Introduction
Cosmopolitan realism

> Cosmopolitanism has a very different cast when you think of it in terms, not so much of political theory, but of social experience and particularly in terms of the social experience of cities . . . Once you actually take an institution like the city, the link between cosmopolitan and cosmopolitanism is obviously a very particular one.
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> Richard Sennett, "Cosmopolitanism and the Social Experience of Cities"[1]

THE DIALECTICS OF COSMOPOLITANISM

Cosmopolitanism and the genres and goals of urban realism overlapped in mutually constitutive ways from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, and the legacy of their symbiosis persists into our own moment. This book is thus concerned both with *cosmopolitanism*, a discourse discernible across a range of nineteenth-century writings, and *cosmopolitan realism*, a mode of literary representation that arose in conjunction with that discourse. While I examine these as distinct phenomena, I also stress the relationship between them and hence that between discourse and literary form.

But why focus on *cosmopolitanism* at all, given the many other terms connected with global paradigms? Criticism that addresses globalization and its history has by now affected the discipline of literary studies as a whole, including Victorian studies. A variety of new paradigms have entered the literary-critical lexicon as a result. Christopher Gogwilt, for instance, uses the term *geopolitical* to investigate the literary impact of Britain's extensive range of influence in the late Victorian and modernist periods; Amanda Claybaugh's *The Novel of Purpose* employs the notion of a transatlantic genre to show how nineteenth-century British and American discourses of social reform were in explicit conversation; and Paul Young focuses on a global historical event – the Great

Exhibition of 1851 – to analyze the creation and evolution of what he calls "the Victorian New World Order."[2]

"Internationalism" has also become a key term. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever's anthology *The Literary Channel* uses both *inter-national* and *cross-channel* as ways of conceiving the British–French dialogue that influenced the development of the novel tradition on both sides of the Channel. Lauren Goodlad and Julia Wright, in their introduction to a journal issue on "Victorian Internationalisms," argue that while cosmopolitanism, Orientalism, and geopolitics are central to the construal of their key term, *internationalism* might best "situate literature's aesthetic, ethical, political – even geopolitical – insights in productive ways."[3] In light of this, and the fact that so many other related terms have proven useful to the analysis of Victorian literature and culture, a focus on cosmopolitanism requires explanation.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 1, cosmopolitanism has a particular value for Victorian studies because of its complex usages in the period; many of the meanings and uses of cosmopolitanism today can be traced to the nineteenth century. Unlike a number of other terms used in contemporary literary studies to transcend a focus on the nation and nationalism, such as *transnational*, *geopolitical*, *global*, and *postcolonial*, cosmopolitanism and its variants were used frequently by Victorians. The tensions between its different meanings thus provide insight into the wide range of responses to early globalization that characterized the period. In turn, these responses help us to understand the relationship between cosmopolitan thought and its varied formal incarnations in realism.

While discussions of cosmopolitanism first gained traction in the eighteenth century, the term began to circulate more widely in the Victorian era, appearing in a broad range of venues, from advertisements and political speeches to novels and periodicals.[4] Its contradictory and overlapping meanings can be loosely divided into two strands. Cosmopolitanism was used in the period to name the condition we now call *globalization*: "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole," in Roland Robertson's helpful definition.[5] This connotation was closely connected to the spread of global capital – as in John Stuart Mill's oft-cited phrase, "capital is becoming more and more cosmopolitan."[6] However cosmopolitanism was also used in a more idealistic Kantian mode to evoke the ideals of "perpetual peace" and "universal brotherhood" that might accompany economic globalization. These often conflicting affiliations and meanings were hard to disentangle. In 1851, for instance, cosmopolitanism-as-globalization was burnished with the

language of human interconnection and used to promote the Great Exhibition. This neo-Kantian ideal celebrated Britain's imperial and global economic power but intersected with other discourses that did not: namely, abolitionist and socialist forms of cosmopolitanism.[7]

