

Index

Introduction

1. Cosmopolitanism

- 1.1 Cosmopolitanism and globalization
- 1.2 Literary cosmopolitanism and world literature

2. Life and work of J.M.G. Le Clézio

- 2.1 Le Clézio
- 2.2 Themes
- 2.3 Le Clézio's writing; contesting orientalism
- 2.4 *Terra Amata*

3. Life and work of J.M. Coetzee

- 3.1 J.M. Coetzee
- 3.2 Themes
- 3.3 Uncomfortable cosmopolitanism
- 3.4 *Disgrace*

Conclusion

Bibliography

Introduction

1. *World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures.*
2. *World literature is writing that gains in translation.*
3. *World literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time.* (Damrosch 2003: 281)

The conception of cosmopolitanism has changed throughout the years and the notion of the cosmopolitan has often been criticized. The issue of “What is cosmopolitanism?” can be translated to “What is world literature?” when you look at the literary aspect of cosmopolitanism. In order to discuss world literature, it is essential to know what cosmopolitanism is. There is not just one notion of cosmopolitanism, but there are several views and conceptions. When talking about the subject of cosmopolitanism, it is impossible not to talk about the subject of globalization, because nowadays they cannot exist without each other. The differences and relationship between globalization and cosmopolitanism are not obvious, but with the use of Peter Trawny’s article *Globalization and Cosmopolitanism* it becomes clear. According to Trawny, globalization seems to depend on cosmopolitanism in the same way cosmopolitanism depends on globalization. Globalization is mostly used to refer to the economic globalization; the worldwide distribution of goods and services, which is linked to the development of new technologies, such as the internet. But globalization also refers to the increasing global relationships of culture, people, and economic activity. Trawny states that: “Globalization is the creation of a real and an ideal infinite (boundless - more or less) surface of the Earth. “Ideal” concerns here the omnipresence of every possible information at every possible place, and “real” means the infinite technical mastering of space and time by traffic and transport.” (Trawny: 2) Cosmopolitanism is the ideology that all human ethnic groups belong to a single community based on a shared morality. Trawny defines cosmopolitanism as something that: “does not take a certain nation or state as the authentic sphere of politics, but the whole cosmos as a universal realm of reason. The “politics of the cosmos” are universal rational politics on the moral presupposition that there is a universal idea of “mankind” as the essence of the human being.” (Trawny: 2) So while globalization is an almost tangible and concrete phenomenon, cosmopolitanism is much more conceptual. Trawny concludes that “there seems to be a mutual dependence between “Globalization” and “Cosmopolitanism.” (Trawny: 2).

The subject of world literature gained knowledge with Goethe using the term *Weltliteratur* and hereby predicting a literary perspective and new cultural awareness.

I am more and more convinced,” Goethe remarked, “that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men . . . I therefore like to look

about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach. (Damrosch 2003: 1)

Goethe predicted that national literature would become replaced by world literature. Twenty years later also Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels mentioned that world literature was arising.

According to David Damrosch, there are three general conceptions of world literature: “as an established body of *classics*, as an evolving canon of *masterpieces*, or as multiple *windows on the world*.” (Damrosch 2003: 15) The “classic” is often identified with Greek and Roman literature, such as Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Homer’s *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It is work of transcendent value and still taught and read today. The “masterpiece” does not have to be an historical work, but can also be a recent or even contemporary work. Goethe considered his own best works as modern masterpieces. The world literature that offers windows in foreign works does not necessarily have to be a masterpiece or classic. These three conceptions of what world literature is, exist side by side. Some people choose one of these conceptions as their true definition of world literature, but some hold all these three conceptions together. Some works can be classified under two or even all three conceptions. Virgil’s *Aeneid* is for example both a classic and a masterpiece. Damrosch states that “world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike.” (Damrosch 2003: 5)

To accurately and extensively explain the concepts of globalization, cosmopolitanism and world literature I will make use of several books and articles. Most important is David Damrosch’s *What is World Literature?*, because his book is very understandable and elaborate. It explores the ways literary works change as they are moving from national to global and how and what make books world literature. Liam Connell’s and Nicky Marsh’s *Literature and Globalization: A Reader* gave me a clear view of globalization theory and influential works in the field. It describes the impact of globalization on literature and our understanding of the ‘literary’ and explains how issues in globalization can be used to read specific literary texts. Also Peter Trawny’s article *Globalization and Cosmopolitanism* and Pheng Chea’s *Cosmopolitanism* have helped me set out a clear theoretical framework.

In this thesis I will make a comparison between the authors J.M. Coetzee and J.M.G. Le Clézio. Both authors won the Nobel Prize, Coetzee in 2003 and Le Clézio in 2008. They are often seen as cosmopolitan writers, but why? Also they are cosmopolitan in very different ways. Le Clézio is a prototypical cosmopolitan writer. He takes the reader away from their own small world and introduces them to other cultures and other worlds. I will be discussing four of Le Clézio’s novels, *Onitsba*, *Terra Amata*, *Wandering Star* and *Desert*. Coetzee is not cosmopolitan in

the same way Le Clézio is. Coetzee is a writer who is not afraid of difficult and heavy topics. I think Coetzee is cosmopolitan in a way where border crossing is not the visiting of different countries, but crossing the borders of certain topics and participating in uncomfortable situations. In Coetzee's novels this encounter with "the other" is often deeply uncomfortable. Coetzee is a writer with innovative views and ideas that he shares with his public through readings, but also by processing them into his work. I will use two of Coetzee's novels, namely, *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello*.

The main question of my thesis will be: What makes Coetzee and Le Clézio cosmopolitan writers and in what ways do they differ/agree? I will examine how it is possible that both Coetzee and Le Clézio can be seen as cosmopolitan writers, while they are so different in their representation of cosmopolitanism. And are they really that different? Or will there also be a lot of similarities when looking closely?

1. Cosmopolitanism

1.1 Cosmopolitanism and globalization

Cosmopolitanism is a term that has been present since the Classical World. Pheng Cheah argues that “cosmopolitan derives from the Greek words for ‘world’ (*cosmos*) and ‘city’ (*polis*) and that it refers to ‘*un homme qui n’a point de demeure fixe, ou bien un homme qui n’est étranger nulle part* [a man without a fixed abode, or better, a man who is nowhere a stranger]’ (Diderot and d’Alembert, 1751–65: 4, 297).” (Cheah 2006: 487) So the idea of cosmopolitanism already started in the Greek and Roman period, however, that idea is not the same as the contemporary cosmopolitanism. The political culture idealized in the Greek and Roman period is not cosmopolitan. In this culture, a man identifies himself first and foremost as a citizen of a particular polis or city. He is bound to this city and is not expected to share with people who live outside the city. By doing so, he signals which institutions and which body of people hold his allegiance. But there were also traveling intellectuals who were issuing cosmopolitan challenges and insisted on “the contrast between the conventional ties of politics and the natural ties of humanity.” (Kleingeld 2011: par. 3) Also Socrates had cosmopolitan ideals, he wanted both Athenians and foreigners to be equal. He was the one that inspired the famous statement of Cynic Diogenes, who identified himself as a citizen of the world.

