large-scale gang violence, and corruption. However, these texts require readers to look beneath the fundamentalist violence that elicits an immediate, knee-jerk response, in order to peel back the layers of the palimpsest and arrive at a thorough postcolonial criminal reading of the city of Bombay. The crime scene in Bombay, similar to the criminal gangs that have moved into the power vacuum left by the paramilitaries in Belfast, is largely of an organized character: "companies," headed up by strongmen, control the flows of capital and crime in the city in fashions that often, as I will demonstrate, recall past imperial pathways.

For a variety of reasons which I will discuss in the next section, I will typically refer to the city as "Bombay" in this chapter, despite its now-official title of "Mumbai." For now, let us note that one way the name change is commonly understood is as taking the city from the colonial era to the postcolonial present; another is that the name change signified the end of an era of cosmopolitanism and ushered in an era of parochialism. While neither linguistic framework tells the full story, Gyan Prakash addresses both the name change and the imperial legacies that mark the city in *Mumbai Fables: A History of an Enchanted City* by writing

> Bombay is now Mumbai. The colonial era is abolished, dismissed as history […] A striking statue of the warrior [seventeenth-century Shivaji], mounted on his horse, sword in hand, stands near the Gateway of India. The Maratha chieftain could never have imagined that his seventeenth-century wars with the Mughal Empire would one day earn him a place in the gateways to a modern city. But there he is, miraculously installed as the city's icon, greeting visitors, commuters, and passersby today with the memory of centuries ago. (25-26)

Prakash goes on to note that Shivaji's original placement in the city's geography was in Kala Ghoda, where a large statue of King Edward VII once stood. Though Shivaji now stands at the Gateway of India, Kala Ghoda was paved over to make a parking lot, and the statue of King Edward was placed in a museum, "legends abound that the vanquished king lives on" (26). In these legends, Shivaji and King Edward engage in duels all over the city, duels that never establish a clear winner. In the morning, Prakash writes, "Shivaji returns to his triumphant Gateway home and King Edward to the museum, both vowing to resume their duel" (26).

The position of the precolonial Shivaji is in line with one theory behind the renaming of Bombay to Mumbai: to signify, as Prakash writes, that "the colonial era is abolished, dismissed as history" (25). Yet, as the legends that would have King Edward and Shivaji fight to a stalemate demonstrate, that belief is not entirely true. Ghosts of the imperial past haunt Bombay: King Edward, thought to be consigned to a museum, instead roams the city freely, engaging in violence against his precolonial counterpart. Prakash notes, "Under the British, Bombay developed its reputation as a city of commerce, a dynamic trading and banking center serviced by merchants belonging to different communities" (35). By the time King Edward VII's statue was established in Bombay, the roots of British imperial control were long established in the site of the international capitalist commerce scene. Yet, in the twenty-first century, King Edward is invisible to the inhabitants of the city, now the stuff of legend and whispered about as a ghost story, much like the imperialism he represents: still present, but invisible, and not discussed or talked about openly. By looking at Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh* and Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*, I claim that we are able to consider the ways in which capitalized postcolonial crime in Bombay, born of the crucible of imperialism, decolonization, postcolonial reforms, and

neoliberalism, structures the contemporary postcolonial city – invisibly but substantively, like the ghostly Edward of popular imagination.

"Peeling Away the Glamorous Façade": Understanding the Palimpsest of Bombay

Put simply, Bombay would not exist without imperialism. In the precolonial era, Bombay consisted of seven islands, which operated as independent fishing colonies controlled by various empires over hundreds of years. In the seventeenth century, the Portuguese briefly took control of the islands that would become Bombay, only to be relatively promptly cede them to the British East India Company.[46] The British are the European imperial power most typically associated with the history of Bombay and with India in general, and it is with them that the modern history of Bombay begins.

British rule in India was primarily a capitalist exercise, instigated and carried out as it was by a trading company. Shashi Tharoor writes that, in the seventeenth century, "a commercial business [the East India Company] quickly became a business of conquest, trading posts were reinforced by forts, merchants supplanted by armies" (4). After capitalism had firmly established itself in Bombay, the British turned their attention to physically colonizing the space. In the late eighteenth century, the British governor William Hornby undertook an immense civil engineering project to unite the seven islands into one single landmass. The project was successful, and for better or worse, created the urban agglomeration we recognize today. Prakash notes that Bombay is thus, doubly colonized: the "seizure of lands from the sea for the urban settlement went hand in hand with the conquest of the territory and the people by European colonialism" (27). This makes Bombay an especially rich territory from which to explore the city that empire made. As Stutti Khanna

[46] The word "Bombay" is likely a corruption of the Portuguese for "good harbor" (*Bom Bahia*).

notes, Bombay was an artificial creation, developed by foreigners in order to advance their own commercial interests (31); this combination of capitalism and imperialism created the foundation for the city we see today.

In *Wages of Violence,* Thomas Blom Hansen writes, "Bombay grew into the leading commercial center of British India in the nineteenth century on the basis of textile mills and overseas trade" (38). This economic system interpellated Bombay into the global colonial economy; Mariam Dossal points out that the nineteenth century brought Bombay effectively into the imperial capitalist world system (1), and, at the same time, that, "by 1875, Bombay had been significantly restructured [by the British]" (3). Part of this restructuring, certainly, was the land reclamation project, but a number of other aspects were added to public space that still today remind residents of the city of the presence of the British and their proto-globalist economic system: structures that used to be cotton mills, still-functional railways for shipping goods and services, old forts for defense, etc. Indeed, the British and the East India Company's "principal motive was economic," and "so too were the major consequences of its rule" (Tharoor 7). The massive investment in Bombay reflected the motto assigned to the city, "Urbs Prima in Indis," and had an immense effect on the appearance and character of the city. Writing of the nineteenth century, Tristram Hunt notes, "if a visiting European tourist avoided the insanitary rookeries, he might not even think his steamship had landed him east of Suez" (263). The heavy hand of the British in Bombay can be understood through less tangible infrastructures as well: Shashi Tharoor has pointed out that

> the sight of Hindu and Muslim soldiers rebelling together in 1857 and fighting side by side, willing to rally under the command of each other and pledge joint allegiance to the enfeebled Mughal monarch, had alarmed the British, who did not take long to conclude that dividing the two groups and

> pitting them against one another was the most effective way to ensure the unchallenged continuance of Empire […] The British had a particular talent for creating and exaggerating particularist identities and drawing ethnically-based administrative lines in all their colonies (121).

The British legacy in Bombay, then, is marked not only by capitalist infrastructure and globalizing strategies, but the forced creation of arbitrary divisions amongst the populace. These divisions were reified by informational technologies, such as the census, that deliberately pointed away from the hybridity many see as integral to the city. The hardening of identities, then, stems from the intersection of imperialist legacies and newer nativist philosophies. Shiv Sena, in this reading, is simply a recent riff on an old tune.[47] What is new about late-twentieth and twenty-first century fundamentalist groups like Shiv Sena, however, is the way they are able to mutate and mold themselves into discourses and patterns set out by emergent ideologies of neoliberalism, based on competition and division among various sectors of society and individuals.

Though Bombay was never the official capital of British India (that role fell to Calcutta and later, Delhi), its status as the primary western harbor gave the city an extremely important role within the colony: Urbs Prima in Indis. Bombay retained its status as necessary to the smooth functioning of the British Empire, primarily for its role in globalized capital and the exporting and importing of products. The British capitalist enterprise had so wracked India and Bombay by 1930 that Tharoor writes of a young American historian and philosopher, Will Durant, who, upon disembarking in India, wrote that Britain's "conscious

[47] Tharoor also points out that British Orientalists portrayed Indian civilization as "essentially Hindu," which excluded Muslims "from the essential national narrative" and "helped give birth in the twentieth [century] to the two-nation theory that eventually divided the country" (132-33).

and deliberate bleeding of India" amounted to the "greatest crime in all history" (2). This crime of capitalism and imperialism would root itself in Bombay, to be excavated years later by capitalized postcolonial crime.

When the British left India, the city ran no risk of being lumped into the new state of Pakistan, but Partition still deeply affected the city: millions of refugees from Kashmir and other border regions poured into Bombay, and the violence and instability that resulted from the hastily drawn up, poorly imagined, and sloppily executed plan that was Partition wracked the city in the 1940s and 1950s. One of the most lasting effects of Partition, however, was the public emergence of imperially engendered and long-simmering fundamentalisms, of both Muslim and Hindu varieties; Alok Kumar Gupta and K. Kruthika Rao point to Partition as leading to an upswing in fundamentalist religious groups, arguing, "fundamentalism has replaced [colonialism and communism] as the greatest problem of the twenty-first century," (29) and naming both the Islamic fundamentalism present in Pakistan and "the Hindu revival in India" (29) as key developments in the contemporary growth of fundamentalism. Importantly, they trace the growth of both of those particular movements back to the British Empire-induced Partition (the "disaster" in "disaster capitalism"), and these fundamentalist movements have both had massive impact on the literature and culture of Bombay today, with respect especially to global circulations of capital and the capitalized postcolonial crime that maps the city.

I noted above that the British interpellated Bombay into the capitalist world economy. The understanding of Bombay as a city driven primarily by capital, especially from international sources, still persists today, though, obviously, a number of economic changes have taken place in the post-Partition era. Declines in governmental regulation of industry, the decrease in importance of the cotton mills (a traditional source of blue-collar, manual

employment), an aggressive courting of international capital, and an explosion in real estate speculation nudged the city closer to the traditional tenets of deregulated neoliberalism in the 1970s, according to Thomas Blom Hansen. Though in many ways a continuation of the policies of the recently-departed British imperialists, these economic developments "laid the framework for the growth of new movements and new cultural phenomena – in particular, the ever stronger quest for incorporating and domesticating the city within the parameters of a vernacular political imaginary" (Hansen, *Wages of Violence,* 41). In other words, nudged by neoliberal economic developments, the city simultaneously turned towards both nativism and cosmopolitanism: in the Shiv Sena-backed reorienting of the city's cultural and social life towards a fundamentalist "vernacular political imaginary" (narrowly defined as male and Hindu) against the backdrop of a globalizing world economy developed out of the wreckage of British imperialism, we see a simultaneous embrace of religious and market fundamentalism: a form of Klein's "disaster capitalism," in that crises have been "exploited" in order to "advance a fundamentalist version of capitalism" (7). Fundamentalist capitalism, or neoliberal economics, and fundamentalist understandings of religion are, in the paradigm of disaster capitalism, understood to be causatively linked.

Shiv Sena, a Hindu nationalist political party, was founded in 1966 by a former cartoonist named Bal Thackeray. The party was ostensibly founded out of a fury over the presence of non-Marathi speaking "foreigners" in the city of Bombay and the state of Maharashta, its formation providing a convenient locus for the rage of the part of the city that was in the grips of general populist nativist sentiment. Shiv Sena, like many right-wing, nationalist, and fascist movements throughout history, is often associated with violence, stereotypically masculine values, and a gut appeal to the "common man." The xenophobia and attraction to violence the organization helped inculcate in certain sectors of Bombay

society propagated a mentality of hypermasculinity, violence, purity, and "us vs. them." Violence, in the form of riots, became normalized throughout the 1970s and 1980s, leading to what many regard as the quintessential "turn" in the history of Bombay, the 1992-93 Hindu/Muslim riots. During these riots, Hansen writes, "it seemed that earlier, more restrained and guarded modes of naming and talking about Muslims gave way to an open enunciation of the most radical xenophobic statements and fantasies that circulated widely from rickshaw drivers to respectable family doctors" (*Wages of Violence* 128). These riots, for many people, signaled the "official" embrace of violent, fundamentalist, parochial identity politics by a substantial portion of Bombay's population.

As Dohra Ahmad has pointed out, "'fundamentalism' is a shifty and unreliable term, "subject to abuse as an all-purpose pejorative or more perniciously as a synonym for Islam." While Ahmad goes on to refer to fundamentalism as any doctrine with a "rigid, totalizing [vision] that [claims] to rely on an eternal truth" (2), there is, all too often, a way in which "fundamentalism" comes to be a liberal code word for "those *other* people, with their crazy and premodern ideas." However, as Martha Nussbaum points out, right-wing Hindu fundamentalism in India "comes not from Muslims or from any 'clash' between European and non-European civilizations, but from something much more sadly familiar: a romantic European conception of nationalism, based on ideas of blood, soil, purity, and the Volksgeist" (5). In particular, Hindus in India, she notes, "have internalized a historical narrative according to which they are a pure and peaceful civilization that has been conquered again and again: in the Middle Ages by a variety of Muslim invaders, and in more recent times by the British" (6). Nussbaum suggests that, due to "the painful experience of colonial subjugation, together with the racism that accompanied it" (6), the right-wing Hindu fundamentalism movement in India grew out of and has been egged on by colonial-era

humiliations. The irony, of course, as Nussbaum points out, is that the response to these European impositions is a recourse to European romantic nationalism.

It may indeed seem odd that I opened this chapter discussing a fundamentalist Muslim group, and I have now moved to discussing Hindu fundamentalism. These groups would seem to be diametrically opposed; they each define the other group as "the enemy." However, it is telling that both these groups, differences aside, found that their philosophies were able to be expressed on Bombay's soil. Jayant Lele, writing about Mahadev Govind Rahande, the nineteenth-century founder of the Indian National Congress, notes, "the reinterpretations of Ranade's ideas on tradition helped the aggregation of diverse interests of the Hindu petit bourgeoisie and, to an extent, the urban working classes. Similarly, the Muslim reaction consolidated the alliance of another universalistic interpretation of the past" (152). This romantic idealizing of a panacea to fix all problems can also be seen in neoliberalism, which is often referred to as market fundamentalism: for example, George Monbiot refers to "market fundamentalism" as a "story… that the market can resolve almost all social, economic, and political problems" (15). Fundamentalism's reliance on a "universalistic interpretation of the past," or what Nussbaum calls "religious nationalism wedded to ideas of ethnic homogeneity and purity" (2), is a common structure to be seen across a variety of fundamentalist movements, whether religious, economic, or political in nature. While the term is indeed slippery and does not fit neatly into traditional postcolonial discourses, I use it in reference to various grand narratives, primarily religious and economic, that, due to various colonial and imperial vectors, purport to look to the seemingly unitary past as a model for the present. Fundamentalisms can be religious, economic, cultural, or political in nature, under this modeling, and often emerge in reaction to each other (Klein).

Only a few years after the 1992-93 riots, Shiv Sena felt empowered enough to push through the name change to Mumbai, which was inspired by the name of a Hindu goddess, Mumbadevi. This cosmetic move, seemingly away from hybridity and towards narrowly defined parameters of identity and religion, played into the hands of the city's elite, who were hoping to be able to continue their disaster capitalism, or market fundamentalist reforms, unabated. Religious fundamentalism, therefore, acted as a diversionary tactic for outrage, while the economic reforms necessary to keep the unequal structure of the city in place were able to be continued and reinforced with very little fanfare. These simultaneous moves also opened up space for corruption within the fundamentalist movements and the more financially-focused elite classes. As Claire Chambers writes of 1990s Bombay, "This is a city in which, when one peels away the glamorous façade, it becomes apparent that corruption flourishes, organized crime and gangsters abound, and the moneyed classes rule the show" (35).

In 1991, the Indian government instituted what Rupal Oza calls "neoliberal policies of reform" which "intensified India's encounter with global capital" (2). Oza links these reforms to the increase in power of the Hindu Right (including Shiv Sena), saying that these developments led to a "consolidation of middle class identity and power" (2). "While dialectically connected," she writes, "these three political and economic developments are independent of each other in the sense that they are not causatively linked" (2). In this chapter, I hold that these events, while not "causatively linked," work together to achieve similar goals: crimes that are linked to either Hindu or Muslim fundamentalisms work in tandem with the market fundamentalism of neoliberalism. As Naomi Klein has written of New Orleans and the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, where, she argues, neoliberal capitalists have utilized "catastrophic events" as leverage for "exciting market opportunities" (6), where

visible religious fundamentalism and invisible neoliberalism work together create a city that operates under ethnically divisive neocolonial and individualizing, atomizing neoliberal structures.

In the first chapter on London, I outlined the alliance between Tony Blair's neoliberal economic policies and his neoconservative foreign policy. Something similar happened in the early 1990s in Bombay; while Shiv Sena's identity politics are rightly viewed as far-right, even fascist, Bal Thackeray would seem to embrace the entrepreneurial nature of neoliberal economic policies wholeheartedly, telling his followers, "Do something! Start a shop or a business!" (*Wages of Violence* 92), revealing a distrust in state intervention and a reliance on individualistic effort. The condoning of economic neoliberalism, through both the Indian government and Shiv Sena, "has brought about profound changes to [India's] urban areas" (Desai and Sanyal 1), notably, for our purposes, Bombay.

The explosive combination of the 1991 economic reforms and the post-riot-emboldened Shiv Sena created an environment in which it was finally acceptable to rename Bombay to Mumbai, which happened officially in 1995. The name change from Bombay to Mumbai, then, signified to many that India was shaking off its years of imperial influence, its role in the global world economy, to be replaced by a narrow Hindu parochialism: a sort of "Mumbai first" narrative that promised to give the city "back" to its people, away from the imperially-tinged global circulations of capital and the non-Marathi "strangers" in the city. But because, of course, Bombay had no plans to withdraw from the world economy, "the transmutation of Bombay into Mumbai is an example of such a contradictory articulation in which the globalization of capital confronts the provincialization of citizens within the postcolonial state" (Varma, *The Postcolonial City and Its Subjects,* 158). "Mumbai," for many, has

negative connotations for this reason; perhaps this is why the novels I examine in this chapter pointedly call the city "Bombay," even those that were published after 1995.

In some of his notes on his novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* (located in his papers in Emory's Rose Library), Salman Rushdie thinks through his twinning of Granada and Bombay in that text, scrawling to himself

> The point of the parallel between the fall of Granada and this story [*The Moor's Last Sigh*] is that this city, Bombay, is also about to fall – the barbarians [religious extremists, corrupt public life, bombs] are at its gates as of Granada's; and like Granada it was the beloved glory of its hour. The Moor, leaving, unable to defend it, utters this last sigh.

While Rushdie's quotation reads as alarmist ("barbarians") and defeatist ("unable to defend it"), it is a useful formulation for thinking through contemporary Bombay's various criminal elements, and what literary portrayals of crime are meant to do. Rushdie names religious extremists, corrupt public life, and bombs as the crimes that will lead to "barbarians" at the gates, causing the downfall of the city. All three of these crimes (and others) have strong and clear imperial linkages, and the barbarians take different forms in different Bombay texts, but are deployed to point the reader back to the crime of imperialism, its chronological successor religious fundamentalism, and the contemporary neoliberalist tentacles of both.

