INTRODUCTION

CRITICAL COSMOPOLITANISM AND MODERNIST NARRATIVE

I sat at a table near the open terrace door, my papers and notes spread out around me, drawing connections between events that lay far apart but which seemed to me to be of the same order.

—W. G. SEBALD, *VERTIGO*

WHAT DOES IT mean, today, to be a British novelist, or even an English writer? At the beginning of the twenty-first century, someone who wins a prize for British fiction may have been born outside Great Britain, may be a citizen of Great Britain who lives elsewhere, or may live in Great Britain while remaining a foreign national;[1] a writer may win a prize for English fiction but English may not have been the language in which the award-winning book was first composed; a writer who wins an English fiction prize may also win, in England, a foreign literature prize as well. The late novelist W. G. Sebald, who was emerging as a major figure in British letters when he died in a car accident in December 2001, fit many of these characteristics: he was born in Germany in 1944, he settled permanently in England in 1970, he wrote each of his four novels originally in German before they were translated into English, and yet in the few years before his death his novels were celebrated as some of the most significant new works of contemporary British fiction. In 2001, Sebald published *Austerlitz*, for which he was posthumously awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award in the United States, the Foreign Fiction prize from the London *Independent*, and the Koret prize for Jewish literature, though Sebald was not Jewish; in addition, the novel was short-listed for the prestigious W. H. Smith literary prize, which in forty years of competition has never gone to a contemporary work composed in a language other than English.

That some of these awards seem mutually exclusive may suggest that readers are now more willing to overlook literary classifications than they have been in the past or that they are less concerned, in an age of globalization and near-immediate translation, about the original language of a text.[2] Yet the importance

and visibility of immigration as a principle, topic, and condition of Sebald's writing should not be underestimated: shuttling among several nations and among memories of several nations, Sebald's narrators draw "connections" among experiences separated by time, place, and tone. He is willing, even eager, to assemble cultural and ethical points of view that seem inconsistent or incommensurate. Sebald does not transcend the categories of British, English, foreign, German, and Jewish writing. But he unsettles the differences among them. His novels disorient the conventions of national literature and cultural distinctiveness by adding new experiences, such as the *kindertransport* and Chinese silk production, to narratives of British culture, while also embedding these experiences in places other than Britain. Sebald thus enhances and also disables local points of view: enhances, because he shows the global networks in which even the most local experiences participate, and disables, because he suggests that those networks change what local experiences are.

In this double gesture, Sebald's writing participates in a tradition of British literary modernism that includes the novels of Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as those of Salman Rushdie and Kazuo Ishiguro at the end. I argue that these writers have used the salient features of modernist narrative, including wandering consciousness, paratactic syntax, recursive plotting, collage, and portmanteau language, to develop a critical cosmopolitanism. This has meant thinking beyond the nation but also comparing, distinguishing, and judging among different versions of transnational thought; testing moral and political norms, including the norms of critical thinking; and valuing informal as well as transient models of community.[3] While my book focuses on *literary* style, I will be arguing that the concept of style more broadly conceived—as attitude, stance, posture, and consciousness—is crucial to many of the other nonliterary practices of cosmopolitanism whose study has transformed disciplines such as history, anthropology, sociology, transnational cultural studies, and media studies.

By speaking of *critical* cosmopolitanism, I mean to designate a type of international engagement that can be distinguished from "planetary humanism" by two principal characteristics:[4] an aversion to heroic tones of appropriation and progress, and a suspicion of epistemological privilege, views from above or from the center that assume a consistent distinction between who is seeing and what is seen. When added to an ideal or a method in cultural theory, the adjective "critical"—as in "critical cosmopolitanism," "critical heroism," "critical internationalism," and "critical globalization," to name just a few recent examples—tends to imply double consciousness, comparison, negation, and persistent self-reflection: an "unwillingness to rest," the attempt to operate "in the world . . . [while] preserving a posture of resistance," the entanglement of "domestic and international perspectives," and the "self-reflexive repositioning

of the self in the global sphere."[5] Yet the case of "critical cosmopolitanism" is somewhat different from the others, since the philosophical tradition of cosmopolitanism has long involved both reflection and demystification: in a "cosmopolitan society," Immanuel Kant wrote in his 1784 essay on Enlightenment, a person should be "completely free as well as obliged to impart to the public all his carefully considered, well-intentioned thoughts."[6] Kant argues that one is free as well as obliged to question the coercive guidance of church and state, to cultivate unauthorized thought, and to understand "a violation of rights in *one* part of the world" as a violation "felt *everywhere*."[7]

Critical cosmopolitanism, as I am using it in this study and as it has been articulated in related ways by a variety of theorists,[8] implies a new reflection about reflection. It involves two gestures of critique that supplement and in some ways contest Kant's model: one corresponds to Max Horkheimer's distinction between "traditional" and "critical" theory; the other involves what I call the critique of critique, which I identify in the work of several modernist writers and which scholars of the novel and other theorists are now formulating in their efforts to historicize and challenge the protocols of "critical reading."[9] In Horkheimer's distinction, "critical theory" involves the effort—an effort that is something of an injunction—to position knowledge in history, to investigate the social uses of knowledge, and to evaluate the political interests that knowledge has served. Critical theory rejects the idea of "neutral" categories and "the insistence that thinking is a fixed vocation, a self-enclosed realm within society as a whole" (232, 243). Horkheimer's theory is committed to social progress, as Kant's is, and to the belief that social progress will depend on demystification and enlightenment. But the critique of critique often departs from Horkheimer's program. It extends the investigation of categories that seem to be neutral to the affective conditions (rationality, purpose, coherence, detachment) that have seemed to make argument or engagement possible. This involves questioning the "faith in exposure" and "method" that have been central to the tradition of critical theory.[10] The critique of critique includes Theodor W. Adorno's suspicion of instrumental action and "responsible" theory in his essays of the late 1960s and Stuart Hall's emphasis in the 1990s on a cultural politics that is rooted in differentiation rather than in negation.[11]

More recently, the critique of critique has led scholars to analyze the history of critical dispositions and to associate critique with a greater range of social dynamics and embodied affects: Michael Warner speaks of "reverence" as a critical idiom, for example, and Jordana Rosenberg of "enthrallment."[12] And writing of "ugly feelings," Sianne Ngai argues that twentieth-century artists have developed "models of subjectivity, collectivity, and agency not entirely foreseen by past theorists of the commonwealth."[13] Of course, it is difficult to think of "reverence" as a critical disposition, since Enlightenment ideas of critique so

much depend on the value of autonomous thinking and the freedom from religious or political authority. But Warner asks to us to consider that the "apparent abnegation of agency" can create opportunities for new reflection, reasoning, and self-cultivation (18), just as Ngai proposes that thinking about powerlessness can generate new opportunities for intellectual inquiry (14). And, indeed, the willingness to relinquish physical or psychological control, to become temporarily and purposefully inattentive, or "disconcerted" as Ngai puts it, is central to early-twentieth-century conceptions of self-knowledge and of the limits of self-knowledge.

This study focuses on novels that develop and examine new attitudes of cosmopolitanism and do so in the service of a kind of critique. To be sure, modernist narrative strategies can be adapted for various political enterprises, as can critical attitudes. *Cosmopolitan Style* is concerned with writers who have used naturalness, triviality, evasion, mix-ups, treason, and vertigo to generate specific projects of democratic individualism, on the one hand, and of antifascism or anti-imperialism, on the other. A new distrust of civilizing processes, and of the role of art in these processes, leads these writers to develop forms of critical cosmopolitanism that reflect both a desire for and an ambivalence about collective social projects. Cosmopolitan attitudes of mix-up and evasion disrupt neutral models of purpose, evaluation, and detachment not only by resisting them but also by transforming or amending them: with flirtation, Salman Rushdie adds playfulness and confusion to a politics of antiracism that has relied on tolerance and distinction; with evasion, Virginia Woolf suggests that autonomous thinking sometimes involves the refusal to think purposefully. As a tradition of political affiliation and philosophical thought, cosmopolitanism has always involved a negotiation between distance and proximity. But twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers emphasize conditions of limited or suspended agency, and they ask us to consider how conceptions of belonging are bound up in the production, classification, and reception of literary narratives.[14]

