CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS

THESIS SIGNATURE PAGE

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

LITERATURE AND WRITING

THESIS TITLE: THE HEART OF REDNESS AND SO FAR FROM GOD: CULTURAL DIFFERENCE
IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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DATE OF SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE: April 16, 2014

THE THESIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE THESIS COMMITTEE IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN LITERATURE AND WRITING STUDIES.

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The Heart of Redness and So Far From God: Cultural Difference in the Age of Globalization

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Introduction

Amongst my travels I have always been fascinated by the different cultural forms I am exposed to. These differences I encounter throughout my travel experiences intrigue me, and are what continually drive me to see and experience more of this vast and expansive world in which we live. Learning about different ways of life, other than my own, allows me to contemplate my actions, and explore different ways of living. I now understand, however, that I do not have to travel to the other side of the globe to get a taste of difference; that difference surrounds us, more now than ever before because of globalization. I also have come to understand though that not everyone else shares my enthusiasm for cultural difference. However, in a world where differences are inevitably coming into contact because of globalization, we must embrace it and understand that difference is not a threat. What is a threat, however, is the incapability to negotiate amongst differences within a global world.

As our world becomes increasingly globalized, boundaries are becoming less rigid while managing change and difference is becoming more commonplace. Because the processes and effects of globalization are so complex, it is difficult to grasp the impact it has on the world, let alone come to an agreement on how the world should respond to it. What can be agreed upon within the study of globalization, however, is that the phenomenon is continually altering physical and metaphysical spaces through contact. Our response to difference in this ever changing geopolitical and cultural landscape has indeed been the focus of academic debates and discussions.

Through my analysis of both Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* and Ana Castillo’s *So Far From God*, I hope to contribute to this debate by engaging the effects that globalization has on communities confronted by its various challenges. Each text illuminates how local identities
are disrupted and forced to deal with change, whether they choose to embrace or resist such change. Both texts exemplify globalization’s ability to invoke conflicting responses to its effects which in turn divides communities, and inhibits effective progress. The texts propose a solution to the unease caused by cultural conflict brought on by globalization through neither completely resisting nor accepting its influences. They insist that there must be a negotiation that takes place in order to find a compromising middle ground. These texts respond similarly to the acceleration of globalization despite their different socio-historical, geographic, and cultural differences. We must, therefore, all learn how to understand each other’s differences in order to progress in a globalized world.

Chapter one discusses the challenges of conceptualizing globalization because of its complexities. I will suggest that trying to understand the process of globalization is not as crucial as understanding and responding to its effects. I apply Kwame Anthony Appiah’s notion of cosmopolitanism to enable us to move forward in a globalized world. Through conversing amongst our differences—accepting and refuting them—we begin to explore the many human possibilities that are among us all. As our world becomes more interconnected, we have an obligation to accept each other’s differences and coexist amongst and despite of them.

In chapter two I introduce Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* and provide analysis that demonstrates how change brought on by modernity creates tension amongst local communities. The text reveals that essentialist thought only prohibits progress and prevents communities from moving forward within the process of globalization. Set in rural South Africa, nineteenth century Qolorha-By-Sea experiences change through the invading British colonial power, while contemporary Qolorha-By-Sea faces the challenges brought on by the oncoming of globalization. This juxtaposition implies that there is a connection between colonial history and current
globalization. The problem that arises in both scenarios is the inability to handle cultural interactions effectively. The text provides a solution through establishing a hybrid space; an in-between space that allows all cultural orientations to be expressed. Mda continually breaks down the preconceived cultural roles and provides a space that has no hierarchical order. He demonstrates through the text that it is possible to negotiate between oppositional standpoints to establish a space that provides a rearticulation of differences, which is imperative for progress.

In chapter three, my analysis of Ana Castillo’s *So far From God* reveals the consequences of an individual’s inability to cope with change. Through each of her characters Castillo demonstrates the effects of globalization. The way each character responds to the phenomenon is ultimately their destiny. The characters who either completely resist or completely embrace globalization’s influence do not survive. It is because they ignore, or even refuse, to acknowledge the other qualities that come from different cultural forms, making them incapable to exist in an interconnected, global world that is always experiencing a process of change. Castillo suggests that cultural contact must be approached with an open-mind and without an adverse opinion to difference. By enacting a cosmopolitan perspective, the community is able to manage the differences they face. They utilize each other’s differences and create opportunistic ventures that enable their community to thrive. Castillo demonstrates that differences are advantageous rather than a threat; and within a global age, we must take action by starting a conversation amongst each other’s differences in order to create effective change.

Through globalization’s ability to accelerate communication and contact amongst the world’s population, cultural confluence is inevitable. Coming to terms with our similarities and differences becomes the defining factor of progress. As our world becomes more interconnected, we have an obligation to acknowledge that we all subscribe to different practices
and beliefs. When we realize and understand that there is much to learn from each other’s differences, the process of globalization becomes less intimidating and more appealing as it enables coexistence amongst the world’s citizens.
Chapter One Globalization: Processes and Effects

The world in which we currently live is experiencing the processes and effects of globalization. Travel, trade, and communication in general, have become easier and more accessible due to innovation and technological advances. Societies and cultures across the globe have thus become more interconnected than ever before. Jagdish Bhagwati’s *In defense of Globalization* explains that Globalization was at first a “buzz word,” celebrated for its virtues, yet, can now also be conceptualized as “a more conventional four letter word” (3). What is globalization, and how is it currently conceived? The answers to these questions have become greatly contested issues.

Trying to define globalization is a difficult and an almost impossible task due to the many facets involved. Understanding that globalization is dynamic, and informed through multiple perspectives and locales, is key to grasping its complexity. Due to the multivalent nature of globalization, the varied discourses are controversial and highly debated. Whether globalization is beneficial or detrimental to the contemporary state of the world is commonly analyzed, as well as who in particular is benefiting and/or suffering because of its effects. Other questions arise as to whether the current interconnectedness is a result of hegemonic forces controlling the flow of capital, labor, and/or ideology; or if the connection is inevitably and naturally occurring purely because of the constant interaction and exchange. Cultural factors, therefore, play a huge role in determining the effects of this phenomenon. There are many considerations that inform whether the world is becoming universally united, as nation-states and geographical borders witness such exchange; or if local communities are trying to isolate themselves and revert to tradition, striving to preserve their cultural practices for fear they may get lost in a homogenous universal identity. Additionally, because the body of intellectual work on globalization is multidisciplinary and is
often approached through many different modes of analysis and application, the vast amount of information regarding the phenomenon can seem, at times, overwhelming.

Because globalization is such a contested issue, it is difficult to locate its meaning. Liam Connell and Nicky Marsh’s *Literature and Globalization* explains that “One of the primary difficulties in assigning meaning to contemporary modes of globalization is that the term has been consistently deployed to name quite different things and that a great deal of its energy derives from the potent and inevitable slippage between these varied meanings” (xviii). Here Connell and Marsh reiterate that because globalization is contextualized in such varying ways, trying to locate areas of significance can be daunting, particularly when trying to apply one specific meaning to globalization. Doing so would not only be difficult, but also a wasted effort.

Controversy within the study of globalization is also highlighted by Paul Jay’s *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*. Through exploring the nature and history of the controversy, Jay’s goal is to “review and intervene in each of these debates.” He asserts that many established explanations and theories of globalization must be further complicated (2-3).

Agreeing with Connell, Marsh, and Jay, I find many explanations of globalization problematic. Many accounts of globalization focus too specifically on one particular issue while ignoring other major factors. For instance, Thomas L. Friedman’s *Dueling Globalisations* describes globalization as “the new international system” that must be differentiated from the post-cold war world and is explained as “the integration of markets, finance and technologies in a way that is shrinking the world…and enabling each of us to reach around the world farther, faster, and cheaper than ever before (110). This is a problematic description of globalization though, because it excludes multiple factors. For example, who is the “us” that Friedman is referring to? In other words, does *everyone* benefit from globalization? Also, within this
explanation where do the cultural aspects lie, and how are they affected by globalization?

Another explanation comes from Anna Tsing’s, “The Global Situation,” which describes globalization metaphorically as a flowing creek cutting through a hillside making and remaking channels that lack any stable landscape elements (49). Although this may be a pleasant way to conceive how globalization works, it leaves out the crucial aspect of how these particular landscapes are affected by this flow. Furthermore, while current conceptual frameworks emphasize either the economic or cultural aspects of globalization, I tend to agree with Jay that these categories cannot be so neatly separated. He states, “[W]hen commodities travel, culture travels, and when culture travels, commodities travel” (3). Each aspect must be considered, without ignoring the former or the latter, when examining the effects of globalization. Frank J. Lechner and John Boli explain in Globalization that, “The economy may be a driving force in creating global change… but its effects depend on what happens outside of world markets. To understand the world economy, then, one also needs to understand world society” (3).

Trying to grasp how globalization disseminates across the globe is important; however, its affects, particularly to the people and the landscapes within it, is where our focus should lie. Instead of attempting to give a definition of what globalization is, or whether it is good or bad for the world, I want rather to focus on how people are responding to and negotiating globalization through literature, particularly within contact zones¹.