In the eighteenth century, the term cosmopolitanism did not so much refer to a philosophical theory, but rather to a person’s open-mindedness. “A cosmopolitan was someone who was not subservient to a particular religious or political authority, someone who was not biased by particular loyalties or cultural prejudice. Furthermore, the term was sometimes used to indicate a person who led an urbane life-style, or who was fond of traveling, cherished a network of international contacts, or felt at home everywhere.” (Kleingeld 2011: par. 16) Eighteenth-century authors that identified themselves as cosmopolitan, were for example Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Hume. Also there is the famous Immanuel Kant, who argues that true and world-wide peace is only possible when not only the human rights of citizens, but also of foreigners are respected. He was concerned “with man as a practical being and actor in history, someone who not only knows the world as a spectator of a play but knows his way about the world as a participant.” (Cheah 2006: 487). Cheah states that, in modernity, the concept of cosmopolitanism has changed from an intellectual vision to a global political vision. According to Kant, world trade and economy provided the historical basis of cosmopolitanism and when in the nineteenth century we see an economic globalization, Marx and Engels are linking the word cosmopolitanism to capitalist globalization and he states that cosmopolitanism has resulted from

the global development of technology. Nowadays, cosmopolitanism is still linked to capitalist globalization. Anthony Giddens for example claims that the main centers of power in the world economy are capitalist states and that “Mechanised technologies of communication have dramatically influenced all aspects of globalization [...]” (Giddens 2011: 21)

In the text *Locating Cosmopolitanism: Between Humanist Ideal and Grounded Social Category* Zlato Skrbis, Gavin Kendall and Ian Woodward discuss some ideas on cosmopolitanism. This article focuses on questions concerning nationalism, globalizations, cultural values and identity. Currently the discussion on cosmopolitanism has been revived again and according to Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward, this is because of Martha C. Nussbaum’s article *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism*. The debate this article launched “reinvigorated the concept, but also reminded us of its inherent promise, limitations and contradictions.” (Skrbis, Kendall, Woodward 2004: 1)

In *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism*, Nussbaum discusses the issue of ‘the citizen of the world’. She rejects patriotic pride, because this would be “both morally dangerous and, ultimately, subversive of some of the worthy goals patriotism sets out to serve [...]” (Nussbaum 1994: 1). She argues that national pride and unity would demolish the moral ideals of justice and equality, because nationalism puts emphasis on diversity rather than on equality. The goals of justice and equality belong much more to a world that has a cosmopolitan view, in which citizens “primary alliance is to the community of human beings in the entire world.” (Nussbaum 1994: 1) According to Nussbaum, it should not matter who you are and where you are from, everyone is equal and should be treated that way. I think this can be linked back to the ideas of Kant, “who retained the idea of membership to humanity as a whole by insisting on the importance of ‘knowledge of man as a citizen of the world [*des Menschen als Weltbürgers*]’” (Cheah 2006: 487)

Nussbaum is against the glorification of nationalism in education and politics. A nation generally teaches their children something of the shared national values and most students also are taught to respect other cultures, but Nussbaum does not think this suffices. She uses the United States as an example, because their children learn that they above all are a citizen of the United States, but that they have to respect the human rights of people from other cultures as well. Nussbaum says this is not enough, they should learn more about the rest of the world, about their histories, cultures and problems. They should be taught that they are above all a citizen of the world, citizens of a world of human beings, instead of a citizen of the United States. Also in this notion I see Kant’s cosmopolitanism shining through. Kant’s cosmopolitanism is not so much opposed to nationalism, but it is more a philosophical approach to nationalism and absolutism.

I understand the goal Nussbaum had with writing this text. There are many occasions in

which patriotism and nationalism do not look right. It seems to do more bad than good, for example when looking at the Holocaust and the events on 9/11. People should indeed learn as much as possible about other cultures and their histories, in order to respect them. They should treat everyone the same, because we are all equal, we are all human beings. But is being patriotic wrong, if we respect others and their cultures? Is it even possible to be a citizen of the world? This is also what Bruce Robbins states in his text *Comparative Cosmopolitanism*. Cosmopolitan would seem to be “knowing no boundaries.” (Robbins 1992: 171) “The limits of the term “cosmopolitanism” are also its conjunctural virtues.” (Robbins 1992: 183) Being cosmopolitan seems to mean belonging to all parts of the world, being a citizen of the world. Not being restricted to one country and culture, but according to Robbins no one can ever be cosmopolitan if that means, belonging everywhere. I think most people are a citizen of their own country first, and a citizen of the world second. You grow up and live in a country with a specific culture and this shapes your identity. There is nothing wrong with being proud of where you are from, as long as you also show interest and respect to the rest of the world.

1.2 Literary cosmopolitanism and world literature

In the introduction I already explained that Damrosch distinguishes three general conceptions of world literature: “as an established body of *classics*, as an evolving canon of *masterpieces*, or as multiple *windows on the world*.” (Damrosch 2003: 15) It is important to remember that these three conceptions of world literature should not be seen as something mechanically, but as dynamic and interwoven. There is not one true definition, but they exist side by side. The title of his book *What is World Literature?*, can almost be changed to: What is not world literature? But it would be useless to have a category from which nothing could be excluded and therefore a certain framework has to be set. Damrosch has concluded his book with a threefold definition of what world literature is:

1. *World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures.*
2. *World literature is writing that gains in translation.*
3. *World literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time.*” (Damrosch 2003: 281)

With the first definition, where world literature is seen as an elliptical refraction of national literatures, Damrosch means that each work of literature is a negotiation between two cultures, namely between the culture in which it is written and between the foreign culture where the work is being received. Therefore “world literature is thus always as much about the host culture’s

values and needs as it is about a work's source culture.” (Damrosch 2003: 283).

The second definition, where Damrosch sees world literature as a work that gains in translation, explains the differences between literary language and ordinary language, namely that literary language is all about beauty, form and themes, while ordinary language is more about the meaning/message. Informational texts neither lose nor gain meaning when being translated, because the most important thing is that the information can still be understood. Literary language, on the other hand, is language that always gains or loses in translation. Some works are not translatable without loss and therefore remain largely in their own national context and will never become world literature, but works become world literature when they gain on balance in translation. Stylistic losses are then compensated by an expansion in depth when they are read in various cultures and in that way increase their range. Rebecca L. Walkowitz has also written about the subject of translation and she does not agree with Damrosch's statement that world literature always gains something in translation. According to Walkowitz, translation leads to cultural homogenization, because readers will read fewer languages and texts that are written for translation avoid complex uses of language. Further it also leads to political homogenization because the world's market needs stories that everyone can read and share, this means fewer distinctions between political histories and social agents. Translation is bad for what it does to books, because the original language and context get lost, but it is worse for what it does to author, because it encourages them to ignore that language and context in order to be wanted.

The third definition, where world literature is seen not as a set canon of texts but as a mode of reading, aims capturing the dynamic aspect of works of world literature.

At any given time, a fluctuating number of foreign works will circulate actively within a culture, and a subset of these will be widely shared and enjoy a canonical status, but different groups within a society, and different individuals within a group, will create distinctive congeries of works, blending canonical and noncanonical works into effective microcanons. (Damrosch 2003: 297)

The conversation of world literature takes place on two levels, namely in the mind of the reader, where works interact with each other, and among authors, who read and react to one another's work. With literature as a mode of reading, Damrosch emphasizes that world literature is not about quantity, but about quality. It is not necessary to read this enormous amount of texts, but this mode of reading can also be experienced just as effectively with a few works.

When looking at literary cosmopolitanism and world literature, Edward Said, literary theorist and cultural critic, is a key figure. He can also be linked to the subject of post-colonialism. Postcolonial theory focuses on matters of identity, gender, race, racism and ethnicity

and matters of developing a post-colonial national identity. In 1978 Said wrote the famous book *Orientalism* in which he describes the Eurocentric prejudices against Islamic people and their culture. With the start of European colonization, the Europeans came in contact with the lesser developed countries of the East. They found their culture very interesting and exotic and therefore established the ideology of Orientalism, where they studied these Eastern societies. By doing this, the Europeans divided the world into two parts, namely the East and the West; the Orient and the Occident, the uncivilized and the civilized. With this they created a superficial boundary. Orientalism [...] is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. (Said 1977: 6) The knowledge the Europeans had about the East did not come from pure facts or truth. It had more to do with 'our' world than it did with the Orient. The Europeans thought of the Eastern societies as all similar to one another and dissimilar to the West. They started to see the Orientals as non-human beings, but as a study object. These ideas were constructed within literary texts and for that the West had a limited understanding of the life in the Eastern countries. "My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness. [...] As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge." (Said 1977: 204).

In 1983 Said wrote the essay *The World, the Text and the Critic*, in which he describes the relationship between the three. Said argues that critics should maintain a distance from both critical systems and the tenets of the hegemonic culture. He emphasizes a form of criticism that is fundamentally oppositional to the dominant culture. He also insists on the fact that texts should be worldly and he believes in criticism from the position of marginality.

