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Sovereign Claims: Postcolonial Literature in the Era of Globalization

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Declaration

This submission is my own work: Any quotation from, or description of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

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To Odysseus

Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore literary narratives which reveal how postcolonial subjects adopt and adapt to the discourses of globalization in order to consolidate their sovereignty. J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986) and *Disgrace* (1999) expose the ways in which literary and theoretical forms of representation can unwittingly sustain the previously colonized subject in the trajectory of the colonial time. The insidious ways by which globalization consolidates colonial discourses is further examined through a close reading of Aravind Adiga, Indra Sinha and Mahasweta Devi's literary texts. Adiga's text *The White Tiger* (2008) is a postcolonial *Bildungsroman* in which Balram, an indebted subaltern, conforms to the dictates of neoliberalism in order to escape subalternity. My point of interest is in the epistolary structure of Adiga's text, which reveals Balram's neoliberal phantasies about exploiting the effects that trigger the progressive erosion of the state. Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) contemplates the consolidation of phallocentric economies within globalization. A close reading of the relationship between Animal and Anjali explores the modalities of a sovereignty which counters patriarchal and masculinist discourses. The disenchanting dynamics of globalization are often deferred by the insistence of indigenous myths and traditions that illuminate other ways of inhabiting the world. Devi's "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay and Pirtha" (1995) documents the irruption of the mythical in the sphere of the political and discloses the ways in which indigenous myths counter the totalizing narratives of globalization. The significance of myths and their reformulation in the present that tackle the encroaching policies of the settler-state are also the focal point of my analysis of Louise Erdrich's and LeAnne Howe's literature. Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988) and *The Bingo Palace* (1994) represent a literary genealogy that depicts the struggles of the Anishinaabe to retain their native land through the reconfiguration of their myths and the integration of the casino economy in tribal politics. Lastly, the urgency of imbricating Choctaw myths in the reconsolidation of native sovereignty is explored through LeAnne Howe's *The Shell Shaker* (2001) which narrates the compromises of the community to the dictates of the casino economy in order to articulate their sovereign claims.

I develop a dialogue between the aforementioned literary narratives and selected theoretical texts by Michel Foucault, Gayatri Spivak and Jacques Derrida to further discuss the effects of globalization on the material world of communities and subjects in the literary texts under study as well as on their philosophical, theoretical and mythical discourses. By focusing on Foucault's analysis of the *homo oeconomicus*, Spivak's critical elaboration on subaltern subjectivity, and Derrida's deconstruction of sovereignty, this dissertation remains attentive to the interruptive silences of various sovereign subjects and their communities that haunt the neoliberal age and tries to contemplate the events and histories that conjure other configurations of the political.

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'You are saved,' cried Captain Delano, more and more astonished and pained; 'you are saved; what has cast such a shadow upon you?'
'The negro.'

Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*

Man is a creature that obeys a creature that wants.

Montesquieu, qtd in Ranajit Guha's *Dominance without Hegemony*

When it comes to nouns, there are blessedly fewer of them and no designations of gender, no feminine or masculine possessives or articles. Nouns are mainly designated as animate or inanimate, though what is alive and dead doesn't correspond at all to what an English speaker might imagine. For instance, the word for stone, *asin*, is animate. After all, the preexistence of the world according to Ojibwe religion consisted of a conversation between stones. People speak to and thank the stones in the sweat lodge, where the asiniig are superheated and used for healing. They are addressed as grandmothers and grandfathers. Once I began to think of stones as animate, I started to wonder whether I was picking up a stone or it was putting itself into my hand. Stones are no longer the same as they were to me in English.

Louise Erdrich, *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country: Travelling Through the Land of My Ancestors*

CONTENTS

1. Introduction 1

1.1 Who Globalizes? The Origins and Practices of a Contested Project 1

1.2 The Event of Postcolonial Literature 8

1.3 The Challenges of Postcolonial Nations and Neoliberalism: Discourses of Emancipation or Subjugation? 12

2. "Dehumanizing Humanitarianism" and the Emergence of the *Homo Oeconomicus* in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* and *Disgrace* 32

 2.1 Introduction 32

 2.2 Reading Histories/ Reading Bodies: The Politics of Representation in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* 39

 2.3 Not the "Dog-Man" Anymore: Globalization and the Emergence of the *Homo Oeconomicus* in South Africa 56

 2.4 The Rise of the *Homo Oeconomicus* in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* 65

 2.5 "Solid in her existence": Contesting Phallic Economies and Gendered Autonomy in *Disgrace* 70

