Cultural Entanglement, Displacement and Contemporary Durban in Imraan Coovadia's *High Low In-between*

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Abstract

This article focuses on Imraan Coovadia's *High Low In-between* and investigates how the novel's join protagonists, Nafisa and Shakeer, navigate their contemporary Durban. The mother and son, I point out, present two disparate subjectivities that engage with both the urban milieu of the city and a globalised world in very different ways. Both experience a sense of displacement in the city, but, as thew novel progresses, they manage to embrace Durban's contemporary cultural entanglements and feel more at home. Nafisa, a doctor in the inner city, learns to engage with the city through walking its streets while Shakeer, a globe-trotting photographer, discovers his ability to notice Durban's local specificity and entanglement of places, people, and cultures.

Keywords: Imraan Coovadia; *High Low In-between*; entanglement; displacement; South African literature; post-apartheid literature

With six novels and wide range of non-fiction pieces to his name, Imraan Coovadia has cemented his position as one of South Africa's most established and respected writers. Despite his sizable oeuvre, however, scholarly research on Coovadia's novels is still surprisingly scarce. While 2016 saw a special issue of *Current Writing* (Frenkel, 2016) dedicated to his work, publications focusing on his work beyond this issue have been relatively few and far between (Mamet, 2008; Frenkel, 2010; Muller, 2017 to name a few). Even more scarce is research explicitly focused on *High Low In-between*; specifically, Margaret Daymond (2018) seems to have produced the only publication focused solely on the novel. As such, this article aims to fill a gap in research on *High Low In-between*.

Before beginning discussion of cultural entanglement, displacement and contemporary Durban in Coovadia's *High Low In-between* (2009), it would be of use first to provide a brief examination of the evolution – both spatially and socially – of part of Durban that occurred between the times that *The Wedding* (2001) and *High Low In-between* are set. This would be a period spanning between roughly 1900 (the year in which much of *The Wedding* is set) and 2009, when *High Low In-between* was published. The primary source of information regarding central Durban's spatial and social development will be *The Making of Place: The Warwick Junction Precinct: 1870s–1980s* (Hassim et al. 2013) as it documents the evolution of the Grey Street area and the eventual legal relocations of many of its residents – of which Ismet and Khateja of *The Wedding* form a part.

In their study of the Warwick Junction Precinct, Hassim, Moodley, Rosenberg, Singh and Vahed (2013) outline four distinct periods in the history of the area: the Early Settlement phase (1824s–1870s), the Colonial phase (1870s–1930s), the Pre-apartheid phase (1930s–1950s), and the Apartheid phase (1950s–1980s). Of these four phases, the latter three are of particular interest since they focus on times after the arrival of both indentured Indian labourers and 'passenger' Indians (2013:18). During the Colonial phase, in which *The Wedding* is largely set, Indian settlements had included areas such as Clairwood, Merebank, Sydenham, Overport,

Clare Estate, Mayville, Cato Manor and Riverside (20) – many of which currently remain populated by a largely Indian demographic. The most well-known and perhaps most written-about of the early residential settlements for Indians is the inner city, which was often referred to as the 'Coolie Location' and was located on the 'west end of West Street, the northern part of Field Street and bounding the Western vlei' (2013).

The succeeding Pre-apartheid phase saw a number of laws that attempted to dismantle the 'Asiatic Menace' (19) that had taken root in the area surrounding Grey Street. The Public Health Act No53/1934 and the Slums Act No53 of 1934 both 'gave the Durban Town Council authority to clear areas considered to be slums' (28). The authors (in Hassim et al.) point out that white residents became increasingly concerned with the growing Indian population and its spread into traditionally white areas. These concerns came to fruition in the form of the Pegging Act of 1943 and the Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act No28 of 1946 – commonly known as the 'Ghetto Act' – which were introduced as attempts to forestall the penetration of Indians into white areas. Both of these acts controlled the ownership and occupation of land by Indians, dividing land throughout Natal and the Transvaal into 'controlled' and 'uncontrolled' areas. Controlled areas were reserved for ownership and occupation for whites only while the uncontrolled areas were not subject to such restrictions. Vahed and Rosenberg point out that 'a large portion of Westville leading down to the Umgeni River' (Hassim et al. 2013: 30) was regarded as a controlled area and thus reserved for occupation by whites – by 2009, this would no longer be the case as Nafisa of *High Low In-between* and her family are able to live in Westville.

