

Desiring Animals: Biopolitics in South African Literature

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers the potential of desire to protect humans, animals, and the environment in the biopolitical times of late capitalism. Through readings of recent South African Literature in English from a postcolonial ecocritical perspective, this project theorizes desire as a mode of resistance to the neocolonial and capitalist instrumentalization of communities of humans and nonhumans, where they are often seen as mere "resources" awaiting consumption and transformation into profit. Deleuze and Guattari posit this overconsumption as stemming in part from capitalism's deployment of the psychoanalytic definition of desire as lack, where all desires are defined according to the same tragedy and brought into a money economy. By defining desire, capitalism seeks to limit the productive unconscious and attempts to create manageable subjects who perform the work of the capitalist machine—subjects that facilitate the extraction of surplus value and pleasure for themselves and the dominant classes. Thinking desire differently as positive and as potentially revolutionary, after Deleuze and Guattari, offers possible resistances to this biopolitical management. This different, positive desire can also change views of others and the world as existing solely for human consumption: views which so often risk bodies towards death and render communities unsustainable. The representations of human and animal desires (and often their cross-species desires) in this literature imagine relationships to the world otherwise, outside of a colonial legacy, where ethical response obtains instead of the consumption of others and the environment by the dominant subjects of capitalism. This project also considers other attempts to protect communities such as animal rights, arguing that rethinking desire is a necessary corollary in the effort to protect communities and lives that are made available for a "non-

criminal putting to death" since positive desire precedes the passing of any such laws and must exist for their proper administration. These texts often demonstrate the law's failures to protect communities through portraying corrupt officials who risk the communities they are charged with protecting when their protection competes with government officials' personal capitalist ambitions. Desire offers opportunities for imagining other creative options towards protecting communities, outside of legal discourse.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: DESIRE AND RESISTANCE

In this project, I want to think about desire as a potentially revolutionary force for reimagining and reorienting “human” relationships with each other, with animals, and with the environment towards a different understanding of the community. Through readings of South African fiction, I trace how desire offers creative potential for thinking about relationships differently, outside of capitalist or colonialist paradigms towards protecting our communities, their environments and their inhabitants from being rendered disposable to the workings of the capitalist machine. Defining the subject is a colonial strategy that attempts to make people more manageable as Homi Bhabha and others¹ have argued. Similarly, defining desire, as advertisements do for example, functions as a colonial tool as Deleuze and Guattari and J.M. Coetzee observe, noting how it captures and stunts a positive, productive, and creative potential of desire by reterritorializing it into a “money economy” (Coetzee 39). In this dominant mode of biopolitical management, the management of populations and of life and death, people and their desires are defined as fixed and knowable. Capitalist biopower seeks to create such manageable, dominant subjects to do the work of capitalism, to consume and farm the world in neocolonial fashion, extracting surplus value and pleasure from environments and bodies—human and animal—for the accumulation of wealth for the self and the dominant classes. When desire becomes colonized in this way, communities become vulnerable and susceptible to becoming mere colonies, where their futures and lives are sacrificed for the profit of a few. As biopolitics concerns itself with attempting to manage life at the level of the population, defining desire has proven to be a rather effective

strategy for creating populations of manageable subjects². As bell hooks puts it, the adoption of this dominant mode of desire (what she calls “eating”) results in easily managed communities: “Communities of resistance are replaced by communities of consumption” (33). A deterritorialized or postcolonial desire that refuses definition and representation, then, presents a threat to this biopolitical management, a resistance to its ambitions of mastery in controlling populations, and resistance to its eating and disposing of bodies, environments, and communities.

At the beginning of *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin identify a major task of the field described in their book’s title: critiquing Western ideas about “development” (27) which often lead to the devastation of communities and the environment. Deleuze and Guattari’s critiques of capitalism and its definition of desire therefore serve as a theoretical frame for approaching this South African fiction which often features characters who challenge the Westernized development of their communities by local or international business interests. In *Colonial Desire*, Robert C. Young identifies the merit of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* for postcolonial critique, acknowledging that their concepts of “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization” accurately describe the colonial project and treatment of native peoples, cultures, and their land (169-170). He also values how their project emphasizes “the role of capitalism as the determining motor of colonialism” (167). Noting the way that Freud’s Oedipus Complex attempts to define and fix the unconscious and thereby define desire as lack, Deleuze and Guattari critique capitalism’s deployment of this definition of desire for its project of turning the world—its people, animals, and materials—into capital to be consumed to fill this lack. To resist this management of

desire, Deleuze and Guattari propose an alternative view of desire as positive and productive, unknowable and revolutionary. They describe Oedipus as a tool of the colonizer used to control and orient desire towards a particular goal: “Oedipus is always colonization pursued by other means, it is the interior colony” (170). When this definition of desire takes root, the colonized interior of the unconscious leads to the establishing of colonial relationships to others and the world, where they are viewed instrumentally as existing to feed and be used by these dominant subjects of desire.

In contrast, desire for Deleuze and Guattari is not the lack asserted by the psychoanalyst and felt by the consumer of capitalism. Instead, they argue that desire is a productive force that enables connections to others in assemblages of human and nonhuman actants. As Réda Bensmaïa summarizes the concept for them, “one desires only as a function of an assemblage where one is included” (xx). Their project then seeks to undermine a view of the world and others as existing for sacrifice in order to be consumed by the lacking subject. The colonizing impulse of global capitalism seeks to profit from everything and everyone; in response, Deleuze and Guattari imagine relationships outside of capitalism where others aren’t regarded in terms of the accumulation of wealth and of pleasures for the self. Abandoning dominant notions of the subject, they imagine relations to the world and others where diverse desires and interests are recognized and the community is constituted as an ethology of forces where ethical response obtains, instead of a community organized by categories of consumers and consumed.

Deleuze and Guattari’s work proves useful for thinking about modes of resistance to biopolitical management in light of their writing in response to the Nazi State and its

camps, along with other poststructuralists (Braidotti *Transpositions* 25). Giorgio Agamben has identified “the camp – as the pure, absolute, and impassable biopolitical space (insofar as it is founded solely on the state of exception) – [which] will appear as the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity” (*Homo Sacer* 72). Writing against the construction of the camp and against totalitarianism also positions their work as useful for thinking about resistance to colonial and neocolonial biopower. As Achille Mbembe notes, the violence of colonialism served as a precursor and model for the violence of Nazi Germany (18). Mbembe cites Hannah Arendt’s account of this legacy, explaining that “[w]hat one witnesses in World War II is the extension to the ‘civilized’ peoples of Europe of the methods previously reserved for the ‘savages’” (23). Deleuze and Guattari’s work of challenging the fixed categories and purity associated with dominant logic then also works to challenge the categories like the “human” which underpinned colonial regimes. Rosi Braidotti explains how

Deleuze places full emphasis on the active force of shame as a step towards an ethics of affirmation....The sense of shame about being human encompasses not only the macro events of our culture, such as the Holocaust of the Jews, fascism, colonialism, the economic exploitation of the many by the few, but it applies just as easily to the micro instances of life on this planet. (*Transpositions* 200)

Using “the shame of being a man” as a tool to motivate a positive, productive ethics, an idea he draws from Primo Levi’s writing about the Holocaust, Deleuze takes an approach that mirrors the projects of many of the authors under this study as they recall the colonial past in order to imagine more positive, ethical and sustainable futures for their communities.

Decolonizing Desire

In her oft-quoted essay, “Decolonizing Relationships with Nature,” Val

Plumwood argues that the treatment of animals and the environment in colonialism works in much the same way as the colonization of people. After explaining how European colonial culture viewed women and ethnic others as closer to nature than white, male, adult Europeans, she describes the way that colonial ideology “tends to see the human sphere as beyond or outside the sphere of ‘nature’, [and] construes ethics as confined to the human (allowing the non-human sphere to be treated instrumentally)” (53). The placement of the nonhuman outside the realm of ethics and as available for instrumentalization describes what Derrida might call the biopolitical creation of a space for a “non-criminal putting to death” which he discusses in “Eating Well” (qtd. in Wolfe 9). While Plumwood identifies a number of important strategies for decolonizing these relationships to nature, decolonizing desire offers another avenue towards promoting an ethics of response and a hospitality to those who find themselves in precarious positions in relation to the community. Where a dominant subject of desire as lack might seek to profit off of those who are marked as “disposable” (Braidotti) ³, decolonized desire opens up the potential for alliances across categories.

South African scholars like Achille Mbembe and Bernard Magubane also describe how this logic of sacrifice reserved for animals was applied to the native people of South Africa during colonization, something Magubane describes in his title *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other*. They argue that it is by dehumanizing or animalizing the colonized people of South Africa that colonials killed them without concern for their lives. In “Necropolitics” Mbembe writes

That colonies might be ruled over in absolute lawlessness stems from the racial denial of any common bond between the conqueror and the native. In the eyes of the conqueror, *savage life* is just another form of *animal life*... The savages are, as

it were, ‘natural’ human beings who lack the specifically human character, the specifically human reality, ‘so that when European men massacred them they somehow were not aware that they had committed murder’. (24)

The perceived boundary between the human and animal that enables a “a non-criminal putting to death” of the animal, then serves as a precedent for the treatment of the native peoples of South Africa during colonization as they are viewed by the colonials as outside the human community.⁴ As much of the literature discussed in this project shows, the legacy of colonialism and this logic continues in the era of late capitalism and globalization as communities and bodies are sacrificed or put in positions of great risk for the demands of, often Western, capitalist enterprises.

As desire works across racial and species boundaries—it flows between a human and a whale in Zakes Mda’s *The Whale Caller*, for example—, it possesses a potential to challenge the exclusionary practices of colonial logic. In addition, by having their own desires and movements (their acting on these desires), animals and the nonhuman possess potential points of resistance towards colonial mastery⁵. Their desires present challenges to the colonial or nationalist (and capitalist) will that views them as inert or docile objects subject to the control and management of a few humans towards a particular vision of the nation, a particular ordering of the world, or a transformation into profit. “Humans” also possess a nonhumanness in the materiality of their bodies and in their desires (Deleuze and Guattari argue that “desiring machines are the nonhuman sex” (*Anti-Oedipus* 294))⁶, that can present challenges to colonial and nationalist regimes. Ethical response is often closed off by racist and speciesist boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and by a particular definition of the human, as Plumwood observes, yet desire works across these

categories, opening up potential opportunities for organizing communities otherwise.

Dobrota Pucherova's *The Ethics of Dissident Desire in Southern African Writing*, also argues for the potential of desire to reorient the nation in her readings of South African and Zimbabwean fiction. Pucherova draws from the work of Derrida, Levinas, Lacan, Kristeva, and other theorists of desire, although she does not write about Deleuze and Guattari's work on desire and does not discuss animals or the environment in terms of desire. She focuses largely on cross-racial desires as challenging notions of nationhood and racial categories: "desire for the other—associated here with the irrational and the libidinal—becomes a boundary-breaking energy that can redefine both the body and the nation" (2). This project shares in Pucherova's view of the potential of desire to transform communities, especially in her estimation of Derrida's concept of "hospitality," which offers an unconditional openness to the other that can also transform the self.

Wendy Woodward has also written about the potential of human relationships to challenge racial categories, although she hasn't considered desire in relation to her work on animals. Woodward summarizes the critical milieu in 2000 suggesting that "so much current debate in South Africa is pre-occupied with post-apartheid cross-cultural relationships" ("Beyond Fixed" 21). She further notes that these relationships challenge "apartheid conceptualisations of the separation of the 'races', contradicting social constructions of blackness and whiteness as different, as self and other, as those who are included and those who are excluded" (23). The potential of the relationships to undermine these categories takes on the language of biopolitics as Woodward mentions the question of inclusion and exclusion, suggesting that such relationships can challenge the limited notions of community that derive from racist logic. "Desiring Animals" draws

from Deleuze and Guattari's positive view of desire and offers a postcolonial approach⁷ critical of the neocolonialism of globalized capitalism; this project theorizes desire as a mode of resistance to biopolitical exclusion for both the human and nonhuman, while recognizing that a human/animal binary does not necessarily determine a body's status in relation to the community as any body can be marked as disposable. The biopolitical terms *bios* or "discursive life" and *zoe* or a position closer to bare life and exclusion are better descriptors of a body's position in relation to the community as Rosi Braidotti explains (*Transpositions* 104) and Cary Wolfe observes (*Before the Law* 54-55).

Like the desires that threaten racial categories and nationalisms, desire also threatens to bring humans and animals together in intimate, ethical relations, upsetting humanism and human cultures that seek to keep humans separate from animals. As Alphonso Lingis puts it, human sexual desire does not necessarily orient "us to a member of our species and of the opposite sex" (63). Indeed the policing of sexual desire through taboos and religious and legal proscriptions evidences the threat that desire poses to a particular notion of the "human" community. Given South Africa's colonial history and history of apartheid which sought to maintain a purity and privileged position for the white Afrikaners community through attempting to control and manage the majority of the South African populations – their movements in space, their sexual desires (with the prohibitions against miscegenation in the "immorality" laws), etc. – the parallels between the attempts to control the desires of animals and the desires of South Africans for the profit and benefit of a particular group suggests a similar deployment of categories and logic. Animal desires and desire between humans and animals, sexual and otherwise, can also reorient and redefine the parameters of the community. Coming before thought,

desire, overflows categories and can lead to ethical relationships with others that might have been closed off by these categories and boundaries setup by dominant culture.

Animal Rights Discourse

Wendy Woodward's work has served as a precedent for this project and her work on representations of animals in South African literature and southern African fiction more broadly has established, in part, a tradition of human-animal studies in South African literary criticism. Woodward takes an animal rights approach that does not address desire but focuses instead on the gaze. Her use of analytic philosophy, specifically Martha Nussbaum's moral philosophy, and rights discourse differs from this project's use of continental philosophy to think about protecting animals from thanatopolitical management. In her survey and analysis of narratives featuring animals, *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives*, Woodward traces the theme of the animal gaze, a concept she draws not from Lacan but from Derrida's "The Animal that Therefore I am (More to Follow)" where he describes an encounter of looking between he and his cat. For Woodward, Derrida's discussion of the "bottomless gaze' (381) of the animal" offers a significant "challenge to the tenets of humanism;" the gaze of the animal offers for Woodward a potential for a space where "the human acknowledges subjective kinship with animals" (3). In this project, Woodward argues that such representations of animal gazes indicate that animals have subjectivities and therefore should be accorded rights in the South African Constitution. Yet, while Derrida "is sympathetic" with the thrust of animal rights approaches which seek to stop the abuse of animals, he critiques them for the way that they work within the "existing juridical framework" (Wolfe 16). By extending subjectivity to animals, rights

approaches for Derrida are essentially “‘confirming a certain interpretation of the human subject’ ...that ‘will have been the lever of the worst violence carried out against nonhuman living beings’” (Wolfe 16). While Woodward draws from Derrida’s discussion of the animal gaze for her thinking about animals as subjects of rights, such an approach contradicts Derrida’s dismissal of rights discourse for being potentially detrimental to the cause of protecting animals.

In *The Animal Gaze*, Woodward explains that the kind of gaze she is talking about “is the gaze of a being who actively claims his or her own subjectivity” (1). She further explains, “for the purposes of this volume an animal is represented as a subject when she or he is regarded as an individual, sentient being who experiences emotions, who, possibly, enacts morality, who has agency, intentionality, a sense of the teleology of her or his life, as well as an ability to recognise and fear death and its advent” (7). For Woodward, these representations of animals make demands on the South African Constitution to recognize animals as subject of justice (18). Her project analyzes many of the texts I read in this project, although perhaps not as in-depth given her project’s broader scope in surveying the larger field of literature featuring animals in southern African narratives. While she provides great insight into the role of the gaze in these texts, she does not treat the desire that, in my view, flows forcefully through these narratives.

Achieving the recognition of animals in the constitution is certainly an ambitious one, which will no doubt result in some positive impact on the lives of animals, yet rights discourse is not without its problems as Derrida and other critics of rights approaches point out. Indeed, we might no doubt recognize that Woodward’s description of animal

subjectivity quoted above begins to sound like an “all too human” list of attributes. This list of the abilities or faculties of the subject would certainly leave many animals out of the protection of the law, and some “humans” as well, determining in advance a boundary that excludes them from the community.⁸ In addition, securing a recognition of subjectivity for animals in a legal sense does not necessarily guarantee their protection. As much of the fiction analyzed in this project describes, and Michelè Pickover’s *Animal Rights in South Africa* makes this point clear as well, government officials often sacrifice communities and populations—their futures, the lives and safety of their inhabitants—, disregarding their rights when their protection competes with the officials’ own capitalist interests.

While Woodward’s project claims that the animals she mentions should be protected and then appeals to the law and government to recognize them as subjects, rethinking desire and promoting postcolonial desires offers a reorientation of community and a potential for protecting animals and others marked as “bare life” that does not depend on the law’s recognition of them as subjects. Given that the law is empty as Deleuze and Guattari (*Kafka*) and others note—and Derrida suggests that the law is heterogeneous to justice in *Of Hospitality*—, getting recognition in the law doesn’t necessarily guarantee protection. The desire for protection that results out of being a member of an assemblage must precede actual protection, with or without the law’s approval. Desire offers alternative creative approaches to protecting the animals of our communities without the need for humanist subjects or rights discourse’s appeals to the authority of the law for protection—a system of laws that have for so long excluded animals and others from the protections of the community. Attempting to protect animals

by decolonizing desire also adopts a postcolonial mode of resistance to colonial discourse that has the potential to protect not just animals alone but also humans and the environment.

As Foucault explains, the exercise of biopower in the thanatopolitical mode is not limited to literal killing: “When I say ‘killing,’ I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on” (*Society Must Be Defended* 256). Thus, the sacrificing of community safety, degradation of the environment—as Rob Nixon’s analysis of “slow violence”⁹ well shows—and any other maneuvers that undermine the sustainable futures of these communities also exercise a biopower, in addition to the literal killing of others. As these texts bear out, desire possesses the potential to protect lives from this “non-criminal putting to death” and to protect the community from these other kinds of risks or “slow” deaths.

For Foucault, the subject of interest of *homo oeconomicus* offers a resistance to the biopower of the State; in other words, the subject of interest enables the possibility of the breaking of the legal contract that pertains to the subject of right (*The Birth of Biopolitics* 271). Foucault argues that *homo oeconomicus* offers “an essentially and unconditionally irreducible element against any possible government” (271). For Foucault, this splitting of the subject as subject of right and subject of interest enables resistance to the State’s power, making it more difficult for the State to manage bodies and populations. Like Wolfe, I find Foucault’s analysis of biopower as concerned with relations of “bodies, forces, technologies, and *dispositifs*” and with “struggles and

resistances” (33) of bodies to be more accurate than Agamben’s focus on sovereign power in his biopolitical thought: “biopolitics is above all a ‘strategic’ arrangement that coordinates power relations ‘in order to extract a surplus of power from living beings,’ rather than ‘the pure and simple capacity to legislate or legitimize sovereignty’” (33). Thus, a rights approach also fails to account for all the ways in which biopower is articulated on bodies, through the regularization and norms that Foucault identifies (Wolfe 22). Foucault suggests, as Cary Wolfe puts it, that subjects of interest offer resistance from “their choices and the ability to make them [which] derive...not from reason but from the capacity to feel (and the desire to avoid) pain” (Wolfe 23). This affective resistance is in line with Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of desire which also resists governmentality, although for them the deterritorialized desires that flow forth from the productive unconscious are more often positive (rather than just a desire to avoid suffering) as, for example, Frida Beckman argues that sexual desire and pleasure too can be revolutionary¹⁰.

Postcolonial Ecocriticism

Writing about the concerns of the environment and animals in postcolonial literature might be considered a contentious practice given the pressing postcolonial conditions that many humans face: violent conditions which writers and critics can be seen as neglecting or as putting on the back burner, so to speak, (or even exacerbating) when focusing on the environment. In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), Rob Nixon identifies the problems of environmentalisms that adopt the idealism of the pastoral tradition—a romanticizing of the environment as free from labor and violence, eliding “colonial spaces and histories”—and calls instead for a

“postcolonial pastoral” (245). Despite the colonial history of some environmentalisms, critiqued most notably by Nadine Gordimer in *The Conservationist*, Nixon contends that “[a]ny lingering postcolonial dismissal of environmentalism as marginal to ‘real’ politics is belied by the proliferation of indigenous environmental movements across the global South” (255). Of course, indigenous peoples have long had their own environmentalisms prior to the emergence of Ecocriticism as an American field of study.

Huggan and Tiffin also address the objection posed by some postcolonial critics that one should first work to protect humans (137) before focusing on ecocritical concerns. They suggest that the violent conditions experienced by humans and nonhumans are not “‘either/or’ matters” and argue that these approaches “must proceed together” (137-8). Approaching these issues by seeking to decolonize desire enables a project that simultaneously seeks to address problems of the human and nonhuman worlds for communities in postcolonial and neocolonial conditions, as opposed to the single focus of some animal rights approaches. This critique of capitalist violence exerted on the environment is not a pastoralism ignorant of colonial history where the goal is an environment free from labor and profits, profits which would no doubt benefit postcolonial communities should the economies be organized on fair and sustainable terms. Instead, the critique is of those capitalisms that seek, often at the expense of the majority of human and nonhuman inhabitants, to extract as much profit as possible, destroying the future viability of communities and economies in the process. Decolonizing desire away from capitalism’s definition, away from its commodity fetishism and focus on accumulating surplus value and pleasure for the self, offers a way to counter this instrumentalization of communities, preventing their transformation into

colonies.

Chapter Summaries

“Desiring Animals” offers five chapters of theoretically-informed analysis of desire in recent South African fiction in English. Discussing desire in relation to space, sexuality, foodways, capitalism, rights, hospitality, and the law, these chapters coalesce around the desires, pleasures, and interests of the human and nonhuman characters of the texts read here. The project focuses almost entirely on recent literature that features animals, with the exceptions of a short play by Zakes Mda and the film *District 9* which don’t focus on animals but raise concerns relevant to this project about desire, community, and capitalism. Beginning with a discussion of J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, the first chapter examines the protagonist’s self-centered relationships with others, both humans and animals and his desire to manage these others in space as a means to make the national space homely, a desire which enacts what Ghassan Hage calls a “fantasy of white nationalism.” I trace the protagonist’s desire to continue inhabiting his position of privilege as a white male in post-apartheid South Africa through the discourse of rights, often at the expense of limiting others’ pleasures and causing their suffering.

For an alternative to Coetzee’s character, David Lurie, I turn briefly to André Brink’s response to *Disgrace*, in his novel *The Rights of Desire*. Responding specifically to Lurie’s defense for raping his student which he bases on “the rights of desire,” Brink’s novel portrays a similar relationship between a young woman and an older man. In contrast to the consumption of Others that pertains to Lurie’s behavior, Brink’s character acknowledges his desires for the young woman while recognizing that one’s treatment of Others cannot be based on “rights” since others have their own interests and pleasures. I

then argue for the transformational potential that arises from Lurie's writing of a "minor music:" a potential, not realized in the novel, to remove the old thoughts about animals, women, others and desire which colonize his mind. This chapter closes with a discussion of space and desire in Anne Landsman's *The Devil's Chimney*, a novel which tells a story about the wife of an ostrich feather baron who, upon his abrupt departure, expresses her desires more freely for her neighbor, and for the workers and animals on the farm. In Landsman's novel, as in *Disgrace*, characters management of others in space includes both racialized and gendered others and animals as they attempt to make their worlds as homely as those that exist in their national imaginaries and to manipulate others for their personal profit and pleasures. Also like *Disgrace*, art and desire in *The Devil's Chimney* provide modes of resisting colonial thought and relationships to animals, others, and space.

Many of the representations of animals in the South African literature discussed here portray animals as desiring or as having desire. Most often these animal desires involve cross-species desire, where human-animal relationships emerge and upset the expectations and value-systems of dominant culture. The next two chapters take up this question of cross-species sexual desire, an issue that Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin discuss in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*. In "Zoocriticism and the Postcolonial," the second part of their book, they devote several pages in the last chapter to the question of animal sex and specifically to "bestiality" in postcolonial literature. Here, they employ the term broadly to describe any sexual activity between humans and nonhumans and conclude about this theme that "the strongest of human emotions—love—is not and cannot be confined to our own species" (201). Although they provide some "preliminary insights"

through readings of novels, they explain of their study that “no definitive answers can be supplied” to the question: “Why is it that postcolonial writers have entered this distinctly tricky territory [of cross-species sex]?” (196). One reason these authors write about “zoosexuality” (Bakke 225) stems from the revolutionary potential of desire and sexuality, a potential which Deleuze and Guattari posit throughout their writing, especially in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977). These sexualities and desires, when they are not blocked by dominant culture or reterritorialized to capitalist ends, can transform the organization of communities away from the monomaniacal focus on extracting surplus value from the environment, animals, and people in neocolonialism that so often and so violently makes them “disposable” (Braidotti 2006) to the capitalist machine.

In the second chapter, I explore the role of desire in the relationship between a human protagonist and a whale which involves zoosexuality in Zakes Mda’s *The Whale Caller*. The discussion of the ethics of desire continues here as Mda portrays what appears to be a consensual and mutual relationship between the protagonist and whale. Where most human encounters with animals and their habitats are experienced only through consumption as in tourism, eating, and economic “development,” Mda’s novel portrays a human-animal relationship which is more egalitarian, outside of capitalism’s version of desire and logic of wealth accumulation. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari’s work on desire, which describes how capitalism deploys the psychoanalytic colonization of the unconscious, I describe how, with the exception of the Whale Caller, most of the characters in Mda’s novel subscribe to this logic of consumption. I argue that Mda’s novel attempts to think desire differently, acknowledging its potential to challenge

colonial views of animals as commodities or as things not worthy of ethical consideration into beings we can know and interact with intimately.

Another way to describe the narcissistic, capitalist mode of desire is to use bell hooks' phrase "Eating the Other." In the next chapter, I explore the ethics of eating in Zinaid Meeran's *Tanuki Ichiban*, a novel in which one of the main characters delights in cooking and eating various exotic animals who appear on the endangered species list. I draw from hooks' concept of "eating" which refers not only to gastronomy, but also considers our relationships to Others sexually, culturally, etc.; hooks is also interested in the potential of desire, when it is not a relation of consumption, to change one's politics and participation in dominant culture. In light of this broader notion of "eating," topics discussed in earlier chapters resurface seamlessly, alongside the discussion of foodways. For example, I also examine the issues of trans-species sex and miscegenation in Meeran's novel. This chapter closes with a discussion of Mda's short play *The Mother of All Eating*, which addresses the corruption of government officials as they endanger the lives and futures of their communities through underhanded business deals, while getting personally rich off of bribes from companies seeking government contracts, a custom which a character in the play refers to as "eating."

Chapter 4 continues on the theme of "eating" in Mda's sense, as it discusses two novels which involve business proposals for the development of local lands and a nature reserve that must pass government approval. Of central concern in this chapter is the role of law in protecting the interests of the people, lands, and animals of South Africa. Addressing the topics of human and animal rights, this chapter argues that theorizing desire differently must also figure as a part of the attempts to defend the lives and

interests of the people and animals of our communities. Indeed, the novels discussed in this chapter—Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* and Michiel Heyns’ *The Reluctant Passenger*—portray characters who work both within and outside the law towards creating more sustainable futures for the inhabitants of their communities. Drawing from Rosi Braidotti’s writing about biopolitics, which suggests that desire comes before thought and is therefore closer to *zoe* than *bios* or discursive life, this chapter examines how characters in these novels embrace their desires rather than attempting to suppress them, and this positive evaluation of desire often results in their ethical response to others and to the precarious situations facing their communities. These novels represent desire outside of capitalist definitions towards promoting different senses of community and reorienting ethical commitments towards protecting the others with which we live.

The final chapter or coda reflects on the concepts raised in earlier chapters in relation to biopolitics, desire, capitalism, and the law. Drawing from Derrida’s concept of “hospitality,” I address the status of refugees, in this case science fiction aliens, who also find themselves in the position of the camp, in Agamben’s “state of exception,” outside the protection of the law in Neil Blomkamp’s film *District 9*. Like the human and nonhuman communities in the fiction discussed in other chapters, this community is particularly vulnerable to the capitalist ambitions and national wills of others. Yet, as in other texts, the desires that arise out of particular assemblages offer resistances to the total domination and management of the alien community. The film alludes to South Africa’s apartheid past as it dramatizes the necessity of working outside the law to protect communities. The aliens are marked as “bare life” and having no standing in the law, still desire and work to protect their community from neocolonial violence.

Ultimately, this project seeks to trace the creative potential that flows forth from desire in these texts and their authors' desires to think differently about how we relate to others and the environment. Literature and art that features such non-oedipal desires, these postcolonial desires, challenge the dominant models of desire deployed by dominant culture, restoring desire's potential for resistance to the colonization of communities and to the "non-criminal putting to death" of the bodies that inhabit communities. The South African literature discussed in this project often allows desire to flow positively away from fixed definitions thereby resisting biopolitical management. Colleen Glenney Boggs observes this potential of desire to resist biopower: "Biopolitics, states Anthony Bogues, has to 'trap both the imagination and desire' in its quest to 'shape, control, and make human life in its own image.'...Biopower depends on regulating representation and affect precisely because imagination and desire make it possible to oppose the 'death drive of imperial power' and its totalizing aspirations" (Boggs 14). Such literature and art produced by positive desire imagines life and community differently, outside of biopower's aspirations of mastery and sameness. The affectivity of bodies makes them difficult to manage, as does the unknowable nature of productive desire. This creativity in literature that stems from a postcolonial desire resists imperial power and offers a different mode of thought and comportment which challenges the colonizing definitions of desire that dominant media and literature offer as models.

Notes

1. Grant Hamilton describes how representing the subject is a colonial practice in his *On Representation: Deleuze and Coetzee on the Colonized Subject*, and argues how thinking

subjectivity “in terms of the Body without Organs” enables one to “describe the ability of the colonized subject to offer resistance to colonial discourse” (xxvii). While he discusses “the body without organs,” becoming, and other concepts from Deleuze, he largely doesn’t address their writing on desire in his thinking about resistance.

2. Frida Beckman explains that when capitalism reterritorializes desire, “[m]anageable subjects of desire are created within the familial and social structures that work to code desire to feed the flows of the capitalist machine” (147).

3. Referring to our current period of globalization, Braidotti explains that “[t]he ‘disposable’ bodies of women, youths and others who are racialized or marked off by age and marginality come to be inscribed with particularly ruthless violence in this regime of power” (60). As she later describes her project of “bio-centred egalitarianism” as also working across species, she includes animals in this list of those whose bodies are positioned as more precariously disposable in the logic of late capitalism.

4. Michelè Pickover provides two particularly horrifying and shameful examples of the non-criminal putting to death of Africans that highlights this logic of animalization. After noting the racism and “intolerance” of hunting organizations, Pickover describes how “killing fields become entangled and the distinction between humans and other species disappears. This happened in 1979 when a group of officers from the apartheid South African Defence Force (SADF) stationed in Angola hunted and killed 12 Bushmen ‘when they failed to find game on a hunt near their base in Caprivi’. No disciplinary action was taken against the officers” (23). In another example, one teenager (Alex Motlokwa) was injured and his friend (Tshepo Matloga) murdered by “members of the Noordelikes Rugby Club in Limpopo Province in 2001 . . . [who] were out hunting when they came across the trespassing teenagers. According to eyewitness Melfort Motlokwa, he and his friends were hunted like wild animals by some of the club members” (23). These horrific examples demonstrate the manner in which the legacies of colonial logic render some bodies more disposable than others.

5. Philip Armstrong explains how animals challenge the mastery of colonial desire: “Defined as that bit of nature endowed with voluntary motion, the animal resists the imperialist desire to represent the natural—and especially the colonial terrain—as a passive object or a blank slate ready for mapping by Western experts (Birke, 1994)” (Armstrong 415).

6. Rosi Braidotti and Jane Bennet explain the nonhuman that is part of the human in the unconscious and the materiality of the body. Braidotti writes “Freud’s and Darwin’s insights about the structures of subjectivity opened up a profound nonhumanness at the heart of the subject” (“Animals, Anomalies” 528). Bennet remarks: My ‘own’ body is material, and yet this vital materiality is not fully or exclusively human” (112).

7. In their essay in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, Robinson and Tormey argue that Deleuze should be considered a postcolonial theorist.

8. In *Without Offending Humans*, Élizabeth de Fontenay critiques the moral agency approach to animal rights for the way it leaves out some humans from possessing rights (67).

9. Nixon explains that “Casualties of slow violence—human and environmental—are those casualties most likely not to be seen, not to be counted” (13). As an example, he explains how many viewed the violence of the Vietnam War to be over with the war’s end, but “hundreds of thousands survived the official war, only to slowly lose their lives later to Agent Orange” (13-14). His call to recognize and work against “slow violence” then demands an ethical response to those current practices that might not be noticed as harmful to the environment and communities but that might risk their long-term viability and cause suffering later on.

10. See Beckman’s *Between Desire and Pleasure: A Deleuzian Theory of Sexuality*.

CHAPTER 2

DESIRE, ART, AND THE SPACE OF THE POSTCOLONY

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Anne Landsman's *The Devil's Chimney* portray characters whose experience of their desires and relationships with space are informed by colonialism, as both desire and space have been tightly patrolled throughout South African history since European contact and especially during apartheid. In their concerns with space, characters in both novels seek to either stabilize, fix and define space, controlling or managing others' movements in it or, alternatively, seek to dwell in "smooth space," exceeding the marked-out boundaries, fixity, subjectivity, and notions of property and rights of the State's "striated" space which capitalism, colonialism, and the apartheid state have deployed. The establishment and protection of rights—especially property rights—for white males in the colonial period and onward performed a double-move in the denial of rights to women and to "non-white" South Africans as Anne McClintock notes in the example of the discovery of diamonds, which I discuss later. Inside this zone of rights, white males experienced a greater degree of freedom to act on their desires, to move through and occupy space, and indeed largely to treat those without rights as they pleased, often with impunity. In "Necropolitics," Achille Mbembe notes that these spatial dynamics resulted from colonialism's cultural "imaginaries [that] gave meaning to the enactment of differential rights to differing categories of people for different purposes within the same space; in brief, the exercise of sovereignty. Space was therefore the raw material of sovereignty and the violence it carried with it. Sovereignty meant occupation, and occupation meant relegating the colonized into a third zone between subjecthood and objecthood" (26). In the post-apartheid setting of *Disgrace*,

these concerns about space appear in a number of cases: Petrus, a black South African, receives a land grant from the government, the white university professor David Lurie feels uneasy about his daughter Lucy remaining on the land adjacent to Petrus in the space of the Eastern Cape, Lurie describes women in spatial terms and voices concerns about there being “too many” people in the national space of South Africa. Similarly, in *The Devil’s Chimney*, Connie, the “white poor” protagonist, expresses concerns about being confined in space as she tells the story of a young girl trapped in the Cango Caves and narrates the history of Miss Beatrice who also is confined by the gendered space of her home on an ostrich farm in early twentieth century Oudtshoorn.

At various points in these novels, desire works across species as human and animal sexuality overlap or are caught up with one another. For example, dogs are present when Connie and Jack have sex outside in *The Devil’s Chimney* and later Jack rather grotesquely lets their dog lick up his ejaculate after he masturbates. The biological desires of animals and humans are also considered as problems for a particular ordering of the world. In *Disgrace*, the sexual desires of the dogs of the Eastern Cape have increased their population to a point that makes humans uncomfortable. Sexual relations between characters also take on spatial dimensions as the ethics of desire are raised in both novels through the violent crime of rape. Similar to characters’ relationships with land, their approaches to sexual relations with others either work to further mark off boundaries between self and other involving a relation of mastery, with claims of their being subjects of rights and domination, or present possibilities for reorienting the subject in a process of “becoming” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*), outside of the logic of rights and outside of dominant thought and its construction of subjectivity. As

both of these novels attest, animals can both serve to uphold spatial boundaries (as guard dogs, for example) or figure as threats to ordered space, depending on if they are oedipalized (tamed) or if they maintain their independent wills and desires. Animal and human bodies, their movements and the threat of their desires possess the potential to upset or frustrate the mastery of a totally human-ordered world; their mode of dwelling in space therefore also presents lines of thinking outside of dominant and colonial relationships to land and environment which these novels explore through characters' experiences of "becoming animal".¹ Both novels also posit art as possessing a potential to transform understandings of space, desire, and self away from oppressive, colonial culture.

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* tells the story of an aging white male professor who rapes his young female student Melanie, and, as a result of his refusal to show genuine remorse or follow the inquiry committee's recommendations, he loses his position at the University where he teaches Communication classes. A scholar of the Romantic poets, Lurie often recites lines from poems and literature in his thinking about himself, his desires, and his relationships to women and animals; indeed, he is working on an opera about Byron and his lover Theresa which changes directions as his thoughts about art and relationships with others are transformed. The novel traces his fall from his position in the university to his temporary stay in the Eastern Cape with his daughter Lucy who watches guard dogs and grows vegetables for sale on a plot of land adjacent to Petrus, an African who receives a land grant from the government later in the novel. As Lucy is also raped by a few South African men, the novel points to Lurie's hypocrisy in condemning the violent acts done to his daughter while denying his guilt for the violence he visits on

women. Through portraying these events and Lurie's helping to euthanize unwanted dogs at the shelter with Bev Shaw, Coetzee portrays a rather violent patriarchal post-apartheid society that continues in the legacy of apartheid. Nonetheless, the novel offers some slight opportunities for transforming communities away from such violence.

Desire, space, and rights figure as important themes in Coetzee's *Disgrace* as David Lurie often views the (usually non-white) women he sleeps with in terms of territory or space. Losing his position at the university after a non-legal inquiry into Melanie's allegations of rape against him, Lurie continues to experience the unhomeliness² of the waning of his privileged position in the changing post-apartheid nation. As the committee recommends his removal for his failure to admit wrong-doing, to feel guilty, or to sincerely apologize, Lurie refuses to change his views of women as objects that exist for his pleasure. His arguments that women and livestock don't own their bodies, but that they must be shared with the world, confirm his view of them as blank spaces to be instrumentalized for the fulfillment of his pleasures. His sexual interactions with others fail to consider his social position of privilege and authority (as white male, as professor, as teller of much of the story of the novel) as necessary factors in deciding on the ethics of his behavior. While he compares his sexual behaviors to animals and describes his sexual desire in terms of animality, he neglects considering his position and actions of domination as rape. Lurie compares human and animal sexuality throughout the novel and his participation in euthanizing and neutering dogs at the animal hospital with Bev Shaw performs a human management, or biopolitics, of their sexual desire. The dogs' sexual desire results in a spatial problem from the perspective of most human occupants in the Eastern Cape as they become "too many," as does Lurie, in that

space. While Lurie largely uses others for pleasure and seeks to maintain his dominant position in South African society, at times he approaches a “becoming animal,” which Tom Herron has noted, in a move away from his sense of self and these selfish behaviors; these changes are reflected in his different relationships to animals, to land, and to the opera he is working on. Yet, ultimately, the potential for transformation is cut short, or at best remains only a potential, as Lurie returns to his old ways and dominant subjectivity. As Lurie relates in his dominant mode of thought, in the new South Africa it is “A risk to own anything... Too many people, too few things... Cars, shoes; women too” (98). The quote describes a view of women as objects in line with Lurie’s misguided view, but also importantly points to his concerns about his needs being fulfilled and his anxieties about property ownership and crowded space.

Landsman’s novel features an alcoholic, racist “white poor” female protagonist, Connie, who narrates the story, suffers from post-partum depression, looks after dogs, struggles with an abusive husband, and obsesses over telling the story of a twentieth century woman ostrich farmer, Miss Beatrice. In the story of the ostrich farmer, Miss Beatrice’s husband’s temporary departure from the farm enables her transformation where she forms much stronger relationships with the animals and the South African servants on the farm, as well as her neighbors. Her freedom from her husband, Mr. Henry, also extends to the realm of sexuality as she engages sexually with both her married Jewish neighbor and takes part in a ménage-a-trios with the black South African servant couple. Through portraying the capitalist Mr. Henry, who planned to get rich in the ostrich feather market, Landsman critiques capitalism, phallogocentrism, racism, and anthropocentrism as her husband is abusive to his wife, all non-white characters, and the

animals. Connie's experiences of abuse and having her desires and movements in space tightly patrolled and managed by others parallels the management and confined space allotted for the ostriches on Miss Beatrice's farm. In both novels, the management and penetration of space and others' occupation of space (including animals) by white males continues in a colonial tradition of mastery that these novels seek to undermine towards more sustainable relationships for the communities and environments of South Africa.

Coetzee's novel has been written on extensively by scholars of postcolonialism, South African literature, animal studies, sexuality studies, etc. Given this preponderance of *Disgrace* scholarship, the present reading of this novel is concerned more with situating *Disgrace*'s concerns with desire, animals, rights, community, and biopolitics in relation to the issues raised in the rest of this project. Critics Susan Smits-Marais and Marita Wenzel rightly read *Disgrace* as a postmodern response to the plaasroman or farm novel tradition, highlighting its challenges to the patriarchy and notions of space and labor traditional to that genre. The present reading of *Disgrace* attempts to articulate the relationship between desire and space that *Disgrace* posits. In addition, Rosemary Jolly has written on the role of desire and its relation to art in *Disgrace* and while she offers keen insight from Coetzee's poetics in her reading of Lurie's opera, reading this desire in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's "minor literature," as this chapter does, offers a more developed understanding of the revolutionary potential of such art for transformation—for decolonizing the mind and reorienting community. The *Devil's Chimney* has received less critical attention and while Wendy Woodward and others have discussed particular aspects of the novel's engagement with space, subjectivity, and sexuality, the reading below further explores the role of desire in these areas, also highlighting the shared

human and animal potentials for resistance to colonial and capitalist mastery. Ultimately, this chapter argues for the revolutionary potential that stems from the non-dominant and non-oedipal desires which inform both *Disgrace* and *The Devil's Chimney's* concerns with thinking about animals, space, and art differently, towards their respective “minor” and “nomadic” arts.

Disgrace, Desire, and National Space

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* begins with a description of the fifty two year old white male professor and specialist in Romantic poets, David Lurie, describing how he deals with sexual urges by visiting a Muslim sex worker named Soraya. The novel explores the character's perspective on rights, desire, and his waning privilege in post-apartheid South Africa. Early on in *Disgrace*, Lurie explains his understanding of desire in a way that coincides with psychoanalytic views of desire and definitions of the human as a lacking subject.³ After considering David's happiness, the narrator recalls a lesson that Lurie remembers from *Oedipus* on the second page of the novel which defines man as a continuously lacking subject: “Call no man happy until he is dead.” This emptiness or lack that Lurie describes in his vision of humans informs his relations to others throughout the novel as he seeks to fill this lack by consuming Others. That is, his view of himself as a lacking, oedipal subject along with his failure to recognize the ethics involved in relating to others, and his privileged view of himself and colonial view of others as somehow less human, lead him to be perpetually consuming others to fill this apparent void. He views others in a colonial tradition as open “blank spaces” without rights or as mere objects which are free for him, as a subject of rights, to explore or to consume in fulfilling his pleasures.

For an analysis of the spatial concerns in *Disgrace*, I draw from *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, where Ghassan Hage describes what he sees as the spatial imaginary that informs some whites' stances on immigration in Australia: an imaginary that he argues also informs white nationalism in other Western and formerly colonized societies.⁴ For Hage, both those that fear or are against ethnic immigrants and those that argue for a multicultural "tolerance" maintain a white supremacy in the perceived authority that these positions maintain for themselves as managers of national space. The holders of these positions assume that it is up to them to decide who belongs and who doesn't and he argues that this comes from a privileged relationship to national space. In describing the anti- and pro-immigration arguments of one particular case in Australia, Hage comments: "Both the 'racists' and the 'multiculturalists' shared in the conviction that they were, in one way or another, masters of national space, and that it was up to them to decide who stayed in and who ought to be kept out of that space" (17). For Hage, calling anti-immigrationists "racist" doesn't accurately reflect their positions as they do not necessarily view their race as being better than others, but their concerns are more spatial. Distinguishing between racism and nationalism, Hage argues on the topic of "ethnic" immigrants that "[a]s soon as I begin to worry about where 'they' are located, or about the existence of 'too many', I am beginning to worry not just about my 'race', 'ethnicity', 'culture' or 'people', but also about what I consider a privileged relationship between my race, ethnicity and so on, and a territory. My motivation becomes far more national than racial, even if I have a racial conception of territory" (32). Hage makes it a point throughout his project that while he's

focusing on this phenomenon in Australia, this fantasy of white national space is prevalent in other societies as well.

In *Disgrace*, characters are highly concerned with the management of populations, with the allocation of space, the protection of property, and the notion of home and homeliness. Lurie adopts a privileged relation to space that is informed by this fantasy of the nation. Given *Disgrace*'s spatial concerns, Lurie's movements and situating of himself and others in space are informed by South Africa's history of apartheid and the regime's management of black populations to particular areas. Hage's description of spatial management in apartheid sheds light on the mastery that pertains to this fantasy of national space:

at a macro level such as the race-based segregational spatiality of apartheid ...the spatiality of nationalist phenomena appears, to a certain extent, to be obvious. In all such examples, nationalist practices seem to be necessarily grounded in an image in which the nationalists construct themselves as spatially dominant, as masters of a territory in which they have managerial rights over racialised/ethnicised groups or persons which are consequently constructed as manageable objects. (48)

Throughout *Disgrace*, Lurie exercises his privileged relationship to space as he participates in the management of others and views himself as having rights over others, often objectifying them.⁵ The novel portrays his waning power as his privileged relationship to the nation and space in the post-apartheid era are further undermined as non-White South Africans assert their claims to national space. The problems raised by this management of national space involve questions of sexuality, desire, rights and the law, and privilege which I explore below and return to in later chapters.

As mentioned earlier, Lurie subscribes to a view of desire which is trying to fill a lack in the psychoanalytic tradition. For Hage, the white nationalists' fantasy also

revolves around an experience or construction of lack, including the originary lack of the fantasy. Drawing from Lacan and Žižek's work on fantasy as Thing, Hage explains how the nationalist fantasy works as it constitutes the nationalist subject:

For Lacan, the Thing has the status of the object-cause of desire. It is that which is desired—an object of desire, the goal—and, at the same time, that which causes desire—i.e. causes the subject to exist as a desiring subject. If I do not posit a desired nation, I cannot exist as a nationalist. This is so because desire emerges in the subjects' attempt at overcoming what psychoanalysis postulates as a constitutive lack that can never be overcome. The subjects come to exist as desiring by relating to a Thing constructed as that which will satisfy their desire...the Thing stages a *fantasy space*, since 'in Lacanian theory, fantasy designates the subjects impossible relation to *a*, the object-cause of its desire.' (72)

As David Lurie adopts this view of desire as lack, he also takes up this nationalist fantasy and anxiety about the loss of control over space as he attempts to maintain his dominance over others and his privileged position as manager of national space: a position where he assumes the right to enter others' spaces (including their bodies) and where he views them as objects to be managed, as in the scene where he recalls, perhaps nostalgically, how in the past Petrus could have been forcibly removed from Lucy's neighborhood, "sending him packing" (116). Challenging the Lacanian view of desire as lack, as I discuss later, then offers a way to resist and undermine the violence that stems from such nationalist fantasies and nationalist thought. Lurie's anxiety about managing space occurs in several scenes. For example, he attempts to negotiate with Petrus to manage Lucy's land if she decides to leave and later voices concerns about their being "too many" people. Rosemary Jolly also remarks on the fantasy associated with Lurie's exercising of his desire in raping Melanie: "The acts of rape that Coetzee's fiction depicts involve fantasy on the part of the perpetrators; they are quintessential enactments of desire

without responsibility, without regard to or for others” (94) His continuous failed marriages and constant use of women for sex confirms his failed attempts to fulfill this lack created by a particular notion of desire and this nationalist fantasy.