Critical cosmopolitanism thus means reflecting on the history, uses, and interests of cosmopolitanism in the past—how, for example, cosmopolitanism has been used to support or to tolerate imperialism.[15] And it also means reflecting on analytic postures, the history, uses, and interests of "the critical"—how, for example, a commitment to collective agency may be a style rather than an index of transnational politics. One can see this double emphasis in a sentence from the opening paragraph of *Cosmopolitanism*, a collection of essays that first appeared in *Public Culture* in 2000. The editors are explaining that they will not define their eponymous term because, they contend, "specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitively is an uncosmopolitan thing to do."[16] One might imagine that the authors of this sentence, Carol Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, are making an unserious claim: one

that is, as Oscar Wilde might say, "perfectly phrased" but not exactly useful. Yet the claim, in all its unseriousness, captures the overlapping, somewhat contradictory projects of traditional and critical cosmopolitanism:[17] it combines the useful cosmopolitanism of belonging beyond the polis or the nation, and the "perfectly phrased" cosmopolitanism of dissenting individualism and decadent refusal. In this sentence, cosmopolitanism refers to a philosophical project and also to an attitude (refusing to specify positively and definitively). By insisting that there has not been only one cosmopolitanism, Breckenridge, Pollock, et al. are articulating a critical theory in Horkheimer's sense, and by insisting that cosmopolitanism might involve thinking and feeling in nonexclusive, nondefinitive ways, the editors are invoking, instead of judgment and progress, an ethos of uncertainty, hesitation, and even wit that is sometimes at odds with political action and with the interventionist paradigms of critical theory.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, modernist writers sought to measure various experiences of thinking and feeling globally, especially in the contexts of imperialism, patriotism, and world war. But it is in their additional reflection on the relationships between narrative and political ideas of progress, aesthetic and social demands for literalism, and sexual and conceptual decorousness, that Conrad, Woolf, and Joyce make their most significant contributions to the analytic project of critical cosmopolitanism. Writing against xenophobia and against nativist conceptions of community, Ishiguro, Rushdie, and Sebald have revived efforts to question the definitions and uses of naturalness, argument, utility, attentiveness, reasonableness, and explicitness. In this book, I will be referring to a specific repertoire of literary strategies that were developed by writers at the beginning of the twentieth century and later transformed by writers at the end; two of the novelists I discuss, Ishiguro and Rushdie, are still publishing today. This project, therefore, focuses on two distinct periods in literary history: in the first part of the book, most of the work I consider was published between 1899 and 1940; in the second part, most was published between 1982 and 2001. As this structure should suggest, I am not restricting modernist practices to a single historical period (the early twentieth century) or to a single global orientation ("Europe" or "the West"), though I will be focusing on works of literature produced in the twentieth century by writers who are situated, at least in part and not always happily, within Great Britain and Ireland.[18] I am calling these writers British because they are British citizens, have lived in Britain, or have worked within a British literary tradition, even if all have worked within other (English, Irish, Indian, German, Polish, Japanese) traditions as well. All with the exception of Joyce lived or first published in England, but I speak of Britain in order to emphasize global contexts of citizenship, world war, empire, and decolonization, and to examine rather than obscure the many different experiences, local and transnational, that inform British culture today.[19]

The writers I examine in this study generate cosmopolitan styles not simply because they *are* cosmopolitan but because, in the simplest terms, they imagine that conditions of national and transnational affiliation depend on narrative patterns of attentiveness, relevance, perception, and recognition. Moreover, they assert the often-invisible connections between personal and international experiences.[20] Formal patterns of relevance and recognition, these writers propose, are crucial to the politics of cosmopolitanism: in *The Secret Agent*, Conrad shows how social processes of classification create the physical characteristics of foreigners; in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf asks us to see the social and literary conventions of patriotism that determine where and when war happens; and in *The Rings of Saturn*, Sebald suggests that those who focus only on the present and the proximate will fail to notice that the lavish architecture of a train station in Belgium was funded by the profits of colonialism in Africa.

Modernism involves strategies that respond to and engage with the experience of modernity, a condition of industrialization and "spirit of critique," as Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar puts it, that scholars now associate not only with the past and with the West but also with emergent practices of "non-Western people everywhere."[21] Michel Foucault provides a definition of modernism that I will use to describe the projects of all of the novelists I consider in this study. He writes of "an attitude" or "consciousness" of modernity: "a type of philosophical interrogation—one that simultaneously problematizes man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject."[22] Two more recent theorists also emphasize attitude and consciousness but extend Foucault's model to non-European contexts: Susan Stanford Friedman presents modernism "as the structural principle of radical rupture—wherever, whenever, and in whatever forms it might occur," and Dipesh Chakrabarty, describing modernist practices in early-twentieth-century Calcutta, writes of "the struggle to make capitalist modernity comfortable for oneself," which includes "cultivating a certain style of being in the eyes of others."[23]

Cosmopolitan Style diverges from traditional accounts of international modernism by treating literary style politically, as a supple and disputed concept within twentieth-century British culture, and by replacing static models of modernist exile with more flexible, more dynamic models of migration, entanglement, and mix-up. Whereas critics from Terry Eagleton to Caren Kaplan have argued that early-twentieth-century writers used metaphors of exile to represent various experiences of displacement, I argue instead that modernist writers troubled the distinction between local and global that most conceptions of exile have presupposed.[24] This book returns to the subject of modernism and internationalism, as recent books by Pericles Lewis, Jessica Berman, and Jed Esty have done, but it uses the resources of late-twentieth-century fiction and cultural theory to offer a new analytic vocabulary both for the earlier period

and for the writing that follows. I examine the late-twentieth-century "internationalization of English literature," to use Bruce King's phrase, not only as an expansion of places, actors, and even languages but also as an extension of modernist impulses and practices.[25] By shifting from the concept of "international modernism" to the concept of "critical cosmopolitanism," I am emphasizing intellectual projects more than intellectual conditions, though I will in the chapters that follow often consider the social and historical circumstances of world war or migration that gave these projects their specific opportunities, limits, and motivations. In the past, international modernism has referred to the experience of artists who moved from one European city to the next or to the mingling of national languages and cultural materials within works of art.[26] Even today, the category tends to invoke communities of artists or artists who travel instead of analytic interventions or ideas of community. Many works of modernism are international in their themes and traditions and origins, but they may not be cosmopolitan in the several senses I've been describing. T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* is a prime example—perhaps the preeminent example—of a modernist text that is certainly cosmopolitan in its posture of worldliness, in its collage of national traditions, and in its resistance to the moral niceties of modern culture, but it is not especially interested in representing patterns or fictions of affiliation, in rejecting fixed conceptions of the local, or in comparing the uses and histories of global thinking.[27]

The writers I discuss in this study have been concerned with the need both to transform and to disable social categories with what ought to be described, on the one hand, and with the social conditions and political consequences of description, on the other. Arguing that patterns of description and recognition are a central concern of modernist narrative, I follow Virginia Woolf, who asserts in her essays that novelists need to discard the "custom" and "convention" that keep them from representing "what is commonly thought small," such as the "dark places of psychology" and the daily experience of women.[28] Later novelists focus on the inadequacy and indispensability of representing minority experiences in the contexts of racism and imperialism: Ishiguro examines the political consequences of narrative strategies that seem to imitate the characteristics of specific cultures, and Rushdie suggests that it is better to mix up nativist readers than to correct them.[29] It is this concern with description—the uses of imitation and parody, the determination of what is describable or worthy of description, the novel's status as a cause or an effect of national culture, the processes and political contexts of knowing and recognizing—that modernist narrative brings to the tradition of cosmopolitanism and to the development of its current "critical" forms.

Before examining how "style" is a crucial aspect of "cosmopolitanism," I will consider, first, what the meanings of cosmopolitanism are and, second, how

the project of cosmopolitanism, which tends to conjure a vision of ethics, community, politics, and new interdisciplinary paradigms, is related to the project of style, which can seem trivial, idiosyncratic, apolitical, and anachronistically literary. Recent studies by Jessica Berman and Amanda Anderson have offered comprehensive accounts of the philosophical traditions of cosmopolitanism within nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century literature. *Cosmopolitan Style* emphasizes the tradition of cosmopolitan posture or attitude and explores how developments in modernist literary style coincide with new ways of thinking about political critique. At the same time, this study argues for the persistence of modernist concerns and techniques in late-twentieth-century writing. The terms I introduce highlight personal affects or mannerisms that are less than affirmative: naturalness carries the suggestion of pretense, and triviality the sense of pettiness, while mix-up and vertigo imply a lack of agency or efficacy; evasion and treason suggest downright negligence and even intentional bad faith. With these terms, I foreground and to some extent value the artful idiosyncrasies and political ambiguities of critical cosmopolitanism.

THE MEANINGS OF COSMOPOLITANISM

The novelists I consider share a common skepticism about the generalizations of collective agency, about political commitments defined by national culture, and about efforts to specify and fix national characteristics. And they have provoked substantial criticism from a variety of groups, including British writers opposing German militarism, Irish writers opposing British rule, socialist writers suspicious of rootlessness, fascist writers suspicious of individualism, and postcolonial writers suspicious of non-Europeans who address European audiences. In climates of insurgent nationalism and resurgent nativism, some early-twentieth-century critics dismissed Conrad, Joyce, and Woolf as indecent, evasive, or opportunistic, while later critics have called Rushdie and other international writers blasphemous and inauthentic. To be sure, these writers have engaged in "thinking and acting beyond the local,"[30] have imagined collective affinities in retreat from the nation, or have conceived of the center from the perspective of the margins, to name just a few of the cultural practices that the term "cosmopolitan" has come to designate. Yet they do not reject all local affiliations or collective endeavors: they are attached to nations and cultural groups through acts of citizenship and custom, and several have participated, sometimes loosely and sometimes actively, in social, cultural, and political organizations, such as the Irish National Theatre (Joyce), the 1917 Club and the Hogarth Press (Woolf), and PEN, the international association of writers (Rushdie).