The Group Areas Act of 1950 ushered in what Hassim et al. identify as the Apartheid phase. During this period, an approved racial zoning plan:

> allocated almost the entire ridge, north centre and south, and the Umbilo-Umhlatuzana interfluves to Europeans. All the residential areas on the sea front were also allocated for European habitation, with the exception of Riverside and the extreme southern section of the bluff, which were allocated to Indians. […] Much of the areas occupied by Indians were allocated and it became necessary for the City Council to compensate Indians by allowing them to retain some of their established settlements on the Bluff, Springfield, Sydenham, Clare Estate and Newlands. Only one new area on the western perimeter of the city was allocated to Indians, the sparsely inhabited area of Reservoir Hills, which was then occupied by about 20 European families. (34)

In 1969, the Department of Planning announced that it was examining the possibility of reserving the Grey Street complex for occupation by white residents. It was, however, decided in 1973 that the area was to be proclaimed as an Indian Group Area. This decision allowed for trading and light industry but stipulated that the vicinity was not to be used for residential purposes. Rosenberg and Vahed (in Hassim et al.), point out that '[t]his proclamation meant that approximately 12 000 residents had to vacate the area' (34). It is after this proclamation that the two main protagonists of *The Wedding* move to the 'new' Indian area of Reservoir Hills. Other residents of the area, however, were not as compliant and, as such, the Warwick Avenue Triangle 'had still not been fully cleared of non-Europeans […] after more than 20 years of pressure to relocate' (36). As apartheid infrastructures came under increasing pressure, the Group Areas Act was repealed in June 1991, giving all citizens, regardless of racial classification, the freedom to inhabit any area they chose. It is at this time that Nafisa of *High Low In-between* and her family are able to take up residence in the previously white area of Westville. Coovadia, in *High Low In-between,* however, suggests that '[i]n Westville whites and Indians with some money had lived side by side before the laws officially changed' (2009:

36). In addition, the repeal of the Group Areas Act allowed black citizens to take up residence in the previously white and Indian parts of the city centre. This is of significance as I will return later to Nafisa's sense of displacement in an area of Durban that would once have been 'hers.'

The sections that follow will initiate discussion of *High Low In-between* by first examining Coovadia's joint protagonists, Nafisa and Shakeer. Despite being mother and son, they present two disparate subjectivities that engage with both the urban milieu of contemporary Durban and a globalised world in very different ways. Both experience a sense of displacement in the city, but, as thew novel progresses, they manage to embrace Durban's contemporary cultural entanglements and feel more at home. Nafisa, a doctor in the inner city, learns to engage with the city through walking its streets while Shakeer, a globe-trotting photographer, discovers his ability to notice the local specificity of places, people, and cultures by adopting something akin to Doreen Massey's 'global sense of place' (1994:156). I will then move on to matters of space and place by examining contemporary Durban as it appears in the novel. This will be done by paying attention to, firstly, how Durban exists as a cosmopolitan and transnational entanglement of people and cultures, and, secondly, to how Durban fits into a wider network of connections with the rest of the globe. It is through Durban's connectedness to global networks that I will address the last facet of this discussion: globalised crime and how illegal organ trade is of particular significance when considered in relation to hybridity and entanglement at the level of the individual. While the links between the matter of organ criminality and Nafisa's and Shakeer's stories are not always clear, I feel that it is worth considering issue of globalised crime here given its ties to globalisation and entanglement.