Said claims not only that texts should be worldly, but that they should be worldly and aesthetic at the same time and this can be problematic. "[...] any occasion involving the aesthetic document or experience on the one hand, and the critic's role and his "worldliness" on the other, cannot be a simple one." (Said 1983: 2) Said states that what makes style the signature of the author, is a certain voice. With that specific voice a text needs to show that it has a personality. A written text is the result of direct contact between the author and the medium. It is the instrument of the critic, who is "the alchemical translator of texts into circumstantial reality or worldliness." (Said 1983: 4) According to Said, texts are worldly when they are involved in a specific historical situation. "Texts have ways of existing, both theoretical and practical, that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place and society – in short, they are in the world, and hence are worldly." (Said 1983: 4) Said states that critics have the

responsibility to distance themselves from the hegemonic conceptions in cultural criticism. Criticism needs to reject the monopoly of the ruling class and make place for new ideas. It should be worldly and oppose monocentrism. In his essay Said explains what he means with this term:

Most of all, I think, criticism is worldly and in the world so long as it opposes monocentrism in the narrowest as well as the widest sense of that too infrequently used notion: for monocentrism is a concept I take in conjunction with ethnocentrism, the assumption that culture masks itself as the sovereignty of this one and this human, whereas culture is the process of dominion and struggle always dissembling, always deceiving. Monocentrism is when we mistake one idea as the only idea, instead of recognizing that an idea in history is always one amongst many. Monocentrism denies plurality, it totalizes structure, it sees profit where there is waste, it decrees the concentricity of Western culture instead of its eccentricity, it believes continuity to be given. (Said 1983: 22)

I argue that Le Clézio writes the worldly texts that Said values. He writes through the eyes of both the so-called Occident, the West, the civilized and the so-called Orient, the East, the uncivilized and in this way offers windows into foreign worlds. Coetzee on the other hand does not necessarily write about foreign cultures and countries, but I do not think this makes him less worldly. Damrosch states that the kind of literature that shows these other worlds is most important for the subject of cosmopolitanism, because it gives us the opportunity to learn from all sorts of different countries and people. But in my opinion cosmopolitanism does not necessarily have to include the border crossing of countries. Coetzee is cosmopolitan mainly by discussing uncomfortable and innovative ideas and the theme of “the other”.

Cosmopolitanism appears on a broad and dynamic spectrum. In this thesis I argue that there is not one right answer to the question “what is cosmopolitanism?”, because in my opinion cosmopolitanism cannot be labeled simplistically. The boundaries of what is cosmopolitanism and what is world literature are dynamic, the conceptions keep changing and changing.

2. Life and work of J.M.G. Le Clézio

2.1 Le Clézio

Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio, mostly referred to as J.M.G. Le Clézio, is not just any writer, he is a Nobel Prize winning writer. If he had not won the Nobel Prize for literature, most of us would have probably never heard of him, for he is was not well known in the English speaking world. According to Adam Gopnik's foreword in *Wandering Star*, this is partly a reflection of the insularity of American criticism, but also partly because Le Clézio is a difficult writer. He is not a writer who is hard to read, but whose point of view is mostly so original that it is difficult to understand what exactly he is doing. Obtaining an English translation of one of Le Clézio's works might be a little harder than expected, but since he won the Nobel Prize for literature, some English translations were published. Novels that have been published in English are *Le Procès-Verbal (The Interrogation)*, *Désert (Desert)*, *Onitsha (Onitsha)*, *Terra amata (Terra amata)*, *La Guerre (War)* and *Étoile Errante (Wandering Star)*.

Le Clézio's mother was born in Nice and his father was born on the island of Mauritius, which was a British colony in those days. Le Clézio has never really lived on Mauritius, but sometimes stayed there for a few months. Nevertheless, he regards himself both as a Frenchman and a Mauritian and he has both a French and a Mauritian citizenship. Le Clézio himself was born in the same city as his mother, Nice, on 3 April 1940. In 1948 he traveled with his mother and his brother to Nigeria to join his father. We see traces of this experience in the partly autobiographical *Ontisha*, a novel about a little boy who travels from France to Nigeria. After studying at the University of Bristol in England from 1958 to 1959, Le Clézio finished his undergraduate degree at Nice's Institut d'études littéraires. In 1964 Le Clézio earned a master's degree from the University of Provence.

He lived in England for some years, in London and Bristol and after that he moved to the United States to work as a teacher. During 1967 he served in the French military in Thailand, but after protesting against child prostitution, he was sent to Mexico. From 1970 to 1974, he lived with the Embera-Wounaan tribe in Panama. Since 1975 he has been married to his Moroccan wife Jémia and they have three daughters. They live in several places; in Albuquerque, in Mauritius and in Nice. Le Clézio has taught at several universities around the world.

2.2 Themes

Le Clézio has been writing since he was seven years old. When Le Clézio was twenty-three, his first novel *Le Procès-Verbal* (*The Interrogation*) was published. Since then he has published more than twenty-five novels, but also short stories and essays. In the first twelve years of his writing career, Le Clézio experimented with the themes of insanity, language and writing, but later on his style changed substantially. He dismissed experimentation and started to use themes such as childhood, adolescence, and traveling. This made him even more popular than before, because it attracted more and different kind of readers. His work is often philosophical, but most of all it is cosmopolitan. The stories take place in a suburb in Pennsylvania (*The Interrogation*), in small villages in France (*Wandering Star*), but also in the Sahara (*Desert*) or on the Niger (*Onitsha*) in Africa. Le Clézio does not just have one subject he writes about, he writes about seas and deserts, about war and peace, about childhood and adulthood, about small villages and countries. Le Clézio writes through the eyes of the oppressed, he writes of young people and their dreams.

According to Jean-Xavier Ridon, who wrote an article about displacement in Le Clézio works, Le Clézio writes of “displaced persons” who seek, each in his or her own way, to find their place in the world.” (Ridon 1997: par. 2) He writes about their experiences and their memories and according to Ridon memory “binds people together in a sense of belonging and community, which imply an idea of recognition and identity.” (Ridon 1997: par. 24) Ridon states that memories travel via storytelling and that this is important because as memory moves from place to place, from culture to culture and from person to person, it also becomes the memory of others.

2.3 Le Clézio’s writing; Contesting orientalism

Le Clézio was an uncommon choice as winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. There was some objection because of the fact that a pretty unknown French writer was writing about colonization, exile and war. The Western Le Clézio could not surely know as much about this subjects as Eastern writers could. But Le Clézio has travelled a lot during his life and this travelling has given him certain knowledge en experience. He processes his experiences and travels in his books, as for example in *Onitsha*. In the books that Le Clézio wrote in the second part of his career, when he dismissed experimentation, he used themes such as childhood, adolescence, and traveling. I will discuss these books first, because these are the books that gave Le Clézio the image of a cosmopolitan writer.

Wandering Star is a story about two girls. One of the girls is Esther, a Jewish girl who is forced to leave her home in a small village in France because of the Nazi invasion. The book describes her journey to Jerusalem. During this journey she grows up and begins to understand what the war is about. She understands that her father is dead and that they had to leave their home, otherwise the Nazi's would have killed them. Arriving in Israel, Esther meets the other girl, Nejma, a Palestinian refugee of the same age.

Suddenly a very young woman broke away from the crowd. She walked toward Esther. Her face was pale and haggard, her dress covered with dust, she was wearing a large scarf over her head. Esther saw that the straps of her sandals were broken. The girl walked up close enough to touch Esther. There was a strange gleam in her eyes, but she didn't speak, she didn't ask anything. For a long moment she stood still with her hand resting on Esther's arm as if she were going to say something. Then she pulled a blank notebook with a black cardboard cover out of her pocket and on the first page in the top right-hand corner she wrote her name, in capital letters like this: N E J M A. (Le Clézio 1980: 192)

Nejma was also forced to leave her home behind. They only meet very shortly. It is as if something pulls them toward each other, as if they know each other and recognize themselves in "the other". They are both very different and very similar at the same time. For me this is the main importance of cosmopolitanism. In order to be a citizen of the world, you need to be able to know/see/feel "the other". Being cosmopolitan is not only knowing yourself and your own place, but you also need to open up yourself to others. In the case of Nejma and Esther, Le Clézio describes this encounter with "the other" as familiar and unclenched, but in Coetzee's work we see that this encounter with "the other" can be deeply uncomfortable as well. After their encounter Nejma goes to a refugee camp. Both girls wander through the world, in an endless quest for a safe home.