Late-twentieth-century theories of cosmopolitanism rely on three, somewhat different traditions of thought: a philosophical tradition that promotes allegiance to a transnational or global community, emphasizing *detachment* from local cultures and the interests of the nation; a more recent anthropological tradition that emphasizes multiple or flexible *attachments* to more than one nation or community, resisting conceptions of allegiance that presuppose consistency and uncritical enthusiasm; and a vernacular or popular tradition that values the risks of social deviance and the resources of consumer culture and urban mobility. In Europe, vernacular cosmopolitanism has included such practices as *flânerie*, dance hall entertainment, department store shopping, and cultural exhibitions.[31] While the philosophical tradition has often involved elements of attachment—an attachment to all of humanity or a commitment to intercultural understanding—changes in the study of culture in the late nineteenth century altered the *meaning* of attachment in important ways, and the anthropological tradition reflects that alteration.[32]

The various strands of cosmopolitanism differ not only in their ideal of allegiance, whether it needs to transcend the local, but also in their understanding of how the local is defined. Whereas the philosophical tradition derives its view from Enlightenment theories of culture, which assumed distinctiveness and coherence, the anthropological and vernacular traditions have been shaped by modernist theories and practices, which began to treat culture as a process rather than an essence. In *The Predicament of Culture*, published in 1988, James Clifford argues that late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century ethnographers, among whom he includes Friedrich Nietzsche and Joseph Conrad as well as Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski, "inaugurated an interconnected set of assumptions that are now in the last quarter of the twentieth century just becoming visible."[33] It is possible to understand syncretism and transience as qualities of a local community, Clifford asserts, because early-twentieth-century writers began to define cultures not as natural or coherent objects but as "constructs" and "achieved fictions" (95). Today, when advocates of cosmopolitanism combine the political energies of the philosophical tradition with the cultural strategies of the anthropological and vernacular traditions, they tend to imagine a more transient, more changeable idea of the nation than the one implied by the philosophical model. Clifford describes local cultures as practices of "dwelling *and* travel," and Homi K. Bhabha seeks recognition for "the ambivalence that exists within any site of identification and enunciation."[34] Similarly, Bruce Robbins calls for a diverse "cosmopolitics" that is geographically and sometimes nationally "situated."[35] In paradoxical formulations, Clifford, Bhabha, and Robbins convey their political and intellectual resistance to versions of cultural attachment that subsume either too much or too little. Bhabha and Robbins imagine neither a cosmopolitanism everyone would

share, as in the Kantian ideal championed by Martha Nussbaum, nor a cosmopolitanism that shares in nothing, having no national or cultural properties at all. They imagine new theories of sharing, which value the partial allegiances and unassimilated communities that for many constitute home.

This shift in the definition of culture helps to explain why Victorian images of cosmopolitanism promote detachment from a definitive nation or community, as Amanda Anderson has shown, whereas modernist images, from Conrad's calculated naturalness to Rushdie's immigrant mix-up, assume more integration among cultures and less uniformity within them.[36] *Cosmopolitan Style* focuses on persistent efforts to reimagine the center in terms of peripheries, within and without, by writers in the first and last decades of the century. My emphasis on the margins of the century and of Britain in some ways complements Jed Esty's recent book on modernism and imperialism, which focuses on the middle of the twentieth century and on those writers—Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, and T. S. Eliot in their late phases, proponents of cultural studies in its early phase, and postwar immigrants such as Doris Lessing and George Lamming—who imagined England as "a center without a periphery."[37] However, while Esty distinguishes between what he sees as the expansive, privileged, and outward-looking perspectives of high modernism and the bounded, limited, and inward-looking perspectives generated by late modernism (the 1930s and after), I argue that communal aspirations, urban patterns of participant observation, and ethnographic self-consciousness were important components of modernism in its earliest stages. Modernist writers influenced by the traditions of aestheticism and decadence sought to redefine the scope of international experience (by focusing on the personal, the intimate, and the artificial) and to resist the affects of heroic nationalism (by developing and analyzing marginal groups within metropolitan culture).[38] For example, I see Virginia Woolf's turn to the renovation of English values, in *Three Guineas* (1938) and in her late essay "Thoughts on Peace in an Air War" (1940), as a way of newly articulating rather than rejecting internationalism.

The novels I examine approach large-scale international events, such as world war and immigration, by focusing on the trivial or transient episodes of everyday life. One way to view these novels is to say that in focusing on the trivial and the transient, they are little occupied with political or international conditions. But one might observe, instead, that these novels are testing and redefining what can count as international politics: they may emphasize incidents that seem to be trivial in order to reject wartime values of order and proportion, or they may emphasize what seem to be only personal experiences in order to expand what we know of global processes. Recent work on modernist art and literature has begun to advocate the latter view, arguing that many early-twentieth-century intellectuals, influenced by Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde,

understood individualism as a social and political cause.[39] *Cosmopolitan Style* joins these efforts to disaggregate the various internationalisms of British modernism and to consider how public debates about privacy, intimacy, immigration, sexuality, education, and marriage influenced modernist thinking about national boundaries and affiliations.[40] It expands the analysis of international modernism by including those narratives that seem to address domestic or private themes but without assuming that (a) such narratives simply underwrite a celebration of ritualized English communalism or (b) that they are oblivious to colonizing practices abroad.

Part of the task for new work on individualism and politics has been to introduce a new understanding of what modernism was. Another, less explicit part has been to correct past conceptions of modernism by highlighting a greater range of social actors and political affects. In this second gesture, scholars of modernism are emphasizing the relationship of "the political" to "politics," to follow Chantal Mouffe's distinction, where "the political" designates "antagonism that can take many forms and emerge in different types of social relations," whereas "politics" refers to "the ensemble of practices, discourses, and institutions which . . . are affected by the dimension of 'the political.'"[41] Writing of Virginia Woolf's engagement with "the dilemmas of the urban and of modernity," including the dilemmas of market economies, Jennifer Wicke suggests that "the obliquity of Woolf's approach" is advantageous rather than troublesome because it allows the novelist to show, to use Mouffe's terms, how the "politics" of markets affects "the political" of everyday life—how, for example, European economies function on a "miniature scale" (14–15).

Like contemporary feminists who have sought to undo the "public/private divide" that long characterized studies of modernism and modernity, Woolf and writers after her have sought to demonstrate that ideas about gender shape conditions of patriotism as well as conditions of political dissent.[42] In addition, these writers demonstrate that what we can know about gender and patriotism is circumscribed by narrative practices. This means that one must focus critical attention not only on war, state policy, and even military uniforms (as Woolf does in *Three Guineas*) but also on conventions of writing, which determine how arguments are made, how words can be used, and even which comparisons are relevant and which irrelevant or impertinent. My study understands Woolf's "obliquity" as a strategic evasion of heroic culture and wartime patriotism; in addition, I argue that Conrad and Joyce, as well as later writers, demonstrate forcefully that "the political" infuses small-scale decisions about sexuality, childrearing, marriage, shopping, education, art, and social decorum. Woolf, Ishiguro, and Sebald suggest in discussions of shell shock, femininity, militarism, and homosexuality that state policies often reflect assumptions about gender and sexuality that are largely invisible or unexamined. Woolf's analysis of this

issue is both direct and indirect. Directly, she will announce in *Three Guineas*, "as a woman, I have no country," and will show powerfully how the politics of gender in England is related to the politics of fascism in Germany.[43] Indirectly, in "The Mark on the Wall" and in *Mrs. Dalloway* (as I discuss in chapter 3), she will propose that British imperialism and wartime masculinity are generated by narratives that require euphemism and hypotaxis.

The claim that literary norms operate politically has been crucial tenet not only of feminist writing by Woolf and later scholars but also of postcolonial fiction and criticism by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gauri Viswanathan. The continuity among these efforts suggests that there is a strain of "postmodernism" that links Woolf and other early-twentieth-century writers to contemporary postcolonial and cosmopolitan novelists: both groups aim to analyze and invent new "rules and categories" of art, which Jean-François Lyotard has called the postmodern condition within modernity.[44] Among postcolonial writers, analysis and invention have focused on the use of the English language in anticolonial literature, the implication of culture in imperialism, and the relevance of culture to the politics of national liberation. Ishiguro, Rushdie, and Sebald address these issues directly: in *An Artist of the Floating World*, Ishiguro considers whether national allegiance and social responsibility depend on the use of specific literary and visual styles (realist, impressionist, allegorical, and so forth); in his story "Good Advice is Rarer Than Rubies," Rushdie proposes that the vernacular culture of proverbs can be used to mix up and resist the clichés of imperialist culture; and in *The Rings of Saturn*, Sebald oscillates among different historical periods to show that the architectural history of England is bound up with the violent pasts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Feminist and postcolonial theorists, like these contemporary writers, have worked to expand and politicize areas of social and cultural life that have seemed apolitical in the past. These efforts have diversified the theory and practice of critical cosmopolitanism.

I argue that the syncretic but less-than-national tradition of cosmopolitanism, which is often associated with aestheticism, dandyism, and *flânerie* at the fin de siècle, helped to establish a new analysis of perception and alternative tones of political consciousness among early modernist writers. I want to retain the association between cosmopolitanism and the late-Victorian tradition of aesthetic decadence, a repertoire of excessive and purposefully deviant cultural strategies whose values include pleasure, consumption, syncretism, and perversity.[45] The decadent tradition is important to British modernism because it amplifies the place of transience and artificiality within models of national culture and transnational mobility. Of course, Oscar Wilde and other decadent artists have influenced many writers in the twentieth century.[46] However, this influence has been largely ignored in accounts of international modernism, which

have tended to emphasize the outward-looking nature of cosmopolitanism and to associate the avant-garde, as the military metaphor implies, only with tones of antagonism, timeliness, and heroic certainty.[47] Some critics have sought to develop more capacious, less exclusive brands of cosmopolitanism by refusing to assume that only people who travel are able to know and touch the world: offering anecdotes as well as detailed histories, Mica Nava, Monica L. Miller, Arjun Appadurai, and Amitava Kumar argue for the inclusion of consumption, imagination, longing, and fantasy among cosmopolitan practices in the twentieth century.[48] Nava would have us notice, for example, that while the consumption of exotic clothing by middle-class English women is not a form of "politics"—it does not act within or on political institutions—it is part of "the political," in that it shapes social relations of gender, bodily display, urban mobility, and transnational fantasy.