 2.6 Tracing the "Commandement" in the South African Postcolony and the Arbiter of Peace 74

3. Constellations of the Political: Subaltern Narratives in the Context of Globalization 86

 3.1Introduction 86

 3.2 The Subaltern in/outside History 92

 3.3 "Digesting" Neoliberalism: Subalternity and the Deterioration of the State in Globalization 101

 3.4 "Seeds of Imperialism": Mahasweta Devi's "Pterodactyl" in the Context of the Green Revolution 113

 3.5 "Homo Mapiens" and the time of the Pterodactyl 119

 3.6 The Legacy of the Subaltern Studies Group and the Awakening to the "Planetary" 125

3.7 The "Slow Violence" of Capitalist Toxicity: Before and After the Bhopal Disaster 129

3.8 Radical Bodily Encounters and the Deconstruction of Phallic Sovereignty 140

3.9 Conclusion 146

4. How to Live with Spirits: The Function of Indigenous Spirits and Myths in Louise Erdrich's and LeAnne Howe's Novels 157

4.1Introduction 157

4.2 The Origins of Settler-State Law and the Paradox of Native Sovereignty 159

4.3 Reconciling Indigenous Tradition with Settler Modernity: Reading the Past into the Future in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace* 165

4.4 The Metaphysical Origins of Land Allotment and the Contingencies of Casino Economy 173

4.5 The Liberalization of the Anishinaabe Community in *Tracks* and the Disruptive Potentiality of Myths 176

4.6 Capitalism as Mourning: Ventriloquizing Anishinaabe Myths 190

4.7 Casinoization and Phallic Economies 199

4.8 Healing Sovereignty and Burial Rites in LeAnne Howe's *Shell Shaker* 206

4.9 Conclusion 216

5. Conclusion 226

5.1 Proposals for Future Research 242

Works Cited List 245

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1. Introduction

1.1 Who Globalizes? The Origins and Practices of a Contested Project

In his work on *Globalization and its Discontents* (2002), Joseph Stiglitz explores the reasons why globalization has augmented the international division of labour and why it has failed to improve the living conditions of developing countries. Globalization is a multifaceted process in which, primarily, international organizations dictate fiscal policies that various sovereign countries need to comply with in order to tackle either financial or humanitarian crises.[1] While many international organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the International Labor Organization, have assisted developing nations in improving their living standards (Stiglitz 10), there have been cases when the intervention of these institutions has seriously impaired the nation's endeavors to overcome poverty, unemployment and healthcare crises. Stiglitz acknowledges that it is the "*economic* aspects of globalization" (10 emphasis in original) that have received considerable criticism since the sum of international organizations mandate a series of policies that promote the aggressive "liberalization of capital markets" (10).

International organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were created after the end of World War Two with the aim of "rebuild[ing] Europe" and "sav[ing] the world from future economic depressions" (Stiglitz 11).[2] Yet, the initial objectives of these organizations were formulated in order to tackle the social and financial inequalities that Europe and the United States of America had encountered and, therefore, the politics of these establishments was in tandem with and attuned to the historical and political processes that produced the European ideals; in other words, the political constitution of these organizations stemmed from a specific European cultural and political heritage that had established an idea of citizenship conditioned by the European liberal and state politics. Thus, the policies of these international organizations were to be implemented both to the European countries and their colonies disregarding the cultural and social discrepancies between Europe and its colonial other. For many developing and postcolonial nations, the appeal to these

international organizations was the only way to overcome the social and financial inequalities colonialism engendered.

Stiglitz is not critical of the politics of these international organizations but of the strategies enforced when a developing country seeks the assistance of these institutions. The IMF, Stiglitz argues, fervently supports "free market ideology" and its main course of action involves "cutting deficits, raising taxes, or raising interest rates" (12-13). Stiglitz accuses the IMF of augmenting "global instability" due to its insistence on "premature capital market liberalization" as the only remedy for the developing countries that struggle to resolve the tensions colonialism bequeathed (15). Globalization affects and shapes the global financial environment disproportionately since the politics that undergird its processes, strategies and mechanisms cannot be disentangled from the imperialist tenets that define European politics. This is evident in the monopolizing tendencies which govern the process of globalization and mandate that developed nations export their products to developing nations while inhibiting the latter from exporting their own commodities to the former (Stiglitz 7). The national markets of developing countries cannot compete imported commodities, subsidized by developed nations, since their prices are considerably lower (Stiglitz 17). Gradually, the imported products dominate the country's market and force local business to discontinue the production of their commodities (Stiglitz 17). The failure of developing nations to insert themselves in the channels of globalization, in equal terms, can have a devastating effect on the social and political fabric of the nation. When international institutions and developed countries administer uncritical neoliberal policies disregarding the particularities of developing nations, we can no longer talk of globalization but of neocolonial globalization.[3]