While these novels contain several less visible legacies of imperialism that a capitalized postcolonial crime reading is meant to dig out, there are some obvious colonial ramifications in the contemporary literature of Bombay which much be acknowledged. As I am focusing exclusively on writing about Bombay in English, I must acknowledge, as Roshan G. Shahani does, that "it is the language of a miniscule minority and a colonial legacy to boot" (1250). When discussing Bombay literature written in English, this is important to

keep at the forefront of analysis, as English is a tool available to only a privileged few. As discussed above, the city of Bombay itself is a colonial legacy, from the popular imagination of the Indian city being a Western imposition to the acknowledgment that "Bombay is a city built by foreigners upon reclaimed land" (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands,* 10). Moreover, as outlined above, the incorporation of Bombay into the British Empire led to the city's interpellation into a global, Western-led economic system. This globalized circulation of capital opened up international pathways for other currents in the city to go international, and where large sums of money go, crime and violence (here in the form of fundamentalist religious violence) are wont to follow.

The Moor, in Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) muses on how Bombay is situated within the country and within the larger world by articulating

> Bombay was central, had been so from the moment of its creation: the bastard child of a Portuguese-English wedding, and yet the most Indian of Indian cities. In Bombay all Indias met and merged. In Bombay, too, all-India met what-was-not-India, what came across the black water to flow into our veins… (350)

The Moor goes on to expostulate about the violence in India that flows into Bombay, from being killed "for being circumcised" to being killed "because your foreskins had been left on. Long hair got you murdered and haircuts too; light skin flayed dark skin and if you spoke the wrong language you could lose your twisted tongue" (350). Here, we see Bombay's simultaneous position as parochial and global: the Moor acknowledges that Bombay is at the epicenter of identity-driven violence and crime because "the wealth of the country flowed through its exchanges, its ports" (351) and positions the city as at the center of flows of crime, fundamentalism, and money simultaneously.

Crime is often represented in Bombay novels as being inextricably tied to larger movements, such as the gangs, companies, or "underworld." These organizations typically have international ties and are linked to global circulations of capital. As Ashley Dawson and Brent Hayes Edwards point out, "the old imperial maps still influence the circuits of culture and capital, underneath and in tension with the 'new imperialisms' of economic globalization" (2004, 3). In many places, including Bombay, imperial legacies interact with individualist neoliberal contemporary realities to produce geographies and literatures marred by invisible capitalized postcolonial crime. As Rashmi Varma phrases it,

> Underneath these new projects of accumulation [in the postcolonial city] lie older logics of colonial rule even as the postcolonial state and social movements seek to foreground the postcoloniality of these cities – colonial buildings, spaces, trade networks, social rules, and street names constitute the postcolonial city as a palimpsest of a messy colonial history and a postcolonial present in crisis (2015, 200).

The palimpsest of the city of Bombay necessitates that "older logics of colonial rule," fashioned as neoliberal economics/market fundamentalism, continue to crop up in the city, though these structuring elements are splashed over by the louder, seemingly more urgent actions of fundamentalist religious groups. Disaster capitalism continues unabated, papered over by violent crimes, in an effort to divert the public's attention and move the city of Bombay away from colonialism and to a new neoliberal world order. What may look like an atavistic return to identity tribalism are in fact deliberately fostered by the neoliberal regime's simultaneously modern and neocolonial character. Bombay in the twenty-first century is both a place where colonialism "remains a relevant factor in understanding the problems and the dangers of the world in which we live" (Tharoor 277) and a place that has successfully

constructed a uniquely damaging neoliberal society. As such, I turn now to Salman Rushdie and how the treatment of crime and fundamentalism in his novels reflect some of the biggest events in twentieth-century Bombay history: the end of British rule and market and religious fundamentalisms's concurrent rises, alongside the change from Bombay to Mumbai.

"Barbarians at the Gates": Salman Rushdie's Bombay

Salman Rushdie is often thought of as a trans- or international writer. His novels are set all over the world and often deal with issues of immigration or movement across international borders, rather than being focused on and rooted in one particular city. As Ana Cristina Mendes notes, "as an Indian-born British citizen, New York resident, secular humanist Muslim, postcolonial writer, global literary celebrity, and transnational polemicist, Rushdie must of necessity experience some degree of paradox in his geopolitical ties" (147), meaning he is typically not viewed as grounded in Bombay, though it is the city of his birth. Yet, no matter what city each particular text is set in, Vassilena Parashkevova argues, "the cosmopolitanism of Rushdie's cities is modelled, in particular, on the precedent of Bombay, whose secular mixture of faiths and cultures has an archetypal status in his work" (3). This "secular mixture of faith and cultures" is, as pointed out in the introductory section, a vision of hybridity that has never quite matched up to the reality of Bombay. Moreover, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri write, "the postmodernist politics of difference [hybridity] not only is ineffective against but can even coincide with and support the functions and practices of imperial rule" (142). Hybridity, like the rigid categories put forth by the British colonial census, is co-opted and incorporated into neocolonial and neoliberal discourses and ideologies.

This section will investigate what happens when capitalized postcolonial crime, in the form of religious fundamentalist violence and "corruption," happens in this supposed city of a "secular mix of faith and cultures," by looking specifically at *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh.* Of course, Rushdie has very personal experience with fundamentalism in his own life, with the *fatwa* on his life issued by the ayatollah of Iran; however, this chapter focuses on Rushdie's Bombay novels, of which *The Satanic Verses* is not one.

For Parashkevova, Rushdie's Bombay functions as almost a Platonic form of hybridity and secularism, but this Platonic form of Bombay doesn't hold up under closer scrutiny. Stuti Khanna writes that, for "Rushdie, as for many Bombay-ites of his generation with liberal leanings, the communal riots and bomb-blasts in Bombay in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 destroyed everything that the city had stood for and represented, namely a harmonious, inclusive, pluralist ethic" (7). These events – riots, destruction of religious sites, bombs – are all inherently violent and criminal in nature, and so fundamentalist violence is the pivot on which, for Rushdie, his criminal city's recent history turns, but a look behind the presence of these obvious facts excavates currents of insidious imperial legacies, even before the violence and subsequent disaster capitalism of the early 1990s.

A common understanding of Rushdie's two primary Bombay novels, *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh,* is that the two texts present an arc wherein Bombay loses its postcolonial shine and becomes a site for darker, more criminal currents. To quote Thomas Blom Hansen in "Reflections on Salman Rushdie's Bombay," "Rushdie's fiction [from *Midnight's Children* to *The Moor's Last Sigh*] thus resonates deeply with the experience of change in the city and the feeling that the Bombay of old, or the Bombay *classique* of the 1950s and 1960s, is irrevocably lost" (93). Khanna agrees, writing, "*Midnight* is a gesture not

only of faith in post-independence Bombay but also of deep affection for it… *Moor* is, however, another story and about another Bombay" (60), and Josna Rege notes that "Rushdie's beloved Bombay was still a tolerant, cosmopolitan city [in *Midnight's Children*]" (344). However, Rushdie himself says in an interview with Gauri Viswanathan:

> *The Moor's Last Sigh* is a novel that comes out of my experience of India as an adult, whereas in a way the inspiration of *Midnight's Children* was from my experience of India as a child. *The Moor's Last Sigh* is, underneath the surface, a much darker novel than *Midnight's Children*; it has much more to do with the kinds of failures [violence, fundamentalism, religious identity politics] that you talk about. But the surface of it is very bright. And I think the point that the book tries to make is that both things are true (Viswanathan 33).

Because "both things are true," we can understand the two novels to be engaged in a similar project, of taking "failures" and glossing over them with a bright surface. This bright surface, while obscuring the violence beneath, is not enough to fully hold the city together. Hybridity was not enough to save Bombay from the growth of fundamentalism. We turn now, then, to 1981's *Midnight's Children*.

Midnight's Children is a loose allegory of the first approximately thirty years of India's independence from Britain. Its main character, Saleem Sinai, was born at midnight, at the moment India officially severed ties with Britain. Saleem's counterpart and rival, Shiva, was born at exactly the same time, and the two are the most powerful members of a cohort of magical "midnight's children," all born in the hour after India's decolonization. Saleem possesses the ability to telepathically connect all the midnight's children, and the pressure of being at the center of this powerful group of individuals takes its toll on him as he begins to crack, physically and metaphorically, from the stresses put on him by the midnight's children

and by the exterior political events of the nation of India and the city of Bombay. Because it was published in 1981, before Shiv Sena became the force it is now, *Midnight's Children* acts to lay the groundwork for the further excavation of capitalized postcolonial crime in the later *The Moor's Last Sigh*.

The novel opens with, "I was born in the city of Bombay… once upon a time. No, that won't do, there's no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947" (1). Note what Deepika Bahri calls the "paradigmatically postcolonial moment" (155); Saleem is born precisely at the minute of India's independence from Britain, his birth a symbol of the end of the crime of imperialism and the ushering in of the condition of postcoloniality. The novel is typically read through the lens of the date and time, but it is important to note that even before Saleem Sinai, the narrator, tells us the date and time of his birth, he tells us the city and the specific place within that city. Only after establishing place does he go on to tell us, "And the time? The time matters too" (1), almost as an afterthought. The city, Bombay, is initially and instinctively more important to Saleem than the time. He is almost reluctant to tell us he was born at midnight on the day of India's independence, whereas he is eager and proud to divulge that he is a native Bombay-ite. Indeed, Anita Desai, in an introduction to the novel, instructs readers to remember, "For all his heroic status, Saleem is above all a child (more specifically, a 'brat') of Bombay…" Bombay undergirds the entire novel; the city and its crimes form the matrix for understanding everything else in the text, and because the setting is so centrally important to Saleem and because he acts as our narrator, Bombay and its capitalized postcolonial crime necessarily seeps into everything he relates to us.

Saleem narrates the novel to us under pressure, for he, as an adult, is literally cracking. He tells the reader

> Please believe that I am falling apart. I am not speaking metaphorically; nor is this the opening gambit of some melodramatic, riddling, grubby appeal for pity… In short, I am literally disintegrating, slowly for the moment, although there are signs of acceleration. I ask you only to accept (as I have accepted) that I shall eventually crumble into (approximately) six hundred and thirty million particles of anonymous, and necessarily oblivious dust (36).

Why is Saleem cracking? I argue that Saleem is cracking under the pressure of narrating a city structured by the advent of neocolonialism and neoliberalism and subsequent failure to redress the imperial legacies he encounters in the city. As his narrative/the novel goes on, the weight of capitalized postcolonial crime and imperial legacies accumulates, resulting in his body, once imagined whole, cracking and disintegrating and "falling apart." Saleem has often been read as representing India, and "falling apart" as allegorical to Partition, the Bangladesh Liberation War, the Emergency, and other conflicts on the South Asian subcontinent; however, this allegory can be dialed back to the city of Bombay, where Saleem's story begins and ends, and where he feels most at home.

But before he falls apart, Saleem was born into a city full of promise and hope for the future, a city ready to try out its new postcoloniality. Saleem is the biological product of a poor woman named Vanita and a retired English colonial servant named William Methwold, while his rival Shiva is born to the wealthy parents who will raise Saleem as their child. Shiva (later Saleem's) ayah, Mary Pereira, out of an attempt to impress her communist boyfriend, switches the children at birth, allowing the poor child to be raised by rich parents and the rich child to be raised by poor parents. The novel begins, then, with a crime based on legacies of economics and empire: Saleem is half-English, and the two midnight's children

are separated by a vast gulf of money, class, and status, foreshadowing a conflict in their futures.

Saleem's adoptive/Shiva's biological parents purchase a building on William Methwold's estate as he makes preparations to move back to England at the end of empire, even though, as he tells the family "my ancestor was the chap who had the idea of building this whole city" (107), thus reinforcing the idea that Bombay is a city constructed by empire. He makes the extraordinary claim "You'll admit we weren't all bad: built your roads. Schools, railway trains, parliamentary system, all worthwhile things. Taj Mahal was falling down until an Englishman bothered to see to it" (106).[48] Beyond acting as a parody of a bustling, self-important colonial servant, Methwold replicates colonial culture as he leaves Bombay behind, with the acquiescence and agency of many Indians and Bombayites. He sells all of the buildings on his estate to native Indian families while he lives in the Taj Hotel, and before they know it

> the Estate, Methwold's Estate, is changing them. Every evening at six they are out in their gardens, celebrating the cocktail hour, and when William Methwold comes to call they slip effortlessly into their imitation Oxford drawls; and they are learning, about ceiling-fans and gas cookers and the correct diet for budgerigars, and Methwold, supervising their transformation,

[48] This instantly calls to mind Shashi Tharoor's recent piece in *The Guardian,* which opens with, "Many modern apologists for British colonial rule in India no longer contest the basic facts of imperial exploitation and plunder, rapacity and loot, which are too deeply documented to be challengeable. Instead they offer a counter-argument: granted, the British took what they could for 200 years, but didn't they also leave behind a great deal of lasting benefit? In particular, political unity and democracy, the rule of law, railways, English education, even tea and cricket?" Of course, this sort of nostalgic apologia falls apart once even the slightest bit of pressure is applied to the narrative; Tharoor goes on to cite the violence of Partition, British "justice," and plain old racism to dismantle this cosmetic argument.

> is muttering under his breath. Listen carefully: what's he saying? Yes, that's it. "Sabkuch ticktock hai," mumbles William Methwold. All is well. (109).

Frederick Cooper writes of postcolonial Africa, "we are not faced with a stark choice between true independence – whatever that might mean in an interconnected and unequal world- and colonialism by other means," pointing to neocolonial financial controls on postcolonial societies as still "maintain[ing] asymmetries of power" (179). Similarly, Saleem, then, grows up in an environment where the glow of postcolonialism quickly gives way to neocolonialism in Methwold Estate's mimicking of the British Empire as closely as possible, giving truth to Fanon's observation that "the national bourgeoisie replaces the former European settlers" (100); the national bourgeoisie replaces European settlers, their replication of colonial structures setting the stage for the later introduction of the late 1990s neoliberal economic reforms in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Though the onset of neoliberalism was not a foregone conclusion in the years immediately after India's independence, a series of machinations at the level of the city created the conditions to make such an environment possible.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have written, "local identities are not autonomous or self-determining but actually feed into and support the development of the capitalist imperial machine" (45). Rushdie's depictions of localized hybridity, as enunciated above, are folded into larger neocolonial processes. Neocolonial capitalist imperialism forms the foundation for Saleem's early life, and it forms the basis of the Bombay he grows up in. He goes to expensive schools, sees movies frequently, is involved in the "bright surface" of Bombay, away from the teeming masses and their seemingly incomprehensible ethnic tensions and fundamentalisms. Saleem and his slice of Bombay exhibit paradigmatic capitalist cosmopolitanism, and are removed far from Shiv Sena's encroaching nativist

discourses. Hybridity, though premised on "the articulation of cultural differences" (Bhabha 2) fails here; Saleem is not willing to engage with cultural differences and remains assimilated into his neocolonial world. Even after Saleem realizes that he, by virtue of being born at midnight, has magical powers and possesses the capability to communicate telepathically with all the Midnight Children's Congress), he continues to think his vision of the city is the only one that matters; when other midnight's children attempt to articulate other ways of being in the world, he ignores their contributions in favor of his own narratives and beliefs (260-62), shaped by his wealthy and privileged upbringing. Saleem is living in a world with encroaching proto-neoliberalist tendencies, a city with "increasing inequality, insecurity, loss of public services, and a general deterioration of quality of life for the poor and working classes" (Ferguson 170); though Saleem has the ability to commune with others, he uses this ability to strive for a shallow vision of bourgeois liberal democracy, which Shiva challenges as ignorant of reality. We see here how Saleem's interpretation of hybridity is used to "feed into and support the development of the capitalist imperial machine" (45), as Hardt and Negri predicted it would be. Any gesture towards hybridity in *Midnight's Children* is superficial, skimming over cultural differences without engaging them deeply or substantively, purposefully mimicking the glossy, "bright surface" world Saleem exists within. These gestures, in their replication of colonial structures, make possible the entrée of various fundamentalisms, both religious and market, due to the conditions Martha Nussbaum points to: continuing (neo)colonial humiliation leads to the search for a pure, romantic past, whether that is found in Hindu history or in the turn to a kind of economics that offers a simple, broad panacea for all the problems facing the city.

We as readers see the effects of this imperial legacy on the poor and working classes through portrayals of Shiva's Bombay. Vanita dies in childbirth, and William Methwold

never recognizes his offspring, so Shiva is raised entirely by a poor accordion player named Wee Willie Winkie (Vanita's widower) who performs for the wealthy new members of Methwold's Estate. This experience has hardened Shiva towards Saleem's Bombay and the people who inhabit it, as he explodes to Saleem

> "Rich kid," Shiva yelled, "you don't know one damn thing! What's *purpose*, man? What thing in the whole sister-sleeping world got *reason*, yara? For what reason you're rich and I'm poor? Where's the reason in starving, man? God knows how many millions of damn fools living in this country, man, and you think there's a purpose!" (252)

Though Shiva is unaware of his birth position, he is still able to articulate his frustrations with postcolonial Bombay and India more generally, as well as the ways in which the native elites have turned into imperialist mimics to perpetuate systems of neocolonialism in a postcolonial age. He is dissatisfied with the economic conditions of an independent India, and is aware that the postcolonial city is built on terms he cannot win: he goes on to say, "Man, I'll tell you – you got to get what you can, do what you can with it, and then you got to die. That's reason, rich boy. Everything else is only mother-sleeping *wind*!" (252). In *Midnight's Children,* Rushdie portrays a city ridden by the problems the British left behind: a proto-neoliberal social system with unreachable socioeconomic gulfs, which fragment the city irreparably, leaving open a vacuum for Shiv Sena and other fundamentalist groups to exploit, as they will in his next Bombay novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*.

In the novel's final pages, Saleem falls apart in the streets of the city, an act of violence brought about by the fact that, throughout the novel, Saleem has been fracturing and breaking under the stress of various imperial legacies, postcolonial realities, and encroaching capitalized postcolonial crime. He continues to be "hurried toward

disintegration" (442), and when he returns to Bombay at last, he can only stay whole and alive long enough to finish the narrative (519); Bombay's mythical status as the center of hybridity is not strong enough to sustain the influence of imperial legacies and capitalized postcolonial crime. Identities are hardening as a consequence of several colonial impositions, from the census to divide and rule tactics to Partition, and the intensive hardening leads to pressure that makes our main character finally crack. When the disintegration reaches its apotheosis, Saleem crumples, leaving himself to be trampled underfoot by the other residents of Bombay. The writing of capitalized postcolonial crime and the failures of hybridity serves as a way to spur the reader into considering alternative sites, beyond hybridity, for the possibility of fruitfully confronting various capitalized postcolonial crime. Saleem's inherent hybridity and possession of several in-between spaces, from his variant national identities to his ability to convene the in-between space of the Midnight's Children Congress in his head, was not enough; in fact, it may have even led to his eventual fragmentation. Hybridity has been co-opted by atomizing neoliberal discourses, and we need an alternative vision to combat capitalized postcolonial crime.