Nafisa

One of Coovadia's dual protagonists, Nafisa, works as a doctor at both her private practice on Beatrice Street in the city centre and at King Edward Hospital. While she has offices in what was once known as the Indian sector of the Grey Street precinct, she feels a profound sense of alienation in the area. Ismet and Khateja of *The Wedding* had lived within the precinct and traversed its streets – and Beatrice Street in particular – whereas Nafisa is unable to bring herself to the point of engaging with the area via a pedestrian modality. Her practice, by virtue of being on the 7th floor of the Durban Medical Centre, removes her from the grasp of the city so that she is unable to form any intimate or meaningful attachment with the place around/below her. Coovadia describes the panoramic view that Nafisa is granted by her elevated vantage point:

> From her office she could look out of Beatrice Street and the surroundings, from the racecourse to the Hindu temple, cellphone shops, and the hospital where ambulances were deployed at right angles to the gate. […]
>
> When, on rare occasions, Nafisa walked out of the Medical Centre she was struck by the smells of wet paper and urine hanging over the gutters. […]
>
> Below her surgery window the kombis sped through traffic, stopping instantaneously between robots to take on new passengers, shouting at pedestrians. She could almost hear them although she was too high up, on the seventh floor, for sound to travel.
>
> On the corner the China New Territories fireworks importer had moved crates onto the pavement. The green and white tubes of Catherine wheels, the gunpowder rockets bound in their dozens and sparklers in their wire cages were visible from the seventh floor. (81–2)

While the seventh floor of the Durban Medical Centre is considerably less elevated than the 110th floor of the World Trade Centre mentioned by Michel de Certeau (1999: 127), the effect of the elevation remains pertinent. From her office, Nafisa can *almost* hear the taxis on the street below her, but Coovadia points out that 'she [is] too high up […] for sound to travel' (2009: 81). While she might be able to see the tableau on the street below, it has been stripped of an aural dimension, resulting in a less comprehensive understanding of it than she would have if she were to experience this from the ground. Furthermore, her elevation strips the scene of the olfactory element – 'the smells of wet paper and urine hanging over the gutters' (81) – she would have been unable to escape had she been walking on the pavement below. Nafisa's one-dimensional bird's-eye view of her surroundings results in her resembling one of de Certeau's voyeurs (81) who observe the city without actively engaging with it. Nafisa's lack of understanding of what she sees results in her passive observation of the cityscape being reduced to a passing glance that lasts 'only a minute' (Coovadia (2009: 82) – a moment that is too short to engage with the scene and examine its more subtle details.

Nafisa's lack of insight into everyday life in the city below her office spawns a particular way of thinking about contemporary Durban. She feels displaced and unsafe in an unfamiliar Durban that is strikingly different from the one in which she had lived before the new government had come into power. It is important to note, however, that the senses of disquiet and danger are not confined to Nafisa alone. Edward Said's notion of the particular poetics (1978: 55) associated with a space is of particular use when examining how numerous characters throughout the novel perceive the city and its imagined threats. Nafisa, during a rare trip out onto the street, observes how the city had changed and how she feels alienated from a space in which she had once felt comfortable: 'It was unusual to be outside in the midst of Durban. In common with the other doctors in the building, Nafisa didn't often set foot on the street. It was too dangerous, too disordered, too African' (88). Without going into any detail with regard to the poetics associated with the city, the narration (at this point focalised by Nafisa) makes her opinion of the city and its relative danger abundantly clear. This brief observation of the city is followed by a recollection of bygone times during which Nafisa had once been at ease in the city centre: 'Twenty years ago it had been safe to do errands around the town. She'd paid in cash for mains at the municipality and deposited the receipts from her practice at the Barclays branch without fear of interception' (81). This 'halcyon' time, however, is immediately juxtaposed to a contemporary Durban that is less accommodating and safe:

> Today the reality was larger, more sour, more unpredictable. Reality was likely to push a knife between your ribs.
>
> Things were bad. They were very bad in Durban. Equally there was always someone worse off than you, in Durban, in Africa, not a stone's throw from your present location […] someone without legs, hands, a face, someone without a minute of life remaining. (81)