At various points in *Disgrace*, Lurie is corrected: when Lucy tells him that her place is not a farm and when he insists on viewing the inquiry committee at the University as a legal body, for example. Another important correction is Lurie’s later acknowledgement that desire is more than merely a lack, a “recognition” which Jolly also observes (94). Lucy corrects his view that the land where she lives is a farm which Smits-Marais and Wenzel read as an opportunity for opening up other possibilities: “By resisting the ideologically laden implications of the term, Lucy opens up the concept of farm in the novel to new possibilities of alternative definitions and interpretations, more befitting to the post-apartheid South African context” (34). Similarly, thinking desire differently from the psychoanalytic and capitalist versions of desire opens up new possibilities.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari critique this definition of desire as lack and instead describe desire as positive and as producing ethical connections to others in assemblage. They explain how capitalism makes use of Oedipus to “reterritorialize” desire into a capitalist logic of lack so that people feel unfulfilled and therefore seek to constantly accumulate material wealth and pleasures to fill their lack. Desire as lack, for them, is a false definition and what is lacking is actually a defined subject or “man:” “...desire ‘needs’ very few things...and...what is missing is not things a subject feels the lack of somewhere deep down inside himself, but rather the objectivity of man, the objective being of man, for whom to desire is to produce, to produce within the realm of

the real” (*Anti-Oedipus* 27). Maintaining his dominant subjectivity, however, Lurie often uses others and avoids further contact with them by returning them to the background of his life where they are separate from him; sustained contact, on the other hand, might risk or render vulnerable this dominant position and remove his notion of himself as a main or major character in the story of his life. In essence, Lurie uses the view of desire as lack to justify his colonial relation to others as he extracts pleasure from them and marks them as territory where he has been. bell hooks addresses this maintenance of a dominant subject position in the context of desire for the Other when talking about characters in Lorraine Hansberry’s play *Les Blancs*: “...simply by expressing their desire for ‘intimate’ contact with black people, white people do not eradicate the politics of racial domination as they are made manifest in personal interaction” (28). Lurie’s use of “ethnic” women for sex then does nothing to undermine his dominant subjectivity, and, indeed, it further reinforces his dominance as he consumes others as objects.

Robert Young remarks in the final chapter “Colonialism and the Desiring Machine” of *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*, that Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* possesses great potential for critiquing the capitalism of colonialism. Young argues

Colonial discourse would provide another example of such group fantasy [in addition to racism], and we can see other ways in which the *Anti-Oedipus* impinges upon questions relating to colonialism. This is most pronounced in the theorization of capitalism according to a geospatial model of the inscription of flows of desire upon the surface or body of the earth: the operations of global capitalism are here characterized as a form of ‘cartography.’ (169)

This “geospatial model” explains, as Young describes, how the earth and its spaces are viewed as awaiting transformation into capital through a mapping and capturing of the

flows of desire for personal profit or for the empire in colonialism. Lurie's privileged access to space and his viewing of others as spaces which exist for him to fulfill or exercise his desires confirms his colonial attitudes.

Throughout the novel, Lurie attempts to manage space and often penetrates the spaces of others as he sees fit in a way that confirms his estimation of his privileged position. Hage explains how the nationalist assumes a position of management with the intent of making the national space homely: "The discourse of home, because it conveys a relation to the nation rather than some kind of objectivist definition of it, clearly implies not only an image of a nation that is one's own, but also of a self that occupies a privileged position vis-à-vis the nation, a privileged mode of inhabiting it" (42). Early in *Disgrace*, when Lurie follows Soraya while she is with her boys and their eyes meet, the narrator explains the homeliness of his position in the city: "He has always been a man of the city, at home amid the flux of bodies where eros stalks and glances flash like arrows. But this glance between himself and Soraya he regrets at once" (6). The scene describes the beginning of a series of events in which Lurie loses his homely attachment to the city. As Soraya later asserts her agency when David phones her at her home after hiring a detective to track her, his privileged dominance and management of space is frustrated: "You are harassing me in my own house. I demand you will never phone me here again, never" (10). The spatial descriptions in Soraya's response confirm that David has violated her home and she resists this management and domination. David understands her response in terms of the home as well: "But then, what should a predator expect when he intrudes into the vixen's nest, into the home of her cubs?" (10). The narrator's language here not only continues to develop the spatial theme of the novel; his use of an

animal metaphor to describe the situation also introduces the zoological concerns the novel takes up in both its symbolic use of animals and more material concerns about actual animals, which I discuss later.

Lurie's relationships to women through lack and in spatial terms continue with his student, Melanie Isaacs whom he rapes on a number of occasions. After forcing undesired sex on Melanie at his home and her flat where he forced his way in as an "intruder" (24), he later sees her on the back of a motorcycle and thinks "*I have been there!*" (35). Thinking of women in spatial terms or as territories, Lurie views them as conquests of land or space rather than as people with their own agency and ownership of their bodies. This spatial view of women is further confirmed when he attempts to convince Melanie that her beauty doesn't belong to her: "A woman's beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world...She does not own herself. Beauty does not own itself" (16). These arguments about Melanie's body might easily be applied to the beauty of a national park (and we might remember here the conservationism of colonization where native peoples were often removed from land for the purposes of white national efforts to conserve and consume nature), suggesting that Lurie views her body as national space. His arguments continue in a colonialist tradition that denied property ownership to natives and women, reserving it as a right of the white male. Indeed, Young's description of the merits of *Anti-Oedipus* for thinking about colonialism confirm the legacy of colonialism that informs Lurie's thinking: "This description of the operations of capitalism as a territorial writing machine...describes rather exactly the violent physical and ideological procedures of colonization, deculturation and acculturation, by which the territory and cultural space of an

indigenous society must be disrupted, dissolved and then reinscribed according to the needs of the apparatus of the occupying power” (Young 169-170) As he later describes a goat’s body in similar terms, arguing that it too belongs to everyone, Lurie intertwines the white management of space in terms of both the bodies and populations of ethnic others and animals, an intersectionality I discuss in detail later. Lurie’s attempts to position women and animal bodies as existing for his consumption takes part in making bodies “disposable” in globalization as Rosi Braidotti describes (*Transpositions* 60).

Anne McClintock’s discussion of Olive Schreiner’s experience of the beginning of the “New Rush” for diamonds, which began in 1871, serves as one historical precursor for Lurie’s arguments about rights and ownership. His comments invoke the legal history of the mines where “Africans were quickly denied the possession of diamonds they dug from the earth. A law was quickly rushed into force by the white invaders: no African would ever be allowed to own, buy or sell a single diamond” (275). McClintock continues explaining how in Schreiner’s *Undine* the protagonist learns that “[l]ike Africans, she is barred from the white male scramble over the diamonds and the economy of mining capitalism” (276). These historical and literary examples make clear that Lurie invokes a relationship to space and property from the past where white, male privilege was further entrenched and explicit. As in the scene with Soraya, Melanie’s agency in filing a complaint with the university challenges Lurie’s privileged access to and management of national space. Her parents seem to behind the allegations, or at least encourage her to accuse Lurie, as they demonstrate their desire to protect their daughter, not unlike the ostrich parents’ desire to protect their egg in *The Devil’s Chimney*, which I discuss later. The young man with the black leather clothes, apparently Melanie’s

boyfriend, also challenges Lurie's spatial dominance as he invades Lurie's office and later on his class on Romantic poetry in a way that mirrors Lurie's entrance into Melanie's flat. His admonishment of Lurie's use of women is described in spatial terms and challenges his privilege: "don't think you can just walk into people's lives and walk out again when it suits you" (30). Lurie's inability to effectively manage others and control "his" spaces begins a series of frustrations that continues in his appearance before the inquiry committee that investigates the Melanie's accusations against him. Here the committee, which for Lurie notably includes women and "ethnic others," assumes an authority to manage the space of the university which challenges Lurie's fantasy of his privileged position.

"The Rights of Desire:" Law and Desire in *Disgrace*

Following Melanie's accusations, David comes before an inquiry committee comprised of fellow professors and university members who don't have legal authority but who can recommend legal recourse. At first, David is upset by Melanie's absence from the proceedings. Throughout the meeting, he takes a rather nonchalant attitude as he at times scoffs at the authority of the committee. Importantly, he repeatedly brings up legal discourse, continuously confusing the purpose and authority of the committee gathered to recommend action on the complaints filed against him. In light of the legal history of South Africa, which secured the rights of white males, denying rights for women and ethnic others, he seeks entry into a discourse which has traditionally privileged him. During the course of the inquiry, the committee points out several times that it is not a legal proceeding: "Let me remind you again, this is not a trial but an inquiry. Our rules of procedure are not those of a law court" (48). They ask him to admit

wrong doing and to convince them that he's being sincere to which he replies: "I have said the words for you, now you want more, you want me to demonstrate their sincerity. That is preposterous. That is beyond the scope of the law." (55) The committee operates outside the scope of the law to protect the students and faculty of the university, demonstrating their desire to protect members of their community in ways that exceed the limitations of the law, an issue I discuss in Chapter 4. Desire to protect the members of the community need not always be channeled through the law and often to fully protect others, work must be done "outside the imperative of the law" (51) as anthropologist Talal Asad argues.

Lurie later explains his case to Lucy in legal terms as well: "My case rests on the rights of desire" (89). Calling it a case and discussing his "rights," Lurie continues to view the committee's recommendations in a legal sense, as do members of the committee at times, like Farodia Rassool's slippage into legal discourse. Lurie's term "rights of desire" fails to consider again the rights or ethics involved in relating to others as these are rights he claims for himself without consideration of the rights of others. He later refuses to sign off on a statement which acknowledges his abuse of Melanie's rights written up by the head of the inquiry committee Mathabane—"I acknowledge without reservation serious abuses of the human rights of the complainant" (57)—because he is not sincerely remorseful. Lurie's refusal confirms again his view that his intrusions even into Melanie's body are within his right and privilege, a denial that he has raped her. As Deleuze and Guattari assert, this casting out of a zone of rights over others and their occupations of space signifies the striations, or cartography and measured occupation of space, of the State: "One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate space over

which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space. It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations and, more generally, to establish a zone of rights over an entire ‘exterior,’ over all of the flows traversing the ecumenon” (385). The “striated” space is that which the state measures and marks out as that which it possesses power over, whereas the “smooth” space is that which is occupied but not measured (362), a space that Deleuze and Guattari associate with nomadism. For them, nomadism is associated with “becoming” and involves a different relation to space as people move through it without marking property boundaries, without staking claims for a self; it is a sense of space experienced materially by the body in close-proximity, by all of the senses, as opposed to the optical focus and distances of the mapped-out spaces of the State (493-4). Lurie asserts his rights over others to justify his manipulation of them for his accumulation of pleasure in synch with the workings of the State. Indeed, he mentions that “he has an eye on her” (12) in his first encounter with Melanie, suggesting the optical focus of striated space. His claim of his “rights of desire” over Melanie, whose body he has described in spatial terms and as a body which does not belong to her, therefore performs a striation in his attempts to construct a place he has rights over but from where she cannot assert her rights.

Such a view of desire as being guaranteed by rights contrast’s largely with Deleuze and Guattari’s positive view of desire as a force that flows through assemblages⁶, that isn’t owned or possessed by a subject. In their chapter in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, “Living in Smooth Space: Deleuze, Postcolonialism and the Subaltern,” Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey explain Deleuze and Guattari’s construction of

desire that doesn't require a subject. Responding to Spivak's critique of Deleuze and Guattari in her famous essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Robinson and Tormey argue that Deleuze and Guattari are postcolonial thinkers and they find fault with Spivak's Lacanian reading of Deleuze and Guattari's work: "Spivak attempts, in Lacanian fashion, to discern a 'subject of desire' in Deleuze. However Deleuze's view is not only that desire can be differentiated from subjectivity, but also that desire alone does not produce a unified subject" (22). In *Disgrace*, Lurie's conception of himself as a subject of rights who has "rights of desire" continues in a Lacanian view of desire, which defines a subject as desiring and defines desire as lacking. Deleuze's concept of desire, as we see in *Anti-Oedipus* and throughout his work, takes on a more positive potentiality that exists outside of rights, possession, and dominant subjectivity:

Desire for Deleuze is not an attribute of a desiring subject but is a matter of flows and becomings which traverse the entire social, and indeed material or ecological field. Hence, desire is not something possessed by the sovereign subject but something inter-, sub-, and extra-subjective. The subject, where it exists, is a product of *certain forms* of desire, but only one of the possible outcomes of what is termed 'desiring production.' It arises from a certain kind of 'molar', 'majoritarian' or 'reactive' construction of desire which produces self-other boundaries and identities... its genesis is in the trapping or capture of desire and not in the kind of affirmative, free-flowing desire Deleuze and Guattari seek. (Robinson and Tormey 22)

Housing desire in the subject of rights as Lurie does, then offers a view of desire that is captured and exists only within those granted rights to exercise or act on their desires. Lurie's behavior of separating himself shortly after his sexual encounters with others where the other exists "over there" confirms that he attempts to develop boundaries between self and other in these limited connections where, by contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's project seeks to undermine such boundaries. It is only when Lurie begins to

lose this sense of self later in the novel, which I discuss below, that his feelings of lack subside and he experiences desire in this more positive sense.

André Brink's novel *The Rights of Desire* takes its title from this scene of *Disgrace* and follows a story somewhat similar in portraying a relationship between a white, male academic and a young "ethnic" student. However, Brink's novel takes as its central focus this relationship and its development as it traces the older white male's struggles to deal with his desire for the young woman. I quote here at length the protagonist's thinking about the rights of desire because it bears directly on the present analysis of rights, desire and space in *Disgrace*:

If I desire, I may well claim the 'right' to desire. But once a right is acknowledged, how does one demarcate its territory, define a content and a consequence? It 'has' no territory as it is constantly on the move; it can have no content, because the moment it contains something, that implies the possibility of fulfillment—and fulfillment is the end of desire, attainment its self-immolation. So where does desire take me: where does it have the 'right' to take me? If I claim desire as my right and its nature lies in motion, its motion towards the other, does not my right to desire invoke the right of the other to refuse me? And does that not make a mockery of 'right', as much as of 'desire'? The most I can claim for desire is the right to be frustrated, to be denied, otherwise it self-destructs. If there are rights, yes, then I suppose desire has a right to be. But that does not give me the right to demand rights for desire. I desire, ergo I am? But only if 'I am,' in this equation, becomes wholly conditional upon 'You are'. And where does that leave desire?" (Brink 154)

The last line here evokes the ethics involved in assemblages of desire in Deleuze and Guattari's project that undo the boundaries of self and other. Prior to this ethical response to the other, Brink describes a concept of the self as defined in psychoanalysis as desiring and lacking. The closing lines act as a counterpoint to describe a process of self that develops through a relationship with others and is also therefore more in line with Deleuze and Guattari's sense of "becoming." Lurie's description of his case as one of

“the rights of desire” excludes the right of the other to refuse, excludes the other from the realm of rights where only he as white male possesses rights. Brink’s description of desire also acknowledges the spatial imaginary involved in a view of desire as lack as it continuously seeks to penetrate space or “territory” in seeking a fulfillment which is forever out of reach. Brink’s response to *Disgrace* in this novel imagines a sustained asymmetrical relationship where the characters respond ethically toward one another and their subjectivities are changed and undone in the process, instead of the consumption of otherness and maintenance of dominance that are involved in David Lurie’s brief colonial encounters with women.

Enrichment Discourse and “Eating the Other”

As mentioned, Lurie consumes women throughout *Disgrace* and often fails to consider the effects this behavior has on their lives, only considering the pleasures and benefits of these episodes for himself. Discussing “the discourse of enrichment” involved in Australian multiculturalism, Ghassan Hage describes how white nationalists, like Lurie, view some ethnic others as existing solely for the purposes of enriching white culture. Through the example of the multicultural fairs which Hage describes as a place where white nationalists see an opportunity for enriching themselves with ethnic otherness, he describes a mode of consumption as they eat these other cultures, sometimes literally eating their food, and where the ethnic other is viewed as merely a “feeder” (118) to white dominant culture. As Hage asserts, the agency of the other is denied in the discourse of enrichment as it becomes a space of white eating and white action. The presence of “ethnic eater[s]” then upsets a view of others existing merely for the enrichment of white culture. David Lurie adopts this mode of “eating” ethnic others

(and animals too), perhaps most obviously in his visits to the sex worker industry where he selects “exotic” women from a menu of sorts which describes their attributes. The agency describes the women in these terms: “Lots of exotics to choose from—Malaysian, Thai, Chinese, you name it” (8). bell hooks describes this sexual consumption of “ethnic others” by white males in America and Britain in similar terms in her essay “Eating the Other.” There she describes how for white males “ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture” (21-2). Lurie specifically uses the discourse of enrichment to describe his relationship with Melanie and later all of his relationships with women.

Upon leaving his meeting with the inquiry committee at the university, Lurie finds himself surrounded by reporters and students, and he answers their questions about his having any regret saying, “No...I was enriched by the experience” (56). He later explains his relationships with women to Lucy in a similar fashion after quoting William Blake on desire: “Every woman I have been close to has taught me something about myself. To that extent they have made me a better person” (70). Such a focus on the self here emphasizes the dominant and consuming nature of his enrichment discourse. He hasn’t learned anything about the women or their cultures and Lucy rightly points to this self importance: “I hope you are not claiming the reverse as well. That knowing you has turned your women into better people.” Ghassan Hage explains this instrumentalization of other cultures involved in enrichment discourse: “While the dominant White culture merely and unquestionably *exists*, migrant cultures exist *for* the latter. Their value, or the viability of their preservation as far as White Australians are concerned, lies in their function as enriching cultures” (121). Hage’s analysis of Australian multiculturalism

aply describes Lurie's treatment of others, especially women in the novel as he views them only in terms of his own benefit. Throughout the novel, his marking others as desirable or undesirable often functions in relation to how they enrich him and make him feel more homely in the space of the nation, or, alternatively, how they assert their own agency and disrupt his mastery of and privileged access to national space.

Lurie returns to this discourse of enrichment towards the end of the novel, confirming the maintenance of his position of dominance: "*Enriched*: that was the word the newspapers picked on to jeer at. A stupid word to let slip, under the circumstances, yet now, at this moment, he would stand by it. By Melanie, by the girl in Touws River, by Rosalind, Bev Shaw, Soraya: by each of them he was enriched, and by others too" (192). Shortly after this reflection on how women have enriched his life, he seeks enrichment once again with a streetwalker. He seeks out the streetwalker after the young man in black, Ryan, threatens him again and removes him from the theatre where Melanie is performing in a production. Having been interrupted and prevented from further close encounters with Melanie, David resorts to a substitute to fulfill his feelings of lack and frustrated mastery in turning to a streetwalker where desire is reterritorialized in a money economy. The spatial emphasis at the end of his encounter with the streetwalker suggests again his consumption of others and management of space in returning her to her "rightful" place: "I'm taking you back to where I found you" (195). In this scene, he continues to eat an other for his personal enrichment and manages her by returning her to the street in a way that maintains his mastery.

As hooks suggests, these sexual encounters with others maintain the dominant's position: "When race and ethnicity become commodified as resources for pleasure, the

culture of specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals, can be seen as constituting an alternative playground where members of dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relations with the Other” (23). In other words, where Lurie has been removed from his position of authority in the university and removed from the theatre where Melanie performs, he still exercises his power over others through these sexual encounters and his management of others. Both Hage and hooks (25) suggest that people from the dominant culture who have experienced failures or frustrations in other areas of life like employment, etc., are more likely to assert their dominance in these realms, especially of national space; the diminishing importance and viability of Lurie’s position in the university situates him as a frustrated representative of dominant culture.

Positioning himself as a subject of rights and agency, Lurie figures himself in a dominant position where he cannot be eaten, but only he can eat others. In “Eating Well,” Derrida describes the desubjectifying effects that should pertain to eating well and acknowledges that eating well involves a relation of “infinite hospitality” to the other, where one is eaten: “For everything that happens at the edge of the orifices...the metonymy of ‘eating well’ (*bien manger*) would always be the rule. The question is no longer one of knowing if it is ‘good’ to eat the other or if the other is ‘good’ to eat, nor of knowing which other. One eats him regardless and lets oneself be eaten by him” (282). As Lurie’s sexual encounters with women occur “at the edge of the orifices,” his construction of himself as a subject of rights and agency who only eats others and never is eaten himself, never rendered vulnerable to the other, ensures his failure to “eat well”

in Derrida's sense, as he attempts to maintain a dominance through the logic of "carnophallogocentrism" (Derrida).

"Too Many:" Managing National Space and Biopolitics

Throughout the novel, Lurie and other characters worry about the populations, human and animal, of South Africa in terms of their occupation of space and the fulfilling of their needs in a country which apparently has little wealth or resources to go around. Bev's concerns are about the "wild" dog populations, while Lurie's comments about there being "too many" largely focus on the population of human South Africans, although he later concerns himself with helping Bev to euthanize the "too many" dogs that are undesirable for humans. As Foucault makes clear, these declarations of "too many" are biopolitical as they seek a control over the population and a management of life and death: "Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem" (245). This management of populations in *Disgrace* is a biopolitics as this field is concerned with "a set of processes such as the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, and so on. It is these processes...together with a whole series of related economic and political problems...which, in the second half of the eighteenth century, become biopolitics' first objects of knowledge and the targets it seeks to control" (243). Ultimately, these concerns about space and property manifest themselves in a biopower that seeks to maintain the status quo or maintain a population equilibrium according to a particular ideal and homely national space. Once again, Hage's analysis of the Australian situation is useful here as he notes the prevalence of the phrase "too many"⁷ from white nationalists who

fear the threat of living in a nation made unhomely by an influx of “ethnic” immigrants. At the base of such a judgment, as Hage notes, is an ideal amount of “others” occupying the national space against which the current reality exceeds.

The fantasy of a time (or a return to a time) when the nation is more homely and when the white nationalist’s privileged position is not in jeopardy motivates the nationalist’s claims of there being “too many” others. In *Disgrace*, however, it is not “ethnic others” alone that are “too many” and not whites alone that make claims of “too many” but the “kaffir dogs” are too many for the *humans* of the Eastern Cape, and Lurie is also included in the “too many” people at Lucy’s place. After Lurie catches Pollux spying on Lucy through the bathroom window and slaps him, setting the bulldog Katy on him, Lurie and Lucy disagree and she says that she can’t deal with Petrus’s family and David in the same place. Then David says to Bev that the problem is not between he and Lucy but “The problem is with the people she lives among. When I am added in, we become too many. Too many in too small a space. Like spiders in a bottle” (209). Here, Lurie recognizes himself as part of the “too many” in the space where Petrus and Lucy live, suggesting a recognition of the other’s right to occupy space and that others have their own vision of a homely national space. Where Lurie’s positions earlier in the novel assume more of a white nationalist fear of the agency of others, at various points in the novel he comes to view himself as part of this “too many” in a way that suggests a reorientation of his relationship to the nation. At this point, he associates himself with the dogs, recognizing that he and they have become a nuisance to others when they are in their space.

In his discussion of the “too many” in the white nationalist’s attempts to manage

space, Hage argues that “the classification of an object as ‘undesirable’ always assumes a space where the undesirable is defined as such. Most things are ‘undesirable’ somewhere, and desirable (or one ‘cannot care less about them’) somewhere else. There is no such thing as ‘undesirable’ or ‘too many’ in the abstract” (37). Hage’s insight into the territorial nature of the classification of objects as desirable/undesirable from which “too many” comes sheds light onto the obviously less than ideal situation in the Eastern Cape as confirmed by Lurie’s comments. As he mentions, it is “A risk to own anything... Too many people, too few things” (98). Lurie’s description of ownership reveals his anxieties in viewing himself as a lacking subject as he worries that his needs will not be met or that his property will be stolen. Again, however, this “too many” is not only a statement of white nationalism; the phrase “too many” also describes the bleak life of the Eastern Cape which has been ravaged by colonization. As Susan Smits-Marais and Marita Wenzel argue, the colonial period of the Eastern Cape and history of disputes over livestock and land led to the devastation of the land (26). They explain how this appears in the novel: “The physical landscape, described by David as ‘Poor Land, poor soil...Exhausted’ (p. 64) can also be seen as bearing the inscriptions of South Africa’s history of colonial exploitation and dispossession” (30). The conflicts between the inhabitants of the Eastern Cape over property and space then should be read in part as a result of the over-consumption of the land that occurred during British colonization and the British wars with the Xhosa over this land, as Smits-Marais and Wenzel argue.

After Lurie begins euthanizing the dogs with Bev Shaw, she explains the problem with the dogs in the Eastern Cape: “The trouble is, there are just too many of them...They don’t understand it, of course, and we have no way of telling them. Too

many by our standards, not by theirs” (85). Her explanation confirms that the dogs are neutered and sacrificed as a result of human desire for a homely space. The dogs are only “too many” for the humans who find their presence in the Eastern Cape a nuisance. As Foucault explains, sexuality, in this case dog sexuality, is not only a disciplinary issue but also a biopolitical problem as it results in changes to the population: “because it also has procreative effects, sexuality is also inscribed, takes effect, in broad biological processes that concern not the bodies of individuals but the element, the multiple unity of the population. Sexuality exists at the point where body and population meet. And so it is a matter for discipline, but also a matter for regularization” (251-2). While it is tempting to read Lurie’s management of the dogs and participation in killing them as a substitute for his frustrated mastery of the national space of others and women, his respect for the dogs in bringing them to the incinerator himself frustrates this reading. By ensuring that their bodies aren’t beaten prior to being burned, Lurie demonstrates a respect for the dead: “He may not be their saviour, the one for whom they are not too many, but he is prepared to take care of them once they are unable, utterly unable, to take care of themselves” (146). Indeed, Jolly reads Lurie’s behavior with the dogs in this scene in terms of responsibility: “If, at the beginning of *Disgrace*, Lurie acts on his desires to ensure immediate pleasure with the least expenditure of responsibility on his part, his perverse desire to incinerate the corpses of the dogs to avoid the mutilation of their (dead) bodies marks a difference” (94).

Given the history of white bourgeois management of stray dogs in Cape Town, which Kirsten McKenzie describes in “Dogs and the Public Sphere: The Ordering of Social Space in Early nineteenth-century Cape Town,” we might read Lurie as

participating in a white ordering of space which these “kaffir” dogs threaten. McKenzie describes how in the 1820s and 1830s the discussions about stray dogs in the *Advertiser* “operated at a more symbolic level and drew broader connections between control over dogs (and the form which this should take) and control over other undesirable elements of the city, including a disorderly underclass. Notions of race and class, and order and disorder, underpin the discourse of dog management in Cape Town” (95). The dogs of the Eastern Cape are viewed as “too many” by the Xhosa who live there as well, confirming that the euthanizing of the dogs is not solely a *white* biopower. This fact is confirmed by the Xhosa woman who brings in her goat to the clinic which has been attacked by dogs: “Every night the dogs come. It is too, too bad. Five hundred rand you pay for a man like him” (82). The dogs are viewed as undesirable in their abuse of the Xhosa livestock as the goat is described in terms of its financial value and the dogs are responsible for damaging its value as property. Lurie identifies with the dogs in also being unwanted at Lucy’s place and at the university; the concerns of order that once pertained to the city then in *Disgrace* extend to the country in the Eastern Cape of the post-apartheid setting of the novel.

Interestingly, Hage uses a discussion of nonhuman species as part of his explanation of the estimation of the “too many” involved in assessments of national space. He describes how the presence of ants sometimes results in action by humans when they become undesirable:

Most humans perceive ants as a different species, and certainly as an inferior species. Yet, just on the basis of this belief, they do not perceive them as ‘undesirable’ or as ‘too many’. They do so only when these ants are seen to have invaded spaces where humans find their presence harmful such as in their houses

or on their plates. And it is only in such situations that practices of violence are directed against them. (37-8)

Hage's description of the ants' undesirable occupation of space here accurately describes the situation of the dogs of the Eastern Cape which Lurie and Bev Shaw euthanize for the human community. Of the dogs at Bev Shaw's "Animal Welfare Clinic" Wendy Woodward writes:

These dogs, unlike Lucy's boarders, are mongrels, who in racialising discourse are 'kaffirdogs.' They are healthy, and have to die because of their fertility, because "there are just too many of them..." Coetzee's critique about the suffering of township dogs is directed not at the owners of the proliferating dogs, but at the lack of government intervention in animal suffering which is concomitant with the problems of the historically disadvantaged living in an economically moribund area like the Eastern Cape. ("Social Subjects" 259)

The distinction Woodward draws between Lucy's dogs and those at Bev Shaw's clinic indicates the difference between dogs marked as "desirable" and those marked as "undesirable," a distinction which continues in the historical legacy which McKenzie traces in the newspapers of Cape Town, as mentioned above. The "Dobermans, German Shepherds, ridgebacks, bull terriers, Rottweilers" which Lucy looks after for their white owners and describes as 'Watchdogs all of them'" (61) are oedipalized dogs which function to protect white property from theft and white space from intrusions. In contrast, the undesirable dogs are viewed as a threat to property value.

In the scene where the three men invade Lucy's home and rape her, they kill these watchdogs which at one point Lucy describes as protecting her in response to David's concerns about her safety: "There are the dogs. Dogs still mean something. The more dogs, the more deterrence" (60). Indeed, Lurie uses the bulldog Katy later on in exactly this fashion as he influences her to attack Pollux when the young man visually penetrates

the space of Lucy's home and body by peering through her bathroom window. Thus, the hypocritical Lurie objects to having his desires policed in his explanation that his case is based on "the rights of desire" and defends his penetration of others and their space but violently attempts to prevent black South African males' penetrations of space. Such contradictory opinions on desire and space confirm that Lurie views the arena of rights discourse as the privileged position of white males.

Returning to the scene of the attack on Lucy, as the purebred dogs have historically been used to protect white space and white property, the assault on Lucy's home is executed in spatial terms as the men challenge the white privileged relationship to space and render the house unhomely. The violence exerted here mirrors Lurie's own behavior; his raping of Melanie is paralleled by the men's raping of Lucy which she describes in spatial terms: "I think I am in their territory. They have marked me. They will come back for me" (158). Just as Lurie describes Melanie in terms of his being "*there*," Lucy thinks that the men view her as a space to be penetrated. The way in which Lurie is confined to the small space of the bathroom during the attack further emphasizes the way that men's violent actions are a means to threaten the white occupation of space where Lucy dwells: "He tries to kick at the door, but he is not himself, and the space too cramped anyway, the door too old and solid" (94). Limited to this small space by the young men, Lurie finds himself vulnerable and unable to aid in the protection of the dogs or Lucy. The threat of the men's agency over national space worries Lurie and he seeks to get the police involved, while also personally attempting to administrate the law by locating and managing the men. He attempts to exact justice for Lucy through the law, and while it is true that she is in a vulnerable state as victim and might require such

assistance, the act might also be read as a denial of her agency and ability to handle the situation.

While he largely attempts to maintain a dominant subjectivity in asserting his rights of desire and attempting to manage others in space, at times Lurie experiences a becoming animal during his time in the Eastern Cape as several critics note his loss of his sense of “self” (Smits-Marais and Wenzel 29) that is accompanied by his waning concerns about space. At the same time, his emptiness and feelings of desire as lack disappear for a bit in his sustained connection with Bev Shaw and the dogs and others he encounters there. For example, Tom Herron argues “[t]his turn, which in its most profound form involves a veritable becoming animal, occurs only when David is finally forced to abandon all that had hitherto sustained him as a white, liberal, libidinous academic” (471). The narrator explains that “[h]ere he is losing himself day by day” (121) and “he has become a dog-man” which is “[c]urious...[for] a man as selfish as he” (146) as confirmation of the loss of self involved in becoming animal. However, his becoming animal is cut short and while he does change briefly,—he goes from viewing some livestock animals solely as the property of man for food to caring about them, for example—his commitment to this dominant subject position later returns in his attempts to master and manage space. This slight transformation is revealed in his different experiences of sexual desire with Bev Shaw and his encounter with Desiree, Melanie’s younger sister. When he finds Desiree alone in a position of vulnerability at the Isaacs home and desires her more strongly than Melanie, he governs this desire where previously he would likely have acted on it without regard for her. Lurie also attempts to manage Petrus’ space and the young man who Lucy identifies as one of her assailants at

Petrus' party celebrating his land grant when he says: "'Who are you?' he says, but the words mean something else: *By what right are you here?* His whole body radiates violence" (132). This return to concerns about managing space in the demand of the young man's identity, which recalls the control of black South Africans' movements with the pass books, marks the end of his becoming animal and his return to a dominant subjectivity.

Lurie continues to attempt to manage space when he negotiates the caring for Lucy's land, which he continues to call the farm, with Petrus. The language used here explicitly invokes the discourse of Hage's "nationalist manager." Petrus describes the proposal: "I must keep Lucy's farm running...I must be the *farm manager*" (152). Lurie remarks "yes, we could call you the farm manager if you like" (152). Lurie acknowledges Petrus' claim to the land and sees himself as sharing or passing on the right of management to him. Unlike Lurie and the three young men who penetrate the space of Lucy's home however, Petrus denies this opportunity to become the nationalist manager saying that "It is too much" (153). In this way, Coetzee disrupts a vision of the future for South Africa that merely replaces a white nationalist fantasy with a black nationalist one. Refusing the role of nationalist manager, Petrus refuses this imaginary and offers a different vision of the future where space is negotiated and shared differently: outside of desires for homely national space with privileged access for some groups.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari argue that "all becoming occurs in smooth space" (486). Their distinction between the mapped out, counted space of the State or "striated space" and "smooth space" where "space is occupied without being counted" (362) suggests that in returning to his concerns of managing space, Lurie

effectively ends his period of becoming. As Smits-Marais and Wenzel suggest, Coetzee reimagines the plaasroman, or farm novel, as a space of new potential to challenge the patriarchal order traditional to this genre (35). Deleuze and Guattari explain the potentiality of “smooth space” in a way that confirms the potential Coetzee sees in land that is not a farm: “Even the most striated city gives rise to smooth spaces: to live in the city as a nomad, or as a cave dweller....Of course, smooth spaces are not in themselves liberatory. But the struggle is changed or displaced in them, and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new paces, switches adversaries. Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us” (500). While the quote refers to the striated space of a city, the farm of the country in South African culture and history is heavily striated as Smits-Marais and Wenzel attest, and indeed Deleuze and Guattari offer the farm as a prime example of striated space. The potential of the smooth space of Lucy and Petrus’s dwelling in the Eastern Cape then offers the opportunity for becoming for Lurie; however, “smooth space” does not serve any kind of messianic function. The land that is not a farm gets striated or reterritorialized and Lurie returns to a dominant subjectivity as he continues to concern himself with spatial management, attempting to maintain a feeling of homeliness in the country which has become unhomely. David continues to call it a farm, recalling the past, where Lucy corrects him and Petrus refuses to be a farm manager, suggesting their desire to live otherwise, to abandon the old ideas and old organizations of land and labor.

Approaching a “Minor” Opera

Artistic creation also possesses a potential for transformation in *Disgrace*. Lurie loses his sense of self one again and changes his thinking about the masters of literature

and art through writing an opera. Early on in the novel, he considers himself a student of the Masters of Literature. “Wordsworth has been one of my masters” (13), he explains to Melanie. Later when he learns that the professor hired to replace him is a specialist in “[a]ppplied language studies” he laments “So much for the poets, so much for the dead masters” (179). David adopts the ideas of these authors in an intimate fashion as he recites their lines often from memory throughout the novel and even attempts to model his lifestyle after some of them. He also recalls quotes from Romantic poets when he attempts to explain away his rape of Melanie and, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, he recalls the chorus from *Oedipus* when it comes to the question of his happiness and his understanding of desire. As a student of the masters, a student of this major literature, he adopts their dominant mode of thought.

In addition to “the masters” informing his lifestyle and sense of self, they too guide his thoughts about the creation of his opera, which initially focuses on Byron. Lurie attempts to write a major literature and position himself as a master, although in spite of this goal, the opera transforms, approaching a “minor literature” and a line of escape from dominant culture rather than an imitation and reproduction of it. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, a characteristic of “minor literature is that in it everything takes on a collective value” and in such a literature “there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that ‘master’” (*Kafka* 17). While David is initially concerned with projecting himself immortally into the future through the opera (63), he later abandons this aspiration to become a master in rethinking the project towards a minor opera. Like most of the elements that Deleuze and Guattari privilege and disparage, such as desire, sexuality, and animals, literature too can serve to maintain dominant, oedipal

culture or, alternatively, it can present opportunities for transformation and revolution, all depending on the style and mode of comportment involved.

Early on in the novel, shortly after the narrator recites the lesson from Oedipus which David remembers, the narrator explains Lurie's opinion "that the origins of speech lie in songs, and the origins of song in the need to fill out with sound the overlarge and rather empty human soul" (4). This theory on song as originating to fill a lacking subject demonstrates an oedipal view of art. As he later attempts to write his opera, he at first begins developing it with this view of song in mind and this understanding of the subject, continuing in the legacy of this master of tragedy, Sophocles. His thinking about creating art then draws from these old ideas which he often repeats and recites: "His mind has become a refuge for old thoughts, idle, indigent, with nowhere else to go. He ought to chase them out, sweep the premises clean. But he does not care to do so, or does not care enough" (72). His mind is colonized by these old ideas as they inform his life and relationships with others, and especially his recalling parts of *Oedipus* as Deleuze and Guattari describe Oedipus as colonization (*Anti-Oedipus* 170). His attempt to become a master and write a major literature then only further entrenches him in this dominant culture and perpetuates the imperialistic spread of these old ideas to future audiences.

Writing a minor literature, a minor opera, by contrast does away with old ideas and their colonization of the mind. In her introduction to *Kafka*, Réda Bensmaïa explains this deterritorialization of the mind, this clearing out of old ideas that arises from minor literatures: "Writing against the current and from a linguistic space that is radically heterogeneous with respect to his great predecessors, Kafka appears as the initiator of a new literary continent: a continent where reading and writing open up new perspectives,

break ground for new avenues of thought, and, above all, wipe out the tracks of an old topography of mind and thought” (xiv). While David continually thinks he cannot change and often refuses to change, his writing of this minor opera begins to change him in unexpected ways, away from the dominant subjectivity and dominant culture’s negative view of desire as lack. Writing and reading minor literature offers ways of thinking outside of oedipal definitions of desire and dominant culture’s fetishization of the self. Importantly, creating or experiencing minor literature or minor music—minor art of any kind—not only possesses the ability to clear away old ideas of major literature from the mind, but also in David’s case those old ideas from apartheid that he repeatedly brings up in insisting on calling Lucy and Petrus’s land a “farm” and recalling the lack of status under the law for black South Africans.

Being a student of the masters, David’s early thoughts about composing an opera describe a desire to imitate and indeed to steal from the masters of the past. He explains his initial approach to writing the opera: “Get the words down on paper....Then there will be time to search through the masters...lifting melodies, perhaps – who knows? – lifting ideas too” (183). Following these old forms and drawing from their music and language however proves dissatisfying—it “has failed to engage the core of him” (183)—in a similar fashion to the fault he finds with the English language earlier in the novel: “More and More he is convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa....Pressed into the mould of English, Petrus’ story would come out arthritic, bygone” (117). Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of a “minor literature” describes exactly a way to break with form (19) and to find an intensity in the oppressive major language: “[t]o make use of the polylingualism of one’s own language, to make a minor

or intensive use of it, to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third World zones by which a language can escape, *an animal enters into things, an assemblage comes into play*” (*Kafka* 27, emphasis added). Deciding to abandon the original plan and now composing original opera music on a toy banjo instead of the piano of dominant music, Lurie begins to approach a minor opera that is expressive and intense instead of a mere imitation of the past masters. He also suggests that he will let a dog into the comedy he’s writing (215), evoking Kafka’s literary bestiary from which Deleuze and Guattari derive their term “minor literature.”

Where he first tries to write the opera from Byron’s perspective, he now takes up Teresa as the main character. His creative mode no longer is a borrowing from the masters and an expert knowledge of them but comes from an unknown place, his unknown desire and his inexpert knowledge of music: “He is inventing the music (or the music is inventing him)” (186). Lucy’s later discussion of minor and main characters also highlights the tensions of major and minor literature, informing the importance of his decision to write from Teresa’s perspective: “You behave as if everything I do is part of the story of your life. You are the main character, I am a minor character who doesn’t make an appearance until halfway through. Well, contrary to what you think, people are not divided into major and minor. I am not minor” (198). This new mode of creating music describes a loss of subjectivity as he is no longer a master creating an object or piece of art. Instead the art is produced through this becoming, through the productivity of desire. Rather than a mastery controlling characters in a story, he follows the characters: “Teresa leads; page after page he follows” (186). The loss of subjectivity in

this transformed opera is also confirmed by his discussion of his new place in the opera: “He is in the opera neither as Teresa nor as Byron nor even as some blending of the two: he is held in the music itself, in the flat, tinny slap of the banjo strings” (184). This loss of self and desubjectified presence of the author in the music of the opera, along with the decision to include the dog’s “lament” (215), its asignifying music (as opposed to Lucy’s earlier point that dogs mean something in South Africa), confirms the beginnings of a minor opera.

In “Writing Desire Responsibly,” Rosemary Jolly also reads Lurie’s composing the opera in relation to desire and Coetzee’s own poetics. She notes the unknowable nature of desire that produces creative art:

What the character of Lurie demonstrates, and what Coetzee here argues for explicitly, is that desire cannot know itself, that creative work is associated with inscrutable desire: Lurie’s opera; Coetzee’s writing. This does not mean, however, that desire is thus licensed to exercise itself in ways that violate the other, as in the imposition of metaphysical constructs that deny the resistance of the other, even to the extent of ignoring corporeal suffering, to achieve their own ends. (100)

Also noting how Lurie’s desire exceeds *Oedipus*’s definition (94), Jolly describes here how, in other words, the opera offers a non-oedipal and non-dominant desire to flow—the desire of a minor literature. Where Oedipus attempts to represent desire, to make it fully knowable by defining all desire as arising from the same tragedy, as Deleuze and Guattari describe throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, Coetzee’s writing and Lurie’s opera are produced by an unknown desire, an uncolonized desire. These non-dominant desires that result from assemblages, whether they be assemblages of books or others, enable different ways of being in the world, and thus present the possibility for transformation away from the old ideas and a colonial relation to others. In creating a minor opera, Lurie

might curb his practice of “eating” others or enriching himself by consuming them as his mouth is deterritorialized (*Kafka* 21) by writing and singing: “To speak, and above all to write, is to fast” (*Kafka* 21).

The creation of an opera approaching a minor music presents an opportunity for deterritorialization and transformation of self and community. This is not realized in the novel although perhaps offered as a minor literature to come, since shortly before this, Lurie is still denying rape and regrets but accepts the fact that he will not become a famous author “returned triumphant to society” (214) because of this piece, acknowledging it will never be performed. Nonetheless, Coetzee suggests that deterritorializing desire and allowing it to flow away from major and colonial literature to a minor literature offers revolutionary potential. Minor literature and art is produced by this postcolonial desire (and reading or experiencing these works also enables this desire to flow) in a way that intervenes and resists dominant culture. As Jolly observes, “In the end, for all the debates about (ambiguous) closure in *Disgrace*, one can at least conclude that this economy [an Oedipal economy of desire] has failed Lurie, and he recognizes and exceeds it, even if neither he (or for that matter, we) can say why, precisely, he comes to such a radical understanding” (Jolly 94). I’m suggesting here that it is through the creation and reading of minor literature that we can recognize non-oedipalized desires. Producing and reading minor literature and art are therefore for Coetzee a way towards transforming subjects and communities away from the modes of thought and organization of the colonial and apartheid past, a transformation of community which might also reassess the position of animals. In *Disgrace*, Lurie’s minor art is not a radical redemptive gesture or production, yet it nonetheless begins to slightly transform this

heavily colonized subject and student of major literature.

Disgrace calls for the production of more minor literature, and indeed literature written in the “minor” languages of South Africa to continue to do the work of transforming society away from dominant culture. In refusing to oedipalize the dog which has shown affection for him and his music, Lurie gives him up, performing the exclusions of the community and leaving the dog in the position of bare life that Lucy adopts for herself: “No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity” but “like a dog” (205): an undoing of the privileged position of whites that Lurie must also move towards in a becoming animal should he seek to give up his dominant subjectivity. This minor literature might work towards protecting animals and others from the violence that results from a particular idea of the “human” as an exclusive category that Lurie teaches his students from major literature through a reading of Byron’s “Lara” early in the novel. He remarks that “there is a limit to sympathy” for those, like Lucifer, who are “not one of us” (33-34). He continues: “Finally, Byron will suggest, it will not be possible to love him, not in the deeper, more human sense” since Lucifer is “*a thing*” (34). Learning this lesson from major literature, which posits that loving those who are not human is an impossibility, the next lines immediately describe the students taking notes with “[h]eads bent” confirming their submission to the authority of the masters and to Lurie, as throughout *Kafka* Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly discuss the “bent heads” of Kafka’s characters as indicating “a submissive desire” (*Kafka* 4), as opposed to the more positive, flowing and transformational desire of the straightened head and music (5) of minor literatures.

National Space in *The Devil’s Chimney*

Anne Landsman's *The Devil's Chimney* (1997) develops many of the themes present in *Disgrace*: space, sexuality, animals, the "farm," violence, and art. Landsman's novel features an alcoholic female protagonist, Connie, who serves as the narrator and looks after the accounting books as part of her job for the South African Tourist Board; she also looks after her dogs and the dogs of visitors to the Cango Caves. Connie, described by her abusive husband Jack as a "Poor White" (14), explains her "shotgun" marriage to Jack, a white man, who often demonstrates violent behavior toward his wife as well as misogynist and racist views. The narrative style evokes the American writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" as Connie struggles with post-partum depression and feels confined in space, although there are significant differences here for this novel set in South Africa as Connie is a racist and drunk. Her unreliable and at times fantastical and incoherent, narrative reveals the trauma she continues to experience over the loss of her child and from the other violence visited upon her by her husband and family.

As part of her coping with the loss of her child and with the violence she receives from her family, Connie obsesses over the story of an English woman ostrich farmer named Miss Beatrice who moved to the Karoo with her husband Mr. Henry during the early twentieth century in South Africa. Connie narrates Mrs. Beatrice's story throughout the novel, often to her sister Gerda, who is deaf and who places a hand on Connie's neck as a means of listening to the story. Miss Beatrice serves as a sort of idealized figure or heroine for the protagonist as Connie at times apparently confuses herself with Beatrice and confesses feelings of jealousy for Miss Beatrice's free spirit and courage. The telling of Miss Beatrice's story fills the majority of the novel and snippets of the protagonist's

life appear only intermittently, interrupting her tales about Miss Beatrice and South Africa in the early 1900s during the ostrich feather boom. Landsman's novel, like Coetzee's *Disgrace*, examines the intersectionality of marginalized groups and their relationships to space, although highlighting more specifically the relationship between the confined spaces of women and animals and their potentials for resistance to mastery.

In the story of the ostrich farmer, Miss Beatrice's husband's absconding of the farm enables her to take charge and she forms much stronger relationships with the animals, the South African workers, and her Jewish neighbors. Originally arriving in South Africa to make money in the ostrich feather market after Mr. Henry racked up substantial gambling debts from betting on horses in England, the couple separates as Mr. Henry departs from the farm following the theft of the gambling money at an ostrich race which he organized. Beatrice's freedom from her husband during this period of his absence enables her to further exercise her desires, specifically sexual desires, as she engages sexually with her married Jewish neighbor and later takes part in a ménage-a-trios with September and Nomsa, a servant couple who live in the "*pondokkie*" or crude hut on the farm. Mr. Henry's absence while on his "long walk" in the mountains enables various becomings for Miss Beatrice and his return seeks to restore his mastery and management of others and space. Like Lucy and Petrus's space in *Disgrace*, Miss Beatrice's farm becomes a smooth space of becoming where hierarchies and categories are called into question.

