

## Space and Desire on the (non)Farm: The Return of the Same in *Disgrace* and *The Devil's Chimney*

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Anne Landsman's *The Devil's Chimney* portray characters whose experiences of desire and space are informed by colonialism, race, gender, and species, 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 stabilize, fix and define space, controlling or managing others' movements in it or, alternatively, they 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 most rights to both European women and non-European South Africans. Inside this zone of rights they gave themselves, white males experienced a greater degree of freedom to act on their desires, to move through and occupy space, and to treat those without rights as they pleased, often with impunity. In "Necropolitics," Achille Mbembe explains 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: David Lurie views women in terms of space, often entering space despite his being unwelcomed and undesired; he also feels uneasy about his daughter Lucy remaining on the land adjacent to Petrus that she refuses to call a farm; and he voices concerns about there being “too many” people in the national space of South Africa; Petrus, a black South African, receives a land grant from the government. Similarly, in *The Devil’s Chimney*, Connie, the “white poor” protagonist, expresses concerns about being confined in space, like the ostriches in the *kraal*, as she tells the story of a young girl trapped in the Cango Caves and narrates the history of Miss Beatrice, an ostrich farmer, who is also temporarily confined by the gendered space of her home in early twentieth-century Oudtshoorn. Despite the opportunities offered in both novels for characters to think about and relate to space, others, and animals differently, to think in new ways outside of colonial models of desire, the protagonists in these novels largely repeat the colonial organizations of space and colonial capitalist relations of extraction. The missed opportunities for transforming the self and relations with others, or outright refusals to act on these opportunities, demonstrate, in part, why some things in the “new” South Africa are not all that different from the violent past.

At various points in these novels, the biological desires of animals and humans are 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 (both humans and non-human animals) 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 and consumption, or present possibilities for reorienting the subject in a process of “becoming.” As both novels attest, animals can both serve to uphold spatial boundaries (e.g. like guard dogs) or figure as threats to ordered space, depending on whether they are oedipalized (tamed) or they maintain their independent wills and desires. Animal and human bodies, their movements and the threat of their

non-human 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 the possibility of characters' experiences of "becoming-animal".<sup>2</sup> Both novels also posit particular modes of creating art as having the potential to transform colonial modes of thought. Landsman's novel also emphasizes the potential of indigenous knowledge to resist such consumption of others.

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* tells the story of an aging white male professor who rapes his young female student, Melanie, and 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. 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 at the university, at first from "professor of modern languages" to "adjunct professor of communications," with the "rationalization" and closing of the "Classics and Modern Languages" department by the university and later his departure after news of the investigation into his affair with a student becomes a scandal (3). Mark Sanders reads this "reduction of language to a communication tool" as serving the "interests of global capital." He cites Coetzee and Ndebele's critiques of such university practices to indicate the colonial nature of this view of language: "[Ndebele] ... offered a detailed materialist critique of how the reduction of the learning of a language to 'functional instruction' can contribute to 'the instrumentalisation of people as units of labour'" (366). In this sense, Lurie is also colonized by the neoliberal university policies that Sanders describes, and his privileging of literature and language study over communications courses might be read as part of a resistance to this neocolonial university model. Following his fall in status at the university, he takes a brief hiatus to stay in the Eastern Cape with his daughter Lucy. On this space which Lurie attempts to call a farm, Lucy 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 black 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 minor 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 the claims against him, Lurie continues to experience unhomeliness because of his waning privileged position in the changing post-apartheid nation.<sup>3</sup> As the committee recommends his removal for his failure to admit wrongdoing, 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 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's later 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," in a move away from his sense of self and 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 he explains in his concerns about the accumulation of private property in a society of vast economic inequality, 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

personal needs being fulfilled, and his anxieties about property ownership and crowded space.

Where *Disgrace* is largely focalized through Lurie, a character abusive to women, Landsman's novel features an alcoholic, racist "white poor" female protagonist, Connie, who narrates the story, suffers from post-partum depression, looks after dogs, and struggles with an abusive husband and mother. In what seems like a coping strategy or a flight from her violent relationships, Connie obsesses over telling the story of a twentieth-century English woman ostrich farmer, Miss Beatrice. Narrating this story, Connie displays jealousy of how Miss Beatrice's husband's temporary departure from the farm enables her more freedom and the opportunity to explore more intimate relationships with the animals, the South African servants on the farm, and her neighbors. Her freedom from her husband, Mr. Henry, also extends to the realm of sexuality as she engages sexually with her neighbors and laborers. Portraying the capitalist Mr. Henry, who planned to get rich in the ostrich feather market, Landsman critiques capitalism, racism, patriarchy, 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, parallel the management and confined space allotted for the ostriches on Miss Beatrice's farm. In both novels, characters' management of others in space and penetration of others' spaces continues in a colonial tradition of mastery that these novels seek to undermine by gesturing toward other epistemologies—other ways of thinking and desiring that might lead to more sustainable relationships for the communities and environments of South Africa.