¹ Mary Louise Pratt coins the term “contact zone” in her Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation defining it as “Social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (4). I use the term accordingly, but expand it to also include instances where more neutral interaction occurs, or rather, hostility due to power relations may not necessarily be present within the particular social space.
Since the term is seemingly all encompassing, it is important to map out the tenets I subscribe to, and particularly those that are relevant to my textual analysis of both *The Heart of Redness* and *So Far From God*. Along with Jay, I agree with critics that argue that globalization has a long history and contend that at our historical juncture it “should be seen as a significant acceleration of forces that have been in play since at least the sixteenth century and that are not simply Western in their origin” (33). Jay further suggests that:

> If we think of globalization more broadly as characterized by a complex set of intercultural encounters, facilitated by successive historical shifts in forms of travel, communication, exploration, conquest, and trade that periodically accelerate in ways keyed to technological, economic, and political change, then globalization in our own time will appear to be the extension of relationships with a long and complex history both within and outside the West. (34)

Conceptualizing globalization as an acceleration is crucial to understanding that its effects on our contemporary state is a continuation of past occurrences that have led up to now, rather than erasing or ignoring everything that has come before it, which typically happens when treating globalization as a new phenomenon. Considering globalization this way also complicates the center-periphery model that places the urban centers of the West in control while influencing a peripheral developing world. While currently “[T]he institutional infrastructures of economic globalization still tend to be defined by this center-periphery model, emerging forms of agency at the cultural level are beginning to loosen its hold” (Jay 3-4). The fact that globalization is more than just an economic issue, characterized by “complex back-and-forth flows of people and cultural forms in which the appropriation and transformation of things—music, film, food, fashion” also raises questions about the rigidity of the center-periphery model (ibid).
Given these flows of cultural forms the question of whether the world is becoming more homogenous arises frequently. Lechner and Boli explain how it is assumed that if “certain activities and institutions become global, they must displace existing, locally variable activities and institutions…if there are more global linkages, global institutions, and global values, presumably this means that more people will have more in common” (3). Many critics of globalization would find the neutrality of this explanation “nefarious” and assert that the West is influencing such changes through cultural imperialism. Others argue, however, that the assumption of the world’s homogeneity due to globalization, is unreasonable for a number of reasons; particularly because of the different locales and how change is interpreted amongst them, as well as the tendency for growing similarity to provoke reactions from cultures to “protect their heritage or assert their identity” (ibid). Appiah explains in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* that “People who complain about the homogeneity produced by globalization often fail to notice that globalization is, equally, a threat to homogeneity” (101). He continues by explaining that a city (or village) that is integrated into global markets is “accessible to you—whoever you are—emotionally, intellectually, and, of course, physically” yet does not make it Western or homogenized. People and places are more connected now than ever before, but according to Appiah the presence of homogeneity “is still the local kind” (102). He claims that:

In the era of globalization—in Asante as in New Jersey—people make pockets of homogeneity. Are all these pockets of homogeneity less distinctive than they were a century ago? Well, yes, but mostly in good ways. More of them have access to medicines that work. More of them have access to clean drinking water. More of them have schools. Where, as is still too common, they don’t have these
things, this is something not to celebrate but to deplore. And whatever loss of
difference there has been, they are constantly inventing new forms of difference:
new hairstyles, new slang, even, from time to time, new religions. No one could
say that the world’s villages are—or about to become—anything like the same.

(102)
The world’s current interconnectedness is not causing everyone to be the same; rather, it
provides an exchange of cultural forms, along with a broader opportunity to examine differences.

In a globalized world, inevitably, change occurs. Appiah points out that some people
embrace the change brought on by globalization, while others find it unsettling (103). A
changing environment, however, can feel threatening to one’s identity, yet this is not a reason to
completely shut out innovation and infrastructure that may lead to a better lifestyle. Cultural
preservationists are inadvertently doing so by suggesting that certain cultures, and particular
regions, should be protected from globalization in order for preservation. Appiah asserts that it
is one thing to provide people with help to sustain arts, or other cultural artifacts that are a
valuable part of our human heritage, “But preserving culture—in the sense of cultural artifacts,
broadly conceived—is different from preserving cultures” (105-106). The cultural preservers’
objective is to maintain the “authenticity” of a culture, yet Appiah questions what makes a
cultural expression authentic, and who should decide how a culture chooses to adapt to change.
He asks, “Are we to stop the importation of baseball caps into Vietnam, so that the Zao will
continue with their colorful red headdresses? Why not ask the Zao? Shouldn’t the choice be
theirs” (ibid)? He goes on to emphasize:

Talk of cultural imperialism structuring the consciousnesses of those in the
periphery…treats…people…as tabulae rasae on which global capitalism’s
moving finger writes its message, leaving behind another homogenized consumer as it moves on. It is deeply condescending. And it isn’t true. (111)

Besides, trying to find an “authentic” culture that has not been influenced by any sort of contact is highly unlikely. Additionally, assumed “authentic” traditional expressions, typically, have had outside influences of some sort. For example, Appiah depicts how

The textiles most people think of traditional West African clothes are known as java prints, and arrived with the Javanese batiks sold, and often milled by the Dutch…And so with our kente clothe; the silk was always imported, traded by Europeans, produced in Asia. This tradition was once an innovation. Should we reject it for that reason of untraditional? … Cultures are made of continuities and changes, and the identity of a society can survive through these changes …. (107)

Globalization is enabling more contact, which in turn accelerates change. What we have increasingly come to recognize is that location and the people who reside within are not fixed, static, or unchanging (Jay 3-4). The way we—as individuals and cultures—deal with these changes, or rather how we should deal with them, is what needs to be addressed, and stressed when discussing the phenomenon that is inevitably unfolding amongst us all. Whether globalization is uniting the world’s people or not, it is certain that more interaction amongst varying differences is occurring worldwide. Thus, in order to deal with these changes, we must realize that we are not only citizens of our local community, but also citizens of the entire world. Through this realization we begin to take the first step in embracing the practices of cosmopolitanism.

Like globalization, cosmopolitanism is, and has been, greatly disputed. Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty argue in *Cosmopolitanisms*
that “We are not exactly certain what it is, and figuring out why this is so and what cosmopolitanism may be raises difficult conceptual issues” (577). The concept of cosmopolitanism, however, dates back to at least the Cynics of the fourth century BC who originally indicated that it is a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities, and is instead a “citizen of the cosmos” (Appiah xiv). The creed was taken up overtime by many influential philosophers and scholars including the Stoics, Immanuel Kant, Voltaire, Virginia Woolf and LeoTolstoy, to name a few; all of whom elaborated and complicated the concept (Appiah xvi). Cosmopolitanisms further complicate the issue by arguing that the practice of cosmopolitanism has no concise “mode of action” with specific guidelines to adhere to. It claims rather that “Cosmopolitanism may instead be a project whose conceptual content and pragmatic character are not only as yet unspecific but also must always escape positive and definite specification, precisely because specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitely is an uncosmopolitan thing to do” (Pollock, Bhabha, et al. 577). Appiah, however, asserts that there are two primary strands that intertwine and are always present in the notion of cosmopolitanism:

One is the idea that we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance. (xv)

In this sense, we are tied not only to those who we are familiar with through bonds of family, friendship, and/or even nationality, but to all human beings. A cosmopolitan understands that we are all united purely for the sake that we share the same universe and that we are all human
beings, regardless of our innate differences. United, though, does not entail the elimination of our differences. In such a vast and populated world this idea seems absurd. Instead, cosmopolitanism calls for an understanding that

People are different … and there is much to learn from our differences. Because there are so many human possibilities worth exploring, we neither expect nor desire that every person or every society should converge on a single mode of life. Whatever our obligations are to others (or theirs to us) they often have the right to go their own way. (Appiah xv)

In a world that is continually becoming more interconnected we need to learn how to accept each others’ differences. Appiah proposes:

[C]osmopolitanism…begins with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence; conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association … Depending on the circumstances, conversations across boundaries can be delightful, or just vexing: what they mainly are, though, is inevitable. (xix-xxi)

Because of dissolving boundaries brought on by the processes of globalization, the conversations Appiah suggests are not only inevitable, but also more crucial than ever. Undeniably, the world is changing and “Cosmopolitanism, in its wide and wavering nets, catches something of our need to ground our sense of mutuality in conditions of mutability, and to learn to live tenaciously in terrains of historic and cultural transition” (Pollock, Bhabha, et al. 580). Identities throughout the world are facing unforeseen changes that require an ability to grapple and adjust to these transformations. And the more we asses each others’ differences the more able we will be at comprehending and coping with them. Pollock, Bhabha, Breckenridge, and Chakrabarty insist
that, “Transdisciplinary knowledge, in the cosmopolitan cause, is more readily a translational process of culture’s in-betweeness than a transcendent knowledge of what lies beyond difference, in some common pursuit of the universality of the human experience (582). Essentially, how one chooses to understand and adapt to difference and change is more important to the cosmopolitan than a perceived or imagined outcome. Finding a translation or in-between amongst cultural difference is the goal.