Even though the term is used more self-consciously today, tensions and slippages between utopian and dystopian views of cosmopolitanism persist. Theorists such as Simon Gikandi, Tim Brennan, and Pheng Cheah, for instance, take a critical stance towards cosmopolitanism.[8] Showing how it is inextricably linked to the uneven development of capitalist globalization, they attribute many of its positive connotations to the false consciousness of liberal academics and writers. Others, perhaps most famously Amanda Anderson, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Bruce Robbins, and Rebecca Walkowitz, embrace these positive connotations and argue for the value of various qualified universalisms: articulations of human solidarity that seek to balance or modify universalism with particularism.[9] Rather than framing cosmopolitanism as an apology for globalization, these approaches visualize it as a potential antidote to the anomie of contemporary capitalism. Anderson argues, for example, that "the cosmopolitan tradition usefully complicates the idea of an insular Western modernity, and, moreover, may provide resources for the critique of modernity within modernity itself."[10]

Though nuanced and illuminating, these competing ways of identifying and judging cosmopolitanism make for a contentious and potentially confounding contemporary debate.[11] Given the complexity that has accrued to the term over time, it is hard either to pin it down as an object of study or to wave it as a banner of solidarity. In both the Victorian conversation and our own, cosmopolitanism is alternately seen as a phenomenon and an ideal, an ideology and an ethos. Furthermore, even though most critics agree that there are "good" as well as "bad" kinds of cosmopolitanisms, they generally stress the primacy of one over the other.

The problem with accounts that emphasize "good" over "bad" cosmopolitanisms or vice versa, however, is that they provide an incomplete picture of cosmopolitan practices in any given period. In order to do justice to cosmopolitanism's historical manifestations, I emphasize the bifurcated nature of its resonances. Rather than as a unitary concept, cosmopolitanism is best understood as a discourse engaged in an internal dialectic between the symptoms of globalization and their critique: one continually in the process of becoming. This definition allows us to understand how multiple versions might coexist simultaneously; to

analyze how one form of cosmopolitanism comes to dominate others at particular moments; and to see how some versions of cosmopolitanism might be both "good" and "bad" simultaneously. As explained in the Preface, my chapter sequence explores how cosmopolitanism changes over time, while individual chapters compare different forms of cosmopolitanism synchronically to show how ideologically dissimilar writers make analogous formal decisions in their attempts to imagine global unity. Conceived in dialectical terms, cosmopolitanism allows for a nuanced view of historical change and for a sense of how discourses about globalization function at a particular historical moment.

If cosmopolitanism is engaged in an internal dialectic between complicit and critical views of globalization, it is also engaged in an external dialectic with nationalism. Cosmopolitanism and nationalism are often understood antithetically but they were frequently seen as symbiotic in Enlightenment and Victorian writings.[12] Until recently, however, many influential works of criticism have focused exclusively on the nationalist frame of literature. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, for instance, famously identifies the imaginary space of the novel with the boundaries of the nation. On the level of form, the novel "provided the technical means for re-presenting the kind of imagined community that is the nation" through its evocation of "simultaneity-across-time," whereby different people's activities across the nation were shown to be coextensive with each other. On the level of content, novels evoke national community through their use of representative detail. The classic nineteenth-century novel, according to Anderson, depicts "the movement of a solitary hero through a sociological landscape that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside."[13]

While Anderson's anthropological outlook gave his book a relatively broad historical and geographical focus, literary critics have since looked closely at the interaction between the nation and the novel at different stages of the novel's development and in relation to distinct generic formations.[14] James Buzard's *Disorienting Fiction*, an important contribution to this growing body of knowledge, reads the novel's nationalism in relation to the new global consciousness that I see as vital to cosmopolitan realism.[15] Like Anderson, Buzard emphasizes the relation between literary and national form, but complicates Anderson's view of the "representative details" which map the novel's space on to the nation by seeing them as part of an autoethnographic project: one erected as a defense against the vast and formless "metropolitan anticulture" generated by imperialism, globalization, and Enlightenment universalism.[16] Over

and against an "unmappably vague universe, lacking in coordinates," the novel describes a bounded English culture: "a demarcated place capable of founding and sustaining collective and individual identities."[17] It does so by developing narrative techniques that foreshadow the Participant Observation of twentieth-century anthropologists, wherein cultural knowledge is produced by the mediation between outside and inside perspectives. Oscillating between the metropolitan viewpoint of an unplaced narrator and the specific locales of its central characters (between the omniscient narrator of *Bleak House* and the narrative of Esther, for instance), the Victorian novel *dislocates* British culture in order that it might be "repatriated, restored or 'returned'" to its people.[18]