Coetzee's novel has been written about extensively by scholars of postcolonialism, feminism, South African literature, animal studies, sexuality studies, and so on. It is difficult and ambiguous at times in its treatment of violent modes of relation, such as its potentially incendiary portrayals of racialized rape. Jane Poyner explains that "[i]n an ANC-commissioned report on racism in the media, the novel has been held up as illustrative of white racism in South Africa today" (12). Lucy Graham also traces how the novel's racialized rape scenes fit into traditions of "black peril" narratives, "sensationalized accounts of white women raped by black men ... that have a long history in South Africa, where they have fed white paranoia" (4). Given the 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. Coetzee's Princeton lectures collected as *The Lives of Animals* are also popular with animal studies critics because of the way they address head on the question of our thinking about and treatment of animals through a fictional author, Elizabeth Costello (and Coetzee created a longer novel with that character's name as its title). However, in its post-apartheid South African setting, *Disgrace* more directly addresses the specific violent histories and modes of thought of the colonial period and apartheid regime.

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 the book highlights. In addition, Rosemary Jolly has written about the role of desire and its relation to art in *Disgrace*. 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 another angle from which to consider the potential of such art for transformation—for decolonizing hegemonic habits of thought. The *Devil's Chimney* has received less critical attention and, while Wendy Woodward and others have discussed the novel's treatment of 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. This chapter considers the opportunities for new ways of thinking and for resistance afforded by non-normative, non-human and anti-oedipal desires in *Disgrace* and *The Devil's Chimney*. In their concerns with thinking about animals, space, and art differently, toward their respective "minor" and "nomadic" arts, both novels demonstrate how characters ultimately fail to transform or act on these opportunities to change their modes of thought and relations to others by their open-ended conclusions.

### DISGRACE, DESIRE, AND NATIONAL SPACE

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* begins with a description of the fifty-two-year-old English professor, David Lurie, describing how he deals with sexual urges by visiting a Muslim sex worker named Soraya. 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. 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. His view of himself as a lacking, oedipal subject along with his failure to recognize the ethics involved in relating to others lead him to be perpetually consuming others to fill this apparent void. Lurie's privileged view of himself and racist view of others as somehow less than human also informs his relations as he thinks of others in a colonial tradition.

Lurie's spatial imaginary is perhaps more directly informed by the state-organized separation of races that occurred during apartheid. As Mahmood Mamdani explains, apartheid was "a project whose sum and substance was to racialize space and communities in white South Africa and ethnicize space and communities in black South Africa" (46). The historical racialization of space then informs his penetrations into the space of racialized and, to him, exotic others such as Soraya, the sex worker whom he calls at home and hires a detective to follow. Anne McClintock also argues that nationalist space is always gendered and emphasizes this aspect of Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa: "All nationalisms are gendered, all are invented, and all are dangerous ... in the sense that they represent relations to political power and to technologies of violence" (352). David's imagined nationalist privilege post-apartheid bears out McClintock's point as his actions are often dangerous and violent toward women, especially women of color. In his writing about white nationalism, Ghassan Hage takes issue with those who thought they were "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). 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)

His term “nationalist manager,” used to describe how people take it upon themselves to identify the “right amount” of racially categorized people, accurately describes Lurie in his attempts to manage others—humans and animals—in space throughout the novel. While his race isn’t clearly indicated in the novel—Derek Attridge suggests that “Lurie is in many ways a typical white South African of the generation that grew up with apartheid” and considers that, even so, he may be Jewish—Lurie still envisions himself in a privileged position in national space (171).

For Hage, the white nationalists’ fantasy also revolves around an experience or construction of lack, including the originary lack of the fantasy (72). In *Disgrace*, Lurie at one point, perhaps nostalgically, recalls how in the past Petrus could have been forcibly removed from Lucy’s neighborhood, “sending him packing” (116).<sup>4</sup> Challenging the definition of subjectivity as one who desires because of a negative feeling of lack, as I’ll discuss later in Chap. 3, then offers a way to resist and undermine the thought that stems from such nationalist fantasies and their violent managements, penetrations, displacements, and removals. Coetzee’s novel gestures to other positive kinds of desire that exceed the psychoanalytic definition. Lurie’s anxiety about managing space occurs in several scenes. Furthermore, Rosemary Jolly detects an element of fantasy in 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” (“Writing Desire” 94). His repeated 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. Lucy challenges David’s categorization of the land as a farm: “Stop calling it the farm, David. This is not a farm, it’s just a piece of land where I grow things—we both know that” (200). Her refusal to view the land as a farm then includes a repudiation of the mythologies and nationalisms of the farm novel and plaasroman traditions—traditions which Coetzee argues often maintain “an order we can call *patriarchal capitalism*” (6). Coetzee explains how some works in this tradition think of “wives and children as capital” and how nostalgia for the pastoralism of farming traditions is a desire for a return to a “past of peasants and masters”;



therefore Lucy's refusal to consider this land a farm frustrates Lurie's viewing of women as objects to be owned as well as the hierarchy he seems to want to reinstate (6–8). Smits-Marais and Wenzel read Lucy's resistance to this definition of the land as an opportunity to open 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). Another important correction is Lurie's later acknowledgement that desire is more than merely a lack, a "recognition" which Jolly also observes (94). 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 it 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";

[D]esire "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. 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*: "[S]imply 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.