Like *Disgrace*, the protagonist of *The Devil's Chimney* describes white character's concerns with land management and an ideal nationalist space, both in the past of Miss Beatrice's narrative and in the novel's present. For example, in the present

of the novel, Connie relates a recent news event where a white man feared the encroachment of black South Africans' *pondokkies* onto the "white" space of the city. She explains how the story of Henry killing September in Miss Beatrice's time reminds her of the present:

I don't know why but when I think of Mr. Henry and September, I think of that man in McGregor who was on the TV. He was tired of the *kaffirs*, he said, who had their *pondokkies* right near the white people's backyards. Of course, this kind of thing is quite new. They are not in the locations where they are supposed to be... This man on the TV, Gerrit Potgieter was his name, got upset because those *kaffirs* just let their dogs roam all over the place and one day his dog, a big Rhodesian Ridgeback male, went out to the *pondokkies* because one of the *kaffir* dogs was in heat. There was a big dog fight and the Ridgeback came home with a torn ear so Gerrit Potgieter went out to the *pondokkies* to show the *kaffir* whose dog was in heat a big lesson. ..Gerrit Potgieter shouted at him and there was a fight and the next thing that happened was that the Coloured man was lying down on the ground and his head was cracked open where the side of Gerrit's gun had hit him. (204-5)

As in *Disgrace*, the presence of the Africans renders the white man's experience of national space unhomely as they and their dogs become "too many" for him. As a result, he violently attempts to manage and reprimand the black man. The racialized dog who was in heat, experiencing that biological desire which apparently led to the fight, also exerts a threatening agency to the white man, further blurring boundaries and frustrating his demands for clearly ordered space. Connie notes the historical distinction between the two violent acts as Potgieter is arrested for this murder and Henry goes unpunished, except perhaps by a pair of ostriches later on. The scenes reveal the revised notion of community and biopolitics in post-apartheid South Africa. Where Mr. Henry's murder of September is regarded as a "non-criminal putting to death" in the logic of sacrifice that Derrida describes, in the post-apartheid incident, Potgieter is arrested for attempting to exercise a biopower in murdering a member of the community. As Achille Mbembe

explains, for Foucault “*biopower*... [is] that domain of life over which power has taken control. But under what practical conditions is the right to kill, to allow to live, or to expose to death exercised? Who is the subject of this right?”(12). As mentioned earlier, in the early twentieth century white males were the only subjects with rights in South Africa; in post-apartheid South Africa, the recognition of the rights of Africans results in the legal punishment of those who still seek to maintain a right to kill other members of the community.

Miss Beatrice serves as an historical precursor to Potgieter, at least at first, in her desire for homeliness after arriving in the Karoo. Arriving during the period of European migration which characterized the early 1900s in South Africa with the ostrich feather boom and diamond and gold booms, the English character Miss Beatrice experiences discomfort with her neighbors who are marked as “other.” She describes her distaste for Mr. Jacobs, “the Ostrich King” who lives on the neighboring farm: “Miss Beatrice is angry and cutting her hair because this is not how things are supposed to be. Your neighbors aren’t Jews. The Boers are bad enough, and so are the poor Whites but the Jews. That’s asking too much. They belong somewhere else. The night of the walking is spoiled. Ruined by Mr. Jacobs and his tribe on the other side of the fence, being so wrong in this place, so very wrong” (38). Maintaining a view of Oudtshoorn, the prime location of ostrich farms in South Africa, as an ideal place and a homely place for herself and other English people of a wealthy background, Beatrice’s description of her Jewish neighbors (and Boers and Poor Whites) as being in the wrong place indicates her vision of an ideal national space free of “others” as she marks Jews as “undesirable.”

Notably absent from Miss Beatrice’s list of undesirable neighbors are “native”

South Africans. This view is likely largely informed by the lack of rights and agency afforded to natives in European settler views of them, where they are viewed merely as a source of labor and without agency, and therefore not a threat. Rob Nixon explains an historical reason for the absence of “coloureds” or “blacks” or the San from the Karoo that perhaps also explains their absence from Beatrice’s list of undesirables. In *Dream Birds: The Strange History of the Ostrich in Fashion, Food and Fortune*, a personal narrative about his experiences with ostriches which details the history of the ostrich boom and the present situation for the birds in both Arizona in the U.S. and in Oudtshoorn in South Africa, Nixon explains that “[d]uring the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *trekboers* and Brits slaughtered the San relentlessly, treating them as little more than vermin. So by the time the Lithuanian Jews arrived, the Karoo’s first inhabitants were virtually extinct” (66). In essence, the San were no longer viewed as “undesirable” as their populations were previously decimated; therefore, they are not a threat to English or white nationalist fantasies: they are not “too many” to Miss Beatrice.

While she initially recoils from her Jewish neighbors and is threatened and unsettled by their success, their possessions, and land ownership—“How dare he. A Jew. Not an Englishman, not even a Boer. How could he. Who let him?”—her desires for Mr. Jacobs later challenge these initial white supremacist views. To be clear, she voices this racism *after* her first sexual encounter with Jacobs, thus confirming that sexual desire for the other alone does not guarantee a changed politics. After a later sexual experience with Jacobs and her continued desire for him, Miss Beatrice no longer holds these views; as I argue in a later chapter, following bell hooks’ argument, desire has the potential to bring about a change in one’s politics and participation in dominant culture: “Acknowledging

ways the desire for pleasure, and that includes erotic longings, informs our politics, our understanding of difference, we may know better how desire disrupts, subverts, and makes resistance possible” (39). Landsman’s novel explores how desire, and indeed narratives about desire, can reorient political alliances and constructions of the self.⁸

This reorientation of community and self that stems from desire also pertains to Deleuze and Guattari’s “becoming.” Miss Beatrice might be described as “becoming animal” and “becoming minoritarian” in these sexual encounters as she takes off on lines of flight away from dominant thought and dominant subjectivity as the characters’ understandings of their “selves” are recomposed in the relating of their bodies. As further evidence of her becoming, the narrator describes Beatrice as a “female ostrich” and as a “Queen Bee” (34), later describing an instance where she becomes like her servants on the farm, noting her darker and dirtier skin from farming: “I think on the inside she went black, like a *kaffir*, and that’s when the *volkie*s all moved in there and made their fires. She didn’t worry anymore about white people, or Mr. Henry, she just made Highlands her country” (45). Her becoming minoritarian notably includes a lack of concern for how space is managed or occupied and a lack of concern for categories of race, rather than a mastery over space and others. Miss Beatrice’s experience of becoming which includes a loss of subjectivity and an experience of desire functions as an alternative to her husband’s capitalist ambitions. John K. Noyes explains the relationship between critiquing capitalism and non-dominant subjectivity: “in the model of capitalism put forward by Deleuze and Guattari, the critical position that attempts an alternative history and an alternative geography of capitalism cannot be divorced from the critical position that had continually to re-invent and re-compose itself alongside and outside the

disciplined, well-structured subject of capitalism” (44). Beatrice’s experience of desire with Mr. Jacobs and with September and Nomsa function to offer glimpses of an alternative relationship to others and the land outside of capitalist demands.

Connie’s remarks about Beatrice actually take on the language of becoming: “I think she became an ostrich herself” (51). She also describes Beatrice’s sexual encounter with Mr. Jacobs as a “flight” (159), later remarking, after mentioning how Miss Beatrice, Nomsa, and September also had sex, that “Nobody knew how far, just how far, she had flown. She was the Knysna loeire, the bird with the crown and green chest and red underwing” (167). Connie remarks on a similar feeling of freedom she experiences being out with her dogs: “She must have had that feeling I sometimes get when I am out with the dogs only she had it all the time. You are the wind and no one can catch you” (46). This becoming animal is also described in spatial terms as Connie explains that Beatrice comes to occupy space in a way like her as after Mr. Henry took all of their possessions, Beatrice lives in the “room of a poor person. A poor White. Just like me and you and Kloppie and ma and pa. And Jack” (97). These experiences of becoming animal and becoming minoritarian—these transgressions of race, class, species, etc.—figure as challenges and resistances to dominant subjectivity and the management of desire and space that Mr. Henry seeks in attempting to re-establish patriarchal order upon his return to the farm.

The Confined Spaces of the Karoo

As Wendy Woodward observes in her essay that partly deals with Landsman’s novel, Connie and her family subscribe to fixed identities and are heavily entrenched in their racial identities as “Poor Whites”. Woodward is interested in the transformational

possibilities for characters in *The Devil's Chimney* enabled by the narrative and the space of the caves. She writes

In *The Devil's Chimney*...Connie's narrative represents the opportunities inherent in moving into a space beyond hegemonic identities. Connie even fluctuates between the animal and the human: her ability to identify with her dogs, to tell their narratives, to sense "ghost dogs" makes her, in Jack's angry definition, "part dog" (2). But Connie's real strength comes from her ability to tell Miss Beatrice's story and, in so doing, to merge identities with her. In addition, within this story she represents other possibilities of psycho-social-spiritual connection between women. (Woodward 31)

Woodward also identifies the liminal space of the Cango caves as a place of transformational possibilities (33) as they are situated underground between Miss Beatrice and Mr. Jacobs' farms.⁹ While Woodward emphasizes the fixed space of "hegemonic identity" and the transformative potential the caves present in her considerations of space in a symbolic sense, I'm interested here in the literal experiences of space by characters in the novel: the similar confined spaces of both Connie and the ostriches. These shared experiences of spaces as limiting or inhibiting movements and desires present opportunities for thinking too about shared resistances. Both the ostriches and the protagonist (and other characters) find themselves increasingly confined and victims of violence when at the disposal of the white male's desires and ambitions of profit.

Connie explains that her first space of dwelling was an extremely confined space: a shoebox. Immediately prior to divulging this information, she explains that Miss Beatrice's aunt who continuously cried was locked up. She explains: "auntie was the one they locked up, the one who cried when she looked at her shoes, who cried when she put on her hat, the one who couldn't stop crying" (28). Throughout the narrative, Connie fears being locked up in the bar (99) or locked out of her house (105), or being stuck and

lost in the Devil's Chimney of the Congo Caves, like the "coloured" maid, Pauline, was as Connie describes at the beginning of the novel. I should note here again Connie's exceedingly racist views as she remarks that she's never seen a pretty "coloured" woman and only values the maid's life in terms of what she meant to the white girl that Pauline worked for. Her violent racist remarks here contrast with her sympathy for non-white people towards the novel's end, suggesting a slight degree of transformation in her racial thinking.

To return to Connie's experience of life in confined spaces, early in the novel she explains her first occupation of space:

I was a shoe myself. I came into this world too soon and so they put me in a shoebox. I'm not sure if I was a man's shoe or a woman's....I'm not sure if she punched holes in the lid the way they do with silkworms but I know that the box was my bed, until I was big enough for Gerda's cradle. Maybe Miss Beatrice's auntie had the same thing and so her shoes made her cry. Perhaps she went from a shoebox to a hatbox to a cradle and that's why the hats made her cry too" (28)

While the space of the shoebox may be read as symbolic of gendered identity in her questioning if it was a male or female shoebox, Connie's narrative here also describes an extremely small space and therefore a managing of the protagonist's movement. Her wondering about the box being equipped with air holes for breathing like the boxes people often create for captured animals invites a comparison between the limited space afforded the protagonist and that offered the novel's animals, especially the ostriches.

Throughout *Devil's Chimney*, Connie's mother seeks to limit her movements and desires by further threatening to confine her should she upset the expectations of motherhood or her race. Her mother greatly fears the threat to order and normativity that desire poses as she, for example, fears that Gerda might desire women sexually (172) and warns Connie

not to engage in miscegenation. This management of Connie's desires and movements in space is a continuation of oedipal culture which seeks a mastery and control of others' desires; the colonial attempt to master others (including animals) is perhaps most evident in the space of the farm.

As there are no redeeming white males in the novel, Landsman charges white patriarchy (and those complicit with it) as largely responsible for the violent abuse of those marked as Others and the controlling of their desires and movements. Jack's description of Miss Beatrice's sexual encounters with racialised others as "the worst" thing she could do and his pronouncement that "she should have been left at the top of the Swartberg Pass under a pile of stones while she was still alive" (166) evidences again the confinement of female desire and how threats of violence are used to master and control it. The intersectional connections between those abused and managed in space is revealed through Connie's mother's threats to imprison her for running away as a child, which Connie describes: "The wall at Highlands makes me think of the prison and the time my ma caught me running away....My ma said that I won't be able to run away again because I would be in a prison and the walls were high and there were warders" (49-50). The attempts to limit Connie's lines of flights by threatening to wall her in or send her to prison demonstrate an attempt to force her to internalize limitations on her movements, to tame her.

As a tame animal, Connie often submits to the national will of white racists and patriarchy as her jealousy of Miss Beatrice's agency and freedom of movement when Mr. Henry is absent makes clear. She is tame as Hage describes that tame animals (and people) "have internalised their state of captivity such that the physical restraints are no

longer needed as an instrument of subjugation” (114). Connie mentions a desire for the absence of her husband as well: “When she [Beatrice] was alone at Highlands, she was all right. Sometimes I think that’s what I need. No Jack, just me and the dogs. I wouldn’t even be drinking. I’d be waltzing around like those ostriches” (54). Connie also recognizes that the restrictions on her agency and the taming of her movements and desires are similar to the restraining and caging prisoners of the apartheid state: “I saw a film on the TV about Robben Island, where they tortured people and of course we didn’t know anything” (288). She continues explaining that “Now I am sorry for the prisoners, but I am also sorry for myself...” drawing this connection to their imprisonment. Connie offers an easy comparison of these “imprisonments” which are *dramatically* different of course, and ineffably so, as Connie was only threatened with imprisonment by her mother where Mandela and other anti-apartheid activists spent decades and most of their lives in prison, experiencing violent treatment there. Connie lists all the main characters in the novel as people she also feels sorry for, including violent white males such as her husband Jack, perhaps suggesting her continued submission to white nationalism and patriarchy. In Hage’s terms, the imprisonment of the anti-apartheid activists at Robben Island confirms their maintenance of their own will and resistance to succumbing to the dominance of the nationalist will of the apartheid regime. Their release signifies the changing national will and transformation of national spatial imaginaries. While at times Connie is tamed and limited by dominant thought and confined in space, at other points she is free to move and think differently, through her telling of Miss Beatrice’s story.

Nomad Science, Art, and the Animal Revolution

The magical realism of *The Devil’s Chimney* enables the telling of different

stories, different knowledges than mere capitalist and colonial relations to the world: a nomad science and art in the form of Nomsa and September's stories and knowledge and Connie's dreams. Connie's own story-telling about Miss Beatrice serves as another magical realist element and form of knowledge outside the racist patriarchal reality described by her husband. Nomsa's *muti*, midwifery and knowledge about the future, September's knowledge about ostriches, etc., and Miss Beatrice's dreams about Nomsa's rearrangement of the house and September's painting: all offer different modes of knowledge and being in the world than capitalism. In her article about magical realism in South African literature, Paulina Grzeda quotes "Brenda Cooper [who] concludes that 'magical realism arises out of particular societies—postcolonial, unevenly developed places where old and new, modern and ancient, the scientific and the magical views of the world co-exist' (216)" (158). She further explains that Cooper "sees this mode of writing as 'thriving on transition, on the process of change, borders and ambiguity. Such zones occur where burgeoning capitalist development mingles with older pre-capitalist modes in postcolonial societies' (215). While Grzeda goes on to offer a more complex understanding of the use of magical realism in South African literature, these explanations of magical realism offer insight into Landsman's use of this strategy to represent Oudtshoorn during the ostrich feather boom. The various elements of magical realism in *The Devil's Chimney* challenge Mr. Henry's authority and knowledge as a capitalist, offering different epistemologies and a postcolonial mode of relating to others, the environment, and space.

In "Necropolitics," Achille Mbembe explains the colonial takeover of space through the use of Deleuze and Guattari's term "territorialization" in a way that might

accurately describe the reorientation of native peoples' society and relation to the space of the Karoo in *Devil's Chimney* by Mr. Henry and other capitalists. Mbembe articulates how

Colonial occupation itself was a matter of seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographical area—of writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations. The writing of new spatial relations (territorialization) was, ultimately, tantamount to the production of boundaries and hierarchies, zones and enclaves; the subversion of existing property arrangements; the classification of people according to different categories; resource extraction. (25-6, emphasis in original)

Upon returning to the farm, Mr. Henry tries, in colonial fashion, to reterritorialize the new arrangements on the farm which have evolved during his departure. He seeks to extract capital from the ostriches to cover the expenses of the child Beatrice is pregnant with, which he believes is his, and in part because he needs the money because, in racist fashion, he wants to raise the child in England away from the Boers and the South African “wilderness” (140). He plucks the birds too early against September and Beatrice's wishes and protests, a practice which September knows will cause the birds to die (199). Frustrated at being ordered to pluck the birds anyway, September bangs the farm equipment roughly and loudly while muttering San mythology about how this plucking will result in a violent future: “the Ostrich with fire under its armpits and how the Ostrich was going to drop that fire and make everything burn down at once” (201). Mr. Henry calls him “a “black bastard” for these protests and for throwing the “bag he had been putting on the ostriches' heads onto the ground” (201) in an act of defiance and refusal. The narrator describes the process of plucking the birds as they are gathered into the big *kraal* then the plucking *kraal* (197) before individually being forced into the “plucking-box” (198), a description of confined space which evokes the shoebox of

Connie's first dwelling. Noting the animals' resistance to this mastery (like September's resistance to Henry's commands), Connie describes: "They don't go in without fussing and shaking, and some of them have to be dragged" (198). These frictions of the birds' bodies demonstrate their resistances to being mastered and tightly managed in space, a potential for resistance that stems from the body and desire and that is therefore also shared with humans.

As she describes September and the other farm workers laboring to get the birds into the box, she takes further note of the confined space: "The wood bar closing from behind, the bird's round body stuck in the tightest of triangles" (198). The confinement of the birds and plucking ends in most of their deaths and September's death as, after the plucking, he and Mr. Henry fight and Henry whips him, snapping his neck. Henry kills him for offering a resistance and protest to his will, and for demonstrating his knowledge about ostriches that derives from San traditions. Not knowing anything about the birds, Mr. Henry enacts violence against September with the whip, as he did earlier in his non-criminal breaking of the neck of a vulture, because of September's resistance to the capitalist disposal of the ostriches. Like the reprimands and threats that Connie experiences for moving or showing her own agency, Mr. Henry kills September with the intent of blocking up his desires which frustrates Henry's own ambitions of extracting capital: "I'll show him a lesson about birds...I'll show that *kaffir* what's what" (201). Henry's disposal of the birds for profit results in failure, however, as the feather market crashes, demonstrating the veracity of September's San knowledge as he predicted this devastating future. The crash of the market also emphasizes the unsustainable nature of certain capitalist practices and economies.

Later, when Mr. Henry returns to the farm and attempts to steal an ostrich egg from its nest, September's prophecy about the violence the ostriches would visit upon the farm if they were plucked too early is further revealed to be accurate. In order to replace the painted egg he broke at Mr. Jacobs' house and in order to return himself to Jacobs' good graces, Mr. Henry attempts to steal the ostrich egg. Now that the feather market has crashed and Mr. Henry needs his financial advice and wants to sell his land to Jacobs, he attempts to replace the egg he has broken. The scene plays on the theme of communication and hearing as Mr. Henry deliberately refuses to hear or heed September's words and knowledge and cannot hear the ostrich's calls. As he attempts to steal the egg, Henry is "hearing September's voice buzzing in his ears" (240) with his knowledge about ostrich farming, specifically September's advice not to disturb the eggs, which Mr. Henry disregards. The narrator reveals the ostriches' communication, unheard by Henry, which leads to their violent attack on him: "What he didn't hear, what he couldn't hear, was the squeak in the shell that came up from the baby ostrich inside the shell ready to hatch...They [the hen and the cock] heard it again and suddenly she was on her feet and she and her mate were flying at Mr. Henry, their naked wings stretched wide, their bills wide open" (241). This communication between the birds, inaudible to Henry's ears but audible to September or the San perhaps, results in their protection of their child and their resistance to Mr. Henry's theft of their un-hatched child. The narrator continues to describe the violence they unleash: "Mr. Henry was up against the fence when the first long toe-nail caught him on the lip and pulled down, like someone opening a can of sardines" (241). As the animals revolt against the theft and abuse of their egg and kill Mr.

Henry, they offer a resistance to his capitalist will. In their desire to protect their egg, they strike and kill the would-be-killer of their egg.

Given the way that Connie tells different versions of her own child's birth where the child either dies or is taken away from her by her mother and Jack, and later given to Gerda (and then possibly dies), the ostriches' violence against this mastery and control of their lives and theft of their child suggests a model of agency that Connie desires as well. Thus, Connie learns and is inspired not only from Nomsa and Miss Beatrice's narratives as Woodward notes;¹⁰ she also observes the revolutionary agency and desire in the narrative about the ostrich parents. In "Incidents in the Animal Revolution" Ron Broglio describes several violent "incidents" of animals revolting against humans, even as these behaviors go unrecognized as a revolution because of denials of animal agency. For example, describing the French President Jacques Chirac's Maltese poodle who "mauled" him, Broglio explains the human control and mastery of the animal that might lead to such revolutionary violence: "Well, being told where to walk, when and if one can walk, when to pee, when to eat . . . one can become a bit frenzied" (24). The highly managed and confined space in which the ostriches are kept under the farm operation, along with their ill-treatment by Mr. Henry and finally his attempts to steal their egg result in their revolutionary gesture. Ultimately, it is their desire to protect their young from the instrumentalization, from being disposed of in a capitalist biopolitics, by Mr. Henry that leads them to revolt and violently kill the man who has destroyed their population on the farm.

September's knowledge of San epistemology, the knowledge of a nomadic people, and Nomsa's Xhosa knowledge in her practice of throwing bones constitute a

“nomad” or “minor science,” an epistemology described in contrast to State knowledge by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (361). Deleuze and Guattari explain that this science is “bound up in an essential way with the war machine” (362) and this is confirmed in the narrative as he and the birds resist and revolt against Mr. Henry. In contrast to Henry, Miss Beatrice clearly values this nomad knowledge as she remarks that Nomsa “know[s] everything” (91). Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the State’s appropriation of nomad science and its disavowal of that which it cannot appropriate accurately reflects Mr. Henry’s relationship to September’s knowledge: “State science retains of nomad science only what it can appropriate; it turns the rest into a set of strictly limited formulas without any real scientific status, or else simply represses and bans it” (362). He uses September’s knowledge and labor in order to turn a profit from the birds and dismisses this knowledge when it impedes the attainment of what he desires.

Both September and Mr. Henry are also artists and their different artworks and methods demonstrate again the practices of the nomad and those of the State. September practices a nomad art in Miss Beatrice’s dream by painting animals on the walls of Highlands, a dream that ends with him being shot by Mr. Henry. “Standing naked in front of the house” September paints “with his fingers, his tongue and even his eye-lashes and soon the outside wall of Highlands was covered with wild animals” (98). As dreams figure as part of the magical realism of the novel, Miss Beatrice’s dreams also reveal nomadic knowledges and offer a space for alternative, anti-capitalist desires. This dream portrays September as practicing nomadic art, an art which Deleuze and Guattari also associate with smooth space (493) and as distinct from empires and their striated space (495). Importantly here, he turns the wall, which functions to striate space by confining

and marking it off, into a “smooth space” with his art, deterritorializing it; in other words, he undermines the wall’s signifying function as a boundary and marker of property in a capitalist economy, making it instead an asignifying, aesthetic artwork that imagines relations to space and animals differently—away from the notions of property and the subject of rights that pertain to being a landowner. The way he is described as naked and painting with all body parts suggests the practice of a nomad art which Deleuze and Guattari suggest includes “‘close-range’ vision, as distinguished from long-distance vision; second ‘tactile,’ or rather ‘haptic’ space, as distinguished from optical space” (492). Using his eye lashes to paint in Miss Beatrice’s dream, September performs this close-range vision, immersing his naked body in vulnerable painting with multiple senses, rather than the painting with the hand from a position of separation, distance, and mastery that pertain to the long-distance painting and emphasis on the optical of Mr. Henry’s art.

In contrast to the nakedness of September’s painting style, Mr. Henry paints on an easel in the veld “with a big white hat on his head” (18), painting pictures that no one likes (26). He tries to sell them for profit after the loss of the betting money at the ostrich races and later attempts to take an ostrich egg from its nest for artistic purposes. Mr. Henry fails to recognize the singularity of the egg, viewing it as an abstract object or commodity instead of recognizing its existence in a specific relationship with ostrich parents. In essence, as he seeks to reterritorialize the egg in a capitalist economy to replace the commodity which he has broken, the ostrich parents resist this reorientation of relations and theft of their egg. Henry seeks to reproduce the egg with the painting of Mr. Jacobs’ farm on it from one of the “fixed eggs at Highlands” (236). Deleuze and Guattari

explain that “Reproducing implies the permanence of a fixed point of *view* that is external to what is reproduced” (372); the emphasis on fixity and externality suggests that Mr. Henry views himself as separate from the environment and materiality as he tries to fix the landscape on the egg. His attempt to reproduce the painted egg and his desire to paint a distanced perspective painting of the landscape of Jacobs’ farm situates him as participating in dominant art, not unlike David Lurie of *Disgrace*’s original plans for his opera where he sought to reproduce the art of the masters. “Haptic,” nomadic art by contrast recognizes the materiality and vulnerable relation of the artist to the art. For Mr. Henry, his making art with the egg is viewed as a “form-matter duality” (369)—the egg as a blank canvas of inert, anonymous matter which he will form according to his will. In contrast, Beatrice’s dream of September’s art evokes the nomadic ethos of Cézanne’s approach which was “to be too close to it [the field or “subject” of the painting], to lose oneself without landmarks in smooth space” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 493). These different approaches in Henry and September’s art (which recall David Lurie’s different perspectives on music) situate September and the ostriches as part of the nomad war machine against the will and domination of the State, of which Henry is a representative, as they deterritorialize the striated space of the farm, resist the mastery of Henry’s art project, and upset his capitalist disposal of the land and its animals.

Conclusion: The Smooth Spaces of the Eastern and Western Capes

The caves are not the only space with potential for transformation and resistance to dominant or hegemonic culture in *The Devil’s Chimney*, and it is significant in this regard that the caves include San artwork, albeit alongside the markers of capitalism and colonialism in the signatures and markings of tourists and colonists, like George Grey’s

ladder. The desires and movements of humans and animals and the creation of nomadic art also present lines of flight away from dominant culture. Deleuze and Guattari explain that striated space can become smooth through deterritorializations and it is through the dream of September's art and Nomsa's rearrangement of the structure of the house at Highlands during her practice of midwifery that it too becomes deterritorialized.¹¹ Rob Nixon describes the past of the Karoo and the nomadic lifestyle of the San people in this area prior to colonization as a mode of dwelling on the land and with animals different from the capitalist lifestyles that arrived with the European immigrants to Oudtshoorn. In addition to the aforementioned near annihilation of the San population, Nixon describes how the settling of the land by whites disrupted the San's nomadic way of life:

The Karoo belonged first to the San, roving hunter-gatherers whose claim on the land colonials and non-nomadic Africans could readily discount. Kraals (corrals), fenced property, branding and personal livestock were all alien to San notions of belonging... They had found a way to dwell in movement, respecting the desert's slender margin of survival by following the seasons and wild herds. (65)

Nixon's description of the San's nomadism and relation to the land and animals describes a way of living with animals outside of capitalism and capitalist desire, and free from the notions of property, rights, lack, and accumulation that often determine relations with animals, others, and the environment in capitalism. The sedentary tribes and whites who denied the San attachment to the land while tragic in the slaughter of the San population and destruction to their culture does not undermine the idea that their way of life was exceedingly more sustainable for the environment. Instead, it demonstrates the violence unleashed on native people and the environment from the capitalist and colonial mission to farm the land that informs these appropriations of the San's nomadic space. Nixon continues "The advancing whites and their flocks denuded the Karoo of game—the

antelope, zebra, giraffe and ostriches on which the San's survival depended. The whites erected fences, interrupting the free flow of migrating animals and the San who followed them. (66) This description of the San's nomadic lifestyle also suggests the nomadism and "smooth space" of Deleuze and Guattari's project. The erecting of fences and boundaries constitutes the striation of the smooth nomad space, the ordering of space according to a rationality that seeks to prevent or capture lines of flight and reterritorialize movements to work towards to functions of the State and to extract surplus value from the colonies.

In both *Disgrace* and *The Devil's Chimney*, novels which function to challenge the patriarchal order of the plaasroman, historical relationships to the land, whether it be the Eastern Cape in *Disgrace* or Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape of *The Devil's Chimney*, inform the current relationships to national space and their transformation. The legacy of white settlement and colonization continue to influence character's relationships to national space. Nomadic and tribal relations to space and to animals, and indeed the animals themselves, always threaten or haunt these current regimes of the State and present the potential for revolutionary change. Deleuze and Guattari explain that smooth space in "The East presents a different figure: a relation to the steppe and the garden (or in some cases, the desert and the oasis), rather than forest and field; cultivation of tubers by fragmentation of the individual; a casting aside or bracketing of animal raising, which is confined to closed spaces or pushed out onto the steppes of the nomads" (18). These different orientations of space that are not "confined" or "closed off" open up onto new opportunities in the postcolony of South Africa as they provide opportunities for more ethical response towards others and ethical ways of living on the land.

Resistances to dominant culture and dominant thought flow forth from a nomad war machine, a nomad and minor art, an animality and a desire that arises from the nonhuman materiality of the body to challenge the consumption of bodies and the controlling of their movements in space. These resistances and desires offer modes for reorienting communities away from neocolonial capitalist extraction, where communities of humans and animals become mere colonies that are eaten by the capitalist machine. Positive desires that exceed and resist capitalist reterritorialization and that arise from positive assemblages as well as from minor and nomadic arts offer creative modes of protecting the human and nonhuman inhabitants of communities outside of the dominant subjectivities and rights discourse of the State which have historically excluded and continue to so violently exclude certain (gendered, racialized, nonhuman) bodies from the protections of the community.

Notes

1. Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming animal" provides an alternative to the dominant, fixed subjects of rights discourse. Deleuze and Guattari explain the politics of becoming animal, noting the oppression these assemblages experience and their extrinsic relation to the State: "There is an entire politics of becomings-animal, as well as a politics of sorcery, which is elaborated in assemblages that are neither those of the family nor of religion nor of the State. Instead, they express minoritarian groups, or groups that are oppressed, prohibited, in revolt, or always on the fringe of recognized institutions, groups all the more secret for being extrinsic, in other words, anomic." (*A Thousand Plateaus* 247)
2. Ghassan Hage uses "unhomely" throughout *White Nation* to describe the anxiety felt by white nationalists in response to the presence of what they perceive as "too many" ethnic others. The term comes from Freud's essay on "The Uncanny" and derives from the German word "unheimlich" which Freud uses to describe feelings of discomfort that pertain to the defamiliarization present in experiences of the uncanny.
3. See Coetzee's "Triangular Structures of Desire in Advertising" where he criticizes the

definition of desire employed in advertising and in some literature. He also describes this desire in advertising as a neocolonial practice: “it can barely escape our attention that it is to someone’s material benefit that people should have models of how to desire.... [W]hereas in the nineteenth century alcohol was used as a means to lure and lock the colonized into a money economy, that function is nowadays effected in the Third World via the propagation of images, models of desiring” (38-39).

4. David Farrier cites Hage’s *White Nation* at times in *Postcolonial Asylum: Seeking Sanctuary Before the Law*.

5. Coetzee’s critique of the privileged position of whites and the white management of national space also appears in his literary criticism. In his essay on Walt Whitman, he criticizes Whitman’s racism and desire to rid the nation of the black population: “While he did not reiterate his pre-war proposal that the best solution to the ‘problem’ of blacks in America would be to create a national home for them elsewhere, he did not withdraw it either” (“Walt Whitman” 184). Coetzee also remarks: “Because slavery was anti-democratic in its effects, because a slave economy was in his eyes the antithesis of an economy of independent yeomen farmers, Whitman supported war against the slaveholders. He did not support the war in order to win for black slaves a rightful place in a democratic order” (183).

6. Assemblages are often positive (although they can be negative when they are signifying, stratified, etc.) collectivities of forces, speeds, and lines (4) in Deleuze and Guattari’s thought where becoming, machinic desiring, and collective enunciation occurs (*A Thousand Plateaus* 22, 264). They provide a book as an example of an assemblage on the first pages of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

7. The “too menny” (146) of *Disgrace* draws from Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* where Little Father Time commits a murder-suicide in killing himself and the other children, leaving a note that says “Done because we are too menny.” (399) The invocation of this scene here suggests the necropolitics involved in being marked as undesirable or in being viewed as unhomely and unwelcome as the children of Hardy’s novel internalize this biopower in taking their own lives.

8. See Stuart Thomas’ reading of “hospitality” in Landsman’s novel where he explains that “In a state of unconditional hospitality, then, the self in both host and guest is displaced to the degree that neither can be named as other. In order to achieve this displacement of self, the changes undertaken in a process of unconditional hospitality must be pre-reflective and involuntary (276)” (Thomas 171).

9. Woodward nicely notes the role of desire in this transformational space as it flows and cannot be fixed: “Sexualities become fluid in time and space, desire cannot be pinned down either to homosexual or heterosexual categorisations. The sexual activity between Miss Beatrice, Nomsa and September transgresses boundaries of class, race and religion” (“Beyond Fixed” 32).

10. Woodward provides an interesting reading of Nomsa and Beatrice's fight over possession of the baby: "The accusation that one has stolen the other's baby could be leveled both ways: Nomsa steals Precious from the cave, but Miss Beatrice had appropriated September's virility literally, just as white employers have figuratively emasculated black men. Nomsa's motherhood has been undermined too, as all her children were brought up away from the farm so she could be employed there. In South Africa, as in most countries with racialised nanny relationships, the black woman has to abandon her own baby in order to take care of the white one" ("Beyond Fixed" 33).

11. The way that Highlands becomes a transformed space is also observed by Woodward: "the suggestion that the two women live together, possibly in a sexual relationship, suggests that they have moved beyond dominant constructions of heterosexuality, "race" and colonial possession of the land, into different consciousnesses that "juggle" cultures (Anzaldúa 1997:236)" ("Beyond Fixed" 34).

CHAPTER 3

POSTCOLONIAL DESIRE AND POSTANTHROPOMORPHIC SEXUALITY IN ZAKES MDA'S THE WHALE CALLER

This chapter examines the role of desire in the relationship between the eponymous protagonist and a southern right whale, Sharisha, in Zakes Mda's *The Whale Caller* (2005). Where most human encounters with animals in the Anthropocene are experienced only through consumption or capitalization, Mda's novel portrays a human-animal relationship which is more mutual. This relationship exists outside of the psychoanalytic definition of desire as lack that capitalism deploys to orient all desires towards achieving capitalist ends: a taming of desire which Deleuze and Guattari critique in *Anti-Oedipus* (1977). Mda creates in *The Whale Caller* the anti-oedipal assemblage of Sharisha and the protagonist, which another character, Saluni, triangulates as "man, woman, and whale," including herself as she tries to oedipalize them like the mother-father-child triangle of *Oedipus*. Mda's anti-oedipal approach enables a mode of thought and comportment that resists triangulation and neocolonial practices where humans, animals and the environment are viewed merely as "resources" awaiting transformation into profit. *The Whale Caller*'s anti-oedipal desire possesses a postcolonial, revolutionary potential to reorganize communities away from the hyperconsumerism and unrestrained capture of surplus value in capitalism, towards more sustainable futures and modes of development.

I use "zoosexuality" instead of bestiality to describe the Whale Caller's relationship with Sharisha after Monika Bakke's point that recently there is a specific, negative use of bestiality, which refers to "the practice of using animals as mere outlets

for sexual tension” (225). Bakke prefers both “zoophilia” and “zoosexuality” to describe positive relationships instead, clarifying that “[i]n zoosexual relationships animals gain the status of a *partner* rather than a victim of human lust” (225). Indeed, in *When Species Meet*, Donna Haraway also describes “companion species” as including an element of the sensual, after recalling the etymology of companion which defines a companion—cum panis—as one you break bread with (17). She uses the term “companion species” to refer not only to those animals we obviously share meals with like when we give a piece of food to our dogs, but also uses the term to refer to the microorganisms that live on and inside our bodies. Sensuality features as an aspect of companion species relating for Haraway as she writes about exchanging tongue-kisses with her dog Cayenne Pepper in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2), emphasizing that through touch and the exchange of fluids, contamination is more often the way that species relate in the world than through filial lines of reproduction.¹ Manuela Rossini notes in her essay on human-animal sexual relations: “it is tongue-kissing between a human and a canine bitch (a term of honour for Haraway) that seems to have triggered off her critical reflections and implicit recoding of ‘love’ and ‘sexuality’ beyond heterosexual and speciesist grand narratives” (244). This sensuality also figures as an important aspect of the relationships between a human and animal in Zakes Mda’s *The Whale Caller* (2005) as it portrays a sustained relationship between the protagonist and Sharisha.

The Whale Caller takes on a dual focus to address the neocolonial violence experienced by humans and animals, perhaps in spite of *The Whale Caller* as, in his devotion to whales, he remains somewhat ignorant of the problems his fellow human inhabitants face. *The Whale Caller*’s disregard for human politics seems to be a flaw;

thus, in addition to the novel's critique of anthropocentrism, it criticizes those isolated environmentalisms that fail to acknowledge their transversal connections to the human world. While the Whale Caller may be ignorant of the problems of the human world, Mda makes clear in this novel that humans and animals alike are disenfranchised by the current economic system in Hermanus. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin explain, postcolonial ecocritical writers like Mda are "against the kind of developmentalism that panders to global-corporate interests," yet "the battle is not so much against development itself as an intrinsically harmful activity or process as against the flagrant social and environmental abuses that continue to be perpetrated in its name" (20). In *The Whale Caller*, the tourist industry, fisheries, and other commercial developments visit this violence on the environment as capitalists and consumers break laws developed to protect animals and their habitats, threatening the sustainability of the community and these economies. This kind of development also fails to result in any positive change in conditions for the poor residents of Hermanus and the adjacent township, as they often find themselves outside looking in on the restaurants and other industries that service the tourists, and they don't see the profits either:

While the town of Hermanus is raking in fortunes from tourism, the mothers and fathers of Zwelihle are unemployed. It is a world where people have lost all faith in politicians. Once, they had dreams, but they have seen politicians and trade union leaders become overnight millionaires instead. Only tiny crumbs trickle down. (Mda 86)

For one example of this disenfranchisement, it is illegal for local abalone fishermen to harvest the sea and they are called "poachers" while the government grants quotas to big companies (Mda 191). Also, "[t]here are established racial hierarchies in the illegal abalone trade" (192) which render their labor cheap while securing large profits for white

men and Chinese traders. This refusal to grant quotas recalls the colonial past of the rush for diamonds, which I mentioned in the last chapter, laws were passed to prevent black South Africans from owning them (McClintock 275). The government in the novel continues this colonial legacy through serving the interests of multinational corporations instead of “what used to be called ‘the masses’ in the heyday of the revolution” (Mda 86). Mda challenges the violence of capitalism in *The Whale Caller* by identifying these colonialist practices; he critiques these neo-colonial relationships to people, animals, and environments that derive from capitalism’s instant gratification, and its emphasis on the self and the accumulation of wealth and pleasure. It is this instant gratification that so often elides what Rob Nixon calls the “slow violence” of environmental degradation that can devastate the futures of communities.

The community-based fishing co-operative and plan for natural tourism run by the community in Mda’s earlier novel *The Heart of Redness* (2000), which I discuss in Chapter 4, work on a decidedly more sustainable business model and confirms that Mda is not against all kinds of development, only those Westernized developments that ravage environments and communities. Because of these alternative developments, Enajite Ojaruega argues that Mda is one writer who has “given African environmental activists one way toward promoting development in the midst of sustaining a healthy environment” (45). In the town of Hermanus in *The Whale Caller*, the Western-style development of the village leaves little possibility for sustainability. Most characters in the novel relate to animals and others only through seeking profit from them or consuming them: “Boerewors-roll chomping tourists, mustard and ketchup dripping from their fingers and chins, train their binoculars in the direction of a group of southern

rights” (19). In contrast to the tourists who gorge themselves on and ogle animals, Mda positions the protagonist and Sharisha’s zoosexuality as a desire that presents opportunities for thinking about animals differently, outside of capitalism’s definition of desire as lack which Deleuze and Guattari critique in *Anti-Oedipus*.

Anti-Oedipal Assemblages

Early on in *The Whale Caller*, the narrator describes a conflict in the town of Hermanus over the performance of two plays featuring non-dominant sexualities. Local pastors protest the plays, attempting to police these non-familial, anti-oedipal desires that Deleuze and Guattari argue are produced by a nonhuman “desiring machine” (*Anti-Oedipus* 294). By trying to block desire and art featuring such desires, this censorship also tries to limit the revolutionary and, as I argue below, the postcolonial potential of desire. These fictional plays in *The Whale Caller* possess this potential, but so too do Mda’s plays and other fiction—these other assemblages. In his play *The Mother of All Eating* (2001), which I discuss further in Chapter 3, for example, the Messenger, a man of the people, refuses to be bought off by the corrupt government official named The Man who “eats” the community. Instead, The Messenger beats him to the point of death, demanding the community’s money back as he desires to protect them from this neocolonial governmentality. The Messenger beats the Man demonstrating the revolutionary potential of desire as opposed to Oedipus’ fruitless attempts to resist the power of the gods where his beating of a man, later revealed to be his father, only confirms their absolute power. In these fictional plays in *The Whale Caller* and in his own oeuvre, Mda creates art where desire flows positively in contrast to the negative desire of *Oedipus Rex* and its anti-revolutionary lesson that all attempts to resist power

and fate are futile. In contrast to this predetermined world of *Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming" (*A Thousand Plateaus*), which Mda engages, offers an open-ended future that celebrates the revolutionary and transformative possibilities of the world. Power is never total, as Foucault's analysis well shows, and the future is not determined in advance but humans and animals' anti-oedipal desires can revolt against and resist regimes of power, transforming the current state of affairs towards different futures.

The Whale Caller portrays auditory exchanges between the protagonist and Sharisha where they call and respond to one another with the aid of the protagonist's kelp horn. In these interactions, they at times enact a sexual release through their working up intensities in each other. Their calling might be compared to phone sex, although, importantly, they sing to each other at first without the goal of climax traditional to this human behavior. The novel offers their sexual relationship as positive (Huggan and Tiffin 200) in contrast to the negative view of such sexualities in the Bible. The protagonist's whale-centered lifestyle and relationship with Sharisha are contrasted with the Whale Crier, who rather than direct his attentions towards the whales, sings to let tourists know when they are able to be viewed. Sharisha and the protagonist's relationship offers a more creative way for approaching animals than as mere tourist attractions, which seek only to capitalize on the animals. Philip Armstrong also points to the colonial legacy of this tourism as in "the repackaging of the wild for eco-tourists" in global capitalism, "whaling becomes whale-watching" (416), a point *The Whale Caller* also observes. Where the Crier sings for profit from the wealthy international human tourists, the Whale Caller sings to the whales, communicating with them not for profit but to bring them joy and to engage in serious, sustained relationships.

In addition to the Whale Crier and the tourists, Saluni also views animals and humans as mere things to exploit or consume. While Saluni and the Whale Caller are both quite poor, she alone desires all of the commodities that wealthy tourists possess and consume as she watches tourists dine through restaurant windows, visually eating the expensive food. The Whale Caller's mode of living with and loving whales in his late years in Hermanus is quite different from Saluni's idea of "civilized" existence. As part of her attempts to control his desires and make the Whale Caller desire her instead, Saluni begins more rituals in the attempts to civilize him: "They go to the biggest supermarket in town to 'window shop,' as they call it, for food. This began as Saluni's project; her attempt to initiate him into what she refers to as civilised living" (70). Looking at various pre-packaged dishes in the supermarket, Saluni imagines what they taste like and consumes them visually encouraging the Whale Caller to do so as well. They, in a sense, create their own advertisements for the expensive foods which they cannot afford and thus foster a view of desire as lack that most advertisements deploy. She also attempts to force the Whale Caller to do this, but his desire eventually resists these civilized rituals: his "whole body rebels" (70) against them. Saluni also dreams of becoming a wealthy international recording artist in Hollywood with her own airplane, suggesting her acceptance of a Western, capitalist definition of desire and her view that collecting commodities brings happiness. As a result of her capitalist views, Saluni consumes others including the Whale Caller, the Bored Twins, and the marine animals of Hermanus in the attempts of securing her personal wealth, sexual pleasure, and dietary satisfaction. Mda offers the Whale Caller and Sharisha's relationship as an alternative mode where desire

does not involve the accumulation of profit and pleasure for the self, but sincere care and concern for others.²

Mda alludes to *Oedipus* at various points in *The Whale Caller*, modifying the famous drama to emphasize his novel's difference from it and its manifestations in psychoanalysis. For example, rather than the male blinding himself, Saluni blinds herself by looking at the sun during an eclipse and not because of any taboo about incest, but as another strategy to divert *The Whale Caller's* desire from the whale towards herself: "I will enslave him with my blindness" (186). Wendy Woodward also notes the novel's emphasis on blindness, citing the way the Bored Twins "blind frogs" so that the frogs "won't have to run away from danger, because they won't see it. They will therefore be safe since danger catches only those who run away from it" (133) (159). The girls' description of their reasons for blinding the frogs describes closely a version of the tragedy of *Oedipus* and emphasizes the violence that results—and here it is animals who are the victims of this violence, demonstrating the novel's ecocritical concerns—when people believe the *Oedipus* myth as a reality.

Saluni's smell reminding the Whale Caller of his mother marks her as an oedipal character and she encourages him to adopt *Oedipus's* definition of desire as lack, trying to reterritorialize his desire into the capitalist machine; however, Mda's novel is anti-oedipal in light of the aberrant human-animal relationship and sexuality it portrays which Saluni triangulates in oedipal fashion as "man, woman and whale" (Mda 81). Although at times the Whale Caller briefly thinks oedipally about his relation to Sharisha when he "feels like a father already"(48) after she gives birth, he mostly relates to her outside of oedipal modes. Mda's allusions to *Oedipus* and his transformations of this myth resonates with

Deleuze and Guattari's project in *Anti-Oedipus*, where they attempt to correct psychoanalysis' definition of desire and critique the dominant class' use of Oedipus to oppress others.

Postcolonial Desire

Robert Young argues for the importance of *Anti-Oedipus* for postcolonial studies and in his chapter "Colonialism and the Desiring Machine," he describes how *Anti-Oedipus*

redirects our attention towards two obvious but important points that tend to get lost in today's emphasis on discursive constructions [in postcolonial theory]—the role of capitalism as the determining motor of colonialism, and the material violence involved in the process of colonization. (167)

The collusion between colonialism and capitalism that Young describes makes evident the need to examine current capitalist operations for their potential neo-coloniality.

Young also elaborates on the relationship between psychoanalysis and capitalism, highlighting how psychoanalysis works to patrol non-capitalist desires: "Psychoanalysis as a therapeutic institution therefore operates, in this account, as a policing agent for capitalism" (168). Young's summary of this point emphasizes the revolutionary threat posed by desires that exceed policing as they can resist capitalist reterritorialization and organize communities differently, preventing their transformation into colonies for the capitalist machine.