Saleem's cracking in the street, *Midnight's Children*'s final act of violence born of capitalized postcolonial crime, foreshadows the crimes to come in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, which was written and published after the city's 1992 fundamentalist-motivated violence and just as the name of the city changed from Bombay to Mumbai. As Parashkevova notes, "for Rushdie, the Bombay-Mumbai reformulation has become a veritable rupture in the history of the city, which has inaugurated a dark urban age" (9), and Rushdie's second "Bombay novel" ushers in this "dark urban age." This novel, sometimes referred to as Rushdie's "love letter" to Bombay, is an account of a Portuguese merchant family, told from the point of view of Moraes Zogoiby, commonly referred to as the Moor, who is the sole remaining

member of the da Gama-Zogoiby family. Like in *Midnight's Children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh* intersects with several real-world Indian and Bombay events, though in many ways, *The Moor's Last Sigh* picks up, chronologically, where *Midnight's Children* left off, covering such later developments and more concrete crimes such as the violence associated with the rise of Shiv Sena, the disaster capitalism of the dismantling of the postcolonial state's initial economic supports and regulations, and the ascension of Muslim gangs – all threads which are, in turn, later picked up by Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*.

In an outline of the novel that would eventually become *The Moor's Last Sigh,*[49] Rushdie asks, "What do we do when the world's walls – its family structures, its value-systems, its political forms, in fact all the expected shapes out of which we build our notions of 'normality' – crumble, fall apart, or simply vanish, without explanation?" In one sense, by asking this question, Rushdie is referring to the Zogoiby family on which the novel focuses. In another, however, he is looking at Bombay in an age when walls have fallen and global flows of capital and crime permeate the city. Though one of the earliest Bombay scenes we see in *The Moor's Last Sigh* is that of a city that details "the shipwrecked arrogance of the English officers from whom power was ebbing like the waves" (131), like William Methwold who is similarly losing power in *Midnight's Children*, imperial legacies and their coincident capitalized postcolonial crime still have a grip on the Bombay of *The Moor's Last Sigh*.

In the years between 1981 (*Midnight's Children*) and 1995 (*The Moor's Last Sigh*), India as a nation embraced neoliberal economic patterns and the global circulations of capital that come with those patterns. In concert with these developments, a nativist Shiv Sena grew in power, spurred in part by the exploitation of anxiety over those same economic reforms. Bahri notes, "By the time he gets to *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Rushdie is far more interested in

[49] Material found in Rushdie's archives in Emory's Rose Library.

the degree to which Hindu fundamentalism had begun to exploit the instability of the historical record" (183). Fundamentalists were able to mine the instabilities inherent in the narrative of the city to, in the words of Rashmi Varma's article title, "Provincializ[e] the Global City: From Bombay to Mumbai." Shiv Sena exploited the conditions created by Bombay's "'predatory capitalism' of speculation and unproductive capital that dissolved the organized working class and prepared the ground for subsequent political and cultural changes in the city" (*Wages of Violence* 9) and used this unrest to "[define] itself against 'outsiders'" (*Wages of Violence* 3), even as the party's ruling order welcomed global currents of capital. This rejection of ethnic, linguistic, and racial "others," combined with a simultaneous economic embrace of internationalism, played into the hands of the various forms of Bombay's criminal underworld, as they worked to repeat imperial patterns of racialized violence and capitalist (neo)imperialism. This interplay of internationalist and nativist positions highlights the linkages between the criminal underworld, imperial legacies, and Shiv Sena (not incidentally, the name of the fictional boss of the Hindu gang is Raman Fielding, which, in its allusion to an English novelist, is probably a lightly disguised Bal Thackeray, the real-life leader of Shiv Sena).[50] Exploring the permutations of capitalized postcolonial crime born of this morass of interconnected currents leads the reader to consider another failed opportunity for hybridity-inspired postcolonial peace in Bombay.

In 1991, four years before the publication of *The Moor's Last Sigh,* the Indian government instituted "neoliberal policies of reform" (Oza 2). These policies, Oza claims, are "dialectically connected" to the "rise in political power of Hindu nationalists" and "the consolidation of middle class identity and power" (2). The newly bolstered Hindu Right, in

[50] This is even though, as Matthew S. Henry writes, "surprisingly little attention has been paid to the parallels between fictional character and existing crime boss" (139).

turn, "needed to displace the political fractures onto another political arena" and so helped to deepen the "Hindu-Muslim conflict" (15), leading to a growth of fundamentalisms of many stripes. This, then, is the city that Rushdie is writing about in the early 1990s, where market fundamentalist reforms are contributing to the fall of walls and barriers for the circulation of capital (and crime), and religious and ethnic fundamentalisms are on the rise. Matthew S. Henry writes that "*The Moor's Last Sigh* is a literary examination of India's post-Independence cultural and political struggles against the backdrop of widening markets, trade liberalization, and growing domestic income inequality" (141). The privileging of the economic standpoint of how Bombay has changed does not do away with the far-right Hindu politics element; rather, as Klein would also point out, they are, Oza says "dialectically linked," and fundamentalism continues to seep through the city and cover up capitalized postcolonial crime in the Bombay of *The Moor's Last Sigh,* continuing the interplay and intersections between internationalist and nativist narratives of the city.

We know from the first page of the novel that *The Moor's Last Sigh* will deal with internationalist currents: the Moor references Luther's nailing of the ninety-five theses to the door in Wittenberg and then asks us to consider "how stories travel, what mouths they end up in!" (4). From the beginning, then, the reader is clued into the fact that the Moor's narrative relies on influence from Europe and other overseas locations; this knowledge is deepened as we learn more about the Zogoiby family and their position in Indian society. The Moor's family[51] is very wealthy, due to his father, Abraham's, various entrepreneurial endeavors, all of which rely on capital from international sources. As Henry notes, "Abraham builds his empire by capitalizing on the changing landscape of India's economy"

[51] It must be noted that his family claims ancestry in the person of Portuguese imperialist Vasco da Gama.

(144). Moreover, Abraham's business empire began with a local spice-trading company, and as the Moor notes, "if it had not been for peppercorns, then what is ending now in East and West might never have begun" (4). Abraham, then, owes his fortune to the imperial demands for spices, as well as a new neoliberally-deregulated, global Indian economy, and his family has a number of different ethnicities, all contributing to a sense that this is a hybrid family and organization *par excellence*. Their wealth is reflected in their experience of Bombay and ability to ignore the events that significantly influenced the lives of those less fortunate, as the Moor notes when he says "on Malabar Hill the Emergency was as invisible as the illegal skyscrapers and the disenfranchised poor" (234). Yet, just like Saleem's Bombay in *Midnight's Children,* the city portrayed in *Moor* has its flipside; the Moor becomes entangled in the underworld, which is comprised of criminal gangs alongside fundamentalist Hindu nationalist movements (though the Moor himself is not Hindu), which, we soon learn, are working in concert with neocolonial capitalist imperialists like Abraham, who are engaged in a fundamentalism of their own type, a fundamentalism of economics which prioritizes the profit motive above all else – otherwise known as neoliberalism, which is a narrative that clearly fails in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Dohra Ahmad notes, "Rather than narrowing the term [fundamentalism], he [Rushdie] widens it to show that fundamentalist mindsets infect not only Islam but also Hinduism, Christianity, Marxism, modern art, and for that matter even the doctrine of hybridity that so many of us would prefer to view as redemptively flexible" (2). It is through these depictions of various fundamentalisms, the failure of hybridity, and Abraham's capitalist imperialism that Rushdie presents the issue of crime to readers as a way to consider how empire has built the postcolonial city of Bombay.

Very soon after moving to Bombay, Abraham begins to "trade in human flesh," to make business deals with "those personages – call them *black merchants* – who purveyed

menace, and bootleg whisky, and also sex" (182). Abraham commits his and his family's future to that of the criminal underworld and its associated fundamentalist Hindu dons, discovering that Bombay was "quite unlike the 'closed town'" Abraham had previously been told to imagine. Rather, "for a man prepared to take risks, to give up scruple – for, in short, a black merchant – it was wide, wide open, and the only limit to the money that could be made was the boundary of your imagination" (182). Abraham's legitimate business, as well as his shadier illegal ventures, are reliant on the economic reforms and capitalist imperialism that are propped up by the global circulation of capital and willful obstinacy of the fundamentalist underworld leaders. The newer, "open" circulations – of human flesh, of liquor – make use of imperial internationalist pathways established in years past. The city, the Moor observes, "was a palimpsest, Under World beneath Over World, black market beneath white" (184). Imperial legacies circulate underneath postcoloniality, illegalist ventures hover under the surface of legal businesses. It is, as the Moor points out "a deadly layering" (184), one in which he, too, engages as he falls in with Raman Fielding's crew and instantiates himself in the crime undergirding the postcolonial city.

The Moor, arrested for "narcotics smuggling" (itself a crime with global and neoliberal implications, and moreover one linked to Abraham's business) is approached by a member of the criminal underworld as he wastes away in jail on this trumped-up smuggling charge. The agent contemptuously informs him that, as the Moor is a member of the native elite, he "live[s] in the city and know[s] nothing of its secret heart" (287). By virtue of the Moor's crime and subsequent imprisonment, he eventually meets Raman Fielding, who proposes to introduce him to what really structures the city:

> 'Whose town do you think this is?' he [Fielding] asked. 'On Malabar Hill you drink whisky-soda and talk democracy. But our people guard your gates. You

> think you know them but they have also their own lives…One day the city – my beautiful goddess-named Mumbai, not this dirty Anglo-style Bombay – will be on fire with our notions. Then Malabar Hill will burn and Ram Rajya will come' (293).

Fielding's understanding and articulation that the city is a palimpsest, that its underlying structures are that of crime, intersect with discussions of imperial legacies and globalizing economics, as well as the cosmetic Bombay → Mumbai name change brought about by Hindu fundamentalists. The top level, the "bright surface" of the city seems to be Fanon's "national bourgeoisie," drinking the whisky that is illegally smuggled in by people like Abraham and their illegalist businesses. Right under that surface, however, is the criminal underworld, guarding the national bourgeoisie. Fielding gives voice to his essentialist view of the city as being for Marathi speakers,[52] not for those living off "Anglo-style" imperial legacies, and his hope for the eventual destruction of the elitist Malabar Hill, where people like the Moor and his family live, even as he provides protection for the contemporary neoliberal world order, thus assisting in its continuation. All of these postcolonialist narratives swirl together in the palimpsest city, and Fielding incorporates the Moor into the competing currents by enlisting him into the underworld to spy against his own father and Abraham's business ventures.

As Abraham has become more and more deeply enmeshed into the underworld of Bombay, he begins to foray into shadier and shadier businesses, like paying off politicians, money laundering, and committing "vast global fraud," to "involvement with terrorist organizations and the large-scale misappropriation of fissile materials" (359-360). Based on

[52] But, ironically, as Shashi Tharoor points out, this itself is reliant on British colonial narratives of Hindu superiority.

"the strong allegations regarding his personal involvement in organised crime" (360), Abraham is brought to court to account for his crimes, including "gangsterism, drug-smuggling, giant-scale 'black money' dealings and procuring" (360). Because of his fall from grace, the Moor tells us, "the empire [pun presumably intended] he had built from the da Gama family's wealth had been smashed" (360). Yet, even in front of the court, Abraham defies any crime and maintains, with a straight face, "My whole life has been spent in the spice trade" (360). Because of the literal protection the fundamentalist underworld affords Abraham, he is able to escape being held accountable for his actions and can continue his capitalized postcolonial crime, the foundations of which are based on British imperial misadventures.

Abraham's moves from the imperially-inflected spice robbery and trade to outright crimes leads to his fall from grace, as he has left the gray area where his activities can be viewed as necessary for the propping up of the postcolonial economy and have shaded into violence and bomb-making, with the "misappropriation of fissile materials" having a strong religious fundamentalist overtone. Though he is eventually acquitted of the charges, his crimes and replication of globalist capitalist imperialism assist in the eventual destruction of the city of Bombay and its promise of the postcolonial peace of hybridity. Abraham's reliance on global capitalism, inherited from imperialism and strengthened by the advent of an Indian gloss on market fundamentalism, is the downfall of both his city and his family, with nothing left in the wreckage to assist in putting both structures back together. "Although the novel tackles the depredations of capitalism directly," Bahri writes, "it also suggests that a change in the relation of production cannot alone solve the problem" (196). Tweaked capitalism will not save Bombay in *The Moor's Last Sigh,* and neither will a capitalist-

tinged hybridity or any form of fundamentalism: the novel, groaning under the weight of its crimes, blows the city up to create a vacuum for future imaginative remappings of the city.

Bahri writes of the ending of *The Moor's Last Sigh* that the novel "has concluded in the image of collapse, opening up the prospect of the unknown" (199). The pessimistic ending of *Midnight's Children,* in which Saleem, grown to adulthood, disintegrates and shatters all over the streets of Bombay, is revisited more violently in *The Moor's Last Sigh* when Bombay "blew apart" (371) via the use of a bomb. The stockpiling of war machinery echoes the tenets of neoliberalism seen so clearly in postcolonial Belfast, but in the case of Bombay, we don't know for certain who instigated the violence. Though "many of Abraham's enemies were hit" (372), the Moor claims that all the citizens of Bombay "engineered our own fall" (373); the fictional bomb blasts of *The Moor's Last Sigh* echo the 1993 bombings of Bombay, and eerily foreshadow the 2008 attacks detailed at the start of this chapter. Fundamentalist religious violence is a common theme in Bombay, and the very nature of this violence is impersonal in nature, both on the part of the perpetrators and the victims. The escaping of personal responsibility and folding of the entire city's citizenry into the failures of neoliberalism and hybridity speaks to the ways in which imperial legacies and capitalized postcolonial crime encompass everyone, rather than singular individuals. Hybridity, internationalism, and globalization have all failed the city.

"Rotted By It": Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*

Vikram Chandra's hard-boiled detective novel *Sacred Games* is a nearly thousand-page epic dealing with the city of Bombay in all its frenzied, convoluted, palimpsestic glory. At the center of the action is Sartaj Singh, a Sikh police inspector who is called to negotiate with notorious Hindu gangster Ganesh Gaitonde through the door of Gaitonde's bunker-like structure. As Gaitonde variously threatens to kill himself, turns melancholic, and threatens

Sartaj, the two men open up about each of their personal histories, recount how they got to where they are now, and discuss the current state of politics, crime, and culture (especially Bollywood movies) in contemporary Bombay. Sartaj learns of Ganesh's entanglement with a mysterious guru, and it is by following this thread that the police inspector is introduced to an entire species of imperially-inflected crime he previously had no idea existed.

The novel opens with a violent crime. A married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Pandey, have been fighting about Mr. Pandey's suspicion that his wife, who is an airline hostess, is cheating on him with a pilot. The fight ends (and the novel begins) with Mr. Pandey throwing his wife's small dog out the window, killing the dog. When the detectives Sartaj Singh and Katekar break into the Pandeys' apartment, Mrs. Pandey is stabbing the door to the bedroom, which her husband has locked from the inside. The reader soon learns that this is a scene of mutual domestic violence, as both individuals are bruised and battered, and the scene ends without a clear resolution, setting the scene for an exploration of crime in Bombay both personal and political.

This violent domestic crime sets the stage, and in many ways undergirds, the series of crimes we are presented with in the ensuing pages of the novel. Readers are introduced early to Ganesh Gaitonde, a ruthless gangster with a rags-to-riches narrative trajectory who controls one of the largest Hindu gangs in the city, as well as a host of other violent characters, from a right-wing, fundamentalist Hindu guru (who Ganesh calls Guru-ji) to Suleiman Isa, the head of Gaitonde's rival (Muslim) gang. The characters in the novel are implicated in corruption, riots, bombings, and terrorist plots, many on international scales; the underworld is allowed to flourish in the way it does because of the neoliberal state's shedding of its traditional responsibilities. As Suketu Mehta notes, "the underworld enters the areas that the state has withdrawn from: the judiciary, personal protection, the

channeling of capital" (178). Because of the deregulated neoliberal reality of India and Bombay, itself a legacy of imperialism, the criminal underworld is allowed to intertwine itself tightly with the destiny of the city.

Gaitonde illustrates well how various forms of crime, from low-level to internationally linked, have infiltrated the city of Bombay; he explains to his friend Jojo that he is worried about, "the rising crime rate in the city, the worrisome incidence of random robberies, the rapes, and also the aggressive posturing of governments and militant groups, leading to bomb explosions in restaurants, and what this might mean for the situation at the border" (845). The contours of capitalized postcolonial crime, from "aggressive posturing of governments and militant groups" to "the situation at the border," may be understood in the context of imperial legacies and capitalized postcolonial crime. However, these more overt crimes – robberies, rapes, terrorism, simmering violence borne out of India/Pakistan relations – mask how postcolonial Bombay has seamlessly incorporated neocolonial capitalist imperialism in its trudge towards an imperial legacy-inflected neoliberal world order.

Sacred Games is narrated alternatively by Ganesh and by Sartaj Singh. As Nels Pearson and Marc Singer write, Chandra's choice to "invoke the hard-boiled detective as a template for [his] own postcolonial, transnational, or racially marginalized detectives" (5) is itself a postcolonial move in that it re-appropriates the detective figure from its original nineteenth-century British imperial pattern. Moreover, the Bombay police force (which in itself as an imperial legacy, having been founded by the British) is rife with dishonesty and fraud, gesturing towards the ubiquitous postcolonial condition of bribery and corruption. Corruption in itself is a legacy of imperialism: as Claire Chambers writes of Sartaj Singh's pre-*Sacred Games* appearance in an earlier Chandra short story, "Kama," "legacies of

colonialism make it almost impossible for a detective in late-1990s Bombay to remain an unsullied 'white knight'" (35): policing itself is an inherently violent, racist, and imperialist system, and a Bombay police officer has to try to make a living within this system on very little money. On the very first day we spend with Sartaj Singh in *Sacred Games*, he goes to a bar to collect money, for "the station and the Delite Dance Bar had a monthly arrangement" (16), wherein the bar pays off the police every month so as not to be raided as frequently as their competitors. We learn that in the past, Sartaj prided himself on being a clean policeman, but that he "took cash now, and was grateful for it" (23); corruption is rife, in part, because of low pay. "A nine-hundred-rupee monthly transportation allowance hardly paid for three days of fuel for his Bullet…" (23), for "he was paid by the great Government of India, at skimpy GOI rates" (641). Because of state employees' meager wages, "things and people were bought and sold every day in this city" (420).[53] Daniel Jordan Smith, writing of discourses of corruption in Nigeria, notes, "what might look to an outsider like pure venality is often undertaken for very different reasons that can be discovered by studying local social institutions and cultural logics" (10). Those logics, in the Bombay of *Sacred Games*, are the ghosts of empire in the form of a British police force, a weak state engendered by anti-Keynesian neoliberal economic plans, and lack of funding for essential government services. But as in Rushdie's Bombay novels, these postcolonial capitalist logics are obscured by more violent, attention-grabbing crime engendered by fundamentalist groups.

