

Cosmopolitanism and Neocitizenship in Teju Cole's *Open City* and Zadie Smith's *NW*

Introduction:

Cosmopolitanism and Citizenship in Neoliberal Societies

The concept of cosmopolitanism, that is, world citizenship was born in the European civilization, and it has existed primarily within the European context for more than two thousand years. Even though it reflects an approach based on Western culture, during this unthinkable long period, the meaning of the word has noticeably transformed. The expression “world citizenship” evokes an urban environment and, in this respect, cosmopolitanism, cities, and citizenship can be seen as inseparable ideas, though the meanings of these terms have always been defined by a given social and political context. The ancient Greek idea of cosmopolitanism, in short, means that people deserve fair treatment, just like quasi-siblings, which should be coupled with a profoundly open-minded attitude. However, as my analysis of Teju Cole's *Open City* and Zadie Smith's *NW* shows, today's cosmopolitanism sometimes suggests an escape to avoid facing personal responsibility, for example, for violence. It can also be a constraint in the case of an abused victim who may prefer to move far away rather than live where the violence happened. Thus, ultimately, people in both categories may leave their countries of origin for a new home where nobody knows what happened to them. The main characters in the novels I explore in this paper carry injuries or secrets from their pasts; they subsequently become world citizens, establish a new existence, and start to flexibly adapt to new circumstances yet cannot really overcome the previous trauma or misery.

Cosmopolitanism suggests that despite profound cultural and social differences, mankind constitutes one community. The first usage of the word in the fourth century B.C. differs from its 21st century meaning and, due to never-ending social changes, the meaning of the term has changed and keeps changing. The history and the aftermath of colonization, slave trade, and imperialism has created new explanatory dimensions to the interpretation of cosmopolitanism and transformed its classical meaning. Colonization has irreversibly changed, among others, the social composition of the inhabitants in many cities of colonizing countries, and the specific social issues and typical challenges they are coping with at present, for instance, racism, prejudice, and undue police violence can be retraced to this heritage to some extent.

Similar to the concept of cosmopolitanism, the meaning of citizenship has also transformed in contemporary Western societies. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines citizenship as a form of relationship between an individual and the state giving freedom and

responsibility to the citizens. However, according to Cherniavsky, the “old” term citizen refers to abstract equality in bourgeois civil society and since the 1990s, heated debates have taken place on the relationship of the nation and the state under the political and economic condition of neoliberalism (Cherniavsky 23), which showed it clearly that the term citizenship, not unlike cosmopolitanism, needs to be redefined. Accordingly, the meaning of cosmopolitanism and citizenship has been in the process of transformation under the economic imperative of neoliberalism, and the aim of this study is to explore how 21st century literary works thematize this change. The question I am searching for an answer to is what new dimensions of cosmopolitanism can be traced in Teju Cole’s *Open City* and in Zadie Smith’s *NW*, and how a new phenomenon, that I call “neocitizenship” appears and shapes the behaviour of fictitious characters. The novels are part of diasporic literature, they were written by a Nigerian American and a British-Jamaican author, thus they can be primary sources to explore topical issues such as migration, prejudice, and violence from the perspectives of contemporary diasporic fiction.

Although neoliberalism is an economic term, it has an impact on many non-economic spheres of the present Western world, including the concepts of cosmopolitanism and neocitizenship. Neoliberalism is a “brutal form of market capitalism” (Huehls 2), and as Huels points out, its roots lie in the Bretton Woods conference in 1944 (Huehls 2). This conference originally intended to rebuild Europe after World War II and came up with a theoretical model for the liberal market economy. The fundamental values established in the conference determined the following decades of international economic policy, and the basic principles of classical liberalism, such as liberty and economic freedom, prevailed. In the 1970s and 1980s, neoliberalism was a political and economic project, a renewed form of free-market capitalism which was “initially designed to restore the power of economic elite” (Huels 2). Since the 1990s, political rationality in the spirit of neoliberalism has “extended market values to all institutions and social actions” (Huels 2). The conference reconciled essential economic principles with basic principles of social liberalism, such as equality and justice, and as a result, the “free-market economy was embedded in a social safety net” (Huels 5). In brief, since, neoliberalism has penetrated deeply all spheres of civil life, it also inevitably influences fields such as literature and the humanities.

However, according to Huels, the reconciliation of classical and social liberalism resulted in a neoliberal model with an inherent tension, a contradiction (5). Fukuyama declared that “history ended,” the “ideological struggle has been replaced by economic calculation to satisfy consumer demands” (Huels 8), and literature with all forms of art, education, entertainment, and health, among others, have entered a phase where profit maximalization is

the main goal (Huels 8). Market rationality penetrated non-economic, social, and cultural domains; a shift of thinking took place, and efficient, pragmatic, and profitable principles were accepted in social, cultural, and educational questions (Huels 9). In the wake of neoliberal changes, the word “citizen” has slowly been divested of the modifier “bourgeois” and gave way to the birth of new descriptors, for instance, “entrepreneurial citizen-subjects” (Cherniavsky 2). In this Western, neoliberal world, the novels *Open City* by Teju Cole, and *NW* by Zadie Smith were born, and some characters in the stories can be called neocitizens because they represent the difference between ethical principles of cosmopolitanism and the inhumanity of neoliberal practices.

Cherniavsky’s recent monograph *Neocitizenship: Political Culture after Democracy* published in 2017, helps understand the social background of the novels because she discusses the changing contexts and practices of citizenship in 21st century neoliberal societies (5). The expression needs to be introduced; Cherniavsky claims, “as we are living in the midst of a momentous reconfiguration of political order (Cherniavsky 11). She suggests that “neocitizens” are citizens who are not primarily characterized by an active political identity (Cherniavsky 36), but they are neoliberal subjects with fewer claims on the state; they are “citizen-subjects” who are obliged to become entrepreneurs of themselves (Cherniavsky 38). Cherniavsky assumes that in the context of neoliberal governance, the classical term citizenship (which implies abstract equality, racial nationalism, bourgeois civil society) has been transformed, eroded, and disappeared and instead, flexible (23), openly opportunistic (64) and entrepreneurial neocitizens live in the neoliberal states (11). Since Cole’s and Smith’s novels explore the dynamic transformation of characters with biracial or multi-ethnic backgrounds in an urban context, Cherniavsky’s observations may prove useful in highlighting the social-civic environment in which the personal stories unfold.

Correspondingly, it has become obvious by the second decade of this millennium that under the condition of neoliberalism, the expected advent of freedom and equality that cosmopolitanism fosters are lagging. Instead of working like a well-oiled machine, diverse and multicultural societies are struggling with new challenges besides the accustomed ones, for instance, instead of becoming integrated, many people live in quasi-enclaves. Although the ever-expanding boundaries of a global world make London and New York more versatile, cosmopolitanism is still not a synonym for a new type of freedom. In this essay, it is argued that cosmopolitanism is acquiring new meanings in neoliberal societies; it is becoming an unattainable, utopian ideal, an escape, as the two diasporic novels I discuss, Teju Cole’s *Open City* and Zadie Smith’s *NW* suggest. Some characters are self-made entrepreneurs, others are

cosmopolitans showcasing an approach that differs from the classical interpretation, and both categories express the disillusionment of a nominally open society that is bound with the long-standing ties of neoliberalism in a shrinking world. They chase a mirage and can never reach the glowing image of equality as they fail to face personal responsibility and run up against the norms and limits of neoliberal societies.