As globalization diffuses across the globe, we can agree that some characteristics of our world are becoming similar, yet we must also keep in mind that some things are drastically changing as well. And although globalization, at times, seems incredibly difficult to grasp, we are all experiencing its effects, regardless of where we reside on this planet. What is important is how we all choose to react to the changes under way due to globalization. Cosmopolitanism suggests that we are obligated as fellow human beings to become aware of our shared space in which difference resides; to converse, translate, and learn from each other. It is our differences that lend us our significance. Applying cosmopolitanism to the changes brought on by globalization may seem like an oversimplified solution to a complex phenomenon, yet starting the conversation is the first step. Appiah states: “…a world in which communities are neatly hived off from one another seems no longer a serious option, if it ever was. And the way of segregation and seclusion has always been anomalous in our perpetually voyaging species. Cosmopolitanism isn’t hard work; repudiating it is (xx). Cultural differences amongst a global society, therefore, should not be the cause of tension, but rather an opportunity to explore something new; a chance to discover alternatives of making meaning. We must learn how to grasp globalization’s inevitable characteristic of contact. Julia Alvarez insists in her introduction to *Borderlands: La Frontera* that “Globalization […] makes the collision of cultures a reality
everywhere. And so when we wonder about how to deal with these confusions and contradictions, we are really addressing how to evolve a new kind of world consciousness that is transformative and synthesizing” (np). So let’s all start to wonder, begin conversing, and establish a global society in which difference is not only accepted but celebrated.
Chapter Two Between the Local and the Global: A Reading of *The Heart of Redness*

Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* depicts the struggles of a remote village located on the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The struggles originally arose amongst the Xhosa people during the late nineteenth century, brought on by colonialism, and have persisted until present day. The main conflict within the novel centers on the opposition between two ideologically different sides consisting of those who believe in, and those who do not believe in, the prophetess, Nongqawuse, and her visions that advise all the Xhosa people to slay their cattle and destroy their crops. Those who originally believed in the prophetess’ advice were faithful that doing so would bring back the Xhosa people’s ancestral spirits in order to help drive out the English Colonizers. However, those who did not believe in the prophetess’ visions found it absurd to destroy their livelihood. Tension amongst those who believed and those who did not believe divided the village into a bitter feud. The divided groups became known as the “Believers” and “UnBelievers.” Because the original patriarchs of the Believers and Unbelievers were brothers, their family rivalry has been passed down through the generations.

Present day Qolorha-By-Sea remains divided not only due to the villagers’ history, but also because of a new dimension that has driven the Believers and Unbelievers even further apart. Faced with the effects that arrive with the oncoming of globalization, the village is presented with new problems. The feud now consists over whether the village should embrace modernity and development, or continue to carry on through preservation and tradition. Combining both their old problems with their present challenges, the tension escalates even further in the village. Essentially, the village is still dealing with the aftermath and consequences that invading imperial powers brought to it, yet has to now decide where it stands in a developing world.
By juxtaposing Qolorha’s past and current issues, and exposing the similarities of the village’s response, the text suggests a relationship between the two challenges. Paul Jay points out in *Global Matters: The transnational turn in literary Studies* that “Mda links these contemporary divisions to earlier ones under colonialism, drawing the kind of historical connection between the forces of colonialism and globalization…” (141). The conflict amongst the villagers begins during the British colonial invasion, which divided the people into two distinct groups depending on how they felt they should move forward during a time of crises. The tension amongst the two opposing sides worsens when they cannot reason with one another to find a solution because they are too attached to their beliefs. Similar disagreements resurface with the onset of globalization when issues arise of how they should develop or preserve their village during a time of change. Within each situation, cultural contact becomes the issue the village is forced to grapple with. Some want to embrace the difference that such contact brings, while others want to resist it; consequently causing conflict within the village. The text, therefore, emphasizes the challenges brought on by colonialism and how the oncoming of globalization can reignite and perpetuate such challenges, which ultimately aligns the two phenomena. Mda’s novel thus depicts the problems that arise from modernization, as well as, explores how modernization can be interpreted as a threat to culture and identity.

Although the characters reside within the same village, and share a rich history with one another, they have conflicting opinions that drive each other apart. Because of each others’ differences the village is unable to progress, which causes even a greater tension amongst the people. Faced with generations of turmoil, the Believers and Unbelievers are incapable of agreeing on anything, and they each insist that the other is responsible for any problem within the village. The Believers blame the Unbelievers for the failure of the movement because they
did not cooperate with the prophetess’ visions of destroying their crops and killing their cattle in order to bring prosperity to the people and their land. The Unbelievers, on the other hand, blame the Believers for causing the fall of the Xhosa people because of their participation within the cattle-killing movement. While the Unbelievers strive for progress through welcoming modernity with open arms, they deny past ancestral tradition and beliefs. The Believers, on the other hand cling to their traditional practices, yet refuse to accept the new. The Unbelievers therefore, feel that the Believers are backwards traditionalists who keep the village from embracing modernity, while the latter think that the Unbelievers’ plans for progress are naïve, ill informed, and will ultimately cause harm to their village. The Believers are associated with “rural life, cultural preservation, darkness, tradition, and the past, while the Unbelievers are associated with urbanization, development, ‘civilization,’ and modernization” (Jay 138). To the Unbelievers the “bush” and “the redness” represent an uncivilized state, whereas to the Believers it stands for tradition (92-93). The stark differences of what each group believes, and represents, perpetuates the dispute amongst the people of the village. The reality is that both the Believers and Unbelievers are so tightly bound to their beliefs that they are incapable of negotiating and adapting to other ways.

This incapability of negotiation is best seen through the leader of the Unbelievers, Bhonco, who is “passionate about development” and “his wrath is directed at the Believers who are bent on opposing everything that is meant to improve the lives of the people of Qolorha” (Mda 70). At first it may seem as if the Unbelievers are progressive. The irony, however, is that Bhonco and the Unbelievers “believe in unbelief to the point that it constitutes a kind of faith for his group that paralyzes them in the present” (Jay 142). The Unbelievers’ unyielding devotion to progress in turn prohibits any agreement upon the community. Each group’s loyalty to their own
belief overshadows their ability to reason with one another, which inevitably halts any sort of progress. The village remains static, except for the continual quarreling between both groups.

The stagnant nature of Qolorha-By-Sea begins to shift, however, when Camagu, a Johannesburg native, arrives to the village. He quickly immerses himself simultaneously into the Xhosa heritage and the conflict between the Believers and Unbelievers. Camagu, who has spent the majority of his life in the United States, feels like a “stranger in his own country” (29). On returning to Africa, his plans to contribute to the development of his country through his expertise and experience with international management backfires when he is continually denied employment by those who resent him for leaving and not fighting alongside them during apartheid. He “constantly marvels at the irony of being called an exile in his own country” (26). While he believed that he was doing something good for his country when he left, he now regrets that he “acquired so much knowledge in the fields of communication and economic development but never learned the freedom dance” (29). Disillusioned by the new state of a post-apartheid democracy, Camagu leaves the city and moves to the remote village on the Eastern Cape. He instantly becomes situated in between the bitter family rivalry, and the village’s latest quarrel to either develop a tourist resort or preserve the land.

Camagu struggles internally with the same challenges the village faces. He embodies both aspects that the Unbelievers and Believers fight over: traditional cultural forms and knowledge about development from the West. He thus feels conflicted and frustrated that he cannot find a space in which he feels he properly fits. Upon arriving at Qolorha-By-Sea, however, he finds himself in the middle of the conflict between the Believers and Unbelievers which distracts him from his own issues.
Camagu becomes involved with each side specifically through the romantic relationships he forms with both the patriarchs’ daughters. Each daughter has inherited her father’s beliefs, and they persuasively discuss and debate the virtues of their side with Camagu throughout the text. The daughters’ characters embody the cultural orientations of the Believers and Unbelievers and represent the dichotomy that is present within the village. By growing closer to each daughter, Camagu is able to explore both perspectives of the village’s conflict.

He is first introduced to the conflict through the Unbelievers’ ideals when he meets Bhonco’s daughter, Xoliswa. She is a beautiful, serious woman, who rarely smiles or lets her guard down. She is a “celebrity” within the village due to her educational background and her experience abroad. She is considered an “educated woman” amongst the people of Qolorha-by-sea, “and by ‘educated women’ they mean those who have gone to high schools and universities to imbibe western education, rather than those who have received traditional isiXhosa education at home during various rites of passage” (97). She received a B.A. in education, and a certificate for teaching English as a second language from “some college in America,” and she now resides as the principal at the local secondary school (4-5). Like her father, she strongly supports the plan to develop a holiday resort in their village that will attract tourism, believing that their village will “see progress” (66). She insists: “This is a lifetime opportunity for Qolorha to be like some of the holiday resorts in America…Qolorha can be one too if these villagers stop standing in the way of progress” (67). In Xoliswa’s eyes America is the definition of progress. She exclaims: “America, wonderful America! (64).” Although she only spent six months in Athens, Ohio—unbeknownst to her “a college town even smaller than the nearby town of Butterworth”—Xoliswa continuously strives to maintain and uphold American cultural forms (64). She speaks of The United States as “a fairy-tale country, with beautiful people…like Dolly
Parton and Eddie Murphy,” demonstrating the media’s powerful influence, and the false sense of values it portrays. She describes the United States as “a vast country that is highly technological” (64). She completely embraces America’s cultural forms while trying to rid herself and her community of their own. Xoliswa represents how globalization is sometimes interpreted as Americanization. Mary Hawkins emphasizes this notion in her *Global Structures, Local Cultures* explaining that “…there has been a long-standing tendency to link modernity and its technologies to the West, and allocate all other societies of the world to the category of ‘traditional,’[…] Global culture then becomes a form of cultural imperialism, guided by North America, or simply a modernizing force emanating from the West” (94-95). This concept, therefore, makes Xoliswa believe that her “traditional” upbringing is primitive and lacking modern advancement. She tells Camagu about her “wish to leave Qolorha-by-Sea, to be away from the uncivilized bush and the hicks who want to preserve an outdated culture” (88). Her exposure to American culture, therefore, is considered advantageous, particularly amongst the villagers who also have this tendency to link the West to modernity. Her character exemplifies the notion that globalization disseminates from a dominant power and influences cultural forms across the globe. She is consumed by American culture, without question, as soon as she is exposed to it. Recalling Appiah’s *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, Xoliswa epitomizes the cultural preservationists’ implied “tabulae rasae” of the developing world whose consciousness is shaped by global powers (111). Xoliswa is incapable of finding value within her own culture, believing it is a sign of uncivilized behavior. She assumes that practicing the ways of American culture will advance herself and her community.