In their critique of Freud's "Oedipus Complex," and its deployment in capitalism's commodity fetishism, Deleuze and Guattari reveal the repressive nature of psychoanalysis' attempts to represent the unconscious and define desire. Coming before thought, the unconscious and desire are closer to *zoe* or the nondiscursive, as Rosi

Braidotti explains throughout *Nomadic Subjects*, and by explaining it away with a universal theory, Freud attempted to fix and represent in language something that is much more fluid. In other words, the Oedipus Complex takes on an imperial thrust—“the Imperialism of Oedipus” (Deleuze and Guattari 51)—to explain everyone’s unconscious based on the same tragedy, thereby making everyone’s desires knowable³ and manageable in an economy of lack. Deleuze and Guattari write:

The great discovery of psychoanalysis was that of the production of desire, of the productions of the unconscious. But once Oedipus entered the picture, this discovery was soon buried beneath a new brand of idealism: a classical theater was substituted for the unconscious as a factory; representation was substituted for the units of production of the unconscious; and an unconscious that was capable of nothing but expressing itself—in myth, tragedy, dreams—was substituted for the productive unconscious. (24)

Thus, Freud defines desire in a way that limits its processual, productive, and potentially revolutionary nature. The unconscious as the unknown part of the subject is rendered much more familiar and knowable with a sense of mastery in Freud’s theory.

Throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain that capitalism works at first towards deterritorializing subjects and creating flows of all kinds. The problem, however, is that it then reterritorializes them to turn them into capital (303). Hence Braidotti’s principle of “the non-profit” as an ethical move away from this reterritorialization: “the principle of *non-profit* means a stand against individualism and exploitation, in favour of self-expression and communally held property right over both biological and cultural artefacts” (110). She also explains that this principle “rejects the psychoanalytic scheme of the subject, which inscribes the political economy of capitalism at the heart of subjectivity in terms of losses, savings, discounts, long-term investments, interest rates, and the surplus value of *jouissance*” (271). Both Mda’s *The Heart of*

Redness and *The Whale Caller* enact a similar ethics of non-profit in their emphasis on community and sustainability and their critiques of selfish desire and the extraction of surplus value from communities and environments. Deleuze and Guattari also describe the class implications of thinking desire as lack:

Lack (*manque*) is created, planned, and organized in and through social production... The deliberate creation of lack as a function of market economy is the art of a dominant class. This involves deliberately organizing wants and needs (*manque*) amid an abundance of production; making all of desire teeter and fall victim to the great fear of not having one's needs satisfied. (*Anti-Oedipus* 28)

In contrast, they posit desire as productive, enabling connections and assemblages, positive transformations instead of the lack of the oedipal subject. Where the dominant classes seek to manage others by planning this lack, Deleuze and Guattari suggest an alternative view of desire that can provide opportunities for revolution and lines of flight away from this control, mastery, and colonial state of affairs.

Like English colonial officials' interest in giving colonized people English subjectivities to make them more transparent to English knowledge and more easily mastered Bhabha (124)⁴, Oedipus attempts to create controllable subjects. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari describe Oedipus as colonizing the unconscious: "Oedipus is always colonization pursued by other means, it is the interior colony, and we shall see that even here at home, where we Europeans are concerned, it is our intimate colonial education" (170). In the globalized present, Oedipus continues in a colonial legacy by representing desire with the goal of turning subjects into masterable and profitable entities. Frida Beckman explains how oedipal desire creates "[m]anageable subjects... [that] feed the flows of the capitalist machine" (*Between Desire* 147). It is by managing these subjects that capitalism exerts its violence by eating communities and turning them

into colonies where the dominant classes extract their wealth and further disenfranchise the poor.

By resisting the reterritorialization of his desires, the Whale Caller's postcolonial desire that arises out of his assemblage with Sharisha refuses these models of desire and resists capitalist management; instead, he adopts a sustainable mode of relating to other people, animals, and the environment. Colonized by Oedipus, Saluni by contrast attempts to turn all her experiences and relationships into capital. For example, she attempts to record a song with the Bored Twins, young girls with angelic voices, using them to advance her singing career in the same way she persuades the Whale Caller to catch fish for her "rent-a-fish business" (170). Astrid Feldbrügge argues that Saluni is "only interested in the money...and does not reflect on the methods used and the effects of such intrusion in the natural world" (164). The Whale Caller and the girls resist this capitalization, however, as he soon refuses to fish, and the girls voices escape the apparatus of capture of the recording machine. Michelé Pickover's analysis of the colonial history of trophy hunting, a tradition which Saluni encourages the Whale Caller to participate in, points to the way it disenfranchises subsistence hunters, like local abalone harvesters and the Whale Caller, in his former fishing practices while away from Hermanus. Pickover remarks that "[s]ubsistence hunting was regarded as uncivilised and bad, while sport hunting was civilised and good. The same stereotypes—poaching versus trophy hunting—persist today" (20). Saluni's persuasion of the protagonist to participate in trophy hunting culture then seeks to capitalize on the fish's deaths and to civilize the protagonist. While he caught fish for food in his years of following whales, trophy hunting causes him discomfort as it implicates him in a colonial culture that desires

mastery over animals and he therefore quickly abandons any fishing ambitions.

Policing Sexual Desire: the Bible and Oedipus

As I've been discussing, the Whale Caller and Sharisha's desire for one another challenges the norms of dominant culture. In J.M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* (1999), the university president's wife, Olivia Garrad, seeks to maintain these norms when she describes a negative response to the idea of sex with animals:

Animals are creatures we don't have sex with—that's how we distinguish them from ourselves. The very thought of sex with them makes us shudder. That is the level at which they are unclean—all of them. We don't mix with them. We keep the clean apart from the unclean. (40)

Garrad's opinions, while representative of dominant culture and likely informed by religious notions of cleanliness and purity, could not be more wrong it seems given Monica Bakke's discussion of zoophilia studies, bestiality cases from history, and the observation that it is "an offence which, if not widespread, is much more common than reported" (Huggan and Tiffin 195). Garrad identifies "unclean" sex as maintaining a hierarchical boundary between humans and other species; she therefore attempts to stop the threat that zoosexuality poses to dominant culture through the possibilities it offers to transform relations with animals.

In addition to capitalism's reterritorializations, *The Whale Caller* portrays religion as another policing agent of non-oedipal desires and sexualities. As described before, early in the novel pastors protest two plays: one featuring "full frontal nudity and explicit gay sex scenes" (Mda 21) and another sex between people of differing ages. The pastors and protestors consider homosexuality to be dirty as they carry placards that read "Clean Out the Filth from Our Town, Hermanus is not Sodom and Gomorrah" and a

townsperson queries, “what is the dirty play about?” (21) in language similar to Garrad’s characterization of human-animal sex in *The Lives of Animals*. The pastors challenge the Whale Caller, who used to belong to the church, to protest with them. His history with the church is relevant here: in his twenties, he left the pastor’s church when the congregation was divided over the question of which instruments to use during worship. Joining the new sect, The Church of the Sacred Kelp Horn, as the “Chief Horn Player” the Whale Caller “felt that the new church brought the worshippers closer to nature, and in greater communion with the spirits of the forebears [the Khoikhoi and San people] that were hovering above the tall cliffs and in the cave” (9). Preferring to be closer to nature and the ancestors, the Whale Caller chose the church of the kelp horn over the other church which preferred the harp because they wanted to be closer to angels and therefore purity. Later, he did away with churches altogether when he left the town to follow and converse with whales for thirty five years after one day a whale unexpectedly responded to his kelp horn.

Uninterested, the Whale Caller replies that “the play has nothing to do with me” (21) which leads the pastor to critique his “godless whale-hugging existence” (22). In light of the Whale Caller’s later participation in sexual exchange with the whale Sharisha, which the pastor is unaware of and which he would likely view as an even dirtier act than homosexuality, the Whale Caller’s lack of interest in human politics and failure to see its relation to his own life seems to be a flaw of his character, and therefore suggests Mda’s critique of not only anthropocentrism, but also those who are too animal-centric: his criticism of isolated ecocriticisms which fail to acknowledge their history and transversal connections to the political issues of the human world. The town drunk Saluni, more

versed in human politics than the Whale Caller, comes to his aid as she critiques the pastor's censorship, revealing that the pastor hasn't even seen the play and reminding the crowd that "the constitution of the new South Africa protects gays. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone just because they are fuckin' moffies" (23). Mda celebrates South Africa's laws against the discrimination of homosexuals that Saluni explains and, as the scene is concerned with censorship, it offers a metacommentary on the politics of repressing art that deals with taboo subjects, as *The Whale Caller* itself portrays scenes of human-animal sex.

For a historical and religious perspective on human-animal sex in South Africa, I turn to Susie Newton-King's "A Short Paper about a Dog," which provides a discussion of two instances of human-animal sex that occurred in South Africa in the 1700s: one with a man and a dog and one with a man and a foal. Throughout the essay, Newton-King ponders the influences on the perceptions of human-animal sex for the people involved and the courts that ruled on these cases. While the cases themselves aren't as important here as the reactions, it seems that the cases Newton-King discusses are more likely bestiality than zoosexuality as there seems to be an element of mastery in both, although the details of the cases are not clear. Focusing particularly on Claas Holder, a man accused of having sex with Jacobus Mostert's dog while working on his farm in the Witsenberg mountains, Newton-King theorizes that these peoples' views are influenced by biblical and Christian views on bestiality. She quotes passages from Leviticus that suggest that such a sexual act would make one "unclean" (54). She also mentions the way in which homosexuality and bestiality are prohibited in the same spirit for Jewish moralists: "sexual relations 'not conducive to procreation', especially prostitution,

homosexuality and bestiality, were abhorrent” (60). Paraphrasing passages from Genesis, Newton-King remarks “Man alone was made in God’s own image, separate and dominant over all other living creatures” (58). Making a strong case for the influence of the Bible in the responses of the South Africans involved in the cases, she concludes that there is a connection from Hebrew thought on morality and law “to the colonies established by the Dutch East India Company” (67).

Newton-King also discusses the fears of the weakness of the flesh, as a source from which desire springs, as distinct from the spirit in Paul’s writings. She summarizes his position: “The flesh can however be redeemed and made new by the gift of grace. When this happens (according to Paul) human beings achieve mastery over the flesh” (71). She also finds evidence from writings at the time of a popular fear that since some people in the South African colony were far from Christian influence and living so closely with nature, they might fall back into a savage state (72). As described by Newton-King, these biblical positions on bestiality encourage the mastery of flesh and attempt to maintain clear categories of nature/culture, human-animal, along with their attendant hierarchies. The Bible passages Newton-King discusses prohibit bestiality not because of concern for the animal’s life or well-being, but to preserve a definition and hierarchy of the human. Bestiality in the way Bakke defines it doesn’t work towards challenging this hierarchy or notions of human mastery over nature, but in fact supports such views of the animal as disposable for human use or consumption. In contrast, zoosexuality and representations of it in fiction, as an expression of mutual desire that exceeds the rules of dominant culture, therefore has the potential to question these divides

and level these hierarchies through positioning humans and animals on equal footing in vulnerable relations.

The Whale Caller takes up the theme of religious prohibitions against sexuality across categories in another instance when an evangelist from America preaches “against the sins of the flesh: fornication, incest, sodomy, and the like” telling the story from Genesis where an Egyptian slave has sex with her master (124). Saluni, who protested the anti-gay protests of the pastors earlier, also finds fault with this evangelist’s sermon, especially seeing as she is a “lovechild, conceived on a windy day by a beautiful young woman who was involved in an illicit affair with an older married man” (35). In contrast to the evangelist’s negative view of sexuality, Deleuze and Guattari find sexuality liberating: “Sexuality is the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings” (278). Beckman’s point that in Deleuze’s thought both non-human sexuality and homosexuality have the potential to challenge dominant definitions of desire and sexuality (“What is Sex?” 16), explains their relation in Mda’s novel. Her account of sexual repression also accurately describes the policing that occurs in these religious scenes: “On the one hand, sexuality tends to be restricted, blocked and reduced, in order to repress and contain its flows; on the other hand, the sexual body is seen as retaining a revolutionary potential” (19). Further, Guattari specifically identifies homosexuality as having this potential: “[h]omosexuality...is a site of potential ‘important libidinal disruptions in society—a point...of emergence for revolutionary, desiring-energy...’ (Guattari 1996a:186)” (Beckman “What is Sex?” 7). The proscriptions of these plays and sexualities seek to block this desiring-energy,

maintaining the status quo while also foreshadowing the stunting of the Whale Caller and Sharisha's zoosexuality, which ultimately ends in Sharisha's demise.

The narrator also relates how the preacher quotes a passage from Genesis which correlates with Newton-King's discussion of the flesh as weak: "You shall desire your husband and he will rule over you..." (125). The phrase from the Bible posits desire as a thing that can be controlled and mastered, as something that can and should follow a command from God or the Bible. Essentially, the passage attempts to reterritorialize aberrant or anomalous desires to the family structure—a structure which Deleuze and Guattari find oppressive in psychoanalysis and dominant culture (*Anti-Oedipus* 28). In addition, the passage attempts to maintain a hierarchy of man over woman, much like the hierarchy and domination of animals that Newton-King described in the prohibitions against sex with animals. Desire, however, coming before thought and being closer to *zoe* than *bios* or discursive life, as philosopher Rosi Braidotti explains, cannot always be controlled and made to submit to control. The imperative "You shall desire" therefore is an attempt to control the ungovernability of the flesh and desire as it comes forth from the immanence of the body. Enabling desires to flow and refusing to submit to cultures' attempts to limit and control them then becomes a political act that has the potential to undermine culture's definitions and orderings of society. In light of the underpinnings of religious prohibitions against sex with animals, zoosexuality undermines culture's project of mastering our animality and installing hierarchies between animals and man. Zoosexuality therefore offers a line-of-flight out of the tightly patrolled and maintained categories of human and animal, away from hierarchy and mastery to put humans and

animals on the same plane in a way that demands more vigorous ethical consideration of animals.

Like religion's attempts to master desire and confine it to the family, Saluni attempts to reterritorialize The Whale Caller's desire. Dissatisfied that she has not yet had sex with the Whale Caller and while "her thoughts are on this *lack* of consummation" (92, emphasis added), Saluni strives to block his desire for Sharisha, directing it towards herself by creating a miniature of the Whale Caller out of sand, poking it with matchsticks in a voodoo ritual. She somewhat successfully reterritorializes his desire by "chanting the binding hymn that the beloved will come to her running, burning with desire" (92). The narrator describes her manipulations of the sand doll as having a bodily effect on the Whale Caller:

Although the fever has caused him great discomfort in the general area of his groin, he would like to believe that it has nothing to do with carnal desires. His position since his return from his wanderings and the discovery of the pleasures that can be derived from whales is that there are things that are more beautiful and less messy than copulation. The most important is just being at the same place at the same time with the object of your affections, breathing the same air and smelling the same smells. Doing little things for each other rather than to each other. (92)

The description of his aroused groin confirms that Saluni's attempt to colonize his desire is working as only his sexual organ is aroused, instead of the deterritorialized "body without organs" (*Anti-Oedipus* 9). Saluni's voodoo mastery of his desire, while seeking to fulfill her capitalist feelings of lack, limits the revolutionary potential of desire in the same way as religious proscriptions. The Whale Caller's desire for relationships that are not focused on copulation demonstrates his rather ascetic lifestyle as he is more interested in pleasure that occurs in simply keeping company with others. While Huggan and Tiffin

rightly point to the way the “Whale Caller is not a servant of the commercial tourist industry,” as the Whale Crier is, their claim that “his luring is of a different, unequivocally sexual kind” (198-199) seems overstated seeing that he has no thoughts of sex with whales at the outset of he and Sharisha’s relationship; sex is only an extension of their relationship, only one of the many pleasures they share.

Postanthropomorphic Sexuality

Later, when the protagonist dresses in a tuxedo, singing and dancing with Sharisha, the narrator describes The Whale Caller after an unexpected orgasm: “He was drenched in sweat and other secretions of the body. The front and the seat of his tuxedo pants were wet and sticky from the seed of life” (66). Here, the Whale Caller achieves orgasm incidentally rather than as a goal; his sensuality echoes Alphonso Lingis’ nonhuman, anti-capitalist sex:

Far from the human libido naturally destining us to a member of our species and of the opposite sex, when anyone who has not had intercourse with the other animals, has not felt the contented cluckings of a hen stroked on the neck and under the wings rumbling through his or her own flesh, has not kissed a calf’s mouth raised to his or her own, has not mounted the smooth warm flanks of a horse, has not been aroused by the powdery feathers of cockatoos and the ardent chants of insects in the summer night, gets in the sack with a member of his or her own species, they are only consummating tension release, getting their rocks off. (45-46)

The Whale Caller and Sharisha interact without a focus on “getting their rocks off,” which capitalism sets as the goal of sex. Instead, they respond to each other’s bodies and create pleasure for one another through their auditory and physical performances without selfish intentions. His sensuous interactions with Sharisha also inform his later sexual experiences with Saluni as she becomes a “body without organs”: “As he fumbles around he discovers that every square inch of her body is an erogenous zone. Even the split ends

of her hair ignite with his touch” (97). In this sense, and following exactly Lingis’ description of non-capitalist sexual experience, he has learned from his relating with whales how to respond to the body of his human lover.

The narrator describes the Whale Caller’s sexual interactions with Sharisha as a mutual sharing of pleasure that is not domination, against Carol J. Adams’ view that all acts of human-animal sex are abuse because of the problem of consent (qtd. in Steeves 152-153). Sharisha’s performance of a mating dance—“Sharisha responded with her own love calls. She rocked in the water in a mating dance” (64)—suggests her consent to the encounter with the protagonist. Mda also portrays Sharisha as significantly agentic, as it seems she could “sail” away at any time she wishes, further refuting the charge of abuse or domination. Towards the novel’s end, the narrator describes Sharisha’s sexual desire for the Whale Caller:

As he blows the horn furiously and uncontrollably she comes swimming just as furiously. She has been longing for the horn. She has not heard it for a long time. All she wants is to bathe herself in its sounds. To let the horn penetrate every aperture of her body until she climaxes. To lose herself in the dances of the past. (216)

Her desiring stimulation all over her body describes again a “body without organs” and her willing participation as a desiring animal.⁵ The Whale Caller’s deep knowledge of whale culture—their songs and body language—suggests an ability to communicate and the possibility of consent. His ability to communicate with Sharisha is of a much higher order than the tourists who come to take pictures of whales for a day or so as part of their vacation. For them, the whales feature as a brief photograph opportunity whereas the Whale Caller’s life has been spent communicating with whales. As Donna Haraway writes: “To claim not to be able to communicate with and to know one another and other

critters, however imperfectly, is a denial of mortal entanglements (the open) for which we are responsible” (227). The protagonist’s education in the songs of the whales offers the possibility for real communication with Sharisha; there is also an element of magical realism to their communication, occurring whenever Sharisha is ready to leave Hermanus: “Nightmares were her way of communicating that to him” (63). This communication between species suggests the potential for consent in human-animal sex acts, especially through portrayals in fiction. Wendy Woodward also views their shared songs as a becoming-animal: “Music as an ‘in-between’ performance itself goes beyond the verbal in its facilitation of becoming-animal; the music and songs of Sharisha and the Whale Caller promote a shared discourse in their alliance which ‘deterritorialises’ their identities” (156). Jonathan Steinwand also argues that singing back and forth between humans and whales is a kind of communication: “the cetacean encounter calls attention to the liminal positions of both cetaceans and humans. And where the encounter attends to songs, chatter, and play, the limits of interspecies communication are approached” (182).

Saluni’s voyeurism of animals having sex, by contrast, approaches the domination of pornography as she watches them solely for her own pleasure. The Whale Caller hasn’t yet accepted Saluni’s sexual advances and Saluni tries to fill this lack with a substitute by visually consuming animals: “in the mornings following the nights her body has been raging, she hunts for mating seals on the rocks and sand hills for her *own gratification*. She sits on a rock and watches them. She finds it titillating” (76, emphasis added). Her seeking out the seals is described as a “hunt” putting her in a position of mastery and domination; her seated position as anonymous voyeur also differs dramatically from the Whale Caller’s dancing with Sharisha, whom he knows him

intimately. When it does not take on a capitalist or pornographic relation, Frida Beckman argues “that sexual pleasure, like desire, also has a wide expanse that we can traverse, and that doing this creates schizzo-flows that unsettle the economic and visual deployment of sexuality in contemporary capitalism” (*Between Desire* 150-151). While sexual pleasure is predominantly reterritorialized, the Whale Caller’s non-capitalist sexual pleasure with Sharisha unsettles and challenges this predominant definition of sexuality as the pornographic accumulation of pleasure.

The narrator describes Saluni and the Whale Caller’s contrasting views on pleasure in a way that expresses the capitalist, dominant underpinnings of her approach to potential significant others: “Whereas she always demands instant gratification of life, he would rather have delayed pleasure, for it carries in it something more solid. Momentary pleasure is flimsy and is for the light-headed ones such as Saluni. True pleasure must be restrained” (77). Saluni’s view is therefore more in line with a capitalist view, its instant gratification, its mode of relation as consumption and logic of desire as lack, causing her to approach people and things she experiences in life as objects to be consumed. Frida Beckman explains this problem of pleasure in her introduction to *Deleuze and Sexuality*, where she discusses the “Body Without Organs” from *A Thousand Plateaus*:

Deleuze and Guattari write about pleasure as being an affection of a subject and therefore a way for persons to “‘find themselves’ in the process of desire that exceeds them’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 173). This means that pleasure is a mode of reterritorialisation that Deleuze and Guattari strive to circumvent. As long as the pursuit of pleasure is related to the ‘deplorable’ fact of orgasm, and pleasure is thus a norm, desire remains in a relation with lack. Pleasure thus has an intimate connection with lack and subjectification. (“What is Sex?” 12)

With his preference for delayed pleasure, the Whale Caller is closer to the masochist that Deleuze and Guattari prefer (Beckman 12) and therefore he too remains in the realm of

desire. Saluni's pleasure-seeking use of others by contrast maintains a dominant subjectivity, a lacking one at that, and a mastery over others and the world.

The Whale Caller does not deny himself pleasure, however, as he experiences different pleasures with whales and orgasms with Sharisha. Mda's portrayal of pleasure and the orgasm therefore coincides with Beckman's positive estimation of their potential, which Deleuze neglects: "by lingering with this paranoiac movement of capture, Deleuze remains blind to the revolutionary potential of sexual pleasure" (*Between Desire* 14). In her reading of these philosophers against themselves, she argues that "[i]f we follow through with Deleuze and Guattari's own argument, a nonhuman sexuality should be free, not only from the subject but also from the lack which inflects its pleasures as part of psychoanalytic economy" (*Between Desire* 143). The Whale Caller and Sharisha embrace this postanthropomorphic sexuality that exceeds oedipalization, challenging capitalism's commodification of sexual pleasure. While Saluni might adopt what Braidotti terms the mantra of "'I shop therefore I am' ... [the] leading refrain of our times" (3) in viewing others as objects to be consumed for pleasure or turned into a profit, the Whale Caller desires significant and sustainable relationships, what Haraway calls "significant otherness" (*When Species Meet* 97). It is a significant otherness that results from a relationship where the other's life and the other's experiences of pleasure and pain come to matter for someone in an intimate way: where one's sense of self is heavily influenced and in part determined by another.

Like their views on pleasure, Deleuze and Guattari also largely dismiss animal sexuality and human-animal libidinal desires as potentially positive. In a discussion of gender where they cite a passage from Marx's *Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right"*,

they focus on his term “nonhuman gender,” reading it as evidence of their nonhuman desiring machines:

Marx says something even more mysterious: that the true difference is not the difference between the two sexes, but the difference between the human sex and the ‘nonhuman’ sex. It is clearly not a question of animals, nor of animal sexuality. Something quite different is involved. If sexuality is the unconscious investment of the large molar aggregates, it is because on its other side sexuality is identical with the interplay of the molecular elements that constitute these aggregates under determinate conditions...Desiring-machines are the nonhuman sex...In a few sentences Marx, who is nonetheless so miserly and reticent where sexuality is concerned, exploded something that will hold Freud and all of psychoanalysis forever captive: *the anthropomorphic representation of sex!* (294)

The passage nicely emphasizes the nonhuman aspect of sexuality that is unconscious desire; yet, they neglect this opportunity for thinking about animal sexuality. It does not seem clear that Marx is not referring to animal sex or animal gender with “non-human sex.” Manuela Rossini’s explanation of their becoming animal clarifies that they disregard the potential of human-animal sexuality:

Deleuze and Guattari do not mean that human beings should really turn into animals or engage in sex with, say, a dog. The idea is, rather, that while having sex our organs *function* like those of animals and, for the duration, manage to escape the organisational and stratificatory power of societal norms. (252).

To be sure, Rossini is right that they do not intend that their becoming animal and the becoming animal of sex be taken literally, and yet for Mda portraying animals’ desires and the desire for animals sexually has important political potential.

Deleuze and Guattari also discuss human-animal sexual encounters briefly in *A Thousand Plateaus* only to largely dismiss them. They use “bestialism” to describe all such encounters:

Sexuality proceeds by way of the becoming-woman of the man and the becoming-animal of the human: an emission of particles. There is no need for

bestialism in this, although it may arise, and many psychiatric anecdotes document it in ways that are interesting, if oversimplified and consequently off the track, too beastly. (278-279)

So they do not deny that “bestialism” may be a part of becoming animal but argue, and no doubt because of the predominant position of mastery of the human in these encounters and the prevalence of overdetermined psychoanalytic readings of them, that this is not really the point: “it is not so much a question of making love with animals” (279). The positive portrayals of animal sexuality and zoosexuality in *The Whale Caller* suggest that both have significant revolutionary potential because they too can challenge Oedipus and capitalist logic.

If desire “is indeed what undermines capitalism” and desire’s “deterritorialized flow” is “where...the revolution [will] come from” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 378), then zoosexual desires and animal desires themselves are also potential sources of revolution. While Deleuze and Guattari are hesitant to consider zoosexuality as positive, Beckman argues (“What is Sex? 14) that they approach non-human sexuality and its relation to animals a bit more directly in *Kafka* (1986). Aside from these brief instances, they offer a more sustained disregard of animal sexuality and repudiation of human-animal sexuality. *The Whale Caller* makes a more overt and consistent case for the potential of postanthropomorphic sexualities—zoosexualities and animal sexualities—to perform postcolonial resistance and work towards the kinds of positive relations that challenge the capitalist organization of communities. Despite this great potential, the zoosexual desire of *The Whale Caller* is blocked up by the dominant oedipal culture of Hermanus, falling short of inciting a revolution.

In the novel’s end, Saluni’s manipulations and the oedipal culture pervading

Hermanus take their toll on the Whale Caller and Sharisha's relationship as Saluni's "remorse" (224) at Sharisha's death shows. The implosion of the stranded whale⁶ marks the end of the zoosexual relationship, demonstrating the violence of oedipal reterritorializations. As Sharisha is dying, the Whale Caller is removed from his position of comforting and mourning her under threat of arrest—a separation that evokes the situation for homosexual partners barred from the hospital rooms of their ill partners in the U.S: "He reluctantly moves away, silently lamenting the fact that people who know nothing about Sharisha have taken over and her life is in their hands" (217). As she dies, government officials' concerns are purely economical: "The politicians from the national legislature are more concerned about South Africa's image in the international community. 'They will accuse us of savagery and barbarism....The markets will react negatively. The rand will go down'" (223). The conclusion to this novel, like that of *Heart of Redness* adopts a pessimistic attitude about resisting neocolonialism, ending with Sharisha's death. In Mda's earlier novel, Camagu celebrates the town's successful resistance to the gambling city but, as Laura Wright observes, he anticipates its inevitable construction (251). The conclusion of *The Whale Caller* strikes a more somber note in this death of the whale and The Whale Caller's surrender of his moniker. The world Mda portrays through these texts is one where Oedipus' colonization of the unconscious, and therefore its creation of communities of manageable subjects, is *near* total, as only one or a few humans and animals desire otherwise. Yet, these desires and sexualities can resist and challenge colonization, thereby creating space to think differently about living and developing communities in sustainable ways instead of the prevailing, Western conception of development where colonized communities are "eaten" by the capitalist

machine. Mda's *The Mother of All Eating* offers a more hopeful outlook for the future as The Man acknowledges and fears this dormant revolutionary potential of the desires of the masses, a potential of desire we share with animals as *The Whale Caller* makes clear: "Okay, okay, I admit. One day the people shall rise. The people have the capacity to rise! The people are not blind! They may seem docile now, but it will take a very small thing to spark action in them" (*Mother of All Eating* 35).

Astrid Feldbrügge argues that the Whale Caller idealizes his relationship with Sharisha and their relationship is destined to be doomed because he is guilty of "ignoring the gap between man and animal" (165). While it is true that the Whale Caller lives an almost entirely animal-centric life, I see this as Mda's critique of those who fail to see the connections between their politics for animals and the similar or related issues for humans. The problem of where critics, writers, and theorists' attentions lie is especially problematic in South African criticism and literature as Byron Caminero-Santangelo writes in his essay about two of Nadine Gordimer's novels.⁷ He quotes Gordimer after mentioning the colonial history of conservation: "...in the South African context, it [concern for the environment] becomes something unpleasant and almost evil, as it did in *The Conservationist*, because there's the question of whose land?...So the concern for the birds and the beasts and the lack of concern for the human beings becomes another issue" (218). For the Whale Caller, it is striking what little knowledge he has about the lives of people in his own town and how often Saluni has to educate him, and it seems to me that Mda highlights this as a weakness of his character. To be sure, he is not a privileged white, middle-class male environmentalist or conservationist who maintains the status quo, reaping significant benefit from doing so. However, although he has adopted an anti-

Oedipal view of desire and subjectivity that undermines capitalism's lure on his own life which informs his love and care for animals of the sea and the people he encounters, he fails to respond to or even notice the conditions under which most of his fellow humans in Hermanus live. The narrator and Saluni's reporting on the various economic and political realities that the human inhabitants experience and which escape or are beyond the Whale Caller best highlights his limited worldview, but given the novel's political commentary which supplements the Whale Caller's views, this is not a limitation of Mda's novel.

Nonetheless, I don't see his relationship with Sharisha as overly-idealized with the implication that the novel is a sort of cautionary tale about those who fail to maintain a boundary between human and animal as Feldbrügge seems to suggest. In support of her claim, Feldbrügge rightly quotes a passage where the Whale Caller idealizes Sharisha: "Sharisha is projected as his perfect love, precisely because she is not human and thus cannot question or challenge him: ('Sharisha. That will be the balm that heals his heart. Sharisha never judges him. Never makes fun of his insecurities,' 50)" (162). While this may be his slipping into a bit of romanticizing of the Other, and he is not without his flaws, it seems clear from Mda's writing that Sharisha could leave at will had she found fault with the Whale Caller, just as she sails into the bay when it seems she desires contact with him. In addition, she certainly responds to him in more egalitarian ways than his human love interest: she does not instrumentalize him for her own sexual gratification to get her "rocks off," or seek to colonize him by putting him to work for her own capital gain, nor does Sharisha treat him so poorly or so "ugly" as Saluni does. Feldbrügge also neglects considering the role that Saluni had in the doomed relationship of Sharisha and

the Whale Caller as Saluni's intent all along was to separate them, attempting to divert the Whale Caller's desire to herself. Her poor treatment of the Whale Caller resulted in his depressed state which is in large part the reason he blew his horn with such abandon in the closing scene of the novel, failing to notice Sharisha appearing so near the shore. While the Whale Caller feels he is solely to blame for Sharisha's death, the novel clearly situates Saluni, a representative of culture and capitalism, as in part responsible for Sharisha's death (along with the murky waters from the storm) as she looks on the scene with feelings of guilt. The novel is not suggesting the need for better maintenance of a human/nonhuman boundary (although it does suggest a need to respect the habitats and space in which animals dwell, but this is a different issue); instead, as the novel highlights how the Whale Caller displaces the normative boundary between humans and animals, the novel demonstrates the difficulty of significantly relating with animals when culture and capital intervene to reterritorialize desire.

Notes

1. In March 2013, I asked Donna Haraway about the question of bestiality and her tongue-kisses with Cayenne, who she describes as having a "darter tongue," in relation to Carol Adams' position that all bestiality is domination. Haraway discussed her view that Adams' work is extremely important for critiquing the domination of women and animals, and for tracing the ways in which women and animals are similarly rendered disposable and viewed as available for consumption in dominant culture. After acknowledging the importance of Adams' work, Haraway offered that she doesn't like the term bestiality to describe her kisses with her dog because of its negative connotations, but prefers sensuality instead, and she thinks there is room for a sensuality between humans and animals that does not include domination of the animal by the human.
2. In her essay "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance" bell hooks considers how desire for the Other might have important political potential for changing things for those groups who find themselves outside of dominant culture. I discuss hooks' essay further in the next chapter.

3. See Foucault's chapter "Man and his Doubles" in *The Order of Things* for his commentary on man's desire to make his others (including the unconscious) the same as himself, especially the passage on "The 'Cogito' and the Unthought:" 322-328.

4. Bhabha describes how Charles Grant, chairman of the British East India Company, demonstrated "partly a belief in political reform along Christian lines and partly an awareness that the expansion of company rule in India required a system of subject formation...that would provide the colonial with 'a sense of personal identity as we know it'...Grant paradoxically implies that it is the 'partial' diffusion of Christianity, and the 'partial' influence of moral improvements which will construct a particularly appropriate form of colonial subjectivity" (124). Grant's notions of reform seek to colonize the unconscious of the colonial, making this unrepresentable and nondiscursive aspect of the human, into an immediately transparent and knowable entity in order to better control and master it.

5. In his unpublished seminar paper, "Towards a Prehistory of the Postanimal: Kant, Levinas, and the Regard of Brutes," David L. Clark lists several "faculties" which philosophers have conditionally granted to animals, among them desire. He lists a number of moments where Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas perform a double gesture in the way they

allow animals a kind of conditional possession of a faculty, as if to possessing it in the mode of not possessing it...[A]s Kant says in early lectures recorded by Herder, animals are desirous but incapable of *wanting* to want, of making a choice in their desires; that is the finely drawn but indelible line that marks their distinction from 'us:' 'This desire is a desire in a desire and is with humans the essence of freedom: otherwise I could not distinguish the soul from the other necessitating grounds in nature' (ctd by Naragon 8). In other words, animals desire, and act on their desire, but they do not *choose* to act on that desire, meaning that their choices are not themselves the object of a desire. They are desirous, but without the slightest inkling of being so; it is as if the animal is at odds with itself by *not* being at odds with itself. But when is desire anything other than desire *of* the other, the other's desire? (Clark 5).

In *The Whale Caller* and the other texts under consideration in this study animals are portrayed with full capacities of desire, perhaps challenging this Kantian partial disavowal of animal desire. The sign-language fluent orangutan in Zinaid Meeran's *Tanuki Ichiban* which I discuss in the next chapter seems especially able to make choices in his desires. Here I am reading animal desire as productive and as possessing a revolutionary potential, instead of as an impoverished form of "human" desire as Kant seems to have.

6. Mda may have drawn from an actual event for this as the *Mail & Guardian* reported in 2005 on the implosion of a live whale that was stuck close to shore in Cape Town (Roelf).

7. Wendy Woodward also mentions this problem in discussing South African authors'

apprehensions when it comes to writing about animals (24). Obviously, focusing solely on animals in fiction writing in South Africa is problematic, especially for white writers, as Woodward later mentions and as Gordimer's quote bears out, given the colonial history of conservation or, in other words, the history of white efforts at conservation at the expense of black South Africans.

CHAPTER 4

CONSUMING THE OTHER AND THE ETHICS OF “EATING”

While Mda's *The Whale Caller* focuses on a relationship between a man and a whale that approaches a relationship outside of capitalist notions of desire, Zinaid Meeran's highly libidinal *Tanuki Ichiban* (2012) focuses much more on portraying the hyper-commodification of others, including animals, almost delighting in detailing the extreme practices and extravagance of some of the novel's especially consumerist characters. *Tanuki Ichiban* narrates stories focused mostly on the sexual encounters experienced by two of its main characters, Geronimo Chanboon and Darius Coochoomber III, while also interrogating the role of food and diet in relation to sexual desire and sex appeal. Indeed, many of the characters adopt new trends in dieting like foraging, dumpster-diving, freeganism, veganism, raw foods diet, etc., while others who live in poverty are forced to practice some of these diets to survive; almost all characters seem concerned with how their eating habits affect their smell and body image for potential love interests. Darius, heir to the Global Flavour corporation which specializes in “nature-identical” flavouring of foods, provides an extreme example of a character who focuses on commodifying food and sex. Before accepting his heirship, Darius spends time trying to woo and court lingerie models and other “exotic” women by hosting dinner parties where he cooks exotic and endangered animals like a polar bear and a sea iguana from the Galapagos. His roommate, Geronimo Chanboon, retrieves many of the animals for Darius via his position as an employee for the ports and canals as Mud Traffic Control Officer of Cape Town. The novel also portrays the topic of human-animal sex through some of the human characters' relationships with the sign-language

fluent and circus celebrity orangutan named Lahnee O. *Tanuki Ichiban* blurs any sense of boundary between human and animal as humans and nonhuman animals at times follow similar diets, are viewed as viable sexual partners in mutual relationships, and at other times are rendered disposable when they become consumable as food or sex objects – including the eating of one human character’s spinal fluid as part of a gelato (154) and brief descriptions of cannibal practices. Human and nonhuman animals are rendered disposable in Meeran's novel in ways that highlight the shared vulnerability of bodies in late capitalism. Later in this chapter, I also return briefly to *The Whale Caller* to discuss the importance of food and eating there before exploring the ethics of eating in *Tanuki Ichiban*. Lastly, I close the chapter with a discussion of Mda’s short play *The Mother of All Eating* (2001), expanding the discussion of self-interested desire and eating beyond the realm of food and sex.

Zoosexuality and Species/Race Logic in *Tanuki Ichiban*

I’ll first discuss the topic of zoosexuality in Meeran’s novel, following up on this theme from the previous chapter’s discussion of *The Whale Caller*, before moving more into a discussion of Meeran’s critique of the consumerist relation to others and the world. After taking ill from having contracted HIV, the orangutan Lahnee O’s legal status as equal to human or not comes into question, raising all sorts of biopolitical questions about the management of his life and his rights as officials consider both euthanizing him to prevent his further suffering and the option of allowing him to continue living. Fynn, Lahnee O’s handler reveals that “...he failed to contract simian HIV...The construction workers on the corridor found Lahnee O was quite amenable to anal intercourse with them, and of course those among them who enjoyed bisexual activity did pleasure him

anally in return” (93). His contraction of aids via sex with humans therefore offers an interesting portrayal of human-animal sexuality as the ethical and political problems associated with this sexual disease, which is usually discussed only in human terms, are extended to the realm of animals. The description also reveals an instance of contamination and sexual desire that occurs across species lines. Shortly before this revelation about the source of Lahnee O’s HIV, the narrator describes the health food grocery chain owner, Minke Sable, who has offered to fund Lahnee O’s legal bills, imagining his sexual appeal. The narrator relates: “she wondered what it would be like to make out with him, to probe that maroon mouth with her own pink tongue, to allow hers to lash against the banana flavour of Lahnee O’s, his tongue so vital it was like an entire other animal involved in a symbiotic relationship with Lahnee. Minke snatched a look sideways at her colleagues. At moments like these she feared she had spoken aloud” (92). Minke’s brief interior thought describes her interest and sensual or libidinal desire for the orangutan, highlighting his diet of bananas as part of his sex appeal. In addition, her checking of this behavior to ensure that it did not escape the privacy of her thoughts results perhaps from fears about taboos associated with zoosexuality and for how culture might view her desire as crossing a limit or boundary. While she does not act on these thoughts, the scene nonetheless portrays her sexual desire for a nonhuman animal.

Corsicana, who is dubbed the “NGO-ho” and works for the group that is helping with Lahnee O’s court case, is adverse to the idea of the orangutan having sex with humans early in the novel—“Corsicana prayed that the lifestyle in question did not involve bestiality” (93). However, she later takes a sexual interest in Lahnee O, and, unlike Minke, does not refrain from acting on her desire for him. The narrator explains

“But what really gave her a kick was the growing love she felt for the consumptive plaintiff himself, Lahnee O. Corsicana had never considered dating outside of her species but here at last was a felluh with that soulful mischief she had searched for in man after man” (278). The interest is determined to be mutual as indicated by the pheromones that Corsicana notices emanating from Lahnee O: “[s]he was kept wide awake [in the courtroom] by the cloud of pheromones floating over from Lahnee O and the occasional hideous grin he would shoot in her direction, a cabaret leftover from his circus days” (288). Lahnee O confirms his desire for Corsicana not through pheromones alone, but also through his sign language. In an interesting passage which confuses desire for food and sexual desire, Corsicana interprets Lahnee O’s signing to his handler—“Lahnee O want Fruit Mouth” (293)—as his wanting “surely some sort of treat.” After realizing that Lahnee O is referring to her, Corsicana “felt the hot rush of that moment when a girl realizes the guy she has her eye on is not flirting aimlessly, but suffering from a driving craving desire for her” (293). Lahnee O describes her as Fruit Mouth because of her “strawberry lips” signing that he “want make baby Fruit Mouth” (292). Through pheromones and through his sign language, Lahnee O communicates his desire in a way that positions the human and animal in a relation of mutual response, rather than domination.

In Pheromones and Animal Behavior: Communication by Smell and Taste, Tristram D. Wyatt explains the role of pheromones in communication: “While we and our nearest relatives, the great apes (the gorillas, orang-utans, bonobos and chimpanzees), may not use odour communication in quite the same ways as the Old World and New World monkeys, chemical communication is still important to us” (270). Wyatt also

remarks that “olfaction is the suppressed sense in contemporary Western Society” (270) seeming to lament the loss of smell as an important communication tool.¹ The West privileges vision over other senses, where approaches which acknowledge smell and hearing for example might provide ways for relating to animals in more interesting ways, outside of the scopophilia associated with Western thought and the visual consumption of capitalism. The importance of smelling and listening for the protagonist of Mda’s *The Whale Caller* in his relationships with Saluni and Sharisha, as discussed earlier, suggests that emphasizing these different senses might provide a way towards a non-consumerist approach to relating to others. As scientists like Wyatt suggest that both animals and humans make use of pheromones, they present the possibility for a kind of cross-species communication, one perhaps more robust and more demanding of response than visual encounters alone. The employment of pheromones in these novels is particularly interesting in terms of assessing a relationship as bestiality or zoosexuality, given that the issue of consent becomes a problem for some theorists.²

Carol Adams takes the position that all human-animal sex acts are bestiality and acts of human domination since the animal cannot consent. She writes in “Bestiality: The Unmentioned Abuse” that

Silence is a major problem. Unlike most forms of sexual contact, in which either partner can report the experience, only one of the participants in bestiality can talk... [N]o matter what the prevailing view of bestiality, it does not consider the animals’ perspectives at all. It is always animal abuse. Relationships of unequal power cannot be consensual. In human-animal relationships, the human being has control of many—if not all—of the aspects of an animal’s well-being. Sexual relationships should occur between peers where consent should be possible. Consent is when one can say no, and that no is accepted. Clearly animals cannot do that. (qtd. in Steeves 153)

Adams notes importantly the problem of giving consent that arises as a result of

differences in language or animal's lack of human language. As quoted in the previous chapter in response to this problem, Bakke remarks on the way in which zoophiles claim that animals are strong and have teeth and claws, etc. to convey if they consent or not. Of course, lack of an animal's violent response is not always an indication of consent given that animals can remain loyal to abusive humans, accepting abuse without retaliation. Meeran portrays pheromones as a way in which sexual desire can be aroused across species and as perhaps another way to communicate across species to address the problem of consent. Lahnee O's knowledge of sign language and use of it to express his sexual desire for Corsicana demonstrates an even clearer form of consent, and one that removes doubts about his being dominated in their sexual interactions. Their sexual encounter is also not an instance of the animal substituting for a dominant male over a woman as Lahnee O "after all being a brute animal, had tried his luck at slipping it in" but Corsicana "kakked him out" (294). In other words, Meeran's representation of human-animal sex cannot be considered part of what Bakke critiques as an androcentric bestiality tradition where "the woman's body and the animal's body are colonized by male desire, and their own pleasure as a female human or a nonhuman animal are not considered, known or acknowledged" (232). In their sexual encounter, both respond to the other's desires and communications about what they allow the other to do with their bodies and for each other—neither of them dominates the other; while she does acknowledge Lahnee O's tremendous strength in hugging her, Corsicana chooses to make out with him and give him "a vigorous handjob" (294), giving him pleasure of her own volition.

Her interaction with Lahnee O also seems to inform Corsicana's politics as in the

next scene at a house party she interrogates a self-proclaimed African nationalist's position on race and species (and the issue of sex) challenging these categories and their boundaries. Corsicana's discussion of species and race here seems to agree with Cary Wolfe's position, which he describes in *Before the Law*. After "emphasiz[ing] ...Foucault's recognition that you can't talk about biopolitics without talking about race," Wolfe argues that "you can't talk about race without talking about species, simply because both categories—as history well shows—are so notoriously pliable and unstable, constantly bleeding into and out of each other" (43). In addition, like Haraway's writing against speciesism which seems to have come from desiring a significant relationship with her dogs as Rossini argues, Corsicana takes a political stance against speciesism and racism after desiring Lahnee O and Geronimo. The nationalist, a filmmaker named "Relick MT Vessel," voices a position that all blacks in South Africa—he added that "blacks include Africans, coloureds and Indians"—need to reclaim the wealth back from whites and stop the way that whites "erase and demean the culture, the identity, the race pride of we blacks with their false ideology of non-racialism, a smokescreen for white racist capital" (303-4). In response, Corsicana queries if this is part of a science fiction film he is working on, patronizingly praising him as she navigates through his species/race logic, pointing out its contradictions and aporias. For example, she asks "So, Darius is Chinese, I see. But can he also be black like the Indian alien subspecies? And I know...that the Indian aliens can be black only if they obey the black aliens" (306.) Vessel replies that it's not about obeying but "staying true to the tenets of African Nationalism" warning her "you'd better watch it about this species shit!" (306). Maintaining the sci-fi discourse of this supposed film, Corsicana comments "Wow! This

Planet South Africa is cool! Over there different species can interbreed. That's not possible on Earth!" (310) After Vessel mentions that South Africans bred with Javanese, Corsicana asks "were the offspring sterile?" explaining the sterility of mules, causing Vessel to forcefully reply that he is coloured and not sterile (312). This racist discourse clearly draws from historical precedents, as in *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other*, Bernard M. Magubane quotes a passage from the naturalist Buffon which disparages the Khoi and questions the humanity of "black" people via sexual reproduction: "If it were not for the fact that White and Black can 'procreate together'...they would be two quite distinct species. The Negro would be to man what the donkey is to the horse, or rather, if the White was man, the Negro would no longer be man but an animal of another species like the ape" (182-3). Corsicana's tracing through this race and species logic, therefore serves to undermine the adherence to these categories of separation, their hierarchies, and the obvious violence that they invoke.