Durban, for Nafisa, has become large, sour, and unpredictable – a place where one is under constant threat, be it real or imagined. Having mentioned previously the smells of wet paper and urine Nafisa would smell below her practice, I suggest that the two descriptions share a similar poetics – Durban has become a place to be avoided due to dirt, disease, and danger. Said's poetics of space is of further importance here as the linguistic representation associated with the same area in *The Wedding* is markedly different. While Ismet and Khateja were comfortable in a city centre populated by a largely Indian demographic among which they felt a sense of safety and community, Nafisa now feels displaced, and that the area has become 'too African' (81). The movement of black residents into the city had displaced the Indian

population, alienating people like Nafisa from a place which would have been once considered 'hers.' This displacement is made apparent as Nafisa later in the novel walks through the Warwick Market. The Indian shopkeepers that populated nineteenth century Durban of *The Wedding* have been displaced by black African shopkeepers. The displacement, however, need not be seen as a contentious territorialisation on the part of the black residents and shopkeepers. Like the Pakistani residents of Durban, the black shopkeepers form part of an ever-changing mass of de Certeauan singularities that (re)write the city (1999:128). Cities, by virtue of having a constantly fluctuating citizenry, are in constant flux as a cultural construct – both including and excluding different groups at different periods in time.

For most of the novel, Nafisa makes a conscious effort to exclude herself from the pedestrians of the city but, in a spirited attempt to see her brother, Nawaz, at the Warwick Market, she walks through the city, adopting a pedestrian modality that affords her a point of view that disrupts her preconceived views of the city and its imagined dangers:

> Beatrice Street, outside her surgery, was already crowded with buses and taxis. Passengers got on holding their shopping which they were taking back to the township. Nafisa went past the Islamic high school and the Catholic hospital, wondering about their coexistence. (190)

The idea of cultural co-existence within a cosmopolitan space may be unfamiliar to her due to her previous unwillingness to engage with the city. While the relationship between these two institutions may not be immediately apparent, considering them as separate roots of a Deleuzo-Guattarian rhizome (2005: 7–9) reveals how they create a culturally heterogeneous space. Independently, both the school and the hospital retain their religious identities but, when considered together, the specificity of the area in which they are located becomes one characterised by diversity – a specificity that can only exist as long as both cultural institutions remain in existence:

> A little further down and the roads were exclusively African: motorcyclists standing on the kerb, truants in school uniform with their shirts untucked, a Jockey from the Greyville track who strode stiffly in narrow white trousers into a café. […]
>
> The names on the signs were familiar while the roads were as strange as could be. They had become African since her previous life. She didn't recognise any of the shops or shopkeepers. She could as well be in Rio de Janeiro as in Durban, in Brazzaville, or at the bottom of the ocean. […]
>
> She was so deep in the city, far beneath its surface, that, to look up and see where she had come from, she couldn't reckon the depth between herself and the surface. (190–1)

Coovadia again points out how the city has changed with regard to its racial demographic, suggesting that it has become 'African' and thus unfamiliar. Nafisa, much like Ivan Vladislavić's girl mentioned in *Portrait with Keys* (2006), immerses herself in the city to an extent where the familiar becomes unfamiliar due to a barrage of finer details that were unavailable to her from her office. The seven-floor distance between her and the street while she is in her office has vanished, and she is unable to catch a glimpse of her former elevated and superficial view of the city, creating a defamiliarised space with which Nafisa must engage in order to reach her destination.

While on her foray into a defamiliarised city, Nafisa walks through the Victoria Street Market, observing how people '[move] in every direction, as if they were particles in Brownian motion' (192). While Nafisa's view from her office removed the olfactory sense from her observations of the city, she now notices an 'unexpected clean smell, air freshener, coming off the counters' (193). The unexpected smell – as opposed to the earlier smells of wet paper and urine – that she encounters can be considered a moment of epiphany during which she realises that her expectations of the city and its perceived threats had been misinformed. She reaches her brother, Nawaz, safely and, in doing so, encounters a city that is unexpectedly 'clean' and unthreatening. She begins to shed her sense of displacement. Nafisa's journey through the city's commercial centre transforms her into an example of de Certeau's wandersmänner (1999: 128) who engages with the city out of necessity.