The Classical Conception of Cosmopolitanism

The examination of the earliest usage and interpretation of cosmopolitanism is indispensable because it gives a solid basis for further comparison and helps understand how the meaning of the term has changed over the centuries. Robert Spenser summarizes the similarities between the classical concept and the contemporary meaning as follows: “in its colloquial usage, cosmopolitanism still means roughly what it meant to the Cynics of the fourth century BC and later to the Stoics, to Christian intellectuals such as Saint Paul and Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire and Kant: devotion to humanity and detachment from local bonds” (Spenser 2). A.A. Long explores more details, discloses historical characters, and discusses the various interpretations of philosophers, writers, and politicians. He sheds light on the early process of how cosmopolitanism was born and broadened its meaning. As he points out, the Cynical Diogenes of Sinope is claimed to have coined the expression “cosmopolitan” with the meaning “citizen of the world” in the 4th century BC (Long 2). When Diogenes moved to Athens, he lived there as a “resident alien” without the rights of citizens, he approved of being described as “stateless, homeless, without native land, a beggar, a vagabond, living by the day” (Long 5). In this case, world citizenship looks like a combination of refugee and hippy, rather than the description of a position that refers to a worldwide community (Long 5). Zeno the Cypriot established the Stoic school of philosophy and Stoicism broadened the meaning of cosmopolitanism by arguing that people need to be treated as quasi-siblings, whose claims on our care and fair treatment are grounded simply in the fact that we are all human beings” (Long 2).

The ancient meaning of cosmopolitanism is not based on the notion of multicultural sympathy, which is very likely the first quality attributed to this word in the twenty-first century. Correspondingly, Zeno the Cypriot states that “we should regard all people as our fellow citizens and local residents” (Long 6). Later Cicero has described the universe as a kind of city that is a common home of gods and human beings (Long 6). Taraborrelli adds that Cicero “identified the contents of one’s duties towards others” in his text *On Duties* and found them

essential in transforming the “mutual bond of solidarity linking men [...] from a moral obligation into a true legal obligation” (xi) The next example, a Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius formulates a statement of cosmic citizenship, a conception of universal and shared citizenship, in his view, the world is a kind of state (Long 7). These examples show that the classical Greek interpretation of cosmopolitanism advocates a brotherly disposition toward locals and strangers as well.

In conclusion, the classical meaning of cosmopolitanism was born in a European culture which may explain its Eurocentric nature. Its early proponents, - Diogenes the Cynic and Zeno de Cypriot, for instance, believed that all human beings deserve fair treatment just like quasi-siblings. It was the attitude of the wise who could live anywhere in a leisurely manner. The expression did not advocate human rights per se: it was rather based on the notion that people should be accountable for their actions and implied a preference to live in peace with fellow human beings.

Modern Conceptions of Cosmopolitanism

It is Immanuel Kant who has defined cosmopolitan citizenship in a way that continues to have an impact on the 21st century. He speaks of a world in which states are obligated to recognize that every human being has the right to visit a foreign country without being treated with hostility. The ultimate goal of history would be to establish a community and, in his work, *Perpetual Peace*, Kant, envisions this ideal world, a cosmopolis, a world made up of confederated free republics (Taraborrelli xi-xii). This idea has endured throughout the 20th century and has been the inspiration underlying global projects such as The League of Nations or the United Nations Organization to promote international peace and defend fundamental human rights (Taraborrelli xii). In the 20th century, the Kantian notion of cosmopolitanism became a theoretical resource to face the challenges triggered by globalization processes (Taraborrelli xiii).

Today, in literary academic discourses, the term cosmopolitanism seems to be more heterogeneous, and, sometimes, contradictory; it seems to be an umbrella term. Sonya O. Rose notes how debated the concept is in academic texts and elaborates on an acceptable definition: “an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrast rather than uniformity” (Rose 3). Spenser also describes the term as contradictory because it may designate the Kantian ideal of hospitality, it may refer to an expanded definition of citizenship, or it can label a cultural mixing represented by literary texts

(Spencer 2). Both arguments include a new aspect of the contemporary academic approach, namely, cultural mixing, broadening further the earliest interpretation of cosmopolitanism and revealing the experience of the characters in *Open City*. Cultural mixing can be connected to colonial heritage and post-colonial migration as well. The presence of entirely, semi-, or non-assimilated citizens in world cities today, exemplified by Farouq and Khalil in Cole's novel, for instance, who belong to the middle class, shows that cosmopolitanism should not be a favoured notion of a small group of well-educated citizens. More attention must be paid to specific positions, for instance, those on the margin, because the universalizing assumptions of Western cosmopolitanism need new, more sophisticated definitions in the 21st century.

In *Open City*, cosmopolitanism refers to real or imaginative mobility, and a summary of personal memories and collective historical recollections as well (Gehrmann 9). Besides mobility, in Julius' case, the word can be associated with both intellectual curiosity and a normative concept that characterizes globalized societies. In a similar vein, *Open City* is customarily read as an exemplary cosmopolitan performance (Vermeulen 3) that both fosters and critiques cosmopolitanism. The accelerating progress in global economies and societies, and the escalating migration outline that the number of possible interpretations of cosmopolitanism will increase in the future, and probably more new terms will be born that follow the latest developments in multi-ethnic societies.

The two novels explore the experiences of diasporic characters in American and British societies in the 21st century in which new layers of the word cosmopolitanism have been in the process of shaping. One such new expression is vernacular cosmopolitanism, which has been coined by Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha found Naipaul's central character enthralling in *The Mimic Men* because he worked through his despair, anxieties, and alienation and lived a sort of incomplete but intricately communitarian and busy life (11). Bhabha calls this type of character vernacular cosmopolitan, meaning that such characters can move in-between cultural traditions, and live hybrid forms of life. His term also refers to refugees, who are on the periphery of Western societies and belong to more than one language or culture (13). According to Bhabha, vernacular cosmopolitans are free but have the right to difference in equality (16). In other words, vernacular cosmopolitanism describes the universality of non-Western citizens with local bonding, who can be called "local-universal citizens" since they are willing to broaden their cultural horizons. These citizens, nevertheless, do not consider equality as "neutralization of differences in the name of the 'universality'" (Bhabha 17). However, the context Bhabha deals with is mainly the post-colonial habitat of better-educated members of the former British Empire; undoubtedly, he describes an intellectual battlefield.

Open City and *NW* are examples of urban fiction where the city, the setting of the stories, plays a central role. The metropolises, New York in the *Open City*, and London in *NW* are not randomly chosen environments. Both novels deal with characters who have multi-ethnic backgrounds, family ties, and social relationships and they are in a city, a perfect hiding place to run away from past mistakes. In the case of Cole's novel, the main character lives and travels through three continents, yet he always chooses a world city. Julius is a psychiatrist, an intelligent world citizen who conforms to certain norms, and he artistically keeps a balance between his local and transnational commitments. He pursues a successful medical career, observes, compares, concludes case studies, and despite his struggles on a personal level, he feels at home in many cities. Surprisingly, under the surface of a relatively peaceful life, he hides the dark shades of his past; consciously or subconsciously, he still escapes from the demons conjured at the age of fourteen when he possibly committed rape in Nigeria. Furthermore, *NW* paints with darker colours both the surface and the depth of city life in the twenty-first century: the novel exposes disharmony, a morose, bitter atmosphere of a district in London where typical characters struggle in a life fraught with many complications and they are on the verge of losing the game. They are not excluded from the ideal world of freedom and equality; they just do not pursue dreams out of reach because it is beyond dispute that the utopian community of a harmonious cosmopolitan society does not exist in the world of this novel. This claim is supported by a sentence on the very first page of *NW*: "Here's what Michel likes to say: not everyone can be invited to the party (Smith 3), revealing that equality is only a mirage.