Camagu is introduced to the other side of the conflict: the Believers’ perspective, through Zim’s daughter, Qukezwa. Qukezwa is completely unreserved and associated with wildness.
She is one with her natural surroundings and is highly knowledgeable of the ecology within her village. She does not sensor her thoughts, making her seem crass, at times; yet, she speaks eloquently about her passion for conserving the environment in which she lives, and persuasively articulates why the Unbelievers’ dream of development will destroy their ecosystem. She sees the Unbelievers’ notion of progress as destructive, not only to their environment but to their traditions and livelihood as well. She understands that developmental projects from the outside will not only restrict her people from their natural resources that they are so accustomed to, but that they will also drive the locals out of jobs, contrary to what the Unbelievers think. Qukezwa explains: “This whole sea will belong to tourists and their boats and their water sports,” and she challenges those that believe the proposed development will bring jobs to the locals:

To do what? What do villagers know about working in casinos? What education do they have to do that kind of work? I heard one foolish Unbeliever say men will get jobs working in the garden. How many men? And what do they know about keeping those kinds of gardens? What do women know about using machines that clean? Well, maybe three or four women from the village may be taught to use them. Three or four women will get jobs. As for the rest of the workers, the owners of the gambling city will come with their own people who are experienced in that kind of work. (103)

In Qukezwa’s eyes the Unbelievers and those “whose heads have been damaged by white man’s education” are the burden of the village and will be the cause of its demise (104-5). Qukezwa’s role personifies that of cultural preservationists who advocate resistance to outside influences by those in developing nations.
The two women become representations of the dichotomy of tradition versus modernity. Their polarized roles reinforce the binary opposition of the two cultural expressions. Xoliswa’s character is believed to be “highly civilized” and “enlightened” through her experience in America, while Qukezwa is portrayed as, what typically would be considered uncivilized, through her association with nature and her lack of proper education (44). Qukezwa is introduced as a girl who, “sweep[s] the floors of white people” and is the “only one left to carry forward the tradition of belief” (45-46). Their roles then also demonstrate the dichotomy of “civilized” versus “uncivilized”. Whereas civilization is linked to modernity, its lack is linked to tradition. While through the women’s roles the text may allude to the idea that civilization is linked to the West, and barbarism to the remaining developing world, Mda challenges this hierarchical dichotomy by giving the women’s perspectives equal weight at first, and then completely subverts the hierarchy when Qukezwa becomes the victor at securing Camagu’s attraction.

Regardless of whose side Camagu is on at the moment, the notions of cultural preservation versus modernization and development continue to play a prominent role throughout the novel demonstrating the problem of essentialist thought. Both sides maintain an all-or-nothing mentality about their beliefs and how their village should progress. These rigid cultural orientations make everyone within the village obligated to choose one side or the other. The text demonstrates though, that Culture does not function so dualistically. The Believers and Unbelievers, however, try to live their lives as so. For example,

The Unbelievers are moving forward with the times…[they] stand for Civilization. To prove this point Bhonco has now turned away from beads and has decided to take out the suits that his daughter bought him… From now on he
will be seen only in suits. He is in the process of persuading his wife also to do away with the red ochre that women smear on their bodies and with which they also dye their isikhakha skirts… But then even the isikhakha skirt itself represents backwardness. No Petticoat must do away with this prided isiXhosa costume. (71)

Each side tries to completely rid themselves of each other’s practices. The opposition is so extreme that it is unacceptable to share, or even consider, any sort of each other’s cultural forms.

The portrayal of the village’s inability to progress toward a common goal is Mda’s way of problematizing essentialist thought, particularly between development and cultural flow versus cultural preservation. Mda proposes that neither side is the solution to the conflict; nor can their ideals be categorized as so black and white. It is impossible to have only one or the other because culture does not work like this. Reinforcing this idea, Appiah claims that, “Cultures are made of continuities and changes, and the identity of a society can survive through these changes…” (107). This is why Qolorha-By-Sea remains static though; they are incapable of negotiating such continuity and change.

Although Mda’s characters are unrelenting and bound to their ways, they continually contradict themselves and blur their defined oppositional beliefs. This lends to further dismantling of the dichotomy. Through the character’s contradictions Mda debunks cultural assumptions. For example, the Unbelievers, especially Bhonco, are so persistent about progress and innovation “[y]et he hasn’t progressed from the old-style rondavel to the modern hexagon” while many of the Believers who stand for preservation “have hexagons aplenty in [their] compound” (94). Also when the Believers want to enforce a new law that prohibits killing birds, Bhonco exclaims: “Have you heard of such a thing? In the veld and in the forests, boys trap birds and roast them in ant-heap ovens. That is our way. We all grew up that way” (71). In both
cases the preservationists try to create something new, while those who “stand for progress” make their case by holding on to tradition and the past (94). Mda makes clear that Culture cannot be theorized so rigidly; even amongst such radical essentialists.

Through the characters of John Dalton and Camagu, Mda demonstrates Culture’s ability to flow and transform. They complicate the finite differences amongst the Believers and Unbelievers by demonstrating that cultural forms and beliefs cannot be so completely fixed. They do not fit within the assumed dualistic categories. Instead, they reside within a space located between the two poles of the dichotomy. They occupy a space outside of assumed cultural orientations. Within this space both Dalton and Camagu model how cultural change inevitably occurs in a globalized world. Their characters do not adhere to essentialist ideals, and because of this they both manage to adapt to the ambiguities and ambivalence that go hand-in-hand with shifting cultural forms and identities.

Dalton breaks down these imposed boundaries that go along with cultural roles in various ways. For example, he is of English descent and has lived on the Eastern Cape for the majority of his life. Although he is a white man “like the skins of those who caused the sufferings of the Middle Generations…his heart is an UmXhosa heart” (8). Other than the color of his skin and the history of his ancestors, he is just as much amaXhosa as anyone else in the village. The narrator explains:

He speaks better isiXhosa than most of the amaXhosa people in the village. In his youth, against his father’s wishes, he went to the initiation school and was circumcised in accordance with the customs of the amaXhosa people. He therefore knows the secret of the mountain. He is a man. (8)
Because Dalton, culturally and traditionally speaking, is like an equal amongst the villagers, it should not be a surprise when he joins the Believers plight of preserving the village. His whiteness though—a symbol of civilization and progress to the locals—causes uneasiness amongst the villagers. The Unbelievers ask: “Are whites not the bearers of civilization and progress? Then why is Dalton standing with the unenlightened villages who oppose such an important development that will bring jobs, streetlights, and other forms of modernization to this village?” (67). Dalton’s situation baffles many villagers because he does not abide by his assumed roles. Through Dalton, and the villagers’ reactions to his cultural expressions, Mda demonstrates the misconception that cultures abide by one specific blue-print; which is especially important to acknowledge in a transforming globalized world. Furthermore, the fact that Dalton, a white man of Western European descent, adapts to Xhosa tradition, rather than carrying on the ways of his colonial ancestor’s, and proposes developmental projects based on the community’s best interests, challenges the Eurocentric model of globalization.

Like Dalton, Camagu represents a subject influenced by multiple cultural forms. Raised in South Africa, yet spending the majority of his life in the United States, he embodies both cultural identities. Through their characters, Mda destabilizes stereotypical cultural orientations. Both characters identify more with a culture that is not considered their own. They even find each other’s circumstances unusual; “Dalton is fascinated by an umXhosa man who has spent so many years in America. He himself has never left South Africa and has spent most his life on the Eastern Cape. Camagu cannot get over the fact that Dalton speaks much better IsiXhosa than he’ll ever be able to” (57). Even though each does not fit within his own normative cultural role, he finds it odd when recognizing the other’s differences. Furthermore, even though both characters are technically African, and carry-out African traditions, they are considered outsiders
by the rest of the villagers because they have acquired additional cultural characteristics that do not seem to fit within the assumed cultural roles.

Through Camagu and Dalton, as well as the Believers’ and Unbelievers’ contradicting cultural expressions, Mda interrogates the notion of authenticity of culture. None of the characters abides by a pure culture. The text demonstrates how cultures are unstable and always in flux; changing and evolving through contact with other cultural forms, and that pure cultures are a mere illusion. Frederick Buell’s *National Culture and the New Global System* asserts: “Clearly… the search for the uninfected—primordial, bounded, perhaps essentialized—kernel of “native” culture becomes more and more like unwrapping an onion: one finds relationships (global, regional) beneath relationships, not a hard, definite, genuinely local core (40).” Appiah also comments on this issue claiming that “Cultural purity is an oxymoron” (113). The text makes clear that the notion of cultural authenticity is problematic. It suggests that instead of focusing our energies on the inevitability of contamination, we need to instead focus on the reactions to cultural contact, and how we should negotiate amongst such interactions.