Chandra gives us the character of K.D. Yadav, a retired Indian intelligence officer, to illustrate how Bombay and its internationalist circuits are mapped via crime. We meet Yadav

[53] These "things and people" include elections and politicians; Gaitonde buys an election for Bipin Bhonsle, a Hindu fundamentalist politician who, once in power, works to safeguard Gaitonde's control of the city and extend neoliberal policies so that Gaitonde's criminal acts may continue to flourish.

on his deathbed, where he is approached by his protégé, a woman named Anjali, for assistance as she attempts to track down Ganesh Gaitonde. Yadav tries to help her as best he can, and after she leaves, lost in his memories of past crimes and criminals, muses to himself, "The world is shot through with crime, riddled with it, rotted by it" (326). He goes on to contemplate the kinds of crimes he has encountered in his long career:

> The Pakistanis and the Afghans run a twenty-billion-dollar trade in heroin, which is partly routed through India, through Delhi and Bombay, to Turkey and Europe and the United States. The ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence, in Pakistan] and the generals fatten on the trade and buy weapons and mujahideen warriors. The criminals provide logistical support, moving men and money and weapons across the borders. The politicians provide protection to the criminals, the criminals provide muscle and money to the politicians. That's how it goes (326).

Given his life's work, Yadav is of course very interested in the international dimensions of crime and how corruption and lawlessness affect the life of the nation writ large. He thinks of offenses against the law in terms of border-crossing and nation-states, about international drug smuggling and how those routes connect in and continue through India. Crime is, for him, a globalized business, like so many other ventures in the twenty-first century, and the imperial roots of such international crime and how these crimes are linked to the global circulation of capital, routes first instigated by imperial trade and navigation, are outlined in his ruminations.

These crimes are not only in the memories of a dying man, but in the present tense of the novel as well. For instance, at the height of his power, Ganesh Gaitonde begins to become intertwined with a far-right guru known as Swami Shridhar Skukla, but whom

Gaitonde refers to as simply "Guru-ji." Guru-ji's religious organization, internationalist in scope, relies on global circulations of capital, gathering donations from his performances in Europe, North America, Asia, and presumably elsewhere, all funneled back to his main coffers in Bombay, while Guru-ji promotes a narrow, parochial Hindu conception of what the city could and should be. The encouragement of international flows of money assists him in his attempts to remold the city in his image: we soon learn that Guru-ji has set up a fake Islamist organization, which he has named Hizbuddeen, which he intends to frame for his own religious organization's setting off a series of bombs in Bombay that are intended to destroy the city. When asked why he wishes to destroy the city, Guru-ji responds with

> All these United Nations, these dreamy-eyed do-gooders who rush to stop conflicts, they don't understand that some wars must be fought, that killing must happen. They think they have stopped war, but all they ensure is a state of constant, smouldering war. Look at India and Pakistan, bleeding each other for more than fifty years. Instead of a final, glorious battle, we have a long, filthy mess (838).

Guru-ji believes that the only way to stop postcolonial violence is to cause an apocalypse so that the world may begin anew, free of what he views as the original sins of imperialism and pluralism, and he plans to cause just such an apocalypse by setting off bombs, financed by his global neoliberal maneuverings and implemented by his close personal friend, Ganesh Gaitonde. Guru-ji points to a bloody imperial legacy, Partition, as one of the key colonial crimes that has caused this "Kaliyug," or state of chaos and violence. This echoes K.D. Yadav's concerns about the international (specifically Indian-Pakistani) dimensions of crime. Moreover, Guru-ji's choice of blaming the bloody apocalypse on an Islamic terrorist front links to the imperial legacy of Partition, as his hope is that the bombs will be blamed on

Islamic terrorists and Pakistan, setting off one "final, glorious battle." Guru-ji's crime story is geared towards an imagined future resolution: an almost Lenin-esque dialectic of hastening the revolution, the ending, by bringing all these strands of crime and imperialism to their logical ends, assisted by the unfettered global circulation of capital.

Oza points to the Indian government's development of nuclear weapons as a key stage in India's neoliberal evolution. She further articulates that the "demonstration of masculine pride and of restored virility following the tests to the nation's colonial history of emasculation and the manner in which the Hindu Right was able to harness and deploy this sense of impotence in contemporary India" (2006, 115) is tied to "the colonial and postcolonial construction of masculinity" (121) and "middle class aspirations" (121). The Hindu Right, aggressive displays of masculinity from both the male-dominated police force and the heavily masculine criminal underworld, colonial history, and neoliberal economics all swirl around the issues of bombing, violence, crime, and the underworld in both Rushdie's novels and in *Sacred Games*. It is not possible to understand the dimensions of crime in Bombay without taking all these issues into account; Guru-ji's crime of bombing the city has multiple imperial legacies, heavy overtones of toxic masculinity, and a clear link to the global circulation of capital, a process instigated by past imperialisms.

Of course, though, the bomb scheme does not work: Sartaj Singh, the Bombay police force, and shadowy agents of the Indian government in Delhi all combine to thwart the violent plan, and Ganesh Gaitonde later kills himself in the underground bunker he has constructed for himself in anticipation of the Kaliyug. With the demise of Guru-ji the plotter and Ganesh Gaitonde the criminal, Chandra's Bombay seems a much quieter, peaceful place. Sartaj Singh, after the drama and violence of the Ganesh Gaitonde case, is returning to work

when his progress is stymied by that most familiar scene of modern city life: a traffic jam. Sartaj

> was hemmed in by a BEST bus and two autos, and there was nowhere for anyone to go, so they all waited companionably. The bus was crammed full of office-goers, and the autos were taking college students to their classes. Young boys were working the stalled traffic, selling magazines and water and gaudy Chinese statues of a laughing man with his hands above his head. A pair of maimed beggars went from car to car, tapping their stumps on windscreens. Sartaj drank it all in, incredulous that he had missed all this while he had been away, and that he was glad to be back. Even this particular stench of exhaust and burning and heated tar, even this was delectable (946).

At first, this scene seems idyllic, peaceful, perfect: Chandra has somehow managed to make the annoyance of the traffic jam, so well-known to urban dwellers the world over, seem pastoral, a picture of cooperation, pluralism, and good harmony in metropolitan life, the poster child for productive hybridity. We have here a city that resists essentialist conceptions of itself, rejects Guru-ji's visions of fundamentalist Hinduism and "cleansing" violence; the city is a place for everyone, from college students to young workers to "maimed beggars," and everyone can find peace even in the most infuriating situations. Everything is pristine and perfect, even car exhaust.

But on closer inspection, this scene fails as a potential escape from capitalized postcolonial crime and imperial legacies. The traffic jam only started in the first place because "a party of Municipal men were working on a hole in the road," but "they weren't actually working, they were standing around the hole looking at it, and apparently waiting for

something to happen" (945). The forced indolence of these city employees echoes the corruption rife in that other publicly-funded agency, the police force; the young boys aren't in school, but selling imported Chinese statues; people with disabilities don't have viable options or support systems, but are left on the streets to beg and rely on what they can take in. This seemingly bucolic scene is, on closer inspection, rather, an image of the individualistic, atomized, lonely neoliberal city that imperialism has made.

Eventually, traffic starts moving again, and Sartaj keeps driving to his destination, the police station. He observes the goings-on in the precinct from outside on his motorcycle, and the scene he describes reveals to the reader that though Ganesh Gaitonde has been vanquished, nothing has changed in the Bombay crime scene. He sees a man and a woman reporting an unknown crime, a constable leading "a shackled prisoner past" (946). His coworkers clean the station, tell jokes, write reports, all as they had before the Ganesh Gaitonde case as well. Sartaj, observing this, is not disturbed, does not consider what it means that the patterns and the contours of a day at the police station have not changed and how this unchanging rhythm might recall the unchanged neocolonial structure of, say, Methwold's Estate. Instead, Sartaj "went in and began another day" (947), finishing the novel.

Sartaj's eschewing of the responsibility to fix the larger structural patterns that cause crimes like the threat of the nuclear bomb and the presence of the underworld to exist in the first place and choice instead to simply solve the one-off crime, return to the police station to begin another day, and repeat the same patterns points the reader back to the opening scene of domestic violence with the Pandeys. In that scene, Sartaj and his partner, Katekar, observe the wounds Mr. and Mrs. Pandey have inflicted upon each other – Mr. Pandey sports "a corrugated red welt" on his shoulder blade, from a Kashmiri walking stick Mrs.

Pandey wielded, and Mrs. Pandey has "green and blue bruises on her shoulder" (4) – and simply sigh and shake their heads. Sartaj, instead of investigating further or stopping the violence at its root, says softly, "'Love is a murdering gaandu [idiot]. Poor Fluffy [the dog]" (5). Sartaj's failure to completely solve this crime loops back around later in the novel, when Mrs. Pandey hires him under the table to find out who is blackmailing her over the affair her husband correctly supposed she was having. After Sartaj realizes the man blackmailing her is, in fact, her lover Umesh, he confronts him and asks why he did it. "Daddy had an angioplasty… So much money. And Chotti, she's got to get married," Umesh responds (798). This initially vaguely sympathetic reasoning is wiped away when he continues, "Everyone has necessities, boss. Everyone. I am sure we can come to some understanding… Kamala really has too much money, yaar. We could all share…" (798). Sartaj does not react well to this suggestion, and he "smashed his fist into Umesh's mouth," a violent gesture which Sartaj found "immensely satisfying" (798). Sartaj extricates himself from the situation but finds himself outside, wishing for "somebody else to hit, something" (799), longing for a target for his anger.

This relatively minor crime, which operates seemingly isolated from the larger narrative of Ganesh Gaitonde and Guru-ji, in fact is linked to larger patterns at work in the city, and this microscopic, personal-level view of crime can be read as nudging the reader into thinking about larger structures of crime and imperial legacies. Umesh's ruthless pursuit of profit above all else, combined with Sartaj's rather half-hearted police work (he initially does not pursue the Pandey case closely, and seems to view the blackmailing case as solved once he beats Umesh up), create the kind of urban context that make the rigid fundamentalist violence of someone like Guru-ji possible and even encouraged. Neoliberal capitalists like Umesh normalize corruption and bribery as an ostensibly natural state of the

postcolonial city, much as fundamentalists like Guru-ji or Shiv Sena incorporate violence and rigid categories of belonging as somehow deep, essentialist, and unchangeable elements of Bombay. The police are of no help in solving capitalized postcolonial crime of this magnitude – in fact, they are deeply imbricated in the neocolonial system – and their failure, like Sartaj's on the micro level, to solve the crimes of the city mean the larger structures continue unabated. Chandra's novel adds to the palimpsest narrative of Bombay by showing that individual, small-scale crimes can be seen as one ring or one thread inside a larger matrix.

Unfortunately, no alternative script for the future is hinted at in *Sacred Games*. Sartaj's ignorance of his culpability in promulgating postcolonially criminal ideologies points to the failure of officialdom to solve the crimes of the city, and no promising vision for the future is offered. *Sacred Games,* in fact, seems eerily grounded in reality: though it was published before Lashkar-e-Taiba's 2008 attacks, as National Public Radio notes, the details of the attacks "might seem familiar to the readers of the 2007 novel *Sacred Games*." NPR points out that just as Guru-ji "engineers a terrorist strike in Mumbai to try to escalate tensions between India and Pakistan," during the real Mumbai terrorist attacks, "one of the policemen killed in action… had spent the past few months 'investigating Hindu right-wingers who allegedly were responsibly for at least one blast' in India recently." Chandra says that when the Lashkar-e-Taiba attacks began, "it seemed as if fiction and real life were anticipating each other." Instead of gesturing towards strategies for Bombay to solve their capitalized postcolonial crime, *Midnight's Children, The Moor's Last Sigh,* and *Sacred Games* all work to demonstrate the palimpsestic nature of crime in Bombay, and the shortcomings of those individuals and structures who are tasked with attempting to fight it. "The greatest crime in

all history," as Will Durant referred to British imperialism in India, continues to reach its myriad tentacles and legacies into the present city of Bombay.

"But What Did I Really Mean? Who Were 'We'?": Crime in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg

Ivan Vladislavić's 2001 novel *The Restless Supermarket* is set in the Johannesburg neighborhood of Hillbrow in 1993, right on the brink of the end of the apartheid era (which formally ended just a year later, in 1994). The novel's main character and narrator, Aubrey Tearle, is a cantankerous and rigid retired proofreader, who is extremely upset that the version of the city he understands, with its orderly apartheid rules and categories, is slipping away as he watches helplessly. Standards, he holds, are slipping, leading to societal downfall. He muses

> Standards of proofreading have been declining steadily since the nineteen-sixties, when the permissive attitude to life first gained ground, and so have standards of morality, conduct in public life, personal hygiene and medical care, the standard of living, and so on. All these are symptoms of a more general malaise. Decline with a capital D (84).

Tearle goes on to explain that, because he believes "the solution to the problem of declining standards lay with the individual" (84), he has begun to visit various establishments in his neighborhood to offer his unsolicited advice on their signage's grammar. He sees this behavior as a public service, for it is his firm belief that upholding his personally-determined standards of correctness is of the utmost importance for wider society. Tearle makes a connection between what he deems to be "correct" grammar and the general orderliness of the world around him, exclaiming to one acquaintance at the end of the novel, "Once you're free to spell a word any way you like, chaos comes marching in… The decline in the standard of proofreading is linked directly to the decline in standards everywhere else" (284-5).

For Tearle, a significant effect of this "decline of standards,"[54] being linked to words on the page, means that the relaxation and eventual abandonment of legal apartheid rules and codes will spell doom for his neighborhood of Hillbrow and Johannesburg as a whole, though he personally is "either oblivious to or disingenuous about the ways in which his systems of imposing order on chaos very much resemble the methods that the apartheid state used to impose social control on the black population" (Graham 81). He is deeply anxious over the loss of a strictly ordered society and how this loss might introduce chaos and criminality into his circumscribed little world. He thinks

> I felt – I had to stop myself from quaking – that we were *in mortal danger*. We were on the verge of extinction, I realized, and the fact seemed chillingly explicit. But what did I really mean? Who were 'we'? The human race? People of good sense and common decency? The ragtag remnants of the Café Europa? Was it a royal 'we'? (155)

Tearle's uncertainty about who gets to be included in the "we" (ranging from the entire "human race" to the fellow patrons of the appropriately-named café where he spends his time to just himself) is, given his time period, primarily a reference to the racial codes and structures of apartheid, but we can see in this quotation a projection into the future, where the criteria for inclusion in the "we" no longer are solely based on race, but have moved on to the more slippery and ostensibly colorblind category of criminality. Tearle's choice of the phrase "people of good sense and common decency" points not necessarily to skin color, but to acceptable standards of behavior, which presumably those accused and convicted of crimes would not exhibit. A byproduct of this seemingly colorblind language, of course, is

[54] Of course, in this context, "decline" has a double meaning: that in "decline of standards," but also, grammatically, "to decline a verb." In the postcolonial context, it also immediately brings to mind Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

that those of "good sense and common decency" are often understood to be white Europeans, and anyone "other" becomes cast as suspiciously criminal.

Later, in an excerpt from a short story Tearle has written about a proofreader, Fluxman, who can change the layout and demographic makeup of his city simply by "correcting" or revising texts written about it or maps drawn of it, Fluxman (who is modeled on Tearle), is confronted with the question about what to do about what he deems the disorderly elements of his city, Alibia:

> And then it was the human detritus he found in the margins of the city, the erroneous ones, the slips of the hand, the tramps, the fools, the congenitally stupid, the insufferably ugly. They were incorrigible, he reasoned, and doing away with them, at one painless stroke, was more humane than trying to improve them. (224)

Tearle sympathizes with Fluxman and similarly wishes to rewrite Hillbrow to remove what he considers "human detritus" – again, not explicitly a racial category, but ostensibly a behavioral one – from the area. Vladislavić's studied refusal to have Tearle utilize racial language and categorization makes *The Restless Supermarket* an interesting test case for the concept of capitalized postcolonial crime in Johannesburg. Though set during the final days of the apartheid era, the text's colorblindness sets up a framework wherein it can be argued that Tearle, though a man with a strong impulse to exclude, does not necessarily view the rubric for inclusion or exclusion into the "we" as being based on race, as the apartheid system would; rather, Tearle's constant inveigling about standards of behavior and declines in propriety might easily be viewed as his desire to exclude those he, personally, deems messy, low-life, criminal, poor, in the post-apartheid, postcolonial world order.

This chapter will argue that, as apartheid began to be recognized as a crime by the international community and then South Africa itself, that system of clear-cut rules and structures was discarded in favor of the more fluid and neoliberal system of criminality. This, in turn, opened the door for contemporary South African writers to deploy depictions of capitalized postcolonial crime in their writings to point to ways in which apartheid and empire's legacies are still felt in contemporary Johannesburg via contemporary formations of neoliberalism. By shedding light on the ways in which discourses and conversations on crime, race, and poverty map and undergird the contemporary South African city, Lauren Beukes and Phaswane Mpe use their novels to spur readers into thinking about the larger systems that structure the post-apartheid environment.

Apartheid, Neoliberalism, Empire, Crime

Christopher Heywood writes of contemporary South African literature, "The twenty-first century may view the wars of the colonial past and the struggles of the later twentieth century as incomprehensible, yet modern nightmares such as disease, privatised crime, and unemployment, are rooted in the past" (20). Tracing how these "modern nightmares," especially "privatised crime," connect back to their historical roots will shed light on how the capitalized postcolonial crimes of the present must be understood in light of the crimes of empire and its racial system of apartheid.