Universal versus Local Values

As a friendly gesture, Julius sends a copy of *Cosmopolitanism* by Kwame Anthony Appiah to Farouq, a Moroccan young man who runs a phone shop in Brussels (Cole 124). Although no concrete part of the book is specially referred to or analysed in detail during their discussions, a modern conception of cosmopolitanism offered by the publication must have made a deep impact on Julius. Just like Julius, Appiah was raised by biracial parents, one of whom is African; thus, they share a common background. Another similarity is that Appiah has always had a sense of family and tribe that is multiple and overlapping (Appiah 17). When Appiah discusses the question of whether it is worth speaking about universal values and universal morality or not, he undoubtedly communicates his commitment to objective values, which he defines as universal and local values (Appiah 20). He is thinking about universal

morality that rests on both being part of the place where one lives and a part of a broader human community (Appiah 17) In other words, certain values are universal just as certain values are local: this argument adds new features to the classical interpretation of cosmopolitanism; however, as my analysis will showcase, the reconciliation of the two types of values remains unsuccessful in both novels. For instance, an ironic remark in NW reveals that Smith's novel regards universal ethical principles utopistic, which are challenged by local practices: "She and Michel are invited to provide something like local colour" (Smith 87); Leah and Michel are a couple, Leah is white, Michel is coloured.

Julius meets Dr Maillotte, a retired surgeon, on the flight to Brussels, whose approach to maintaining or losing personal ties to a country can be read as a model for how to advance from a national to a global direction. They have a long discussion on the plane and later meet for lunch (Cole 88). Dr Maillotte shows that it is possible "to work through the national towards the global" because they, by nature, never have to choose between the local and the global but their inborn cosmopolitanism helps reconcile local attachments with global allegiances (Spenser 38). Local attachment can mean, for instance, personal relationships in New York or Nigeria, and Dr Maillotte travels to Belgium every now and then because it is her friends that keep her coming back. She thinks that her husband slowly loses connection to Brussels (Cole 142), and it can be one reason why she mainly comes to Europe without him. She asks Julius about his travels to Nigeria; he says that he rarely visits the country of his birthplace because he is rather busy, and he is losing some of his connections.

Farouq is thinking about global and local values from a different angle, he would like to be the next Edward Said (Cole 128). He refers to Said who published his *Orientalism* in 1978 in which he criticized the stereotypical Western vision of otherness: "European culture was able to manage – and even to produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (Said 3). Farouq is disappointed because the marked difference is never accepted and never seen as containing its own value in Europe. Farouq describes "Belgium as a difficult place for an Arab" to live because there is a specific trouble about being here and maintaining the uniqueness and difference (Cole 142-143). Nevertheless, Farouq represents a self-contradictory point because he says: "in my opinion, the Palestinian question is the central question of our time" (Cole 121), which suggests that he believes this question is more important than others.

Farouq's arguments and reference to Said can also mean the failure of cosmopolitan ideals and may imply that, just like in the case of Western orientalism criticized by Said, a similar dilemma exists in the case of the Eurocentric definition of cosmopolitanism. This is an

example when the two ideals, universal concern and respect for legitimate difference clash and there is a sense in which cosmopolitanism is the name not of the solution but the challenge (Appiah 15). Farouq is the character in the novel who represents the emotions ideological differences may stir. He recalls a political philosophy class discussion when they were supposed to choose between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, and he chose Malcolm X because he “recognized that difference contained its own value” (Cole 105) and argued that “No one likes foreign domination (114).” In other words, Farouq chose him not only because he was Muslim, but Malcolm X represented values that were equally important to him, and Malcolm X believed that an ideal society is free from the rule of another nation, which may reflect Said’s point.

Moreover, Farouq deems that his job at the phone shop perfectly exemplifies a harmonious community of different people; they are making calls to a wide spectrum of places, Colombia, Egypt, Senegal, Brazil, France, and Germany, they can live together, and keep their own values intact at the same time (Cole 112). His opinion is in line with Appiah’s conviction who puts a strong emphasis on the idea that difference and cosmopolitanism often go hand in hand. Appiah states that cosmopolitans know about differences, and they are eager to learn from them. In reality, there are so many human possibilities worth exploring, that it is neither expected nor desired that every society should converge on a single mode of life (Appiah 15). Even though the episode in the phone shop shows an ideal case, it can be read as a critique because the main aim of this shop is to sell its products, it is a profit-oriented business organization, and the cultural difference of the business owner is not considered a significant factor at all. As the main feature of neoliberalism is the freedom of the market, profit-oriented business, and entrepreneurialism, it is ironical that a lucrative business enterprise models the idealized harmonious coexistence.

Professor Saito, who used to give lectures at Maxwell College before he retired, can be seen as another character who embodies universal values. Appiah argues that cosmopolitanism is based on two ideas: first, it is an obligation that exists toward others that stretches beyond personal interest, and second, human lives are taken seriously since practices and beliefs are treated as significant (Appiah 14) The gay professor enjoys Julius’ company, shares his opinion with him, warns him that he “must be careful about closing too many doors (Cole 172), which can be a relevant piece of advice to help him maintain the cosmopolitan open mindset. Julius visits him in New York, sometimes due to respectful obligation. One day Julius meets Mary who used to work as a nurse for Professor Saito and lets him know how the professor enjoyed the visits (Cole 234), meaning that not only did Julius highly appreciate the professor but he also equally appreciated him. They have a master-disciple relationship, and when Julius learns

that the professor is gay (Cole 172) he only says that “I had had conversations for three years without any idea about this vital part of his life” (Cole 172) and thinks that there is no reason to bring it up.

Another time, Professor Saito expresses the view that the advances in equal rights for gay people are welcome (Cole 171), and Julius again does not articulate his view on the subject, which shows his respect for difference. His behaviour, on one hand, reflects Appiah’s views who mentions the following example to demonstrate the double standard in society: “a man and a woman kiss in a movie theatre. No one takes a second look. Two men walk hand in hand in the high street. People are embarrassed. They hope their children do not see. They do not know how to explain it to them” (Appiah 87). Appiah comments on same-gender relationships suggesting that homosexuality should not be stigmatized but can be a sexual orientation worth respecting. On the other hand, there is another reading of Julius’s response to Professor Saito’s remark; Julius’ restraint may suggest that, though he enjoys the company of the Professor, he is unable to express his solidarity, he can exist only on an intellectual level, he cannot connect to people emotionally. For example, in another episode, he does not express his anger for the two Afro-American boys who rob him, he goes on as if no serious attack has happened to him. He is equally unable to bond deeply with his girlfriend and after breaking up, he remains emotionally “intact” in his inaccessible and unbreakable world. Partly, his cold relationship with his mother and partly, the rape he probably committed and suppressed can explain his behaviour. His inability to become involved emotionally and face personal responsibility suggests that his cosmopolitanism is utopistic.