Although Dalton seems to cope better with cultural contact than those associated with the Believers and Unbelievers, his reactions are also problematic. As far as the villagers are concerned, he has always been disassociated from the colonial history of his ancestors, other than his British name and the color of his skin. He is nothing like the other “English-Speaking South Africans” (9). Instead, he “often laughs at the sneering snobbishness of his fellow English-speaking South Africans. He says they have a deep-seated fear and resentment of everything African, and are apt to glorify their blood-soaked colonial history” (ibid). He has always been proud of the Xhosa heritage within him. Because of this, he sides with the Believers by rejecting the proposed developmental project, and fights to preserve the village’s natural elements. His
reasons for preservation, however, align him closer to his colonial ancestors than he thinks. Although Dalton strives for what is best for his community, his character is compromised through the way he exploits the Xhosa traditions. One of his ongoing projects entails, what he calls “cultural tourism” which involves the display of “amasiko—the customs and cultural practices of the amaXhosa—to the white people” (96). Dalton, along with NoVangeli and NoManage—“two formidable women”—bring tourists to a “traditional” Xhosa hut in Dalton’s “four-wheel-drive bakkie” where

…the tourists watch two women polish the floor with cow dung. After this the tourists try their hand at grinding mielies or sorghum on a grinding stone or crushing maize into samp with a granite or wooden pestle. All these shenanigans are performed …in their full isiXhosa traditional costume…which is cumbersome to work in. Such costume is meant to be worn only on special occasions…not when they are toiling and sweating…And the tourists pay good money for all this foolery! (96)

It is apparent that Dalton’s business angers many of the villagers, especially since he displays an exoticized portrayal of the Xhosa culture. He falsely depicts the contemporary villagers’ lifestyle as completely traditional, and lacking any concept of modernity. In doing so, he capitalizes on the tourists’ interests in having the chance to glimpse into a day in the life of an “authentic culture.” John P. Taylor’s “Authenticity and Sincerity in Tourism” clarifies why this is problematic. He explains:

Within cultural tourism, and wherever else the production of authenticity is dependent on some act of (re)production, it is conventionally the past which is seen to hold the model of the original. Authenticity in the present must pay
homage to a conception of origins. In this way, tourism sites, objects, images, and even people are not simply viewed as contemporaneous productions, or as context dependent and complex things in the present. Instead, they are positioned as signifiers of past events, epochs, or ways of life. In this way authenticity is equated with the “traditional”. (np)

This authenticity of culture that Dalton tries to illustrate to the tourists implies that the Xhosa people are still living in the past. Even though Dalton’s cultural orientations are aligned with Xhosa traditions, he perpetuates the binary model of tradition/modernity through his cultural tourism business. His whiteness, therefore, is still associated with, and maintains an exploitative nature. Although Dalton has, indeed, come a long way since his colonial ancestors, the text continues to draw a connection between them. As his ancestors believed they were improving the village and the lives of those who lived within it, Dalton too considers his efforts to be beneficial to the people of Qolorha. Although his attempts to advance the village are nowhere as harmful as his ancestors were, they both establish methods of their own accord into the village without the approval of the villagers. Dalton’s practices are truly with good intention, but without the collective consent of the people, he is imposing his ideas of what constitutes progress. The text, therefore, directly links him to his colonial ancestors and imperial domination.

Camagu’s response to cultural contact is favored by the end of the text. His perspective, unbeknownst to him, becomes advantageous because he is unbiased and has no allegiance to either side. Because of this position, he is capable of contemplating each side which enables himself, and the reader, to better understand the Believers and the Unbelievers stance. Camagu’s continual shifting back and forth between the two sides, and his struggle to find a middle ground
between the two, eventually dominates the novel (Jay 143). Finding this middle ground, however, is what leads to the village’s solution. Meanwhile, stuck in the middle of the opposing sides, and entangled between two women, Camagu forgets about his own intrapersonal struggles and occupies himself with the issues of Qolorha-By-Sea.

Although fully engaged in the village affairs, Camagu is reminded of his upbringing when he encounters a snake in his hotel room; his reaction indicates that he still maintains his traditional clan beliefs. He refuses to allow the maintenance personnel to kill the snake, claiming, “This is not just any snake. This is Majola…This snake is my totem” (98). The maintenance personnel quickly come to understand that Camagu is from the amaMpondomise clan and respect his customs. They also respect him for being able to simultaneously express both his traditional and modern cultural practices. The text explains:

The men understand. They are of the amaGcaleka clan and do not have snakes as totems. As far as they are concerned, snakes are enemies that must be killed. But they know about the amaMpondomise of the Majola clan. They know also that in their upbringing they were taught to respect other people’s customs so that their own customs could be respected as well. As they walk away, they talk of Camagu in great awe. They did not expect a man with such great education, a man who has lived in the lands of the white people for thirty years, to have such respect for the customs of his people. He is indeed a man worthy of respect. (98-99)

The interaction between the two clans demonstrates the mutual respect for each other’s customs and differences, suggesting that the cultural forms of traditional clans are perhaps more civilized than assumed; which, once again, inverts the dichotomy of “civilization/enlightenment” versus
“backwardness/heathenism” that continually preoccupies the characters within the text (43). More importantly, though, it is at this point within the text that Camagu gets recognition for being able to negotiate both his traditional clan ways and his modern practices. He now understands that identifying with both his modern and traditional traits is acceptable and beneficial. Camagu finds his agency by taking on a hybrid position. Through embracing and contesting the many forms of his cultural influences, he finds a new way to articulate them.

Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* describes this hybrid space further, asserting that

> Hybrid hyphenations emphasize the incommensurable elements...the performative nature of differential identities: the regulation and negotiation of those spaces that are continually, contingently, ‘opening out’, remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference—be it class, gender, or race. Such assignations of social differences—where difference is neither One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between*—find their agency in a form of the ‘future’ where the past is not originary, where the present is not simply transitory. It is…an interstitial future, that emerges in-between the claims of the past and the needs of the present (219).

Camagu finds the solution to his anxieties within this “in-between” space. This realization is then paralleled to the conflict between the Believers and the Unbelievers. Camagu realizes that he no longer has to take sides, nor should the two have to remain in opposition. Like his cultural circumstance, the solution to their problems is not an either-or matter.

The text uses these dichotomies to model the opposing sides that exist within globalization and the challenges that come along with it. It demonstrates that Global matters require a more intricate explanation than a dualistic model can provide. The Believers can be
compared to critics who call for cultural preservation, whereas the Unbelievers represent those who desire development and modernization. Both sides call for their solution, but are blind to the consequences. The Unbelievers do not consider the negative effects that will come along with the resort; such as the locals developing gambling addictions, the lack of employment due to inexperience, and restrictions to access the lagoon and surrounding lands that will become private property. The Believers are too enraptured with conserving their land and carrying on their age old traditions that any sort of progress in their village is discouraged and overlooked. Both extremes do not consider what is truly best for the village and the rest of the community that resides within it. The text therefore continually breaks down the binaries to suggest that essentializing global issues is not only unproductive, but in actuality, impossible.

Camagu eventually learns that the rest of the people residing in the village are not concerned with the feud between the Believers and Unbelievers, and they really only want what is best for the community. He is told:

Most of the people here don’t care about those petty quarrels. They want to see development happening. They want clean water. They want health delivery services. They see Bhonco and Zim and their small bands of followers as clowns who are holding desperately to the quarrels of the past. But the whole thing frustrates development. (116)

Camagu realizes that what the people really want for themselves and their village is neither represented by the Believers nor by the Unbelievers. Both in striving to better their culture—regardless of the different routes they take to achieve this—ignore what is best for the individuals of the community. What the community wants and needs in order to move forward in a globalized world, is overshadowed by the feud, causing everyone to be locked within a space
that cannot achieve effective change. Through the village’s inaction, and incapability to move forward, the text reinforces that cultural conflict, particularly the concern of preservation versus development, should not prohibit progress; and what matters the most is what is best for the collective community. This issue is commonplace within the globalization debate. Too many globalization critics are concerned with the threat of the homogenization of cultures, and what will become of them in a global world. In an era of globalization, though, individual needs, like access to clean drinking water, medicine, and schools, for example, should be a priority; not whether the world’s cultures are becoming more or less homogenized. These critics who claim globalization is causing homogenization throughout the world’s villages must consider that

Where, as is still too common, they don’t have these things, this is not something to celebrate but to deplore. And whatever loss of difference there has been, they are constantly inventing new forms of difference…No one could say that the world’s villages are—or are about to become—anything like the same. (Appiah 103)

Because culture is always changing and reinventing new forms of difference, the threat of homogeneity is unwarranted. What the text allows the reader to focus on is that moment when a culture is faced with outside contact. What prohibits them to move forward, to enter that “in-between” space, is their refusal to negotiate amongst their differences. The Believers and the Unbelievers quarrel over whether they should preserve or destroy their culture is what causes them to deviate from what is ultimately most important for their community to progress.

Drawing once again from The Location of Culture, Bhabha affirms:

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those
moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These ‘inbetween’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (1-2)

Qolorha-By-Sea cannot reach that “in-between” space because they are preoccupied with essentialist modes of culture.

At the conclusion, the feud between the Believers and Unbelievers is at its worst: people are angry—unable to get along because of their differences—refusing to cooperate with one another, leading them towards misunderstanding and violence. Camagu, however, urges that this conflict must be resolved, and that there is a possibility for all sides to be heard. “This rivalry […] is bad. Our feud has lasted for too many years […] and for what? Nothing! There is room for both the holiday camp and the cultural village at Qolorha. We must all work together” (277). Camagu projects his own method of balancing his cultural orientations onto the village in order to suppress the conflict. He proposes that “in-between” space that allows an articulation of their differences. Through understanding their shared qualities and negotiating amongst their differences, the village can have both preservation and development.

The text depicts how conflict arises within local communities due to cultural contact. Cultures, however, will always face change they will have to negotiate. The change occurring because of the acceleration of globalization may be drastic and abrupt; and the people involved within these areas of contact are conflicted by the processes of which they have to adjust their lifestyles to. *The Heart of Redness* insists that cultures should neither lose sight of their traditions nor cling to them; and that they should never have to choose between the two as if they
are their only options. Instead cultural contact should initiate an “in-between” space that allows for a rearticulation of differences.
Chapter Three Meeting the Challenges of Globalization in *So Far From God*

Ana Castillo’s *So Far From God* exposes the turbulent life of a family of five women who continuously struggle to cope with the many challenges they are regularly faced with. Sophia, a single mother abandoned by her husband, devotes her life to her four daughters, Esperanza, Fe, Caridad, and La Loca. They all live within the same household in Tome, a small town on the outskirts of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The daughters’ personality traits completely differ from one another causing them to respond differently to the constant challenges presented to them. Esperanza, the eldest daughter, is rebellious, strong-willed, and has “always had a lot of ‘spunk’” (26). She prides herself on speaking her mind, and is the only daughter with a college degree. Caridad, considered the most attractive of the sisters, is sexually promiscuous and completely apathetic to her life in general, until she discovers her ability to naturally heal herself and others. Fe, obsessed with material wealth, wants nothing more than to leave her small town and become something better than what her family life consists of. And La Loca, the youngest of the siblings, resurrected from death when she was a baby, suffers from epileptic seizures and social anxiety, yet has a keen sense of the spiritual world. Although the women reside within a remote town, and feel as if they are completely disconnected from the rest of the world, they are still affected by the inevitable change brought on by globalization. Their inability to cope with the change and outside influences that eventually makes its way into their small town becomes their downfall.