This book treats cosmopolitanism not simply as a model of community but as a model of perversity, in the senses of obstinacy, indirection, immorality, and attitude; this approach allows me to consider the relationship between gestures of idiosyncratic contact or distance and those of sympathetic association. A perverse cosmopolitanism is especially visible in the work of Rushdie, who advocates incorrectness and flirtation as strategies of antiracism, or Sebald, who suggests that transnational sympathies may be nurtured by vertiginous points of view: Sebald writes of Roger Casement, who managed British colonies while criticizing the exploitation of colonized peoples, received a knighthood but was later executed for treason, and was celebrated as a patriot but later reviled as a homosexual. Rushdie's and Sebald's examples of cosmopolitanism include acts of antagonism and individualism as well as acts of community or group affiliation. It will be important for my argument that cosmopolitanism in the early twentieth century can refer not only to practices and affiliations that seem to exceed national collectivity but also to those that seem to preclude, pervert, or abjure national collectivity or civic culture: these can include domestic or intimate practices that seem, perhaps by design, exceptional or eccentric, or they can include manners or behaviors, such as those attributed to Jewish immigrants, that seem naturally to lack any trait whatsoever.

Throughout the twentieth century, as many critics have argued, there has never been a single or coherent "national culture" of Britain, but there have been various efforts to define it: some involve privileging one or more spaces (England, the United Kingdom) over others (Scotland, Wales, the colonies); some involve identifying those practices and people that do not belong by virtue of race, location, or behavior; others involve identifying alternative or more local collectivities in the context of antiracism or of anticolonial projects of national liberation. For the writers in this study, who have tried to resist one or more of these efforts, willful perversity and posture are not accidental or

expendable elements of critical cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, these writers suggest, new conceptions of national culture and international belonging require new social attitudes about authenticity, patriotism, and moral correctness. This is why, for example, Joyce focuses his critique of British colonialism and Irish nativism on a system of manners that requires "acquiescence" and "cheerful decorum." These social attitudes, Joyce argues, have helped to keep Irish culture in place. Joyce rejects cheerful decorum by inventing a literary style that purposefully gives offense: he refuses to separate trivial details from serious politics and in fact suggests that anticolonialist art needs to cultivate a promiscuous style of attention.[49]

MODERNIST COSMOPOLITANISM

Some scholars have sought to extricate the international aesthetics of early-twentieth-century modernism from the international politics of late-twentieth-century anticolonialism, multiculturalism, and migration. In *Cosmopolitan Geographies*, Vinay Dharwadker reports approvingly that the new theory and practice of cosmopolitanism "has been freighted with politics rather than with aesthetics."[50] He attributes this emphasis to transformations in the latter quarter of the twentieth century—the consolidation of new types of nationalism, the empowerment of new immigrant communities, the accelerated globalization of capital—and to concerns with "urgent practical problems" (1–2). Similarly, in a survey of the new paradigms, Samuel Scheffler isolates the "common parlance" of cosmopolitanism from other "specialized" meanings presently in circulation.[51] Putting to one side the "posture of worldly sophistication" suggested by colloquial usage, Scheffler divides his remaining subject into two "doctrines": a "doctrine about justice" and a "doctrine about culture" (255–57). His definition implies that the doctrines are part of a political sphere fundamentally separate from acts of self-fashioning and "posture." For her part, Martha Nussbaum eschews European decadence by invoking Rabindranath Tagore's novel *The Home and the World*.[52] With this invocation, Nussbaum attaches her "worldwide community of human beings" to colonized India, conventional narrative practices, and the critique of "superficial" love.[53]

It is understandable that scholars as different as Nussbaum and Dharwadker would want to reject values that seem wholly frivolous or Eurocentric (or both), given the problems of exploitation and inequality that they want an ideal of cosmopolitanism to correct, and it is certainly true that the decadent tradition of aestheticism, dandyism, and flirtation has involved gestures of Eurocentrism and frivolity. However, practices of *bricolage*, aestheticism, and syncretism, which are mainstays of the decadent repertoire, are nevertheless visible in

Dharwadker's examples of anticolonial cosmopolitanism (as in his account of the strategically "ruralized" cosmopolitanism of Mahatma Gandhi) and even, though perhaps accidentally, in Nussbaum's renovated universalism (her example of the cosmopolitan ideal is not only Tagore's novel but also Satyajit Ray's film of that novel, in which cosmopolitanism, characterized by the belief in universal right but also by the desire to learn French and read English poetry, is presented as an alternative to the strident pragmatism that the narrative associates with anticolonialist nationalism).[54] That there are echoes of modernism in contemporary versions of cosmopolitanism does not (or not necessarily) mean that modernism is more committed to ethical action than we thought it was or that cosmopolitan theorists have learned more than they know from modernist culture. I want to suggest, rather, that contemporary versions of cosmopolitanism have included, in their ambivalence about modernization, a persistent effort to reassess the definition and temporality of progress.[55]

Yet some contemporary theorists of cosmopolitanism have been reluctant to associate the new project of critical cosmopolitanism, which emphasizes adverse or quotidian experiences of transnational contact, with modernism, which they argue emphasizes rarified and exceptional experiences. This is the view of modernism that Bruce Robbins offers in *Feeling Global*, when he criticizes Susan Sontag by linking her shrill demands for unconflicted self-sacrifice to "the modernist aim of disorientation, defamiliarization, making strange." Sontag's international project is "like modernism," Robbins continues, in that it "is open to the very few, and it takes its aesthetic value—in part at least—from that very inaccessibility, that critical remoteness from the habits of the benumbed multitude."[56] I argue, on the contrary, that the literary and cultural tradition of modernism reflects a conflict about the content and constituency of international experience and an effort to display relationships between everyday, private activities and public, international ones; in addition, I argue that the idiosyncratic vision of modernism is congruent to and necessary for the *critical* aspect of today's critical cosmopolitanism. In a sense, I think that Robbins is right about modernism but wrong about the analytic conditions of the brand of "cosmopolitics" he advocates.[57] In my view, what Scheffler calls "posture"—that is, a purposeful affect or stance—makes new conceptions of attachment, culture, and affiliation possible. Robbins's cosmopolitanism is "like modernism" not because it is open only to the very few but because it does involve "estrangement" and "hesitation," a term that Robbins will invoke and admire in a later essay.[58] His critique of "modernist" cosmopolitanism notwithstanding, Robbins has been perhaps the strongest advocate of a theory of cosmopolitanism that requires rather than rejects aesthetic experience, "strategic acquiescing," and models of conscience that are "rooted in routine duties and pleasures as well as in once-in-a-lifetime renunciations."[59] Indeed, one might say that he

is more concerned with the democratization of actors (read: anyone can think globally or act strategically) than he is with the democratization of affects (read: all global thinking is "cosmopolitical").

In this project, I argue that "discrepant" and "critical" models of cosmopolitanism, which have focused attention on the contested histories of globalization and on a new range of international actors, not only retain but also deploy modernist narrative strategies.[60] For example, while Walter Mignolo limits his model of critical cosmopolitanism to actors who emerge "from the various spatial and historical locations of the colonial difference" (179), he identifies as its principal "tool" something he calls "border thinking," which involves various techniques of *bricolage*: not the invention of new vocabularies but the tactical use of dominant vocabularies (180), "the critique of all possible fundamentalism" (181), and other acts of "appropriating and transforming" (183). Not simply in Mignolo's work but in the work of many other theorists of cosmopolitanism as well there is an oscillation between a project that is defined by located bodies and experiences (for example, people who live on or between state borders) and a project that is defined by analytic perspective, experimentation, and self-consciousness (for example, "border thinking"). Although the editors of the anthology *Cosmopolitanism*—where Mignolo's essay is collected—will not specify their eponymous term positively or definitely, as I've discussed, they do offer two possible meanings: on the one hand, it is a "critique of modernity that minoritarian cosmopolitans *embody*" (6, emphasis added), and, on the other hand, it is a kind of "thinking" (10), for which "minoritarian" experience is a "source" (13). While the editors are indeed arguing that there are "plural . . . cosmopolitanisms" (8) because intellectual formations will differ according to time and place, they are less self-conscious in their move between an emphasis on new voices and an emphasis on the critique of voice—a tension or an oscillation that I have associated with the project of literary modernism and that Foucault, Chakrabarty, and others have associated with the experience of "modernity" more generally.