By pointing to the self-consciousness with which the British novel scrutinizes its own culture, Buzard effectively contests the claims of Said and other critics who argue that Britain functioned as a "blank metaculture" during the imperial era while only *other* cultures served as objects of knowledge.[19] He also qualifies Said's notion that "[w]henever a cultural form or discourse aspired to wholeness or totality, most European writers, thinkers, politicians, and mercantilists tended to think in global terms" by claiming that "the English novelist's *way* of thinking in global terms was to hold the category of the global at bay by reinvesting and focusing detail-rapt attention upon the *national*."[20] *Disorienting Fiction* is thus a salutary corrective to earlier theories about the relation of imperialism to the novel and a valuable addition to debates about how the novel shapes community. I share Buzard's view that the novel is shaped by its consciousness of global and metropolitan space and mediates between totality and detail in representing collectivity, but make a different argument about the *scale* of collectivity by questioning the fundamental assumption of much recent criticism that the nation is the only significant form of community to which Victorian realism gives shape, and drawing attention to both the city and globe as important alternative paradigms of human collectivity in urban realism.[21] To put it differently, the metropolis not only symbolized an *anticulture* against which the nation must define itself; it also served as the embodiment of a *multiculture* that is part of, but different from, the rest of the country.[22]

In examining the cosmopolitan strain of Victorian literature, then, this book necessarily traces its engagement with nationalism as well. I show how mid-century works such as *Bleak House* generate the totalizing techniques that would allow later authors a holistic view of the world even as they remain wedded to a national outlook, and analyze the ways in which this later cosmopolitan vision is often vexed by the self-evidence of

the national frame. But unlike critics who see the nation as the only totality to which realism aspires, I emphasize the more fragile global whole also discernible in a wide range of nineteenth-century texts. Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, for example, which contrasts the identifiably English places of the countryside with the unreadable spaces of the metropolis, is much more readily associated with nationalism than cosmopolitanism. As Ian Baucom has argued, Wordsworth's poems often convey the lesson that "metropolitan culture, rather than revolutionary France, is now the enemy of Englishness, primarily because the city induces a forgetfulness of precisely the skill the poems teach – the skill of reading and valuing England's memorial places."[23] Yet in my interpretation, Wordsworth's vision of the city in Book VII also proffers utopian moments in which metropolitan space is vital to the poet's world-encompassing perception of the "unity of man." Though sublime and unstable, the narrator's panoramic view of London delineates a horizon that encircles the globe in a self-consciously democratic gesture. Wordsworth's worldly overview, like other examples of cosmopolitan realism I analyze, is an imaginative effort to turn the city into a vision of human collectivity: an effort of transcendence in the face of the dehumanizing global forces that London so dramatically brought into view.

Other critics have argued for a similarly recuperative view of Victorian cosmopolitanism, most notably Amanda Anderson in her influential *The Powers of Distance*.[24] Though she takes into account critiques of cosmopolitanism that link it to histories of racism and imperialism, she insists also on its progressive potential and takes seriously the ways in which individual writers participate in a "reflective interrogation of cultural norms" through a stance of cosmopolitan disinterest.[25] Defying the "hermeneutic suspicion" of literary critics who see Victorian forms of universalism as inherently fallacious, she strives instead to see them as "self-consciously pluralistic" and politically "enabling."[26] In defining cosmopolitanism as the "*aspiration* to a distanced view," she signals the degree to which the impossibility, or undesirability, of perfect distance is acknowledged by nineteenth-century writers themselves.[27]

While I draw on Anderson's use of cosmopolitanism to name a distanced stance and an investment in ideas of universal humanity, I place more emphasis on the discourse's constitutive ambivalence, giving equal weight to its pernicious elements alongside its more progressive ones: those moments when cosmopolitanism serves the goals of empire (as in the case of General William Booth); when it results in political stasis (as in the ending of *The Princess Casamassima*); and when it is

fundamentally self-contradictory (as in William Morris' mix of biological essentialism and socialist internationalism in *News from Nowhere*). Rather than focusing on the philosophies of individual authors, I look at the ways texts use verbal and visual versions of the sketch and panoramic mode to produce alternately distanced and close-up perspectives that turn the space of narrative into that of a global whole.[28] If Anderson's work allows us to see how critical stances, both then and now, attempt to navigate between particulars and universals, this book analyzes the formal maneuvers which enable that navigation.