Before moving on to her son, Shakeer, it is worth examining Nafisa's sense of displacement more generally. Although born on the African continent, Nafisa's cultural rhizome extends well beyond a narrowly South African frame of reference. Coovadia points out that her family was.

> from Botswana, originally from Probandar in India, Memons, a designation derived from the Arabic term for the faithful. Nafisa has been the beneficiary of a scholarship to medical school in Bombay, courtesy of the richest Indian family in Gaborone. (48)

Her personal history and links to Durban, Gaborone, Probandar, and Bombay (now Mumbai) create a complex entanglement that seems to set Nafisa adrift on an ocean of difference. Nafisa, throughout the novel, is aware of this difference; an awareness that becomes the source of her feelings of displacement. She observes how

> […] the Zulus and the Indians, two cultures side by side in Natal and once governed by the British, were deaf to each other. In this province, KZN, they were neighbours, their lives were entangled, yet they were as far apart as any two points on the globe. (68)

She wishes to but is unable to position herself as an African because she sees such interconnectedness and complexity that she seems unable to position herself at a particular locus. Of interest here is Coovadia's own use of the notion of entanglement. The Zulu and Indian communities exist in a state of geographical and historical entanglement via the shared histories of colonialism and apartheid, but Nafisa cannot imagine any social integration between the two. As the novel progresses, her sense of (non)belonging intensifies as she begins to feel that the Zulu community is actively attempting to displace her:

> It perplexed Nafisa to live among nine million beings, to treat them, to pay and be paid by them, to be buried in ground they claimed for their own, yet never to see how they should be so certain of their own place, and of hers. Yet they were certain and she was not. (178-9)

Her sense of uncertainty regarding 'home' in a country where '[e]ach person was a puzzle piece drawn from a different set' (244) begins to dissipate as the novel draws to a close.

After Govin Mackey confesses to having killed Nafisa's husband Arif because he had planned to expose Mackey's and Gerson's (il)legal organ trade, Nafisa, jolted by the news, begins to re-assess her responses and attitudes to her own life. Her first step is to try to see, again, what surrounds her in both Durban and her home. She turns to her domestic worker, Estella, and invites her to go to work with her the following day to be tested for HIV. Up to this point, the

relationship between the two women had been strained due to Nafisa's awareness of the difference between them. This caring gesture comes about due to her newly developed 'sympathy with every creature in the universe' (248). While the novel begins with Nafisa sense of displacement, it concludes with her feeling a profound connectedness and belonging in a country characterised by cultural and historical entanglements.

Shakeer

Having discussed Nafisa, her distancing of herself from the city, and her eventual process of engaging with it, I will now turn to Coovadia's second protagonist, Shakeer. Nafisa's son is a photographer, born in Durban but living in Los Angeles. He returns to South Africa to attend his father's retirement party but his time in the country is complicated by Arif's murder and his own inability to understand the country of his birth. Although based in North America, Shakeer is a seasoned traveller and Coovadia, throughout the novel, pinpoints the numerous places that his character has been to on assignment. Some of the places mentioned include Papua New Guinea, Antananarivo (28), Shanghai (49), St. Petersburg (97), Guadeloupe, Mauritius, Mexico City, and Santa Fe (103). Shakeer's travels are depicted as beneficial since he has the ability to both travel and make a living by capitalising on a globe that makes travel easy. His travels, however, are not without disadvantages. Upon his return 'home' after many years away, he seems unable to relate to the cosmopolitan space that is contemporary Durban. While he has experienced numerous other contemporary cities, he seems to be unable to understand Durban's particular hybrid specificity. Nafisa, upon collecting him from the airport, notices how he lacks the physical attributes that he once had. 'America had taken Sharky and made him fat, thick, uncomfortable. America had swallowed up her son' (35). What she notices is his possible inability to understand hybrid existences, particularly in relation to himself. He has shed his South African idiosyncrasies, becoming instead an 'American.'