Most theorists argue that cosmopolitan practices are made possible by a located experience, but most argue also that these practices depend on—do not exist without—an analysis of self and location. "Being cosmopolitan," for texts and for people, means engaging in an intellectual program rather than inhabiting a cultural position. That said, being a cosmopolitan *flâneur*, to take one example, is a rather different experience for those who have full access to the city than it is for those—women, migrants, colonial subjects—who do not, not only because some observers can move and observe more easily than others but also because some are themselves the objects of intense or hostile scrutiny.[61] But the self-conscious project of looking and in some cases appropriating is significant in each case, even as the risks, resources, and outcomes of urban observa-

tion will vary. Melba Cuddy-Keane has argued forcefully, speaking of "cultural globalization" in terms that are very similar to those I use to describe critical cosmopolitanism, that "not every cultural encounter should be taken as a form of cultural globalization. Fundamentally, what is at issue is not a prescribed feature of a text but a distinctive form of consciousness."[62] Chakrabarty's account of *adda*—"the practice of friends getting together for long, informal, and unrigorous conversations," which was common in early-twentieth-century Calcutta—offers a prime (nonliterary) example of cultural globalization: as Chakrabarty describes it, *adda* was an effort to resist "capitalist modernity" or to make it "comfortable for oneself" (*Provincializing Europe*, 180). While *adda* was a Bengali practice and is now often described by nationalists as "peculiarly Bengali" (183), Chakrabarty explains, it was also a cosmopolitan practice in several senses: it was a space for reading and discussing books from South Asia as well as from Europe and the United States (198); it was a space where "a democratic and cosmopolitan vision of the world could be nurtured and sustained" (199); and it "provided for many a site for self-presentation, of cultivating a certain style of being in the eyes of others" (187).

Like *flânerie* and dandyism, Charkrabarty emphasizes, *adda* was not a utopian activity: it was a bourgeois space predicated on the separation of the sexes and on an escape, largely for men, from domestic responsibility; its unrigorous conversations were "opposed to the idea of achieving any definite outcome" (204).[63] In Chakrabarty's account, *adda* was neither an ideal nor an experience; rather, it was an activity that involved using the materials of Anglo-Irish and U.S. literary modernism to create new "mannerisms." It was, Chakrabarty writes, "an arena where one could develop new techniques of presenting oneself as a character—from Wilde or Shaw or Joyce or Faulkner—through the development of certain mannerisms (meant for the enjoyment of others), habits of speech, and gestures" (206). In this account of Calcutta "modernism" (182), Anglo-Irish and U.S. modernist texts are not models but tools; using Wilde, Shaw, Joyce, and Faulker, Bengalis created their own attitude of modernity.

As I see it, my extended account of critical and alternative cosmopolitanisms has two important consequences: first, it suggests that cultural strategies of posture have a significant role in even those cosmopolitan paradigms that involve actors who are not social elites or whose position in the world is not in all ways privileged; second, and more tendentiously, it suggests that paradigms that emphasize ethical or political commitments may contain antiheroic or aleatory impulses, whose influence can be seen in the articulation of more narrow kinds of efficacy or in the strategic refusal of aspects of modernization, instrumentality, attentiveness, and historicism. Rather than rejecting cosmopolitanism outright or attempting to "dissociate" cosmopolitanism from the lineaments of "class, hierarchy, and affluence," as some theorists have proposed, it may be more use-

ful, politically as well as intellectually, to acknowledge the analytic complexities of the cosmopolitan tradition.[64] It is not my aim simply to expand the definition of critical cosmopolitanism to include modernist practices. Rather, I suggest (a) that there is no critical cosmopolitanism without modernist practices and (b) that the implication of modernist practices in critical cosmopolitanism must change what we claim about the relationship between idiosyncratic expressions of culture and the conditions of international sympathy or reparation.

COSMOPOLITAN MODERNISM

The tradition of writing that I describe in this project is not always ethical. Those literary strategies I call "cosmopolitan styles" often privilege the ability to see and think mistakenly, irreverently, trivially, and momentarily over the necessity to see and think correctly or judgmentally. In Conrad's and Rushdie's novels, thinking irreverently is in some ways ethical or subversive because it extends perception, makes it more various, and because it can provide an alternative to what Stefan Collini has called "those more instrumental, pragmatic, aggregative processes which are nonetheless wholly necessary for running the world and getting its business done."[65] For Woolf, Joyce, and Ishiguro, modernist innovation can involve confronting, analyzing, and diversifying the language of political commitment. As a response to the politics of euphemism, Woolf's evasion is not efficient, as explicitness would be, but it offers an alternative to the brutal instrumentality she attributes to wartime patriotism.

The analysis of perception and its provocations has been important to formal accounts of modernist experimentation as well as to cultural, political, and geographic accounts of urban experience and empire. These accounts of literary and political seeing come together in the phrase "metropolitan perception," which Raymond Williams uses to mean both the affirming experience of "privileges and opportunities" in the imperial center and the disorienting, sometimes liberating experience of urban crowds and urban isolation.[66] Most striking in Williams's account of modernist development is his argument that "immigration to the metropolis"—and it is significant that Williams speaks of "immigration," which connotes popular or economic aspirations as opposed to "travel" or "exile"—was "the most important general element in the innovations in form" (45). For the immigrants who became writers, like Joseph Conrad, for the writers who became immigrants, like James Joyce, and for the so-called natives, like Virginia Woolf, immigration, Williams asserts, "forced certain productive kinds of strangeness and distance: a new consciousness of conventions and thus of changeable, because now open, conventions" (47). Thinking of modernism's conditions in terms of immigration helps to explain why late-

twentieth-century writers such as Rushdie, Ishiguro, and Sebald would make use of critical strategies developed by early-twentieth-century writers such as Conrad, Joyce, and Woolf.

Cosmopolitan Style shares Williams's sense that the themes and formal innovations of modernism respond to the conditions of the metropolis, that they are in some sense products of European imperialism, but this does not mean, either for Williams's argument or for mine, that modernism is a mirror of imperialism or that the experience of the metropolis was uniform or uniformly experienced even within the city center. The idea of "metropolitan perception," while registering the influence of increasing mobility, social diversity, and consumer culture on modernist ideas of consciousness and perspective, should not lead us to imagine that modernist writers as different as Woolf and Conrad shared the same experience of centrality, or that Joyce's Dublin was, to follow Williams's distinction, an "imperial and capitalist metropolis" rather than a "deprived hinterland" (47). In an influential essay, Fredric Jameson proposes that metropolitan texts do not ignore or exclude "the imperialist situation" but rather distort it because they display the failure of perception (the fact of an unseen colonized world) rather than "colonized daily life": that is, instead of perceiving the experience of colonized peoples, readers perceive the limitations of their perception.[67] Jameson's argument is useful because it challenges our sense that modernism is detached from social problems and political situations and because it helps to enlarge what a modernist account of international conditions, including the conditions of imperialism, could look like.[68] His argument is predicated, however, on a definition of the political and on a distinction between spectatorial and transfiguring practices that is somewhat narrower than the one I have employed.[69]

In my reading of Woolf, I argue that the ethical pitfalls and aesthetic opportunities of diverting or withholding attention are central topics for modernist art, and thus I see inattentiveness as an effect of innovation rather than of ignorance. I examine the modernist encounter with European "otherness," which for Jameson merely occludes a lack of encounter with what he calls the "more radical otherness" of colonized peoples (49), as it prepares the way for initial practices of self-reflection and for later practices of immigrant mixing and antiracist critique.[70] Indeed, modernists themselves were less certain than Jameson that anger, regret, and judgment are the only ways to inspire critical thinking and critical action, especially given that Bloomsbury writers like Forster were focused, as Jameson acknowledges, on the dangers of militarism and heroic masculinity in Europe.[71] It should be said that I do not claim to find or to describe a consistent tradition of anti-imperialism in British modernism: as many scholars have shown, Conrad in some ways admired British imperialism even as he criticized Belgian policies; Woolf's emphasis on England, while

it brought attention to private and domestic experiences, can seem to ignore the experiences of empire. All the same, I propose that late-twentieth-century theories of cosmopolitanism, including those that are focused on the critique of imperialism, often build on the experimental tones and analytic strategies of modernist narrative.

IDIOSYNCRASY OF STYLE

All of the writers I consider promote two kinds of entanglement: the literal knotting together of cultures and experiences that seem to be disparate, such as British censorship and Irish nationalism (Joyce), Chinese silk and English urns (Sebald), Japanese militarism and U.S. democracy (Ishiguro), a party in the evening and a suicide in the afternoon (Woolf); and the effect of ethical discomfort or embarrassment that is generated by incommensurate or unconventional associations. Since a new understanding of description is central to the project of modernism, a cosmopolitan style is also a modernist style: it registers the limits of perception and the waning of a confident epistemology, the conflict between the exhaustive and the ineffable, the appeal of the trivial, the political consequences of uniformity and variousness in meaning, the fragmentation of perspectives, and the disruption of social categories. Conrad, Joyce, and Woolf ask how national experiences can or should be represented, but the contemporary writers Rushdie, Ishiguro, and Sebald ask as well how novels might function as effects or symptoms of a national culture. Like Rushdie and Ishiguro, Sebald prompts his readers to imagine that British literature might reflect more than one national or cultural tradition; that the national location of a given work is no longer unique or consistent; that fiction and journalism are proximate ventures. Just as Ishiguro proposes that British novels can have Japanese narrators and even seem like novels in translation, Sebald suggests that novels about German narrators, which are in fact composed in German, can respond and contribute to the tradition of British writing. The effect of vertigo is specific to Sebald's quite disorienting work, as I discuss in chapter 6, but the trope of connections among geographically and ethically disparate events pervades the literary and cultural projects of cosmopolitanism in the twentieth century.