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 its more material concerns about actual animals, which I'll discuss later.

Lurie's relationships to women through lack and in spatial terms continue with his student, Melanie Isaacs, whom he rapes on several 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. Robert 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 169–70)

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 the populations of ethnic others and animals, an intersectionality I'll discuss in detail later. Lurie's attempts to view the space as a farm and to position women and animal bodies as existing for his consumption take part in making bodies violently "disposable" to the capitalist flows of globalization.

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 to 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. In Melanie's case, her

parents seem behind the accusations against Lurie as they demonstrate their desire to protect their daughter, not unlike the ostrich parents who desire to protect their egg in *The Devil's Chimney*, which I'll 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 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: "[D]on'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 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. He also repeatedly brings up legal discourse, continuously confusing the purpose 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 most of these rights for women and ethnic others, he seeks entry into a discourse which has traditionally privileged him. During 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 wrongdoing 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'll discuss in Chap. 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.

However, the various slippages into legalese and human rights discourse suggest that the inquiry committee still thinks about protecting students in a human rights framework—a framework which I critique throughout this project for its weakness and ineffectiveness in attempting to protect humans and animals who fall under its jurisdiction. Often such laws are ignored or not upheld, and bodies are at greater risk of violence when authorities and others don't have the desire to uphold them. After discussing how racist and sexist discourses excluded some people from the category of human, Rosemary Jolly argues: "These discourses and their antecedents are not effectively contested, Coetzee proposes, by including women and blacks into an enlarged category of the human in a sort of putative metaphysical search-and-rescue operation. The anxiety still haunts the discursive space between marginalized humans and non-human animals" (154). Furthermore, after discussing how South Africa passed legislation in the late 1990s and 2000s to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence against women, Lucy Graham quotes Lisa Vetten's critique of the efficacy of legal discourse: "[T]here is no necessary connection between a progressive legislative framework and a reduction in violence against women" (132). Coetzee's novel suggests that positive definitions of desire and the transformation of violent modes of thought have the potential to be more effective where laws and rights discourse fall short.

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, such as in Farodia Rassool's slippage into legal discourse. The phrase "rights of desire" fails to consider 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 written up by the head of the inquiry committee, Mathabane, which acknowledges his abuse of Melanie's rights: "I acknowledge without reservation serious abuses of the human rights of the complainant" (57). 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. 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 attempts to construct a space he has rights over but from where she cannot assert her rights.

The organization of the inquiry committee in *Disgrace* alludes to the committee hearings of the TRC, which several critics have noted. For example, Mark Sanders observes how “[t]here are clues that the committee is a ‘Truth and Reconciliation in miniature: for example, the confusion between the legal requirement of perpetrators to make a full disclosure and the unlegislated moral pressure to express remorse, make repentance, and even ask forgiveness of victims’ (369–70). In this regard, some of the committee members’ complicity in Lurie’s violence—and, again, it is not altogether clear what claims have been made about him—and willingness to help him sweep this under the rug by asking him to sign off on a prewritten apology recalls the critiques of the TRC’s ineffectiveness in addressing many of the ills and violences of apartheid. As Shakti Jaising explains, the TRC’s amnesty committee didn’t offer total amnesty for the apartheid regime, but on a case-by-case basis: “[A]mnesty was to be granted to individual ‘perpetrators’ of human rights violations who could prove at public hearings that they had acted for ‘political’ (and not personal) reasons” (119). In this sense, the inquiry committee that looks at David’s case and narrative also seeks to establish a narrative of the university as upholding human rights. The hollowness of this approach to address past violence, as Mamdani argues of the TRC, is clear in the statement that Mathabane crafts for David to sign. In other words, the public image of the university as upholding human rights seems to take precedence for some members of the committee over concerns to protect students from the self-described predator Lurie.

Such a view of desire as being guaranteed by rights contrasts largely with Deleuze and Guattari’s positive view of desire as a force that flows through assemblages that isn’t owned or possessed by a subject, especially a subject of rights. In their chapter in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey explain Deleuze and Guattari’s construction of desire that doesn’t require a subject. 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, positive desire seeks to undermine such boundaries. It is only when Lurie begins to lose this sense of self later in the novel, which I’ll discuss below, that his feelings of lack subside and he briefly 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 ... 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? (154)

The last line here evokes the ethics involved in assemblages of desire 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 a sense of “becoming.” 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,” 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 the US 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.” 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” (121). Throughout the novel, Lurie’s marking others as desirable or undesirable often functions in relation to how he feels they enrich him in an accumulation of pleasure and make him feel more homely in the space of the nation, or, alternatively, how he feels threatened by their presence and assertions of agency that disrupt his mastery and privileged access to national space.