Envisioning himself "fucking this racist and very hot white bitch" (310), Vessel goes on to explain to Corsicana his definition of racist "subspecies" as those who don't have sex with other races. The conversation reveals that his politics only focus on human species, and Corsicana confirms that he "actually believe[s] that the humans on...our Planet Earth, all belong to different...races" which she identifies as a "racist" view (314). Corsicana's position might be said to agree with scholars who argue that race is a social construction, while importantly acknowledging that it nonetheless has a very real history of violence.³ Given that she has just engaged in a sexual act with a member of another species in the previous scene, Corsicana's critique of Vessel's approach to race seems to take issue with the way it lumps people of varied backgrounds into large groups like

blacks and whites, separating them in advance, rather than recognizing race as a construction which has been used by dominant groups to exploit others. Braidotti makes a similar comment about species: “in the age of *bios/zoe*-power, transversal interconnections make it impossible on the cognitive plane and irresponsible on the ethical level actually to uphold categorical distinctions between human and other-than-human subject positions” (131).⁴

Corsicana has sex with most of the characters who appear in the novel: she slept with all the male clerks of the Constitutional Court of South Africa (280), for example; however, she says no to Vessel it seems not because she is racist but because she doesn't like the way he thinks, especially his racial politics. South African scholar Hein Willemsse and author Zoë Wicomb discuss the politics involved in choosing to identify oneself by a racial category in South Africa. Taking issue with a review of her work, Wicomb comments: “What is this business about finding out who you are? Why have we turned this into a problem? When is it not a problem then? When you've got ‘pure blood’? Isn't it replicating the old identities of apartheid? This is in the past, we're in the avant-garde” (147). Willemsse also seems to lament how after being released from prison Mandela used the racial categories of the 1950s like “coloureds” “Africans” “Indians,” “as distinctly separate categories,” thereby sanctioning their usage when from the “seventies through the nineties we've shunned those appellations in favor of more non-racial terminologies” (147).⁵ In this vein, “Relick MT Vessel” is named so in Meeran's novel because his politics are outdated as they attempt to define people according to racial categories that were used during apartheid. He is an empty vessel as his politics offer little promise or potential for political change. In contrast, Meeran's novel suggests that sexual desire has

the potential to bring people together who were once separated according to this dominant logic, as is made evident by Corsicana's sex acts with all different kinds of people and animals, whereas a political approach that begins by defining people by race works to keep them separate. To be sure, critiquing the idea of race is a different thing than failing to acknowledge racism's existence and history—the ways in which it afflicts the real lives of those marked as the non-privileged, non-dominant “race”—which is often a move that attempts to maintain the privileged position of the dominant class. While Corsicana doesn't participate, choosing to spend time alone with Geronimo instead, the orgy that follows dinner suggests again how sexual desire works across boundaries as characters of various backgrounds engage sexually. Yet, as the orgy participants seem rather gluttonously interested in consuming each other sexually after they've consumed a polar bear for dinner, their desires for each other seem unlikely to change their politics, and are more likely to maintain the status quo.

Steven Best makes a similar connection between the logic of categories that informed apartheid and what he calls “species apartheid:” “Just as *racism* arbitrarily defines one group of humans as superior to another, out of sheer prejudice and ignorance, so *speciesism* positions human animals as superior to nonhuman animals, and anoint themselves as the end to which all other life forms are mere means” (Best). Desire and specifically sexual desire works across categories to bring people together in ways that humanism cannot account for. As Vessel swings a meat-cleaver at Corsicana's head in response to her comments and she cuts him with her knife in reply “removing two hundred and fifty grams of streaky bacon,” the earlier discussion of species and race continues in the narration of the action of the novel as a cutting tool usually only applied

to animal bodies is swung at Corsicana's head and a cut of Vessel's body is described as type of animal meat. The blurring of categories and critique of positions which maintain categories suggests the overlapping of race & species discourse and their politics in South Africa; these blurrings also reveal how encounters with the Other, especially through desire for sex and food, have the potential to either reify boundaries of race and species, often in the course of maintaining hierarchies and instrumentalizing the Other, or, conversely, to undermine them through mutual relationship and ethical response.⁶

“Eating the Other”

Both Mda's *The Whale Caller* and Meeran's *Tanuki Ichiban* highlight the role that food and eating play in mating rituals and desire. These novels take up questions of eating in terms of desire but also in relation to the ethics of response to animals. *The Whale Caller* features a protagonist who lives on macaroni and cheese until Saluni asks him to change to catching and cooking fish for her. *Tanuki Ichiban* is certainly more concerned with foodways as each chapter title includes beneath it small drawings of food that will be consumed by the characters in that chapter. For example, the chapter titled “Corsicana • Lahnee O” describes their act of zoosexuality and features a drawing of a half-peeled banana. In addition, two of the characters in Meeran's novel, Darius Coochoomber and Minke Sable, are owners or part- owners of major international food distribution corporations. *Tanuki Ichiban* also features various comments about vending machine treats, fast-food chains like McDonald's⁷, organic and processed foods, and Coochoomber's cooking of animals who appear on endangered species lists, to name a few of the items consumed.

In her essay “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance” bell hooks considers recent representations in popular culture and examples from daily life where members of the dominant class (generally she’s discussing white males) in the United States take an interest in having sex with members of other races, eating their food, and consuming their culture. She opens the essay wondering if desire has the potential to offer political resistance to and critique of dominant culture; in this essay, hooks is mostly thinking about desire’s potential for resisting white supremacist thinking. She remarks that most white males and cultural representations address the Other with the assumption that they are progressive for doing so, but she convincingly argues that most of the encounters with the Other initiated by the dominant classes in her analysis make use of or instrumentalize the Other, with little concern or real interest in a mutual relationship. About the identity crisis for white males in the U.S. and how some view black culture, food, and sexual partners as a way to transform themselves, hooks writes “ethnicity becomes a spice” (21). This renders the Other as a commodity in a logic of desire as lack, where dominant culture consumes the Other. In addition, she cites the way in which commodified Otherness removes its potential for political resistance and revolution—capitalism reterritorializes political icons, regalia, etc. for profit. Such a gesture promotes an empty politics or what hooks might call a move that maintains the status quo—where “[c]ommunities of resistance are replaced by communities of consumption” (33).

While hooks theorizes humans and their cultures in the United States, her essay is of particular interest in discussing animals as Others and for analyzing representations of humans and animals engaging sexually (as well as the question of food and diet), given that humans largely occupy dominant positions in relation to animals. Of course, much of

her analysis of encounters with the Other in human classes and cultures in the specific singularity of the U.S. does not translate well to encounters with Others of different species; nonetheless, her interest in desire as a mode of political resistance against oppression by the dominant group is an interest that this project shares, specifically in relation to animals. She writes of desire: “Whether or not desire for contact with the Other, for connection rooted in the longing for pleasure, can act as a critical intervention challenging and subverting racist domination, inviting and enabling critical resistance, is an unrealized political possibility” (22). While at the time of writing hooks feels as though desiring Others has not done much towards subverting dominant thought, she still entertains the possibility that it might be a politically viable avenue. The South African authors under analysis here also entertain the idea that desire for the Other can be useful for political change. It is exactly this desire for significant Otherness, that, as I mentioned at the opening of the chapter, Rossini contends led to Haraway’s sustained interest in critiquing speciesism. In addition, hooks’ analysis of particular encounters between people of different races or groups offers important ethical guidelines for assessing when a relationship maintains a dominant position and should be considered instrumentalization and when a relationship is of a more mutual and egalitarian nature. hooks title of “Eating the Other” enfolds nicely questions of inequality in sexual and cultural encounters of Otherness, taking on a more literal bent when it comes to the question of food and the animal as Other. Indeed, as Derrida mentions in “Eating Well,” the ingestion of the Other is “[a]n operation as real as it is symbolic when the corpse is ‘animal’ ...a symbolic operation when the corpse is ‘human’” (278). In *Tanuki Ichiban*, the ingestion of humans is also real.

In *The Whale Caller*, the protagonist's desire for Sharisha does not constitute an instance of "Eating the Other;" rather he approaches her and others in a more ethical way, voicing concerns for the infractions on marine animals' habitats and lives. Instead, as described earlier, it is Saluni and capitalism which promotes the consumption of the Other. The tourists consume the whales visually and eat sushi at Hermanus' restaurants; Saluni among many other instances of consumption encourages the Whale Caller to eat and sell fish. As discussed, she also views the seals mating in a pornographic fashion. Carol Adams has also provided significant analysis of how those marked as Other than man—especially women and animals, and she does acknowledge those deemed Other by race at a few points—are rendered as meat, as disposable objects to be consumed in dominant culture. In *The Pornography of Meat*, Adams writes "With pornography, fragmented body parts become sexualized so that someone can get pleasure from something. Yet that *something*—the woman used in pornography—was at one point someone, a very specific someone" (25). Saluni does not know the seals – they are "something" to her, to give her pleasure—whereas the Whale Caller intimately knows and relates to Sharisha. His relationship with Sharisha including their sexual encounters should not be considered a kind of "eating the other" because they engage in a mutual relationship to give each other pleasure; he does not use her or sacrifice her to his own pleasure or for the purpose of his own transformation.

This again is where Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming animal and theorization of desire might be more post-anthropocentric. As hooks suggests, "[c]ommodity culture in the United States" presents sexual encounters with the Other as a way to transform one's own identity out of a static identity of dominant culture—as a

“conversion experience”—in a way that instrumentalizes the Other (22) for self-interested reasons, not acknowledging the desires or interests of the Other. Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking is clearly a move away from the individualism, accumulation, and commodification associated with capitalist culture, but as becoming-animal focuses mostly on the transformative aspects for humans, they might further acknowledge the realities of animals in their oppression by dominant culture. Like hooks, Braidotti similarly warns against commodified subjectivities, explaining that her project is to encourage the development of subjectivities “not for profit.” “Post-industrial societies make ‘differences’ proliferate to ensure maximum profit.” She continues explaining that she wants to “explore how this logic of multiplying differences triggers a consumerist or vampiric consumption of ‘others’, meaning new forms of micro-, infra- and counter-subjectivities... This phenomenon, however, seems to leave miraculously unscathed the centuries-old forms of sexism, racism, and anthropocentric arrogance that have marked our culture” (44). Thus, like hooks, Braidotti feels that when commodified, encounters with Otherness maintain the status quo whereas desire for the Other that is not for profit and mutual has actual potential for challenging the status quo and resisting dominant culture. For hooks, desire for the Other can lead to resistance when both persons’ positions in respect to dominant culture are acknowledged: “Mutual recognition of racism, its impact both on those who are dominated and those who dominate, is the only standpoint that makes possible an encounter between races that is not based on denial and fantasy” (hooks 28). The same might be said of encounters with animals, of course with an acknowledgement of speciesism, although the question of an animal’s recognition of speciesism might be one of the areas from hooks theory that doesn’t translate especially

well. As the Whale Caller recognizes the eco-tourist industry's exploitation of whales as an extension of the history of whaling and critiques other industry's intrusions into the spaces where creatures of the sea dwell, his relationship with a whale is a mutual one where he, at least, acknowledges this history of domination as it informs his political views on issues like poaching, fishing laws, oil exploration of the seas, and his diet.

In addition to the Whale Caller's zoosexuality with Sharisha, his opinions of the role of food in dining, diet, and sexual encounters also critiques consumerist attitudes. Where hooks derives her title and discussion of food in relation to an example in film of white patriarchal culture consuming "black food," in other words, an encounter where someone eats food prepared differently from dominant culture (although she describes that in the context of the film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* it is an eating of death), when it comes to discussing those who desire animals, "eating the Other" is not just a style of food preparation or the culture of the Other, but literally eating the body of the Other. Living on a modest diet of macaroni and cheese, the Whale Caller doesn't figure as a good consumer or capitalist, whereas Hermanus' restaurants, many of which specialize in foreign cuisine, are patronized mostly by wealthy international tourists who consume expensive meals of animal Others made into meat. When out with Saluni on one of their strolls to consume the restaurant food with their eyes, a ritual Saluni coaxed the Whale Caller into participating in, the Whale Caller relates eating and sex:

He learns table manners, although he suspects that the whole ritual is geared towards arousing him. He is well aware that in the 'civilised world' the ritual of eating is some kind of foreplay. That is why gentlemen and ladies have candlelight dinners before bedding each other. He remembers from his travels along the coast that in the African languages he came across the crudest word for sex, which literally translated into 'eating.' In this garish language of the gutter a man eats a woman. (71)

Drawing linguistic connections between sex and eating, the Whale Caller derives a critical position on both consumptions of others, similar to bell hooks. In the civilized culture, he observes that animals are sacrificed as part of the ritual of human sexual encounter. Food too can be sensuous and can be desired but is reterritorialized for profit in capitalist culture when turned into an expensive commodity that promises to feed desire and to lead to the promise of sexual gratification.

The Whale Caller, unlike Saluni and the tourists, does not take much interest in eating and his experience with whales is mostly auditory and mutual. After refusing to window-shop at the restaurants with Saluni, claiming he cannot be witness to the worship of food and the orgy of diners, the narrator remarks: “He eats to sustain himself, because if he does not eat he will die. His habits of eating are quite rudimentary... There was no ceremony” (116). He does not view eating as an opportunity to commodify Others or consume other cultures through their style of preparing food, one of the few ways the dominant classes encounter or relate to Others and other cultures. As hooks writes, “It is by eating the Other... that one asserts power and privilege” (36). The privileged tourists freely travel great distances to consume the whales and other creatures of Hermanus, as well as food cultures from all over the world, while the poor population of Hermanus sings for their change. Singing for the Whales, and not capitalizing on his intimate knowledge of and relationships with them, the Whale Caller relates to Otherness differently, without reterritorializing his desire into capital. In fact, he shares a meal with Sharisha as a companion, “eating *with*” (Haraway) the Other, instead of “eating the Other.” Rather comically, Mda describes him dressing up in his tuxedo and preparing a

table as if it were a fine dining restaurant at the end of the jetty, pouring wine into the sea for Sharisha. While he does in this way adopt culture's sensuous dining rituals, when translated for his nonhuman lover, the human worship and orgiastic associations with food are rendered somehow more ridiculous and yet at the same time more earnest as he sincerely attempts to please his nonhuman lover. This is, however, not the sacrificing of the animal solely for human pleasure, but it is a table where the animal is invited to break bread together as companion species, regardless of the difficulties of the sharing and eating of food for the two drastically different creatures. In contrast to eating the Other which seeks to maintain the dominant position of the self, the Whale Caller's becoming whale and becoming with the whale Sharisha risks his sense of self, risks his being judged foolish from a normative perspective, and thereby undermines the civilized ritual of eating the Other.

If *The Whale Caller* portrays a character who attempts to abstain from capitalism's logic of turning the Other into a commodity to be consumed or eaten, Meeran's *Tanuki Ichiban* revels in portraying the many ways in which anything or anybody can be turned into a commodity in late capitalism. Meeran's novel portrays in a rather casual, humorous, and irreverent fashion a fact about bodies that Carol Adams notes as well, "We are each more than meat, more than our bodies. Yes, in some sense we are made up of meat, of muscle. But we would never want to be seen only as meat" (19). In Meeran's novel where each character seems constantly motivated by libidinal or gastrointestinal desires, anybody has the potential to engage in a relationship of mutuality and companionship across culture's categories or to become instrumentalized in a capitalist logic: to be eaten as an Other. Featuring several international food corporations

and their wealthy high-ranking officials, the novel details how capitalism reterritorializes desire for food into capital, while also influencing how characters relate to others sexually.

While there are no totally redeeming characters in *Tanuki Ichiban*, the novel broaches the ethics of several key South African political issues, critiquing consistently but at times incidentally or offhandedly colonialism, capitalism, racism, and speciesism. None of the characters who voice criticism on these issues seem without flaw themselves. For example, Minke Sable's position on animals is trivialized somewhat by her apparent obsession with the disney-fied version of an animal in her love of Paddington Bear: she brings a "*Paddington Bear*" DVD box set "wherever she did go" (99). The trade in exotic animals and the upper-class wealth associated with this trade are consistent targets for Meeran, as evidenced by Darius Coochoomber's murder at the hands of Minke Sable and Corsicana, and he's chosen a significant problem as in 2007 Steven Best writes: "In the vast and burgeoning international trade in wild animals and plants—as advertised and mass marketed to a global clientele through web sites and magazines—South Africa is the biggest wildlife trader on the continent." Discussing Coochoomber's Chinese upbringing where he ate "consommés of fruit bat and cupcake surprises of nightingale breast" and describing how Darius' father was "a non-practicing cannibal from New Caledonia...[who] really loved nothing better than risky boiled Thrice Meat (mutton, pork, dog) down at the docks with the boys" (49-50), Meeran acknowledges cultural differences in diet and how valuations of particular animals are culturally relative. Nonetheless, Darius's practice of extreme dining on endangered species seems clearly unethical and informed by capitalist logic and the colonialist exploitation of

globalization, not a mere matter of cultural difference. Pickover writes that “[a]ll the mainstream conservation organizations in South Africa support the trade in wild animals because they see them as a renewable natural resource” (50). She continues “The toll it takes of the environment is increasing, particularly in the context of global over-consumption. Human desire for ‘exotic’ animals for food, possession and status has produced an endless and unrelenting demand for wild animals and this is having a catastrophic effect on their survival, particularly because the market value of a specimen is usually related to its scarcity” (50). Darius’ desire for dining on endangered species is therefore a pursuit that only the extremely wealthy and those invited to their dinner parties (or their roommates in Geronimo’s case) can engage in. His desire to attract exotic women via his endangered cuisine suggests a similar view of the women as objects to be consumed via the lure of the sensuous appeal of food and the status associated with such exoticism and wealth.

In the scene which follows the race/species argument between Corsicana and Vessel, Darius serves polar bear for dinner and Corsicana “goes cross-eyed with desire” when she looks in the pot of cooking meat. Human desire for exotic animals and specifically for them as food positions them as instrumentalizing the animal as Other, or eating the Other. The characters are highly uninhibited and the eating of the polar bear and orgy that follow seem in line with a kind of bacchanalian ethos that flows through the novel. Meeran interrupts the dinner of the endangered polar bear with a few pages describing the polar bear’s last few hours of existence that imagines his experience and thinking as he swims among the melting ice floes, struggling at the decline of his habitat from global warming and encountering the hunters just before they kill him. Such a

description acknowledges the animals' lived experience and immediately following its appearance as a main course challenges the dominant view of animals as replaceable or anonymous meat available for consumption. The narrator describes the encounter: "Then he heard the cries, those yipping, chirping cries of the two-legged predator that his parents had feared and taught him to fear. Yet there was nothing for it but to paddle on in the direction of the icepack, with the hunters alongside, and it was no canoe of Inuits this, but a vessel the size of a trawler" (310). The narration describes the animal's relation to humans as a move from local hunters to exploitation by global capitalism. Imagining for a moment what it was like to be that particular polar bear, what it was like to inhabit the polar bear's body and its experience of an encounter with humans suggests an acknowledgement of its singularity and that its life is rich and valuable on its own terms, that it does not exist merely for its end as a commodity for human consumption. The passage also highlights the move from a subsistence-based hunting and eating of animals by local hunters to the unsustainable hunting practices of late capitalism as evidenced by the "trawler," a boat used in commercial ventures, and the selling of exotic animals on the global market.

Biopolitics: Disposable Bodies in Late Capitalism

Tanuki Ichiban provides further commentary on the role of class in rendering bodies disposable in late capitalism as Geronimo, not being heir to an international food corporation like his roommate, lives at most points a life closer to poverty. For example, in many scenes he is described foraging for food or dumpster-diving for survival and Darius mostly just uses Geronimo for his ability to acquire commodities somewhat like Saluni does to *The Whale Caller*: here his ability to transport endangered species through

his position as Mud Traffic Controller. Braidotti discusses the importance of class in relation to how bodies become disposable: “The category of ‘class’ is accordingly linked to that of tradable disposable bodies of all categories and species, in a global mode of post-human exploitation. Animals are also sold as exotic commodities and constitute the third largest illegal trade in the world today, after drugs and arms but ahead of women” (*Transpositions* 98). In addition, Darius usually tries to intervene with women that Geronimo desires sexually, attempting to satisfy his own desire for them in a way that confirms his capitalist individualism as he attempts to accumulate exotic women. In contrast, while in Japan, Geronimo is particularly poor and sells his body as a means to purchase a rifle to hunt the snow ape, where he hopes to make enough money to survive. In the economy of late capitalism, poor human and animal bodies become disposable when they are considered nuisances and when they are viewed as commodities available for sex as *Tanuki Ichiban* reveals:

Geronimo took to offering up his body to the insatiable thirsts of the flood of steelmen, bricklayers, hod carriers, daga-boys, divorcees, dowagers, housewives, ecologists, forest rangers, tinkers and polar bear scientists who swept through Cold Bridge... Unlike guns, the arse in Cold Bridge, was cheap, and Geronimo was wearing a wad of furniture foam in his rectum by the time he made enough filthy lucre to buy a Bowie knife. A hunting rifle would cost another hundred to one hundred twenty fucks. (181)

Such a description clearly positions Geronimo in a different economic class than the exceedingly wealthy and well-educated Darius. The narrator also reveals that hunting the snow apes is profitable because the government is funding them as “vermin clearance” (177). Their behavior of foraging through human waste for food is not unlike Geronimo and the other poor’s means of subsistence; the snow apes are described as vermin because “[f]eeding on shit they grew strong and fast and after the first toddler was seized—more

than one city councillor intimating for the purposes of sex, not food—vermin status was a shoo-in” (177). Meeran’s description of the categorization of an entire species as vermin because of one snow ape’s theft and supposed sex act with a human child, a cross-species desire, provides a rather bizarre and stark example of how bodies become disposable in biopolitical times: the criminalization of bestiality has historically punished both humans and animals, and often with death, as Susie Newton-King (65-66), Colleen Glenney Boggs (34), and others note. The way these scenes show how both humans and animals can be viewed as disposable for any number of reasons emphasizes the “transversality” (Braidotti) or intersectionality and shared vulnerability of human and nonhuman animal bodies.

While both are primates, the snow ape in Japan is considered disposable whereas the exceedingly famous and popular circus performing orangutan Lahnee O receives a thorough trial in the South African Constitutional Court, amidst an abundance of legal support and an embarrassment of financial backing from an NGO and the organic food store owner, Minke Sable. In fact, the court decided that Lahnee O receive a “sizeable award for damages [which] would be wired into an HSBC account opened for Mr. O by Minke Sable’s stockbroker in Singapore” (322), with the damages resulting from Gauteng Parks and Recreation causing “undue pain and suffering...[for] Lahnee O...[in] being denied the right to euthanasia” (75). The question of his being counted as human also weighed in on the decision, since euthanasia of humans is against the law in South Africa (75). The novel dramatizes the problems with animal rights discourse here for the way it views animals as diminished humans and leaves some animals excluded from community of subjects of rights. Such difference in the treatment of animals both

considered to be primates—the orangutan and the snow apes—speaks to the arbitrary status of animals in biopolitics, where decisions about whose lives count as valuable or are closer to *bios* and whose are not when marked as closer to *zoe* determines their standing in relation to the protections of the community. On this topic and in a different context in a talk at the Society for Literature Science and the Arts Conference in 2012, Cary Wolfe has noted the disparity between Americans’ treatment of pets like dogs and cats and their treatment or regard for cattle. He remarked that clearly it is not a question of human versus nonhuman, but a drastic difference in treatment for those that are both considered animals. Where Americans spent “about \$38.4 billion overall on companion animals” in 2006” (Haraway 48), Wolfe’s point is that Americans seem to care very little for cattle, not voicing much concern or doing much about the factory farming and resultant terrible lived experiences of cattle that exist solely to be fattened cheaply and eaten by humans in capitalism.

To be sure, there are no utopian solutions to these sometimes horrifying facts of living in biopolitical times. As Haraway comments elsewhere: “No community works without food, without *eating together*. This is not a moral point, but a factual, semiotic, and material one that has consequences....There is no way to eat and not to kill, no way to eat and not to become with other mortal beings to whom we are accountable, no way to pretend innocence or transcendence or a final peace” (294-5). Indeed, the meal the Whale Caller brings to share with Sharisha is one of seafood, and while he lives an extremely animal-centred life, he too is not innocent of killing for food. Haraway continues noting that this fact doesn’t mean that all kinds of eating are the same or that there aren’t ethical responsibilities in eating and killing. The Whale Caller’s diet mostly of macaroni and

cheese, rare meals of seafood, and his earlier subsistence diet of fish are more ethically responsible than Darius Coochoomber's endangered species diet, since Coochoomber's behaviors take on a colonialist and consumerist vision of the world and its animals as awaiting his conquest and consumption. Meeran's novel doesn't offer any final solutions to the problems of eating and killing either and yet his characters clearly condemn the eating of endangered species as Corsicana and Minke Sable, who both earlier desired Lahnee O sexually, plot and successfully execute their plan to kill Darius for his extreme dining practices.

Earlier in the novel, the narrator reveals that "Minke Sable's attention had been drawn to a certain bargeworker who had been seized in possession of a Kalahari Bat-Eared Fox, secreted into a load of Okavango rice and waylaid in transit to the Docklands warehouse of Rip Roaring Good" (100), which is the name of her food store chain. The endangered species errantly ends up in one of her stores and the bargeworker explains that it was for his "customer, who he suspected had dock access and who, he knew, had procured rare animals from other bargies and oceangoing seamen, from what he heard had been doing it for years, critters from every corner of the globe, but so sorry he had not caught his name." As her interests clearly lie with animals in light of her financial support of Lahnee O, it is of little surprise that "Minke was of the opinion the customer should pay with his life" (100). Minke and Corsicana's murder of Darius may be considered a bit extreme given different cultural assessments of what is acceptable to consume as food and what status or value animals hold. Indeed, Haraway warns against "relegating those who eat differently to a subclass of vermin, the underprivileged, or the unenlightened" (295). In this light, the problem of cultural relativism rears its head in

assessing the ethics of Coochoomber's eating, and Corsicana and Minke might be best viewed as similar to extremists who rally around other biopolitical issues, like those who kill people who test on animals, or those who kill others for practicing or preventing abortions in right to life or right to choose campaigns—both biopolitical issues which scholars have discussed elsewhere.

Yet, Haraway allows that all kinds of eating are not the same, echoing Derrida's ethical imperative to "eat well." While their actions may be a bit extreme, Corsicana and Minke's desires for animals inform their political action on behalf of animals, in a way that exemplifies how desire for the Other can lead to political resistance. In addition, Cary Wolfe discusses the ethics of responding to the Other with "hospitality," as theorized by Derrida, arguing that this position does not end in relativism. On the question of who belongs inside the community, he writes:

there is no 'god's eye view'; there are *only* 'limited points of view.' But the fact that any norm *is* unavoidably perspectival doesn't dictate relativism, solipsism, or autoimmunitary closure. Quite the contrary...because of its constitutive self-referential blindness (Luhmann), its constitutively 'performative' and 'conditional' character (Derrida), it constitutes the opening to the other and to the outside, to the necessity of other observations (Luhmann) and even to futurity or the 'to come' of justice itself (Derrida). (Wolfe 86)

Darius' dominant view of exotic, endangered animals as disposable in the logic of late capitalism is an extreme form of "eating the Other" as he participates in the removal of entire species from the planet, highly commodifying them at exorbitant prices due to their rarity. Killing Darius with the "poetic justice" of "high-powered hunting rifles at point blank range" (339), Corsicana and Minke murder him in a way that mirrors the earlier description of the polar bear's death; the novel seems to emphasize once again that in biopolitical times, any body regardless of status, or how it is considered to be part of a

particular species, race, gender, class, etc. can potentially be excluded from the community, can be made available for a “non-criminal putting to death” as Derrida describes in “Eating Well.” He writes of this space of exclusion: “Such are the executions of ingestion, incorporation, or introjection of the corpse” (278). In other words, any body has the potential to be rendered disposable or, alternatively, to be viewed as a companion, a member of the community, (and anywhere in between) often depending on if desire has been reterritorialized in dominant culture or, in instances where resistances appear to dominant culture, how desire takes off on a line-of-flight away from capital, to the detriment of the dominant status quo, and away from hierarchy. Desires that escape reterritorialization by capitalism can challenge dominant thinking about the Other to move away from the auto-immunization promoted by culture’s categories, hierarchies, and laws, opening up avenues of response through hospitality (Wolfe) and therefore ethical responsibility to Others.

The Mother of All Eating

I close the chapter with a discussion of Mda’s short play *The Mother of All Eating* which describes yet another mode of narcissistic consumption as “eating:” the practice of government officials who take bribes from “development” companies, profiting personally while neglecting their ethical responsibilities to the other members of their communities. While the play is not directly concerned with animals or the environment, its portrayal of “eating” the community or country is relevant to this study for its critique of these social problems, which necessarily extend to questions of the environment as I’ll describe in the next chapter. As it concerns another kind of “eating” the other, an eating of the community, the play closes the theme of this chapter, while also transitioning to

the next chapter, which discusses two novels which involve business proposals for the “development” of local lands and a nature reserve that must pass government approval.

The play concerns a government official, “THE MAN,” from Lesotho who arrives home from a business meeting in Johannesburg to find an empty house, with his wife who is pregnant missing. As the man is the only character to speak, the play develops his character as he confesses his business practices to the audience and phones his friends and colleagues, becoming increasingly defensive and anxious about both his corruption as a government official and his uncertainty about his wife’s whereabouts. The short drama intertwines the two causes of his stress as it is revealed that his approving of a rather expensive contract with a foreign European company (instead of hiring a local company) to improve his community’s roads, a contract that was inflated and from which he skimmed a great deal for his personal bank account, led to the company doing a shoddy job on the roads; he learns that his wife is in serious condition and his child has died as a result of a car accident caused by one of the humungous potholes on her way to the hospital to give birth. The play emphasizes the costs to the community of government corruption: when those in positions of power seek their own profit instead of desiring what is best for the others of their communities.

Importantly, THE MAN describes his corruption and that of his colleagues as a practice of “eating.” For example, he comments:

Who of you here can claim to have clean hands? Now, you tell me! Did you buy those BMs and Benzes that you drive with your meagre salaries? I am no different than any one of you. The word that we use at home here is that we eat! Our culture today is that of eating. Everybody eats. From the most junior civil servant to the senior most guy. The shortest road to becoming a millionaire is to join the civil service or one of the parastatals. [*Sings.*] Join the civil service and be a millionaire. (Mda 10-11)

The kind of “eating” here is clearly aligned with the self-serving relation to others that hooks mentions, as well as the exercising of power and privilege that she describes as part of “eating the Other;” the eating in the play also exemplifies the kind of self-accumulation and capitalist desire as lack that both Braidotti and Deleuze and Guattari critique. The language the protagonist uses to describe his path of upward mobility—“the shortest road to becoming a millionaire”—also draws our attention back to his part in the poor construction of an actual road which causes his wife’s injury and son’s death. THE MAN abuses his privilege to further fortify his position of dominance and wealth above the other members of his community, sacrificing the safety and protection of their lives and their future well-being. Like Saluni of *The Whale Caller*, the protagonist views others in terms of his own profit and accumulation of pleasure, in a narcissistic manner that renders others disposable, in an unsustainable fashion.

His relation to his countrymen continues in a colonizing manner, where the community and its inhabitants are “disposable” to him so that he might have disposable income. He explains that “Maseru is really a one street town. That’s due to bad British planning—or non-planning. Our colonial masters had no intention of making us a beautiful city we could all be proud of. It seems it was meant to be a temporary administrative camp, with no potential for growth. And then we took over and made it worse, in fact” (19). Of course, the colonizing and capitalist relation to his community is not sustainable, as his bank account is padded with funds allotted for the maintenance of infrastructure for the community. The corruption continues in a colonialist legacy of impoverishing and capitalizing off of the local community. Mda’s play also highlights the

racism and Eurocentrism present in these government dealings as the protagonist prefers to work with whites and foreigners, and the white government officials receive more money and better living conditions than their black counterparts.

His comparisons of the corruption in his country to wealthy nations of the global north further reveal this colonial impulse. He comments that the corruption in Lesotho is not unique: “Well, don’t pretend you are surprised at all this. We are not at all peculiar in this sort of thing. You remember in America a few years back, during the days of Mr. Reagan’s sleaze factory, the big guns at the Pentagon would buy a single nail for a thousand dollars. Why do you expect us to be different when our masters in the First World are prone to the same habit of eating?” (13).⁸ Thus, Mda emphasizes how “First World” countries are the model for “modernization” and “development” and therefore how developing nations adopt this colonizing and unsustainable corruption. As in his novel *The Heart of Redness*, which I discuss in the next chapter, here Mda critiques the view of the West as more advanced or more democratic than developing countries. THE MAN further explains the relation between his corruption and the “first world” in the course of Mda’s critique of U.S. international policy and relations:

We must be open about it [the “eating” or corruption], for we are doing it in the interests of this country. For the development and economic growth of our beloved country. All countries in the world will do anything they can to protect their interests. That is how the world works. The U.S., that citadel of democracy, will commit acts of terrorism by mining the harbours of Nicaragua, or will assassinate foreign leaders through their CIA. What I am trying to say here is that there is no country in the world that will not engage in underhand activities in order to protect the interests of that country. Why do you expect Lesotho to be different? It is in the interests of this country that you should have some millionaires like us, so that you can proudly point us out to the world and say, ‘We too, in our country, we are developing, we have our own millionaires.’ (29)

The passage reveals the protagonist’s vanity, critiquing his “development” rhetoric and

justification of his behavior through his use of “First World” approaches to government as models; thus, the problem is not with attempts at improving or developing the city, but that he uses the rhetoric of development to put a positive spin on his actions which obviously harm and ravage his community. The critique of the United States’ behavior on an international scale is not only of its government corruption that fails its own people, harming its own communities, but further, that it continues in a colonizing relation to other countries and communities for its profit and to secure its economic interests.⁹

THE MAN’s failure to see that his “eating” also puts he and his family’s own protection and safety in jeopardy also confirms his overestimation of his power and independence, his failure to recognize his own bodily vulnerability and the vulnerability of his family members. Val Plumwood describes the lack of vision in this type of reasoning:

rationalistic agency that is in the process of killing its own earthly body sees itself as the ultimate form of reasoning planetary life, and seeks to impose itself universally, prioritising its models and enforcing them maximally across the globe and even beyond. Because the system is self-prioritising and has eliminated or colonised political, scientific and other potentially critical and corrective systems, it has little capacity to reflect on or correct its increasingly life-threatening failures or blindspots. (Plumwood 16)

THE MAN’s blindness to the fragility of life and the materiality of our bodies results from his rationalist and capitalist view of the world which Plumwood argues warps how “we understand our relationships to nature and to one another” (16). As Deleuze and Guattari might suggest, he is colonized by Oedipus or a desire as lack, and Plumwood acknowledges in the quote above that political systems like the checks and balances of many governments are also colonized, and therefore the instrumentalization of the world goes unchecked. Mda’s play bears this out as well, as those who attempt to disrupt or

bring attention to the corruption, like THE MAN's friend Joe and others, are fired from their jobs or paid to maintain their silence.

Further evidence of THE MAN'S failure to recognize the fragility of bodies and to consider the ramifications of his actions occurs in another of the instances where he attempts to defend himself to the audience. The stage directions indicate that he begins saying his lines "frantically" (29) as the play continues, in response to his concern that the audience may be judging his behavior, and he attempts to defend himself: "Don't be so judgmental against me. Don't look at me as if I have killed someone! I have told you already that I am not doing anything that others are not doing" (29). His comment suggests that it is a common practice, indicating the colonization of political systems that Plumwood mentions, and further, it shows that he doesn't consider the implications of his actions on the bodies and safety of his community. Of course, his saying he hasn't killed anyone foreshadows how his roads cause the death of his unborn son on the way to the hospital to be born. The "future" of his community in the figure of the child is killed pointing to the unsustainable practices of his corruption and "eating" of his community. Also, we might recall Foucault's point about killing in biopolitics here, a point I discussed in the Introduction, that killing is not just literal killing but includes risking bodies towards death, making them more vulnerable. In addition to the death he causes to his unborn son, THE MAN's corrupt behavior also performs this other kind of killing of the community.

The protagonist writes off the poor members of his community as worthless: he calls them "criminals" (31) in order to justify his treatment of them. Of course it is his crimes, which aren't regarded as crimes or punished, that are in large part responsible for

their poverty, like when he “bought all the houses that were built by the Housing Corporation—built to relieve the housing shortage” (32). He continues: “I bought them all, and am renting them out at very high rent. A lot of white people are coming into the country bringing aid. I rent to them. Not to local blacks. They couldn’t afford it anyway” (32). His buying up the houses and renting them to white people demonstrates a racist and colonizing occupation of space. Significantly, in his memoir Mda also criticizes the practice of Western countries supplying foreign aid to “developing countries” for the “day-to-day survival of the country” as creating a “dependency mentality” (457). THE MAN also remarks later in the passage that he refuses to patronize black owned businesses and at another point explains that through his eating he has bought a house that is “palatial.”

In his time of need during his family’s car accident, however, he reaches out for the support of others, those who he has instrumentalized all along, and at the play’s conclusion instead of their help, he receives a severe beating from his co-workers. As Plumwood remarks of the blindness of reason: “It is the special form of failure such monological and hegemonic forms of reason are subject to that they misunderstand their own enabling conditions—the body, ecology and non-human nature for example, often because they have written these down as inferior or constructed them as background in arriving at an illusory and hyperbolised sense of human autonomy.” (16-17) What constituted the background for the protagonist, the roads and people which he’s profited from, comes to the foreground as his wife and child are involved in the car accident and human dependence on others and on nonhuman matter, like well-made roads are brought into focus.

Of course, THE MAN's inflated notion of agency, distance, and mastery over others and the nonhuman results, at least in part, from his adoption of a dominant notion of subjectivity. The way in which Mda doesn't give him a name but just labels him 'THE MAN' also perhaps alludes to his dominant subject position. As Derrida writes of "carnophallogocentrism:"

Authority and autonomy are, through this schema, attributed to the man (*homo* and *vir*) rather than to woman, and to the woman rather than to the animal. And of course to the adult rather than to the child. The virile strength of the adult male, the father, husband, or brother... belongs to the schema that dominates the subject. The subject does not want just to master and possess nature actively. In our cultures, he accepts sacrifice and eats flesh. ("Eating Well" 280-281)

Thus, the dominant subject "man" sacrifices others and "eats" to feed his dominant subjectivity. While Mda's short play isn't concerned with the literal eating of flesh, of animals for example, it nonetheless shows how the character's "eating" his countrymen through his corruption, does in fact lead to the death of its members—it is a non-criminal putting to death—as the man sacrifices the protection of his community for his personal accumulation of wealth, and indeed his own son dies as a result.

Eating always involves a relation to the other and the question of belonging to a community as both Haraway and Derrida discuss. Again, Haraway's discussion of the etymology of companion as "cum" "panis" (17) is relevant here as companion refers to those we eat with, those we break bread with. Pickover also notes the importance of eating for community: "throughout human evolution food has never been just food but also a way of defining family, community, and culture" (143). In addition, Derrida remarks: "One never eats entirely on one's own: this constitutes the rule underlying the statement, 'One must eat well' (282). Of course, some of these theorists are discussing

literal eating, but, for Mda, THE MAN's "eating" of the others of his country constitutes an assault on the community that resonates more with hooks negative usage of "eating." Given the colonization of the political systems which might offer resistance to this corruption and capitalization of the community, which Plumwood highlights, Mda posits revolution as a corrective to this unsustainable governing. In the final scene, THE MAN's coworkers, those he's failed to share his bribes with, arrive at his extravagant house to exact their retribution. THE MAN describes the scene when his messenger first arrives: "Now this is my hour of sorrow, and you come to my house to tell me that today I will vomit all the money that I have stolen from other people" (34). Describing his bodily response as "vomiting" continues in the language of eating and digestion, and suggests the goal of the violence as being the return of the community's wealth and perhaps the ridding of the community of corruption.

THE MAN continues describing the messenger's words and actions as he confronts THE MAN: "What do you mean I am a rotten piece of shit, and that one day the people shall rise and take vengeance on the likes of me?" As the other government directors arrive to join in the beating of the protagonist, he attempts to prevent this abuse by trying to convince them to side with him as "fellow millionaires" (36) instead of siding with the poorer messenger who aligns himself with the people: "Did you hear him? He says even you, my friends, even you, your day will dawn... He says he is going to whip up the emotions of the common people who will rise against you" (36). The description of the people rising up against the corrupt government suggests a revolutionary impulse that springs forth from desire, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, a desire for the others of the messenger's community, for their protection and for a

sustainable future for them. The beating and possible killing of THE MAN eliminates this parasitical existence from the community: the stage directions at the play's end indicate that "*He receives a last kick on the stomach which finally shuts him up. He groans, and his body jerks and twitches. He is vomiting. He gasps once or twice, then lies silent. Is he dead, perhaps?*" (36). The play ends with a violent response to a character whose "eating" practices continue in a colonizing tradition and have greatly harmed the members of the community, not unlike the violent death that Darius Coochoomber receives at the hands of Minke and Corsicana in *Tanuki Ichiban*. Such violent reactions to those who "eat" members of one's community evidences the revolutionary power of desire, this biopolitical resistance, to protect the community.

Of course, there are laws for the "rights" of people, communities, animals, etc. which are supposed to protect communities; however, as seen in this literature, when people in positions of power are colonized by Oedipus (Deleuze and Guattari)—in *Tanuki Ichiban* the government workers who oversee the ports are also bribed to ignore the illegal transport of endangered animals—the law can fail its assigned task to protect these communities. In *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other*, Bernard Magubane describes how the dominant class uses the rhetoric of dehumanization to justify to themselves their theft and enslavement of the poor just like THE MAN in *The Mother of All Eating* categorizes the poor as criminals to convince himself and the audience that his corruption is perfectly ethical. Magubane also notes the complicity, or perhaps more accurately the synonymous nature, of the State and non-government colonial or capitalist enterprises that has its origins in the Dutch East India company, as he quotes Pearson's observation that "the Dutch East India Company was identical with

the state” (180). Thus, desire for the Other and its revolutionary potential provides a necessary alternative towards protecting communities where the law and its enforcers may fall short.

As Derrida comments about the shift to biopolitics, the ethics of eating depend upon a relation to the Other:

If the limit between the living and the nonliving now seems to be as unsure, at least as an oppositional limit, as that between ‘man’ and ‘animal,’ and if, in the (symbolic or real) experience of the ‘eat-speak-interiorize,’ the ethical frontier no longer passes between the ‘Thou shalt not kill’ (man, thy neighbor) and the ‘Thou shalt not put to death the living in general,’ but rather between several infinitely different modes of the conception-appropriation-assimilation of the other, then, as concerns the ‘Good’ [*Bien*] of every morality, the question will come back to determining the best, most respectful, most grateful, and also most giving way of relating to the other and of relating the other to the self. (281-282)

“Eating Well” therefore involves a reconceptualization of the subject as well as ethical response to the Other, which includes the nonhuman for Derrida as well. While Mda’s short play is not set in South Africa, but Lesotho, the problems of “eating” in the government he critiques are clearly also present in South Africa, given the portrayals of corruption and the influence of big business in two novels discussed in the following chapter. For these authors then, “eating” more often has a negative connotation as it refers to the instrumentalizing, colonizing, and capitalist relation to the Other; Derrida’s “eating well” recognizes the necessity of eating to sustain our bodies and communities, while offering an ethics of response and respect that Mda and Meeran’s works posit as stemming, at least in part, from a desire for the Other.

Notes

1. It should be noted that much of the knowledge about mammalian pheromones remains under debate, and, while many scientists have provided strong cases for human

pheromones, some have questioned their existence in mammals and especially in humans, like Richard L. Doty's *The Great Pheromone Myth* (2010), where he notes that pheromones were first written about in studies of insects and only later applied to mammals. A few of the problems involved in studying human pheromones include recording the chemical smells and separating out the pheromones from other factors, as well as the complexity of human response (Wyatt 300).

2. Pheromones appear in another scene in *Tanuki Ichiban* where an elephant notices them emanating from the car where Geronimo and Hazara are beginning their love affair: "Swishing her trunk, up from the tall yellow grass, the matriarch tested the air with her trunk, picking up the scents of expensive liquor, perfume sweat and pheromones, mostly pheremones" (243). In addition, the alpha male chacma baboon, Petrus, in Michiel Heyns' *The Reluctant Passenger* finds the male protagonist attractive for the pheromones emanating from his body. I discuss this scene further in the next chapter on desire and the law.

3. In *Essentially Speaking*, Diana Fuss' comments following her discussion of African American Literary scholars Houston A. Baker, Anthony Appiah, Henry Louis Gates Jr. and others' positions on "race" might describe Corsicana's approach here: "To say that 'race' is a biological fiction, is not to deny that it has real material effects in the world; nor is it to suggest that 'race' should disappear from our critical vocabularies" (Fuss 91-92).

4. In an interview about *Tanuki Ichiban* Meeran states about the characters in the novel, "So everybody's mixed. There are no racial identities. But I do mention the historical ancestry of the characters I bring up. I reach far back, to the age of exploration. People are Madagascan, or Huguenot, or of Caroline origin. It's not about being coloured or Indian. That misses the point" He continues in language that evokes aspects of becoming-animal: "To me it's about completely disrupting the accepted categories. . . . It's about seeing the human as more of a collection of sparks of associations and identifications, rather than concrete ideas and ideologies. And these are fleeting" (Cilliers). Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari's description of the plane of consistency offers a similar thrust: "The plane of organization is constantly working away at the plane of consistency, always trying to plug the lines of flight, stop or interrupt movements of deterritorialization, weight them down, restratify them, reconstitute forms and subjects in a dimension of depth. Conversely, the plane of consistency is constantly extricating itself from the plane of organization, causing particles to spin off the strata, scrambling forms by dint of speed or slowness, breaking down functions by means of assemblages or microassemblages." (*A Thousand Plateaus* 270)

5. Willemse gave a talk entitled “Self-Representation and Identity Formation in Selected Post-1994 South African Auto/biographies” at the African Literature Association’s annual conference in Charleston, South Carolina 2013. His paper described various writers who chose to identify or not as “coloured,” and considered their reasoning and the political implications of their decisions. For further reading see Wicomb’s “Shame and Identity: The Case of the Coloured in South Africa” (91-107) in *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy: 1970-1995*. Eds. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

6. Another important work of South African fiction that ties in questions of sex, race, and bestiality is Es’kia Mphahlele’s “Mrs. Plum.” Mphahlele offers the character of Mrs. Plum as an indictment of hypocritical white South Africans who are for black people’s rights and interests in a general and public sense, but who still maintain borders in a personal sense. Mrs. Plum disapproves of her daughter’s intent to marry a black man, and Mphahlele portrays a somewhat ambiguous scene where Plum seems to masturbate in her room while her dog is present—it seems to be a consistent behavior on her part—or perhaps she even engages sexually with her dog. The critique here develops further on the theme throughout the story that Plum treats her dog better than her black servants, and therefore her suspected sexuality with an animal renders her pronouncements against miscegenation absurd as she seems to uphold a boundary on the question of sexual intercourse with others when it comes to differences in “race”, but not when it comes to species. The quite ambiguous description of what goes on with Mrs. Plum and her dog in her bedroom also suggests the possibility that her behavior is one of domination over the animal. Mphahlele’s representation of bestiality is therefore more interested in it as a taboo and as a way to critique the position of the privileged white middle class character, than as the potential for a significant relationship with an animal.

7. Pickover describes how fast food companies increase the demand for cheap animals as meat produced from factory farming. She highlights how this “eating” of the animal also ends up “eating” the human community—an issue I discuss at the end of this chapter—in contrast to the way that factory farming is often “promoted as a solution to world hunger” (163). She describes a Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) Report from 2002 which suggested that “factory farming is increasing poverty and threatening human health and food security. It [the report] revealed that by being exported from the North to the South, industrial animal agriculture, and its associated problematic byproducts such as environmental degradation and impacts on human health, are putting small farmers out of business and compromising the ability of countries in the South to feed themselves” (164). In traditional colonial rhetoric, as is critiqued in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* for example, the corporations enter the scene under the guise of helping to improve the conditions for the poor, only to profit further from them instead: “Agribusiness in the

North... may be ensuring that the South gets 'hooked' on factory farming and its associated products such as special feeds, pharmaceuticals, technology for processing plants and the genetically bred animals themselves, which are produced largely to benefit multinationals in the North" (164).

8. The 2011 film *Battle for Brooklyn* directed by Michael Galinsky and Suki Hawley, offers an interesting look at a community's attempts to prevent the takeover of its land by a corporation for the building of a sports arena in its neighborhood in the U.S. The film similarly traces the corporation's use of "development" rhetoric and it attempts to show that the project greatly harmed and displaced the community instead of improving it.