According to Appiah, a further tool the cosmopolitan disposition relies on in case of discord is conversation; it is a universal value, and it can be the first step when the voices of dissent are heard. Appiah acknowledges that a “conversation doesn’t have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values; it’s enough that it helps people get used to one another (Appiah 87)” Julius applies this method when he talks to Farouq and Khalil; he listens to them and transmits their one-sided opinion. He does not refuse or quarrel, but he also shares his final thoughts about Farouq’s opinion: “there was something powerful about him, a seething intelligence, something that wanted to believe itself indomitable. But he was one of the thwarted ones” (Cole 129). Here Julius understands the partial points, he gives a non-biased representation of Farouq’s thoughts, thinks about his points, and concludes with a private opinion, a decent statement at the end. Appiah says that often “we enter every conversation without a promise of final agreement” (Appiah 56) and this is the outcome of the conversations between Julius and Farouq as well. It sounds a bit disappointing because the two points of view

do not come closer in the end; nevertheless, reaching an agreement on such a question would far not be utopian but rather, down to earth.

However, Appiah's evaluation, in itself, shows the utopistic feature of his idea because the aim of a conversation should be to understand the other person, while Appiah's argument sounds as if he immediately apologized for the failure. Appiah argues that it may happen that people involved in a conversation do not agree in the end and he identifies three kinds of disagreement about values: failing to share a vocabulary of evaluation; giving different interpretations to the same vocabulary or giving different weights to values (Appiah 74). Obviously, such a disagreement remains a permanent source of tension in the long run and the idea of agreement, a universal value, remains unattainable. Farouq holds Germany responsible for Israel, not the Palestinians (Cole 114), which is an example of a controversial evaluation on the status of Israel. He shares his views with Julius who listens carefully to his friend's points and recognizes the difference between a Muslim and a Christian point of view, but he does not refute Farouq's claim. He takes, again, a distant, outsider position, which might be considered polite because, they are, indeed, strangers. Nevertheless, they may be on different platforms, too, but it does not mean that they must clam up when a hot issue arises. Although they evaluate historical facts in a different manner, the conversation proceeds, and it agrees with Appiah's take when he states that according to cosmopolitan ethics, the connection is upheld despite differences (Appiah 129). Another example of this point is the cosmopolitan treatment of disagreement between Pauline and Michel in *NW*: Pauline says that they had their differences with Michel, but he loves Leah (Smith 45). The narrator reveals earlier in *NW* that even though there is only mistrust and misunderstanding, the fact that the mother and husband wish to have a baby forms a sort of coalition between natural enemies (Smith 18). Surprisingly, the narrator refers here to the husband and the mother-in-law which is strange because it is the husband and the wife who should discuss this private family issue. This shows that something is wrong with the relationship between spouses: they are unable to discuss problems in an open and honest way. The examples above show the basic aim of conversation: sharing views without being compelled to take sides and this is what Julius represents when he gives an objective image of Farouq's and Khalil's opinions.

In addition, Appiah expands the contemporary meaning of cosmopolitanism with two modern interpretations, which are probably the most feasible of all his proposals since both ideas can help to reconcile local values with universal ones. First, the fact that we can agree about what to do even when we do not agree on why (Appiah 75) and second, practices and not principles are what enable us to live together in peace (Appiah 88). Farouq exemplifies this take

when he says that he is a Muslim who believes that Islam is not a religion but a way of life, and he understands the historical structure with the help of Marx. Despite his strong convictions, he claims to be a pacifist who does not believe in violence, and he would not kill anyone even if a gun were pointed at his family (Cole 115), that is, he wants to live in peace with everybody despite obvious religious, political, or ideological differences. Even though his arguments might be controversial, in fact, he is against brutality, and this is what matters when people of different ethnical backgrounds live together in a city. The point of conversation is not to reach a final consensus on how to rank and order values, as Appiah argues (Appiah 20). In a cosmopolitan spirit, when we cannot agree, the understanding that our responses are shaped by some of the same vocabularies can make it easier to agree to disagree (Appiah 45). However, this episode shows that making clear statements based on personal conviction does not lead to a favoured diversity but rather contributes to maintaining the unchangeable discrepancy.

On the other hand, if parties in a conversation merely reveal their views, it may prove insufficient to overcome disagreement. Therefore, Appiah refuses relativism because it does not support conversation, it only supports the disputing parties to make statements that prove they are right. “From where I stand, I am right. From where you stand, you are right” (Appiah 45). It is clear in *Open City* that the reconciliation of practices and principles remains unattainable, and achieving consensus seems a utopistic aim. Relativism is thought to be leading to tolerance; nonetheless, unless parties learn from each other, the conversation becomes pointless. An example of disagreement without a reassuring end is when Julius takes a taxi and forgets to say hello to the black driver. When he gets into the cab, he is a bit of a clueless person, and it takes a few minutes to tell him his address. By the time he asks the driver how he is doing, the driver has been stiffened and seems disagreeable. Julius did not say hello to a “brother,” another African fellow, and an apology does not help. Even though both men explain why they behave in a particular way, the look of reproach remains on their faces. There is silence in the cab on the way home, the driver prefers to switch on the radio, and finally, he takes him to the wrong address, several blocks from his apartment. Julius asks him to correct the error, but he is unwilling to cooperate; thus, Julius must walk home in the rain. (Cole 40) In this episode, the two men have African backgrounds, and they are expected to practice solidarity but due to miscommunication, the silence of disagreement prevails and shows an unspoken discord instead of the silence of tolerance.

The novels, not unlike theoretical arguments, suggest that cosmopolitanism is humanistic ethics that is hardly reconcilable with neoliberalism, which is a profit-driven idea. Appiah has come to a similar conclusion since he states that the real challenge to

cosmopolitanism is not the belief that other people do not matter at all; it's the belief that they do not matter very much. (Appiah 142). This characterizes the nominally open society *Open City* portrays. Farouq is a janitor at an American school in Brussels on a foreign campus of an American university and he pretends not to have any ideas of his own. Once the head of academics comes around and somehow, get talking, the man is surprised but remains open. The principal is responsive to this conversation, and he invites Farouq in his generous American way to his office to continue their discussion. However, when they meet next time, the principal not only refuses to speak to him but, in fact, pretends that he had never seen Farouq before. He is just a janitor, mopping the floor, he is nothing more than a part of the furniture and when he greets him reminding him of their conversation, the principal says nothing (Cole 104). It is not known whether the director ignores him because he is not a student or because he is from Morocco, but in this case, he is not dealt with as an equal person with respect, and Farouq feels that despite his intellectual achievement, he does not matter much. This example reveals the basic difference between cosmopolitanism, which is human-centred ethics, and neoliberalism, which is a business-oriented perspective.

The analysis of the local versus global aspects of cosmopolitanism, then, suggests that representing both dimensions generates tension that remains unsolved throughout the novel. The difference is regarded as an enriching component in an ideal case, and multi-ethnicity or same-sex relationships may add versatile values to the composition of the society. The role of conversation is also mentioned as a crucial element in the understanding of other points of view and Farouq's narratives supply many examples. Farouq's opinion is revealed on many topics, and Julius transmits them in an impartial style, he positions himself as neither superior nor inferior to Farouq. It is left to the reader to agree or disagree with Farouq, nevertheless, the inherent tension due to irreconcilable opinions never disappears.