Lurie returns to this discourse of enrichment toward 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 sex worker after the young man in black, Ryan, threatens him once 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. 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 spatially, confirming his return to the same old ways of thinking and relating to others. Both Hage and hooks (25) suggest that people from the dominant culture who have experienced failures or frustrations in other areas of life, such as employment, are more likely to assert their dominance in their treatment of racialized others. The diminishing importance and viability of Lurie’s position in the university positions him as such a frustrated representative of dominant culture.

### “TOO MANY”: BIOPOLITICS AND DESIRE

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 with vast social inequality. As Foucault makes clear, characters’ declarations of “too many” in *Disgrace* are biopolitical as they seek control over the population and 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” (*Society Must Be Defended* 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)

In this light, the concerns in *Disgrace* about space, property, and population manifest themselves in a biopower that seeks to maintain the status quo. At the base of such a judgement of “too many,” as the apartheid regime’s displacement policies make evident, is an ideal amount of “others” occupying particular areas of 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 who are "too many" and not whites alone who 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' family and David in the same place. Then David says to Bev that the problem is not between him and Lucy but "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.

Lurie describes the precarious situation in the Eastern Cape as a Malthusian problem of population: "A risk to own anything ... Too many people, too few things" (98). However, such a perspective seems to ignore the apartheid regime's strategic organization of economic inequality, an organization that has not significantly changed for the masses. 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. Susan Smits-Marais and Marita Wenzel also describe how the lands of the Eastern Cape have been ravaged by colonization (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 characters of the Eastern Cape over property and space then might be read more accurately as caused by colonial overconsumption of the land and the organized creation of social inequality by the ruling classes, rather than as primarily a problem caused by increases in population.

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” (“Writing Desire” 94). Jane Poyner suggests that Lurie experiences a kind of atonement for his violence to women in his caring for the deceased dogs and points to a risk of this focus on animals eliding the violence done to women: “At stake is whether by paralleling very different modes of oppression Coetzee sacrifices specificity and silences the working of the particular” (“Truth and Reconciliation 163”). While it is questionable if his work to respect the dog corpses serves as atonement, and this elision of specificity is a risk, an ecofeminist reading might suggest that the violences inflicted on women and animals work according to similar logics and need not be approached as separate, distinct issues.

Given the history of white bourgeois management of space and stray dogs in Cape Town, which Kirsten McKenzie describes, 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. For example, a Xhosa woman who brings her goat to the clinic because he has been attacked by dogs explains how “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 woman’s livestock as the goat is described in terms of its financial value and the dogs are responsible for damaging its value as property.

Woodward explains how the breeds of dogs at Bev Shaw’s “Animal Welfare Clinic” reveal how humans assign symbolic meaning to animals, valuing them based on human-established categories and hierarchies:

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 intrusion. 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 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.

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 considers 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.

Lucy's apparent non-normative desire, or the potential of it, also offers ways out of dominant modes of desire. While her same-sex desire is ambiguous in the novel, it nonetheless gestures to the possibility of other ways of desiring than heteronormativity. Lucy lives with a woman named Helen who has left for Johannesburg prior to David's arrival at her house. At first, Lurie imagines Lucy and Helen's "Sapphic love," later questioning this opinion: "Perhaps he is wrong to think of Lucy as homosexual. Perhaps she simply prefers female company" (104). Where Lurie seeks to define her desire and subjectivity perhaps in seeking to call her a "homosexual," homosexuality in Deleuzian thought is not an identity but a becoming, a positive desiring energy that can transform dominant subjectivities, thought, and modes of relation.<sup>5</sup> Despite this ambiguity about her sexual desire, Lucy's role in the novel as a character who often challenges David's patriarchal and other violent ways of thinking positions her as a character that might work to transform colonial modes of thought and relating. The promise of homosexual desire to transform violent modes of relation toward positive becoming gets taken up again in discussions of a homosexual play in *The Whale Caller* in Chap. 2, and the non-normative desires of the protagonist and his co-worker in *The Reluctant Passenger* in Chap. 4. Lucy's mode of desire (and indeed her way of relating to the land) is not a logic of sameness but a kind of thinking that seems to move in new, different possibilities. Her desire plays a significant role in David's briefly changed perspective and decision to write his opera from Theresa's perspective. Perhaps, too, in the figure of her child of rape, then, there exists the idea that Lucy may help to inaugurate a new, different future, albeit one that is a product of an extremely violent act and national history. However, despite the potential of homosexual desire to transform thought, and it's not altogether clear she desires in this way, her plan to join Petrus' family suggests a blockage of this potential. As Sorcha Gunne argues, "Lucy adopts a pre-Enlightenment view of marriage as an economic and political treaty" that has the implication that "if she does not marry Petrus, she faces eviction and rape" (5).