9. A recent novel by Hari Kunzru titled *Gods Without Men* also takes up this issue of people in the U.S. capitalizing on others at the expense of the protection and sustainability of other countries and communities, albeit from a business perspective and thus not necessarily a critique of government, but of investment firms. Working at a hedge-fund company, the protagonist Jaz, becomes worried about the effect that the company's investment model "Walter" is having on other countries and the global economy as it, for example, led to Honduras "facing a national crisis" after putting confidence in their currency into question: "We did that, thought Jaz. We went in there and turned it over, like robbing a bank" (147). He later confronts another member of the hedge-fund expressing his distaste for their company's actions: "We fucked their country... And at the same time, the BRVM and Thai stocks moved in the same way" (149) Jaz's colleague attempts to mollify him by highlighting his personal income from the harming of these countries: "If it wasn't us, it would have been someone else. You won't feel so bad when you get your bonus" (149). As in Mda's play, others—even entire nations—are rendered "dispensable," to use Magubane's term, for the profit of the individual.

CHAPTER 5

DESIRE AND THE LAW

The Reluctant Passenger (2003) by Michiel Heyns and *The Heart of Redness* (2000) by Zakes Mda portray communities that struggle to protect themselves, their lands, and the animals with which they dwell from being used and abused to turn a profit for businesses. Both novels portray competing claims for land as business proposals attempt to develop potential tourist locales by disenfranchising their current inhabitants through the rhetoric of Western notions of “development.” As in the previous chapter, the role of desire as “eating” appears here again as government officials are bribed by business owners to approve their land development proposals, and at the cost of sacrificing the homes, protection, and interests of the local inhabitants of these lands. These novels perform what Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin identify as “[o]ne of the central tasks of postcolonial ecocriticism” as they “contest—also provide viable alternatives to—western ideologies of development” (27). The capitalist proposals for wealthy tourist destinations continue in a colonialist view of these lands as blank spaces awaiting appropriation and transformation into capital. This chapter explores how characters in both novels successfully work within and beyond the law to prevent the destruction of particular environments which their characters have come to know intimately.

The protagonist of *The Reluctant Passenger*, an environmental lawyer, critiques the political scene the novel sets up involving unethical environmental rulings and other legislation influenced by big business and bribery. Heyns' novel highlights many environmental concerns, particularly the legal status, or lack thereof, of animals

(specifically baboons) in South Africa. As the protagonist struggles to help maintain the nature preserve for the troop of baboons at the request of his client Luc Tomlinson, the novel portrays Luc's experiences dwelling with the baboons, demonstrating his great respect for their lives and culture. Similarly, Camagu, the protagonist of *The Heart of Redness*, argues against the development of the small village he has grown to love into a gambling city. Offering a more ecocritical alternative to the tourist town, Camagu expresses his view, informed by Qukezwa's arguments and knowledge of local culture and nature, that the town developed by outside businesses will offer little work or profit for the townspeople and be detrimental to their environment. In contrast, he proposes a smaller measure of a resort built with local materials by the villagers appealing to a different type of tourist who "like[s] to visit unspoiled places for the sole purpose of admiring the beauty of nature and watching birds without killing them" (239).

These novels consider the available avenues for opposing the late capitalist thrust for the "commodification of all that lives" which Rosi Braidotti describes (*Transpositions* 130). The communities in these works offer ways of thinking about promoting sustainable futures against the overconsumption of the environment associated with most capitalist development projects. As animals are valued highly by the characters in both texts, Heyns' and Mda's novels argue persuasively for sustainable futures for the humans and animals (and in *Heart of Redness* also the flora) that are part of their communities. Characters in both novels understand community in a broader sense, including humans and nonhumans, and recognize that they are all potentially disposable in the logic of profit-seeking capitalists. Where some approaches to the novels espouse an animal rights perspective, I argue that an ethics of sustainability and a biopolitics informed by

deterritorialized or *postcolonial desire*, here specifically the desire for animals, is essential to protecting communities in ways that rights discourse and the law cannot guarantee.

Critique of Animal Rights

In *The Reluctant Passenger*, the protagonist, an Environmental lawyer named Nick Morris, somewhat contradictorily dislikes the ungovernable or disorderly aspects of the environment and animals. For example, he has a discussion with his friend and fellow lawyer Gerhard about masturbation that turns into an analysis of Romantic poets where Morris discloses that he masturbates to the Lake District of England. In response, Gerhard encourages him to consider Blake's poetry and to "try *The Tiger* next time" (173); Nick explains his disregard for unruly nature:

I am not a Tiger type of person, and such fantasies as I have tend towards the tame. For this reason my involvement in the ever-deepening intrigue surrounding Luc Tomlinson's baboons was as unusual as it was unwelcome. As far as I'm concerned, the Environment should behave itself if it wants us to look after its interests. As a matter of fact, the Lake District is just about my notion of an ideal environment: well-mannered, contained, placidly packaged, officially protected and signposted. (173)

As the novel progresses and Nick becomes increasingly involved with Luc Tomlinson and the case for the baboons, the lawyers discover the law's limited ability to protect the animals: "the rights of animals are a much debated area in law..." (259) is the best that Nick can offer in response to Luc's query about protecting the baboons in a legal manner. Where the law fails them, I'm interested here in how and why the characters work to protect the baboons extra-legally. In light of Nick's discomfort with "wild" or untamable nature (or *zoe*) and his sexual fantasies about ordered and "contained" environments, his reassessment of the unmasterable aspects of the world including his own desires and

“self” leads him to break several laws in the course of rescuing the baboons with Luc later in the novel. Where Nick once lived a life of abstinence to avoid the messiness and feelings associated with a sexual relationship, he ends up having sex with Luc in his house while the rescued baboons they have secured in the second floor of his house dirty, rearrange, and otherwise mess up his home, which had once been so clean and ordered as to appear uninhabited. This scene indicates the importance of a positive appraisal of desire for protecting animals in relation to the limits of legal or animal rights approaches, positions which I rehearse and analyze below.

In *The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Fiction*, Wendy Woodward reflects on the interiority and sense of “self” of the animals in Southern African fiction, including *The Reluctant Passenger* and *The Heart of Redness*. For Woodward, these literary representations of animals do important work towards changing the way we think about animals and their rights. Woodward argues that animals have subjectivities, therefore they should be recognized in the South African Constitution and be accorded rights. In support of her animal rights approach, Woodward draws from Martha Nussbaum’s philosophy of “moral agency,” a philosophy which, as I’ll discuss later, Braidotti criticizes heavily early on *Transpositions*. For example, Woodward recounts how Martha C. Nussbaum critiques utilitarian approaches to rights which position animals as having “moral standing.” She summarizes the utilitarian position through a quotation of Nussbaum:

Because they are subjects of social justice ‘if a creature has *either* the capacity for pleasure and pain *or* the capacity for movement from place to place *or* the capacity for emotion and affiliation *or* the capacity for reasoning and so forth (we might add play, tool use, and others), then the creature has moral standing’ (362). Nussbaum quite rightly argues for the importance of the agency of the nonhuman

animal; in moral agency, then, the animal is active in this sphere, whereas ‘moral standing’ is conferred on the nonhuman animal for the characteristics he or she embodies. (Woodward 68)

This preference for active instead of passive qualities in “moral agency” over standing or capacity is certainly a more interesting approach than moral standing as agency suggests a recognition of the moral life and behaviors of animals, and yet “moral agency” still suggests that animals should be granted rights because they have similar agency as humans.

Élizabeth de Fontenay also critiques this position in *Without Offending Humans:*

A Critique of Animal Rights:

Without useless brutality toward metaphysical and legal humanisms, a pathocentrist perspective does in effect allow us to establish the fact that the moral community is constituted not only by ‘moral agents’ capable of reciprocity, apt to enter into contracts with full knowledge of what this means, but also by ‘moral patients,’ which includes certain categories of human beings and animals. (67)

Fontenay’s argument here is that this approach to rights from the perspective of “agency” leaves out some humans and animals from being protected because they do not possess this agency. She further critiques this in her response’s to Peter Singer’s philosophy, arguing that such rights approaches are “offensive” to humans as they run the risk of sanctioning the poor treatment of non-normative humans, like those with different mental abilities for example, who may not necessarily be included in the category of “moral agents.”

Rosi Braidotti critiques animal rights discourse in her chapter on “Becoming Animal” from *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* for its maintenance of a humanist notion of the subject. She says this is not to indict approaches for animal rights but,

similar to Cary Wolfe's position, she argues that we should recognize their limitations and the need for more creative and additional approaches to animals and animal ethics. First, she acknowledges the significance of rights positions: "Not only is there nothing wrong with emancipatory or egalitarian politics and the struggle to win the same rights as the subjects who count as the standardized norm, but it is also that case that such a position is urgent and necessary" (133); later, she argues that other approaches are necessary as well. Wolfe also admires the goals of the rights approach but critiques it, arguing that humanist accounts don't do justice to the "robust state of affairs" going on with animals and humans.

Posthumanist accounts of subjectivity, like Rosi Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity that involve a radical immanence, offer a fluid notion of the subject where subjects are interdependent, existing in assemblages with other humans and the nonhuman, instead of a fixed view of subjectivity in the liberal individual tradition. The law constructs dominant, discursive subjects which fail to do justice to or fully account for the fluidity and complexity of our subjectivities. Braidotti argues:

The becoming-animal axis of transformation entails the displacement of anthropocentrism and the recognition of trans-species solidarity on the basis of our being environmentally based, that is to say: embodied, embedded and in symbiosis... 'Life,' far from being codified as the exclusive property or the unalienable right of one species- the human- over all others or of being sacralized as a pre-established given, however, is posited as process, interactive and open-ended. (99)

While Woodward does discuss Deleuze and Guattari's becoming animal briefly at times, she looks for more human qualities or attributes of human subjectivity in the animals in the literature she analyzes, which approaches a kind of becoming human of the animal. Obviously, for Deleuze and Guattari there is no becoming man because the category man

holds the dominant position and all becomings lead away from this phallogocentric logic of the Same (or human being), towards a positive valuation of difference. As Braidotti mentions: “The point about ‘animal rights’ is that, by attempting to redress the moral and legal balance in favour of animals, it ‘humanizes’ them...At such a time of deep epistemological, ethical and political crises of values in human societies, extending the privileges of the human to other categories can hardly be considered as a generous or a particularly productive move. Anthropocentrism thus imposed breeds nostalgia and paranoia” (108). Rights discourse, then, while oriented towards similar goals of her posthumanist ethics of sustainability, ends up humanizing animals, leaving this political approach perhaps less effective than other creative options.

In this light, Woodward’s discussion of animals that engages Deleuze and Guattari’s “becoming animal” with Nussbaum’s moral philosophy is somewhat contradictory from a Deleuzian perspective. Braidotti points out that “Deleuze rejects moral judgments in favour of an ethics of forces and effects” (13). Rejecting moral universalism, Braidotti’s ethics of nomadic subjectivity calls for a promotion of subjectivities and attachments, what she terms “positive passions.” Braidotti also critiques Martha Nussbaum’s universalism (after Kant) that seems to desire a stable humanist subject, in favor of her nomadic subjectivity. One obvious difference is the notion of subject and agency here in Nussbaum’s formulation as she seems to view these animals as fixed, individual subjects who possess agency, whereas the vital materialist Deleuze views both subjectivity and agency as dispersed, interdependent, the subject as a process in assemblage. Braidotti further critiques the universalism in Nussbaum’s approach: “Nussbaum’s unargued *assertion* of the universal value and validity of

concepts like humanism, justice and American-style liberalism, has one formidable thing going for it: historical tradition...Nussbaum fails to address the historicity of her position” (*Transpositions* 19). Lastly, Braidotti critiques Nussbaum’s position for trying to intimidate new or experimental approaches and philosophies by asserting that they are relativist as well as Nussbaum’s unexamined acceptance of the authority of philosophy, with its history of exclusionary practices (18-19). Another problem with universalism is the failure to appreciate local knowledges and hence a tendency toward a monocultural, dominant view of the world; Woodward, however, nicely avoids this by recognizing and analyzing the importance of shamanist traditions and the indigenous knowledges of South African peoples.

In essence, Woodward’s somewhat humanist approach and the posthumanist approach I espouse are after the same goals—the protection of animals—although her project seems limited to that particular kind of life that possesses “moral agency” and my project seeks to protect the community in a broader sense: that is I am concerned with the protection and improvement of the conditions and treatment of animals, the environment, and the others of Man that have been excluded from man’s central position in humanism and therefore viewed more easily as disposable because of the negative valuation of difference that results in racism, anthropocentrism, and phallogocentrism. While *The Reluctant Passenger* and *The Heart of Redness* offer a view of animals as deserving of rights, and *Reluctant Passenger* engages in this discourse of rights more directly, both novels also offer more creative ways of thinking about sustainable futures. Thus, the novels call for working inside the law and also other creative ways of protecting the animals, human and nonhuman, of their communities.

For Braidotti, sustainability consists of multiplying subjectivities “not for profit” and increasing the possibilities of positive attachments. A significant part of her project entails establishing a positive view of *zoe*, in contrast to negative views of it espoused by Agamben and others. For Braidotti, the others of Man—women, native others, animals, earth others, etc—are closer to *zoe* whereas man is closer to *bios* or discursive life (104). She explains that

Whereas ‘life’ or *bios* has been conceptualized as a discursive and political notion ever since Aristotle, *zoe* is the non- or pre-human ‘outside’ of the polity. It has been rendered in figurations of pejorative alterity as the ‘other of the living human’, which means the inhuman or divine and the dead....Against this forensic turn in contemporary philosophy [Agamben’s association of *zoe* with death, for example], ... [she] stressed instead the need to cultivate positive political passions and ethics of affirmation. (*Transpositions* 265)

She also explains how *zoe* disrupts a “unitary” vision of the subject—a nonhumanness at the heart of the human that flows through bodies. This sustainability perspective replaces one of rights as she argues: “The work of Francisco Varela is of the greatest importance in redesigning this type of environmentally bound, post-anthropocentric and anti-Cartesian ethics of co-determination between self and other. The notion of co-dependence replaces that of recognition, much as the ethics of sustainability replaces the moral philosophy of rights” (123). In contrast to a rights perspective that argues that animals be included in the community and be granted protection because of their similarity to humans under our notion of humanism and the Law, this approach of co-dependence recognizes that the “human” has never been human, never existed independently, but always depends on a relation to the Other.

Part of Nussbaum’s approach to animals also includes the argument “that animals be recognized as subjects” (13). Thus, Woodward bases her “rights” approach to animals

on their subjectivity, and therefore their being subjects in the law. Cary Wolfe argues that this approach to protecting animals is not sensible:

I think we would all agree that an admirable desire of humanism would be to respect the standing of at least some nonhuman animals and to protect them from exploitation, cruelty, and so on. But the attempt *to articulate that desire*, which is an admirable one, in terms of the rights framework ends up *foreclosing and undercutting that desire* by reinstating a normative picture of the subject of rights that ends up being humanist and anthropocentric through and through, that ends up with a being that looks a lot like us, so that, in the end, nonhuman animals matter because they are just a diminished version of us. It seems to me self-evident that trying to think about the value of dolphins in terms of their being diminished versions of *Homo sapiens* makes no sense. (“After Animality” 186, emphasis added)

For Wolfe, rights approaches then inevitably begin to look for human characteristics in animals as a means of securing their protection. While his reading of the law and animal rights perspectives often focuses on the work of Derrida, specifically Derrida’s essay “Before the Law” from which Wolfe derives the title of his book on biopolitics, Wolfe’s emphasis on the “undercutting” of desire is something worth taking up from Deleuze and Guattari’s perspective. Both Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari write about Kafka’s *The Trial*, which includes the story titled “Before the Law,” as starting points for, or in the course of, their thinking about the law and what it means to be “before the law;” Wolfe spends much of his work on biopolitics describing Derrida’s position, noting for example the lack of response in law as, constructed in the technicity of language, its automatic nature leads merely to reaction; yet, in this interview, he emphasizes “desire” in relation to the law. As this project has explored the role of desire throughout, Deleuze and Guattari’s writing on desire and the law, specifically their *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* adds another fold to biopolitical thought.

While he doesn’t consider Deleuze and Guattari’s writing on Kafka, and therefore

their specific writing about the relationship of their vitalist project to the law, Wolfe does address how Deleuze's work, which might seem at first to promote the equality of all life in an affirmative biopolitics, is useful in terms of biopolitical thought. He explains how a pragmatic application of Deleuze's philosophy bypasses the potential problems of an affirmative biopolitics: "By a pragmatist account, philosophy for Deleuze, as Paul Patton puts it, 'is the invention or creation of concepts, the purpose of which is not accurate representation' but rather to provide 'a form of description which is immediately practical,' one 'oriented toward the possibility of change'" (*Before the Law* 93). In other words, while their ethics of affirming *zoe* might appear to promote the flourishing of all life, this is not an accurate portrayal of life, but instead a practical politics for resisting dominant thought, capitalist logic and the consumption of everything that lives. Like Wolfe, Deleuze and Guattari also mention the "undercutting" of desire in programmatic approaches towards changing the state of affairs, in this case, not referring to the situation for animals, but to a project of undermining the logic and hierarchy of the dominant class in capitalism. In *Anti-Oedipus*, they write:

And if we put forward desire as a revolutionary agency, it is because we believe that capitalist society can endure many manifestations of interest, but not one manifestation of desire, which would be enough to make its fundamental structures explode, even at the kindergarten level. We believe in desire as in the irrational of every form of rationality, and not because it is a lack, a thirst, or an aspiration, but because it is the production of desire: desire that produces—real-desire, or the real in itself. (*Anti-Oedipus* 379)

For them, rights approaches would likely fall under the category of "interest" and, as Wolfe and they suggest, desire poses a more direct and revolutionary threat—one that works outside of the rationality of the law, an authority which currently excludes most animals from the community. That is, rather than appeal to the authority or work within

the confines of the law which has rendered animals in their current position, which has, through its exclusionary violence, failed to protect them, staying with that desire and its productive nature holds opportunities for working towards this protection in new ways, outside of the law.

In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari argue more specifically against the law as a means to justice. They offer a corrective to the view that the law secures justice: “*where one believed there was law, there is in fact desire and desire alone. Justice is desire and not law*” (*Kafka* 49). This perspective on law agrees with Wolfe’s discussion of the “undercutting” of desire that pertains to rights approaches. The law, when viewed as the only outlet to protect animals, “undercuts” desire then by reterritorializing desire into the existing legal framework, appealing to its authority or authorities, thereby undermining its revolutionary potential. Or more specifically, for Deleuze and Guattari, the law does not undercut desire, but instead is one of two kinds of desire: the transcendental law or the schizo-law. They argue that:

We should emphasize the fact of these two coexistent states because we cannot say in advance, ‘This is a bad desire, that is a good desire.’ Desire is a mixture, a blend, to such a degree that bureaucratic or fascist pieces are still or already caught up in revolutionary agitation. It is only in motion that we can distinguish the ‘diabolism’ of desire and its ‘immanence,’ since one lies deep in the other. Nothing preexists anything else. It is by the power of his noncritique that Kafka is so dangerous. (60)

In other words, for them, the law itself doesn’t necessarily undercut desire, but the law perhaps is one arena where desire is either reterritorialized or takes off on a line of flight.

Continuing their reading of *The Trial*, they argue

From this point on, it is even more important to renounce the idea of a transcendence of the law. If the ultimate instances are inaccessible and cannot be represented, this occurs not as a function of an infinite hierarchy belonging to a

negative theology but as a function of a *contiguity of desire* that causes whatever happens to happen always in the office next door...If everything, everyone is part of justice, if everyone is an auxiliary of justice...this is not because of the transcendence of the law but because of the immanence of desire. (*Kafka* 51)

This position radically calls into question Nussbaum's moral universalism or "universal rights" as it is revealed that law is just an arena of sorts for desire that springs forth from the immanence of the body. Desires that are not reterritorialized, that remain schizo-law, are therefore specific to the singularities of the material assemblages "next door" and, obviously, as they privilege deterritorialized desire and schizophrenia throughout their work, schizo-law for them provides the possibility for political action against dominant thought and dominant constructions of desire which have resulted in the failure to protect particular members of the community.¹

What's at stake in this understanding of law as nothing but desire is the realization that a rights approach assumes that passing a law will secure the protection of animals or the environment. The import of Deleuze and Guattari's insight into the law, however, is that the law itself is empty, is nothing but desire. In other words, and I'll discuss this further in my treatment of the novels below, if the desire to protect animals, the environment, humans, etc. does not exist in the exercising or administration of the law, the law itself (and the passing of more laws ad infinitum, even) will surely fail to protect them and ensure their futures. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Val Plumwood argues that reason colonizes political systems which might check the instrumentalization of the world or rationalization of the environment by capitalism (16). If those positioned as authorities of the law are colonized by Oedipus and their desires are therefore reterritorialized by capitalism, the laws themselves will not stand a chance against the

disposing of these Others for the accumulation of pleasure and profit by the arbiters of the law. If the law is really desire and its officials are colonized by capitalism's definition of desire as lack that must be filled through consumption and accumulation, their authority in the law enables the potential of capitalist desire to render all that lives "disposable" to their personal interests and make everything available for consumption and profit in a logic of exchange. Thus, it becomes all the more important to theorize desire differently and to think outside of capitalist logic which defines desire as lack, viewing desire instead as an opportunity to make ethical attachments towards sustainable futures. Since what appears to be law is really desire, if we take that observation seriously, decolonizing desire or resisting its colonization towards a postcolonial desire then becomes a significant intervention into the political field as part of a project to protect the Others and the environments of our communities. Since capitalism bombards us with its definition of desire constantly, portrayals of what I'd like to call "postcolonial desire" in these novels offers a "line of flight" away from capitalist logic: a field of desire which can reorient one's sense of self and relationship to others, animals, and the environment

Woodward argues that animals can be focused on in literature and writing because human rights have been secured in South Africa. She writes, "Now that human rights appear to be in place in a democratic South Africa—even while much of our racialised history remains intact—writers can represent animals more expansively without engendering criticism of foregrounding animals at the expense of humans. White writers in particular may have felt constrained not to portray animals as ethical subjects when the majority of South Africans were without rights." (14). To be sure, the putting in place of

human rights is a significant achievement, and yet, as she seems to acknowledge here in recognizing that the “racialised history” has not changed much with the advent of rights, the securing of these rights doesn’t radically alter the state of affairs or ensure the protection and improved treatment of those now granted rights. Additionally, the secondary consideration of rights for animals continues to privilege the human over the animal, ensuring the continual deferment of protections for animals. Similarly, calls for the addition of more kinds of rights, like Elke Zuern’s argument for the case of “socioeconomic rights’ (66) as part of human rights, while certainly important in their attempt to redress economic inequality and its violence which much current rights discourse overlooks, require their enforcement by the authorities of the law. Zuern summarizes her research: South Africans argue “that freedom can only be realized when civil, political, *and* socioeconomic rights are protected and enforced” (xii). The phrasing of this observation gets to the heart of the matter in that the passage of the rights in law, if we agree with Deleuze and Guattari, guarantees nothing without an accompanying schizo-desire that would desire to protect the community. To further extend these rights to animals, then, without thinking desire differently towards a postcolonial desire does little to protect them or the locations where they dwell. Where the recognition of rights is important in a legal sense, poor conditions obviously still persist for many of those who are now extended rights in South Africa. For example, the poor conditions for mining workers which led to the strikes at many mines, including the Marikana platinum mine in August 2012 (and miners are striking again as of January 2014), where several strikers were shot by the police, are evidence that the putting in place of human rights have not guaranteed the protection of South Africans formerly left outside the law’s protection

during apartheid. Indeed, one striker interviewed for NPR commented that his life is now no better than it was during apartheid. Deterritorializing and decolonizing desire is a necessary part of any approach to protecting the inhabitants, human and nonhuman, of South Africa.

The law “manifestly lacks balls” (260) as Gerhard puts it in *The Reluctant Passenger* in his summary of Luc’s description of the law as a “eunuch.” Michelè Pickover reveals evidence of this powerlessness of the law throughout *Animal Rights* in noting the complicity of the law with corporate interests, an issue I mentioned in an earlier chapter via a citation of Bernard Magubane’s observation of the often synonymous nature of the State and multinational corporations. Pickover notes how in many animal protection issues like vivisection, factory farming, the trade in wild animals, conservation, etc., the government officials who oversee and make laws protecting animals are often also involved with the corporations, or indeed in many cases, such as factory farming, corporations are often left to follow the laws on their own, without any oversight. For example she writes, “The South African government either lacks the political will or the resources to police and regulate the industry” of trophy hunting, and she notes that “[t]he truth is that trophy hunting promotes a culture of violence and guns. This is in direct opposition to the needs of South African society, which is desperately trying to free itself from its violent past” (48). She also describes how this instrumentalization of animals continues in an apartheid legacy: “Wild animals were exploited to fund the apartheid war, the secret agencies, the Special Forces and the individuals connected to them. It is no secret that the Nationalist government and its military machinery were involved in the illegal trade in ivory” (51). These obvious

conflicts of interest in the form of a desire to extract a maximum profit from animal bodies and being charged with the task to protect them speaks to the many ways in which the law is compromised through its colonization by capitalist desire. As Pickover's reporting on the exploitation of bodies during apartheid reveals, authorities often acknowledge or disavow the rights of others and choose to administer the law as it suits their agendas and financial interests. This problem, namely that the access to rights and to the protections of the law are made to depend on those administering it (perhaps best described in Kafka's "Before the Law" with the countryman seeking access to the law from the doorkeeper), was most obvious during the apartheid regime with the passing of laws denying the rights of black South Africans. In the context of this discussion of the law being colonized by capitalist desire, perhaps the most pertinent of these laws limiting the rights of black South African were those acts which prevented or hindered these communities from acquiring decent paying jobs, ensuring that the white community would benefit financially. In *The Reluctant Passenger*, the villainous Judge Conroy describes these financial benefits of apartheid to Morris upon telling him of his former plan to hand over the fortune he collected from corrupt dealings as a lawyer: "You no doubt imagine yourself too morally fastidious to benefit by money derived from an evil regime. I need hardly point out that for decades every white South African to a greater or lesser degree benefited by the policies and practices of that regime" (404). Heyns' and Mda's novels shed light on many of these problems as they portray the corruption that informs environmental rulings: *The Heart of Redness* describes the conflict of interests of the government official deciding on the development project for Qolorah by the Sea; Heyns' novel in particular describes the governments' collusion in the abuse of baboons

in vivisection.

To return briefly to Mda's *The Mother of All Eating*, discussed in the last chapter, it is the messenger's desire which takes off on a line of flight and threatens the power and privilege exercised by THE MAN and his fellow government officials, who are colonized by the reterritorialized desire of capitalism. THE MAN's attempt to stop the messenger's revolutionary behavior, which I've referred to in Chapter 2, acknowledges the way that capitalism colonizes desire:

The people don't have any leadership that will create a critical awareness in them, that will open their eyes. Whenever new leadership emerges, even if it begins as honest leadership, it is swallowed by the culture of eating, and becomes one with it [...] The people are doomed to... [*an obvious kick, and a scream*] Okay, Okay, I admit...it will take a very small thing to spark action in them, and to arouse them to an anger that has not been seen before. (35)

THE MAN tries to quell the messenger's revolutionary desire by attempting to convince him that his behavior and the position of the people is one of impotence, as is the case for humans in relation to the gods in *Oedipus*. His descriptions of the people as "blind" recall the "blindspots" of Plumwood's discussion of what happens as a result of the colonizing force of reason, and his observation that "honest" leadership may be colonized by the culture of eating, confirms her argument about the colonization of political systems as well. After experiencing the violent kick from the messenger, however, THE MAN acknowledges that the desire of the people is what he lives in fear of; indeed, it is what is threatening his life at this point in the play as The Messenger refuses his bribes, and he fears that this desire has the potential to change the state of affairs, threatening to unseat and remove all the corrupt officials who "eat" the community.

Desire in *The Reluctant Passenger*

South African author Michiel Heyns, whose *Lost Ground* won him the Sunday Times Fiction prize in 2012, has also received accolades for his translations of South African literary criticism and literature from the Afrikaans into English such as Marlene Van Niekerk's *Agaat*. He also currently maintains a blog titled "books and dogs" where he writes often about his dog Simon and dogs in literature ("Michiel Heyns"). His second novel, *The Reluctant Passenger* (2003) features a white South African middle class environmental lawyer, Nick Morris, who takes on a case for Luc Tomlinson and a troop of baboons. The subjects of law, rights, and desire discussed earlier come into focus in Heyns' novel as the protagonist becomes more involved in the case for the baboons. At the beginning of the novel, Morris detests the unmasterable and disorderly aspects of himself and the environment. Heyns' offers a critique of reason and mastery as Morris is frustrated by any disorganization or things that don't adhere to the norms of human rationality or reason. For example, Morris wishes he was an accountant as he originally planned where the world is neatly divided and ordered into columns of debits and credits. He also resents his neighbor's dog that shits on his lawn and he chooses to live a celibate life with his girlfriend so he won't have to deal with the messiness of sex or love. In an early scene, the dog actually knocks him into a pile of shit as Morris attempts to clean it up to restore cleanliness to his yard. In response Morris violently wipes the shit all over the dog's body, viewing animals in a pejorative sense as mere producers of dirt and filth. Morris prefers order and is a perfect employee under capitalism, an ideal manageable subject of capitalist biopolitics, as he is never late, is apolitical, and maintains neatness and order above all else. He makes all attempts to master and control his animality through regimes of culture and seeks to avoid encounters with his own nonhuman life or

zoe (including his desires) as well as encounters with nonhumans and the nonhuman world. In addition, his concerns for the neatness of his lawn and property cause him, rather comically, to forget to vote in the 1994 democratic elections. Almost all of his life is ordered and he attempts to master or control it completely. As Braidotti describes of the dominant understanding of consciousness, he lives in fear of *zoe*: “Relentlessly vital, *zoe* is endowed with endurance and resilience...*Zoe* carries on regardless: it is radically immanent. Consciousness attempts to contain it, but actually lives in fear of it. Such a life force is experienced as threatening by a mind that fears the loss of control” (*Nomadic Subjects* 110). He also lives a rather sedentary lifestyle alone in a large house in a gated community and seems to have little life or connection to the world outside of working, with the exception of meeting his one friend Gerhard, an openly homosexual fellow lawyer who embraces *zoe* by, for example, discussing his sexual encounters and desires openly, engaging in sexual acts in public, and often being late for meetings and work for love-related and other reasons.

The novel centers around a case Morris takes up when a kind of hippie wild man character, who turns out to be the wealthy Luc Tomlinson, comes into his office asking him to take his case to protect the baboons and the private reservation where he lives with them. Luc’s father threatens to build a resort there partly because it is a business venture and he is a capitalist, and partly because of a long family feud. Gerhard encourages Morris to be less reserved and to experience more of the uncertain, unpredictable, and non-normative aspects of life, like the dirty, unkempt Luc and the baboons. As the novel unfolds, the protagonist learns about himself as he learns more about baboons, appraising them as a worthy case, suggesting the interconnectivity of a positive appraisal of the

nonhumanness of subjectivity and of the nonhuman world. That is, as he embraces *zoe* as a positive passion, instead of a negative one which disrupts his orderly world of progress as he had before, he comes to value the complexities of the world in its open-ended becoming. He moves from being someone who fails to ever examine his own sexual feelings for the sake of order and not wanting to be inconvenienced by them, and who detests the disorder and dirt that animals bring into his life like his neighbors' dog, to a person that finds himself having sex with his client, Luc, in his home while the troop of baboons they've saved from a vivisection lab tear apart his furniture and cause havoc to the upstairs of his house.

The novel's title and image on the cover, explained in the first pages, offers a suggestive description of *zoe*. Morris describes: "I once saw a man transporting his Rottweiler in a shopping trolley through a No Dogs Allowed area: the beast was clearly well trained, and stayed put, but you could see that all it really wanted to do was chew the wheels off all the trolleys in the universe" (11). This image emphasizes the *zoe* of the animal and how it is maintained in consumerist culture or oedipalized for the benefits of human shoppers—the dog is thus a reluctant passenger. As Braidotti writes challenging the idea that dogs are only dirty, "Dogs are not only messy, but also openly sexual. They unleash a reservoir of images for sexual explicitness and even aggression, as well as unbridled freedom: they are a vehicle for *zoe*" (104). Like the dog in Morris' story, he himself is also reluctant as he somewhat hesitantly moves in the other direction from a *bios*-centred life to embrace *zoe*: at first, he is discomforted and bothered by the presence of Luc and the thought of taking on the case for the baboons. As Morris ends up exploring his sexual desires with Luc Tomlinson, he recognizes that the messiness of life

which is part of his own subjectivity, or the *zoe* which flows through him, is connected to this nonhuman force of life in animals. He begins to care for the baboons, Luc, and his neighbors' dog, which he formerly detested, when they plan to euthanize the dog because they are leaving for Australia and no longer have a use for it to protect their property.

To return to Deleuze and Guattari's point from *Kafka* that what we think is the law is really desire, *The Reluctant Passenger* reveals throughout the legal case for the baboons and through the behavior of various judges, lawyers, and government officials that the workings of the law are really the workings of desire. For example, we learn that Luc desires protection of the baboons and the protagonist, Morris, begins to care for the case at first because he desires Luc as the narrative later confirms. And it is Gerhard's embracing of *zoe* and his encouraging of the protagonist to take pleasure in the world in its becoming that leads him to take on the legal case for the baboons. In other words, Morris doesn't take on the case at first because he legally has to—the law doesn't require that he accept the case or that the baboons be protected, and indeed he appraises it as not much of a case at first. Yet his desire, which is before thought, compels him to venture out to the preserve to meet Luc and the baboons.

Further evidence of the law actually being desire is the revelation towards the novel's end that the authoritative figure Judge Conroy has been controlling most of the plot through underhanded deals, bribes, etc.—many of the same tactics that he and other judges used during the apartheid regime. Having lost the woman he loved, Joyce Tomlinson, to the wealthy Brick Tomlinson, Luc's father, while living a modest life to complete his law degree, Conroy spends the rest of his life seeking revenge for the lack of consummation of his desire for Joyce. We learn that he manipulates Brick to propose

the business development of the baboon's land, persuades Luc to seek out legal recourse to protect the reserve, and controls many of the other events of the plot; as he tells the protagonist of his manipulations, Nick queries: "So even in the capacity of puppet I was not indispensable?" (403). As Conroy's actions reveal, he disposes of others consistently through his authority as Judge for his own profit and to exact his private revenge.

As these behaviors bear out, what appear to be the workings of the law are actually the workings of desire. Another example of this occurs in the resignation of the Director of Nature Conservation and Development as he does so because he's blackmailed with the threat that his affair with his secretary will be revealed to his wife if he doesn't resign. Thus, the regulation of desire that pertains to the family is exploited here as capitalist desire attempts to reterritorialize the Director's desire to protect the animals and environment. Deleuze and Guattari explain that

These two coexistent states of desire are the two states of the law. On the one hand, there is the paranoiac transcendental law that never stops agitating a finite segment and making it into a completed object, crystallizing all over the place. On the other hand, there is the immanent schizo-law that functions like justice, an antilaw, a 'procedure' that will dismantle all the assemblages of the paranoiac law... To dismantle a machinic assemblage is to create and effectively take a line of escape that the becoming-animal could neither take nor create. (*Kafka* 59-60)

Thus, the attempt to control or limit desires, to force people into dominant subjectivities and fit the world nicely into concepts or categories becomes a paranoiac attempt to limit schizo-law. This desire to master the world is also something Jane Bennet challenges via Adorno's critique in his "negative dialectics" where he theorizes that violent behavior results from the frustration humans experience when the world does not fit our concepts (14). Conroy's behavior and description of his motivations confirm his paranoid and narcissistic attempts to reterritorialize desire via his position as authority and arbiter of

the law. Especially interesting here also is that like her son Luc, Joyce Tomlinson is closer to *zoe* in her embracing of desires as she often promotes Luc's free-spiritedness. In contrast, Conroy is colonized by Oedipus which defines his desire as lack in that his life is devoted to filling the lack created by Joyce's marriage to Brick, and to a lesser extent his desire to acquire wealth for the manipulation of others. Conroy acquires wealth mostly for the purpose of attempting to separate Joyce and Brick. Joyce, however, largely disregards capitalism's lure as it seems she loves Brick for himself, not for his finances. Of course, Brick's extreme adoption of capitalist logic leads him to view the baboons and their land as an opportunity for profit, and, anticipating this behavior, Conroy manipulates him into the business venture. The novel thus points to the precarious biopolitical situation for those seeking protection from the law when its arbiters are colonized by capitalist desire. In other words, Conroy's lack of Joyce in his life and his use of his position to accumulate wealth jeopardizes the protection and futures of South African communities, making "disposable" those his position was created to protect. The desires of Luc, Morris, and the other characters who assemble to save the baboons, however, work to challenge these capitalist and narcissistic desires outside of the limitations of the law.

As the novel reveals towards the end, Conroy occupies a god-like position in his manipulation of the plot. His desire for mastery suggests an extreme form of the kind of control and disgust for vagueness and untidiness that the protagonist exhibited earlier in the novel. As the protagonist and Conroy approach a relationship of mentor and mentee, Heyns positions the development of the protagonist's character as dependent on his relationship to desire or *zoe*. On one end of the spectrum, the side of transcendental law

sits Conroy, whereas Nick's best friend and fellow lawyer, Gerhard, embodies "immanent schizo-law" or desire and *zoe* as positive. Conroy describes his frustration with the failure of his plan, that even after rendering Brick to a state of poverty, he still has not separated Joyce from Brick, blaming this on the incalculable nature of humans: "again I failed to take into account the inconsistency of human beings. Joyce...was moved by his destitution to side with him" (404). Joyce's exceeding the mastery of Conroy's control suggests the ungovernability of Foucault's "*homo oeconomicus*" from *The Birth of Biopolitics*, as Cary Wolfe describes:

In opposition to what Foucault calls *homo juridicus* (or *homo legalis*)—the subject of law, rights, and sovereignty—we find in this new subject, *homo oeconomicus*, "an essentially and unconditionally irreducible element against any possible government," a "zone that is definitively inaccessible to any government action," "an atom of freedom in the face of all the conditions, undertakings, legislation, and prohibitions of a possible government." "The subject of interest," Foucault writes, thus "constantly overflows the subject of right. He is therefore irreducible to the subject of right. He is not absorbed by him." (*Before the Law* 23)

Conroy thought he could control her, assuming that she loved her husband for his money, that she was colonized by capitalist desire, but she desires her husband for himself. Even from his position of authority in the law, Conroy cannot master Joyce's desire or tame it to direct it towards himself. The protagonist Morris also presents challenges to power and government that pertain to Foucault's *homo oeconomicus* as he has broken numerous laws and no longer attempts to master his own desires.

In addition, Conroy offers in this scene his desire for an oedipal relation to the protagonist based on their similar orderliness and strict discipline:

As you know, I had been taken with your dissertation some years ago... and now, I thought... you could take the place of the son I never had... You reminded me of myself at your age: ascetic, high-principled, civilised... For the first time my

sterile obsession with avenging myself on the world for what I had missed yielded to a vision of what I might yet have. (404)

Here, Conroy's knowledge of the protagonist's homosexual act with Luc upsets his oedipal ambitions of fatherhood. More specifically, Morris's acting on his sexual desires with Luc caused Morris to miss his appointment with Conroy—the first time the protagonist ever missed or was late for an appointment—frustrating Conroy's ambitions of mastery. Frida Beckman's discussion of homosexuality in Deleuze's thought acknowledges how in addition to non-human sexuality, “[a]nother way of exploding the anthropomorphic, heterosexual, familial, and Oedipal organisations of sexuality is found in homosexuality” (16). She continues explaining that “[h]omosexuality, as Verena Andermatt Conley notes, is seen here not as an identity, but as a becoming” (16). Morris' now positive appraisal of desire which also motivates his protection of the baboons (who express sexual desire themselves) therefore enables the freedom from Conroy's complete mastery of most of the characters in the novel from his position as an authority of the law. Morris embraces his homosexual desires, instead of repressing or avoiding desire as he does at the beginning of the novel, in a way that enables a becoming away from the fixed identity of the subject of rights or the subject of capitalism that Conroy might have otherwise mastered.

Conroy's description of his ideal new society built on “wisdom of authority” also includes biopower in the form of “death squads” (404), biopower being that which Foucault argues derives from a desire to govern and control the *homo oeconomicus*. Indeed, Conroy describes his position of mastery here in a way that confirms his paranoid attempts to maintain and control desire. After suggesting that he wasn't trying to get

Joyce back, he comments: “What I resolved to do was to achieve mastery over myself and others, partly through self-control, partly through control of them. And whereas control of the self is a matter of discipline, control of others is a matter of money. Of this, as I have remarked, I soon had large sums, thanks to my contacts in countries officially hostile to South Africa” (401). Here, Conroy confirms the manipulation of his position of authority to exact his revenge, and along the way treating others, the land, and indeed the country of South Africa as disposable in service to exercising his personal grievances. In short, he adopts a relation to others of “eating” as discussed in an earlier chapter. Rosi Braidotti’s discussion of *zoe* and mastery (*Transpositions* 110-11), which I quoted earlier to describe Morris early in the novel, accurately describes Conroy’s behavior. While early on in the novel, the protagonist, like Conroy, attempts to live an exceedingly controlled and ordered lifestyle (and this is in large part why Conroy views him as an ideal candidate for his mentorship), his embracing of *zoe*, perhaps especially his embracing of his homosexual desire, frustrates the mastery and control of Conroy’s plan. The protagonist’s decision to embrace *zoe* as positive then becomes revolutionary as it creates a line of escape from the mastery and instrumentalization of the humans, animals, and environment of South Africa exhibited in the apartheid regime’s practices.

Baboons Before the Law

At one point in Heyns’ novel, after the baboons have been stolen from their home, Luc Tomlinson appears at Morris’ office to discuss the legal case for saving the baboons and their land from his father’s business plans to setup a luxury resort there at Cape Point. The conversation the characters engage in about the legal status of the baboons reveals the problems the law has with deciding on the status of animals, an issue

Fontenay discusses in her chapter titled “Between Possessions and Persons.” Luc expresses his desire to get a “court order” (259) for the baboons to which Morris responds: “Before I can get a court order I need to establish that somebody’s rights are being infringed” (259). Luc argues that it is obvious that the “chacs” rights aren’t being respected, noting how they’ve been taken away for medical testing and vivisection, an issue I’ll return to later. The protagonist replies “The rights of animals are a much debated area in law...” (259). At this, Luc replies angrily at Morris, the environmental lawyer: “I’m not interested in any fucking debate. Anybody who isn’t unbelievably stupid or dishonest *knows* what we’re doing to the animals...it just suits us to come up with *debates*. The law is...”. Morris attempts to finish Luc’s sentence offering “An ass?” to which Luc replies: “I was thinking of something more useless, like a...a eunuch.” (259) Their conversation about the law continues, describing how the law only protects certain people through their metaphor of eunuchs as Morris remarks “They guard the Sultan’s harem” and Luc replies “Yeah. Great if you’re the Sultan, not so great if you’re not” (259). The discussion of the law in terms of eunuchs and harems continues to develop the theme of sexuality in the novel, and also points to the exclusionary nature of the law, as it only protects those that are considered as belonging to the community. The discussion of the harem and the Sultan also perhaps highlights the discriminatory nature of the law’s privileging some and excluding others.

The protagonist attempts to end the conversation about the law and what can be done for the stolen baboons in a way that suggests he’s exhausted all available avenues to help them. He remarks: “Well...for better or for worse, the law, for all its shortcomings, is all we have to help us here” (259). Such a position, that we can only work within legal

discourse to improve the state of affairs for animals, greatly limits the political potential for addressing the problems facing animals. As Braidotti remarks, arguing for approaches outside of rights:

My point is that one should simply not stop there. Given the complexity and paradoxes of our times, there cannot be only one political frontline or precise strategy. Multiple positions are needed instead. This statement contains an inbuilt critique of egalitarian or emancipatory politics, in so far as it questions the desirability of that very norm which is being pursued in the logic of rights and the pursuit of equality (Irigaray 1987a). It need not be an indictment of this logic, however. Nomadic politics is a complex and multi-layered approach that does not pursue right lines or straight paths, but combines even potentially contradictory positions in a zigzagging pattern of mixed strategies. (*Transpositions* 134)

Where the protagonist, who lives most of his life according to society's normative rules, who lives extremely discursively or "by the book" as it were, seems to be giving up on the case for the baboons when they reach a dead end legally, his friend Gerhard intervenes, responding to Morris' claim that the law is all we have: "Not necessarily" (259). Gerhard continues critiquing the lack of power that pertains to the law: "But where, as Mr. Tomlinson has pointed out, the law so manifestly lacks balls, we may have to rely on our own...devices for a remedy" (260). The characters' desires for one another—Gerhard is sexually attracted to Luc, flirting with him, and as the consummation of Luc and Morris' relationship bears out later, they desire each other as well—and for the baboons, especially Luc's, result in their hatching a plan to save the baboons, outside the parameters of the law.

As a lawyer for Luc and the baboons, Morris employs some blackmailing of his own as a strategy to win the case for the preserved land home to the baboons with the help of a fellow lawyer and her husband and the rest of the group which have rallied around the cause including Gerhard, Morris' former girlfriend, and others. In doing so,

they are able also to reinstate Mr. Haartshorn, the original Director of Nature Conservation and Development, who testified in the case that he was blackmailed with evidence of his extra-marital affair and bribed into resigning after writing a report denying Brick Tomlinson's business proposal for the land under question. Morris and his team also use some compromising pictures of Minister Stanford from what are revealed to be sex parties for Ministers in the apartheid regime which involved their raping of young men in military uniforms at the one building in Rocklands, the preserve of the baboons (163). The photos were given to Morris by Joyce Tomlinson, and later we learn at the recommendation of Judge Conroy, to influence the Minister's testimony so that he confess that Haartshorn gave him the report denying development prior to resigning. The trial results in Haartshorn unseating the man who, in the old regime's pocket, replaced him and approved the proposal. For Conroy, this was a victory as it caused a large financial loss for Brick Tomlinson by preventing the development of the land. However, the baboons are still rendered unprotected after the ruling as they are stolen and taken to the vivisection laboratory and bulldozers appear at the nature preserve. Thus, even the legal ruling that uncovers the corruption and decides in favor of the baboons cannot protect them from the extra-legal means of the capitalist desire to dispose of and turn a profit from the baboons and their land. Heyns portrays in Morris a character who transforms his negative feelings about sexuality and animality into positive passions to work for the protection of the baboons, even outside the realm of the law.

How do we think outside of dominant thought and beyond its closures? When faced with the limits of law, the characters desires compel them to think differently. Braidotti explains that Deleuze and Irigaray "bank on the affective as a force capable of

freeing us from hegemonic habits of thinking. Affectivity in this scheme stands for the preconscious and the prediscursive: desire is not only unconscious but remains nontought at the very heart of our thought because it is what sustains the very activity of thinking. Our desires are that which evades us, in the very act of propelling us forth” (*Nomadic Subjects* 40). Thus, desire and affectivity enable Gerhard, Luc, and Nick to think differently, outside the parameters of the law to devise a plan to protect the baboons. Woodward argues of Luc’s appeals for the rights of baboons throughout the narrative that “Luc coaxes the reader to accept the concept of baboons as ‘creature[s]...of moral standing’ within modernity, to refer back to Nussbaum’s argument” (78). She further concludes her chapter on baboons noting that “the moral agency of baboons...has not been acknowledged by the South African constitution, which does not incorporate the subjectivity or even sentience of nonhuman animals” (90).