Recent attacks on cosmopolitan decadence—disparaged as "cultural inventiveness," "self-indulgence," or "unbelonging"—have a long history in debates about modernism and modernist cultural practices, including practices of writing.[72] Early-twentieth-century critics of cosmopolitanism presumed that cultural artifacts, as a matter of course, should articulate and maintain existing cultures. These critics argued that literature should conform to a writer's "experience," by which they meant a coherent national tradition that was neither

changeable nor uncertain. More than this, readers assumed that they knew, before reading a text, what a writer's experience—English, Polish, German, Japanese—was. The assumption that a novel will express a writer's nationality, that the novel functions metonymically, rests on a conception of literary style that is not only antimodernist but anterior to modernism; moreover, it is continuous with theories of culture that modernists often sought to challenge.[73]

In early-twentieth-century Britain, a well-known champion of expressive literature was the critic and editor J. Middleton Murry, who presented his definition of "style" to an audience at Oxford University in 1921. Murry was no fan of the "calculated subtleties" he found in the writing of many of his contemporaries; in 1926, he would remark that "ten years hence no one will take the trouble" to read either *Jacob's Room* or *The Waste Land*, both of which he condemns as "failures."[74] He finds the writing of Woolf and Eliot "over-intellectualized" where it should be "instinctive" and full of "spontaneity" (591). In his lectures on "The Problem of Style," Murry classifies the new trend as a "hypertrophy of style" because it disfigures and exceeds the realities of nature.[75] Literature, Murry writes, should reflect "an author's success in compelling language to conform to his mode of experience," and "false" writing is "produced when the vital reference of language to this mode of experience" is lost (23). The hypertrophic style is doubly false, Murry insists, because it fails to convey nature and then conceals this failure by creating an artificial, eccentric form of life. "Instead of being obviously hollow and lifeless," Murry explains, "a barren idiosyncrasy of style . . . may present the appearance of luxuriant growth"; it has, he adds, "the vitality of a weed or mushroom, a vitality that we cannot call precisely spurious, but that we certainly cannot call real" (22). In excess of expression, Murry argues, literature deviates from its purpose.

Murry's view, that there is cultural perfidy implicit in literary deviation, corresponded to many other, more popular views of cosmopolitan identity and art. Murry's attack demonstrates, however, not a consistent anticosmopolitanism but rather an inconsistent nativism: he was married to Katherine Mansfield, who was born in New Zealand; he published in magazines alongside Bloomsbury artists; and he attended parties and social gatherings with many experimental writers, including those (Woolf, Eliot) he criticizes in his lecture. In this period, one could be a patron of international art and a supporter of international artists while also embracing nationalist and sometimes nativist theories of culture: as I discuss in chapter 1, even Edward Garnett, who recommended Joseph Conrad's first story for publication and whose wife, Constance Garnett, was an important translator of Russian novelists, would speak of the "secrets of Slav thought" that Conrad brought to "our [English] tongue."[76] This combination of nativist theory and international practice links Murry to other major figures, such as Arthur Symons and the art historian Selwyn Image, and also

to less-major journalists and popular writers. In a debate about "Cosmopolitan Art," published in *The Art Journal* in 1902, Image argued that cosmopolitans, who abandon their own national traditions, can inhabit other traditions only artificially and insubstantially.[77]

Image's article matches a review of Conrad that was published by the Irish writer Robert Lynd in 1908. Lynd finds Conrad's work shallow, and he sees this failing as an index—an effect that is also a sign—of "cosmopolitan" identity.[78] In particular, he disparages Conrad for his ability and willingness to write in a chosen rather than a given language.[79] Without a given language, Lynd asserts, Conrad's texts fail to achieve a natural expression. In the early twentieth century, the term "cosmopolitan" was attributed to artists who seemed to invent identities rather than inhabit them and to work that dramatized this process of invention. The critics claim to know an artist's rootlessness from the material he or she produces, even as they imagine that the life and not the craft is responsible for this effect. To imagine anything else, of course, would be to suggest that the artist could generate a self, rather than merely reveal it.

Two decades later, in very similar terms, the critic W. J. Turner argued in *The New Statesmen* that Igor Stravinsky had "become so cosmopolitan" playing for audiences in London and Paris that his work seemed "artificial" and "empty."[80] Turner is not suggesting that Stravinsky has intercultural or transcultural sympathies but rather that his work displays an unnatural or theatrical attitude towards national as well as musical traditions. Because he is distanced from his "roots," Turner asserts, Stravinsky is "too consciously clever," where he might be more "instinctive" and emotional. By this argument, artifice of mind, attributed to cosmopolitan living, leads to work whose superficial fashion indicates a lack of substance: "there is a curious affinity between Stravinsky's music and the smart hats and frocks of society." Turner implies that Stravinsky's music has no content, it is equivalent to "smart hats and frocks," and also that it has no value, since those who give importance to fashion will have little taste for serious music. The problem of style is posed as a problem of artificial nationality: Turner focuses not so much on the natural affiliation Stravinsky has lost as on the unnatural affiliation he has sought to cultivate. One can see in the critiques of Stravinsky and Conrad that the work of art is said to lack content in the same way that the affiliations of the artists are said to lack content, and indeed the latter condition is blamed for the former predicament. I argue that Conrad promotes this connection between strategies of affiliation and styles of art; his work suggests that identities are affirmed by social practices of recognition and that art can intervene in the ways of thinking that make recognition possible. Stravinsky's critic asserts, with tongue-in-cheek approval, that the composer "has managed to avoid expressing anything at all with wonderful skill" (475).

The problem with Conrad, Lynd likewise explains, is that he has lost the "concentration and intensity of vision" that one's "own language" confers (210).

If styles of writing can affirm cultural norms, Woolf will propose, they can also help to change them. Readers are wary of change, as Theodor W. Adorno later argues in an aphorism called "Morality and Style," because what is recognizable or familiar is often mistaken for what is relevant and responsible.[81] The socialization of writing is one of the international conditions that modernist novelists seek to represent and often to resist. One can see this resistance in the purposeful triviality of Joyce's fiction, in Woolf's narrative evasions, and in Ishiguro's treasonous syntax. For those who believe that literature best achieves "morality" by refusing its ready protocols, being bad becomes the only way to make good.

BUTTERFLIES AND JEWS

Early-twentieth-century concerns about the unnaturalness of modernist art became, at midcentury, a more explicit debate about the politics of literary style. It is well known that Jean-Paul Sartre, Georg Lukács, Theodor W. Adorno, George Orwell, and others were focused in this period on the political efficacy of modernist art. It is less noticed, however, that this focus was motivated by questions of cosmopolitanism.[82] How can writers change international conditions? In times of international crisis, are some literary styles more useful or more responsible than others? What are the topics appropriate to committed literature? Do the unsettling methods of cosmopolitan art serve to resist the adverse realities of cosmopolitan culture? Or do they facilitate them?

The midcentury debate about modernism and international politics is in some ways old-fashioned, especially in its Cold War distinctions between First and Third World. However, the debate remains significant and influential in its efforts to think about modernism globally and to consider whether the aesthetic strategies of literary modernism are relevant to projects of antiracism and decolonization. In "What Is Literature?" (1947), an essay composed in the wake of the Second World War, Jean-Paul Sartre argues that "committed literature" is the necessary and strategic response to the international problems of the postwar era. Among these problems, Sartre identifies "the present machinations of the Soviet government . . . American anti-Semitism and Negrophobia, our own [French] colonialism and the attitude of the [allied] powers in regard to Franco."[83] To uproot totalitarianism, racism, colonialism, and fascism, Sartre argues, writers need to adopt a literary style that is transparent and descriptive: they need to display the conditions they seek to resist, bear witness to them, directly and exclusively (36–37). "The function of the writer," Sartre proposes, "is

to act in such a way that nobody can be ignorant of the world and that nobody *may* say that he is innocent of what it's all about" (36). Because the prose writer only "*makes use* of words" (34, emphasis in text), Sartre contends, his style "should pass unnoticed" (39). As Sartre defines it, committed writing depends not on the perfection of one's style but on the correctness of one's topic, whose relevance to international affairs and other matters of political urgency should be obvious and compelling. "In short," he argues, "it is a matter of knowing what one wants to write about, whether butterflies or the condition of the Jews" (40). For Sartre, committed writing is cosmopolitan writing, and the proper subjects of cosmopolitan literature are Jews, but not butterflies; social facts, but not fleeting consciousness; political identities, but not trivial experiences.

Adorno responded to Sartre's volley in 1962, in the wake of two subsequent international events: the German translation of Sartre's essay and the construction of the Berlin Wall. Calling his essay "Commitment," Adorno invokes Sartre's theory only to replace it with a commitment of his own. Adorno argues that literary styles not only transmit but also shape social circumstances, and thus, he contends, "Sartre's conception of commitment strikes at the cause to which Sartre is committed."[84] Adorno's contention is this: Sartre's argument, by dismissing so-called trivial or decadent themes, reinforces the moral distinctions that make racism possible. Adorno rejects Sartre's image of "alternatives"—butterflies or Jews, communication or silence—as an accommodation to predetermined choices and the rigidity of social thought (80). Committed literature, he argues, should produce discomfort rather than certainty because "the course of the world" will be altered only by the encounter with ideas "that cannot be admitted at any cost" (78). Adorno calls for art that is purposefully "strange or upsetting" (78–79), that ruptures boundaries of taste and convention, that generates experiences that are not "officially approved" (88). He concludes that there is a profound compatibility between Sartre's demand for useful, utilitarian writing and the fascist rejection of "what is said to be unnatural, overly intellectual, unhealthy, and decadent" (78). Refusing to think about butterflies, Adorno implies, may only hurt the Jews.