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 that “[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. “‘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 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: “[Y]es, 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: “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. The potential of “smooth space” is at work at this place that is not a farm in *Disgrace*:

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 (and David feels more at home in the city), the farm of the country in South African culture and history is heavily striated as Smits-Marais and Wenzel’s attest, and indeed Deleuze and Guattari offer the farm as a prime example of striated space. Interestingly, the quote about living in smooth space also suggests the example of becoming a “cave dweller” as one such modality: a kind of occupation of space we see at times in the sexual encounters that take place in the Cango Caves in Landsman’s *The Devil’s Chimney*, which I’ll discuss later. The potential of the smooth space of Lucy and Petrus’ dwelling in the Eastern Cape then offers the opportunity of becoming for Lurie. However, “smooth space” does not serve any kind of messianic function. 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 figures as a mode of thought that might enable transformation in *Disgrace*. Lurie loses his sense of self once again and changes his thinking about the masters of literature and art through

writing an opera. Early 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 on some of them. As a student of the masters, a student of this major literature, he adopts their dominant mode of thought. In his reading of *Disgrace*, Attridge argues, "[i]t is important to insist once more that the novel is not proffering the work of art as a solution to or a compensation for the ills of its time" (183). Similarly, Sanders argues that the novel does not "make Lurie's opera a resolution" (371). While it's true that art doesn't offer a solution or resolution, some kinds of art and modes of artistic creation, like Lurie's opera, offer a *potential* for resistance to the same old modes of thought toward new ways of thinking and for the experience of other ways of desiring. Lurie, however, fails to follow through on this opportunity to change and think differently.

In addition to "the masters" informing his lifestyle and sense of self, they guide Lurie's 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, despite 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 theorize, such as desire, sexuality, and animality, literature and art too can serve to maintain dominant, oedipal culture or, alternatively, can present opportunities for transformation, all depending on the style and mode of comportment involved.

Shortly after the narrator recites the lesson from *Oedipus*, which David remembers, they explain 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, consumerist 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 different ways of thinking and desiring that challenge dominant culture's definition of the self. Creating or experiencing minor literature or minor music—minor art of any kind—possesses the ability to clear away old ideas of major literature from the mind. In David's case, such art can also deterritorialize those old ideas from apartheid that he repeatedly brings up in insisting on calling Lucy and Petrus' land a "farm" and recalling the lack of status under the law for non-white South Africans.

Being a student of the masters, David initially plans to imitate and indeed to steal from the masters of the past for his opera. He explains his first thoughts about writing the piece: “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 becomes 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 is no longer a borrowing from the masters and an expert knowledge of them but comes from an unknown place, his unknown desire and his inexperienced 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 and a becoming-music, the latter a mode of becoming present also in *The Whale Caller*, as will be discussed in Chap. 3.

In “Writing Desire Responsibly,” Rosemary Jolly also reads Lurie’s composing the opera in relation to desire and Coetzee’s own poetics. She describes 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*’ 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. 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 transformational opportunity afforded by the opera is not realized in the novel. Shortly after this moment of intensity, 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. Nonetheless, Coetzee suggests that deterritorializing desire and allowing it to flow away from major and colonial literature to a minor literature offers transformative potential. As Jolly observes,

[i]n 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 toward transforming subjects and communities away from the violent modes of thought and relation 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, who unfortunately returns to the same old ways.

*Disgrace* calls for the production of more minor literature to do the work of transforming society away from dominant culture through experiences of postcolonial desire. 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 toward in a becoming-animal should he seek to give up his dominant subjectivity. This minor literature might work toward protecting animals and others from the violence that results from a particular idea of the “human” as an exclusive category, which 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, echoing racist and speciesist logics of exclusion in marking the limits of love and ethics, 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 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. The 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 her 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 in this novel set in South Africa as Connie is a racist and a 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 Miss 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 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 much 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 people and animals, and their relationships to space, although highlighting more specifically the relationship between the confined spaces of women and animals, and their potentials for resistance of mastery.

Like the opportunity offered by the "end" of apartheid for new ways of living in *Disgrace*, Miss Beatrice's husband's absconding from the farm enables her to take charge and offers opportunities for new kinds of relationship with the animals and African workers on the farm, and with her Jewish neighbors. However, unlike the anti-colonial stance, as Coetzee reads it, of a "farm novel" like Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*, Miss Beatrice largely maintains the organizations of space, labor, and power of colonialism rather like David Lurie's same old ways of thinking. 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 liberties for Miss Beatrice, and in his return he seeks to restore his mastery and management of others and space.

Like Lucy and Petrus' non-farm space in *Disgrace*, the caves near Miss Beatrice's farm offer smooth space and opportunities for becoming where hierarchies and categories are called into question. Yet, like *Disgrace*, these opportunities are wasted as Miss Beatrice often uses them to reinstate the same kinds of relation that Mr. Henry installed at the farm. The difference here is that she occupies Mr. Henry's position of privilege and power herself in a kind of white feminism. In *Disgrace* the violent national imaginary of the three characters who rape Lucy suggests a repetition of the patriarchal violence of apartheid nationalism. In *Devil's Chimney* the transfer of privilege in the nationalist discourse on the ostrich farm, for the most part, only occurs in relation to gender as



the English woman Miss Beatrice assumes power. The novel thus demonstrates Anne McClintock's point that "White women are both colonized and colonizers, ambiguously complicit in the history of African dispossession" (379).