In the previous chapter I discussed Said's claim that texts should be worldly and aesthetic at the same time. A certain voice shows that a text has a personality, which makes it aesthetic. Le Clézio's *Desert* has its own personality. It is a rich and poetic novel, which really displays the cosmopolitan character of Le Clézio. It reflects on colonization and its legacy. In *Desert* Le Clézio weaves together two stories, namely that of the Tuareg, the desert warriors, also known as the blue men, and that of the young Nour and Lalla. The story Le Clézio tells about the Tuareg, is the story of their last days, when they are being driven from their ancestral lands in North Africa by the French colonial army. *Desert* is a slow, but beautiful story. Le Clézio's detailed descriptions of the suffering, the desert, the draught, the heat, the sky, make the story so vivid and real.

It was as if there were no names here, as if there were no words. The desert cleansed everything in its wind, wiped everything away. The men had the freedom of the open spaces in their eyes, their skin was like metal. Sunlight blazed everywhere. The ochre, yellow, gray, white sand, the fine sand

shifted, showing the direction of the wind. It covered all traces, all bones. It repelled light, drove away water, life, far from a center that no one could recognize. (Le Clézio 1980: 5)

In *Desert* Le Clézio writes about people who are close to the earth and sea, and at the same time about the beauty and forces of nature. Because of the fact that Le Clézio's work is often so vivid, it touches the reader. It makes it easier for the reader to empathize with the characters and opening up to them. A surreal encounter between the reader and the characters takes place. The reader meets "the other" in the same way novel characters meet "the other".

In *Wandering Star* we also see an individual voice and personality. Here Le Clézio's writing style is beautiful, yet understandable. He writes in a simple and child-like style. His use of language is flowing and expressive, very poetic and dreamy, which is in contrast with the subjects he writes about. Le Clézio is a master in writing rich and vivid passages. His novel *Wandering Star* is full of these vivid passages. One of the most vivid described parts of *Wandering Star* is where Le Clézio describes Esther's little games with Tristan, where she jumps from rock to rock in nothing more than her panties. While reading, I can feel the wind touching the grasses and the trees. I can see the goose bumps on the children's naked bodies. I can hear their shouting and their laughing. I can hear the rippling of the river. "For a while Tristan could hear their shouts, their calls, then their voices were drowned out by the sound of the water cascading down between the boulders. The sky over the valley was utterly blue, a hard, taut color that hurt your eyes." (Le Clézio 2004: 56). *Wandering Star* carries out the aesthetic aspect that Said values, but does it also contain the aspect of worldliness, or in other words, is it cosmopolitan?

Said argues that texts are worldly when they are involved in a specific historical situation. "Texts have ways of existing, both theoretical and practical, that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place and society – in short, they are in the world, and hence are worldly." (Said 1983: 4) *Wandering Star* is a story that is entangled in a certain circumstance, time, place and society. It takes place between 1943 and 1982 (time) during a war (circumstance). The characters travel from one place to the other. It ranges from France and Italy to the Middle-east (place) and they get in touch with the inhabitants of those places (society). Said insists on the worldliness of the text, that is related to the social and cultural manifestations. He rejects the idea of close-reading, where only the text itself creates meaning, but he believes that texts should be studied as a part of a historic, social and cultural network. *Wandering Star* is part of a very big historical, social and cultural network. It is one of the numerous texts that have been written about the Second World War. When you read a book that is about the Second World War you can ask yourself whether it adds something to the enormous amount of literature that has already been written on the subject. It is not easy to come up with an original story, but with

Wandering Star it is exactly what Le Clézio did. A lot has been written about the fate of Jewish people in Europe, but much less about the fate of surviving Jews that escaped to the young Israeli state. The Palestinians have been almost entirely absent in European literature. So not only does Le Clézio write a worldly text that is part of an historical, social and cultural network, but it is also an original story. It is one of a kind, it something new, and with that Le Clézio distances himself from the leading conceptions in literature.

In his essay Said states that critics have the responsibility to distance themselves from the hegemonic conceptions in cultural criticism. Criticism needs to reject the monopoly of the ruling class and make place for new ideas. Criticism should be worldly and oppose monocentrism. This is exactly what Le Clézio does by writing his story from another point of view than usual. He writes not only from the Western viewpoint, but also from the Orient viewpoint. Le Clézio is a French writer who is writing about subjects such as colonization, exile and war. Is this Western author writing about Eastern subjects similar to the European attitude towards the Oriental that Said criticized in his book *Orientalism*? Especially since Le Clézio is a French writer and according to Said “To speak of Orientalism therefore is to speak mainly, although not exclusively, of a British and French cultural enter-prise.” (Said 1977: 4) On the contrary, Le Clézio’s novel *Wandering Star* shows that it is far removed from what Said described as Orientalism. Most significantly he distances himself from this Orientalism by telling the story from more than one ethnic point of view. The structure Le Clézio uses in *Wandering Star* is probably the reason the book was so well received by European readers. He starts with the story of Esther, a French Jewish girl who has to escape her country. It is a story European readers easily identify with, because it takes place in their own familiar surroundings and because they have read so many other stories on this subject. They read about this beautifully described journey she makes to Jerusalem and everything that happens during this journey. And then suddenly, the readers barely noticing it, he shifts to the less recognizable story of the Palestinian girl Nejma. The readers are then so touched already by the story, that they keep reading and start to see the similarities between the lives of the girls. “How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the ‘other’)?” (Said 1983: 325) Le Clézio proves that there is another way to discuss “the other”, instead of with aggression and hostility. He tries to let his readers empathize with the life and situation of the Palestinians. The Palestinians are in this case the ones who represent the Orientals. The differences and polarities between Esther’s and Nejma’s lives, show that the story of the European Jewish girl who had to flee Europe because of

the Nazi invasion, is not the only story. It shows how complex the history of the Jews and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is, and also shows that the solution for one problem often creates other problems.

Le Clézio's *Onitsha* also brings forward Le Clézio's empathy with "the other". *Onitsha* is a partly autobiographical book, which tells the story of Fintan, a young European boy who travels from Bordeaux to Onitsha in colonial Nigeria with his Italian mother. The main theme of the book is traveling. Fintan travels from France to Nigeria and after Fintan's father losing his job, the family travels to London first and then to the south of France. This main theme shows Le Clézio bond with travelling, but besides the theme of travelling, it is also a book about childhood, slavery and colonialism. Fintan and his mother find it hard to integrate into the colonial society of Onitsha. They feel like they are strangers, alone in a world where they do not belong.

She felt her throat tighten, as if she might cry. She looked at the English officers around the table, so white; she sought Geoffroy's gaze. But no one was paying attention to her, and the women continued to eat and to laugh. Gerald Simpson's gaze paused a moment upon her. There was a strange glint in his eyes, behind the lenses of his glasses. He wiped his little blond moustache with a napkin. Maou felt such hatred that she had to avert her gaze. (Le Clézio 1992: 60)

In the previous passage we also see the contradictions between the white "self" and the black "other". It is made very clear that the officers are white and have blond hair. The novel criticizes the power of the white ruling class and the oppression of black people. The book is a critique of racism and colonialism. Throughout the book the mother Maou speaks out against the way the colonials treat the indigenous people.

Maou was on the terrace and watched with astonishment – these chained men were crossing the garden, their shovels on their shoulder, with a regular noise each time the rings around their ankles pulled on the chain – left, left. Their black skin shone through their rags like metal. Some looked over towards the terrace; their faces were eroded by fatigue and suffering. (Le Clézio 1992: 59)

2.4 *Terra Amata*

Terra Amata is a story about a man named Chancelade. The story focuses on the experiences and perceptions of the main character. Chancelade is a man who does not do much, but he experiences his ordinary life in so much detail, that this makes his life worth to write about. For Chancelade, the world is filled with beauty, wonder and possibilities. From everything he has ever done he remembers the most minute details. From the sand on the beach where he was playing as a little boy, to the insects in his garden. Chancelade leads both himself and the reader "through numerous sensorial and contemplative adventures which yield unexpected insights on humankind's situation in the universe. The fictional account of Chancelade's experiences offers

simultaneously a prescription for how to live, a critique of the social and cultural institutions that have traditionally determined modes of living, and an example of a new kind of literature that brings attention to some of the earth's most minute details and reveals what can be learned from them about the relationship between humans and the earth they inhabit." (Racevskis 1999: par. 1) *Terra Amata* is full of lyrical descriptions and language games. It is not at all a book about travelling, but it is a book that focuses on life itself. "this novel is about the earth and more specifically about a certain way of approaching the world's concrete realities." (Racevskis 1999: par. 1) *Terra Amata* was written in the first twelve years of Le Clézio's writing career, where he still experimented with the themes of insanity, language and writing.