Shakeer's misunderstanding of cultural hybridity that is able to maintain a sense of local specificity further manifests in his difficulty in taking pictures of Durban. Shakeer, unlike Ismet of *The Wedding*,Footnote[1] is insensitive to the subtleties of Durban's cultural rhizome. Where there is hybridity and subtle yet specific newness, he sees only generic homogeneity. He interprets hybridity as a cultural whitewashing that lacks Doreen Massey's conception of uniqueness of place (1994: 151) due to its particular combination of entanglements:

> In the Indian quarter, Sharky said, Durban had the feeling of a souk. He had once tried to take photographs of this section of town but he could not them specific. The shots resembled nothing so much as Tunis or the black and Arab marketplace in Zanzibar. (91)

Here, while Shakeer is able to identify cultural influences from outside of Durban, he is unable to observe any form of newness that may arise from the meeting of cultures. When taking pictures of Durban and seeing the Muslim influences, the culturally specific elements become synecdochic in the sense that they conjure in his mind images of souks elsewhere – in Tunis or Zanzibar. The synecdochic relationship for Shakeer is so strong that the mental images subjugate the perhaps more subtle specificities associated with Durban. Shakeer's insensitivity to the *inter*national space of contemporary Durban infringes on his ability to photograph the city as he 'had never taken an interesting photograph at home' because he 'could never quite understand what he was looking at in Durban, what he was supposed to make of it' (208).

Throughout the novel, Shakeer expresses feelings of alienation by virtue of not living 'in the country' (147). He does, however, come to the realisation that he 'had never been truly at his

ease anywhere else on the planet … in Guadalupe, Mauritius, Mexico City, in Santa Fe, wherever else his assignments had taken him' (103). In a sense, he is lost in a formless homogeneity which he cannot understand. Shakeer represents the second wave of diaspora moving outwards from South Africa but also serves as a warning of sorts about the absence of cultural awareness. Coovadia does not seem to argue for a kind of 'cultural whitewashing' but instead seems to suggest that one should adopt both an identity and awareness that is open to cultural hybridity and entanglement. Shakeer's disbelief in cultural entanglements that retain an element of specificity does not, however, exempt him from being a complex cultural rhizome himself. His friend and previous almost-lover, Leila, observes his cultural complexity. When she meets him at a *mawlud* celebration in Stanger with his mother, she tells him:

> I thought you would be completely American by now. But you hardly sound American at all. On the other hand you never sounded completely South African either, even when we were on campus already. (114)

While Leila does seem to notice a kind of cultural change in Shakeer, it is not one that has any identifiable influences. Despite being based in North America, he 'doesn't sound American at all', suggesting that Shakeer undergoes a cultural whitewashing, resulting in an acultural international entity rather than a culturally entangled *inter*national one. His aculturality had been evident early on in the novel at his father's funeral:

> He was told where to stand, when to join the procession, and asked to read the Arabic text on a stained photostat page. He could pronounce the words but not understand what he was saying. (54)

Despite coming from a Muslim background, Shakeer has little understanding of the culture and its ceremonies. In addition, while at the *mawlud* with Nafisa, he asks a man what the celebration is for. The man explains that 'it is the Prophet's birthday' (111) and continues by criticising him, saying 'if you are here, you should know the basics of the religion' (112).

Like his mother, Shakeer undergoes a personal transformation that changes his outlook on cultural difference, hybridity, and entanglement. Despite his difficulty in taking photographs in Durban, the final scene of the novel sees him going to a *taziya* ceremony near the old Sufi Mosque in Riverside in order to photograph the proceedings. Despite arriving late, Shakeer finds himself moving 'first closer to the centre of the crowd and then along with them towards the river' (268) in which the ceremonial tomb would be placed. This scene is a marked departure from the preceding religious ceremonies mentioned above as Shakeer is no longer on the margins of the ritual but is instead actively engaged in it. Within the crowd, he seems to discover a sense of connectedness and community that he had lacked throughout the novel:

> After a while Sharky [Shakeer] forgot himself and felt the heat rising at the back of his head. The men holding the tomb had set it alight before they could place it in the river. He felt the silent flames flicker on the back of his neck. The heat went to his head. So long as he didn't turn back to look the flames would never go out. (268)

Like Nafisa, Shakeer sheds his feelings of displacement and finds himself at home in the crowd.