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:

[W]hen 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 and agency of Africans render this white nationalist's experience of space unhomely as they and their dogs become "too many" for him. The "where they are supposed to be" of his comments suggests a longing for an ideal of a segregated society that Africans' intimate proximity disrupts. 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 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?" ("Necropolitics" 12). In the early twentieth century, white males arranged it so that they were the only subjects with full rights in South Africa. In the post-apartheid example of Potgieter, 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 also serves as a kind of historical precursor to Potgieter, 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 and 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 as one free of "others" or at least heavily segregated 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 displacements, and 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

the reason for the absence of “coloureds,” “blacks,” or the San from the Karoo that perhaps also makes clear 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 and which details the history of the ostrich feather boom, 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). The San were no longer viewed as “undesirable” as their populations were previously decimated. Therefore they were not a significant threat to English or white nationalist fantasies: they were 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” (38)—her desires for Mr. Jacobs later challenge these initial white supremacist views of him. As I will suggest in Chap. 3, 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). However, sexual desire for those marked as racialized others doesn’t guarantee a changed politics altogether. The way Beatrice seeks to make “Highlands her country” (45) indicates a settler colonialism that attempts to ignore the displacements and other violences exerted on indigenous peoples to achieve this possession of land.

Landsman’s novel takes on the poetics of “becoming-animal” as Beatrice takes off on lines of flight, has a sexual encounter with Jacobs in the caves, and is compared to various animals. However, while she does come to love Jacobs, her sexual experiences and desire largely cut short the opportunity for a changed politics and transformed relations to space. Connie uses the language of becoming to describe Beatrice throughout her narrative: “I think she became an ostrich herself” (51). Despite the positive views that Connie and Beatrice have of animals, they serve largely in their imaginaries as idealized modes of freedom and escapism. In other words, relationships with animals are considered largely in terms of the liberation, or ideas of liberation, they afford these characters; Connie and Beatrice generally don’t do much in the way of

improving the lives of animals. In their sexual experience in the cave, the language describes a rising intensity—[t]here was a river ... flowing from her into him ... it swelled over and flooded them” (75) —that seems to approach a becoming. Yet Miss Beatrice attempts here to maintain a view of the land as uninhabited, eliding the violent colonial displacement and destruction of the San population. The narrator explains how after Jacobs reminds Beatrice that the name of the caves is Congo, “She didn’t want this to be a place where anyone had been. You are the first man, she said. I am the first woman. This is ours. He laughed and said, We’re not Bushmen” (75). Beatrice’s nationalist imaginary that seeks to naturalize her presence on the land and claim it as her property as an original dweller there evidences a settler colonialism that makes clear that this is not a positive, transformational encounter. Coming shortly after September’s explanation of San knowledge to Beatrice that “[w]e are the first people. Ouma Boesman said” (68), her attempt to claim the land as its first settler, ignoring the San’s presence, recalls the nationalist imaginaries of some early Dutch settlers in South Africa.

Miss Beatrice’s sexual experience with September and Nomsa continues this violent mode of relation as she invades the space of their hut and tells them, “I want you to love me,” a request that Nomsa responds to with: “And how must we do that?” (91) Given the hierarchy that informs their relationships on the farm, Nomsa’s response demonstrates a feeling of compulsion to do what Beatrice asks, an arrangement of mastery made clear by Mr. Henry’s killing of September when he refuses orders. Before describing the violence of their sexual relations, Connie explains that “[w]hatever was happening to September, it wasn’t happiness” (93); and she compares this scene to the story she tells to open the novel of the Devil’s sexual assault of Pauline, the maid who was lost in the caves. The latter half of the novel focuses in part on Miss Beatrice’s pregnancy that results from sex with September in this scene. Nomsa’s theft of the infant demonstrates a South African feminism as motherhood serves as a politically motivating identity. Nomsa reclaims her husband’s baby, child of Beatrice’s apparent rape of September. Woodward explains Nomsa’s motivations to take the baby:

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)

While Connie too appears to have had her baby taken away from her, the resistance that Nomsa offers to Beatrice’s authority and possession of the child also mirrors the ostriches who kill Mr. Henry when he attempts to steal their egg, their unhatched child.

While it’s tempting to read Connie’s description of Miss Beatrice transforming here as a becoming, a move away from a privileged position in terms of race and class, Connie’s narration often indicates a level of domination and violent nationalist imaginary. Since “becoming-minoritarian” includes a lack of concern for how space is managed or occupied, rather than a mastery over space and others, Miss Beatrice’s transformation is not the positive mode associated with becomings; instead, the transformation enacts a privileged relation to space that is somewhat like David Lurie’s nationalism. Such nationalist imaginaries appear in other texts discussed in this book. For example, in Chap. 4 I’ll discuss the nationalisms of characters in Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness*. Miss Beatrice’s experience of desire with Mr. Jacobs and with September and Nomsa offered opportunities for transforming relations to more positive, postcolonial ways of being in the world. However, she fails to follow through on changing her thinking as she seeks to claim the land as her own, eliding indigenous South African peoples’ presence on the land and ignoring their own agencies, desires, and interests. Ultimately, Landsman’s novel argues that an intersectional approach is required to truly transform social relations away from the violence of the past—an approach that addresses the violences done to all bodies via the exclusions from the community of the colonial and apartheid pasts.