Earlier I argued that in order to be a citizen of the world, you need to be able to feel yourself into "the other". In Coetzee's novels this encounter with "the other" is often deeply uncomfortable. This is also the case in Le Clézio's *Terra Amata*. "The other" we encounter are for example animals, little bugs. Chancelade is torturing little bugs by capturing them and pulling their legs out.

Chancelade began with the bug in cell No. 16. It was a strong little creature and when the boy got hold of it between his thumb and forefinger it struggled and tried to escape by clinging on with its feet. Chancelade brought it up close to his face, looked at it and rebuked it gently. Then with his left hand he pulled off its legs one by one. (Le Clézio 1967: 15)

While torturing the animals, Chancelade does not seem to feel much. He does not torture these bugs because he feels angry or sad, but he thinks he is a sort of god, who has the "absolute power over life and death over them." (Le Clézio 1967: 13) He is not being cosmopolitan, because he is not at all trying to think himself into "the other". Just like the colonial people in *Onitsha* and the Nazi's in *Wandering Star* he only thinks of himself and his own little world. He feels alone in the world and does not care about others. Partly this is also what happens in Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* that I am discussing in the next chapter. For Elizabeth Costello it is impossible to think herself into the being of other persons, but she claims that we should be able to think ourselves into the being of another; even into the being of an animal, because Costello states there are no bounds to this imagination. Costello does have the cosmopolitan view, even though it is hard for her to actually carry it out, while Chancelade does not even try.

At first it confused me that Le Clézio chose this self-centered person as a main character. It is an unexpected point of view for a cosmopolitan writer as Le Clézio, but maybe we can see this as his way of empathizing with "the other", the un-cosmopolitan. Also it makes this book be in contrast with the rest of his cosmopolitan works, where the cosmopolitan aspect is even more highlighted by this less cosmopolitan work.

We should not see *Terra Amata* is an un-cosmopolitan novel, just because it has an un-

cosmopolitan main character. It is cosmopolitan in the representation of the earth. *Terra Amata* focuses on earth's tiniest elements, tiny grains of dust or sand, insects, blades of grass. "Small specks of reality point to much larger structural analogies of themselves; our point of view on miniature worlds implies that an analogous perspective on our own world might consider us a microcosm. Thus a conception of the universe as a succession of cosmic levels, combined with meticulous attention to phenomenal detail, provides new ways of conceiving the situation of humans on the earth." (Racevskis 1999: par. 4) It does not behold the world as a whole, but it notices each small detail, that form the world together. Also it implies that we should not merely be concerned with the world, but also with the universe. This is also a cosmopolitan conception, only not the human side of cosmopolitanism, but more, precisely, the cosmic side of it.

3. Life and work of J.M. Coetzee

3.1 J.M. Coetzee

J.M. Coetzee is a South African writer who in 2003 was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and was also the first author to be awarded the Booker Prize twice. Coetzee is considered to be one of the most important writers of our time. Coetzee was born in Cape Town on 9 February 1940. Coetzee's father was a lawyer, government employee and sheep farmer. His mother was a schoolteacher. Coetzee spent the biggest part of his youth in Cape Town and when Coetzee was eight years old he and his family moved to Worcester in Cape Province because Coetzee's father lost his government job due to disagreements over the state's apartheid policy. Coetzee studied both mathematics and English at the university of Cape Town and received a bachelor degree for both of them. In 1963 Coetzee married and he and his wife had a daughter and a son. In 1980 they divorced. Coetzee's son died in 1989 in an accident. From 1962 to 1965 Coetzee lived in the United Kingdom, where he worked as a computer programmer. At the same time he received a master's degree for a dissertation on the novels of Ford Madox Ford. In 1968, Coetzee began teaching English literature at the State University of New York and in 1969 he received a PhD in linguistics at the University of Texas. In Buffalo Coetzee started his first novel, *Dusklands*. In 1970 he returned to South Africa to teach English literature at the University of Cape Town. In 2002 Coetzee moved to Australia and in 2006, Coetzee became an Australian citizen. Several of his books are autobiographical. These autobiographical books are in the form of a trilogy and the novels are called *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life*, *Youth*, and *Summertime*.

Coetzee has been awarded many prizes throughout his career. He has a reputation for avoiding award ceremonies. He was the first author who was awarded the Booker Prize twice, namely first for *Life & Times of Michael K* and for *Disgrace*. In 2003 Coetzee won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Coetzee is a reserved and sequestered man. He is a vegetarian and does not drink nor smoke. He takes his writing very seriously and he writes every day.

3.2 Themes

Coetzee is a versatile writer who writes about all sorts of subjects, countries and people. Coetzee has written several novels in which the theme of the loner who must try to keep standing in a group often recurs. In his novels he also discusses, from different angles, important human themes such as love, happiness, loneliness, fear, sadness, good and evil and a theme that always comes back is the essence of being human. He uses a very compact and simple style to highlight

major themes, by linking very complex themes to a seemingly simple story. Coetzee is not the kind of writer who writes mainly about cultures and travelling and who offers windows into foreign worlds, like le Clézio does, but that does not make him a less worldly writer. Coetzee is a writer who is not afraid of difficult and heavy topics. He is cosmopolitan in a way where border crossing is not necessarily the visiting of different countries, but where crossing the borders of certain topics and participating in uncomfortable situations is most important. However, we should not ignore the fact that Coetzee does write about travelling, especially in his autobiographical works, but also in other novels, like *Elizabeth Costello*. Costello is a famous writer who travels around the world to receive prizes and give speeches. Coetzee is a writer with innovative views and ideas that he shares with his public through readings, but also by processing them into his work.

3.3 Uncomfortable cosmopolitanism

One of Coetzee's famous novels is *Elizabeth Costello*. The novel's protagonist is Elizabeth Costello, an aging Australian writer who travels around the world to give lectures. Elizabeth Costello is also the main character in Coetzee's academic novel, *The Lives of Animals* and she also appears in Coetzee's *Slow Man*. She became famous for writing *The House on Eccles Street*, a novel that re-tells James Joyce's *Ulysses* from the perspective of the protagonist's wife, Molly Bloom. The work is held in high esteem and Costello travels around the world to give lectures on various topics such as animal rights, realism, the Holocaust and literary censorship. Costello is a writer who often disappoints both her audience and her family. Her speeches are often provocative and uncomfortable. Apparently she also lacks all passion while delivering her message. Afterwards she leaves her audience confused and frustrated. By discussing these provocative topics Costello is breaking down comfort zones. She mentions subjects that other people do not want to be mentioned. She does not choose the easy way, but she chooses the critical and hard way. Costello is an exhausted and confused woman and has somehow lost herself and she does not seem to recognize the woman she has become.

For the moment, all she hears is the slow thud of the blood in her ears, just as all she feels is the soft touch of the sun on her skin. That at least she does not have to invent: this dumb, faithful body that has accompanied her every step of the way, this gentle lumbering monster that has been given to her to look after, this shadow turned to flesh that stands on two feet like a bear and laves itself continually from the inside with blood. Not only is she in this body, this thing which not in a thousand years could she have dreamed up, so far beyond her powers would it be, she somehow is this body; and all around her on the square, on this beautiful morning, these people, somehow, are their bodies too. (Coetzee 2003: 210)

Costello struggles with all kinds of issues like vegetarianism, belief and language. She discusses these issues in her lectures. Many of the lectures that Costello gives in the novel are edited pieces that Coetzee previously published.