The Perspective of Diasporic Writers

The two novels discussed in this essay allow insight into cosmopolitanism from a diasporic angle. Since the main characters in *Open City* and *NW* have different ethnic origins, and battle with family or personal heritage, diaspora studies may help explore the ways in which social and cultural practices are portrayed in the novels. Avtar Brah's *Cartographies of Diaspora* is a relevant source for my analysis because diaspora studies examine a field that is related to cosmopolitanism: the themes of culture, identity, and politics are discussed and the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity and generation are explored. Diaspora

means that a group of people scatter from their countries of origin to other places, have their own cultural habits, and live in local diasporic communities. According to Brah, diasporic people experience a sense of “homing desire,” which, however, is not the same as “a desire for a homeland” (Brah 16). She states that “this distinction is important, not least because not all diasporas sustain an ideology of ‘return’ (Brah 16). This point is important from the perspective of cosmopolitanism since migrants practice and transform their cultural habits in the host country which becomes their permanent place of residence; thus, they become world citizens without denying their roots.

The arguments Brah puts forward may offer an excellent alternative insight into the world of multi-ethnicity; however, the main characters in *Open City* and *NW* do not primarily define themselves by belonging to their ethnical group or by performing certain specific cultural practices; on the contrary, they intend to smoothly blend in with the majority. Michel, Leah’s husband in *NW*, for instance, says that he is “going up the ladder” because “I’m not like these Jamaicans” (Smith 30). Natalie can serve as another example since from childhood she does her best to become a barrister and improve her standing on the social ladder. She is attracted to the opportunities that a legal career offers, becomes the wife of a successful businessman, lives in a posh neighbourhood in London, and she seems content with her ethnicity. Julius is also a very conformist character who never puts his uniqueness in the foreground; on the contrary, he smoothly adapts to the circumstances.

In addition, Bhabha’s conception of vernacular cosmopolitanism can be equally important because it also proposes an alternative option. It suggests more physical flexibility, Bhabha describes conscious adults who were raised under a given cultural condition, yet they seek engagement in a different cultural environment without denying their unchangeable emotional ties. From *NW*, Felix’s father can be an example, “old Lloyd” who is “Still Rasta” (Smith 103). Then, Michel, a black character, whose name is pronounced as “Me-shall” (Smith 226), reminiscent of his French origin. From *Open City*, Farouq and Khalil can be called vernacular cosmopolitans because they are from Morocco, and they are proud of the history of their country. They are Moors, who used to rule Spain, their forefathers used to rule a part of Europe in the Middle Ages (Cole 124) and today they are pleased to have such a respectful cultural heritage.

Julius was born in Nigeria, and he gradually becomes a successful self-entrepreneur neocitizen with ties to three different continents. His work, presumably, would be even more important in Nigeria. The freedom provided by neoliberalism is attractive, he intends to build a career in America, and his name, Julius, facilitates him to accommodate to a brand-new

environment. He has a Yoruba middle name, Olatubosun, but he never uses it; on the contrary, this name surprises him a little each time he can see it on his passport or birth certificate, like something that belongs to someone else. Being Julius in everyday life thus confirms him in his not being fully Nigerian (Cole 78), in this way, his name, birthplace, country of origin, ancestors, and place of work all remind him of his complex grounding and may speak of his sense of homing desire. Brah holds that diasporic identities are at once local and global at the same time (Brah 192) and through networks of transnational consciousness, they provide wide space to live in. Julius, Moji, Dr Maillotte are the characters in *Open City* who can smoothly slip from one community to another on the surface, they do not complain about the difficulties that shifting causes, as opposed to Farouq, who openly lists his grievances in Brussels.

The diasporic connection seems relevant because the writers have multi-ethnic backgrounds, but the main characters do not seem to believe that familial roots in other continents are crucial in their professional careers. The crisis in their lives originates in refusing to take responsibility for personal decisions and facing it or escaping from it will influence their futures. Firstly, Julius is the most obvious figure who has yet to acknowledge that once he released the beast in himself. Secondly, Natalie also has to come to terms with the fact that under the surface of a successful life, she seeks consolation in extramarital affairs. Lastly, Leah should cope with the stubborn fact that she deceives his husband because she had an abortion and takes contraceptives without informing Michel. Both *Open City* and *NW* leave it open whether these characters will undertake personal responsibility in the future, which could be the beginning of a new life.

Neocitizenship in the Neoliberal Frame

Whereas the ideal of cosmopolitanism appears as an unattainable mirage throughout the novels, another accessible form of conduct has been slowly shaping on the horizon: neocitizenship. Characters manage their lives in the freedom offered by a neoliberal environment which ensures the conditions for opportunistic self-realization. Michel can be an example of this attitude because he says that “I know this country has opportunities if you want to grab them, you can do it” (Smith 29). Moreover, the ideology of neoliberalism is inseparable from market capitalism, the prime mover of neoliberal societies. Often, this freedom is very deceptive: migrants who are less skilled than Julius can easily find themselves on the periphery of the neoliberal city. In *Open City*, for instance, Julius speculates about a coloured woman who is cleaning a church in Brussels, he tries to find out her story while he is walking up toward the

altar in the silent hum of the vacuum cleaner and the organ music. (Cole 138). She can be a refugee, “a cheap labour force” who finds a hiding place in Europe from what she might have seen in the country she has left. Julius believes that “her escape was not from anything she had done, but from what she had seen” (Cole 140), consciously or subconsciously, attributing the exact opposite of his own story to her. It does not turn out whether she is a political or an economic refugee but probably, she is less educated, otherwise, she would not do a cleaning job.

Interestingly, this immigrant woman never says a word, she remains a marginal character on the periphery; it is only Julius who speculates about her story. The woman is working in silence while the well-educated, elite Julius remains the single narrator, and the less privileged woman’s story in the background is conveyed exclusively through his perspective. *NW* provides a less stereotypical example of how labour force moves when the story of a Brazilian girl, Maria is told, who, after arriving in London, “discovered her employer to be several shades darker than she was herself” (Smith 299). The two examples show that being a mobile world citizen itself does not guarantee equality; they can be equal cosmopolitan human beings only in theory as the labour market prices them very clearly in neoliberal societies.

Harrison assumes that in an immigrant novel, such as *Open City*, the movement of migrants follows the model of capital flow: “they formally position migrant subjects as analogues of capital” (203). Nations remain important, though not as a fixed goal but as a means to forward the flow of capital or labour force, and in this respect “an immigrant novel mirrors neoliberal capital’s paradoxical reliance on the nation as an economic mechanism that can facilitate competitive conditions for the free flow of capital” (Harrison 203) Unlike the cleaning woman who may work as a cheap labour force, Julius is an elite diasporic intellectual; he is from Nigeria, but he lives in America as a respectful psychiatrist, not as a refugee. His patients are proud of him, one of his elderly patients, for instance, notes with emotion in his voice how important it is for him to see a black man in a white coat: “Doctor, I just want to tell you how proud I am to come here and see a young black man like yourself in that white coat, because things haven’t ever been easy for us, and no one has ever given us nothing without a struggle” (Cole 210). This episode shows that neoliberal societies welcome those who can adopt the attitude needed to become successful, but the uneducated layer is ignored and neglected, for instance, the reader knows nothing about this patient except that he is black.

Julius demonstrates what Spencer has called a cosmopolitan disposition, though Julius rather looks free and altruistic only on the surface. He never really intends to put his ideals into practice, instead, turns out to be a self-entrepreneur neocitizen. Spencer states that

cosmopolitanism is, first of all, a disposition characterised by self-awareness, a sensitivity to the world beyond one's immediate milieu (Spencer 4), and this is true for Julius on the surface. This disposition characterizes his life; at first glance, he appears to be sensitive to the suffering of others. The young Julius wants to protect a girl in his class because she has polio which has withered her left foot into a twisted stump that she drags behind her when she walks, and Julius is afraid that the boys in the class would mock her (Cole 61). His first instinct is a gallant, protective one, though, he has nothing to do with that girl. This is a generous, altruistic step toward a stranger, but it is strange that he shows empathy only to people who are emotionally far from him in the novel.