Johannesburg is the largest city in a country that has seen Portuguese, Dutch, and British imperial influence and, until the late twentieth century, operated under a system of strict racial segregation known as apartheid. Though not formally instituted until 1948, apartheid built upon systems of racial segregation initially put into place by both British and Dutch imperial rule. Apartheid's intensities and formal codifications into strict law were a post-imperial innovation, but apartheid can be seen as an imperial legacy in that its general

purpose was to solidify the hold white Europeans enjoyed over indigenous Black Africans and the mixed Coloured population once the formal protections of European imperial rule had left the country. Moreover, because "land had been a critical factor in the colonial encounter" (Welsh 30) and apartheid focused heavily on controlling access to land and space, "apartheid can surely be grasped," argues Rita Barnard, "as a deliberated and anachronistic perpetuation or reinvention of the spatial and epistemological distortions of imperialism within one country's borders" (47). Apartheid, simultaneously a system of domestic imperialism and a hangover from imperial rule, was also tied up with discourses of criminality from early on, both in the sense that the system was a crime, a violation against any basic understanding of human rights and in that it instituted a wide and far-ranging set of crimes in the sense of "legal concept[s] [and] what is or is not against the law" (Roth 8). Because of apartheid's many rules and regulations regarding what people could or could not do based on skin color, it was virtually impossible to keep abreast of the many ways one could violate apartheid law and thus be classified as a criminal. As Loren Kruger writes

> the apartheid order… created instead a determinedly *provincial* [italics original] *criminal city* [italics mine], not merely in the broad anti-apartheid sense of a regime that violated international human rights, but also in the classification of most inhabitants as actual or potential offenders against a host of laws defining Group Areas, Separate Amenities, and Urban Areas and thus, as foreigners deserving expulsion (146).

Perhaps the starkest rendering of this institution of criminality may be found in the title of South African comedian Trevor Noah's autobiography, *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* (2016). The first page consists of a reprinting of the 1927 Immorality Act, which was intended to "prohibit carnal intercourse between Europeans and natives and other acts in relation thereto." Noah, as the child of an African woman and a European

man, was thence "born a crime," and is only one of several examples of how crime could be and was defined in apartheid South Africa.

The operation of apartheid as both a system of domestic imperialism and as a crime was particularly sharply felt in (criminal) cities, including Johannesburg. David Welsh writes that "one of apartheid's principal aims – if not *the* principal one – was to abort the urbanisation revolution among Africans by deeming urban Africans to be 'temporary sojourners'" (212). Classifying Africans as such meant that they had no right to the city and could not live within its limits; further legal technologies, such as pass and identification laws, meant that Africans could only be inside the Johannesburg city limits during certain times of day (usually business hours) before they had to return to the townships, located on the urban fringes. It is at least partially for this reason that Irikidzayi Manase asserts that the South African city, Johannesburg included, "evolved and assumed its characteristics due to the impact of European colonialism, white social, political and economic domination, and, currently, the policies of the ruling majority and nationalist governments as well as the impact of changes in the world economies" (101). Though it is true that "in spite of its appearance of fixity, Johannesburg was never a totally foreclosed city even at the height of apartheid" (Mbembe 48), the contemporary city of Johannesburg remains shaped by the legacies of the systems of imperialism and apartheid, leading to contemporary capitalized postcolonial crime.

Because the outright, explicitly racist attitudes that were acceptable in the apartheid era are now discouraged, the divisions and exclusions of contemporary South African cities are based less on racial categorizations than on crime. The economics of neoliberalism, which took root in South Africa after the dismantling of apartheid, lead to more unequal societies, which in term lead to crime, especially property crime; on a more theoretical level,

neoliberal fretting about crime helps to sustain the spatial logic of apartheid in contemporary Johannesburg. Due to the massive demographic changes that took place in Johannesburg in the 1990s – from white flight into the suburbs to the increase in migrants from other parts of Africa – crime and security and the languages surrounding these concepts became a socially acceptable way to process the end of apartheid and the rise of the "new South Africa." Because, moreover, "South Africa's democratic breakthrough coincided with the highpoint of neo-liberal triumphalism" in the 1990s (Green 326), and crime is often committed due to economic disparities and shredding of social services that are the byproducts of neoliberalism, fear of crime is often expressed in language closely linked to some of the main tenets of neoliberal philosophies: individualism, personal responsibility, defense of property, competition and market logic, etc.

One way, I argue, that writers have tried to map Johannesburg is by understanding the urban space through first the crime of apartheid and later, the capitalized postcolonial crime of ostensibly colorblind codes of criminality. Its turbulent history, from apartheid to crime, means that Johannesburg as a city is often seen as incomprehensible, its social problems contributing to its inability to be properly understood by "rational" observers. Loren Kruger writes, "from its early years to the present, Johannesburg has escaped the strictures of literary as well as civil decorum. The city has appeared to planners and artists alike to be *unimaginable* as well as unmanageable" (141). Unpacking an ostensibly colorblind neoliberalism turns the city from unmanageable and unimaginable by tracing discourses of capitalized postcolonial crime to excavate imperial and apartheid legacies.

The literary texts analyzed in this chapter – Ivan Vladislavić's *The Restless Supermarket,* Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City*, and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* – are all set in the Johannesburg neighborhood of Hillbrow. Together, the texts comprise a constellation of

literary Hillbrow narrated and presented by vastly different subject positions. The neighborhood of Hillbrow holds a vexed place within the larger city. Hillbrow is a high-density area, unusual for Johannesburg, which is generally a sprawling, low-density city, notable for its lack of infill. In the apartheid era, Hillbrow moved from being a "whites-only" area to being designated a "gray area," where people of different ethnicities lived side-by-side. During this "gray area" phase, Hillbrow was known for its cosmopolitan, intellectual, progressive atmosphere, as well as its (unusual for the time) LGBT scene. However, with the white flight that was common to many inner-city areas of Johannesburg in the 1970s and 80s, Hillbrow became marked by the same problems that plagued many cities, both in South Africa and around the world, in this time period: poverty, unemployment, crime. Today, Hillbrow is generally known as an area for people in transit, hosting migrants from rural South Africa, as well as the rest of the continent of Africa. It has been compared to London's East End: hosting newcomers to the city until those newcomers are able to get on their feet, so to speak, and move elsewhere in the city. The contemporary neighborhood, due to its immediate post-apartheid image and its current home as a landing space for immigrants, is stereotyped as being dirty, dangerous, and full of the Other. For reasons based in these historical and contemporary stereotypes, Hillbrow is also frequently pointed to as the epicenter of Johannesburg and South Africa's problems with crime.

Lindsay Bremner notes that Johannesburg in the post-apartheid era "has become a field of violent contestation between extreme wealth and extreme poverty, between luxury and subsistence, idyll and inferno, excess and need" (51) and that "into this [neoliberal] situation, a new discourse and set of practices have emerged – those of crime" (53). As previously stated, capitalized postcolonial crime and the moral panics that surround the subject can be considered a subset of neoliberalism in many ways: sometimes actual crime is

committed due to material inequality under neoliberalism, or the panic over property crime is linked to neoliberalism's insistence on the value of personal, private property. But, especially in South Africa, discourses surrounding crime allow people to express themselves in coded racist ways. In the post-apartheid era, it is considered inappropriate to articulate the explicit racism that was a key part of the apartheid order. For this reason, not-so-subtle concerns about security and crime have edged into the public discourse and can similarly be seen in contemporary Johannesburg literature in order to continue to prop up the racialized order Aubrey Tearle and so many others hold dear. Yet, in *Zoo City* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow,* Lauren Beukes and Phaswane Mpe offer subtle rejoinders to the moral panics surrounding crime and security in contemporary Johannesburg and offer ways forward for Johannesburg to reimagine itself. In the sections that follow, I consider these two novels – both set in the inner-city suburb of Hillbrow, though during different time periods – to think about the ways different forms of literature can excavate imperial legacies and neo-apartheid structures in order to present how they are related to contemporary discourses of capitalized postcolonial crime.

"No Offense to the Animalled": Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City*

Lauren Beukes's 2010 novel *Zoo City* is a futuristic, science fiction text set in a dystopic Johannesburg. Elements of the real history of Johannesburg have been carried through into the speculative city of Beukes's novel – for instance, apartheid seems to have happened in the history of *Zoo City*, and the titular "Zoo City" is the real-life Johannesburg neighborhood of Hillbrow. But, given the genre, many elements of the world of *Zoo City* are fantastic; some residents of the city, known as "zoos" or, more derogatorily, "apos," the novel's narrator Zinzi December included, are constantly accompanied by animal familiars (Zinzi's familiar, for example, is a sloth). Though various theories abound as to why these

"zoos" (who exist all over the world, not just in Johannesburg) have come to be, the one constant variable common to all zoos is that they are all formerly incarcerated persons, or as Zinzi wryly puts it "criminals. Murderers, rapists, junkies. Scum of the earth" (15). Because of her criminal history, Zinzi is forced to make her living on the black market, by finding lost things for clients and by taking part in the ultimate capitalized neoliberal venture, Internet scams. But besides the commonality of a criminal history, neither the scientific community nor the world at large has managed to figure out how or why the zoos have these familiars, and zoos face significant social, economic, and political discrimination in their day-to-day lives.[55]

Residents of Johannesburg use "Zoo City" to refer to the part of the city where the zoos are effectively forced to live. Zoo City is what was previously (in its Former Life, or FL, before the zoos arrived) referred to as Hillbrow, an inner-city suburb that, in both our history and the history of the novel, was viewed as glamorous and cosmopolitan in the apartheid area, and that fell into hard times with the end of apartheid and subsequent white flight to the suburbs. By designating Hillbrow as the area where the zoos, people with criminal histories, must live, Beukes draws a connection between apartheid and criminality; in the "real" history of Johannesburg, post-apartheid Hillbrow is often stereotyped as being dirty, dangerous, and full of Others, due to its post-apartheid demographic makeup; the same is true of the speculative Zoo City and its criminal zoos. Neville Hoad writes of the neighborhood that while it "continues to enjoy a lively street life," this is "coupled with a high crime rate, and [the neighborhood] is considered a no-go zone for respectable white people and tourists" (113) (note the pairing of the ostensibly colorblind, behaviorally-

[55] In addition to the apartheid parallels with the zoos, the phenomenon of "animalling," or the pairing of animal familiars to those who have committed crimes, came to prominence in the 1980s, much like the HIV/AIDS crisis and the phenomenon of neoliberalism.

influenced language of "respectable" with the color-conscious use of "white people"). In both our Hillbrow and in the world of *Zoo City*, the neighborhood is a site of post-apartheid segregation, with the new postcolonial divisions based on a neoliberal, capitalized language of crime; Lisa Propst writes, "Unable to escape the visible stigma of criminality, this animalled become the new underclass" (4). For an example of the continuities between the eras of apartheid and post-apartheid in the novel, consider how much of the language in post-apartheid *Zoo City* remains the same as in the apartheid era. For instance, when Zinzi is meeting with one client, the old woman snaps, "'If you would be so kind as to let me finish?...I hid in the bathroom and took all my jewellery off because I know how *you people* – criminals that is,' she added hurriedly, 'No offense to the animalled'" (8). We see a slippage here between the racist, apartheid-era language of "*you people*" to the quick clarification that she means "criminals," and of course, not the animalled. Though the deep structures have not changed, in a post-apartheid and neoliberal era, Zinzi's client must clarify that she is not racist in the sense of judging the physical characteristics of the animalled, but that she is simply prejudiced against "criminals."

The fictional Zoo City's past matches that of the real Hillbrow's: for instance, Zinzi talks about "back when this part of town was cosmopolitan central, with its glitzy hotels and restaurants and outdoor cafes and malls packed to the skylights with premium luxury goods" (51), an image that would reflect the real history of apartheid-era Hillbrow. In the time of the novel, however, Zinzi informs us, "Gunfire has always been part of the nocturnal soundscape of Zoo City, like cicadas in the countryside. But it's only recently that it's become part of the daytime routine" (59). The danger associated with the neighborhood, Beukes suggests, has come about in the immediate post-apartheid era, much like in "actual" Hillbrow. The colonial system of apartheid has given way in both the speculative

postcolonial, capitalized future of *Zoo City* and its close parallel, our contemporary Johannesburg, to a less strict, more neoliberal system of segregation and control. Neoliberalism's looser rules and privileging of economic segregation creates a Hillbrow/Zoo City that is *de facto*, rather than *de jure*, home to those left behind by years of the apartheid order.

When we first meet Zinzi December, she is waking up next to her Congolese migrant boyfriend, Benoît, and his animal familiar, a mongoose, in her bed in Zoo City, in a building that was "condemned years ago" (8). One of the first things readers learn about her is that, "I'm precious about my work. Let's just say it's not entirely legal" (7). Zinzi, as previously mentioned, contracts herself out on the black market, receiving payment under the table, to find lost things. In this way, she fashions herself as a kind of detective: she notes that "everybody's lost *something*" and that the key to success in her field is "all about figuring out which string to tug on" (13). Zinzi gives her readers a kind of framework for untangling the mystery of why her city is structured the way that it is – we know, because she tells us, that, "some lost things can't be found… like… property values once the slums start encroaching" (13), but what we don't immediately know is *why* the "slums" are "encroaching," or why Zoo City – both the neighborhood and the novel – are organized and structured in the way that they are.

As the colonial legacy of structured apartheid gave way to the more fluid rules of the post-apartheid era, neoliberalism took over as the defining organizational structure of the city, both in our Johannesburg and the speculative criminal future of *Zoo City*. Critics have noted the failures of neoliberalism that are apparent in *Zoo City* and its coincident depictions of crime and danger in Johannesburg. Matthew Eatough notes that the novel engages with the African National Congress's post-apartheid decision to "move to a market-driven logic

in state planning" (696) and that it portrays "an eerily familiar South Africa in which money, resources, and respectability have been apportioned into a two-class system" (703), comprised of ordinary humans and zoos. In this neoliberal framework, Eatough contends, "the category of criminal has subsumed that of race in discussions of inequality" (708) in a move "eerily reminiscent of apartheid's race-based system" (709). Jayna Brown similarly notes that *Zoo City* "revels in the underside of capitalist hyperconsumption" to create "a new aesthetic… marked by a focus on class" (7). As such, the race-based system of apartheid that targeted the non-white has partially given way to market-driven, capitalized logic in both our own world and in that of *Zoo City*, though the logic of segregation promulgated by apartheid retains its hold; in Zinzi's words, "that's the thing about ghosts from Former Lives – they come back to claim you" (68). In the world of the novel, this variant of neoliberalism, like a ghost from imperialism's high capitalist days, has specifically targeted those with criminal histories, opening the door for the discourse of crime – a key anxiety in the real world of 21st century Johannesburg – to create space for new postcolonial possibilities.

For imperialism and apartheid have structured a society that, on first glance, seems very grim. Zinzi recounts the chain of events that led her to living in Zoo City, after she has been arrested for drug offenses:

> They call prisoners clients these days. It's all in the semantics. "Clients" still get served slop and *pap*, still have to sleep fifty-seven to a room designed for twenty, still have to exercise in a grim concrete yard with the outside world taunting, only a mesh fence and a gun turret away. Clients still get kicked out onto the street when their compulsory state-funded vacation is up. With zero support except for an overloaded parole system that can't keep track of who you are, let alone what you're supposed to be doing…

> It was inevitable that I'd end up in Zoo City. Although I didn't realise that until after the fifth rental agency had sneered over their clipboards at Sloth [Zinzi's animal familiar] and told me they didn't have anything available in the suburbs – had I tried Hillbrow? (60-61)

Surface-level jargon aside – clients instead of prisoners, etc – the deeper effects are neoliberalism are evident from this passage. For instance, Zinzi's incarceration and subsequent labeling as a criminal once she is released reminds the reader strongly of Michelle Alexander's argument in *The New Jim Crow:* that individuals belonging to discriminated-against classes of people (Zinzi is black) are branded as criminals in a neoliberal age to keep the prison-industrial complex humming. Once released, without state supports (Zinzi, like many others formerly incarcerated, is estranged from her family and cannot rely on them), people with criminal histories have nowhere to go, no one to rely on. Without laws or safety nets in place to mandate some sort of reintegration into society, or robust housing assistance, all the people with criminal histories, the "zoos" are forced together into Hillbrow. This may no longer be due to the official policies of the apartheid regime – actual laws mandating who may live where have been repealed – but the logic of the market, combined with individual prejudice and bigotry, mandates that there's nothing available in desirable areas and that the zoos must live in Hillbrow/Zoo City, the place of last resort.

Because of this neoliberal segregation, Zinzi is effectively barred from legal, non-black-market work, which is why she must begin her finding business and plant herself into the 419 Internet scamming business. Rather than being a drag on her productivity, her sloth familiar actively assists her in finding lost things and in navigating the 419 world, by acting as a sort of conduit through which discoveries may pass to Zinzi. Matthew Eatough contends, "As the novel progresses, the zoos and their *mashavi* [familiars] quickly crystallize into a

metaphor for the privatization of infrastructure under neoliberal economic policy" (704) because the zoos rely on their familiars, rather than the state, for services ranging from "household security… to medical care… to freelance employment" (704-5).

This neoliberal, segregated, and individualistic environment Zinzi and her sloth are effectively forced to navigate provides the motor for the novel's main action. Her skill at finding things is established very early as she manages to find an old woman's (Mrs. Luditsky) ring. She is on her way to return the ring when she gets word that Mrs. Luditsky has been murdered. The two individuals who give her this information outside Mrs. Luditsky's apartment, a man with a Maltese poodle familiar (whom Zinzi refers to as "Maltese") and a woman with a marabou stork ("Marabou"), seemingly innocently engage Zinzi in conversation and, hearing what she does for a living, tell her that they run a "procurement" business and hire her to find a missing person, the pop star Songweza, who is managed by a reclusive music producer named Odi Huron. Though Zinzi despises finding lost persons, the death of the old woman and her subsequent loss of that paycheck, combined with her segregation from legal markets, means that she is left with no other choice than to accept the job.

Zinzi's Johannesburg is built on capitalized postcolonial crime: colonial legacies have made it so that the economic and social structure and functioning of the city is built upon a continuation of apartheid-esque codes of segregation and urban organization, with the criminal now occupying the space formerly designated for Africans in Zoo City's "inegalitarian division of basic services eerily reminiscent of apartheid's race-based system" (Eatough 709). But Beukes positions Zinzi in a way so that she at first assists in propping the system up, but then navigates the system in such a way as to bring to light subsumed ideologies and places the reader in the position of detective to figure out the base, underlying

structure of a society where the bones of colonial legacies are still visible for those who know where to look.