There are several aspects that I believe make *Elizabeth Costello* a piece of world literature. Damrosch states that “masterworks could engage in a “great conversation” with their aristocratic forebears, a conversation in which their culture and class of origin mattered less than the great ideas they expressed anew”. (Damrosch 2003: 9) Coetzee definitely meets the criteria of Damrosch’s idea of what a masterpiece is. First of all he is in a conversation with his ‘aristocratic’ ancestors, like Descartes, Kafka, James Joyce, and so on. Coetzee is a writer who regularly makes use of intertextuality. The last chapter ‘At the Gate’, is a reworking of Franz Kafka’s *Before the Law* and *The Trial*. It is a letter from Lady Chandos to Francis Bacon. This is an allusion to Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s *Letter of Lord Chandos to Lord Bacon*, where Lord Chandos complains that language has begun to fail his need for self-expression and he regrets this. In Coetzee’s letter a female voice is added to this canonical modernist work, which is also what is done in *Elizabeth Costello*. Coetzee included several writers and philosophers and works of world literature in his novel. These conversations with the great ancestors is partly what makes the novel worldly.

Secondly in *Elizabeth Costello* Coetzee brings forward several new and critical views and ideas. Through Costello’s lectures, Coetzee shows the readers his view on certain subjects, such as vegetarianism, belief, language and evil. The lectures that Costello gives in the novel are real and often shocking readings that Coetzee himself has given. By framing these essays Coetzee found an original method to present these often philosophical texts. Here kicks in the problem of realism. The critic Cornwell wrote an article about Coetzee and realism. Cornwell says that the important issue of *Elizabeth Costello* is: “What is the writer trying to do for himself or herself by writing this work?” (Cornwell 2011: 349). He answers that Coetzee had some views and ideas that he felt were important and interesting to share with others. But what complicates this answer is that not Coetzee is sharing these ideas, but Costello is. Several critics have given different opinions on this, but they all appear to agree that “the Costello device is a creatively enabling one for Coetzee”. (Cornwell 2011: 349)

I argue that Coetzee wants his readers to analyze and think for themselves. The constant doubt and confusion that Costello has about herself and about her lectures, give the novel a critical, questioning character. The interventions by the narrator point out the literary status of the book, it makes the internal composition visible. The novel is not just a sum of theories.

Elizabeth Costello:

It is not a good idea to interrupt the narrative too often, since storytelling works by lulling the reader or listener into a dreamlike state in which the time and space of the real world fade away,

superseded by the time and space of the fiction. Breaking into the dream draws attention to the constructedness of the story, and plays havoc with the realist illusion. However, unless certain scenes are skipped over we will be here all afternoon. The skips are not part of the text, they are part of the performance. (Coetzee 2003: 16)

She disagrees exactly with what Coetzee does, letting the narrator interrupt the story. The interruptions put emphasis on the novel's own temporality, but also it stands in the way of a relaxing reading experience. It makes the reader analyze the things he reads and form his own opinion.

Cosmopolitanism does not necessarily have to be the crossing of a country's border. A writer can choose to cross borders and visit other countries, whether in the novel or in real life. He can do anything he wants, he is the creator and he is not bound to anything. A writer can enter any space he wants. Coetzee describes various countries, travels and cultures in his works, but this is not the main reason for his cosmopolitanism. In *Elizabeth Costello* "the other" is a very important aspect. The novel gives a whole set of othernesses by making everything alien and uncomfortable. This creates a cosmopolitan view, because in cosmopolitanism not "the self", but "the other" is important. In order to be cosmopolitan and to be a citizen of the world it is necessary to think yourself into "the other". As we see in *Elizabeth Costello* this is not always easy. Opening up yourself to others can be deeply uncomfortable.

The subjects animal rights and vegetarianism give an important voice to "the other". In the article *Humanity of Animals and Animality of Humans* Agustín Fuentes states that for Costello the humane treatment of animals and respect of animals arises from the "thinking ourselves "into the being of another"." (Fuentes 2006: 125) According to Costello we can seriously think ourselves into the being of another, there are no bounds to this imagination. Imagining what it feels to be like an animal is not the same as the actual experience of being this animal, we can only be this animal "anthropomorphically and psychologically" (Fuentes 2006: 125), but this thinking is important for the humane treatment and respect for animals. The subjects of "the other" and animals, are subjects she talks about in her readings. These statements contradict the way she acts. She does not even find it possible to think herself into the being of other persons, let alone think herself into the being of animals. Costello finds it so hard and difficult for her to be part of the world, it is impossible for her to blend in. She sees all people as "the other" and feels alone in the world.

Throughout the novel, Costello is breaking down comfort zones and she cannot even help herself doing that. Breaking down these comfort zones is exactly what makes this a worldly novel. For Costello the border crossing is not the visiting of different countries, but the participating in these uncomfortable and stressful events, like the readings she detests. Costello

always stays true to her own beliefs, no matter if other people disagree with that. Her audience does not like her speeches, but it is her opinion and she is not ashamed to share it with the world. If they do not want to hear it, they should not listen. Costello wants people to think and have their own opinions, just as Coetzee wants his readers to think for themselves. He does not give his opinion, but he wants his readers to form their own opinion. Coetzee appoints heavy topics, while sometimes interrupting the story to put emphasis on the novel's own temporality and to let the reader have an active reading position. *Elizabeth Costello* is a novel that breaks down comforting zones. It shows that dialogues are very important, but deeply uncomfortable as well.

3.4 *Disgrace*

In *Disgrace*, Coetzee enters the brain of David Lurie, an English professor who struggles with his excessive sexual desires. He is dismissed from his position as a teacher when he seduces one of his students, Melanie. He goes to live on his daughter's farm. It starts off as a quiet period and Lurie becomes comfortable with the rural life on a farm. But then the farm is attacked and Lurie's daughter Lucy is raped and becomes pregnant. *Disgrace* is a story about a man who loses everything he has; his reputation, his job, his dreams. *Disgrace* brings forward several themes; apartheid, race, poverty, personal shame, animal rights and crime. It is an honest and genuine story about the struggles around the apartheid, but the book sparked debate in the political surroundings of South Africa. They felt that the book portrayed South Africa in too pessimistic a light. In *Disgrace* Coetzee created an extreme tension. The main character of the book, Lurie, is a confusing person who is hard to understand. When being accused of sexual harassment he pleads guilty, but he rejects an offer of clemency by refusing to issue the public statement of contrition that the University demands. Lurie believes this is a private matter and by rejecting this he stays true to his own beliefs. This reminds me of Elizabeth Costello, who always stays true to herself. When her audience and family want her to keep quiet or talk about more accepted subjects, she still holds on to her own ideas and shares them with her audience.

According to Gareth Cornwell: "Coetzee thus convincingly evokes the pathos of an aging man's recognition of the uselessness of his desire.." (Cornwell 2002: 315) He recognizes desire, but recognizing love seems to be impossible for Lurie. Lurie's self-centered vision on the world made him believe there was a relationship between him and the student, but there was not. They had sex, but Melanie is very passive in their interactions. Earlier, Lurie had the same confusion when he was 'dating' a prostitute. He believed they had a relationship, but they did not have one. "This failure of mutuality, of empathy, of imaginative identification, this refusal to acknowledge

the self's necessary passage through the other, seems to lie at the heart of the novel's thematic burden." (Cornwell 2002: 315) With losing his job and everything that came with it, Lurie can be linked to the white South African male in a world where such men no longer hold the power they once did. Lurie used to have everything under control, but now he is forced to rethink and reshape his entire world. He believes he is too old for this, but eventually it helps him finding out who he really is. First Lurie is completely wiped away, broken down. Everything that belonged to him and made him who he was, did not exist anymore. He seemed to have lost his self, which reminds me of Elizabeth Costello, who lost herself to such extent she did not even recognize herself anymore. Lurie has to start from the beginning and rebuild himself. Lurie finds out what life and death really mean, he discovers the essence of being human, a returning theme in Coetzee's novels.

In *Elizabeth Costello* the theme of "the other" is very present, this is also the case in *Disgrace*. In *Disgrace* we see "the other" in the opposition of men and woman, white and black, victim and victimizer; in the black male rapist and the white female victim. The novel presents the theme of otherness by making everything distant and uncomfortable. At the changing point in Lurie's life, when he loses everything that matters to him, he becomes a loner. Nobody understands the choices he made and he feels completely alone in the world. Just like Costello, Lurie finds it very hard for himself to be part of the world around him. By pleading guilty and refusing the offer of clemency he creates an uncomfortable situation for both himself and others. He distances himself from the rest of the world which makes him even more of a loner. Lurie especially has difficulties communicating with women. This is also a theme of the novel, difficulty of communication, not only between men and woman but also between parents and children and between human and animals. Father and daughter find it hard to communicate with each other. Lurie finds it difficult to understand Lucy's choice of a hard and simple farming life, far removed from the "civilized" world of ideas that have formed his own existence. Here we see that Lurie is not really a cosmopolitan character. Issues he does not understand, he simply rejects.