In this exchange, Sartre seems to be arguing that writers need to describe social conditions in order to change them, while Adorno is arguing that writers best change social conditions by resisting the conventions of description. The distinction between Sartre and Adorno is sharpest when they are speaking about "committed literature" in the abstract; however, when Sartre considers that literature has served to *produce* colonialism, for example, his argument takes a different course. In "Black Orpheus," an essay about Afro-French poetry and the négritude movement, Sartre acknowledges that writers aiming to resist or change the norms of national culture will need to "notice" literary style. Looking back at "What Is Literature?" from the perspective of "Black Orpheus,"

one can see that Sartre's initial conception of "committed writing" had assumed a shared community of readers and writers; it had assumed that authors are always at home in the language they are using.[85] "Black Orpheus" affirms that literature may be one of the social institutions that a writer is seeking to change, and it recognizes that Afro-French writers may have a different approach to communication, in French, than French writers do.

Négritude poetry helped Sartre to see that literary modernism informs the project of anticolonialism. Ironically, it is Sartre, rather than Adorno, who provides a nascent theory of cosmopolitan style. Sartre argues in "Black Orpheus" that modernist poetry, rather than realist prose, generates the most effective resistance to French colonialism: négritude poetry allows African and West Indian writers not only to redescribe Afro-French identity and to reject racist descriptions, but also to alter descriptive methods, which are embedded in the French language of the past.[86] Négritude poetry is revolutionary, Sartre argues, both because it replaces colonialist descriptions of "Africans" with African descriptions and because it redirects the analytic gaze from colony to metropolis: when the French read négritude poetry, Sartre asserts, "suddenly France seems exotic in our own eyes" (292). Furthermore, Sartre contends, if Afro-French writers were to ignore the relationship between aesthetic traditions and national cultures, they might reproduce or fail to resist the conditions of racism. "When the Negro declares in French that he rejects French culture," Sartre explains, "he accepts with one hand what he rejects with the other" (301). Instead, négritude writers take a different tack: "since the oppressor is present in the very language they speak," Sartre concludes, "they will speak this language in order to destroy it"; the négritude poet aims to "de-Frenchify" French words by "break[ing] their usual associations" and "violently" bringing them together with unfamiliar images and topics (303). Sartre argues that Césaire and other Afro-French poets have given a "rigorously defined function" to modernist literary strategies: they have shown their political and cultural use (312).

The tactic of breaking "usual associations" and creating new, sometimes "violent" connections serves to de-Frenchify French culture much as Sebald's entanglements serve to de-British British. These efforts do not simply offer alternatives to national affiliation; they attempt to make national culture less homogenous. It is important to observe that writers such as Ishiguro and Sebald are developing new models of the nation: Sebald may propose that butterflies and the condition of the Jews are, surprisingly, of "the same order,"[87] but he does this to assert only a tentative contiguity rather than a new coherence. Indeed, once Sartre begins to question the norms of collectivity, he begins to question in turn the priorities of sympathetic attentiveness that he took for granted in "What Is Literature?" For all his concern about literary decadence in the earlier essay, Sartre later celebrates decadent strategies in "Black Orpheus." Those

strategies include violent correspondences, perversity of subject matter, indecorous allusions, experimental rhythms, and erotic sensuality.[88] Sartre's claim that antiracist poetry needs to reject habitual Frenchness leads him to value heterogeneous impressions, much as Walter Pater valued "any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colors, and curious odors, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend."[89] To be certain, Pater disavows the claims of social or political commitment, but he prefigures Sartre's contention that aesthetic constraints, including hierarchies of subject matter, reinforce social rigidity.

The project of de-Frenchifying French that Sartre attributes to négritude poetry exemplifies the tactic of "assimilation"—really, a kind of unassimilation—that the sociologist Michel de Certeau later includes among his practices of countercultural *bricolage*.[90] In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau describes "tactics" as makeshift cultural maneuvers that bring moments of innovation into rigid social disciplines. The affinity between de Certeau's tactics and the literary strategies of modernism is legible, for example, in Amanda Anderson's discussion of Oscar Wilde, whose style of detachment she describes as

> a certain punctuation of the aesthetic mode: it is not so much living for every moment, as Pater would have us do, but rather seizing the moment which the drama of life only occasionally or intermittently presents to us. To seize the moment requires simultaneously an ethical finesse and an artful capacity; it is entirely outside of the sphere of conventional morality or virtue and in fact often flies in the face of such morality.[91]

The paradigmatic tactician in de Certeau's theory is the itinerant and unplaced consumer, whom he describes variously as an immigrant, an apartment renter, a nomad, a traveler, and a poacher (ix–xxiv). De Certeau borrows his metaphors from the late twentieth century, but he could have included early-twentieth-century figures such as female shoppers in Oxford Street, Jewish advertising canvassers in Dublin, and secret agents in Soho. The paradigmatic tactic in de Certeau's theory is assimilation, though not as it is usually defined. There is, de Certeau argues, a "misunderstanding" about assimilation: "This misunderstanding assumes that 'assimilating' necessarily means 'becoming similar to' what one absorbs, and not 'making something similar' to what one is, making it one's own, appropriating or re-appropriating it" (166). De Certeau uses the term "misunderstanding" generously: he suggests that the interpreters of assimilation are unable rather than unwilling to see more than one definition of the term. He does not add that these interpreters may not wish to acknowledge assimilation's mix-up: that immigrants add themselves to national cultures, which are then transformed in the process.

My contention in this book, that the modernist strategies of cosmopolitan writing have served to test and expand the critical methods of international thinking, has been shaped by the work of Adorno and de Certeau. Readers may notice Adorno's imprint on my claims about the politics of style and de Certeau's in my emphasis on the connections between private acts or opportunities and institutional systems. It is perhaps more common to associate Adorno with "resignation," the title of one of his late essays, than with interventions or tactics, but I argue throughout this book that Adorno presents dissenting thought, including his own, as a precondition for social change.[92] Adorno's conviction that social norms are embedded in traditions of literary style and that literary style is embedded in the politics of national culture makes his work particularly significant for theories of culture and cosmopolitan fiction. Adorno asserts that the homogenization of writing—at the level of narrative structure, diction, and syntax—is responsible for and reinforces the homogenization of culture, which he associates with fascism. He aims to reject familiar habits of thought by refusing their styles of expression.

De Certeau is important for my study because, unlike Adorno, his work helps to show how avant-garde strategies function in popular culture and in the culture of everyday life. If Adorno imagines a world of art that resists everyday culture, de Certeau rejects this distinction and proposes that everyday activities accommodate strategies of art. De Certeau submits that shopping, reading, and walking, for example, offer moments of imaginative resistance within the space of dominant culture. De Certeau's examples of "resistance" are ephemeral and poetic: he does not propose that reading or walking or even shopping will change the urban environment or government policy.[93] In addition, most of his examples involve unselfconscious acts: everyday habits rather than critical practices. My use of "tactics" is somewhat different than de Certeau's because writers are producers as well as consumers: British modernists have used new critical attitudes to circulate and provoke new conceptions of self and community.

TACTICS

Each of the following chapters examines a "tactic" or "attitude" of critical cosmopolitanism as it is developed in the work of a twentieth-century novelist and in theories of modernism and international culture: Joseph Conrad's "naturalness," James Joyce's "triviality," Virginia Woolf's "evasion," Salman Rushdie's "mix-up," Kazuo Ishiguro's "treason," and W. G. Sebald's "vertigo." I call these tactics "cosmopolitan styles" to emphasize the importance of affect, manner, and self-consciousness in all practices of critical cosmopolitanism and to iden-

tify the use of new narrative strategies in the cosmopolitan literary practices of the twentieth century. A cosmopolitan style is not an alternative to or replacement for a cosmopolitan politics or what Bruce Robbins and others have called "cosmopolitics."[94] Rather, it describes an analytic feature of critical cosmopolitanism, which has been used politically by writers such as Joyce, Woolf, and Ishiguro. In addition, a focus on styles of cosmopolitanism is meant to value what Jane Gallop has called "alternative ways of theorizing," versions of cosmopolitan theory that pay attention to the "narrative forms" in which theory is produced.[95] It is for this reason that my introduction has examined closely the aesthetic strategies of contemporary cosmopolitan theory; the chapters will examine in turn how twentieth-century writers have used the innovations of modernist narrative to generate cosmopolitan interventions. I have been proposing that cosmopolitan theory is more literary and more modernist than its practitioners have previously acknowledged. I will be arguing, further, that modernist fiction produces a cosmopolitan theory that emphasizes the analytic (new ways of thinking and feeling) as well as the thematic (new objects of thinking and feeling) and that brings together several gestures of critique—the progress of knowledge, the analysis of progress in history, the resistance to some forms of progress, and the dilation of knowing into feeling, partial knowing, knowingness, and refusing to know.