Zinzi begins looking into Songweza's case by pretending she is an investigative journalist for a popular music magazine in order to gain access to those in the upper echelons of the entertainment and music industries. This positioning allows her to delve into areas where a criminal zoo would typically not be allowed, and as she falls deeper and deeper into her investigation, Zinzi begins to realize that the disappearance of Songweza closely mirrors the cases of other missing people in recent years; when she discovers all those people (except for Songweza) were animalled, she begins to become convinced that the prior murders in the pattern were committed to kill the familiars, not the human zoos they were attached to. She realizes that the familiars have been killed to make *muti*, or a potent kind of medicine thought to treat diseases like HIV/AIDS that are thought to be uncurable. The familiar *muti* murders in *Zoo City* have a real-life parallel in contemporary South Africa, in that a moral panic not unlike the one kicked up around the prevalence of crime has sprung up around supposed *muti* murders of humans. Zinzi notes that "someone's always buying in this city. Sex. Drugs. Magic" (301). By tying the fictional *muti* murders of familiars to the rare-but-it-happens phenomenon of *muti* murders of real-life humans, Beukes further solidifies the link between the speculative future of *Zoo City* and real Johannesburg: no one misses zoos, as Zinzi points out (301), and no one misses the Africans killed for *muti* either. Capitalist imperialism has taken over where apartheid left off to continue the categories and structures set in place by apartheid's racial codes.

Though she doesn't articulate it in quite these terms, Zinzi works out the connections between apartheid, imperialism, and capitalized postcolonial crime when she arrives at Odi's mansion to accuse Marabou and Maltese of keeping Songweza and her twin,

S'bu, hostage for a purpose that remains murky, but that Zinzi knows has something to do with the *muti* murders. Maltese tells her frankly that he and Marabou have killed two "unlucky street kids who match the general physical description" (322) of Songweza and S'bu and framed Zinzi for their murders. He explains, over her protestation, "No one's going to believe this":

> "Won't they? A psychotic junkie zoo bitch who killed her brother? Who was so celebrity-obsessed she pretended to be from a bigshot music magazine so she could get closer to the twins? Whose fingerprints were all over poor Mrs Luditsky's apartment, who took her little china cat home with her as some kind of trophy? Are you kidding me?" (322).

Songweza's disappearance was planned by the Maltese and the Marabou; they framed Zinzi from the beginning, killing Mrs Luditsky to snare Zinzi into the criminal structure. Though Songweza and S'bu are not zoos, the murders of the "street kids who match the general physical description" have been plotted to make the pop stars' impending murders look as though they fit the pattern of *muti* murders. The purpose of murdering the twins at all is revealed when we learn that Odi Huron is a zoo and hiding this from the public; he is "sick to death" of his familiar, a crocodile, and believes that murdering zoos for their familiars, followed by killing one of the twins, will allow him to transfer his familiar to the remaining twin and rid himself of the stigma of being a zoo. Then, by murdering the twin who he has forced to take his crocodile, he will kill the crocodile and "chop you up for *muti"* because, as Zinzi explains to the animal, "Monster like you? You're probably worth a fortune" (340).

This complicated plotline would make sense nowhere except in the context of a Johannesburg shaped by neoliberalism, imperialism, and apartheid. The capitalized postcolonial crimes are thick: the discrimination against zoos that both would make Zinzi a

believable suspect for a series of murders and that forced her to work in illegal activities to begin with is a start, but so is the neoliberal city that pushed her out of jail onto the streets with nothing resembling state supports, nudging her into a life of constant evasion of the law. Large patterns shape the world she is operating within; the undying quest for profit above all else that would make these serial murders possible, the segregation brought about first by apartheid and then by the unequal distribution of wealth and privilege encouraged by neoliberalism that drives crimes like these murders forward by providing convenient cover stories. Beukes uses a speculative future with many parallels to our own world to demonstrate that capitalized postcolonial crime has taken over contemporary Johannesburg in the eroding of the formal codes of apartheid.

Though Odi may seem like a monster, it's made clear that he was being used by the true criminals, the agents of the neoliberal, neopartheid, neoimperial state: the Marabou and the Maltese. When Odi is killed by his own crocodile, the Marabou says, "'A pity to lose the Crocodile, but what can you do?'" to which the Maltese says, "'Oh, sweetie, there'll be other procurements'" (343). They make no mention of Odi; it is clear he was merely a tool for them to use the crocodile, which they planned to sell for *muti*. Operating entirely outside law and morality, at the end, they are not punished – they "simply" vanish into thin air (343), never to face the consequences of their actions. "Zinzi," writes Lisa Propst, "may be able to solve the murders, but her discovery does not alleviate the suffering of the victims" (8); nothing structural changes as a result of Zinzi's detective work. The Maltese and Marabou escape all consequences.

In the world of *Zoo City*, people like Odi or other low-level agents of the world order, from those who harbor individual prejudice against the zoos to those who cordon off their homes with the help of gates and security wire to others who are simply cogs in the

neoliberal machine, are not the ones who ultimately prop up the structure of the criminal city. Rather, those like the Maltese and Marabou – who do not seem terribly threatening through most of the novel – are the true players in the criminal city, along with the neoliberal order itself. The Maltese and the Marabou's statuses as zoos reminds us that systemic capitalized postcolonial crime in both our Johannesburg and *Zoo City* can often be so subtle as to go undetected except by those, like Zinzi in her investigative work and the reader of *Zoo City,* with an eye towards discovering it. Beukes, in her imaginative future of *Zoo City*, encourages us to become detectives in our own cities and open up opportunities for uncovering and combating capitalized postcolonial crimes, even if her main character does not fully follow through on that opportunity for herself.

Zoo City ends with Zinzi escaping the dangerous hellscape city for a drive across Africa. She maps out a journey for herself in eight days, from Johannesburg to Harare to Lusaka to Mbeye to Dar es Salaam to Nairobi to Jinja to southern Uganda to Kigali (348).[56] Once in Kigali, she plans to assist Benoît's family, who are stuck in a refugee camp there. As for her plans for what do after she helps them, she muses, "maybe I'll get lost for awhile" (349), giving no indication to the reader she intends to return to the city, rotted with corruption, that she has left behind her. Zinzi's rejection of the city and gesture of pan-African solidarity is one way to escape the crime that has so damaged the city, but, as we shall see, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* represents another response.

"World of Our Continuing Existence": Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

First published in 2001, seven years after the formal dismantling of the apartheid system, Phaswane Mpe's novel, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow: A Novel of Postapartheid South Africa,*

[56] Note the heavily city-centric route: she only once notes anything that isn't a city, with "southern Uganda."

paints a rich portrait of Hillbrow as it existed in the years immediately following apartheid. The novel "has become one of the formative textual markers of the post-apartheid period" (Frenkel 31) by giving readers a post-apartheid map of one of the central neighborhoods of the city. Though the novel switches between the points of view of two characters, Refentše and Refilwe, it is continuously narrated in the second person, which has the effect of drawing the reader in and interpellating him or her in the day-to-day functioning of Hillbrow; in Ronit Frenkel's words, "the reader becomes *a part* of the story and is inextricably implicated as a member of the ever-expanding community the novel maps out" (32) (italics original). Frenkel continues, "Mpe anticipates and utilizes the fear that the inner-city neighborhood of Hillbrow summons as an icon of criminality" (32). Going into the novel, readers expect a degree of criminality and danger from the neighborhood; Mpe knows this, and, as the novel progresses, writes accordingly to resist our preconceived notions of Hillbrow as a bastion of lawlessness and immorality.

Though set in the late 1990s (Mpe's present), the Hillbrow portrayed in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* initially comes across as dangerous as the dystopic future Hillbrow of *Zoo City*. One of the first impressions readers receive as the neighborhood is filtered through a radio report, "broadcasting snippets of car hijackings and robbers' shoot-outs with the Johannesburg Murder and Robbery Squad every news hour" (5). The text goes on to list further crimes broadcast on the radio, including but not limited to (ellipses original):

> Five men were found with their ribs ripped off by what appeared to have been a butcher's knife… Two women were raped and then killed in Quartz Street… Three Nigerians who evaded arrest at Jan Smuts Airport were finally arrested in Pretoria Street for drug dealing… Street kids, drunk with glue, brandy and wild visions of themselves as speeding Hollywood movie

> directors, were racing their wire-made cars through red robots, thus increasingly becoming a menace to motorists driving through Hillbrow, especially in the vicinity of Banket and Claim Streets… At least eight people died and thirteen were seriously injured when the New Year's Eve celebrations took the form of torrents of bottles gushing out of the brooding clouds that were flat balconies… (5)

The list of crime and violence goes on, but the unnamed narrator caps it off with a dryly ironic "Welcome to Our Hillbrow…"

As seen in the excerpt above, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* does not shy away from tackling crime and other contemporary topics; indeed, Mpe has stated he wanted the novel to address what he called "taboos" or "sensitive issues," and he refers to Hillbrow as a "monster" on page 3, noting "the lure of the monster was… hard to resist." However, by taking those issues on and demonstrating that Hillbrow certainly has problems, Mpe is able to construct a very real, relatable space that works to unearth and address some of the capitalized postcolonial crimes inherent in that space. As Shane Graham points out, literature can reimagine "the postmodern, post-apartheid city"; *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* does just that.

When reimagining the city through literature, a great boon to Mpe's readers is that we feel part of and invested in the literary map of Hillbrow he creates for us. The second person narrative voice has the effect of interpellating the reader into Mpe's imaginative city; we as readers are not afforded the distance from the text usually granted to us. Take one of the earliest scenes of mapping the neighborhood. The unnamed narrator seems to be talking to Refentše, giving him directions to Refentše's cousin's place. Refentše is newly arrived

from the countryside, from a town called Tiragalong, and the narrator's directions seem to have the pride of knowledge of the recent transplant to the city as well:

> If you are coming from the city centre, the best way to get to Cousin's place is by driving or walking through Twist Street, a one-way street that takes you to the north of the city. You cross Wolmarans and three rather obscure streets, Kapteijn, Ockerse and Pieterse, before you drive or walk past Esselen, Kotze, and Pretoria Streets. You will then cross Van der Merwe and Goldreich Streets. Your next port of call is Caroline Street. On your left-hand side is Christ Church, the Bible Centred Church of Christ, as the big red letters announce to you. On your right-hand side is a block of flats called Vickers Place. You turn to your right, because the entrance to Vickers is in Caroline Street, directly opposite another block, Da Gama Court. If you are not too lazy, you will ignore the lift and walk up the stairs to the fifth floor, where Cousin stays (6).

Though this block quote is long, I highlight it for a number of reasons. First, note the effect of the "you" – though we know it is technically Refentše walking to his cousin's house, the narrative puts you, the reader, in the position of imaginatively charting that same path to Cousin's house (with a big C, indicating that character's knowability to you). This very detailed map grounds the reader in the physical space of Hillbrow, while also pointing out some of the more obvious imperial legacies present in Johannesburg – the street names.[57] Note the Kapteijn, Ockerse, and Pieterse Streets to reflect the Dutch/Afrikaaners/Boers, as well as the Caroline Street and Vickers Place for the British. The neighborhood even reaches

[57] Though it is not specifically mentioned in this quotation, if one consults a map of Hillbrow, one will see that there is an "Empire Street" just to the north of the designated area. Do with that what you will.

far back to the days of Portuguese contact with Da Gama Court. Though imperialism, of the Portuguese, Dutch, or British variety, has not been a reality in Johannesburg for quite some time, the city retains its legacies, as Refentše's walk shows us.

Similarly, apartheid is not a physical, contemporary presence in the novel, but its legacies are certainly felt. Sarah Nuttall writes, "Hillbrow, for Mpe, is figured as a partial and now patchy inventory of the old apartheid city and as a revised inventory of a largely black, highly tensile, intra-African multiculture" (206). Though the characters are able to walk or drive anywhere in the city they please without being stopped at checkpoints or being forced to carry papers, it is clear the racial segregation system still deeply haunts the city. The full title of the novel is *Welcome to Our Hillbrow: A Novel of Postapartheid South Africa,* but that "post" should not be read as a strictly temporal marker, saying apartheid is done, dusted, and dealt with. Rather, the "post" in postapartheid can be read similarly to the "post" in postcolonial, in that it urges readers to be attentive to the legacies of the system being described.

The legacies of imperialism and apartheid retain a potent hold on late-twentieth-century Hillbrow and Johannesburg, and they are excavated by the city's capitalized postcolonial crime. Though, as Ghirmai Negash says in the introduction to the novel, Mpe does not "dwell on apartheid's material exploitation and violence" (xvi), the years of apartheid have clearly marked the city in which *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*'s characters dwell. Structures of apartheid have carried over into postapartheid Johannesburg. As previously mentioned, Hillbrow is typically thought of as being a neighborhood for migrants from the South African countryside or other countries in Africa. Non-native South Africans are pejoratively referred to as the *Makwerekwere* and often discriminated against, in similar ways as the zoos are in *Zoo City*. Neoliberal lack of attention to urban planning has much the same

effect on city geography as apartheid did; with no state supports to assist recent migrants to the city, they are forced to coalesce in specific areas, where they will be stereotyped and discriminated against, much as the native Africans were during the years of apartheid. This repeat of apartheid-era structures and organizational patterns often serves as a launching pad for characters in the novel to expostulate on other subjects, notably their own perceptions of crime.

For instance, when Cousin and Refentše are having a discussion on soccer ("Like most Hillbrowans," the narrator tells us, "Cousin took his soccer seriously" [17]), we learn that Refentše and Cousin disagree strongly on the subject of supporting "foreign teams – especially those from elsewhere in Africa" (17). During these arguments, "Cousin would always take the opportunity… to complain about the crime and grime in Hillbrow, for which he held foreigners responsible: not just for the physical decay of the place, but the moral decay" (17). Refentše, on the other hand, believes that "the moral decay of Hillbrow, so often talked about, was in fact no worse than that of Tiragalong" (17). Cousin refuses to agree with him, insisting instead "that people should remain in their own countries and try to sort out of the problems of these respective countries, rather than fleeing them; South Africa had too many problems of its own" (20).[58] By positioning this issue as an argument between Refentše and Cousin, Mpe is able to point out to the reader the untenability of Cousin's position and the ways in which he is (either knowingly or unknowingly) drawing on the legacies of apartheid and imperialism to replicate their structures in the present. In this way, Cousin acts as a sort of unwitting accomplice to capitalized postcolonial crime, in that he is

[58] For what it is worth, Cousin is employed as a policeman, or an agent of an organization that was primarily tasked with maintaining apartheid order and punishing what was and is deemed as "crime."

one of the "useful idiots," to borrow the Cold War term, who assists in shoring up the contemporary order by buying into and spreading propaganda and moral panics.

Refentše's rebuttals to Cousin, though unheeded, reflect the ways in which the novel positions the *Makwerekwere* as having been slotted into positions similar to that of the Africans under the apartheid state, and the ways in which neoliberalism perpetuates this new/old societal order. Refentše points out to Cousin that "there are very few Hillbrowans, if you think about it, who were not originally wanderers from Tiragalong and other rural villages, who have come here, as we have, in search of education and work" (18). This, of course, would not have been possible during the apartheid era, when access to the city was strictly limited and Africans were relegated to townships on the outskirts of the city, but now, under the neoliberal regime, it is not only accepted to leave home villages for the city to compete against others for education and work, but encouraged. Moreover, though, Refentše thinks,

> You would want to add that some *Makwerekwere* were fleeing their war-torn countries to seek sanctuary here in our country, in the same way that many South Africans were forced into exile in Zambia, Zaire, Nigeria, and other African and non-African countries during the Apartheid era. You would be reminded of the many writers, politicians, social workers and lecturers, and the endless string of South Africans hanging and jumping from their ninth floor prison cells because the agents of the Apartheid government wanted them to (19).

Refentše's explicit comparison of the *Makwerekwere* with the treatment of South Africans during the apartheid regime, as well as the apartheid-era suicides that mimic Refentše's own future suicide when he jumps out of his apartment window, mark Hillbrow and

Johannesburg as clearly still influenced by the not-so-long-ago apartheid era. As Emily S. Davis writes, "Subject to constant police harassment and reliant upon illicit trades such as prostitution and drug dealing for their income, the *Makwerekwere* occupy a position uncomfortably similar to that of black South Africans under the apartheid regime" (104). Manase agrees, saying, "The South African city is therefore fictionally mapped as fragmented socially: it pits the community as segmented between the perceived diseased and dislikeable foreign migrants and the suspicious and contempt-filled local migrant characters" (96). The conjunctures between assumed (and actual) lawlessness, apartheid logics, and criminal classifications are too glaring to ignore, and add up to a contemporary instance of capitalized postcolonial crime; much like in *Zoo City*, when the postcolony could not explicitly rely on the Africans to subjugate, as was possible in the apartheid era, it had to reach for some other population. In *Zoo City*, this was the zoos, and in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow,* the *Makwerekwere*; both are marked as Other, alien, criminal.

In short, the two Hillbrow texts of *Zoo City* and *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* both utilize crime and those who get classified as criminals as a way to explore how crime is weaponized to create Others in the postcolonial world order: in this case, a postcolonial, post-apartheid city space. Though, obviously, the specifics of the two novels are quite different, both think through ways in which apartheid and imperial legacies still linger, and offer differing ideas of how its logics have been carried through to either our very recent times or a hypothetical future dystopia. However, while *Zoo City* does not offer a rooted, Hillbrow-specific vision for the future, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* uses its vision of the neighborhood, as well as its incorporation of a Heaven where deceased residents of the neighborhood may go while remaining invested in Hillbrow, to articulate a space of a local solution for resisting these discourses of crime.

Zoo City, as discussed above, ends with a rejection of the specific city of Johannesburg and an embrace of the larger African continent and its urban spaces. Given what we have seen of Hillbrow's deaths and prejudices, the reader could be forgiven for assuming the characters in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* might plot similar escapes: it seems at first glance as though Mpe's Hillbrow is hardly a place one would wish to be welcomed to, even less want to stay, much like Beukes's initial portrayals of Zoo City. It would even seem as though characters are actively looking for a way out. For instance, the first main character we encounter, Refentše, commits suicide after discovering his lover in bed with his best friend. He jumps off of the roof of his building, a move that will be eerily echoed later in the text during discussions of crimes committed by police and other agents of the state in apartheid South Africa. After his death, the book turns to the experiences of his former lover, Refilwe, without any explicit explanation, change in style, or break in stride. Refilwe, in turn, leaves Hillbrow to go and study in Oxford, seemingly signaling an exit from the criminal city. However, both Refentše and Refilwe return through Hillbrow – one spiritually and one physically – as the novel continues.