Stiglitz maintains that the policies promulgated by the IMF fail because it insists on an aggressive liberalization of the country before "safety nets" for the disadvantaged and poor are in place in order to withstand the austerity measures it imposes (17). These measures have serious ramifications on the social body for the working class is burdened both with heavy taxation and cutbacks on the welfare state (Stiglitz 20). Hence, not only are social inequalities aggravated by the developing nation's compliance to the IMF's fiscal controls but also the nation's rebuilding program remains incomplete (Stiglitz 20). The most disconcerting consequence of globalization is that the international

organizations which dictate the terms of the process cannot be held accountable by the people whose lives they severely impact. Stiglitz names this condition as "global governance without global government" (21). These extra-political institutions confer upon the financial stability of nations and impose conditions and policies that undermine the sovereignty of the people. This is achieved via the aggressive privatization and liberalization strategies which bar the working forces from inserting themselves in the terrain of capitalist hegemony. Stiglitz refers to the example of Ethiopia to demonstrate how the international organizations often confuse the "means with ends" and reveal the ways in which extra-political institutions impinge on the nation's sovereignty (27).

The colonizing policies of institutional organizations were evident in Ethiopia's initiative to repay an IMF loan earlier than the agreed deadline (Stiglitz 30). Both the United States and the IMF objected to early repayment due to the fact that the Ethiopian government, acting on behalf of a sovereign people, did not ask permission for this course of action (30). Although through early loan repayment the Ethiopian government was able to demonstrate that it could gradually disentangle itself from the restrictive financial custody of the IMF and reestablish financial stability, it was obliged to abstain from this action since it violated the bureaucratic mantras of the institution. As Stiglitz suggests, to the Ethiopian government "such intrusiveness smacked of a new form of colonialism; to the IMF, it was just standard operating procedure" (30). Stiglitz also disagrees with the uncritical "financial market liberalization" the IMF espouses (30).

In the case of Ethiopia, the institution insisted that the country's banking system "open up its financial markets to Western competition" (Stiglitz 31). Although the arrival of foreign banks might improve the loaning interest rates, it might have a detrimental effect on the loaning policies since there would be no guarantee that international banks would lend money to or invest in the small-scale and agricultural businesses, which dominate the Ethiopian market. It becomes evident that the financial policies promulgated by international institutions not only do they advocate the aggressive liberalization of the financial system but, in the long term, redirect the cultural, political and social comportment of the people; the lending strategy of these institutions forces the nation's traditional productive forces into atrophy and fosters an environment of aggressive capitalism and liberalism. Given the existing financial conditions formulated,

to a large extent, by the directives imposed by international institutions a sovereign nation cannot determine its political course without taking into consideration financial indicators such as inflation, Gross Domestic Product and interest rates. These financial markers, however, need to be the means and not the end of national policy.

In his work *Development as Freedom* (2000), Amartya Sen argues that basic freedoms should not be sacrificed for the sake of development. On the contrary, development should be measured according to the enhancement of personal freedoms and the "free agency of the people" (Sen 4). The ideology that conditions the policies of international organizations is premised on the strict regulation and monitoring of performance indicators and financial markers which, hypothetically, depict the nation's real financial picture and its compliance with the tenets of aggressive liberalization. According to Sen, though, it is in the nation's interest to focus on "social and economic arrangements" which evince the improvement of individual "freedoms" such as the access to public health care, high-quality education and the protection of fundamental "political and civil rights" (3). The obsession with inflation statistics and interest rates that characterizes the policies of international institutions results in the biopolitical realignment of the people to a teleological reasoning that deems certain "substantive freedoms" as injurious to development (Sen 5). Instead, international organizations and nations need to draft developmental strategies that take into account the measure of "capability deprivation" their policies induce (Sen 20). Sen argues that "capability deprivation" encompasses the societal, educational and psychological complications germane to the fiscal and developmental policies imposed by international institutions on developing countries. Contrary to the calculative discourse which dictates the imperial policies of international establishments, Sen punctuates the urgency of developing alternative demographic indicators which articulate the inequalities and injustices austerity policies engender. This can be achieved by clarifying the distinction between "culmination outcomes" and "comprehensive outcomes" (Sen 27). When nations focus on "culmination outcomes" they are preoccupied with achieving their financial objectives disregarding the means employed to accomplish their goals. On the contrary, Sen maintains that developing nations need to remain attentive to the "comprehensive

outcomes" so that they contemplate the means employed in order for an objective to be achieved.