CITY, UTOPIA, COSMOPOLIS

Victorian city literature includes some of the darkest and most despairing work of the period; it seems counterintuitive, therefore, to argue for its idealism. Joseph McLaughlin and Jonathan Schneer, among others, have amply demonstrated the degree to which London was thought to be irrevocably contaminated by its imperial reach.[29] As Ian Baucom notes in *Out of Place*, the city "seemed, uncannily, to situate the imperial 'without' inside the national 'within'" and was therefore seen as a threat to "England's authentic places of belonging."[30]

This book makes a case, nonetheless, for the importance of the category of utopia to a fuller understanding of city literature and cosmopolitan realism. Disenchanted with the forces that were bringing the world together, cosmopolitan writers attempted to *re*-enchant it by subjecting it to the alchemical power of the imagination. In doing so, they relied upon that "symbol of conscious design in society": the city.[31] Those who wrote about the city, after all, were necessarily engaging with its long and diverse literary history as the space of utopian community. Pointing to ancient texts such as Plato's *Republic*, Northrop Frye notes that "[t]he utopia is primarily a vision of the orderly city and of a city-dominated society," while Fredric Jameson makes a similar point vis-à-vis science fiction utopias, arguing for "the city ... as a fundamental form of the Utopian image."[32] Louis Marin, in his theoretical study of utopic imaginaries, argues not so much for the ideal coherence of the city as the possibilities generated by its *in*coherence: "The city map is a 'utopic' insofar as it reveals a plurality of places whose incongruity lets us examine the critical space of ideology."[33] In his account, cartographic and visual forms of knowledge are not inevitably allied with modern regimes of rationalization and imperial ideologies but can lend themselves to the re-imagining of social space.

Celebrating the utopian promise of global cities, a number of urban planners, geographers, and sociologists concur with this view, noting that the cosmopolitan populations and endless shape-shifting of cities make them impossible to homogenize or control.[34] Saskia Sassen's work, for example, which uses economic analyses and sociological studies of immigrant communities, upholds Marin's more text-based analysis. While Sassen focuses on the way global economic systems shape the local spaces and politics of modern cities in ways that result in gross inequalities, she also argues that cities allow for the emergence of new identities and transnational politics (as in the rise of queer politics and their international coordination in various urban events, such as LGBT parades). Materializing the contradictions of global capital, urban spaces become "strategic sites for disempowered actors."[35] Yet another version of the contemporary utopian city can be found in Jacques Derrida's short but suggestive essay "On Cosmopolitanism," in which he argues that the city might serve as an alternative to the state. "Cities of refuge," in his view, might allow for a kind of hospitality that addresses the exclusions of the state and the modern problem that Hannah Arendt identified as that of the displaced person.[36]

Notwithstanding these more hopeful analyses of the intersection of utopias and cities, the totalizing perspectives that I associate with nineteenth-century urban utopianism have been justifiably regarded with suspicion. Michel Foucault's famous analysis of the overview of Bentham's panopticon, for example, has become emblematic of our understanding of the institutionalized, society-wide nature of modern disciplinary power, and has been convincingly aligned with the viewpoint of the omniscient narrator of the realist novel.[37] Kurt Koenigsberger, in keeping with Foucault's critique of power, specifically connects the proliferation of Victorian forms that attempted to produce a sense of totality (such as the menagerie, the exhibition, and the novel) with the ideology and management of British imperialism.[38]