Welcome to Our Hillbrow constructs a literary, physical Hillbrow that is premised on human dignity and the politics of belonging and locality, incorporating migrants from the countryside, Hillbrow natives, and *Makwerekwere* alike. Indeed, shortly after we are presented with the earlier-cited radio report on the horrific crimes being committed in Hillbrow, Mpe writes (the "you" is Refentše, shortly after he has arrived in Hillbrow):

> So far, you have not seen any car chases or witnessed a shoot-out. You did meet some semi-naked souls whom your guide, from the same village of Tiragalong, called prostitutes. Otherwise, the thing that stands out in your

> memory is the extremely busy movement of people going in all directions of Hillbrow, seeming to enjoy the neon lights of the suburb, while others appeared to be in a hurry to get to work – or yes, to *work*. Now, you were not in a position to say what *the work* was. You knew, though, that a student's guide to careers in South Africa would probably not have listed it as an entry. It amazed you that there should be so many people jostling one another in the streets at nine in the evening. When did they prepare their meals and go to sleep? (7)

By constructing this vision of Hillbrow for his readers and refusing to let Refentše give into the hysteria surrounding crime and violence to which so many of his co-citizens have succumbed, Mpe constructs a Hillbrow full of people, life, and enterprise to rebut Kruger's claim that Johannesburg presents as unmanageable; rather, Mpe's novel makes the neighborhood legible and manageable. By mapping the neighborhood and populating Hillbrow with "so many people jostling one another in the streets," Mpe is signifying that Hillbrow is a real place, one with life, one with a story to tell, not the scary hellhole riddled with gunfire and violence that is too often imagined and portrayed. The *Makwerekwere* are not identified as being separate from the "real" Hillbrowans; they are simply part of the city, there just like everybody else. No one in this excerpt is causing crime, no one is perceived as dangerous, and, however briefly, the logics of apartheid and imperialism are overcome via this streetscape. Mpe's Hillbrow is not a place to be fled from; rather, it is a place where it is possible to set down roots and live companionably with one's neighbors, a place where even readers are interpellated into the community. In this way, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is able to imagine an earthly, localized alternative to the postcolonial city that is too often thought of

as corrupt, violent, dangerous, and criminal by demonstrating that, even in this criminal city, there remains room for resistance and recovery.

Yet, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow,* even in the excerpt above, is still captive to the logics of neoliberalism – note the implication that one must "hustle" to survive, which thinkers such as Lester K. Spence and others have noted is neoliberal in nature, and the subsequent acknowledgement that the residents of Hillbrow are completely dependent on individual work and striving and amassment of capital. This feeling is magnified when, for instance, we learn that "the concrete pavements here, like those of inner Hillbrow, teemed with informal business, in the form of bananas, apples, cabbages, spinach, and other fruits and vegetables" (8). The need to rely on "informal" (and likely illegal/illicit, like Zinzi's shady finding lost things setup) business ventures may be viewed by some as a testament to the Hillbrowans' ability to survive and prosper; while it may be that, it also points to the ways in which the former apartheid city currently utilizes neoliberal logics to continue to classify some people and some neighborhoods as less-than or "criminal."

But Mpe's novel offers solutions for this, as well. Neoliberalism relies strongly on the notion of the individual's will and work ethic determining success (or lack thereof); as is evident even from the title of the book, however, the Hillbrow of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is far more interested in the communitarian possibilities that lie in contemporary urban life. Ronit Frenkel notes that the novel "[asserts] a sense of communal ownership for Hillbrow and its attendant vices" (32), while Neville Hoad asks, "Who is the 'our' of our Hillbrow? Both the potential expansiveness of the 'our' and the geographic place to which we are being welcomed (Hillbrow) work against the elite overtones of the cosmopolitan to invoke the lineaments of an insurgent and rooted, yet open, cosmopolitanism" (113). Though some people, like Cousin, view the *Makwerekwere* with suspicion and tag them as potential or actual

criminals, the novel as a whole offers a vision of the neighborhood that points to the possibilities of what could happen if urban residents viewed themselves as part of a community, rather than as a collection of individuals.

The second chapter, titled "Notes from Heaven," develops this theme explicitly, by utilizing the space of Heaven as a metaphysical parallel to Hillbrow. In the earthly neighborhood of Hillbrow, Refentše had had a relationship with a woman named Lerato, who was both from Hillbrow and thought to be a *Makwerekwere*, marking her as doubly disadvantaged in the eyes of many from Refentše's home village of Tiragalong. Though on earth, Refentše's mother "hated the Hillbrow women with unmatchable venom" (39) and was none too pleased about Lerato's supposed foreigner status, once in Heaven, his mother accepts Lerato warmly. Mpe writes, "You [Refentše] watched your mother's eyes contracting. They scrutinised Lerato from the feet, slowly moving up until they reached the level of her eyes. Your mother fixed a long stare there. And a gentle smile announced itself" (70). Though on earth, Refentše's mother despised even the idea of Lerato, in the Heaven which lies above Hillbrow, the two are friendly and warm with each other. The earthly, individualist prejudices do not exist; Heaven functions as the community that Mpe's literary Hillbrow on earth aspires to be. Because Heaven is a reflection or extension of Hillbrow, Mpe uses this trope to develop a vision of a city where divisions borne out of apartheid, imperialism, neoliberalism, and crime discourses are able to be transcended and overcome. Refentše, as well as other characters who have died throughout the novel, moves to his new residence of Heaven, but he and the other characters are able to look down on the goings-on in Hillbrow much as if watching a television. Though they cannot intervene in the events on earth, they seem very interested in observing what is happening in Hillbrow, and Mpe paints their reactions and emotions for us in great detail. As noted earlier, we as readers feel

preternaturally connected to Hillbrow via the narrative voice and mapping of the city; we feel similarly interpellated into and invested in Heaven by virtue of those same narrative tools.

By virtue of this tool of Heaven, as well as Mpe's portrayals of life on the ground in Hillbrow, Refentše and other deceased characters, unlike Zinzi, stay in the neighborhood, "crime and grime… physical… and moral decay" (17) and all. Though *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* functions in a similar post-apartheid, neoliberal city as *Zoo City*, Mpe's novel offers a radical vision of a space without capitalized postcolonial crime, both on the ground in Hillbrow and in the space of Heaven to combat the harmful effects of imperial legacies and neoliberal economics that structure the current city of Johannesburg.

For another counter-example to Zinzi's escape from Johannesburg, consider Refilwe, Refentše's old girlfriend. When she is diagnosed with AIDS,[59] she moves from Oxford, where she was doing postgraduate work,[60] back to Hillbrow. Upon arrival back home, "she remembered Refentše telling her how the superintendant of his building hated *Makwerekwere:* It used to be fine in Hillbrow, until the Nigerians came. Now she herself was, by association, one of the hated *Makwerekwere*. Convenient scapegoat for everything that goes wrong in people's lives" (118). Her last days on earth, in the space where she moved home for comfort and healing, are thus marked by apartheid-esque divisions put in place by the neoliberal world order. The novel ends with Refilwe's welcoming into Heaven, which the narrator tells us is

[59] As previously noted, the zoos in *Zoo City* also began to proliferate around the time the HIV/AIDS virus did the same; it bears noting that neoliberal, Reagan-esque lack of involvement in curtailing the disease led to its continuing spread.
[60] In this, Refilwe's life mimics Mpe's own: Mpe also died of complications from AIDS and had pursued graduate work in Oxford.

> the world of our continuing existence, located in the memory and consciousness of those who live with us and after us. It is the archive that those we left behind keep visiting and revisiting; digging this out, suppressing or burying that. Continually reconfiguring the stories of our lives, as if they alone hold the real and true version. Just as you, Refilwe, tried to reconfigure the story of Refentše; just as Tiragalong now is going to do the same with you. Heaven can also be Hell, depending on the nature of our continuing existence in the memories and consciousness of the living (124).

Refilwe's arrival back in Hillbrow is announced by her new status as an outsider and perhaps a criminal; with her medical diagnosis, she becomes a type of *Makwerekwere*, a scapegoat, someone outside the law and moral code of her society. Any hoped-for peace in Heaven may not be delivered, as Refilwe is told "Heaven can also be Hell": the Milton-esque line indicates that the space of Heaven is dependent on how it is cast in the minds and imagination of those left on earth. Refentše and Lerato were welcomed into a Heaven that straightened out and smoothed over the postcolonial, neoliberal world over, but it does not look like the same option is on the table for Refilwe. Mpe's casting Heaven as an "archive" means that Heaven is necessarily edited: materials that go into archives are carefully chosen, smoothed around the edges, made to fit a particular narrative. That narrative closely mimics the one in existence on earthly Hillbrow: Refilwe is bad, damaged, a criminal, her story to be "reconfigured" by those left on earth. Heaven, it turns out, is subject to the imaginations, the "memories and consciousness" of those left on earth; it is not the space of perfection we as readers were at first led to believe.

And because we, as readers, have become interpellated into Heaven and Hillbrow, we are to some extent responsible for this perpetuation of capitalized postcolonial crime. We

are participants in the archive, we continue to shape what is considered to be "the real and true version." To return to the text which opened this chapter, *The Restless Supermarket,* and its protagonist, Aubrey Tearle, we as participants in this literary text, like Tearle in his obsession with printed words and proofreading, are complicit in the perpetuation of capitalized postcolonial crimes. In an interview with Mike Marais and Carita Backström, Vladislavić says of Tearle,

> What fascinates me is the places where Tearle and I are very similar… that sense of ordering is certainly something that comes out of my own personality. And the impulse to exclude, which I think is very powerful here… I think what I try to do, perhaps, with Tearle, is to take to extremes, positions that I, and people I know, might hold in a very mild way. A concrete instance of this is the way in which people who experienced the orderliness and tidiness of formerly white Johannesburg overreact totally when, these days, now that the city has become
> more relaxed, they encounter a bit of 'chaos,' a little bit of 'dirt,' a little bit of 'disorder.' People react in a very extreme way to this (166).

By interpellating us into Hillbrow, Mpe points out to us the ways in which we reconfigure stories, suppress certain parts of the archive, highlight certain narratives and bury others. We are thrown into Hillbrow, welcomed, but then asked at the end to consider the ways in which our presence perpetuates "the world of our continuing existence" where "Heaven can be a Hell." How do we react to such a realization that we are complicit in these systems? Vladislavić notes that there is a bit of Tearle in all of us, that people can "overreact totally" when confronted with the seeming chaos of the postcolonial. On the other hand, we can smooth over narratives in the archive, as was done for Refentše and Lerato, or reinforce

harmful suppositions, as was done for Refilwe. By using discourses of crime, neoliberalism, urban spaces, and imperialism to provoke us into these realizations, Vladislavić, Beukes, and Mpe open up various postcolonial possibilities for their readers to consider – ways to live in the postcolonial criminal city.

"Gorgeously and Permanently Overrun": Capitalized Postcolonial Crime and the Refugee Crisis

I opened this dissertation with an image of Queen Elizabeth delivering a speech on an airfield in Nairobi, Kenya, stressing the import of reading contemporary literature through the lens of past imperialisms and present neocolonialisms, and treating both of these processes and their consequences as unreparated crimes. The introduction, and subsequent chapters, looked at how capitalized postcolonial crimes, or contemporary crimes that hearken back to imperial and capitalist injustices that have not been redressed, manifest in specific urban environments, from the heart of former empire to the "golden" far South African outpost. In 2017, however, it is impossible to ignore how colonialism and its permutations seep through the cracks not only of specific cities, but also through networks that connect cities and encompass the world. A key argument of this dissertation has been that, while capitalized postcolonial crime may shift with its geographical context, some versions of it are always present, are always anxieties to be worked through. The mobile nature of capitalized postcolonial crime presents itself clearly in 2017 with regards to the contemporary refugee and migrant crisis, which connects cities in the formerly colonized and formerly colonizing worlds to in turn link back to colonial crimes and the nationalisms and racisms of the immediate postcolonial era up until today. To unpack these issues further, this coda will look at Mohsin Hamid's 2017 novel *Exit West*, a text of the contemporary refugee crisis, an event which, like today's criminal cities built on issues like murder, urban violence and riots, and the sale and trade in war machinery and arms, is contingent on past colonial crimes.

In 1968, with the British Empire massively shrunken from where it was even when Queen Elizabeth spoke on the airfield in Nairobi, Enoch Powell gave his infamous "Rivers of Blood" speech in Birmingham, a speech which focused on the supposed dangers of Commonwealth migration to Britain. Powell, like the Queen, focused on the British Empire and cities; unlike Elizabeth, however, Powell offered no pleasing anecdotes on imperially created cities in the colonies and instead focused on a fantasy concocted around what he believed happened when the colonized come to cities on the British mainland. While Elizabeth elided over the crimes of empire, glossing over the violences as if they never happened, Powell not only ignored imperial crimes, but actively turned the tables and put the onus on the postcolonial migrants. Powell painted postcolonial British cities, like pre-colonial Nairobi, as "savage places," made dangerous by the very same dark-skinned people who populated Nairobi before the advent of British colonialism. From citing an anonymous "quite ordinary working man" who believed "in this country [Britain] in 15 or 20 years' time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man" to claiming "whole areas, towns, and parts of towns across England will be occupied by sections of the immigrant and immigrant-descended population," leading to elderly white women supposedly becoming "afraid to go out," finding "excreta pushed through her letter box" by "Commonwealth immigrants," Powell built to a crescendo, culminating in his frothy, "As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see 'the River Tiber foaming with much blood.'" With this speech, Powell turned the "savages" of Queen Elizabeth's speech who had been "contained" by the colonists into bloodthirsty, violent, dangerous criminals who have come to Britain to turn her cities into unrecognizable places. To connect Powell's rhetoric to today, when Powell became too extreme for the Conservative Party, he joined the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in Northern Ireland. The DUP is the party Theresa May's

Conservatives had to form a coalition with in 2017 to carry out their Brexit plans, indicating colonial logics are just barely under the surface in contemporary Britain.

The erasure of imperial crimes like genocide and economic exploitation in the colonies that we see in the Queen's speech, and the apocalyptic rhetoric surrounding postcolonial migrants in the former imperial center we see in Powell's both continue to occur in contemporary postcolonial societies. As I have stressed, cities initially created or sustained by the British Empire are built on the unpunished, unprosecuted crimes of colonialism, but these legacies are glossed over in order to normalize various elements of the contemporary neoliberal world order. Instead of acknowledging the vicious colonial histories and legacies that have substantially shaped our present world, popular narratives instead celebrate wealthy entrepreneurs in developing companies, unbridled globalized accumulation of capital, bootstrapping ideologies, and atomized individualism as normal, even desirable, aspects of contemporary life. We continue to celebrate the gleam of Nairobi, treating its depiction as being important because it is a center for capitalism as natural and legitimate, while ignoring those on the margins in the postcolonial city. We ignore colonial crimes, and so they take on new life in the postcolonial era. Most relevantly for 2017, colonial crimes have mutated to take on the form of the contemporary refugee crisis, which manifests both in the ways colonialism has physically, economically, and socially ravaged countries in the Middle East and Africa, as well as the treatment of refugees and migrants upon their arrival in Europe and other countries of the so-called West. Horrifying images of young boys drowned on beaches, of overcrowded rafts on the Mediterranean, all possess colonial genealogies that must be traced if they are ever to be reparated. The refugee crisis, and the rhetoric that often surrounds it in the West, illuminates colonial crimes in sharp relief.

Because the crimes of colonialism have never been fully called to account, they continue to significantly structure the cities of the postcolonial world, both in the metropole (in terms of Brexit) and in the former colonies. In many cases in formerly colonized spaces, the installation of military strongmen and native elites in the immediate postcolonial era has led to societies and economies that replicate systems of oppression and exploitation originated by imperialism. When this societal structure becomes unbearable, the result is often military instability leading to outright civil war, as has been the case in several countries now producing refugees bound for Europe. Very often, the collapsing of civil society is most pronounced in cities and urban centers. As we see in *Exit West,* which begins its narrative in a former British colony, now an unnamed Muslim-majority country that is in the midst of a military coup and encroaching civil war, one of the main characters lives "in a once handsome building, with an ornate though now crumbling façade that dated back to the colonial era" (10), which is now "squarely in the path of heavy machine-gun and rocket fire" (11). It is this war that causes so many residents of this city to leave and migrate to the West. What, in the city, was once created out of imperial wealth is now firmly in the sight of postcolonial violence: "Location, location, location, the realtors say. Geography is destiny, respond the historians" (11). The importance of urban geography to the story of past and present violence and crime is of the utmost importance to the narrative in *Exit West*, drawing attention to the imperial roots straining against the soil of contemporary postcolonial cities. *Exit West* utilizes depictions of present-day crimes and violences, in various global postcolonial cities in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, to draw readers' attention to unpunished historical crimes of imperialism. These depictions of crimes happen in conjunction with the understanding, both implicitly acknowledged and explicitly made verbal, that quite often, refugees are viewed as criminals in the popular imagination.

In June 2016, just before the United Kingdom's vote on whether to leave the European Union, American journalist Zack Beauchamp wrote in *Vox* of his and his girlfriend's recent trip to London. A drunk British man Beauchamp refers to as "Bob" approaches the two in a pub, wanting to talk about Brexit. "Bob," Beauchamp tells us, "wanted Britain to leave, and he was very open about his reason: immigration. The Muslims and the Eastern Europeans, he believes, are ruining Great Britain." Bob tells the two, "We're letting in rapists. We're letting in shit. I have four children. How are they supposed to get jobs?"

Bob's rhetoric on migrants and refugees deploys a series of old tropes, deployed most recognizably by the previously-cited Enoch Powell – that the Others are criminals, "rapists," bent on taking economic opportunity away from the native Britishers. As Agnes Woolley points out, such language in Britain specifically is redolent of a "sense of crisis" that "has been evoked in relation to immigrants in Britain… at regular intervals before and since the country's post-war panic over immigration was immortalized in Powell's famous speech" (3). Moreover, Bob's specific language, whether he knows it or not, mirrors almost exactly Donald Trump's on Mexican immigrants to the United States. In June 2015, Trump kicked off his campaign to be elected president of the United States by riding down a golden escalator and then saying of Mexican immigrants, "They are not our friend [sic], believe me. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

From the West, it is fairly easy to hang Brexit and Trump on the hooks of imperial nostalgia. "Make America Great Again!" Trump hollers, providing America with perhaps the most blatantly transparent political slogan in all her history, while Brexiters dream of a pre-1945 Britain, before those troublesome Others began pouring in from the colonies. It is so

easy to parse the frameworks of psychological imperial legacies from London or New York and analyze the troublesome rhetorics on crime as obvious new riffs on an old Western-centric rhythm that we sometimes get lost in the weeds of critique and forget to propose alternative ways to imagine the contemporary moment. We know Bob in the pub thinks Muslims are criminals (as does Head Brexiter Nigel Farage), and we know Donald Trump believes the same of Mexicans (and Muslims, and African Americans, and…). If we are to understand how crime is deployed in this contemporary crisis, it is necessary to dig deeper than simply re-examining how those with privilege weaponize this type of language to achieve political ends.