Contemporary Durban

Moving now to matters of space and place, the following paragraphs will focus on the kind of Durban in which Coovadia's protagonists find themselves. As mentioned earlier, the contemporary Durban of *High Low In-between* is a one that is markedly different from that of *The Wedding.* Although the city is no longer racially segregated by law, social segregation remains between the black and Indian communities. This is evident in Nafisa's inability to engage with the city and her strained relationship with Estella. Durban is now more cosmopolitan as the globe has continued to 'shrink' (Harvey 1989: 240) due to technological advances, resulting in a rhizomian entanglement that has connections to countries both within and beyond Africa. Colonial Durban of *The Wedding* features almost no black figures whereas the city is now populated by figures from postcolonial African countries. Nafisa observes how this is true of not only Durban but of South African cities more generally:

> Since the advent of the new government nobody had enforced the rules on immigration. Unending blocks of Johannesburg were dominated by the Nigerians who moved heroin and morphine from Lagos to Los Angeles. The Senegalese and Congolese were established in Cape Town. There were groups of Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, others from the Horn of Africa who had served in battalions in Eritrea. (Coovadia, 2009:17)

Durban is also populated by Pakistanis, described as 'tough new characters, recent arrivals from the subcontinent' (17). When collecting the catering for Arif's retirement party, Nafisa and Jadwat go to the Pakistani-owned Karachi Delights. Arif insists that this eatery does the catering due to what he considers to be 'their preservation of the old ways' (17). It is worth noting, however, that the preceding paragraph mentions that cricket is 'a Pakistani religion' (17). The combination of 'old' Pakistani cuisine and the colonial connotations of cricket position the new subcontinental arrivals as cultural entanglements that are not as 'pure' as what Arif may like to imagine. The Pakistani residents, however, have not limited their entrepreneurial prospects to food only. Examining the heels of her shoes, Nafisa considers having Estella take them to the 'Greek shop in Davenport Centre next time she was in town' (64). While the existence of a Greek shop is in itself evidence of international cultural threads in the fabric of Durban, the entanglement becomes even more complicated:

> The shop was presently run by a Pakistani man. *The name people used had remained the same, as it was a buoy held in place in changing water*. The Greek had returned to Cyprus, Nicosia, after independence in 1994. (64, own emphasis)

By people referring to the shop by its old name, the shop retains a superficial tie to its previous Greek owner while simultaneously becoming a Pakistani enterprise. In this way, Durban is depicted as a place of cultural flows and one that is constantly (re)written by those who live within it.

While Coovadia does not go to great lengths to populate the Durban of *High Low In-between* with people with origins outside South Africa, his Durban does fit into a broader global network that allows for the transport of people, items, information, and culture. The following paragraphs will examine how Coovadia's contemporary coastal city functions as a hub for global industry and exchange. Nafisa's brother, Nawaz, supports his family by buying and selling clothing from the boot of his car. He sources his wares from 'factory stores on the South Coast, not far from Scottburgh, where there were barracks of young women armed with Singer sewing machines' (48). Coovadia, however, points out that:

> Nawaz was a figure from the past, almost of the eighteenth century. His days as a clothing salesman were numbered. The garment business throughout Africa was going extinct because of Chinese competition. China was the future, the world's workshop. (49)

David Harvey's notion of 'time–space compression' (1989: 240) helps to make sense of such an increasingly interconnected globe that allows for international trade at relatively low cost.