Even more communicative difficulties arise after the attack. For Lurie it is impossible to speak about the attack with his daughter. Lucy says he will never understand what happened to her when she got raped, because he is a man. By doing this she makes Lurie one of "the others" and he becomes unreachable. From that moment on there is a clear division between men and women. After the attack Lurie is shaken, but Lucy, who seems calm, is in fact deeply traumatized. Lucy refuses to tell the police about her rape. She realizes that in the context of modern South Africa, no true justice will be served, but most of all she states this is a private matter. Lurie does not agree with this, but it is the same argument he posed during his hearing.

The uncomfortable choices Lucy makes by keeping her rapists baby and marrying a man not for love, but in exchange for protection and the right to remain in her house, can also be seen as cosmopolitan. Lucy is one of the few white farmers remaining in the region. She is being helped by Petrus, a black African who lives in the back of her property. The white Lucy is the mistress, while Petrus is in a subservient position. At the end of the novel they get married and they become equal.

Just as for Elizabeth Costello, for Lurie it is also impossible to think himself into the being of other persons. Both Costello and Lurie are not afraid to give their own opinions, even though it hurts others and creates uneasy situations. *Disgrace* also shows that dialogues are both very important and deeply uncomfortable. Coetzee is a writer who breaks down comfort zones.

Conclusion

In my conclusion I will answer the main question of this thesis: What makes Coetzee and Le Clézio cosmopolitan writers and in what ways do they differ/agree? In the previous chapters I discussed their individual representations of cosmopolitanism. In the conclusion I will take a closer look at differences and similarities in the way Le Clézio and Coetzee represent cosmopolitanism.

So what is cosmopolitanism? Cosmopolitanism does not have one fixed meaning, there are numerous notions and opinions on cosmopolitanism. In this thesis I have discussed the world literature of Le Clézio and Coetzee. It is impossible to understand and discuss contemporary world literature, without knowing what cosmopolitanism is and when talking about the subject of cosmopolitanism, it is impossible not to talk about the subject of globalization. World literature, cosmopolitanism and globalization cannot exist without each other. They exist side by side and are interwoven at the same time. According to Peter Trawny, globalization depends on cosmopolitanism in the same way cosmopolitanism depends on globalization. Globalization usually refers to the economic globalization, but also to the increasing global relationships of culture, people, and economic activity. Cosmopolitanism is mainly seen as the ideology that all human ethnic groups belong to a single community based on a shared morality.

In this thesis I discussed several views on cosmopolitanism. Immanuel Kant believes that cosmopolitanism is a matter of participating, not of spectating. This can be extended to the cosmopolitan idea of “the other”. In order to be a citizen of the world, you need to be able to empathize with “the other”. Being cosmopolitan is not only knowing yourself and your own place, but you need to open up yourself to others. You need to participate in your own life and in that of “the other”. An important aspect of this opening up to “the other” is that it can be deeply uncomfortable. Nussbaum states that cosmopolitanism should reject patriotism. She states that nationalism puts emphasis on diversity rather than on equality and that the goals of justice and equality fit in a world that has a cosmopolitan view, with citizens of the world. Robbins doubts this idea of cosmopolitanism, that someone who is cosmopolitan should be without boundaries, a citizen of the world who is not restricted to one country or culture. World literature has an important role learning about other cultures and creating a cosmopolitan world view. Goethe was the first to mention world literature; he predicted that national literature would become replaced by world literature

An influential critic in the field of cosmopolitanism and world literature is David

Damrosch. He states there are three general conceptions of world literature: the Greek and Roman classics, the masterpieces and literature that offers windows into foreign worlds. He has three conceptions of what he thinks world literature is; as an elliptical refraction of national literatures, as a work that gains in translation and as a mode of reading. Also Edward Said has influenced the theories on world literature and cosmopolitanism. His most famous work is the book *Orientalism*, in which he describes the Eurocentric prejudices against Islamic people and their culture. With the start of European colonization, the Europeans came in contact with the lesser developed countries of the East. The Europeans saw the Eastern societies as “the other” and did not endeavor to empathize with them. Said strongly disagrees with this attitude. In his essay *The World, the Text and the Critic* Said argues that critics should maintain a distance from both critical systems and the tenets of the hegemonic culture. He insists that texts should be worldly and aesthetic at the same time. In Le Clézio’s works I see the aspects that Said estimates as cosmopolitan. Le Clézio tries to understand “the other” and see him as an equal. He writes through the eyes of both “the self” and “the other”, through the eyes of the West and the Orient. In Coetzee’s work this is less visible, but this does not make him less worldly. On the contrary, he is very cosmopolitan in his way of discussing uncomfortable and innovative ideas and the theme of “the other”. Cosmopolitanism is a broad and dynamic appearance, it is impossible to pin down. I argue that there is not one right answer to the question “what is cosmopolitanism?”, because I believe that cosmopolitanism cannot be labeled so simply. The boundaries of what is cosmopolitanism and what is world literature are dynamic.

Le Clézio and Coetzee have differences and agreements in their ways of carrying out cosmopolitanism, but they are both cosmopolitanism writers. Le Clézio is a writer who traveled a lot during his life and he processes these travels into his novels. Le Clézio’s work is often philosophical, but most of all it is cosmopolitan. The stories take place in a in all kinds of places with all sorts of peoples. He writes about numerous different subjects, from nature, to war, to childhood. Le Clézio often writes through the eyes of young oppressed people. I stated that being cosmopolitan is not only knowing yourself and your own place, but also knowing “the other” and their place. In Le Clezio’s work we see a lot of meetings with “the other”. In *Wandering Star* there is the case of Nejma and Esther. A Jewish girl and a Palestinian girl, who have a very different background and culture, but because of their shared fate, they meet. Only by looking at each other they see this blink of recognition. Also in Le Clezio’s *Onitsha* we see a meeting with “the other”. Fintan and his mother have a hard time integrating into the colonial society of Onitsha. Maou feels hatred against the colonizers, who stand on the side of “the self”, and she feels sorry for the indigenous people, “the other”. *Terra Amata* is a different case. Chancelade is doing the

opposite of connecting with “the other”. He seems not to care at all and he stays in his own familiar environment, but we see an opening up to nature and the cosmos. Le Clézio’s novels are novels with an individual voice. His language is flowing, expressive, poetically and dreamy. He describes the events in his novels a vivid way, which make the story seem very real. An outstanding encounter with “the other” in Le Clézio work is the one between the reader and the characters. Because of Le Clézio vivid storytelling the reader is being pulled into the story and is able to open up himself to the characters, “the other”.

Coetzee is a versatile writer as well, who writes about all sorts of subjects, countries and persons. He often discusses the theme of the loner, who must try to keep standing in a group, but also themes such as love, fear, good and evil often recur in his novels. One of Coetzee’s main themes that always comes back is the essence of being human. Coetzee is a writer with innovative views and ideas that he shares with his public through readings, but also by processing them into his work. He uses a seemingly simple style, to highlight major themes. These major and often provocative themes make Coetzee the kind of cosmopolitan writer he is. It is not the writer who determines whether he or she is cosmopolitan or not, but it is the point of view that he or she chooses. Elizabeth Costello states she does not truly believe in cosmopolitanism or world literature as I discussed earlier.