Through each of her characters, Castillo enters the contested conversation about globalization. She does so by capturing a family’s reaction to the many changes brought on by the phenomenon. Through each character I will demonstrate a different response to the problems presented by globalization. The experiences portrayed through each character, and the way they
respond to and are affected by globalization are drastically different, even though they reside within the same household. The novel critiques many aspects of globalization including late capitalist practices, economic development, corporate power, the media, and war to name a few. Although Castillo touches on multiple issues within the study of globalization, her emphasis on hyperbolic differences, particularly within a shared space, captures how unique we all are and that globalization can affect each of us in a variety of ways. Recognizing that we all are different, however, and that the way we negotiate these differences is especially important. The characters that refuse to compromise among differences or adapt to any sort of change have fatal outcomes; whereas those who respond to and converse with the differences they are faced with persist; suggesting a cosmopolitan approach to survive in a globalized world. Essentially, we cannot survive by clinging onto only our own ways within a global world; compromise and negotiation amongst the world’s cultural forms are crucial to persist.

Castillo’s text comments on how consumerism and the media’s influence become very impactful within a global age. The glorification of consumption, and the overt value placed on material goods and money are especially portrayed through the character of Fe. Maintaining a job since high school at the local bank, she is constantly involved in the exchange of money. She strives to be wealthy, or at least better off than her family. She “couldn’t wait until she got out—of her mother’s home as well as Tome—but she would get out properly, with a little more style and class than the women in her family had” (29). Her image is most important to her, and she is ashamed of her family’s underprivileged state. Fe does not relate to the rest of her family because she cannot “[…] understand how they could all be so self-defeating, so unambitious” (28). She associates her value only through accumulation of wealth and commodities. Arjun
Appadurai comments on the global consumer’s need to spend, coining the term “fetishism of the consumer” in his “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy” indicating that the consumer has been transformed through commodity flows (and the mediascapes, especially of advertising, that accompany them) into a sign, both in Baudrillard’s sense of a simulacrum that only asymptotically approaches the form of a real social agent, and in the sense of a mask for the real seat of agency, which is not the consumer but the producer and the many forces that constitute production. Global advertising is the key technology for the worldwide dissemination of a plethora of creative and culturally well-chosen ideas of consumer agency. These images of agency are increasingly distortions of a world of merchandising so subtle that the consumer is consistently helped to believe that he or she is an actor, where in fact he or she is at best a chooser. (103)

To Fe, money and material objects give her a sense of agency, which she believes in turn, will bring her happiness, particularly because she was brought up in a household that lacked both the former and the latter. However, this sense of agency is only imagined through the presentation and the provocation of the media. Fe falls victim to the attractive images that the marketing and advertising industry bombards our society with. She is presented with the illusion through advertisement that wealth and consumption will provide happiness. Sut Jhally’s “Advertising at the Edge of the Apocalypse” explains that advertising provides a “relationship of objects to the social life of people” and that it connects “commodities (the things they have to sell) with the powerful images of a deeply desired social life that people say they want” (606-07). Fe gains a sense of power through accumulating wealth and consumption when in reality it is the advertisement industry that holds such power over her. Her relentless preoccupation to have a
life that she has only imagined from what she has viewed on the television reveals the power of the media’s influence. She therefore becomes not only a victim of the media’s advertising schemes but a victim of the homogenizing forces of Westernization in which mass media play a large part in the process of globalization. Her inability to resist the media’s power of influence sustains the center-periphery model of globalization’s ability to disseminate a dominant culture. Frank J. Lechner and John Boli’s “Cultural Globalization I: The Role of the Media” asserts that many critics of globalization believe the media are controlled by American and European companies who spread their “ethereal tentacles through the airwaves to the farthest reaches of the globe” imposing powerful images, sounds and advertising on “unprepared peoples who succumb meekly to their messages” (303). Fe’s obsession with an imaginary lifestyle, filled with particular name-brands, influenced by the media and the flow of cultural forms is a direct result. Her inability to resist such influences, however, is what continually plays a role in her demise.

Fe’s life continues to revolve around money and wealth when she finds love with an accountant who shares similar goals as herself. Eventually getting married, she rejoices not in the union of her love but through the “long-dreamed-of automatic dishwasher, microwave, Cuisinart, and the VCR” that she buys herself with her own hard-earned money (171). And indeed the money was hard-earned; it is eventually what leads to her death.

Fe’s new job at Acme International, “a big new company,” that a co-worker from the bank tells her about eventually kills her (177). Acme International demands “utilization and efficiency” from their employees and gives raises based on such. Fe, being “the queen” of such qualities in the work place quickly climbs the wage ladder. However, she, almost immediately, from time of hire, begins suffering chronic headaches, skin irritation, and repeated miscarriages. Many other women that Fe worked with at Acme suffered similar symptoms as well. She
ignores these “coincidences” purely because she “wanted to make some points with the company and earn bonuses to buy her house, make car payments, have a baby, in other words, have a life like people do on T.V.” (180-189). Jhally reinforces the power of advertising that sustains Fe’s desires and false sense of happiness,

No wonder then that advertising is so attractive to us, so powerful, so seductive. What it offers us are images of the real sources of human happiness—family life, romance and love, sexuality and pleasure, friendship and sociability, leisure and relaxation, independence and control of life…The cruel illusion of advertising however is in the way it links those qualities to a place that by definition cannot provide it—the market and the immense collection of commodities. (607)

Fe’s commitment to obtaining wealth at whatever expense becomes her downfall. Her tragedy exemplifies the media’s ability to create and sustain unobtainable desires, while obscuring our values. Through Fe’s death, the text directly opposes the western model of capitalism that relies on mass consumption driven by the advertisement industry.

Fe’s position at Acme International not only focuses on the length one will go to achieve agency through consumption by the media’s power of influence, but it also exposes the false sense of agency and autonomy that one may develop through holding an exploitative working position. Her work at the factory replicates many controversial issues that have surfaced because of multinational corporations that, due to globalization, have flourished throughout the world; issues regarding unfair labor wages and rights that critics of globalization put at the top of their agenda. Juanita Elias’ “International Labour Standards, Codes of Conduct and Gender Issues: A Review of Recent Debates and Controversies” claims that the poor working conditions and labor relations is one of the most contested issues in the globalization debate and are consequences of
economic integration and market liberalization for employment (283). Acme exploits Fe’s willingness to go to any length to earn higher wages in order to financially support herself and her new family. She receives vague answers when questioning her duties, and she is both literally and metaphorically left to work in the dark. Being considered for “bigger jobs” along with higher compensation makes her feel valued at the factory, even though her compensation does not compare to the pain she suffers. She does not complain like the rest of her coworkers and feels a sense of pride because of this. Regular “promotions” are given to her because of her dedication and ability to adapt to the undesirable conditions, and because she is always “the first one that one of the main supervisors came to ask if she wanted to take on an especially tough job” (182). Some supporters of globalization and those who benefit from growth gained through multinational corporations, would explain that although such working conditions are harsh, the workers choose these circumstances, and prefer working in such conditions because they at least have a job where they are earning a wage, ultimately giving them a sense of autonomy. Jagdish Bhagwhati’s In Defense of Globalization not only claims that workers in foreign-owned enterprises receive competitive wages and “fare better” than if they did not work in one, but argues further that “by adding to the demand for labor in the host countries, multinationals are also overwhelmingly likely to improve wages” (172-73). The text however, challenges this defense of unjust labor practices.

Unfair wages are only part of Fe’s battle at Acme. Like many exploited workers, she is completely unaware of the health risks that are present within her work environment. Her situation demonstrates how employers will go to any length to drive home a bigger profit, even if this means harmful and/or illegal activity. Through Fe, Castillo exposes the lack of regulation of labor rights and corporate social responsibility present in the practice of multinational
corporations. Fe eventually gets subpoenaed for mishandling a dangerous chemical, and is left without guidance or representation from the company who put her in such circumstances. She later finds out that she was misinformed about the harmful chemicals that she was using and not given proper instructions on how to handle them. Like many multinational corporations that lack proper regulation and information, Acme did not legally have to defend their worker when problems arose. Havidán Rodríguez argues in “A ‘Long Walk to Freedom’ and Democracy: Human Rights, Globalization, and Social Injustice,” that “The corporation’s social responsibility is nothing more than to itself, to its own system of production and accumulation” (393). Rather, blame fell upon Fe for misconduct, leaving her to suffer the consequences.

Fe is eventually diagnosed with cancer, and lives her last few months in agony. Abdallah Simaika’s “The Value of Information: Alternatives to Liability in Influencing Corporate Behavior Overseas” points out that “Too often, American companies have been implicated in environmental abuses, human rights violations, and poor labor practices…compromising America’s reputation around the world” (348). So Far From God reveals the pain and suffering inflicted on the workers caused by the malpractice of multinational corporations, particularly within the factories with poor labor practices, exposing the uglier side of globalization and its effects.