The first half of *Cosmopolitan Style* focuses on Conrad, Woolf, and Joyce, each of whom has been hailed, for different reasons, as the exemplary British novelist of the twentieth century. This exemplarity is telling both about the critical history of British fiction and about changing definitions of national culture in Britain. The second half of the book focuses on Ishiguro, Rushdie, and Sebald, whom I have chosen in part to reflect a range of "new ethnicities" in late-twentieth-century Britain—the different internationalisms of Japanese, Indian, and German immigration—and in part to provide what I take to be the most striking recent examples of literary cosmopolitanism.[96] By introducing this study with Conrad and concluding with Sebald, I aim to reemphasize the place of Europe within early- and late-twentieth-century British writing. I am suggesting that it is important, once again, to consider Britain's status as a European nation and to consider how Britain's relationship to Europe complicates the oppositions between empire and metropolis, East and West, and Europe and America that have dominated recent scholarship in British studies. Scholars who teach and write about literature in English often make a distinction between British and world literature, where "British" refers to literature in English produced in the British Isles and "world" to literature in English produced in the former British colonies (except the United States).[97] My point in writing about "the British novel" is to privilege texts that seem to be testing the protocols and boundaries of British culture. For this reason, it has seemed

right to me to include Joyce and Rushdie in this project, even though each also participates in other national and diasporic traditions. And I have included Sebald, even though his work was not written originally in English. Whether the texts I consider *are* "British" is less significant to me than the tension they articulate, what I see as a modernist tension, between enhancing and disabling that term.[98]

My emphasis on analytic strategies has led me to privilege different postures of cosmopolitanism, such as naturalness and evasion, rather than different experiences of cosmopolitanism, such as travel and migration. In this emphasis, I have sought to focus attention on the critical models that writers use to present and interpret experiences, while continuing to acknowledge the new range of experiences that shape the materials and circumstances of writing. The tactics I identify reflect this double gesture: on the one hand, they describe specific practices of cosmopolitan culture, such as the mixing or mixing-up of different cultural traditions within a single literary text; on the other hand, they serve as analytic paradigms that show, for example, how the purposeful mix-up of languages opposes the aggressive rhetoric of the "immigrant's mistake."[99] I have chosen terms that have both a local and general relevance: local because they operate in one or more examples of cosmopolitan writing; and general because they operate conceptually within theories of cosmopolitan practice. I have looked for words that function, often tacitly or unremarkably, within debates about modernism, political strategies of writing, and cosmopolitanism.

My own tactics are comparative in several senses: broadly, I have compared projects of critical cosmopolitanism with projects of modernist narrative, in an effort to revise what "international modernism" is and to argue that early-twentieth-century literary strategies continue to shape cosmopolitan practices at the end of the twentieth century; more narrowly, I have brought together the novels of contemporary immigrant writers, which focus on the global, non-Western entanglements of British culture, with those of European modernists, which focus primarily on the experiences of British-born characters and on entanglements closer to home. In the later period, I have treated writers of European descent alongside writers of non-European descent; in the earlier period, I have treated a writer born in England alongside writers born in Ireland and Poland. A comparative methodology offers risks and opportunities: on the risk side, it may seem insufficiently attentive to the distinctive histories of postcolonial, immigrant, or non-Western peoples and insufficiently resistant to an old, universalizing tradition of British fiction; on the opportunity side, it may introduce alternatives to the prevailing oppositions between postcolonial and British, East and West, margin and center, non-European and European.

While my aim has been to examine boundaries without stepping over them, it is true that I have tended to assemble rather than separate a variety of cos-

mopolitan projects.[100] As Carolyn Dever has argued about the role of theory in feminist activism, comparison or abstraction allows for the presentation of "a systemic justification, definition, explanation, or hypothesis," even though, by virtue of its sweep and selectivity, it "represents the failure to account for all the material claims and challenges local evidence presents."[101] By comparing different kinds of British, English, modernist, and cosmopolitan writing from two different periods, several places, and two languages, I have sought to analyze and suspend national distinctions. This allows for new, alternative distinctions to emerge—collectivities defined by culture rather than by place; by place rather than by language; by town or region rather than by country; by contestation rather than by consensus; or by values and pleasures rather than by history and law. Cosmopolitan writers allow us to see that an effective politics may need to be specific and purposeful, but it need not be local.

To establish the cosmopolitan project of modernist fiction, the first chapter of this book turns to Joseph Conrad, whose work is concerned with patterns of attentiveness, relevance, perception, and recognition. In his novels and prefaces, Conrad develops a style of *naturalness*—a manner that passes for nature—to show how these patterns shape conditions of national and international affiliation. Emphasizing naturalness, I approach Conrad as an inheritor not of Kipling but of Wilde: I argue that Oscar Wilde's social paradoxes prefigure, at the level of epigram, the cultural artifice that Conrad represents at the level of narrative. The chapter looks closely at *The Secret Agent* (1907), the "domestic" fiction that generated Conrad's reputation as a cosmopolitan writer. I argue that Conrad makes naturalness both a topic and a characteristic of his fiction: he makes his texts British not by excluding international characteristics but by displaying them. Treating British culture as a paradigm of manners rather than of instincts, Conrad presents his quintessentially British novels as "effects" (his word) of cosmopolitan production.

The second chapter focuses on James Joyce, whose cosmopolitanism is motivated not by a desire to seem British, as in Conrad's case, but by the competing urgencies of anti-British nationalism, aesthetic individualism, and antiracism. Valuing the *trivial* for its taint of pettiness and impermanence, Joyce promotes two, somewhat different models of national culture: a fixed culture that can be described through the collection of minor details; and a transient culture for which minor details mark the principle of inexhaustible, proliferating characteristics. Sustaining the tension between these two models, Joyce's triviality is committed both to describing Ireland and also to changing it. Reading among several of Joyce's texts, including "Two Gallants," *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and the "Wandering Rocks" and "Cyclops" episodes of *Ulysses*, I argue that Joyce cultivates triviality as an alternative to the false decorum of British imperialism, Irish anti-Semitism, and Catholic evangelism.

In the third chapter, I examine modernist efforts to replace a heroic model of political engagement with new political affects such as evasion and agitation. A style of *evasion* allows Virginia Woolf to analyze the generalizations of British culture and to notice, for example, that many British citizens have European origins, that metropolitan art is international art, and that London's landmarks memorialize the itinerary of imperial conquest. Whereas Woolf is often seen as an emphatically English writer, I argue that her analysis of heroism and her emphasis on the political nature of intimacy are crucial to later cosmopolitan fiction. Woolf does not focus on scenes of colonialism or immigration, as Joyce and Conrad do, but she shows how colonizing policies have shaped what it means to be an honorable man (to follow Cynthia Enloe's example) and how these policies in fact *rely* on ideas of honor and masculinity that are supposedly private and domestic.[102]

To establish the revival of modernist cosmopolitanism at the end of the century, the fourth chapter examines the novels of Kazuo Ishiguro, who embraces *treason*—the refusal to tell a consistent story about politics, about oneself, or about the past—as a tactic of immigrant writing and antifascist dissent. Ishiguro conceives of treason in people, nations, and art as more reliable and sometimes more responsible than absolute or merely dutiful allegiance. Like Woolf, Ishiguro rejects national triumphalism, whether British imperialism, German anti-Semitism, or Japanese militarism, and he situates his analysis within a tradition of novelistic manners: his narratives about immigration or world war are also narratives about marriage, problems between parents and children, unconsummated romantic attractions, and the details of professional housekeeping. Ishiguro offers a cosmopolitan approach to international topics, arguing, for example, that free speech and militarism are rooted in intimate disputes about social achievement, education, and childrearing. Showing that a politics of individualism can lead to a politics of collectivity, he proposes that global action cannot (indeed, does not) ignore the microintimacies of domesticity.

Tactics of *mix-up*, nicknaming, collage, assimilation, and flirtation are the subjects of the fifth chapter, which focuses on Salman Rushdie's critique of racist aphorism and xenophobic name-calling in *The Satanic Verses*, several stories from *East, West*, and his novel about New York, *Fury*. Like Michel de Certeau, who moves among the metropolises of London, New York, and Paris, Rushdie is an itinerant ethnographer, though of London, New York, and Bombay. In his writing of the 1990s, he embraces the literary and cultural mix-up, arguing that correctness in naming and social description does not constitute a practical or even ethical model for antiracist literature. In his later work, Rushdie distinguishes among different versions of cosmopolitanism: he suggests in *Fury* that the mix-up of national traditions is a common strategy not only

of twenty-first-century British fiction, such as his own, but also of multinational capitalism.

All of the authors I consider in this study write about adverse social conditions—fascism, world war, colonialism, displacement—but also about useless details, trivial sensations, exquisite moments, transient beauty, playful nicknames, and decorative objects. This diversity of topics generates a dizzying uncertainty of place and perspective that Sebald addresses directly in his novels. Making connections among high and low culture, among disparate anecdotes, narrators, and settings, Sebald's palimpsest of memories and nations introduces *vertigo* as an ethics of cosmopolitan culture. My final chapter turns to Sebald, who unassimilates the British novel by emphasizing the foreign entanglements of his own endeavor and of those past endeavors, such as Conrad's, whose example he follows and reimagines. Naturalness, triviality, evasion, treason, mixup, and vertigo: these styles of cosmopolitanism are the subject of this book.

COSMOPOLITAN MODERNISM

PART 1