An understanding of capitalized postcolonial crime will assist us in accomplishing this task. What if the discourses of crime were to be flipped, and it was no longer the Nigel Farages or the Donald Trumps or the Bobs in bars who decided who would be slapped with the spurious label of criminality? What if that label were to be turned around and understood through the position of the subaltern instead? Keeping in mind that definitions of crime are socially constructed, and that labeling individuals as criminals is not a productive way to approach a long-term revisioning of society, performing a reading of the contemporary fiction of the migrant crisis by being attentive to capitalized postcolonial crime has the potential to restructure the framework through which we view the catastrophe and twenty-first-century society in general. In doing so, I situate migrants and refugees as an essential part of the postcolonial story, as Edward Said points out when he writes, "it is one of the unhappiest characteristics of the age to have produced more refugees, migrants, displaced persons and exiles than ever before in history" (332). I similarly take Frantz Fanon's epigraph to this dissertation to heart, thinking of ways in which it might be possible to

"settle the debt" of colonialism when the crimes of colonialism, in the form of migrants and refugees, are still so visible in many of our world's contemporary cities.

Exit West, published in 2017, is the first major Anglophone novel to take on the contemporary migrant and refugee crisis, making it a work of the moment that Alexandra Alter of *The New York Times* calls "ominously relevant." Jia Tolentino, who calls the work "instantly canonical" in *The New Yorker,* says that the novel "rewrites the world as a place thoroughly, gorgeously, and permanently overrun by refugees and migrants." Michiko Kakutani writes that the world in *Exit West* "is, in many respects, an extrapolation of the world we live in now, with wars like the one in Syria turning cities into war zones; with political crises, warp-speed technological changes, and growing tensions between nativists and migrants threatening to upend millions of lives." According to *Slate*'s Isaac Chotiner, the novel is "eerily in tune with these bleak times," while Viet Thanh Nguyen writes that *Exit West* is the latest entry in Hamid's oeuvre that asks the reader to think about how "East and West inevitably meet as a consequence of complicated histories of colonization and globalization." *Exit West*, by tapping into a global contemporary humanitarian concern, works as an exploration of how contemporary issues link up with past imperial legacies.

Exit West is first and foremost the story of Nadia and Saeed, two lovers in an unnamed country – Chotiner thinks Pakistan, while I suspect a speculative future Jordan[61] –

[61] Several characters observe that their country was the first to experience a deluge of migrants and refugees, before the citizens of that country became refugees and migrants themselves due to a military coup in the country. This could happen in Jordan, situated as it is in a volatile geography and with its long-established position as a catching ground for refugees and migrants from all over the Middle East. Additionally, there is resonance in the possibility of the country being Jordan, as the modern definition of refugees was created to accommodate Palestinian refugees after the 1948 creation of the state of Israel, many of whom and whose descendants found refuge in Jordan ("Saeed" also sounds like "Said," as in Edward Said, whose family was Palestinian). Lastly, at the start of the novel, we learn "their

whose lives are upended when their country, long a haven for migrants from other surrounding countries, erupts in a civil war of its own, making the city of both their births too dangerous for continued habitation. The reasons for the violence in the unnamed city are complex, as they are across the postcolonial world. Proceeding with the understanding that Nadia and Saeed are Jordanian, their country was formed out of the British and French Empires drawing artificial borders in the region; this, combined with the imperial Balfour Declaration which was the origin for the creation of the modern state of Israel, has led to instability for much of the past century. Arbitrary border markers are a constant through much imperial governance, meaning that even if *Exit West* is not set specifically in Jordan, the generalities of this imperial action would likely hold true for wherever the novel is meant to be set. Moreover, Geetha Ganapathy-Doré points out, "the disengagement of the West from its former colonies and more than half a century of postcolonial nationhood have not brought about the much awaited stability and peace" (3), largely due, in Jordan and in broad strokes across much of the postcolonial world, to the post-independence era instantiation of "native elites" and subsequent subscription to an economic model that prioritized engagement with the West, private markets over public investment, and reification of the position of the already wealthy and privileged. This proto-neoliberal economic model, organized as it is to keep the majority of the populace poor, is certainly true in the case of Nadia and Saeed's violent and unstable city, and the weak economic and civic life of the city is, in large part, what leads to the eventual success of the military coup. Prior to the physical violence, many young people left the unnamed city for economic reasons – "in their efforts to integrate the circuits of capital" as Ganapathy-Doré puts it when referring to

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city had yet to experience any major fighting, just some shootings and the odd car bombing" (4), which roughly mirrors the contemporary state of Jordan.

contemporary migrants at large (3) – but our two main characters are primarily refugees from postcolonial violence, rather than economic migrants marginalized by neoliberal circulations of capital and austerity measures. Nadia and Saeed manage to escape through magical realist doors, which are scattered through the city seemingly at random to allow people to escape to various points in the Western world, encountering various forms of "natives"[62] in their respective landing places.

Nadia and Saeed first land in Mykonos, Greece, alongside several other refugees from around the world. Their first place of refuge on a Greek isle mirrors our own world's realities, as many rafts of desperate humans wash up on Greek and Italian shores from the Middle East and North Africa. However, Nadia and Saeed's travels sharply differ from the experiences of migrants in our own world, in that they are able to simply step through doors to reach the West. Why skim over the actual travel undergone by so many "exiting west?" Hamid himself explains that he "wanted to write a very large book about the entire world on a very small scale, so I needed to find some way of covering a lot of ground" (Alter). This erasure of the travails of the journey to the West may seem to be a whitewashing of actual experience to many readers, but by asking us to suspend our disbelief, and writing their transportation as a magical realist technology, Hamid stakes his claim to his novel being considered a postcolonial discourse. As Stephen Slemon has argued, the use of magical realism indicates "a process […] of psychic liberation from Old World domination and its cognitive codes" (413). While *Exit West* works to resist "Old World" tropes about the Other and the criminal, Nadia and Saeed must actually travel *to* the Old World of empire while "psychically liberating" themselves from colonial trappings. The use of magical realism

[62] Hamid refers to Westerners, whether in Mykonos, London, or California, as "the natives" throughout, a move to which Nguyen refers as a "postcolonial reverse."

assists in this seeming conundrum, as magical realist writing often appears when the actual events of the world are too traumatic to express in realism (Arva). By setting *Exit West* in a lightly fictionalized version of our world, thereby taking the focus off the material realities and trauma of hiking across the desert and crossing the Mediterranean Sea, Hamid directs his readers' attentions away from the traumatic journey and towards the question of how the unreparated crimes of colonialism manifest specifically in postcolonial criminal cities.[63]

The first of those cities, Mykonos, which at first was a glorious refuge, soon becomes nothing more than a limbo. With Saeed and Nadia's funds running low, and no apparent forward momentum in their lives, they decide to find a way to a new door, to a new place. After locating one in Mykonos, they emerge in a sleek, ultramodern bedroom, which they first take to be a hotel, but later realize is an enormous vacant home in a wealthy part of London (Kensington and Chelsea, to be exact – the same borough as the recent Grenfell Tower disaster).[64] The two almost immediately get to work "transforming this narrow bedroom, at least partially, temporarily, into a home" (124), putting into praxis Homi Bhabha's call for a "poetics of relocation and reinscription" (323). They are to begin the next stage of their lives in Bob from the pub's city, a London forced to reconcile with its imperial past coming home to roost in the form of migrants from all over the empire – Nadia and

[63] I am not arguing that one *has* to make use of magical realism to work through capitalized postcolonial crimes; I am simply pointing out that this is the strategy that Mohsin Hamid in particular has chosen.

[64] The Grenfell Tower fire was caused, at one level, by a neoliberal economic model: Owen Jones of *The Guardian* even goes so far to say, "If any episode sums up the collapse of our own neoliberal era, it is surely Grenfell Tower." The borough of Kensington and Chelsea eschewed its responsibility to the inhabitants of Grenfell, choosing to save a bit of money by covering the building in fire-prone cladding which then exploded in flames. Illustrating the close connections among fear of migrants, rhetorics of crime, and Brexit, the *Daily Mail* ran a much-lambasted headline the day after the fire about the "Ethiopian taxi driver" whose "faulty fridge started the tower inferno" – a breathtakingly blatant example of a racist choice to focus on low-level crimes at the expense of much deeper economic, historical, and political structural problems.

Saeed's particular neighborhood is mostly populated by Nigerian refugees and migrants – and with all the societal upheavals that can be seen in our own world's London, too.

The London of *Exit West* alludes to Fanon's colonial city, a schematic which was dissected in this dissertation's introduction. Hamid tells us that, due to "the complexities of London's electricity network" (145), the wealthy parts of the city very often have sufficient light, while in places where refugees and migrants congregate, it was very dark. Though "in the odd building here and there […] an enterprising migrant had rigged together a connection to a still-active high-voltage line" (145), the Manichean structure largely holds throughout the city, leading to a binary structure of "dark London" and "light London." Saeed and Nadia's ruminations on the subject echo Fanon's formulation: "From dark London, Saeed and Nadia wondered what life must be like in light London, where they imagined people dined in elegant restaurants and rode in shiny black cabs, or at least went to work in offices and shops and were free to journey about as they pleased. In dark London, rubbish accrued, uncollected, and underground stations were sealed" (146). Compare this to Fanon's colonizer's city, which "is a sector built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed-of leftovers" (4). By contrast, the "native" quarters, or the colonized section of the city, "is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people…It's a world with no space, people are piled on top of one another, the shacks squeezed tightly together" (4). This original Fanonian criminal city has never been reparated, though it has been flipped: now the British "natives" live in the light, while the more recent arrivals live in the dark. This division between refugees and migrants and native Britishers maps onto the older structure of the colonized and the colonizers if that older structure were flipped 180 degrees, and soon related, more successful, postcolonial revisioning of colonial logics come to light in the text.

Kakutani notes that the first half of *Exit West* is "about how war warps everyday life," while the second half is "a tale of globalization and its discontents." A key example of one of those "discontents" is Brexit, which, though never mentioned by name, is threaded throughout the London portion of the narrative. Andrew Motion notes that Hamid takes on native Londoners' reactions to refugees and migrants "in terms that deliberately echo some of the intolerant voices raised by Brexiters." But by telling the stories of the refugees from their own points of view, rather than the more dominant perspective of Bob in the pub or Nigel Farage, postcolonial literature such as *Exit West* can begin to shift the narratives of the calamitous crimes of colonialism and re-envision contemporary cities as places for everyone. Though London fails in this respect – after riots instigated by a "nativist mob" (134), "the talk on the television was of a major operation, one city at a time, starting in London, to reclaim Britain for Britain" (135), Nadia and Saeed's time in London is an important entry in their travel through a global catalogue of postcolonial cities, if only because it demonstrates what types of capitalized postcolonial crimes might and will take place when right-wing, neo-imperialistic, fearmongering rhetoric of the kind spouted by Donald Trump and Nigel Farage is allowed to take root; violence will turn up and excavate old patterns of imperial racism. It is of note, of course, that the way the reaction to refugees and migrants comes up in London is through reference of "reclaiming" Britain "one city at a time." Note that the "reclamation" is to come through urban spaces, rather than towns, areas, or farmlands. The city, in a reversal from images of pastoral Britain, is now where the true Britishers live, where the postcolonial migrants are not allowed.

Exit West, though it contains a brief respite on the beach in Mykonos, writes a world mapped by cities, cities that are "pulling away from hinterlands" as "war and migrants and nativists" (158) fracture once seemingly whole regions. Nadia and Saeed hop from the city of

their birth (Amman?) to Mykonos before they return to city life in London, and then a new, refugee-centric city north of San Francisco named Marin. By prioritizing the geography and the primacy of the city in the globalized, postcolonial twenty-first century, Hamid insists on the centrality of the urban space to the contemporary moment, while also reminding us that some postcolonial subjects do not have the luxury of being rooted in one place. We begin the narrative in a postcolonial city, somewhere in the Middle East; moving just briefly, unsatisfactorily to a non-urban space; on to postcolonial London, beginning to feel the first tremors of the gasp at imperial nostalgia that is Brexit; and on to an entirely new postcolonial city, in California. The final city, Marin, used to be wealthy, suburban, and largely white before migrants and refugees populated it, making the city the centerpiece of a worldwide movement of refugees claiming legitimacy and humanity. In a palimpsestic move, Hamid also honors the original pre-Columbian inhabitants of the city of Marin, acknowledging that though "in Marin there were almost no natives, these people having died out or been exterminated long ago," impromptu encounters with Native Americans lead to a sense that "the tales of these natives felt appropriate to this time of migration, and gave listeners much-needed sustenance" (197). Hamid also points out that white Americans, "who claimed the rights of nativeness most forcefully" (198) were often least-deserving of the label, while also honoring the experiences of "a third layer of nativeness… composed of those who others thought directly descended, even in the tiniest fraction of their genes, from the human beings who had been brought from Africa to this continent centuries ago as slaves" (198). Emphasizing the experiences of indigenous people, the descendants of the Atlantic slave trade, postcolonial survivors, migrants, and refugees, allowing Nadia and Saeed to add their voices to an entirely new city, created by refugees, in a world mapped by cities, flips colonial

logic on its head and opens the door for a reimagination of the rhetorics of crime and criminality that unfortunately surround the experience of the migrant or refugee.

For example, consider one of Hamid's many interludes from the story of Nadia and Saeed. Throughout *Exit West,* Hamid scatters various anecdotes from other refugees and migrants from around the world, from a refugee family who lands in Dubai to a vaguely unhappy British man who takes a chance on a door and winds up in Namibia. Before we have been fully introduced to the doors, however, we receive an anecdote about a refugee landing in Australia, in a woman's bedroom, while she is sleeping. Through the depiction of this migration, we are asked to reconsider the concept of crime, migration, and refugees.

The scene opens with "a pale-skinned woman" (7) who is sleeping alone in her home in Sydney. Her house alarm is not on, and she appears to be completely vulnerable, alone and asleep in her home. She has left the door to her closet open while she sleeps, and this doorway is "dark, darker than night, a rectangle of complete darkness – the heart of darkness" (8). After the allusion to a colonial travel narrative (as opposed to postcolonial), we see "out of this darkness, a man was emerging." Hamid tells us

> He too was dark, with dark skin and dark, woolly hair.[65] He wriggled with great effort, his hands gripping either side of the doorway as though pulling himself up against gravity, or against the rush of a monstrous tide. His neck followed his head, tendons straining, and then his chest, his half-buttoned, sweaty, gray-and-brown shirt… The woman who slept, slept alone. He who stood above her, stood alone. The bedroom door was shut. The window [to the outside] was open. He chose the window. He was through it in an instant, dropping silkily to the street below. (8-9)

[65] This sentence seems to allude further to *Heart of Darkness,* as Conrad writes from Marlowe's perspective, "A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow" (60).

This scene, with its potential for sexual violence, at first seems to echo the fantasies of Bob, or Donald Trump, or Nigel Farage, but it turns out to be completely non-threatening and totally harmless, as the man leaves the home almost instantly. By casting a breaking-and-entering – technically a crime – in such a light, Hamid is asking his readers to reconsider the shape of the discourses that all too often surround refugees. Though it calls up the fantasies of the far right, this scene is a flipping of the paradigm, a signal that dark-skinned refugees are nothing to fear. Later, when Nadia and Saeed arrive in London through the doors, their appearance is cast in a similar fashion – people emerging from various doors and windows, peacefully and non-threateningly. In fact, the only crime committed involving refugees in the world of *Exit West* is outside a bar in Tokyo, when a Japanese man attacks two young Filipina girls (30-31), and even then, there are no refugee perpetrators of crime: refugees are the victims of the violence of the wealthier countries. In *Exit West,* the refugee crisis asks us to recall the violences and injustices of imperialism, in a world where the smaller-scale fantasies of a Nigel Farage just do not happen. By considering crime and the language around it as a prism through which to view legacies of imperialism and the contemporary structuring of the postcolonial city, a new concern of world literature can begin to take shape – a consideration of how crime, imperialism, neoliberalism, migration, and geography may act as a matrix through which to view much contemporary literature.

Exit West, in its treatment of the migration crisis, asks us, in the words of Isaac Chotiner, to consider "the degree to which the places where we are born shape our destinies." And in a world where inter-city travel is more common than travel within a country, why is it that London, Marin, Tokyo are the destinations, while Aleppo, Amman, Manila are the places to be escaped? Why does geography so often seem to be destiny? Legacies of colonialism – from Sykes-Picot to economic inequality – play a major role in

continuing to shape the world we live in today, and these legacies often are what we talk about when we talk about crime. The refugee crisis is a hearkening back to the ugly days of imperialism, its very presence an ugly reminder that the scab has never healed, the crime has never been reparated.

Mushtaq Bilal's review of *Exit West* in the *Los Angeles Times* begins on an optimistic note: "In a world swarming with refugees, a world of travel bans, extreme vetting and giant walls, imagine mysterious black doors that transport defenseless refugees from war-torn cities to the safety of San Francisco and London. No overcrowded dinghies, no life vests, no Aylan Kurdis washing ashore." Though Bilal views the world of *Exit West* through some rose-colored glasses – violence still wracks this speculative city-world, after all – his basic instinct rings hopeful for our postcolonial world. Perhaps Viet Thanh Nguyen is closer to the mark when he articulates, "Hamid exploits fiction's capacity to elicit empathy and identification to imagine a better world. It is also a possible world. 'Exit West' does not lead to utopia, but to a near future and the dim shapes of strangers that we see through a distant doorway. All we have to do is step through it and meet them." Hamid himself tells Alexandra Alter of *The New York Times* that "the novel grew out of a hopeful impulse."

This better world does fail at first in London, at least for Nadia and Saeed, but it ends up working in Marin, perhaps because of its multi-layered attention to the presence of "the natives," from Native Americans to African Americans to migrants. This vigilant account of several layers of colonialism perhaps offers a vision for the future, a city made up of several groups thrown together by colonialism and globalization, a true postcolonial city, created out of the wreckage of capitalized postcolonial crime. This possibility may offer a way forward for the postcolonial novel in a world still scarred by capitalized postcolonial crime, a way to integrate the concerns of imperial legacies into the world at large. Perhaps,

by attending to and reparating capitalized postcolonial crime, we can, in the words of Homi Bhabha, "suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees… may be the terrains of world literature" (17) so that the world may be "gloriously and permanently overrun.

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