Other family members within the text also suffer due to events brought on by globalization. Unlike Fe’s devotion to the media, however, it is Esperanza’s resistance to their influence that leads to her end. Outraged by the media’s coverage Esperanza takes it upon herself to report the news. Her activism develops in college where she receives a B.A. in Chicano Studies, and it quickly blossoms while dating Rubén “(who, during the height of his Chicano cosmic consciousness, renamed himself Cuauhtemoc)” (25-26). Castillo brings light to
the importance of ethnic and racial consciousness through emphasizing Esperanza’s education, particularly in Chicano Studies, and her interests in Ruben and his devotion to his cultural practices. Through her intracultural understanding, Esperanza has the ability to embrace the aspects of her culture that she values, and recognize the value in other cultures, which is crucial within the globalization paradigm where borders are transgressed constantly. Furthermore, Esperanza is the only character who seems to be aware of the hegemonic forces that interfere within her daily life; as well as the only one who speaks out and takes action to resist such forces. Her eventual break-up with Ruben pushes her back to school, where she receives her M.A. in communications and is immediately hired as a news broadcaster at the local television station (26). It may seem as if Esperanza clearly knows what she wants, but she is deeply conflicted. These years were “transitional years where she felt like a woman with brains was as good as dead for all the happiness it brought her in the love department” (26). Conflicted by her desires, she refuses a job offer in Houston and gives Ruben another try. By doing so, Esperanza dives right back into their relationship ignoring her “other life, the life which Rubén referred to derogatorily as ‘careerist’” (36). She remained by his side at the teepee meetings of the Native-American Church where Ruben taught her “the do’s and don’ts of his interpretation of lodge ‘etiquette’ and the role of women and the role of men and how they were not to be questioned. And she concluded as she had during their early days, why not?” (ibid). Eventually, however, Esperanza could not ignore her “other life.” She “needed to bring it all together, to consolidate the spiritual with the practical side of things” (37). By this point, it becomes apparent that Esperanza continually struggles to find what she truly wants and where she fits in. She has […] spent her whole life trying to figure out why she was the way she was. In high school, although a rebel, she was Catholic heart and soul. In college she had a romance
with Marxism, but was still Catholic. In graduate school, she was atheist and, in general, a cynic. Lately she prayed to Grandmother Earth and Grandfather Sky. For good measure she had been reading a flurry of self-help books. (39)

Aware of her conflctions of her identity, she concludes that her “personal sense of displacement in society had to do with her upbringing.” She therefore leaves it all behind: Ruben, her family, and Tome by accepting a job offer in Washington D.C. where she believes she can start anew. It is clear that Esperanza is unable to compromise or negotiate between her desires; she is either absolutely loyal to one thing or another, but incapable of balancing them. She moves from one role to the next without ever considering a confluence of them all. Although each new role allows her to gain positive qualities, she chooses to not acknowledge them as she switches roles, believing that it is those qualities that are the cause of her instability. It is this behavior, along with her radical devotion that leads her from one problem to the next. Completely committed to her new position as anchorwoman, Esperanza delivers the news firsthand through aggressive, investigative reporting. Her enthusiasm lands her an assignment to cover the conflict in Saudi Arabia (46).

Through Esperanza’s assignment, the text examines the contested issue of war and conflict within the globalization debate. Questions arise such as who benefits from war, are those sent to war properly trained and or/prepared, and for what reasons are wars even waged? Since Esperanza is so excited for her opportunity to report on a global scale, she does not care about the risks and also tries to make “this faraway and frightening place…sound inviting” when telling her family the news. Her parents especially are apprehensive to let her go, and despite their “naïveté about things that happened in the world, they were well aware of what that assignment meant. So many men and women throughout the state had been shipped off in the
last months because of the imminent global crisis” (47). Here, Castillo depicts both enthusiasm and apprehension about going to war, as well as portraying how families are affected by war. Her father, Domingo, is torn; on one hand he is proud of his “college-educated, career-oriented daughter” but on the other, he never expected to send any of his children to war, particularly because he has four daughters. He “questioned what the world had come to when a daughter also went off to the frontlines of a war as part of her ‘career’? What business did she have there and what right did her bosses have to send someone so obviously unprepared to defend herself?” (48). Furthermore, Domingo does not believe in war because he feels it only benefits “los ricos” (ibid). The family’s reasons for hesitation demonstrate common concerns about war.

Unfortunately, Esperanza never comes home. Missing for months, the family receives an official letter from the Army confirming the death of Esperanza and her colleagues “through sources which it could not reveal” (159). Filled with uncertainty, the family continually visits Washington D.C. for answers but they never get any, so “Esperanza’s missing body remained a mystery” (160). The constant uncertainty of her whereabouts during her assignment and the details of her death contribute to the text’s critique of war. Castillo demonstrates through Esperanza’s tragedy, the frustrations of war that surface amongst the public, particularly during a time of globalization. Many people protest against war and are ill informed on why they are even waged. Michel Chossudovsky and Finian Cunningham’s “The Globalization of War: The ‘Military Roadmap’ to World War III” claim that “We are dealing with a global military agenda, namely ‘Global Warfare’. Far from a world of peaceful cooperation, we are living in a dystopian world of permanent wars—wars that are being waged in flagrant contravention of international law and against public opinion and interest” (np). Through Esperanza, Castillo contends that war is not the answer to bring peace to a world experiencing globalization. Ironically, in an effort to
report the news on a war that was waged to establish international peace and cooperation, Esperanza gets killed. Castillo demonstrates that although globalization may inevitably bring interconnectedness, the process may not always be peaceful. Furthermore she demonstrates through Esperanza’s death the extent of how innocent bystanders are also affected by war, as well as their families. Critiquing war, Castillo suggests that the efforts made to establish peace amongst cultural differences are actually part of the cause of conflict, and that war is not how peace should be obtained.

Castillo provides a solution, however, as to how we can establish a true global community, through Sophia. Unlike her daughters, Sophia did not have much freedom to explore and dedicate herself to one particular desire. Struggling to raise four daughters alone, she devoted herself solely to motherhood. Because of this, however, Sophia is continually exposed to the differing opinions and interactions of her daughters; frequently playing the mediator during hostile disagreements within her household. Learning from her daughters—their accomplishments as well as mistakes—Sophia eventually decides to dedicate herself to something for once in her life, instead of sitting on the sidelines. Fed up with the way her life was unfolding due to seemingly uncontrollable forces, she takes matters into her own hands. She engages herself in current issues and contemplates how she can get involved, rather than live her life idly. In doing so, her character steps into an active role and is responsible for her outcome, rather than allowing the control of outside influences. By just making the choice to become active, Sophia instantly started to effect positive change within her community. Rather than remaining silent, and allowing life’s challenges to get the best of her, she begins a conversation with her community and realizes that many of her neighbors are unsatisfied with the changes that have been brought upon them as well. Faced with poverty, exhausted resources, and the younger
generations leaving home for better opportunities, the community struggles with common challenges associated with the acceleration of globalization. The community states their concern about

the outsiders moving in, buying up land that belonged to original families, who were being forced to give it up because they just couldn’t live off of it no more, and the taxes were too high, and the children went [...] away to work, or out of state to college, or out of the country with the Army, instead of staying home to work on the rancherias. The truth was that most people had not been able to live off their land for the better part of the last fifty years. Outsiders in the past had overused the land so that in some cases it was no good for raising crops or grazing livestock no more. (139)

Understanding that her community was also concerned with the way their lives were unfolding, Sophia decides the best solution is to run for mayor, assuming the only way to hold power within her city is through becoming an elected official. She decides she no longer wants to be considered a “conformist. ‘That’s what my ‘jita la Esperanza used to call people who just didn’t give a damn about nothing! And that’s why, she said, we all go on living so poor and forgotten” (139)! Sophia recalls her daughter’s revolutionary spirit, and persuades her community to unite in order to create change,

Our jita, Esperanza, always tried to tell me about how we needed to go out and fight for our rights. She always talked about things like working to change the ‘system.’ I never paid no attention to her then…but now I see her point for the first time…I see that the only way things are going to get better around here, is if we, all of us together, try to do something about it (142).
Sophia’s main plan to “rescue” Tome relies on economic self-sufficiency (146). The creation of a “sheep-grazing wool-weaving enterprise, ‘Los Ganados y Lana Cooperative,’ modeled after the one started by the group up north that had also saved its community from destitution” enables the people of Tome to utilize and make a living off their land and resources. Sophia was “starting to like the thought of being able to engender some new spirit back into Tome, land of her ancestors” (141). At first with reluctant support from her friends and family, she insists: “I have been living in Tome all my life and I have only seen it get worse and worse off and it’s about time somebody goes out and tries to do something about it! And maybe I don’t know nothing about those kinds of things, but I’m sure willing to work for community improvement!” (138). However, becoming the unofficial mayor, Sophia rises to the occasion and brings together the citizens of Tome developing a successful grassroots movement that transforms their town.