Until the end of the narrative, Julius makes an impression of an objective observer, a highly sensitive, and responsive person to others' sufferings, but it is rather telling that this is true exclusively in the case of strangers. For instance, as a part of his professional duties, he wants to buy a book written by his patient just to understand her mindset; though he knows he would not have time to read all of it, he wants to think more about what his patient has written, and he also hopes that the book might help him gain further insight into her psychological state to help her (Cole 27). However, looking at the deep level of the story, when it comes to people, he had intimate connections with Julius's response is different. He is, for instance, incomprehensively ignorant of the tragedy that his rape could have caused in Moji's life. He is insensitive to the devastation that he caused, and he is also blind to acknowledge that it is impossible to turn his back on his past deeds and run away without restoring his relationship with Moji. This statement supports Spenser's argument who claims that "not entirely unfairly, cosmopolitanism remains tainted by the pejorative connotations of utopianism, escapism, and condescension. Cosmopolites are viewed as free-floating and ethereal creatures: "they are indifferent to the travails and responsibilities of those who are confined through choice or necessity to the local sphere" (Spencer 2).

Nevertheless, none of the characters are carried away by aggression, they can control their emotions on an acceptable level; while they are working on the achievement of personal success, they refrain from using destructive means. Spenser and Appiah agree that even if espousing cosmopolitan principles of solidarity, community, and human rights are highly esteemed values, these should never be imposed on society violently (Spencer 13). The most obvious illustration is Farouq, a pacifist, who represents this viewpoint in a peaceful manner and would not kill even if his family would be used to threaten him. His behaviour coincides with Spenser's take on cosmopolitanism, he states that "cosmopolitanism does not equal homogeneity but seeks to lay down the condition in which difference can be safeguarded and

encouraged” (Spencer 34). Farouq is angry because the world, as it is currently organised, is not cut out to ensure this. Therefore, he is not satisfied with his life in Brussels, and this is one of the reasons for his disillusionment.

Finally, the treatment of the rape that Julius may have committed highlights a typical feature of the neoliberal world, namely, accountability. Accountability matters even though it is not foregrounded in the novels, it remains hidden behind veils, but it subconsciously controls the behaviour of neocitizens who work consciously on achieving personal success. In the environment of the neoliberal business practice, which seeks protection from local regulation, profit-oriented companies often try to avoid high national taxes by resorting to offshore banks (Harrison 208). Julius exemplifies a new neoliberal model of migration; his figure is modelled after the capital committed to endless movement across borders and he strives to shake off accountability (207) “His rape accusation is also about transparency and about being accountable”, as Harrison states (212). Natalie can be mentioned as another example of irresponsible character from *NW*, since she also leads a double life; she cannot control her lust to peep into strangers’ intimate moments, and she is a voyeur: “Natalie Blake had a strong desire to slip into the lives of other people” (Smith 283). Her deeds committed in secret are eventually revealed to her husband and it slowly becomes obvious that the entrepreneurial self-actualization of neocitizenship costs an unexpected price.

Characters manage their lives in the freedom provided by neoliberal societies, they flexibly adapt to the circumstances. Their country of origin does not determine their options, as it does not delimit their cultural practices: they are self-entrepreneurs and take advantage of the free mobility offered by neoliberal societies, yet their choices are constrained by the market economy.

Neocitizenship in *NW*

Zadie Smith’s novel is a social drama of steely grey lives whose endless struggle for a little human warmth and the narrative that distances the characters portrays the coldness in human relationships. Wood states that the narration technique that overwhelms the reader with information beyond control can be viewed to fill a void (Hedin 18) and it creates bridgeless chasm between the figures and the reader. There are no admirable characters, successful and desired careers, reassuring foreseeable solutions on the horizon, or happy endings in any of the storylines. Instead, examples of abusive personal relationships, substance usage, stabbing, social strife, desperate struggle on a personal level, and fear of aging dominate the narrative.

Shaw states that the realistic urban environment is an ideal setting to bring up cosmopolitan issues at the most micro-level of society (6). The London of *NW* is depicted as a microcosm for the transnationalism of the twenty-first century, exposing the difficulties in practising the world citizen ideals of empathy, tolerance, and belonging (Shaw 7). The setting of the story is London, a megacity, which is a perfect setting to demonstrate how cosmopolitan ideals bump into neoliberal reality. For instance, Leah's immediate friendly reaction to help Shar is an illustration of the cosmopolitan attitude but later, when the cheat turns out, she is shattered. This episode shows her as an altruistic cosmopolitan who is willing to help on the grounds that everybody deserves fair treatment.

NW displays sunless shades of a metropolis; characters are world citizens in the sense that their downfall is inevitable. They are types in a moderate estrangement of an urban environment; they love, fear, cry, communicate and struggle for personal and social advancement. The characters also exemplify an earlier observation that there is a significant difference between human-centric cosmopolitanism and profit-centric neoliberalism. Leah, for instance, comments on Michel's opinion this way: "you want to be rich like them, but you can't be bothered with their morals, whereas I am more interested in their morals than their money (Smith 82).

Although neocitizenship is used in a political context in Cherniavsky's book, it is a central concept in this study because political and economic changes always give way to social changes. *NW* is a novel that portrays how characters must attain their personal objectives in a rather challenging environment. I call these characters, such as Natalie, and Felix, "neocitizen" since their present achievement and private attitude matter in the first place. Cherniavsky refers to this personal feature when she describes "citizen-subjects" and expresses the need for a new alternative descriptor attached to citizens, such as "flexible or entrepreneurial" (23). This is in contrast with the "old", "bourgeois" citizenship, which is based on the idea that people are engaged in issues with equality, civil society (Cherniavsky 23), civic virtue, and the common good. However, the characters in *NW* are seldom depicted as beings preoccupied with such virtues, and even if they are, as Leah, for instance, their altruism seems to be unable to survive in the neoliberal environment. Neocitizens are not characterized by their political engagement or relation to the institutions of neoliberal governance (Cherniavsky 23), the focus is achievement based on their own efforts, irrespective of ancestry or physical heritage. In Smith's novel, Natalie, whose real name is Keisha, represents this attitude the most obviously, which is why she can model an entrepreneurial neocitizen.

Neocitizens in *NW* are born in London or soon after their arrival they live as if they had been born there, and they keep or take up the pace of the city. They are not examples of exotic otherness, oppressors and victims, immigrant, or native inhabitants. Natalie, a black woman, a busy barrister who studied at a posh university, is trying to maintain the illusion of an enviable, privileged life. At first sight, Natalie is an ideal model of personal and social advancement; she has always been a hard-working girl; she thinks “three years ahead about the important things in life” (Smith 184). She can “sit in one place longer than other children”, and “be bored for hours without complaint” (Smith 180), she is determined about her career and changes her name from Keisha to Natalie (Smith 206). Natalie is “studying for the bar”; she is going to be a barrister (Smith 217), and she hates “holidays preferring to work” (Smith 258), just like Julius in *Open City*. However, in a couple of years, her mindset changes; she earns so much that she has “completely forgotten what it is like to be poor” (Smith 280), neither does she speak, nor does she understand the language of the lower class anymore. Even though she has reached desirable economic goals and she belongs to the lucky upper middle class, she is not happy and finds comfort in secret sexual affairs. She has built up herself, adapted to the familial, and social expectations, but still, she seeks compensation that finally she is teetering on the verge of committing suicide.