While Heyns’ novel certainly points to the lack of legal status for baboons, *The Reluctant Passenger*, in my view more strongly argues that it is necessary to think beyond the law, and acknowledges the role that desire can play in this thinking differently. That is, by acting on their desires for the baboons’ protection, and for Nick Morris by embracing *zoe* as positive instead of attempting to master it in a negative relation, these characters ensure the protection of the baboons, that the law cannot always guarantee. As Talal Asad argues in “What Do Human Rights Do? An Anthropological Inquiry,” rights do not always guarantee the protections they describe. Asad argues:

Human rights discourse may not...always be the best way (and it is certainly not the only way) to help remove oppression and relieve suffering among human animals, as well as non-human animals, or to preserve the world's natural and cultural inheritance. Working in hospices, providing comfort for the traumatized, the sick, the destitute, helping to rejuvenate depressed neighborhoods, are among

the activities that help to relieve human suffering. Such commitments remain outside the imperative of the law. (51)

In light of Heyns' novel, we might add rescuing baboons from vivisection and hiding them in one's house to Asad's list of the ways we can protect and prevent the suffering of nonhuman animals. Although *The Reluctant Passenger* focuses on the life of an environmental lawyer, the novel emphasizes that we have creative options for responding to animals outside of legal means, options that exist "outside the imperative of the law" (Asad).

As I've discussed in previous chapters, desire works across species boundaries, and again in *The Reluctant Passenger* an animal's desire and a human's desire for animals leads to the protection of the animals and their habitat. After Nick and the Adonis-like Luc Tomlinson walk naked with no deodorant on to meet the baboons (so as not to scare them off), Petrus, the alpha male chacma baboon, takes a sexual interest in the protagonist: "'Bloody amazing,' said Luc, almost admiringly. 'You must have really potent pheromones.' He added with an unconvincing affectation of concern, 'I'm afraid he wants to fuck you.'" (84). As his attentions turn to another baboon, Petrus does not consummate the sexual exchange in what would surely be his domination of Morris who fears his great strength and doesn't want to engage in sex with a nonhuman animal, but the sexual arousal that the protagonist and his pheromones caused in Petrus turns out to be the reason that Luc, the self-proclaimed friend of the baboons, initially finds the protagonist attractive sexually as well. The passage in Heyns' novel suggests the transversal nature of desire as it works across species and indicates the role that pheromones might play in sexual attraction. Like the desires that involve Lahnee O,

Minke, and Corsicana in *Tanuki Ichiban* and the Whale Caller and Sharisha in *The Whale Caller*, here again animals' desire and humans' desire for animals ensures the protection of the animals. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, the desire that arises out of assemblages (and not transcendental law) enables justice: "Transcendent and reified, seized by symbolical or allegorical exegeses, it [the abstract machine] opposes the real assemblages that are worth nothing except in themselves and that operate in an unlimited field of immanence—a field of justice as against the construction of the law" (87). Thus, the law is not the house of justice; instead justice dwells in the potential of desire that results from the immanence of our bodies and relations to others in assemblage. Of importance here is that this assemblage includes "black" South Africans as well in the figure of Nick's colleague and her husband Mhlobo who works at the *Mail & Guardian* and who helps with the case for the baboons as he aids in discovering the underhanded deals of the government officials. This environmentalism of the novel is therefore not a "white" or colonial conservationism but a postcolonial ecocriticism that benefits the larger community of South Africa. In this light, Heyns' novel might best be considered a "minor literature" in Deleuze and Guattari's terms as it portrays how the desires of a particular assemblage of human and nonhuman actors works against the mastery and control of dominant logics, refusing reterritorialization as the desire that emanates from the assemblage is a postcolonial desire that presents lines of flight out of the paranoid and narcissistic law and "eating" or instrumentalization of the community.

Gerhard's plan to retrieve the baboons from the vivisection ward demonstrates the creative potential of desire to work for the protection of Others beyond the realm of the law. The group learns that the evil former apartheid government scientist now turned

scientist for a corporate interest, colonel and doctor Johanna van der Merwe performs vivisection on the baboons and also has a project of “rehabilitating” homosexuals to heterosexuality. Pickover also highlights the horrifying fact that this testing on animals was done often to develop drugs and chemical weapons to dispose of and control those humans that opposed the apartheid government, and Woodward notes this from Pickover’s work as well. Pickover explains that this information came out in the Truth & Reconciliation hearings as she quotes Dumisa Ntsebesa who chaired the hearings:

‘When animals are being used by scientists for experiments to manufacture chemical and biological weapons, then society should condemn such experimentation in the strongest terms...Even more alarming is the fact that the people who were using their research skills and knowledge to manufacture murder weapons, were people in white coats with stethoscopes hanging out of their pockets. These people are normally associated with preservation of life. That is the most repulsive feature of the evidence that has come before us.’ (133)

Ntsebeza’s response to learning of the vivisection of and creation of weapons to destroy humans speaks to the biopolitics involved in this case as he notes that those who are supposed to aid in maintaining life, end up being the administrators of death.

In response to van der Merwe’s two projects, which render animals and non-dominant sexual desires (which upset her normative visions of the human and white nationalism) disposable to the control and mastery of science for the profit or benefit of the corporation and a particular vision of the nation-state, Gerhard devises a plan to distract her by offering himself up as a victim for her experiments so that the other members of the assemblage might sneak in to steal the baboons away. In offering his body, Gerhard renders himself vulnerable and lets himself be “eaten” by the State, sacrificing his body for the protection of the baboons. Gerhard explains that van der Merwe “was a Medical Officer in the South African Defence Force” and during that time

she “was in charge of some highly controversial experiments” (268). After Mhlobo informs Nick about van der Merwe’s horrifying science experiments and creation of drugs and weapons to harm the black community, Nick meets van der Merwe, dubbed “The Black Widow,” in a gay bar to setup the appointment where Gerhard will be “rehabilitated.” Van der Merwe expresses her views on sexuality here in a way that confirms her attempts to limit desire and to exercise biopolitical control over the South African population: “*in terms of all three of these paradigms [science, her womanhood, and Christianity] the function of the human species is to procreate itself responsibly*” (288). She continues offering here a speciesist perspective: “I believe, of course, that *as the Bible tells us, we have been instructed and empowered to rule over creation. The human being is the crown of creation, and as such is entitled to use the rest of creation for his benefit—within certain limits, of course*” (289). Such a view of animals confirms religion’s role in attempting to separate humans and animals, something I’ve also discussed as it is portrayed in *The Whale Caller*.

Van der Merwe continues to explain her convoluted arguments, at times insisting on the “naturalness” of her positions while at other points explaining the need for science to correct nature after the Fall. Immediately prior to Nick’s meeting with the Black Widow, Mhlobo informed him that one of the scientist’s projects was to sneak birth control into foods that black South Africans commonly eat as a way to control their populations. Here van der Merwe explains her position after Nick queries “Isn’t breeding natural?” (290). She replies “It’s natural only in the sense that the procreation of rabbits and chickens is natural. Nature in that sense is an accident, without plan or purpose. That is the creation *over* which the Lord gave us dominion. The higher nature is guided by

divine wisdom as manifested *through* science and technology, and informed *by* a sense of individual and national identity.” Here van der Merwe clearly dehumanizes black South Africans given that her eugenic project to control the population’s sexual reproduction is discussed in terms of rabbits and chickens in this case, and she thereby establishes a hierarchy where whites are superior to black South Africans. As the conversation turns to her project of making gay men straight, she explains that she takes it as her calling “To tell them what they should be, and to help them assume their rightful identities” (291). Such a perspective demonstrates an attempt to control desire and subjectivity, limiting sexuality to only normative and procreative practices that might benefit the State in a fantasy of white nationalism. Thus, human and animal sexualities—these desires—threaten her biopolitical ambitions and ideal vision of the nation. As it turns out van der Merwe, in a sense, rapes Gerhard “in the interests of science and the nation” after using a probe on him that was used to give baboons erections to extract their semen for use in experiments to develop the birth control for the black population.

Gerhard’s risking of his life, body, and perhaps sexual orientation for the baboons demonstrates a personal sacrifice that results from his desire for their protection. We learn later that the “reorientation” is unsuccessful as he admits having sex with his lover Clive directly after the experiment and perhaps Gerhard is not as distressed from the experience with the Black Widow as one might assume as he seems to view it as a challenge. As the assemblage of people risk their lives and well-being for the baboons, it’s clear that they’ve gone well beyond the law to ensure their protection. In addition, Nick’s development of character emphasizes the novel’s perspective that embracing *zoe* and desire as positive is a necessary intervention towards the protection of communities.

No longer the solitary, sedentary, order-loving, manageable subjects of complicit consumerism and model capitalist laborer, Morris becomes political, deals with the complexities and ungovernable aspects of life including his sexuality, and multiplies his attachments around a common interest or goal of a sustainable future not just for the environment and baboons, but also towards social reforms of the legal system through removing those “eaters” of the country from their positions of authority in the government— sustainable futures for the social conditions of South Africa.

Desire and Development in *The Heart of Redness*

Like Morris and the assemblage of characters who work against the business proposal to “develop” the land and remove the baboons from their home in *The Reluctant Passenger*, Camagu, the outsider to the village of Qolorha-By-the-Sea and protagonist of Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* (2000) works to protect the community and environment of the village. Mda also won the Sunday Times Fiction Prize for this novel which describes how Camagu and many of the other villagers, especially Qukezwa, argue against the gambling city that is proposed to develop the small village he has recently made his home and come to love. Offering a more sustainable alternative to the tourist town, Camagu expresses his view, which is really Qukezwa’s position, that the town developed by outside businesses will offer little work or profit for the townspeople and be detrimental to their environment. As in *The Reluctant Passenger*, the association of big business with the law is revealed as the developers attempt to intimidate the villagers’ opposition with claims of their connections to the government: “How will you stop us? The government has already approved this project. I belong to the ruling party. Many important people in the ruling party are directors of this company” (201). Again, here we

see another instance of the political systems that might check the instrumentalization of the world failing as a result of their compromised positions and colonization by a capitalist logic of desire. The audacity with which the developers assert their power demonstrates the way in which they abuse their positions of authority to administrate the law: they do not seek to protect the people and animals of the village as the law might happen to prescribe. Instead, the developers use their position of power to secure their personal wealth at the expense of the well-being of the community, continuing a practice of “eating” of the community and viewing it as disposable for their personal gains.

Somewhat similar to *The Reluctant Passenger*, where the character development of the protagonist is situated on a scale of *zoe*—between his embracing its uncertainties in the example of Gerhard and controlling or mastering it in the example of Conroy—Camagu’s character in *The Heart of Redness* also develops in relation to desire. In this case, how he apprehends it as oedipal, capitalist and as a lack or as positive, productive, and ethical is manifested through his thinking about his relationships with women and Western development: whether he sees such development as totally beneficial to the community thereby privileging Western civilization or, taking a more critical position, considers the harm that Western development may do to the village. His interest in relationships with two women of the village indicate his growth as a character as he is at first interested in the Unbeliever Bhonco’s daughter Xoliswa Ximiya: a teacher who no longer lives in the village, fetishizes everything about America, deplors local traditions like the practice of dyeing the face with ochre (“the redness” of the novel’s title), and who sees the advancement of the community towards a greater likeness to Western civilization as worth the sacrifice of the environment and animals of the village. As the

novel progresses, Camagu finds that he more strongly desires Qukezwa, daughter of the Believer Zim, who demonstrates an exceptional knowledge of and intimacy with the environment, the flora and fauna of the village, and local history and traditions. Particularly important here as well, is the believers expanded notion of community beyond the “human” that is evidenced in particular characters’ devotions to their horses, Camagu’s refusal to kill the snake of his totem that appears in his bedroom, and especially Zim’s love of and communication with weaverbirds.

In contrast to the developers’ plan, and based on the insight into “development” he learns from Qukezwa, Camagu proposes a smaller measure of a resort built with local materials by the villagers appealing to a different type of tourist who “like[s] to visit unspoiled places for the sole purpose of admiring the beauty of nature and watching birds without killing them” (239). Camagu’s alternative proposal, importantly, does not disregard the fact that the villagers lives would benefit from some increase in funds. That is, as I discussed in an earlier chapter through quotation of Huggan and Tiffin (20), he is not against “development” in and of itself. Instead, he is against those forms of development that position the developers in a parasitic relation to the environments and communities they develop, where they can better control and manipulate the community through their inclusion into the global capital system. His proposal is certainly one of development as well—the important difference here is that the proposal is developed so as to benefit the community as it values local flora and fauna, knowledge, and labor, making the community more sustainable instead of killing and devastating it as the capitalist casino and theme park would certainly achieve. Many of the villagers are divided into their different groups of Believers and Unbelievers: believers being

descendants of the followers of the prophetess Nongqawuse back in the times of The Cattle-Killing Movement in the 1850s.² As the novel jumps back and forth from the colonial past to the present, at times seamlessly, colonial and neocolonial themes are developed in relation to the environment and sustainability. The Believers are more traditional in their return to and appraisal of customs of the past and, as espoused by Zim, a prominent Believer, they are against the development of the tourist casino. However to be sure, Mda does not portray these two groups as totally at odds or pure in their difference: the groups are more complex as some of the Unbelievers value the traditions of the amaXhosa people, for example.

The leading Unbeliever, Bhonco, and his daughter view all signs of “development” and “progress” imposed by corporations as beneficial for the future of the village. As evidence of this, Bhonco discontinues some of the adornments of his traditional clothing and begins wearing business-style suits. As Braidotti describes, late capitalism endangers not only biodiversity but also human and cultural diversity: “It [disregard for biodiversity] also threatens cultural diversity by depleting the capital of human knowledge through the devalorization of local knowledge systems and world-views. On top of legitimating theft, these practices also devalue indigenous forms of knowledge, cultural and legal systems. Eurocentric models of scientific rationality and technological development damage human diversity” (53-4). The plans to make the village of Qolorha by the Sea into a casino would not only render the environment unsustainable but it would also dominate the culture and non-dominant, indigenous knowledge like, for example, the ways of fishing and other environmental lessons that the American-educated Camagu is continually learning from the villagers throughout the

novel. Alongside this are the high esteem Bhonco's daughter holds for America, the country where Camagu left to get a degree only to return for the elections of 1994. Camagu attempts to correct this view of America as a land of progress by describing the prevalent racism and imperialist practices that he experienced in everyday American life and foreign policy.

Camagu's Desire

The ethics of sustainability that informs Camagu's development of a co-op calls into question the capitalist notions of Western development. He discusses his cooperative with Dalton, the trade store owner: "I am talking of self-reliance where people do things for themselves. You are thinking like the businessman you are...you want a piece of the action. I do not want a piece of any action. This project will be fully owned by the villagers themselves and will be run by a committee elected by them in the true manner of cooperative societies" (248). His description confirms that his motive is "not for profit" in line with Braidotti's project, but for creating more positive passions, more joyful lives for the villagers than the current work some of the villagers perform as workers in the mines, service workers at hotels, and the potential jobs that would come from the casino. The narrator describes these workers as receiving racist treatment at the hands of white tourists and also receiving poor wages. Camagu makes his opinion of the casino proposal as an unsustainable option clear at one of the meetings the villagers have with the developers: "It is of national importance only to your company and shareholders, not to these people!" yells Camagu. "Jobs? Bah! They will lose more than they will gain from jobs. I tell you, people of Qolorha, these visitors are interested only in profits for their company. This sea will no longer belong to you. You will have to pay to use it"

(200). Part of the loss from these new jobs will include the devaluing of local customs, knowledge, and labor and the inclusion of the work done by villagers into the economy of exchange in capitalism that translates into profit for the Western developers. Camagu's desire is clearly for the people, and this desire for the community stems from his initial desire for Qukezwa and his knowledge of its importance for her; his anti-oedipal desire therefore counters the capitalist desire of the developers.

As mentioned earlier, Camagu arrives at his position on the proposal for the casino resort after his discussions with Qukezwa. Indeed, the arguments he voices at the village meeting with the developers are those she expressed to him earlier in the novel. Having a PhD in "communication and economic development" (29) from the United States, Camagu at first finds the casino proposal unproblematic. In fact, early in the novel he adopts more of a capitalist logic of desire as lack and it is Qukezwa's teachings that change his views on desire and his relation to Others. At the novel's outset Camagu is about to leave South Africa to return to America for a job in his career in economic development, and yet it is his desire that derails his trip, it is desire that brings him to Qolorha. As in *The Whale Caller*, Mda here distinguishes the protagonist's desire from narcissistic desire. After hearing the song of a funeral singer, a "makoti" (28), he cannot get her out of his mind:

He becomes breathless when he thinks of her. He is ashamed that the pangs of his famous lust are attacking him on such a solemn occasion. But he quickly decides it is not lust. Otherwise parts of his body would be running amok. No, he does not think of her in those terms. She is more like a spirit that can comfort him and heal his pain. A mothering spirit. And this alarms him, for he has never thought of any woman like that before. (28)

While all of his relations to women previously are of a sexual and selfish nature, and he is

ethically deficient in this regard as he pays his servant to have sex with him in a way that the narrator compares to the rape of a slave by her master (28), his desire for this woman is not of a self-serving kind; it is this desire for her that motivates him to seek her out again in Qolorha. Thus, while he is self-interested and narcissistic in his use of others for sexual pleasure at the novel's beginning, he comes to approach desire differently after this experience with the makoti and after learning from Qukezwa. This is perhaps another reason why we might regard Qukezwa as "the quintessential ecofeminist" (113), as Harry Sewlall dubs her for her thorough knowledge of the plants and animals of her habitat, her challenges to the patriarchal traditions of the villagers, her dressing in traditional garb, and her educating others in the village about the environment and living in a sustainable way.

Camagu's once capitalist desire gets deterritorialized and becomes postcolonial as he no longer narcissistically spends his time seeking his own pleasures and profits. Qukezwa draws attention to the colonization of his thought that results from his American PhD in economic development and highlights how this colonization informs his initial thoughts about the proposal for the casino resort: "Vathiswa says they made you a doctor in the land of the white man after you finished all the knowledge in the world. But you are so dumb. White man's education has made you stupid. This whole sea will belong to tourists and their boats and their water sports. Those women will no longer harvest the sea for their own food and to sell at the Blue Flamingo. Water sports will take over our sea!" (103). Like Nongqawuse, Qukezwa desires to protect her community, a community which includes animals, plants, and the people of Qolorha. After Camagu argues that the village will be paid for this and the development will create jobs, she

further challenges his thinking:

What do villagers know about working in casinos?...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 will 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)³

Thus, it is Qukezwa who is responsible for protecting the community alongside the changed Camagu who decides to stay in Qolorha instead of leaving for America for his own financial gains, a decision to stay in South Africa that Nick Morris makes as well in *The Reluctant Passenger*; therefore Anthony Vital's claim that "the United States is represented also as providing the central character with the economic understanding that protects the local from outside exploitation" (306) seems to fail to recognize Qukezwa's knowledge and influence on Camagu's thought and desire. Qukezwa's assessment of the proposal is accurate and the way in which the proposal is framed to benefit the community works just like traditional colonial logic of the civilizing mission, where the colonizer's behavior is presented as a benefit for the people, when really its goal is to further disenfranchise them so that the politicians and developers can "eat." Mda points to this colonial history as well in portraying George Gray's taking of the Xhosa's land in return for "civilizing" them.

Biopolitics in Qolorha

This ethics of sustainability in *The Heart of Redness* is not one of moral universalism, but instead one that acknowledges the importance of local or indigenous knowledge. Harry Sewlall describes the novel's representation of this knowledge by pointing to the importance of the local court's treatment of Qukezwa for cutting down

foreign trees: “What emerges at the village trial of Qukezwa is that the indigenous people of this land have always had their own laws to protect the environment. While Qukezwa’s actions are considered criminal because there are no laws proscribing wattle trees, there are traditional laws in place which allow the destruction of noxious weeds and plants, such as the mimosa” (114). The novel highlights multiplicities of perspectives, times, and values concurrently, as mentioned in the contrasting positions of the Believers and Unbelievers, but also in Dalton and Camagu’s different plans for the village as either a cultural tourism site or a nature tourist site. As Braidotti explains, for her nomadic ethics, “Consciousness gets redefined as an affirmative function in the sense of synchronizing complex differences and allowing them to coexist” (110-111). Woodward also draws attention to the importance of both Xhosa and Khoikhoi knowledge and traditions for environmentalist characters of Qolorha in her chapter which discusses *The Heart of Redness*.

The administration of the local laws of the amaXhosa reveals that the elders of the village who make rulings do not view the law as static or transcendental. For example, although the “old law” (213) regards any woman not married as a minor, they listen to the unwed twenty year old Qukezwa’s arguments against this law: “in the New South Africa where there is no discrimination, it does not work” (213). At this, the chief replies: “Now she wants to teach us about the law” (213). While Bhonco’s daughter Xoliswa Ximiya is officially a teacher, it is Qukezwa who becomes a more active teacher in the community here. Making biopolitical decisions about what must be sacrificed for the future of the community, Qukezwa explains to the elders why she cut the trees: “The trees that I destroyed are as harmful as the inkberry. They are the lantana and wattle trees.

They come from other countries...from Central America, from Australia...to suffocate our trees. They are dangerous trees that need to be destroyed” (216). At this Bhonco replies that the law doesn’t allow for these particular trees to be destroyed, although it does allow for the killing of others, and Qukezwa replies: “Then the law must be changed...It is an enemy since we do not have enough water in this country” (216). Bhonco is positioned here as upholding the law at all costs, further proving that it is desire which is actually in the place of law. While the ruling of the elders on this case gets interrupted by a fire that burns a few of the villagers’ homes, the elders mostly disagree with Bhonco as it’s clear that he is just interested in punishing Qukezwa because she is a Believer, and Zim’s daughter at that. Bhonco’s desire is reterritorialized in capitalist terms, seeing as he has no problem with the development of the casino city which would break these laws, a project which the developers reveal involves the killing of many of the villages trees: “How can we call it a grove when we’re going to cut down all these trees to make way for the rides?” In response, the other developer remarks: “we’ll plant other trees imported from England. We’ll uproot a lot of these native shrubs and wild bushes and plant a beautiful English garden” (202-203). In contrast to the developers and Bhonco whose desire is self-interested, and it is perhaps significant in this regard that Bhonco’s frustrations with his inability to secure his old age pension from the government is a frequent sore spot for him throughout the novel, Qukezwa’s actions are motivated by a desire to protect her community, in this instance, specifically the local plants and water supply of Qolorha.

As the history of the amaXhosa wars with the British colonists and Qukezwa’s killing of colonizing plants bear out, the response to new things and deciding on their

belonging to the community or not often involves a consideration of how these new people and things harm or “eat” the community or if they further protect it. Bhonco at times wants to expel Dalton, descendent of a British colonial officer, and Camagu, who at times he calls a foreigner. He decides that these “outsiders” do not belong to the village community in relation to how their presence or absence would personally benefit him, not the larger community. He has constant arguments and later a violent encounter with Dalton, for example. Also, Camagu’s presence was obviously not a problem when Bhonco welcomes him energetically at first at the thought that he might marry his daughter. As it becomes clear that Camagu’s desire is for Qukezwa instead, Bhonco argues that these two should be expelled from the community for their not being “pure” amaXhosa or their not being born in Qolorha. However, this logic of exclusion based on categories only suits his desire for “development” and what he thinks will be his personal benefit and profit. Indeed, he often disavows the importance of local knowledge, allowing Western notions of “development” and civilization to inform his thinking about biopolitical decisions. In building his case against Qukezwa for destroying the colonizing trees, he argues that it is unjust to absolve her when “white tourists” were recently arrested for “smuggling cycads” and boys were also punished “for killing the red-winged starling, the *isomi* bird” (216). The elders reply to Bhonco’s argument noting the difference of life under consideration here: “Shall we now be required to teach revered elders like Bhonco about our taboos? It is a sin to kill *isomi*. Yes, boys love its delicious meat that tastes like chicken. But from the time we were young we were taught never to kill *isomi*... We only *desired* them from a distance” (217, emphasis added). The traditional laws and words of the elders here express a desire for animals that results in

the community seeking to protect them from being eaten. In contrast, Qukezwa, evaluates newcomers to the community in relation to the harm they may cause or, alternatively, their ability to further protect and sustain the community. While not amaXhosa, but a descendant of a different people, Camagu also honors the knowledge and traditions of his people in his biopolitics as in the scene where he refuses to kill or disturb the snake he finds in his bed, it being his totem animal.

Bhonco's attempts to dispel Camagu and Dalton from the community as well as his approval of the sacrifice of the nonhuman life of Qolorha for the casino city suggests that his approach to the law relates to what Cary Wolfe and Derrida call an autoimmunitary problem. Wolfe writes about the need to deconstruct species and race as way to prevent this problem: "race and species must, in turn, give way to their own deconstruction in favor of a more highly differentiated thinking of life in relation to biopower, if the immunitary is not to turn more or less automatically into the autoimmunitary" (56). In other words, Bhonco's use of these categories at times as a way to challenge the membership of these Others in the community risks the sustainability of the community in the expelling of its diversity, especially considering that it is Dalton and Camagu who, with the assemblage of other community members, ultimately successfully resist and prevent the development of the casino city. Wolfe discusses the desire for Sameness that pertains to the law and how Derrida's notion of "hospitality" can challenge this problem in its ethical response to the Other:

...the reason that this [the ideal of unconditional hospitality] is crucial to biopolitical thought is that it keeps that zone of immunological protection from automatically turning to, as Derrida puts it, an autoimmune disorder. The idea is that once you start drawing lines between humans and animals, Aryans and Jews, Muslims and Christians, that is always going to lead to the runaway train process

of an autoimmune disorder. So eventually, you know, how Aryan is Aryan enough? How Christian is Christian enough? How human is human enough? How 'proper,' to go back to Heidegger, is proper enough? The horizon of unconditional hospitality as something to strive for is precisely calculated to remind you that whatever those lines are that you are drawing have to be always taken under erasure, *even as*, pragmatically those lines have to be drawn and *are* drawn all the time. ("After Animality" 184)

Bhonco's desire to dispel particular members out of the community then evidences this kind of autoimmune disorder as he accuses people of not being Xhosa enough. In essence, Bhonco seeks to improve himself, and to that end approves of the casino city, not recognizing its neo-colonial nature, thus advocating the sacrifice of the local land, animals, and other members of his community for the building of the casino. In contrast, the other characters consider sacrifice in terms of the protection of their community, including its human and nonhuman members.

Qukezwa, for example, responds to the biopolitical problems of protecting her community, with hospitality. Wolfe quotes Derrida's description of hospitality: "pure and unconditional hospitality, hospitality *itself*, opens or is in advance open to someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolutely foreign *visitor*, as a new *arrival*, nonidentifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other" (*Before the Law* 92). Rather than write off or automatically exclude foreigners to the community, Qukezwa responds ethically to Camagu and the other new arrivants to Qolorha, including flora and fauna. To be sure, she does not welcome everything in an unconditional hospitality because to do so as Wolfe and Derrida note would be to become apolitical and unethical. As Wolfe notes, critiquing the law from a perspective of hospitality:

Hospitality, *to be* hospitality, to be real, must be something 'determinate' and 'conditioned'; my laws will not protect you if they aren't. But this act of selection and discrimination, in its contingency and finitude, is precisely what opens it to

the other and to the future. This is why discrimination, selection, self-reference, and exclusion cannot be avoided, and it is also why the refusal to take seriously the differences between different forms of life—bonobos versus sunflowers, let's say—as subjects of immunitary protection is, as they used to say in the 1970s, a 'cop out.' (103-104)

Qukezwa clearly exercises discrimination in deciding on which plants, animals, and people are welcome to be part of her community and which aren't, often on the basis of their colonizing or harming the life and futures of the other members of the community.

Toward the novel's end, the community stops the casino development when Dalton gets a court order declaring Qolorha a "national heritage site" (269) something Camagu had suggested earlier in response to the developers' "How will you stop us?" The location's history of Nongqawuse's prophecies that led to the Cattle-Killing Movement renders it worthy as a potential site deserving protection. As Dalton protects the community in a round-about legal way, Mda's novel provides another example of how, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, desire exists where we think there is law to protect communities. Camagu and Dalton, in their desire to protect the community, think of this alternative way to ensure the casino development will not go through. Thus, in addition to Qukezwa's ethical response to protecting her community, Nongqawuse's prophecies, her desire to protect the community in thinking towards the future that led to the Cattle-Killing Movement in the 1850s in response to colonization that brought with it lung-disease for the cattle, disease for amaXhosa's crops, and the starvation of many of the amaXhosa, while tragic, continues to protect her people via the national heritage site enabling further sustainable futures. Laura Wright notes this as well: "If there is any hope to be had, the polyphonic and temporally simultaneous structure of the text seems to suggest, it is in the cyclical and nonlinear nature of history wherein Nongqawuse can be

read at once as the cause of a people's destruction in the past and, through her cultural cache as such a figure, their salvation in the present and as the girl whose failed prophecy in 1856 is fulfilled late in the twentieth century" (251).⁴ Although the following of the prophecy of Nongqawuse was devastating for the amaXhosa, Mda offers it as an ethical attempt to bolster the immunity of the community. That is, in light of the European invasion of lungsickness infecting the cattle and drawing from local knowledge and tradition, Nongqawuse's prophecy that inspired the killing of the cattle attempted to secure a future for the community.

J.B. Peires explains the biological conditions that resulted from colonial contact and led to the Cattle-Killing:

An important cause of the Cattle-Killing was the lungsickness epidemic which reached Xhosaland in 1855. Cattle mortality was as high as one half to two thirds in some places, and many Xhosa lost all their cattle. The great believer Chief Phatho, for example, lost 96 percent of his 2,500 cattle...The Xhosa began to believe that their cattle were rotten and impure, and that they might as well kill them since they were probably going to die anyway. (312)

In this light, part of the logic that informs the movement is the attempt to limit the spread of the disease, to prevent it from attacking all the cattle. Another aspect of the logic of sacrificing the cattle involved the hope that it would remove the British colonists:

"Cattle-Killing was born partly out of Xhosa frustration at colonial domination and partly out of the hope awakened by the news that the Russians had beaten the English....Among the many predictions that circulated at the time was one to the effect that the English, like all other evil things, would be swept away in the great storm which would precede the resurrection of the dead" (Peires 316). Peires also explains that, alternatively, many also believed the sacrifice would amend the conflicts and bring peace between the British and

amaXhosa nation. Perhaps the greatest reason for the British “success” in colonizing the amaXhosa then is this cattle disease that “was brought to South Africa in September 1853 by a Dutch ship carrying Friesland bulls” (Peires 70) as it functioned essentially as a kind of biological weapon in the war between the British and amaXhosa. The slaughtering of the cattle in the attempt to prevent the spread of this disease is an exercise in biopolitics. As Wolfe notes in critiquing affirmative biopolitics that fail to consider the difference of life—those approaches that view all life as equal—such an approach isn’t practical (or perhaps desirable) given the destructive nature of some life forms: “do we extend ‘unconditional hospitality’ to anthrax and ebola virus, to SARS?” (*Before the Law* 93).

In the face of such an attack on the immune system of the community, King Sarhili’s decision to follow the words of the prophetess exercises an ethical attempt to protect and sustain the community. Of course, as the history bears out, the situation and decision was extremely devastating: one of the figures offered for the drop in the human population of the Xhosa people from the Cattle-Killing is an estimated loss of 40,000 over a two year period. Also 400,000 cattle were slaughtered and the Xhosa lost 600,000 acres of land to the British (Peires 319). These tragic figures highlight the vulnerability of bodies that humans and animals share; they also point to the great dependence of the community on these nonhuman others for survival. Emphasizing our limited knowledge and that to act at all we can only respond with a conditional hospitality, Wolfe writes of biopolitics: “We *must* choose, and by definition we *cannot* choose everyone and everything at once. But this is precisely what ensures that, *in* the future, we *will have been wrong*. Our ‘determinate’ act of justice now will have been shown to be *too* determinate, revealed to have left someone or something out” (104). While the Cattle-

Killing may appear to have been “wrong” from the perspective of today as it can be seen as being responsible in part for the devastation of the amaXhosa community—Peires notes that some view it as a mass-suicide, although he clearly disagrees with this view—in light of the biopolitical decisions exercised by Qukezwa in the present of *The Heart of Redness*, Mda situates the movement as an attempt to act politically and ethically to protect the community. Mda’s novel emphasizes, as Peires also argues, that the tragic deaths of the amaXhosa community were caused by the colonizing disease of lungsickness as well as the colonizing British, both of which established a relationship of “eating” these communities. Just like the development project of the casino city which attempts to colonize and devastate the community, the British colonization during the Cattle-Killing Movement was geared towards ruining the AmaXhosa nation:

The Cattle-Killing cannot be divorced from the colonial situation which was imposed on the Xhosa in 1847 by Sir Harry Smith. . . it should be remembered that the essential objectives of Grey [Sir George Grey] were identical to those of Smith and of colonial rule generally: to destroy the political and economic independence of the Xhosa, to bring them under British law and administration, to make their land and their labor available to white settlers, and to reshape their religious and cultural institutions on European and Christian models. (Peires 313)

Further emphasizing the violence of the international development company’s proposal and its resemblance to British colonization is Derrida’s characterization of globalization, which Wolfe cites: “[a]s Leonard Lawlor observes. . . for Derrida ‘*globalization is war ‘by other means.*’ Even more, the violence of this war, which is violence against the living in general, is autoimmune precisely because it is global and therefore limitless” (*Before the Law* 100). By deterritorializing desire away from the narcissism of colonization and global capitalism toward a postcolonial desire, one for the benefit of the members of the community, Qukezwa and the others of the assemblage including Camagu and Dalton

work to fend off the disposal of the community by an international development corporation, exercising an ethical biopolitics that continues in the tradition of the prophetess, and, for the time being, she temporarily secures her community's protection and its potential for a future.

Conclusion: Towards Sustainable Futures

In addition to the government officials who support the casino in *The Heart of Redness*, Chief Xikixa who is charged with protecting the land where it “is illegal to build within a kilometer of the coast” also puts his own profits and pleasure ahead of the community. He gives the land away to wealthy white people and “some well-to-do blacks,” some of whom build “right on the seashore,” for bribes such as a “bottle of brandy” and later on “cellphones and satellite dishes” (68). These products of globalized capitalism bring the village of Qolorha into the global economy, threatening the life and future of the community as it is rendered exchangeable for a cheap price and for the pleasure and profit of a few. In both Heyns and Mda's novels, the commodification of the lands of local communities and the disposing or harming of the interests of their residents, human and nonhuman, are thwarted through what I'm describing as the *postcolonial desire* of an assemblage of characters, a desire for the community in a broad sense that disrupts and resists the colonizing ambitions of capitalism and its adherents. As Braidotti argues, in the context of biotechnology, the nonhuman which she calls *zoe* offers resistances to and exceeds capitalism: “Nature is more than the sum of its marketable appropriations: it is also an agent that remains beyond the reach of domestication and commodification” (*Transpositions* 47). If capitalism seeks to commodify all of life and proliferate its logic of desire of lack through colonizing the

unconscious, *postcolonial desire* describes a potential of desiring machines that escapes, resists, or undoes this colonization in a line of flight away from capitalism's reterritorialization of desire, reassembling communities around an ethics of sustainability instead of an accumulation of personal profit.

Where some global capitalists see an opportunity in the "under-developed" lands or villages to secure a profit at the expense of destroying and devastating its inhabitants, the resistances offered by these human and nonhuman assemblages disrupt the capitalist machine and, for the time being, protect the futures of their homes. In both *The Reluctant Passenger* and *The Heart of Redness*, the laws passed to protect these communities repeatedly fail to do so, often as a result of the compromised position of those tasked with upholding the law. While these authorities, judges, and politicians seek their own profit at the expense of the community, they reveal their colonization by capitalist logic. Through weaving the history of the Cattle-Killing movement into the narrative about the present day proposed casino city, Zakes Mda emphasizes the colonial legacy in which global capitalism operates and continues in the practices of capitalists and government officials from developed countries and their counterparts in "developing nations." While Heyns' novel focuses more specifically on protecting a troop of baboons instead of protecting a larger community of human and nonhumans as in Mda's novel, the critique of the capitalist development of the baboon's home in the nature preserve also undermines the workings of the apartheid regime more broadly, in this case the animal testing and other exercises in biopower of the apartheid state on South African bodies. For both novelists then, the explicit violence exerted on communities, on bodies, and on the land in the pasts of colonialism and apartheid reappears in a subtler and more nuanced fashion in the

present of late capitalism through the weakened and compromised administration of the law which fails to fully protect communities from the threats of disposal and violence. Mda and Heyns represent desire as a resistance to this neo-colonial threat that might better protect these communities and their futures from being consumed by the capitalist machine.

Notes

1. Derrida also emphasizes this emptiness in noting the lack of an origin for the law in “Before the Law:” “What is deferred forever till death is entry into the law itself, which is nothing other than that which dictates the delay...What *must not* and cannot be approached is the origin of *difference*: it must not be presented or represented and above all not penetrated. That is the law of the law, the process of a law whose subject we can never say, ‘There it is,’ it is here or there.” (205)

2. Mda draws significantly from J.B. Peires’ *The Dead Will Arise*, a historical account of the Cattle-Killing Movement, for the historical information he includes in his book. Indeed, he dedicates the book in part to Peires. In *The Dead Will Arise*, Peires details how although extremely tragic for the amaXhosa, Nongqawuse’s prophecies and the decision to slaughter cattle resulted out of extreme circumstances of British colonization and disease. The slaughter of most of the amaXhosa cattle then offers an example of a biopolitical issue. For example, Peires writes “that the Cattle-Killing was a logical and rational response, perhaps even an inevitable response, by a nation driven to desperation by pressures that people today can barely imagine. I further believe, and I trust that the book will demonstrate this too, that the Cattle-Killing would not have been so fatal an error had it not been for the measures of Governor Grey, which first encouraged and then capitalized on the movement” (x). The unfortunate coincidence of increased pressure from British colonization and the lungsickness that devastated their cattle therefore led to the amaXhosa decision to slaughter their cattle as a way to preserve their remaining community. As Peires and Mda’s novel bears out, the decision to slaughter the cattle after the telling of Nongqawuse’s prophecies therefore figured as an attempt to secure the futurity of the amaXhosa people, even while it ultimately caused so many of its people to die.

3. In a note on the previous chapter I mentioned the film *Battle for Brooklyn*, a film about the proposed sports arena for a Brooklyn community, in discussing the corruption of

government officials in Mda's *The Mother of All Eating*. Again here, in *The Heart of Redness* the parallels between the "development" proposal portrayed for the community in Brooklyn, New York and the one for Qolorha are uncanny, including many of the same empty promises and problems that Qukezwa describes.

4. Wright also seems to offer a critique of the alternative proposals that Dalton and Camagu offer when she says that there is "an uncomfortable verisimilitude between Camagu's ecotourist business venture and Dalton's invented capitalistic model in terms of the cultural village; the only difference is the product being markets: culture or nature" (251-2). Wright's critique of the project is warranted, and yet, not all capitalist "development" is the same and, as Huggan and Tiffin suggest, part of a postcolonial ecocriticism is to challenge parasitic development, not all kinds of development (20). Their alternative proposals prevent the immediate "development" of the casino which would surely spell the ruin of the community, rendering it unsustainable. Mda seems to acknowledge that this approach of ecotourism is not exactly the most radical approach either, as his later novel, *The Whale Caller* offers a much more revolutionary politics, as I've argued in an earlier chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CODA: DESIRING ALIENS & HOSPITALITY IN DISTRICT 9

Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* offers an example from science fiction for thinking about the status of another group who find themselves in precarious relation to the community and its protections: refugees. The film portrays an alien population whose

ship has arrived in a damaged and weakened state to hover above Johannesburg, South Africa in 1982. Blomkamp makes use of these science fiction aliens to comment on the country's apartheid past and to look forward to the current problems of refugees in the film's 2010 present setting. While not exactly regarded as animals, the aliens of *District 9*, often referred to as "prawns," are marked as a different non-human species who are similarly excluded by this categorization from the protections of the human community. It is not surprising in this regard then that the film also invokes the past situation for the "coloureds" of District 6 and incidents like the demolition of Sophiatown in South Africa's history of apartheid, as well as other human atrocities from history and the present exclusions that humans and animals experience.¹ The lives of those who find themselves outside the human community and its protections are therefore made more "disposable" to its security, wealth, and well-being, as Rosi Braidotti might put it, more "dispensable" as Bernard Magubane would have it, and are more susceptible to a "non-criminal putting to death" as Derrida and Agamben describe (Wolfe, *Before the Law* 9).

The film succeeds in touching upon these specific human atrocities through its portrayal of a non-human species in part because of the nature of biopolitics. After highlighting "Foucault's recognition that you can't talk about biopolitics without talking about race," Cary Wolfe adds "and you can't talk about race without talking about species, simply because both categories—as history well shows—are so notoriously pliable and unstable, constantly bleeding into and out of each other" (43). The film replaces the signs used to manage space during apartheid—"whites only" and "non-whites"—with signs marking off businesses and spaces as for "humans" and "non-humans" to show the ways in which this logic draws on categories of race and species.

Like the biopolitical questions raised in the last chapter about the arrival of foreign humans and nonhumans to the local community portrayed in Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*, Blomkamp's film offers a reflection on the hospitality, or denial of hospitality, that these aliens receive from the larger community of Johannesburg. The film nicely brings together many of the biopolitical issues raised in this study about spatial and population management, the administration of life and death, the commodification of life, scientific testing on bodies, and, of course, the role of desire in all of this.

Early on in *District 9* a man (presumably a resident of Johannesburg) is being interviewed about the presence of the aliens there and comments that "If they were from another country, we might understand, but they are not even from this planet at all." As an excuse for his lack of openness to the aliens, this comment demonstrates what Derrida might call a "conditional hospitality" (25) in that it imposes the condition on the hospitality being offered that the other must come from another country. While other interviewees offer far more violent responses in suggesting that the aliens "must go" or that they should be killed with a specially-designed virus through biological warfare, this first seemingly less innocuous statement performs a failed hospitality that is in fact in line with these more extreme views. That is, by offering hospitality only on the condition that the foreigner is from a nation-state, the commenter establishes a boundary in advance where the aliens exist in what Agamben calls a "zone of exception" (98) outside of the human community of Johannesburg, although still inside the city in a spatial sense and therefore under its legal jurisdiction. Agamben describes this exception as "a limit zone between life and death, inside and outside, in which they [people in the camp] were no longer anything but bare life" (Agamben 91). Despite early efforts of humanitarian aid

for the aliens in the form of UIO aid workers, the area initially chosen to help and feed the malnourished aliens becomes the “militarized” and fenced-in zone of *District 9* as the sociologist in the film, Sarah Livingstone, reports. Writing about postcolonial asylum seekers, David Farrier explains the situation which occurs at the point of contact between the State and the stranger: “Sovereign power is invested in keeping hospitality conditional, and thus the moment of the stranger’s arrival at the border becomes a contest between the stranger’s right to access, and the host’s right to deny it, exercised as Derrida points out, ‘by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence’” (167). The aliens experience this violence as they occupy this space of “bare life,” being denied entry into the community as subjects of rights.²

In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida suggests a more ethical openness to the foreigner in an “unlimited hospitality.” In this concept, Derrida specifically mentions nonhumans as included in those to which we must be hospitable for a true hospitality: “Let us say yes *to who or what turns up*...whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female” (77). Saying yes “*to who or what turns up*” then offers a much more inclusive hospitality, one not based on the category of the human and its exclusivity.³ Saying yes to all-comers motivates the ethics of an unconditional hospitality rather than the conditional statement expressed in the first commenter’s remark which offers a hospitality open only to those from other countries, those whose rights are (or were at some point) granted to them as subjects of other nation-states. In *Before the Law*, Cary Wolfe summarizes Hannah Arendt’s critique of the notion of universal rights that points to this problem of the necessity of a nation-state for the guarantee of rights: “Arendt brilliantly argues in *The*

Origins of Totalitarianism that the idea of ‘universal human rights’ is dubious because it attempts to ground the standing of the subject of rights in the mere biological designation of the human being as *Homo sapiens*, whereas rights themselves are always a product of membership in a political community” (Wolfe 6-7). Thus, the commenter’s position defines the limits of hospitality as a contract between subjects of rights; therefore aliens from another planet, presumably without a nation-state recognized by humans, are excluded from being subjects of rights and are not extended the protections of the community. This conditional hospitality also exercises the mastery of colonialism as Farrier argues in explaining the distinction between a foreigner from another country and an “absolute other”:

‘Foreigner’ is thus equated with legitimacy, rights, and (limited) *access*. By contrast, the absolute other is unknown and anonymous, and thus the theoretical recipient of a hospitality that does not ask for reciprocity or deference of any sort. Here asylum issues and postcolonial issues intersect: the ‘coloniality’ of conditional hospitality perpetuates the colonial structure—of the host/master—in the home; absolute hospitality confounds the host’s sovereign right to define the stranger, conferring instead an ‘*unquestioning* welcome’. (167)

Unconditional hospitality, by contrast, offers a more radical potential for inclusion into the community and its protections to those persons or things who find themselves outside of the protections of nation-states. This unconditional hospitality figures as an openness to the Other that does not seek to automatically make that other fully present to knowledge through mastery, but instead allows the other to remain, in part, different. As Wolfe explains, this unconditional hospitality is an impossibility in practice (92), as it would likely kill the community in allowing all life to thrive equally (even deadly viruses, etc.) and prevent ethical action in its infinite openness. Nonetheless, he argues it should still motivate possible, concrete actions.

The Space of the Camp and the Law

The failed hospitality towards the aliens in the film is motivated in part by the citizens' relationships to national space. As argued in the first chapter through Ghassan Hage's work on spatial imaginaries and white supremacy, biopolitics takes on a spatial dimension in its racist and speciesist forms as populations are managed in tightly patrolled areas to prevent things like miscegenation or "contamination" and other threats—that stem from desire, materiality, and population—to the ethnocentric State's aspirations of biological purity and its biopower. Agamben also identifies the concerns with space in biopolitical thought in his discussion of "the camp"⁴ and the relationship between land, birth, and nationalism. Like the discomfort felt by characters in *Disgrace* when the presence of others reaches a threshold of "too many," the citizens of Johannesburg are portrayed in Blomkamp's film as attempting to restore the homeliness of their city by removing the aliens. Violent riots and statements against the aliens—the news headline reads "non-humans violently evicted from townships"—confirm that these citizens occupy a privileged position in relation to the land as subjects of right. As "managers of national space" (Hage) they take it upon themselves and call on their government to remove these alien others from the city and from close-proximity to it, viewing the aliens as objects to be managed without rights of their own. This failure in hospitality results in the government's hiring of Multi-National United (MNU) to fulfill its plan, headed by the film's white male protagonist⁵ Wikus Van De Merwe, to relocate the aliens to District 10 much further away from the city. This scene demonstrates the arbitrary nature of the legal status of the aliens as the State grants or denies them rights as it sees fit or as it best benefits the State.

How does the space provided for the aliens by humanitarian aid organizations so quickly turn into a militarized camp? Agamben argues that the camp or state of exception is “the nomos of the modern” (95). He cites two examples as the possible first camps and notably one of these is South African: “Historians debate whether the first camps to appear were the *campos de concentraciones* created by the Spanish in Cuba in 1896 to suppress the popular insurrection of the colony, or the ‘concentration camps’ into which the English herded the Boers toward the start of the century” (Agamben 95). However, Achille Mbembe, rightly argues that the colonies were the first states of exception in citing Arendt’s observation of the treatment of “savages” as a precursor to that of Jews in WWII and in remarking that “in most instances, the selection of races, the prohibition of mixed marriages, forced sterilization, even the extermination of vanquished people are to find their first testing ground in the colonial world. Here we see the first syntheses between massacre and bureaucracy, that incarnation of Western rationality” (22-3). Thus, South Africa has a rather long history of the camp and in *District 9* Blomkamp suggests that this violent treatment in marking Others as *bare life* will continue in the arrival of the aliens and their exclusion from the community. In his book on hospitality in J.M. Coetzee’s fiction, Mike Marais says something similar when he argues of *Disgrace* that “[w]hile apartheid may have ended, Coetzee’s point seems to be, the history of the ostensibly new South African community still erects itself in the old manner: i.e. through a logic of collective discrimination which is, by definition, hostile to otherness, to singularity” (224). The exclusions of the aliens from the “human” community in *District 9* then perpetuates a legacy that has its origins in colonialism, and, as I’ll discuss later, in the traditional exclusion of animals from many human cultures.