The cooperative models the ability of a community to resist the many problems brought on by globalization. Castillo not only critiques modern infrastructural practice but demonstrates that it is not necessary for the success of a community in an age of globalization. For example, the barter system is used rather than capitalist practices in order to get their business up and running. Contemporary farming practices are critiqued through the sheep-grazing aspect of the business which satisfied the “growing demand for their hormone-free meat” (147). As well as the planting of organic vegetables provided “inexpensive access to pesticide-free food” allowing the local community to “live on more substantial diets than what they had previously relied on from the overpriced and sprayed produce of the huge supermarket” (148). Women’s labor rights are mentioned through childcare no longer being an issue because the women could bring their “jitos” to work (147). Also partnering with the local junior college allowed the women to earn college credit and potentially a degree for their skills. Eventually, once the cooperative was
secure, it resisted the power of big banks and corporations by establishing “a low-interest loan fund for their members, so that those who were motivated and willing could start up their own business,” further allowing the workers to have a sense of pride for owning their own business (148). The city’s current “drug problem” was solved by the locals forming a “kind of hard-nosed drug SWAT team” that ultimately saved lives (148). The fact that Sophia runs for mayor—a government position—defies the neoliberal ideal of success that is based on freedom from government intervention of any kind. Her role, in fact, as a political government leader is what provides progress and success to their community, implying a resistance to privatization and denationalization that drives globalization. The local community came together and was capable of finding solutions to their problems.

By utilizing the knowledge they already have, the people of Tome are able to become self-sufficient and embody a true communal spirit. The success of the community stems from resisting capitalist integration and challenging the invading global institutions that is interfering with their livelihood. Los Ganados y Lana Cooperative began as a small idea to improve a deteriorating community, and grew into a self-sustained ongoing project that brought autonomy to its people. The novel supports this model and suggests that it can be applied in order to resist the misfortunes of globalization.

Through this resistance it is apparent that globalization’s facility of interconnectedness across borders does not cause a culturally homogenizing effect, but rather puts emphasis on the particular and distinct characteristics of cultural forms and tradition. Lechner and Boli claim that, “Growing similarity provokes reactions” (3). The community was unsatisfied with the current practices instilled by a diffusing dominant global force, so they in turn reacted. The cooperative however was not an easy task. Sophia explains that “every single step of launching
off the cooperative took a lot of effort, a lot of time, and mostly a lot of not only changing
everyone’s minds about why not to do it but also changing their whole way of thinking so that
they could do it” (146). In Inclusion and Exclusion in the Global Arena, Max Kirsch explains:
Our recent epoch has witnessed an upsurge in demands for local autonomy,
particularly among indigenous peoples… Indigenous movements have become
vital parts of a civil society that is challenging the view that passivity on the local
level is to be expected, particularly in undercapitalized areas of the world. (10)
Castillo illustrates through the cooperative that a local community can negotiate their position
within a global framework by insisting on their inclusion. Imposing global institutions may
seem overwhelmingly powerful, but Tome’s success reinforces what a seemingly powerless
group of people can accomplish. Sophia continues: “At first, people were really nervous and for
good reason…but finally it became a debate of either everyone doing it all together or nobody
doing anything at all” (146). Collectively, the community chose to make a positive change.
Richard B. Lee’s “Indigenism and its Discontents” shows how the local peoples, by necessity
have

Reinvented themselves […] rather than being simply defined as another group of
poor citizens […] or an encapsulated underclass, many indigenous groups have
used their status to defend their autonomy from the strategies of dislocating state
and multinational agendas and their inclusion into the arenas that at least provide
a promise for the maintenance of community and lifestyle… (11)
By embracing their traditions, the community of Tome was able to not only make a name for
itself but also thrive. The cooperative exemplifies a culture’s ability to maintain tradition within
a globalized community. Castillo, therefore, challenges the notion of cultural imperialism and
the assumption that cultures are dissolving into a homogenous global community. Perhaps globalization is causing some similarities to occur across the world. More so though, it is encouraging dialogue across boundaries enabling interaction and transaction of culture to take place, inevitably exposing difference to each other and giving the global community options to better their resources.

Although Sophia may not be aware of it, her character demonstrates cosmopolitanism to manage change brought on by globalization. She continually practices what she knows best, but is willing to question and learn from opposing sides. Her ability to observe and converse with multiple perspectives enables her to negotiate among a wider variety of options, facilitating a better chance for success. One individual’s willingness to negotiate within the community perpetuated solutions to countless challenges throughout.

So Far From God metaphorically demonstrates how a cosmopolitan approach is beneficial within a globalized world. Although the characters live in the same house, within a small town, and are united through a familial bond, they are all completely different. We must remember that although we live within a vast world, we too, are united through living together on this planet and sharing the characteristic of being human. Like the sisters, we too, are all different though, and we must embrace who we are individually as well as who we are collectively. The characters’ lives end fatally because they devote their lives to resist who they are innately; they are always longing for something more. Their deaths are brought on by their initial inability to accept who they are, which the text asserts is crucial within an ever-changing globalized community.

Fe’s obsession with consumption, and searching for autonomy and happiness through material goods, causes her to turn her back on her upbringing. Her constant longing eventually
leads to her overworking herself to death. This longing, which is so prevalent among today’s global society, driven by capitalism and fueled by the advertisement industry, overshadows what Fe actually has.

Esperanza, on the other hand, consciously contemplates her identity but finds the instability of it daunting. She constantly moves back and forth within a space of uncertainty in order to find a sense of belonging. In a globalized world, where we are always confronted with differences and contradictions, we must learn how to accept change. Esperanza, although always changing, cannot cope with the unrest. Obsessed with trying to find the “truth,” she runs away to the other side of the world and never finds her way back home. Her death implies that we cannot resist the transitions that come inevitably throughout life. We must learn how to be open to change—contemplate it, converse with it—not just turn our backs on it, or rather, in Esperanza’s case, run from it. Her character demonstrates that a measure of resistance is an important quality, but one cannot wholly resist. The character’s fatal flaws become a lesson then; we are all so unique, but we must accept, respect, and try to understand each other’s differences. Doing so may enable a true global community.

Sophia, and the community cooperative, for example, recognized what was not working for their town and revised their practices in order to appropriately accompany their lifestyle and ensure a better community. They united, and utilized their individual knowledge and skills in order to collectively thrive. They did not wholly resist or conform to any ideal; they made the most out of all perspectives. As Sophia and the community of Tome models, action through conversation amongst each other’s wide range of differences can effect positive change. Just think of how expanding this model, especially where differing cultures are constantly in contact
with one another, can affect the communities around the world. Appiah argues in *The Ethics of Identity* that,

[…] there is a great range among the starting points we have for these conversations… between people who differ in class and gender, or profession, or along a whole range of dimensions of identity. From these conversations we can be led to common action—for our shared environment, for human rights, for the simple enjoyment of comity. (271)

Within a world currently experiencing transformation brought on by globalization we must embrace and utilize the benefits that can come from this range, not reject them.

*So Far From God* reinforces the current problems caused by globalization, but lends a solution that starts with negotiation, compromise, and compassion. The debates centered on globalization’s affects are prevalent, however, we can learn, through a Cosmopolitanism approach, to unite and effect change in order to solve the problems brought on by the phenomenon. Appiah claims, “Inasmuch as we are, already, fellow citizens of the world, we do not have to wait for institutional change to exercise our common citizenship: to engage in dialogue with others around the world about the questions great and small that we must solve together, about the many projects in which we can learn from each other…” (ibid). While sharing only one world, especially as inevitable effects of globalization occur, we must unite amongst our wide range of dimensions. *So Far From God* illustrates the consequences that can arise without compromise through each sister’s resistance to one another and their inability to accept each other’s differences. Lacking the support of one another, each sister goes her separate way, and eventually dies. The text, therefore, metaphorically suggests through the sisters’ relationship that within a globalized world we cannot survive by completely clinging on to our own ways; we cannot ignore one another’s differences. Instead, we must learn from Sofi and
Los Ganados y Lana Cooperative. Conversation, negotiation, and compromise amongst the world’s cultural expressions are crucial to persist. We must acknowledge our differences and figure out how we can collectively utilize them in order to carry on within this global community.
Conclusion

As we enter into a global age we are faced with many challenges while contemplating how to move forward. We cannot deny the changes—good or bad—that globalization has enacted. We can, however, reflect upon the positive and negative effects of the phenomenon and establish a more productive solution to the contested issues. Becoming a united world cannot happen overnight; and with so many different perspectives as to how progress is achieved, it will likely take much more time for coexistence to truly manifest. In the meantime, however, we need to extend this conversation, and develop and maintain habits that allow us to coexist amongst all of our differences. Our differences are what make us unique; it is what propels change and drives our world forward; we cannot, therefore, ignore or defy them. Proposing a solution through acceptance, contemplation, and conversation amongst our differences may seem implausible, but it is possible. We must recognize that we are all connected simply because we are human beings; and we owe it to each other to put forth an effort in order to establish an understanding and unity amongst our differences.

_The Heart of Redness_ and _So Far From God_ both model solutions to handle cultural differences in an age of globalization. Mda’s novel illustrates that global matters require a more complex explanation than a dualistic model can provide. The text demonstrates that essentialist thought and dichotomous opposition halt progress within an environment that consists of multiple cultural forms. Although change, particularly brought on by modernization, can be interpreted as a threat to culture and tradition, the text responds to its challenges through finding a hyphenated, hybrid space amongst the different cultural forms enabling successful development.
Castillo’s novel highlights the various issues that surround the subject of globalization, and emphasizes how it can affect each of us in a variety of ways. Through the character’s outcomes, it illustrates that there must be a degree of negotiation within cultural contact. The text insists that in a globalized world we cannot completely embrace or resist the different cultural forms that we continually interact with; rather, we need to utilize the multiple expressions and perspectives to enable effective change.

Each novel depicts varying responses to the processes and effects brought on by globalization. Inevitably, globalization is making the world more interconnected causing change to occur amongst the world’s cultures. It is crucial to understand how culture responds to such change in order to transition more effectively into a globalized world. The texts suggest that we need to approach cultural contact with an understanding that conversation and negotiation is imperative. Realizing the benefits and possibilities of the multiple variations that exist within our world may lead to a global society in which difference is not only accepted but celebrated.
Works Cited