Taking into account both the positive potential of utopian thought and the coercive possibilities of totality, I argue that cosmopolitan realism involves a version of what Fredric Jameson has famously called "cognitive mapping."[39] Jameson defines this as "the coordination of the existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with unlived, abstract conceptions of the global totality," pointing out that "we all necessarily … cognitively map our individual social relationship to local, national, and international class realities."[40] The work of totalizing, then, does not necessarily lead to totalitarianism in Jameson's account, as it does for

other theorists. He sees cognitive mapping as an acceptance of the fact that capitalism, as "the fundamental rule of the world," has set "absolute barriers and limits to social changes and transformations undertaken in it"; but while the imaginative work of thinking of the world as a whole acknowledges the delimiting forces that draw it together, it can do so in the hope of transcending them.[41]

By illustrating how London might stand in for a utopian vision of the world, cosmopolitan realism gives shape to the otherwise invisible and fragmented totality of a global system.[42] It thus participates both in literal mapping (the work of documenting and organizing the city that draws on visual knowledge) and in cognitive mapping (a reckoning with the invisible that attempts to imagine the world as a geopolitical totality and potentially as a shared community).[43] The latter is an activity that Jameson regards as crucial to the construction of an alternative political and social reality, citing its "Utopian power as the symbolic affirmation of a specific historical and class form of collective unity."[44]

Jameson associates cognitive mapping with the late capitalism of the modern and postmodern periods, arguing that it is in this period that imperialism and global capitalism contribute to a sense that the economy of the nation is no longer situated within its geographical boundaries. But in doing so, he misses the significance of cosmopolitan realism for what he calls a "geopolitical aesthetic." As I argue below, there are a number of historical and literary rationales for seeing the nineteenth century as the starting-point of the imperial and metropolitan imaginary that Marxists like Jameson and Raymond Williams locate in the modern period. Through the synecdochal substitution of London for the world, imaginative works engage in an early form of cognitive mapping that must be recognized as such if we are to properly understand its later incarnations.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND UTOPIA: THE PROBLEM OF NONCOEVALNESS

In imagining the world-city as a microcosm of humanity and attempting to provide a unified vision thereof, writers had to contend with the fact that the very notion of universal humanity was under debate in the emergent discipline of anthropology: a discipline defined, early on, by its efforts to determine the nature and extent of human differences.[45]

At mid-century, many ethnologists held a "monogenist" position which "described the genesis of all races from the single creative source in Adam." This was pitted against an alternative, polygenist account

"according to which theory different races had sprung up in different places, in different 'centers of creation.'" As the anatomists who propagated these theories would have it, people from disparate parts of the world probably belonged to different species. This view more self-evidently elevated human differences over commonalities, but both positions supported the notion of European racial superiority, for the monogenist position "saw different races as having fallen unevenly from the perfect Edenic form incarnated in Adam."[46]

Post-Darwinian theories of human development complicated the picture further. From its publication in 1871 onwards, E. B. Tylor's account of human evolution, *Primitive Culture*, helped to shape the anthropological debate. Like the monogenists, Tylor saw human civilization as a single narrative but, unlike them, explained human differences by hypothesizing that different groups had evolved at different rates. While the human mind had equal capabilities across cultures, Tylor argued, some cultures were more evolved than others.

Each of these anthropological theories created an implicit hierarchy within the concept of humanity, participating in what Johannes Fabian calls a "denial of coevalness." Fabian defines this denial as "*a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse*" (his emphasis).[47] In the nineteenth century, he contends, this gesture allowed anthropology to contribute "above all to the intellectual justification of the colonial enterprise."[48] Indeed, the idea that Europe, and particularly Britain, was in the vanguard of human development influenced not only imperial ideology but many other realms of social thought as well, such as political economy. Despite the rhetoric of equality and cosmopolitanism at the Great Exhibition, for example, Britain was clearly positioned as the nation with the most evolved economy: a gracious host inviting the world in to follow her example. As Paul Young puts it, "the Great Exhibition articulated the concept of a British imperial mission to raise up the non-European world after the image of the Victorian metropolis."[49]

At the end of the century, theories of degeneration and the increased scientism and proliferation of racial discourses made egalitarian or universal views of human community even harder to fathom, or articulate convincingly. The idea that evolution, rather than charting a uniform course for mankind, could backtrack and produce atavistic types (primarily to be found among working-class and imperial subjects), permeated a range of discourses, and steadily undermined the progressive telos of earlier evolutionary thinking which, even if it placed European cultures