Coovadia seems well-aware that globalisation is a modern phenomenon by suggesting that Nawaz's tactic of sourcing local textile products is an out-dated way of doing business. Durban, in this example, has become a gateway to Asia, but its potential extends beyond cheap Asian products. As Shakeer ventures onto the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, he does not expect to see any familiar faces as

> His friends from those days were in Johannesburg, or in Melbourne, Swakopmund, Pondicherry. The professors who had once taught him had also relocated. Bernard Shumaker had retired to Milton Keynes, outside London, […] Turner, the Latinist, had gone further afield. (165–6)

Here, people have become commodities that are able to cross the globe with relative ease. While this example is indicative of what has been termed South Africa's 'brain drain', Coovadia offers an example that shows talented individuals coming *into* the country. Shakeer observes foreign medical practitioners at his mother's home:

> Whether it was by chance or design, several of the guests on this particular evening belonged to international organisations. Their groups were based either in Basel or Geneva, or across the Atlantic in Bethesda or Maryland. (150)

The groups that he encounters in his mother's home have connections to both North America and Europe. While these individuals contribute cultural threads to Durban's rich tapestry, their actions are further indicative of a technological age that allows for the creation and maintenance of relationships around the world. Shakeer notices that they are 'bent painfully over their telephones typing messages to contacts in other time zones' (151). If these communications were to be given a visual component, the result would look something like Massey's suggested view from an orbiting satellite (1994:148).

Globalised Crime

Before concluding discussion of *High Low In-between*, it is worth making mention of the notion of globalised crime as it is presented in the novel.Footnote[2] Although the novel is not a true crime thriller in the sense of having a 'real' detective, both Nafisa and Shakeer fill this role to an extent by actively trying to uncover the truth behind Arif's death. It is due to this similarity that I will turn to the notion of the globalisation of crime in the 'krimi' novel. Nicol, Pulman and McNulty suggest that Criminality does not merely mirror or shadow modernity; arguably, modern culture shapes or even produces forms of criminality' (2011: 3). Similarly, Eva Erdman suggests that '[i]n literature, the spread of crime has taken on topographic proportions that reflect the globalization process of the late twentieth century' (2009: 13). When considered together, these statements suggest that globalisation has given rise to global crime which is in turn reflected in contemporary literature. I suggest that Coovadia's *High Low In-between* is an example of such a text.

Surgeons Govin Mackey and David Gerson are charged with more than a hundred counts of organ trafficking with The *Sunday Times* reporting that '[i]n a private hospital in Durban they had removed kidneys from Brazilian donors and placed them in Israeli recipients' (161). The effective modes of transport and 'shrinking globe' of the twenty-first century have made this kind of crime not only possible but also lucrative. Illicit organ trade in the novel is significant not only due to its globalised context but also due to the notion of entanglement. Sarah Nuttall points out that DNA research has revealed '"ancestral maps" charting the geographical location of ancestors closer to us in time' (2009: 8). These findings, by revealing global genetic entanglements, have the potential to undercut the 'rigid conceptions of racial identity in which both colonial rule and apartheid were based' Nuttall (2009: 8). The organ trafficking conducted by Mackey and Gerson results in hybrid identities that consist of unseen genetic ties to places beyond the borders of South Africa. Mackey, although not disclosing where he had located a kidney for Arif, tells Nafisa that he had called 'Malawi, Botswana, Egypt, [and] the UK, desperate to find a kidney' (240), revealing that any country or continent could be a potential resource for this kind of cosmopolitan criminality. Near the novel's denouement, superintendent Gumede – a man whom Nafisa would consider having a legitimate sense of belonging to the African continent – reveals to Shakeer that he is himself a recipient of one of Mackey's and Gerson's illicit kidneys. Given how far afield the surgeons are prepared to search for a matching organ, it stands to reason that Gumede may be genetically hybridised by virtue of carrying a kidney from outside Africa.

In conclusion, I argue that Coovadia's novel, by virtue of its characters, its depiction of contemporary Durban, and the type of crime upon which the plot depends, reflects and era of cultural entanglement. It is only by embracing cultural entanglements and the specificities they afford that Nafisa and Shakeer are able to shed their respective senses of displacement in contemporary Durban.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Notes

1 See Muller (2017) for a fuller discussion on Ismet's engagement with fin de siècle Durban in *The Wedding.*

2 Coovadia is no stranger to marrying globalisation and crime in his fictions. His sophomore offering, *Green-eyed Thieves* (2006), sees twin brothers Firoze and Ashraf travel around the globe, pulling off daring capers. For a full discussion of cosmopolitan criminality in *Green-eye Thieves*, see Muller (2016).

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