Beatrice is somewhat liberated in Mr. Henry’s absence to move about more freely and in her freedoms to relate with Mr. Jacobs, and such moments are often compared to animal movement in the novel. Connie remarks on a similar feeling of freedom that she experiences from 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). While there is some positive language of becoming-animal here and some important cross-species interactions, these are often achieved at the expense of ignoring African labor, agency, and occupation of the land. These experiences of becoming-animal figure as potential challenges and resistances to dominant subjectivity and the

patriarchal order that Mr. Henry seeks to re-establish upon his return to the farm. Yet they largely fail to result in any significant change in terms of the ways that Connie and Beatrice relate to African characters.

### 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.<sup>9</sup> In her essay, Woodward emphasizes the fixed space of "hegemonic identity" and the transformative potential the caves present in her considerations of space in a symbolic sense. However, 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 white males' desires and ambitions for 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: "[A]untie 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. Thus, Connie's telling of Miss Beatrice's story offers a kind of white feminist escapism that fails to consider the position of non-white South African women.

Connie and Miss Beatrice's politics thus seem limited to their own self-interests and they have missed an opportunity for changing relations and thinking of a feminism that considers the lives of women of color. As Dabi Nkululeko puts it,

[a]s aliens to [black] experience, Euro-settler women have to overcome most of the trappings of their own experience, such as their own class interests and status, and they have to study closely their experience as part of the colonist-settler nation, disassociate themselves from it before they can begin to comprehend the experience of the native women under colonialism ... In order to extricate themselves from culpability in the oppression of African women, settler women—the "feminist socialists"—must work among their own people to create conditions for the destruction of such oppression.<sup>6</sup>

Connie, however, when not consuming alcohol to escape her situation or out with the dogs on a walk, idolizes Miss Beatrice and tells her story as a white feminist figure that continues to oppress African women, men, and animals. Connie's extremely racist attitudes toward the maid Pauline that open the novel largely fail to change by the novel's end, suggesting this flaw in her limited white feminism. Wendy Woodward reads the possibility of a more positive mode of transformation in the ambiguous guess made by Connie that Nomsa and Miss Beatrice possibly live together: "[T]he 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). However, this positive reading seems undermined

by the many ways that Miss Beatrice seeks to elide Africans' occupation of land and asserts a level of power over Nomsa and September that is not too different from David Lurie's consumption of others.

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 to 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.

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 racialized 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.

Like a tame animal, Connie often submits to the national will of white racists and patriarchy, as is evident in her jealousy of Miss Beatrice's agency and freedom of movement when Mr. Henry is absent. 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). Later, she compares the restrictions on her agency and the taming of her movements and desires to the restraining and caging of prisoners by 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, whereas 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 like her husband Jack, perhaps recognizing how their violent logic and actions harm themselves as well. 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 ANIMAL RESISTANCE

The indigenous animism 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. Connie's own storytelling about Miss Beatrice serves as another form of knowledge outside the patriarchal reality described by her husband. Nomsa's *muti*, midwifery, and knowledge about the future, September's knowledge about the natural world, 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 Western, colonial capitalism. In her article about magical realism in South African literature, Paulina Grzeda explains that Brenda 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 this definition highlights the concerns with capitalism in Landsman's use of this strategy to represent Oudtshoorn during the ostrich feather boom, Harry Garuba's “animism” or “animist materialism” provides a more useful framework, especially considering September's indigenous knowledge of the natural world that recognizes its great agency. Garuba explains how “an animist conception of the world is much larger in scope and dimension than the concept of magical realism could possibly describe” (274). He further elaborates that the “animist unconscious is much closer to a kind of social imaginary” (283). In this view, September's knowledge and imaginary offers a mode of thinking about relationships to the world and to others that differs from the national imaginaries of Beatrice, Henry, and Jacobs. September's knowledge of the natural world takes the form of stories that perform the “re-enchantment” that Garuba describes. For example, September tells Beatrice the story of how “the ostrich doesn't fly” because the “Mantis stole his fire” (68). By contrast, Mr. Jacobs only discusses ostriches in terms of their economic value. In *The Devil's Chimney*, animism is privileged, and Beatrice acknowledges its value; animism, like desire, serves as a challenge to Mr. Henry and Jacob's authority and knowledge, offering different epistemologies and a postcolonial mode of relating to others, the environment, and space.

Upon returning to the farm, Mr. Henry tries, in colonial fashion, to reterritorialize the slightly new arrangements on the farm which

have evolved during his departure. He seeks to extract capital from the ostriches immediately to cover the expenses of the child Beatrice is pregnant with, which he believes is his. His motivations are capitalist and racist because he wants to raise the child in England away from the Boers and the South African “wilderness” (140), which he fears might contaminate his child. 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 knowledge about how this plucking will result in a violent future: “[H]e was saying something under his breath about the Ostrich with fire under its armpits and how the Ostrich was going to drop that fire and make everything burn down at once” (200–201). September’s animist knowledge emphasizes the great agency of animals, something that Mr. Henry ignores to his detriment by the novel’s end. 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). The 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. In this scene, animal desires and animist knowledges challenge the violent instrumentalization of bodies.