Describing the space of the camp, David Farrier is right when, using terms from Deleuze and Guattari, he says that “the interstices available to and inhabited by the asylum seeker differ from that described by postcolonial studies as a ‘smooth space’ of productivity and difference—rather, it is a space of detention and exclusion through inclusion, striated by razor wire and legislated segregation” (7). The aliens of *District 9* have an “improper” relation to the space where they come to dwell in Johannesburg as they don’t fit the traditional State logic of being naturalized citizens in being born on the land. Wikus explains to the MNU agents that “we have to say this is our land, please will you go,” demonstrating humans’ rights over a space which aliens occupy without being subjects of rights. Agamben explains this assumption about the relationship between birth and sovereignty that underpins nationalism:

If refugees...represent such a disquieting element in the order of the modern nation-state, this is above all because by breaking the continuity between man and citizen, *nativity* and *nationality*, they put the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis. Bringing to light the difference between birth and nation, the refugee causes the secret presupposition of the political domain – bare life – to appear for an instant within that domain. In this sense, the refugee is truly “the man of rights,” as Arendt suggests, the first and only real appearance of rights outside the fiction of the citizen that always covers them over. (Agamben 77)

By highlighting this “bare life” which politics often elides—the fact that we all are born and can become again bare life—the aliens’ presence necessitates a government decision. As Cary Wolfe puts it: “to live under biopolitics is to live in a situation in which we are all always already (potential) ‘animals’ before the law” (*Before the Law* 10). The State seeks to prevent all unauthorized or deterritorialized flows and occupations of space; as such, the State includes the aliens in its territory only through excluding them from the realm of rights afforded its naturalized citizens. As discussed in Chapter 1, Deleuze and

Guattari explain how the State attempts to cast a zone of rights over an outside and therefore the State striates that space and exercises its rights over those without rights. I briefly quote this passage here again as it explains exactly the way in which the state of exception, for Agamben, locates a place at the threshold of inside and outside: “It is a vital concern of every State...to establish a zone of rights over an entire ‘exterior,’ over all of the flows traversing the ecumenon” (Deleuze and Guattari 385). The aliens of *District 9* are included in this space of exclusion as they—as an unexpected and unsanctioned flow—are assimilated into the space of Johannesburg without being allowed in the realm of subjects of right and without being allowed to move beyond the strict confines of the camp.



Fig. 1 Thomas, Wikus, and Fundiswa serving an eviction notice to an alien. *District 9*.

Tri-Star, 2009.

<http://www.imdb.com/media/rm820873472/tt1136608?ref_=ttmi_mi_all_sf_3#>

The aliens’ lack of legal standing in the film is revealed in the scenes where the

MNU begins to forcefully evict them from the shacks they've constructed in D9 to the tents set up by the government 200 kilometers away from Johannesburg in D10. Grey Bradnam, the UKNR Chief Correspondent in the film, comments in an interview that the twenty four hour notice and protocol for eviction are a legal "whitewashing." Hired by the government, MNU operates with impunity as they manage the aliens' population and occupation of space in District 9. As the plan to evict the aliens is made public, the TV news reports that MNU should follow all UIO regulations and human rights groups will be watching because they "suspect abuses might occur." However, the temporary space of D9 which was an exception has become normalized as "the camp" and as Agamben says of the camp: "every question concerning the legality or illegality of what happened there simply makes no sense" (97). Occupying a status outside the realm of the subject of rights, the law and its protections do not apply to the space or people of the camp according to the State's logic of exclusionary inclusion. As "bare life" the aliens are more vulnerable outside the protections of the State and therefore they occupy a space where it is acceptable to manage them as objects rather than subjects with rights and even to kill them under the law in a "non-criminal putting to death."

Throughout the film, MNU workers, as hired security for the government, thwart the law to complete their eviction mission. The role of capital in this is notable as well since they receive payment from the government for executing the mass eviction and thus their actions are motivated by profit. The aliens become disposable then not only because of what Derrida and Wolfe might refer to as the "autoimmune disorder" ("After Animality" 184) of the South African community in refusing hospitality to foreigners, but also because of MNU's financial interest in managing the alien population. MNU's and

the Nigerian gangsters' stockpiles of alien weaponry and testing on aliens further confirms the capitalist logic of surplus value extraction that adds to the disposability of the aliens. In essence, the government not only fails to extend hospitality to the aliens as they keep them separate from the rest of society in District 9 and approve their eviction to District 10, they fail to ensure any other protections for the aliens as well as they leave it up to MNU, a corporation, to follow the law and to deal with the aliens unregulated. This situation recalls Pickover's discussion of South African industries that deal with animals, such as factory farming, which are responsible for following the laws written to protect animals or reduce animal suffering on their own with little or no government oversight (146-147). Already marked as bare life, the aliens become disposable not only to an ideal of a homely nation, but also to the ambitions of a profit-seeking multi-national corporation, who in capitalist fashion will sacrifice the safety and lives of others for a larger profit margin.

In serving eviction notices, the MNU is shown disregarding and manipulating the law for their own ends. For example, one alien hits at the eviction papers clearly as a violent refusal when he is asked to sign them as a confirmation that they have been received. In response, Wikus says to another worker and perhaps to the documentary camera that the alien has made his mark in touching the paper and that it "counts as a scroll" or signature. Importantly here, the role of the paper serves to administer the law to the aliens who, as state-less refugees, are paper-less. The refusal to sign evokes Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" and that character's notorious refusals in the "I would prefer not to," a text that David Farrier reads in *Postcolonial Asylum*. After noting Derrida's observation that paper determines legal subjectivity, Farrier argues that

“Bartleby unsettles paper’s legitimizing function” (131) through the manner in which he performs his work as scrivener. More importantly than this literary intertextuality, however, the scene also evokes historical events in South Africa, namely the anti-apartheid activists’ act of burning pass books to undermine the authority of the law—the Pass Laws Act of the apartheid regime— a law developed to control and survey the movements of the African population. In *District 9*, however, Wikus distorts the alien’s refusal to acknowledge the eviction paper into an acceptance of the authority of the law to advance the MNU’s population management goals.

Similarly, as Wikus attempts to serve the eviction papers to Christopher Johnson, Christopher questions the legality of the notice asking “Why? You must give me twenty-four hours. This isn’t legal.” Christopher refuses, even though he is forced to kneel at gunpoint and, in response, Wikus intimidates him to sign by first asking if he has a license for his child. Finding that he does, Wikus makes a bogus charge of “unsafe conditions” and threatens to take his child away to Child Services where “he will live in a one-by-one meter box for the rest of his life.” Through threat of imprisonment, violence, and death, the aliens are intimidated in the attempt to force them to accept the authority of the law and the State’s decision on their rights as foreigners towards the goal of eviction; if they refuse, they are often killed, bribed with cat food, or violently made to submit as in the space of the camp, they have become bare life.

Another way the State performs a failure in hospitality, by including the arrivant through an exclusion, is by marking off the aliens as criminals. Farrier notes Arendt’s observation of this mode of the State’s accommodating the foreigner: “As Arendt says, ‘Since [the stateless person] was the anomaly for whom the general law did not provide,

it was better for him to become an anomaly for which it did provide, the criminal” (12-13). When he is not calling for airstrikes on District 9 or intimidating aliens to sign papers, Wikus is constantly identifying “criminal” behavior and signs—spray paint means gang-related or criminal, Christopher’s possession of computers, etc.—as a means of bringing the aliens “before the law” without being subjects of rights. Through these various activities Wikus exercises biopower over the aliens who have become the bare life of the camp in District 9, further controlling them by preventing their self-organization and possession of property.

For another obvious biopolitical example, Wikus and a few other MNU workers destroy an alien incubation shack which houses alien eggs. As he removes what seems like a feeding tube from the egg, he jokes to another MNU worker that he can take the tube home as a souvenir for his first abortion. Wikus then calls for a “population control team” which sets fire to the shack with the “prawn” eggs, and they can be heard screaming as they burn. This scene of the sounds of nonhuman life coming from eggs recalls the discussion in Chapter 1 of Mr. Henry’s attempted theft of an ostrich egg in *The Devil’s Chimney*, where he cannot hear the noise emanating from the shell but the adult ostriches do, resulting in their protection of the egg and killing of Mr. Henry. In this scene, however, the eggs aren’t saved as Wikus shows no signs of sympathy or concern for the aliens but is rather excited on his first day in this position of authority, performing for the camera and delighting in explaining that the sound of the alien eggs burning sounds like a popping, “like a popcorn.” Wikus and the other MNU workers function in this scene not unlike the doctors that Agamben mentions who took it upon themselves to decide life, something he notes as a power which used to be reserved for the sovereign:

If there is a line in every modern state marking the point at which the decision on life becomes a decision on death, and biopolitics can turn into thanatopolitics, this line no longer appears today as a stable border dividing two clearly distinct zones. This line is now in motion and gradually moving into areas other than that of political life, areas in which the sovereign is entering into an ever more intimate symbiosis not only with the jurist but also with the doctor, the scientist, the expert, and the priest. (Agamben 72)

Assuming the authority to manage the life and death of the aliens, Wikus and the other MNU workers exercise biopower as employees of a multi-national security company hired by the government, rather than as administrators of the law. This phenomenon of companies exercising biopower is the mode of the day as in his essay “Necropolitics” Achille Mbembe explains that “Military manpower is bought and sold on a market in which the identity of suppliers and purchasers means almost nothing. Urban militias, private armies, armies of regional lords, private security firms, and state armies all claim the right to exercise violence or to kill” (Mbembe 32). *District 9* emphasizes this vulnerability of those marked as *bare life* as almost anyone can kill them with impunity.

Interspecies Sexuality

Like several of the texts discussed in this project, *District 9* offers some brief commentary on cross-species sexuality, which in this case demonstrates an exercise of biopower. In this film which focuses on the camp in its title, however, sexual desire across species is not explored as a positive force; rather, sexual desire gets reterritorialized as capitalist desire as the only instances of sex involve inter-species prostitution and the MNU’s false report about Wikus participating in sex acts with aliens as a means of making him kill-able. Discussing bestiality cases in colonial America, Colleen Glenney Boggs notes how, under the law, the act of bestiality can remove a subject of rights from that community, transporting that person into the state of

exception. She explains how “the accused [of bestiality] was recognized as *bios* before the law, but his crime relegated him to the category of *zoë* in that he was stripped of his legal rights and put to death” (34). In a scene which occurs after Wikus has begun to transform into an alien, this accidental and unwelcomed becoming alien, when he has escaped from the MNU laboratory, he returns to a fast food restaurant which he and other MNU workers dined at earlier in the film. While trying to keep a low profile by wrapping himself in a blanket, a news report comes on the television reporting on his escape which portrays him having sex with an alien, blurred out of course for the purposes of decency, and he is immediately identified as the man on the news by the workers and patrons of the restaurant.

Clearly, MNU’s falsely constructed TV news release derives from the logic of the taboo against sex with a species other than human that Boggs describes. As noted in the discussion of bestiality cases in South Africa in Chapter 2, this religious taboo against inter-species sex also has a long history in South Africa. In this sense, the TV report is constructed with the intent to position Wikus in a realm of “non-criminal putting to death.” MNU doubles up on this marking of Wikus as *zoë*, as more disposable and further away from *bios*, by appealing to the auto-immune anxieties of the security State through falsely reporting that Wikus is also highly contagious. Foucault explains this auto-immunitary logic in a discussion of racism and biopolitics:

On the one hand, racism makes it possible to establish a relationship between my life and the death of the other that is not a military or warlike relationship of confrontation, but a biological-type relationship: ‘The more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I—as species rather than individual—can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be. I will be able to proliferate.’ The fact that the other dies does not mean simply that I live in

the sense that his death guarantees my safety; the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer.” (*Society Must Be Defended* 255)

As *District 9* makes apparent here, however, this logic extends from markers of race to categories of species as the nonhuman aliens are quarantined with the aim of improving the health of the human community of Johannesburg. The dramatic effect of this news report as an exercise of biopower is immediately realized as Wikus unsuccessfully appeals to the law when the restaurant workers now refuse to serve him: “you are legally obliged to serve me.” Instead of receiving the food he orders, the other customers flee the store to separate themselves from him and, now marked as bare life and without rights, he receives shots from the store-manager’s high-powered rifle. The shots miss, however, and to escape this certain death in the space of the community, Wikus then heads off to District 9, to the camp, to this zone of another kind of death, a zone proper to those in the state of exception.

After Wikus is exposed to the liquid which Christopher has collected from discarded alien technology, which he’s been gathering in order to power their small ship so that they might return to the mothership, Wikus’ body begins to transform as his hand turns into an alien appendage. In this metamorphosis, this becoming-alien, Wikus loses his standing as a subject of rights, as described above, via the MNU’s media reports. While this becoming-alien or “becoming minoritarian” offers the potential for reorienting Wikus’ sense of subjectivity and ethical attachments to others, specifically the aliens, he undermines the radical potentiality of this becoming as he seeks only to re-establish himself as a subject of rights in his privileged position.⁶ Deleuze and Guattari explain in

A Thousand Plateaus that “[i]n a way, the subject in a becoming is always ‘man,’ but only when he enters a becoming-minoritarian that rends him from his major identity” (291) and describe how becoming “constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernability, a no-man’s-land” (293). Instead of following through on this opportunity of becoming to embrace his removal from a dominant subjectivity and from dominant culture in inhabiting the no-man’s-land of District 9—an opportunity that presents the potential for resistance and revolution against the State and its violent exercises of biopower over the minoritarian and the anomalous—, Wikus largely seeks to regain this “major identity.” For example, he attempts to chop his alien arm off with an ax to separate this alien limb from his human body, to restore a human purity to his body, and he asserts his difference from the aliens when Christopher’s son holds up his arm in comparison saying that they are the same. Wikus replies “We’re not the fuckin’ same.” Indeed, most of his actions after his metamorphosis begins are geared towards “fixing” himself as he establishes an agreement with Christopher where Wikus will help him steal the canister of liquid back from MNU if Christopher agrees to return Wikus to his human state. However, the opportunity to reorient his sense of attachment away from a “humans only” community continues beyond this selfish desire to return to a privileged position, even after the contract with Christopher is breached by being extended into the future.

Hospitality as Desire

As Derrida explains in *Of Hospitality*, guest and host can exchange places in the process of hospitality and this is evidenced in the exchanges that take place in *District 9* between Wikus and Christopher. Derrida explains that “So it is indeed the master, the one who invites, the inviting host, who becomes the hostage—and who really always has

been. And the guest, the invited hostage, becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host" (125). While the citizens of Johannesburg largely fail in their hospitality to their guests, the aliens, once he too is marked as bare life, Wikus appeals to Christopher's hospitality as he arrives as a guest at Christopher's shack, seeking sanctuary from MNU. Like the aliens who initially were in such a weakened and sickly state on first contact, Wikus arrives in extremely vulnerable conditions as he immediately falls to the floor, unconscious, from the toll the transformation is taking on his body. At this point Christopher, the guest, becomes the host to the host Wikus, the one who earlier in his mastery was attempting to remove Christopher and manage him in space. In his appeal for sanctuary, Wikus remarks "Please sir, you have to hide me" confirming the role reversal.

As a guest in Christopher's shack seeking sanctuary, Wikus no longer displays the sense of mastery that he exercised in his earlier dealings with Christopher and the other aliens as a top operative for MNU. Earlier in the film, Wikus demonstrated this mastery in attempting to explain all the behavior of the aliens as if he had full knowledge about them, and of course he seems mistaken and wrong in most of his conjectures about alien culture. Where earlier Wikus engaged with the aliens in brief and violent, largely one-way conversations as a government-hired and therefore authoritative eviction notice deliverer, as a guest of Christopher, he engages with him for sustained periods of time with more even exchanges in communication. Extended periods of contact can enable transformations in the asymmetrical relations of the "contact zone," a term that Mary Louise Pratt developed to describe mostly colonial encounters in travel writing and which Donna Haraway employs in her discussions of human-animal relationships. She explains

this transformative power via Vincaine Despret, a philosopher of science:

Emphasizing that articulating bodies to each other is always a political question about collective lives, Despret studies those practices in which animals and people become available to each other, become attuned to each other, in such a way that both parties become more interesting to each other, more open to surprises, smarter, more 'polite,' more inventive. The kind of 'domestication' that Despret explores adds new identities; partners learn to be 'affected'; they become 'available to events'; they engage in a relationship that 'discloses perplexity.' (Haraway 207)

The affectivity that occurs in sustained encounters with others can, in other words, reorient the self away from dominant subjectivity towards positive and ethical relations, where the self develops as a process through "becoming with" others in assemblage, as Haraway describes. This potential of sustained contact reveals the violent and strategic tactics of the strict separation of others from the community that pertain to the camp and, indeed, to apartheid.

During their discussions after Wikus' arrival, Christopher shows his son the MNU brochure for District 10 explaining that this will be their new home and that it should be better than District 9. This is in response to his son's expression of a desire to return home to their home planet. Here, Wikus corrects the lie that MNU peddles to the aliens and explains that the tents are not better and that they are "smaller than the shacks, actually more like a concentration camp." This description confirms the presence of the camp, of the zone of exception and indeed this camp will be even an even more violent site of biopower than their current location. In being offered hospitality by Christopher and in becoming more attuned to Christopher's life and situation from the sustained close encounter in the "contact zone" of the shack, Wikus no longer maintains his role of mastery over Christopher, but tells him this fact which is in Christopher's interest to

know, offering more of a hospitality than mastery himself, which I argue is also produced by a non-capitalist desire for the other. This desire, in Deleuze and Guattari's view—and this is their positive and productive desire—arises from relating with others in assemblage as Réda Bensmaïa puts it: “one desires only as a function of an assemblage where one is included” (xx).

Indeed, Derrida describes unconditional hospitality as something that is “desired” or “as desire” (127, 147) and heterogeneous to rights. On the difference between “absolute or unconditional hospitality” and “conditional hospitality,” Derrida explains, “The law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right, with law or justice as rights. Just hospitality breaks with hospitality by right; not that it condemns or is opposed to it, and it can on the contrary set and maintain it in a perpetual progressive movement; but it is as strangely heterogeneous to it as justice is heterogeneous to the law” (25-7). This argument for the heterogeneity of justice and the law recalls Deleuze and Guattari's argument that “justice is desire and not law,” discussed in the previous chapter, suggesting further that unconditional hospitality works as a desire for the other, for the protection of the other. As host and guest reverse in this scene and throughout the rest of the film, the assemblage of Wikus, Christopher, and Christopher's son works to protect its members' lives, futures, and interests through their expressions of what Derrida calls desire for hospitality and desire as hospitality; however, the lives and futures of the individuals of the assemblage are sacrificed or risked when this desire, in Wikus, gets reterritorialized as an Oedipal and capitalist desire as lack where he sacrifices and “eats” the others in the attempt to be again a full subject of rights, rights of which he feels he is lacking. Wikus sacrifices the others for example when he knocks Christopher

unconscious, leaving him for the MNU forces to find and steals his small spacecraft. In this scene, Wikus separates father and son in his attempt to fly to the mothership, it seems, in hopes of restoring his body to a fully human state in a more immediate fashion after demonstrating his frustration with the three year waiting period for the return of his human body, which Christopher has just announced.

Eating the Aliens

The aliens' advanced weaponry and technology become a valued commodity, and yet a stubborn one that does not easily yield to being transformed into capital. Designed with biological technology, the weapons only fire if operated by aliens; although both the gangsters and the MNU extract the weapons from District 9 and stockpile them, they are unsuccessful in turning them into a profit because of this biological resistance. Both groups are aware of the potential value in this weaponry, as the advanced security state portrayed in *District 9* provides for an economy where more powerful weapons are highly sought after commodities. After explaining Wikus' great value as hybrid who can operate alien weaponry, the MNU scientists discuss that they want to "harvest" Wikus, remarking that he represents "hundreds of millions, maybe billions of dollars" of biotechnology and that governments and companies will surely want it. His father-in-law, Piet Smit, a top official at MNU, asks if Wikus will survive the harvest and the scientist replies in the negative; yet, his father-in-law says to harvest his arm anyway, demonstrating a sacrificing of life for profit. As one of the interviewed characters in the film explains of Wikus: "he became the most valuable business artifact on earth" and his "real value is that he could operate alien weaponry." At this point Wikus becomes "disposable" and he experiences the dispossession of his body as it becomes a possession

of MNU just as District 9, the property and bodies of other aliens are forcibly taken from them in the eviction plan as they are marked off by their species and status as foreigners as outside the realm or rights. However, like the biotechnology of the alien weapons which prevents their easy assimilation in human capitalism, Wikus' great strength in the alien arm affords him a resistance to this mastery of his body and prevents his death in a capitalist endeavor as he uses it to break free from the restraints of the medical lab bed.

The dissection of alien bodies and the attempt to "harvest" Wikus' body that occurs in MNU's laboratories performs an "eating the Other" as the bodies are cut and sacrificed with the hope of extracting the ability for humans to use the aliens' weapons. Again the government is complicit in the capitalist consumption of these bodies as it fails to successfully oversee or regulate the multi-national corporation's practices. While government officials who, colonized by capitalist desire, sacrifice their communities for bribes or personal profit are at least tasked with protecting their communities and fail them as THE MAN does in Zakes Mda's *The Mother of All Eating*, the situation in *District 9* makes evident the boldness of capitalism in its colonizing power as government officials take a back seat to capitalists hired by the government to protect the community. In a similar fashion, the Nigerian gangsters in the film, who serve as a bald-faced and underground version of the violence of the corporate and state-sponsored MNU, also seek to extract the power to operate alien weaponry; however, they literally eat the aliens in practicing a *muti* which they believe will grant them the aliens' powers. As many critics note, the representation of Nigerians only as gangsters in the film plays on stereotypes, marking them as dangerous outlaws to the larger South African community. While I agree that this representation of one national group as the

homogenous and sole element of organized crime is a weakness of the film⁷, in my view, the gangsters' role serves to bring the violence of the State-sanctioned MNU into focus. As the counterpart to the Nigerians, the MNU is essentially revealed to be a gangster organization of the same order, if not, a more menacing threat to life in Johannesburg because of its secret biological experimentations and duplicity. This juxtaposition highlights the exclusionary violence upon which communities have traditionally been founded, as history shows. The gangster element in District 9 kills aliens at will like the MNU, because it is legal to kill them according to their status as bare life and they seek to extract a profit from them. Also, like MNU, the head gangster wants to cut off Wikus' arm, although he wants to eat it to take his power. Wikus' becoming alien through contact with the fluid—this flowing material—however, is what enables him to operate alien weaponry and an indication that the alien biology will resist this capitalist eating as well. By stealing back the canister with this fluid from MNU, which seems not to have been tested yet in their labs, Christopher and Wikus prevent MNU from discovering this key to operating alien weaponry and therefore prevent the transformation of alien weaponry into capital as it remains inoperable by humans. As both MNU and the Nigerian gangsters are colonized by capitalist desire, they relate to the aliens only through a sacrificing of them towards their personal accumulation of wealth.

While his alien arm enabled his resistance to MNU's attempt to harvest his body, it is, unbeknownst to Wikus, Christopher's son who protects him from certain death at the hands of the Nigerian gangsters by remotely operating an alien robot armor suit and shooting them. This protection demonstrates the young alien's hospitality and desire to protect Wikus, accepting him into a human-alien assemblage. With his life under direct

threat to being sacrificed by the gangsters, Wikus does not gain protection from the law or demand of these outlaws a recognition of his rights. Instead it is the desire of the alien, a desire for the other in ethical response that seeks to protect Wikus. This is an exercise of what Derrida describes as a *desire as hospitality*. Talking about the time when an antinomy exists at the same time as its impossibility—such as “[o]ne cannot at the same time take and not take, be there and not be there, enter when one is within” (125)—he explains that:

This duration without duration, this lapse, this seizure...—this is a necessity that cannot be outsmarted any more: it explains why one always feels late, and that therefore, at the same time, one always yields to precipitation, in the desire for hospitality or in desire *as* hospitality. At the heart of a hospitality that always leaves something to be desired. (127)

In this desire as hospitality, Derrida explains again the way in which host and guest interchange and enable a simultaneity in being at once host and guest and vice versa. Hospitality as desire involves these reorientations of self and these contradictions to exist in the becoming that removes the fixity of dominant subjectivity, undoing self and other.

Becoming Alien & a Line of Flight

To be sure, Wikus is selfish as he at first leaves Christopher for dead in knocking him out and leaving him unconscious and vulnerable for MNU to find. He all but sacrifices Christopher in the attempt to restore his dominant subjectivity and position. Later, again he is selfishly running away to protect himself towards the end of the film when he overhears Christopher being beaten by the MNU and hears of their decision to kill him. In response, this time Wikus turns around and protects Christopher, enabling Christopher and his son’s escape from the camp. What motivates this response? It is not his wanting to restore his dominant position or to secure his own safety. It is not out of a

sense upholding the law or a contract that has already been breached. It is a desire for the other that leads to this protection: in risking the self—rather than seeking safety and attempting to re-establish his privileged, dominant human position—Wikus enacts the positivity of desire outside of capitalist or Oedipal formations towards a desire for the other. Working outside the law and against the law’s hired security firm, Wikus offers a protection for these two aliens—a protection that the larger alien community offers him as his life immediately comes under threat from the head MNU “cowboy” after he helps Christopher escape. Once again host and guest exchange as Wikus served as host in protecting Christopher and his son; the other aliens of District 9 play host to Wikus in killing the MNU military leader and saving him from certain death. Wikus’ altered sense of community and ethical relations that derive from the new assemblages within which he dwells is best dramatized by comparing his disregard for alien life in the abortions and his participation in violent evictions early in the film to his risking his life to protect Christopher towards the film’s end. He moves from being an instrument of a security corporation that derives profit from the State by managing the lives and populations of its enemies (informed by its auto-immune disorder) and from seeking to strengthen his own dominant position and wealth in a capitalist desire to becoming a force against this thanatopolitical regime in embracing postcolonial desire where the self is risked and altered in ethical relation to the alien other.

The film could have been more successful in making this difference—Wikus’ move away from the pursuit of a dominant self—clearer. While Christopher’s promise to return to “fix” Wikus in three years time might allow for a reading of Wikus’ behavior in saving Chris from murder as still motivated by a selfish interest in the desire to return to

his dominant position, Wikus' saving Christopher is not self-interested. This self-centered reading is perhaps Michael Moses' assumption in his claim that "the most disturbing aspects of *District 9*...[are] its thinly veiled portrait of *post*-apartheid South Africa as a political dystopia, and its persistent undercurrent of nostalgia for the old days of racial segregation" (159). Moses continues this reading of Wikus as nostalgic for apartheid: "The ostensible white hero of the film does not want to join the aliens: indeed, his sole and abiding wish is to return to his comfortable home and his beautiful white wife, Tania" (159). There are inconsistencies in such a reading, however, and I would submit that Wikus no longer has a "sole" wish. Also, if we bracket, only momentarily, the important question of his returning to a dominant position in a society of such inequality, should we fault characters for wanting to live in comfortable homes with the people they love? This is, after all, what Christopher and his son and the other aliens of the camp seem to want as well. As Moses himself notes in the positive portrayals of Christopher and his son and in the idea that "the degraded condition of the aliens might be interpreted from a liberal perspective as the result of their mistreatment and oppression by the South African authorities and MNU, rather than their inherent viciousness" (159), the film certainly offers some positive representations of aliens and even the potential for a sustained positive reading of its portrayals of the Other-ed aliens. While I've argued in agreement with Moses that Wikus largely seeks to restore his dominant position throughout his opportunity for becoming-alien, this instance where he protects Christopher falls outside of a desire to return to a dominant self, as do a few other events, frustrating Moses' attempt to make Wikus into a totally selfish and dominant-subject seeking character.

Wikus' becoming alien reveals the difficulties of transforming subjectivity away from dominant positions in such heavily striated and policed cultures. Deleuze and Guattari's description of how even Oedipal and striated formations can produce lines of flight might describe how Christopher and his son engage with Wikus, who is at first *almost* totally Oedipalized, to deterritorialize him to enable a line of flight from the camp: "impasses must always be resituated on the map, thereby opening them up to possible lines of flight...one will often be forced to take dead ends, to work with signifying powers and subjective affections, to find a foothold in formations that are Oedipal or paranoid or even worse, ridgified territorialities that open the way for other transformational operations" (14-15). Wikus, the administrator of population control, eviction-server, concentration camp ferryman, and in so many other ways manager of movements, stopper of flows, and patroller of space, who at first stole Christopher's small ship which offered Chris' only line of flight out of the camp—this same dominant subject Wikus becomes deterritorialized and transformed, offering Christopher protection to the damaged but still flyable ship and a path out of the camp on a line of flight.

While the promise of physical transformation back to a human state and his desire for a return to this dominant subjectivity informs the majority of Wikus' interactions with Christopher, it doesn't inform all of them as alternative desires exceed and frustrate the dominant definition of a subject as lacking. Like David Lurie's experience of this desire that exists as an excess of Oedipal desire in *Disgrace*, Wikus's non-oedipal desire presents opportunities for ethical response and relating that are closed off by capitalism and dominant culture. It also seems clear that things have changed irrevocably for Wikus and that even should he still desire a return to the past and the way things were, this is

ultimately impossible. He cannot simply return to work for his father-in-law and the MNU who sentenced him to death and whose dozens of workers he killed and building he bombed (which was reported as “terrorism” another classification that is used to mark others as *bare life*) as if nothing has changed. Nor can he return to life as it was given his highly televised and reported escape from MNU as a “contaminated” human, becoming an alien. His assistant Mhlanga’s imprisonment for revealing MNU’s violence makes this clear. In fact, he must now seek the protection of the aliens from the violence of MNU and the State. The limitations of Moses’ reading stem also it seems from the way he reads the aliens too closely as a mere allegory for the apartheid past and his failure to address the singularity of the fictional aliens as a different species, as asylum-seekers, etc..

Reading Wikus as a “corporate stooge,” as John Marx does (165), is decidedly more accurate than Moses’ reading of him as some sort of anti-apartheid hero who also somehow wants a return to apartheid, a difficult reading which Moses then obviously finds as a menacing fault with the film by describing it as a “troubling lament” for apartheid (160). If anyone is a hero in the film, it is Christopher, a hero-to-come, who has worked for twenty years to collect liquid to power the ship in order to return to the home planet for help and, now that he is aware of it, to protect the aliens from being used as medical experiments. Instead of thinking of him as a hero, Wikus might better be read as an allusion to Dirk Coetzee, a death squad leader for the apartheid regime who changed alliances by first confessing his murderous work in killing the ANC’s political leaders of the anti-apartheid movement. Dirk Coetzee later worked for the ANC to help dismantle apartheid and prevent this violence while seeking its protections from the apartheid state. As leader of the eviction program in *District 9*, Wikus is certainly less knowledgeable of

MNU's thanatopolitical practices and somewhat less violent than Coetzee; Wikus' switching of alliances is also not as clear or dramatic as Coetzee's as he only changes briefly right before the film's conclusion. However, Fundiswa Mhlanga, Wikus' assistant, perhaps completes this historical allusion as towards the end the film shows that he is imprisoned for exposing MNU's illegal genetic testing program on the aliens to the public.

While Wikus is mostly "just doing his job" throughout most of the film, the indication that Wikus is not a "corporate stooge" through-and-through, however, is his correction early in the film after comparing his promotion in MNU to his wedding day that the promotion is, in fact, not as important as his wedding day. His desire for his wife supersedes his capitalist desire to be a model employee and thereby to be a model state-hired eviction server and administrator of the State's biopower, suggesting that he has not been entirely colonized by capitalist definitions of desire. This excess desire, its possibility in what Foucault calls "*homoeconomicus*" as a subject of interest that exceeds the subject of rights (*The Birth of Biopolitics* 275), is what biopower seeks to limit and capture in its mastery. In fact, desire threatens State and capitalist biopower more so than interest as Deleuze and Guattari argue: "And if we put forward desire as a revolutionary agency, it is because we believe that capitalist society can endure many manifestations of interest, but not one manifestation of desire, which would be enough to make its fundamental structures explode, even at the kindergarten level" (*Anti-Oedipus* 379). Even in this most rigidified subject Wikus, its threat looms as a flow and power that might undo the dominant regime of biopower. The alien fluid which Wikus was exposed to and which now flows through his body (and which enabled Christopher's line of flight)

dramatizes this effluvial character and potential of desire to overflow the *bios*-centered subject of rights. His father-in-law and director of MNU, Piet Smit, explains that Wikus' being married to his daughter did not factor into his calculation to appoint Wikus to head operative, seemingly to explain away any favoritism in the hire; yet, this explanation is more revealing in that biopower doesn't factor postcolonial desire—Wikus' desire for his wife which exceeds his capitalist desires—into its administration and calculations of managing life and death. His expressions of desire for his wife in this statement and in creating the flower for her frames the film in a way that demonstrates desire's ability to traverse species boundaries and transform ethical relationships and community boundaries drawn to mark off those who count and those who do not. The importance of this seemingly minor detail in Wikus' mentioning that his wedding is a more important day, if not already apparent, can be further highlighted through a comparison to a character discussed in the previous chapter.

Wikus' relationship to desire and his working for his father-in-law at MNU recalls the situation in Michiel Heyns' *The Reluctant Passenger* for the protagonist, Nick Morris. As he finds himself almost working for the unseen hand of the former apartheid regime, Judge Conroy, who continues its violent acts of biopower—recall the “death squads”—on the South African population in the “post-apartheid” era, Morris finds that his re-appraisal of desire and his relating to others and nonhuman others has helped him to escape from the manipulations of the Judge. Like Wikus, Morris is at first a bit of a “corporate stooge” in that he is a model worker and never lets his life, desire, or passions make him late for work, and even though he is an environmental lawyer, he doesn't care about the environment but just does his job. While both characters largely seek to master,

control, and keep separate nonhuman flows and *zoe* from themselves and the human community, (with Morris it is more of this control over his own *zoe*), as “good” workers in capitalism, (and Morris’ transformation to embrace *zoe* is much clearer and more dramatic), their desires from assemblages exceed and resist being totally colonized by Oedipus and capitalist desire as lack. This excess desire leads them both to change from being apolitical, self-centered, capital-seeking, dominant subjects to re-orient their sense of community, extending hospitality to those marked as “bare life” by dominant culture—offering hospitality to a troop of chacma baboons and an alien population. Wikus, like Joyce Tomlinson in *The Reluctant Passenger*, remains incalculable because of this desire and therefore beyond the mastery of biopower. This postcolonial desire, seemingly absent from these characters’ *bios*-centered subjectivities, presents the power for radical change even in its minuteness in occurring at the level of the individual, and has, as both texts bear out, significant revolutionary potential to change the state of affairs for those marked as “disposable” in the workings of multi-national corporations and the State.

The consequences in both texts had these characters not enabled their excess desires to flow but allowed them to be reterritorialized or colonized are devastating given the potential continuation of Conroy’s thanatopolitics in Morris’ case and the blockage of all lines of flight for Christopher and the doubtful future of the aliens in Wikus’ case. In helping Christopher, however, Wikus is no longer a dominant subject of rights who feels a lack of those rights; instead it is a transformed sense of self and a desire that positively flows from his belonging in an assemblage with Christopher and his son. In the closing scenes, Wikus, now fully alien, makes a metal flower on a garbage heap which his wife

later finds on her doorstep, hoping it's a gift from him. Moses reads this as confirmation that "*District 9* stands as a troubling lament on behalf of South African whites for the world lost with the end of apartheid. Disturbingly, it literalizes the long-running nightmare of the white Afrikaner that the demise of apartheid spells the decline of the white ruling elite, who will be reduced to a condition identical to that of the continent's impoverished, exploited, and politically oppressed black masses" (160).

As I've attempted to argue here, we should, instead, read this scene as an alien expressing desire for a human, or even without these categories of species, as an expression of desire between two bodies, two actants, in excess of and in resistance to the colonizing reterritorialization of capitalist desire. It is a desire which presents lines of flight away from the workings of biopower in the security State. The film's open-ending, with the promise of an alien return, demonstrates the threat posed by *zoe*, by the nonhuman, and indeed by the desire which precedes thought as therefore the "unthought at the heart of the thinking subject"⁸ (Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* 112) given the way that this desire enabled Wikus' aid in Christopher's line of flight. This nonhuman desire flows through the posthuman subjects that we are becoming, a posthuman and postcolonial desire that overflows the highly rigidified category of the human and undoes it, thwarting its exclusionary violence. The promise of the untimely return of Christopher with more aliens to protect his people enabled by this *zoe* and assemblage is what *bios*-centered biopower hasn't thought of. In *Nomadic Subjects*, Braidotti explains how desire precedes thought after noting that Deleuze and Irigaray "bank on the affective as a force capable of freeing us from hegemonic habits of thinking" (40). She continues explaining that

Affectivity in this scheme stands for the preconscious and the prediscursive: desire is not only unconscious but remains nontought at the very heart of our thought because it is what sustains the very activity of thinking. Our desires are that which evades us, in the very act of propelling us forth, leaving as the only indicator of who we are, the traces of where we have already been, that is to say, of what we have already ceased to be. (40)

Wikus' desires and the desires of the other members of the assemblage transform him and change his habits of thought. He is no longer colonized by dominant culture's obsession with the self and an oedipal definition of the self as a lacking subject. Capitalist and *bios*-centered dominant culture attempt to tame or master desire by defining and fixing it through representation as Freud's Oedipus does, assimilating it as a known entity into thought; yet, coming before thought, it retains its potential to resist this assimilation and operate otherwise, transforming dominant thought and dominant subjects. Braidotti also explains that desire comes from the materiality or corporeality of the body (*Nomadic Subjects* 112) in a way that points to both matter's resistance to physical mastery and desire's resistance to the mastery of thought. In its assumed totalitarian mastery, thanatopolitics cannot stop or prevent the threat of a revolutionary power of desire that has the potential to transform subjects and to deterritorialize the current state of affairs in order to protect the members of its assemblage from the non-criminal murderous operations of the biopolitical *dispositif*.

Conclusion: Desiring Sustainable Communities

Characters, in most, if not all, of the fiction discussed in this dissertation negotiate their relationships to positive desire and away from capitalism's colonization of it; nonhuman animals and aliens also express desires that frustrate the mastery of

biopower's thanatopolitics: David Lurie consumes others in a dominant, self-serving desire and struggles against the potential for changing his self when he discovers a desire in excess of this; Miss Beatrice of *The Devil's Chimney* moves away from Mr. Henry's capitalist desire to explore other forms of desire in assemblage with her neighbors, and the ostriches' desires resist the total mastery of biopolitical control by killing Mr. Henry to protect their egg and future hatchling; the Whale Caller begins to be colonized by Saluni into capitalist desire but refuses and maintains his non-capitalist desire in assemblage with Sharisha; Minke and Corsicana's desires flow forth from their assemblage with Lahnee O leading them to exact vengeance for the capitalist murder of endangered species in the bizarre world of *Tanuki Ichiban*; the MESSENGER in Mda's short play acts on a revolutionary desire that undoes THE MAN's capitalist colonization of the community; Camagu in *The Heart of Redness* moves from being a self-centered economic development PhD to embracing a different kind of desire for women and for the protection of his newfound community; Nick Morris moves from a *bios*-centered existence to embrace *zoe* or desire as positive in *The Reluctant Passenger*; and the small bit of Wikus' desire that derives from being in assemblage with his wife and later Christopher and his son exceeds the dominant subject of biopower's total control. All of these desires, to varying degrees, at some point escape capitalist and oedipal colonization and move towards relating to others ethically in assemblage. They also enable the protection or potential for protection of those marked as "bare life" and this also includes a revolutionary potential of not just humans alone but the revolutionary desire that is produced as a function of humans and animals, human and nonhuman assemblages: the animals' desires too are revolutionary.

This revolutionary power of desire which derives from assemblages, regardless of the species or race of the members that compose them, has the potential to produce flows which escape the capture and reterritorialization by dominant culture. Desire's postcoloniality in resisting colonization by Oedipus, by regimes of global capitalism and dominant *bios*-centered culture, offers ways out of the colonization of communities, the risking of their sustainable futures, and their destruction in biopower by both capitalist interests and the anxiety-ridden workings of the security State. If colonization is the first scene of the state of exception as Mbembe argues, then a postcolonial mode of resistance is needed to confront biopower in its current forms in globalization and late capitalism. As animals also figure as a founding location for the space of sacrifice and the marking of *bare life* in many cultures as Agamben explains in describing the "anthropological machine"⁹, their movements and materiality can resist the mastery of biopower—their desires which too are material in coming from the materiality of the body also possess a potentiality to protect vulnerable bodies from the workings of biopower.

In a recent speech to the African Literature Association, South African author and scholar, Njabulo Ndebele called for a change in the way communities are organized, arguing that communities should be based on "inclusion" rather than "extraction."¹⁰ This description of communities recalls bell hooks critique of the way that in capitalist modes of relation "communities of resistance are replaced by communities of consumption" (33). Ndebele called for this reorientation of community after critiquing South African president Jacob Zuma's private use of public funds and his palatial transformation of his personal residence. In the course of this talk, Ndebele notably also criticized conservative repression of alternative sexualities, these "non-normative" desires, and specifically

mentioned that both humans and nonhumans should be included in this reforming of community. As one of the tools of colonial power is the attempt to force the adoption of a dominant subjectivity as I mentioned at the outset of this project, challenging capitalism's and dominant culture's fetishization of the subject as lacking—a definition which enables the flourishing of this extractive ethos—towards becomings and towards assemblages where ethical relations obtain and from which positive desire flows, presents opportunities for this kind of inclusiveness, opportunities for hospitality towards others, who or what ever they may be. The fiction of these South African authors and this filmmaker promotes the awareness of the power of postcolonial desires, imagining alternate ways of relating to the world other than capitalist biopower, thinking other ways of forming and sustaining communities.

Notes

1. I must note here that when teaching this film to students in Arizona in the U.S., students often point out the film's relevance to the situation of "undocumented" immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America to the state, who the State includes only through exclusion in marking them as criminal, as "illegal immigrants." Matthew Jones also points out that "When van de Merwe warns one of the aliens not to go to District 10, the new camp built specifically for the visitors, the sense of urgency and horror in his voice leads one to imagine that inspiration for the solution to the alien problem might have been drawn from the Nazi's Final Solution or the Soviet Gulags" (121).

2. Animals are marked as even more disposable in this film as their bodies largely appear only as food. When his alien arm is tested by MNU for the capacity to operate alien weaponry, Wikus unsuccessfully attempts to refuse his being forced by electric prodding to shoot at the live alien target by explaining that he prefers to shoot the pig instead, which seems to possibly already be dead, having the effect of emphasizing the difference of lives and challenging biological continuism. What might be called animal aliens are also forced to fight each other to the death in the camp in a way that evokes the violence of cock and dog fighting. Lastly, in the scene where he protects Christopher's passage to the small aircraft, Wikus flings a pig (live or dead?) with incredible force to kill an MNU gunman. This is just the use of an animal as a mere weapon and the film might have offered more creative ways for their inclusion in the revolution and resistance to MNU's thanatopolitics.

3. I agree with Wolfe's position that you can't actually offer hospitality to everyone or thing in practice as, if you do, you can all but sentence the community to death. Unlike the trees that Qukezwa kills and the casino city which are banished from the village in *The Heart of Redness* because of the devastation they would visit on the community, these aliens in *District 9* are not a colonizing threat to the community of Johannesburg; they are vulnerable and in need of help. Wolfe explains this problem of unconditional hospitality in practice by challenging the biological continuism of Esposito's affirmative biopolitics: "if we want to salvage the Deleuzean impulse of Esposito's conjugation of life and norm—do we extend 'unconditional hospitality' to anthrax and ebola virus, to SARS?—then we are necessarily driven back on a pragmatist rather than ontological reading of Deleuze" (*Before the Law* 94). Further, it is in fact the auto-immune disorder of the State which creates the threats to its immunity as the violence against the aliens gives rise to potential revolutionary action against the human community in Christopher's promise of return. Roberto Esposito makes this point in *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*: "as in all areas of contemporary social systems, neurotically haunted by a continuously growing need for security, this means that the risk from which the protection is meant to defend is actually created by the protection itself" (qtd. in Wolfe, *Before the Law* 49-50).

4. Greg Bourke also highlights the film's engagement with Agamben's concepts of the camp, homo sacer, and bare life.

5. Lucy Valerie Graham notes this as a problem of the film as it becomes "part of a tradition of films that present, for Western viewers, the 'problem' or dilemma of the other, but do so through the lens of a white male focalizer who becomes a point of identification" (162). To be sure, as a Hollywood blockbuster, the film is somewhat flawed in this regard and certainly in others as I discuss below. The choice of white male protagonist does, however, have the benefit of pointing to the often elided violence upon which white privilege rests. Nonetheless, the film is still valuable for its commentary on the deployment of race and species discourse in biopower.

6. Wikus' moving from a position as manager of those without rights to being without rights himself also alludes to the reversal for the protagonist, a colonial magistrate, of J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* when he loses his post for his engagements with "the barbarians" and is imprisoned by Colonel Joll. Farrier reads this novel of Coetzee's for its representation of bare life; Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K* offers perhaps an even more overt engagement with "the camp" and Mike Marais discusses this in terms of hospitality in his book.

7. In his review, Michael Valdez Moses notes this problem with the representation of Nigerians in *District 9*: "Obesandjo and his gang members are a distillation of some of the most negative contemporary South African stereotypes of Nigerian immigrants, tens of thousands of whom have entered the country illegally since the 1980s, and some of whom are part of a nation-wide (indeed international) crime syndicate trafficking in drugs and engaging in other illegal activities that got its start in Johannesburg in the late 1980s"

(158). Similarly, in her review titled “*Amakwerekwere* and Other Aliens: *District 9* and Hospitality” Lucy Valerie Graham discusses the problems with the representations of the Nigerians when she “acknowledge[s] the rather obvious point that although the film critiques xenophobia, it ultimately perpetuates it” (162).

8. Ron Broglio makes a similar point in reporting from the field of the animal revolution, a point informed by Erica Fudge’s “A Left-Handed Blow”: “As the [human] hand which is thought covers the paw, claw, hand of the animal, out of nowhere comes the *other* hand, the paw or claw or jaw of a left-handed blow. Reason never counted on being outwitted by that which it rejects outright — idiocy, dullness, the body, and the animal” (28).

9. Agamben explains the need to stop this anthropological machine in *The Open: Man and Animal*:

Like every space of exception, this zone is, in truth, perfectly empty, and the truly human being who should occur there is only the place of a ceaselessly updated decision in which the caesurae and their rearticulation are always dislocated and displaced anew....And faced with this extreme figure of the human and the inhuman, it is not so much a matter of asking which of the two machines (or of the two variants of the same machine) is better or more effective— or, rather, less lethal and bloody— as it is of understanding how they work so that we might, eventually, be able to stop them. (37)

Cary Wolfe also explains this space left open by the sacrifice of animals: “as long as the automatic exclusion of animals from standing remains intact *simply* because of their species, such a dehumanization by means of the discursive mechanism of ‘animalization’ will be readily available for deployment against *whatever* body happens to fall outside the ethnocentric ‘we’” (*Before the Law* 21).

10. Ndebele explained that he was drawing these terms from another scholar whose name I didn’t catch.

11. I discussed this passage from Bhabha’s chapter “Of Mimicry and Man” about colonial subjectivity in Chapter 2.

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