‘The English novel’, she says, ‘is written in the first place by English people for English people. That is what makes it the English novel. The Russian novel is written by Russians for Russians. But the African novel is not written by Africans for Africans. African novelists may write about Africa, about African experiences, but they seem to me to be glancing over their shoulder all the time they write, at the foreigners who will read them. Whether they like it or not, they have accepted the role of interpreter, interpreting Africa to their readers. Yet how can you explore a world in all its depth if at the same time you are having to explain it to outsiders? It is like a scientist trying to give full, creative attention to his investigators while at the same time explaining what he is doing to a class of ignorant students. It is too much for one person, it can’t be done, not at the deepest level. That, it seems to me, is the root of your problem.’ (Coetzee 2003: 51)

She states she is not cosmopolitan, but she is not the one to decide. The content does not decide whether a text is cosmopolitan or not, but the ways in which the writer presents certain views does. Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello* is a novel that breaks down comfort zones. It shows that dialogues are very important, but deeply uncomfortable as well. Costello feels alone in the world, she experiences everyone she meets as “the other” but she keeps meeting and talking with people. She is breaking down her comfort zones to empathize with “the other”. She even mentions the subject of “the other” in her readings. She does not feel comfortable talking with her fans and family, but she does it anyway. Costello sees border crossing not as the visiting of different countries, but as participating in uncomfortable and stressful events, like the readings

and award ceremonies. *Disgrace* is also about the breaking down of comfort zones. Lucy chooses to marry a man in exchange for protection and to remain her house, instead of marrying someone for love. She would have wanted her life to be different, but she still makes the choice to marry him. She actively chooses to become equal with “the other”, a black man who feels like a stranger to her.

Before writing this thesis I expected Le Clézio and Coetzee to be very different in their way of representing cosmopolitanism. I expected Le Clézio’s cosmopolitanism to be mainly about traveling, different cultures and different people. This is not at all the case. *Terra Amata* is for example a story that has nothing to do with travelling, but it is a book that focuses on life itself. The story focuses on the experiences and perceptions of the main character, Chancelade, who is not a cosmopolitan person. It is an unexpected point of view to choose for a cosmopolitan writer as Le Clézio, but could we see this as his way of empathizing with “the other”, the un-cosmopolitan. Also it is partly cosmopolitan because of its representation of the earth. It shows that the earth consists of numerous small elements and that the world has a place within the universe.

Also I believed Coetzee was mainly cosmopolitan because of his choice of innovative and provocative views and ideas that he worked out in this uncomfortable manner, but I discovered that the theme of travelling is just as important in his work. In Le Clézio’s work these travels and meetings with different people from different cultures are obvious, it is often the main theme of his novels. In Coetzee’s work it is more in the background of his philosophical themes.

Both Coetzee and Le Clézio often describe encounters with “the other”. This not surprising, because the encounter with “the other” is one of the most important aspects of cosmopolitanism. I argue that in order to be a citizen of the world, you need to be able to empathize with “the other”. Being cosmopolitan requires opening up yourself to “the other” and expanding your familiar view of life. Cosmopolitanism needs an active attitude, it is about participating, not spectating. The differences between the meeting with “the other” in Coetzee and Le Clézio’s work, is that in Coetzee’s novels the meeting with “the other” is mostly uncomfortable. In *Elizabeth Costello* there is Elizabeth Costello who has a hard time communicating with “the other”, her family and audience, and in *Onitsha* we see “the other”, the colonized, who are being mistreated. In *Disgrace* we encounter “the other” in different forms; in the opposition of men and woman, white and black, victim and victimizer; in the black male rapist and the white female victim. In Le Clézio the meeting with “the other” is mostly not uncomfortable, but familiar and unclenched. In *Wandering Star* there is the encounter between Esther and Nejma. This meeting is not uncomfortable at all, because even though they both see

each other as “the other”, they also recognize themselves in each other. Only Le Clézio’s *Terra Amata* is an exception. In this case the meeting with “the other”, the little bugs, is pretty uncomfortable. Chancelade is torturing the bugs by pulling their legs out and the worst part of it is that it does not make him angry or sad, but it makes him feel powerful. It is striking that Le Clézio uncomfortable encounter with “the other” is at the same time the one that is not a cosmopolitan encounter. The encounter happens, but it does not work out, because Chancelade is not trying to see himself into the other. The discomfort is standing in the way and he does not want to open up.

So what makes Coetzee and Le Clézio cosmopolitan writers and in what ways do they differ/agree? Their writing about different cultures and countries is the first aspect that creates cosmopolitanism in their novels. In Le Clézio’s work this is a significant and main aspect of his cosmopolitanism, while in Coetzee’s work it is more in the background of his philosophical expressions. Secondly the encounters with “the other” give their novels a cosmopolitan nature. Being cosmopolitan requires opening up yourself to “the other” and expanding your familiar view of life. In Coetzee’s work these meetings with “the other” are often deeply uncomfortable, while in Le Clézio’s work these encounters are far more relaxed and familiar. This uncomfortableness is an important factor in Coetzee’s work, because it shows that opening up yourself to “the other” can be uncomfortable. Cosmopolitanism is about participating, not about spectating and this uncomfortableness is something you need to overcome in order to be a citizen of the world. Coetzee is cosmopolitan in a way where border crossing is not only the visiting of different countries and cultures, or crossing the borders of “the self” and opening yourself up to “the other”, but it is also the crossing the borders of certain topics and participating in uncomfortable situations.

Finally, I would like to once again emphasize that there is not just one right notion of cosmopolitanism. It is a dynamic and extensive appearance that can and should not be simply labeled. The boundaries of what is cosmopolitanism and what is world literature are dynamic and the conceptions keep changing and changing.

Bibliography

- Cheah, Pheng. 2006 'Cosmopolitanism'. *Theory Culture Society*.
- Clézio, J.M.G. le. 2009 *Desert*. C. Dickson (Transl.). London: Atlantic Books [1980].
- Clézio, J.M.G. le. 1997 *Onitsba*. Alison Anderson (Transl.) Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press [1992].
- Clézio, J.M.G. le. 2008 *Terra Amata*. Barbara Bray (Transl.) England: Penguin Books [1967].
- Clézio, J.M.G. le. 2009 *Wandering Star*. C. Dickson (Transl.). Willimantic: Curbstone Press [2004].
- Clézio, J.M.G. le. 2008 In the forest of paradoxes. Nobel Lecture.
- Coetzee, J.M. 2000 *Disgrace*. London: Vintage Books [1999].
- Coetzee, J.M. 2003 *Elizabeth Costello*. London: Vintage books.
- Connel, Liam and Nicky Marsch. 2011 *Literature and Globalization*. Routledge: Oxon.
- Cornwell, Gareth. 2002 "Realism, Rape, and J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*" *Critique*, pp. 307-322.
- Damrosch, David. 2003 *What is world literature?* . Princeton University Press: New Jersey.
- Damrosch, David. 2003 "What is World Literature?". *World Literature Today*, pp. 9-14.
- Fuentes, Augustin. 2006 "The Humanity of Animals and the Animality of Humans: A View from Biological Anthropology". *American Anthropologist* 108, pp 124-132.
- Kleingeld, Pauline and Brown, Eric, "Cosmopolitanism". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2011 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.).
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/cosmopolitanism/>>. (June 19, 2012)

Nussbaum, Martha C. 1994 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism' *Boston Review*.

Racevskis, Roland. 1999 'J.M.G. Le Clézio's *Terra Amata*: a micro-fictional affection for the real.' *Romanic Review*, pp. 409-415.

Ridon, Jean-Xavier. 1997 "Between here and there: A displacement in memory." *World Literature Today* 71: 717.

Robbins, Bruce. 1992 'Comparative Cosmopolitanism'. *Social Text* 31/32, pp. 169-186.

Said, Edward. 1987 *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Said, Edward. 1983 "The World, the Text and the Critic" *Bulletin of the Midwest European Language Association* 8/2, pp. 1-23.

Saussy, Haun. 2006 *Comparative literature in an Age of Globalization*. The John Hopkins University Press: Maryland.

Skrbis, Zlato & Gavin Kendall and Ian Woodward. 2004 'Locating Cosmopolitanism: Between Humanist Ideal and Grounded Social Category.' *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 21 no. 6, pp. 115-136.

Trawny, Peter. *Globalization and Cosmopolitanism*.

<[http://webappo.sh.se/C125702700229BA0/0/BD847E3091192A1DC1257571004B2C0A/\\$file/Trawny%20Cosmopolitanism%20and%20globalization.pdf](http://webappo.sh.se/C125702700229BA0/0/BD847E3091192A1DC1257571004B2C0A/$file/Trawny%20Cosmopolitanism%20and%20globalization.pdf)> (June 19, 2012)

Walkowitz, Rebecca L.. 2007 'Unimaginable Largeness: Kazuo Ishiguro, Translation, and the New World Literature.' In: *Novel*, pp. 216-239.