Felix could have been another positive model if he had not been killed on the way home. He has met Grace and his “happiness has finally arrived” (Smith 118) because she has proved to be a lifesaver (133). He is lucky until “he got deep in the drug” (Smith 128) and lost his family, and after a troublesome couple of years, at a juncture, has the mental strength to “pick himself up off the floor” (Smith 128). Felix believes that only he has the power to stand up (Smith 133) and he is working at a garage now, being an apprentice, he can build his life from scratch. He makes a final visit to Annie Bedford, the last connection to heroin, and offers a helping hand to remove her from the world of the shades. Felix prepares for a serious talk (Smith 148), asks her not to allow people to take advantage (Smith 150), and tells Annie that he is “not going to be coming round here no more” (Smith 152). He reveals that he “is tired of the way he has been living” and he has killed the demons torturing him and is ready to move to the next level (Smith 157). Unfortunately, his dreams fail because he happens to travel with two men who stab him (Smith 304); thus, much as he is on the threshold of a brand new and free life, his promising future shatters in a moment.

Michel is a good man, full of hope, he wants to move forward, and outwardly, he is on the best way to reach his goals. His credo is “you are what you do” (Smith 29) and he usually makes decisions based on a golden rule; he is doing something only if that is acceptable to him.

From the very first day he “was stepping into this country”, it has been very clear that he was going up and climbing the ladder. In France, his social mobility was more limited, but in England, he can move; he appreciates his opportunity and grabs it without hesitation. “In France, you’re African, you’re Algerian. There’s no opportunity, you can’t move! Here, you can move.” (Smith 29). Michel believes that the advancement in this country has less to do with skin colour, he says: “I can trade like anyone” and “it’s pure market on there, nothing about skin” (Smith 29). However, he contradicts himself in the same monologue when later he says to Leah: “your skin is white, it’s different, it’s easier, you’ve had opportunities I didn’t have” (Smith 29). His goal is to have a family, stay with a woman he loves, have children, work hard, be in the market, move towards his destiny, and “think of the next achievement” (Smith 30). Unfortunately, Leah does not want to have a child and by means of dramatic irony, the narrator informs the reader about her disposition whereas Michel does not know that his plan is soon going to collapse. In addition, Michel and Leah exemplify another disappointing feature of the cosmopolitan utopia: “It could be said that one of Michel’s dreams has come true: they have gone up one rung, at least in the quality and elaboration of their fear” (Smith 92).

The personal failures, the unhappy stories, and the ending without reassuring or hopeful future possibilities in *NW* compel the reader to face the unpleasant side of contemporary urban reality. The naked truth shown without hypocrisy to the reader destroys the idyllic image of cosmopolitanism; the characters in the novel do not embody the sunny side of the life of cosmopolitan citizens and even if they have altruistic ideals about hospitality and equality, these fail in the novel. In a conversation, Frank calls some men Leah knows “Eurotrash brothers” (Smith 226) and in return, Leah says to Frank: “You are Eurotrash” (Smith 226). This passionate outcry reflects a harsh neoliberal perspective that implies a critique of the basic tenets of cosmopolitanism, which are based on the belief that despite profound cultural and social differences, mankind constitutes one community. The reader is forced to be a voyeur, the most intimate, private secrets are disclosed and there is nowhere to run away from them. The characters are frustrated, their dreams fail, and none of them exemplifies an attractive model, thus *NW* can be seen as the critique of cosmopolitan utopia.

Julius, a Cosmopolitan of the Twenty-First Century

Julius can establish a new life on a different continent in New York and becomes a successful city dweller, a self-entrepreneur citizen with a cosmopolitan mindset who decides freely about his affiliations and solidarity; Julius’ mind is the open city. The title of this novel

can be interpreted in three ways; first, it refers to Brussels during the Second World War when it was declared an open city and thereby exempted from bombardment to avoid its destruction (Open 97). Then, New York can be called an open city as well because the influx and the outflow from the city never stops; it is an ever-growing and always-changing dwelling place. Lastly, Julius' life is like an open city because he lives in an open world without borders, as if he were a city with open gates allowing entrance and exit. Correspondingly, Spenser asks what cosmopolitanism is and Julius is the answer since his sensitive character and open disposition make him a conscious world citizen (Spenser 4). He has buried his secret imperceptibly, and on the perceptible surface, the doors are open, anybody can walk in and walk out of his world. The novel depicts the steps Julius takes on the way to his self-actualization: "You have to set yourself a challenge, and you must find a way to meet it exactly, whether it is a parachute or a dive from a cliff, or sitting perfectly still for an hour, and you must accomplish it in a beautiful way, of course" (Cole 197). He is never complaining but flexibly accommodates himself to his environment which helps him survive both in the Nigerian military school and in New York when he loses his girlfriend or friends.

Julius is a world citizen, and his personal relationships span over race, age, and continent, and he interprets the terms "we" and "them" in a more conscious and less intuitive way. His free choice about solidarity and affiliation is a further interesting issue. Julius' decisions seem to be less influenced by his roots than his personal interests, and passion. He listens to European classical music, and European radio channels, and he reads famous works of classical English, Greek, and other European writers besides "a novel by a Moroccan writer, Tahar Ben Jelloun" (Cole 102). Once he is watching a film and realizes that almost the entire audience consists of "white-haired white people" and he sits, in a sense, alone (Cole 29).

He admires classical fine art, and it constitutes the main ingredient of his cosmopolitan mindset. For instance, he compares the cleaning lady in the church in Brussels to the women Vermeer painted: "she possessed her secrets fully, as did those women that Vermeer painted in the same grey, lowland light" (Cole 140). Another example is a Mahler concert at the end of the novel; Julius is sitting in the theatre and realizes that almost everyone, as almost always at such concerts, is white. It reminds him of how divided life remains, and it never ceases to surprise him how easy it is to "leave the hybridity of the city and enter all-white spaces" (Cole 252). His explanation shows his cosmopolitan openness: "Mahler's music is not white, or black, not old or young, and whether it is even specifically human, rather than in accord with more universal vibrations" (Cole 252). However, the episodes in the movie and the concert hall are

telling since in a nominally open society he is an elite black person in an audience but nobody from the white audience says a single word to him, which can be a frustrating experience.

Moreover, black citizens often expect him to show solidarity on an ethnical basis, but Julius appears less enthusiastic about the point and his manner differs from the classical interpretation of cosmopolitanism in two ways. First, the characters with African roots are not “quasi-siblings” from a privileged, elite, and intellectual world; blacks other than Julius do not fight for the desired equality, and unlike Julius, they are satisfied with their positions. A black cab driver (Cole 40) feels honestly hurt because Julius does not express his solidarity toward him. Julius is angry, and not in the mood for people who try to lay claims on him; he pays the fare and walks home. During a walk in New York, he enters a restaurant and sits at the bar, and orders a drink from a waitress. A man sits next to him and initiates a conversation because he saw Julius in a museum a week ago. He tries to be friendly, but he starts to wear on Julius, and Julius wishes he would go away. He compares this Caribbean man to the cab driver who was making a similar claim “hey, I’m African just like you” (Cole 53). In other words, being black is not enough to arouse his solidarity. In the post office, he meets an office clerk who calls him “brother Julius” (Cole 187), and he is too friendly. He invites Julius to listen to some poetry together, but Julius finds him intrusive, and when he leaves the building, he makes “a mental note to avoid that particular post office in the future” (Cole 188); being either a poet lover or a black migrant in America does not awaken his sense of camaraderie.