As she describes September and the other farm workers laboring to get the birds into the box, Connie 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 resistance and a protest to his will, and for demonstrating his superior 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 reasserting his sense of mastery over nature and others, and re-establishing a hierarchy that September's knowledge threatens: "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 a devastating future would result from the wrath of the ostriches retaliating against Henry's violent treatment. 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. Now that the feather market has crashed, Mr. Henry needs Jacobs' financial advice and wants to sell him his land. Henry attempts to replace the painted egg he accidentally broke at Mr. Jacobs' house in order to return himself to Jacobs' good graces, by attempting to take an ostrich egg from two ostriches. 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 ostriches' calls. As he attempts to steal the egg, Henry is haunted by September's San knowledge as he is "hearing September's voice buzzing in his ears" (240), 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 unhatched offspring. The narrator continues to describe the violence the birds 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 and thief 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. Their resistance to this theft of the prehatched bird recalls Nomsa's own taking of September's baby from Beatrice. Thus Connie learns and is inspired not only by Nomsa and Miss Beatrice's narratives, as Woodward notes;<sup>10</sup> she also observes the 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 which the ostriches are kept in at the farm operation, along with their ill-treatment by Mr. Henry and finally his attempts to steal their egg, result in their violent resistance. Ultimately, it is their desire to protect their young 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). In their attempts to extract and make use of indigenous knowledge for their capitalist ambitions, Henry and Beatrice fail to understand that

“[Traditional Environmental Knowledge] is not just knowledge *about* the relationships with Creation, it is the relationship with Creation; it is the *way* that one relates” (McGregor 394, emphasis in original). Where September’s teaching presents an opportunity to transform ways of relating, the settler colonists ignore this opportunity and seek to instrumentalize the knowledge. 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). Henry and Beatrice, in colonial fashion, use September’s knowledge and labor to turn a profit from the birds, and Henry dismisses this knowledge when it impedes the attainment of what he desires.

Like *Disgrace*, *The Devil’s Chimney* also portrays art as offering transformative potential or as fortifying social inequalities through the creativity of September and Mr. Henry. September appears as an artist in Miss Beatrice’s dreams and, while this complicates things a bit, this mode of art challenges Western modes of thought about relations with the natural world and with space. 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 sometimes offer a space for alternative desires. Importantly, here, September’s art turns the wall, which functions to striate space by confining and marking it off, into a “smooth space” with his art; 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 includes “‘close-range’ vision, as distinguished from long-distance vision; second ‘tactile,’ or rather ‘haptic’ space, as distinguished from optical space” (Deleuze and Guattari 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) and later drawing "pictures ... like spiders and worms in a nest and the nest was sitting in the middle of a cage" (177). He tries to sell his art 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. He seeks to replace the egg he has broken which had a painting of Mr. Jacobs' farm on it. However, the ostrich parents resist this reorientation of relations and theft of their 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. Mr. Henry views 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) position September and the ostriches as resisting the mastery of Henry's art project and his capitalist thinking about 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 or indigenous knowledge, also present lines of flight away from dominant culture; yet these opportunities are often cut short as nationalist and colonial ways of thought return. The dream of September's art, and Nomsa's rearrangement of the structure of the house at Highlands during her practice of midwifery, challenge colonial views of the world and organizations of space. 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). The erecting of fences and boundaries constitutes the striation of the smooth nomad space, the ordering of space according to a nationalist imaginary that seeks to prevent or capture lines of flight and



reterritorialize movements to work toward the functioning of the state and to extract surplus value from human and animal bodies.

Both *Disgrace* and *The Devil's Chimney* challenge the patriarchal capitalist order of the farm novel and plaasroman. Whether it be the Eastern Cape in *Disgrace* or Oudtshoorn in the Western Cape of *The Devil's Chimney*, historical relationships to the land inform the current relationships to national space. In these novels, characters often fail to follow through on these opportunities for inaugurating new ways of thinking and, instead, they return to similar, violent modes of the past. However, nomadic, indigenous epistemologies as well as the resistances offered by animals, matter, and non-human desire always haunt current regimes of violence, threatening to transform the status quo toward more positive ways of relating.

## NOTES

1. The terms "smooth space" and "striated space" come from *A Thousand Plateaus* and I define them below. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
2. Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming-animal" provides an alternative to the dominant, fixed subjects of rights discourse. Ibid.
3. 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 entitled "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.
4. 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). J.M. Coetzee, "Walt Whitman," in *Inner Workings: Literary Essays 2000–2005*, 1st US edition (New York, NY: Penguin, 2007), 174–88.

5. See Frida Beckman, "What Is Sex? An Introduction to the Sexual Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze," in *Deleuze and Sex*, ed. Frida Beckman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 1–26. There Beckman explains that "[h]omosexuality ... is seen here not as an identity, but as a becoming" (16).

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2017, XIII, 277 p. 1 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-56725-9