The second way his case is different from classical cosmopolitanism is that the classical Greek and Roman interpretation of cosmopolitanism advocates a brotherly disposition; however, the three black “brothers” younger than fifteen rob him, and their robbery is not retaliated. Even though the law guarantees the right of citizens to safety, in the crucial moment, surprisingly, Julius withdraws in defeat. The young black men in their twenties pass him in daylight and, suddenly, Julius feels heavy “blows on his shoulders” and back, he “falls to the ground” (Open 212). He shouts but soon he loses the will to speak and takes the blows in silence his blood is not boiled. This episode can be read as an example of why cosmopolitanism fails in the novel as Julius is also black; a black man is attacked, robbed, and injured and he does not exercise his civil rights, which would be going to the police. Instead, he remains silent.

Julius successfully accommodates to new conditions, which proves to be favourable to him. Nonetheless, it is telling that he lives alone, and cannot establish deep emotional connections. Sometimes he meets his girlfriend; he walks often in the city alone, he visits Professor Saito every now and then, meets his friend a couple of times, easily makes short-term relationships, and looks like a contented man. The single event that shook him was his father’s

death when he was fourteen but paradoxically, the loss helps enrich his sense of belonging (Cole 81). Furthermore, he is in the best company when he is alone, he can think, and he can work out new strategies both in the hospital and on a private level as well. He is never searching for the company of other immigrants with Nigerian backgrounds, he does not need a “club” where he would meet “brothers”; instead; he seems to have a natural affinity with classical music fans which is a typical cosmopolitan attitude. Julius is a person who is anchored in more than one location, one of those whom Brah calls people with “multi-placedness” (Brah 191) and he feels at home on three continents. Holding local and global identity, a sort of transnational consciousness facilitates him to find an acceptable space to live in (Brah 192).

Julius is a psychiatrist, he is “at the beginning of the final year of [his] psychiatry fellowship” (Cole 3), which becomes significant at the end of the story. The narrative reveals Moji’s account who accuses him of raping her in Nigeria when they were teenagers. It is astonishing that he intentionally chooses this occupation and studied for several years in America after immigration to have a degree with such a burden in his past. His story is so reminiscent of Nabokov’s *Lolita* in which Humbert Humbert recalls his memory in the prison and tells that “[a]t first, I planned to take a degree in psychiatry; but [...] I switched to English literature” (Nabokov 17). Moji says that “in late 1989 when she was fifteen” and Julius was “a year younger, at a party her brother had hosted” (Cole 244) and Julius “forced himself on her” and later Julius “acted like he knew nothing about it, and even forgotten” (Cole 244). That is the victim remembers, and the perpetrator forgets. Although he was only fourteen, drunk, and had an immature psyche, it is astounding that he builds a career in his new home that is in connection with mental health: he is trying to help other people, but he is unable to face his own past deeds.

Julius lives on an abstract level of cosmopolitanism, and the unprocessed repression of his violence against Moji in Nigeria remains an irremovable obstacle in the novel to putting principles into practice. This drives him to endless wanderings, which is the reason why Vermeulen calls Julius a *fugueur*, a mad traveller (3) who “emerged in urban areas in France at the end of the nineteenth century” (3). They “unaccountably walked away from their lives and, when found, were unable to remember what had happened on these trips” (Vermeulen 3). Mózes also argues for the indispensable need to address the logical connection between the rape and his impaired ability to connect emotionally to the people who are the closest to him. She suggests that Julius uses a “blind spot” to cover his sin which is why he cannot remember the act of rape (17). This is an ophthalmic expression in connection with the function of the eyes, and this can be responsible when “the vision goes dead” (Cole 239).

The analysis of *Open City* shows a successful cosmopolitan image of Julius on the surface, he is a highly mobile, well-educated, elite member of American society, with an open mindset without prejudice. He performs productive self-realization, and he can flexibly adapt to new environments because this type of flexibility, which characterizes neocitizenship, is rather superficial and does not require deep changes. However, he fails to feel brotherly solidarity with black citizens on the grounds of ethnical basis as he cannot connect to other migrant characters such as the cleaning lady in Brussels. He lives alone, unable to connect emotionally in the long run, presumably because he lives in denial. Julius is accused of committing a sexual crime and he chooses an occupation that may help cure and reconstruct his shattered soul. He embodies cosmopolitan virtues such as freedom in mobility, place of living, profession, or making friends, but he is never able to face his past mistake that has left a shameful mark on his life. In the end, Moji says that she does not think Julius has changed at all and warns him that “[t]hings don’t go just because [he] chooses to forget them (Cole 245). She asks: “But will you say something now?” (Cole 245). Instead of trying to restore his relationship with Moji, Julius immediately jumps to the abstract level, which Vermeulen has called a startlingly inadequate response to Moji’s trauma (53): “Camus tells a double story concerning Nietzsche and Gaius Mucius Cordus Scaevola, a Roman hero from the sixth century B.C.E. (Cole 246). This is the same leap from reality to theory as in the church when he aestheticizes the cleaning lady as a Vermeerean figure instead of speaking to her. Therefore, there remains a discrepancy between his abstract cosmopolitan ideals and everyday practices.

Conclusion

The question I asked at the beginning of this study was whether Teju Cole’s *Open City* and Zadie Smith’s *NW* shed light on new dimensions of cosmopolitanism: what “neocitizenship” means, and how the cosmopolitan disposition and neoliberal social conditions shape the behaviour of the characters. The analysis suggests that cosmopolitanism needs to be redefined in the 21st century for a number of reasons. Firstly, the high mobility of people fostered by neoliberalism invalidate accountability. Second, while the classical definition of cosmopolitanism posits that all human beings deserve fair treatment just like quasi-siblings, recently, the meaning has broadened with an obligation to respect universal and local values. A few characters such as Farouq and Khalil in *Open City* and Felix’s father and Michel in *NW* can be called vernacular cosmopolitans in the Bhabhaian sense since they intend to be equal without denying their ethnicities. The reference to Edward Said in *Open City* draws attention to the fact

that a one-sided vision may lead to distorted conclusions. The diasporic perspectives the novels showcase have proved to be significant; although both writers are diasporic, the main characters of the novels intend to smoothly blend in with the majority, which suggests that it is hard foster ethnic difference in contemporary neoliberal societies.

Furthermore, cosmopolitanism appears as an idealistic disposition that advocates humanism whereas neoliberalism supports a profit-oriented approach. The difference between practices and principles can be seen in Julius' life who fails to live up to cosmopolitan ideals because he is in permanent denial and represses his sense of responsibility. His cosmopolitanism is manifested in an open mindset towards strangers, emotional coldness in close relationships, and an escape from the past into elitism and aestheticization. Leah's shattered humanist ideal and Frank's angry exclamation of "Eurotrash" also exemplify the unattainable ideals of the cosmopolitan utopia. Simultaneously, neocitizenship appears as a flexible self-actualization exemplified by Natalie's life who is just as successful on the surface as Julius. Under the surface, however, she hides frustration which makes her seek compensation, and shows that it would be inevitable to face responsibility in order to live a mentally and emotionally healthy life. Both characters who believe in cosmopolitan ethics and more down to earth neocitizens chase a mirage and may seem successful on the surface but they have yet to take responsibility and face their past to be truly successful on a deeper level.

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