Globalization morphs into an insidious colonization when international institutions, which advocate that certain developing countries are in dire need of development, introduce fiscal policies that impact national sovereignty and reshape the cultural and political comportment of the people. The negotiations, between international institutions and developing countries, constitute an exchange between a benign organization and a desperate country where the former maintains that development is only to be achieved through a " 'fierce' process, with much 'blood, sweat and tears'" (Sen 35). The developing nation's journey to modernity requires the "calculated neglect of various concerns" which primarily involve state subsidies to the disadvantaged, the poor and marginalized constituencies (Sen 35). Sen argues that international institutions are willing to provide financial assistance to developing countries as long as the latter limit their democratic "luxur[ies]" and begin making mature and responsible decisions; the extra-political institutions and committees that adhere to austere financial regulation maintain that democracy can be resumed as soon as the financial indicators allow it and that developing nations' democratic principles need to be suspended in order to be protected (Sen 35).

The liberal and capitalist policies espoused and advanced by the prominent devotees of globalization are concomitant with social disparities and the intensification of the international division of labour since they reproduce the colonial ideology. If globalization and development are to work in the periphery, Sen argues, people need to be able to participate in the global "labor market" in equal terms with their counterparts in developed nations (7). Following Karl Marx's elaborations on capitalism, Sen maintains that the marked difference between the "unfreedom of precapitalist arrangements" and capitalism is that in the latter subjects are free to negotiate the exchange value of their labour (29).[4] As globalization intensifies, subjects in developing countries are presented with myriad of opportunities to sell their labour albeit in unfavorable terms. Hence, while globalization, as a process and ideology, is propounded as the only path to development, it insidiously reinstates a modern figuration of bonded labour. Put differently, globalization systematically excludes subjectivities from

developing countries from entering the global labour market by strategically appropriating their labour via aggressive liberalization and austere fiscal policies. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has elaborated extensively on the ways in which globalization augments social inequalities and the international division of labour.

Spivak defines globalization as the "implications…of the financialization of the globe, [and] the establishment of a uniform system of exchange" ("The double bind starts to kick in" 105). This "uniform system of exchange" was promulgated by the constellation of international organizations that were founded, after the end of World War Two, with the intention of maintaining global peace and tackle poverty, hunger and underdevelopment. The Bretton Woods Organizations, the United Nations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the IMF and the World Bank are born out of the ashes of the war waving the flags of "modernization" and "development" as the remedies to the sociopolitical and financial issues that developing nations encounter (Spivak 98). Notwithstanding their humanitarian intentions, these international organizations and agreements constitute the continuation of colonialism since they perpetuate the very same colonial reason which carried out the imperial project from the 16th to the 19th century. The colonial ideology that underpins their projects is premised on the familiar binary between the developed/ civilized nation which is burdened with the modernization of its underdeveloped/ uncivilized other. Colonization was already globalization since its main objective was to disseminate the European culture and capitalist tenets around the globe, establish a "uniform system of exchange," namely capitalism, and, more importantly, indoctrinate the periphery to the cultural dictates of the European center. The international institutions which sprung from the embers of Europe, after World War Two, epitomize the continuation of imperialism albeit in humanitarian terms.

International institutions and their policies perpetuate the international division of labour and sustain social inequalities and discriminations because they promise development and modernization only insofar developing nations adopt and implement ideologies and policies of aggressive liberalization. Developing and postcolonial nations that strive to overcome the financial and social devastation of the colonial era by seeking the assistance of these international institutions are compelled to replace vernacular modes of exchange with neoliberal ones. More specifically, globalization usually arrives

in developing nations and postcolonial nations under the cloak either of humanitarian intervention or developmental projects which promise to enable the marginalized and disenfranchised constituents to reclaim their lives and sovereignty by succumbing to the modernizing agendas that various nation-states endorse. Globalization, articulated through relief and entrepreneurial projects that guarantee improved living and working conditions, embeds the sovereign claims of the disadvantaged in its processes and practices, hence, rendering them indistinguishable from its capitalist and neoliberal objectives. Spivak mentions the example of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and its project of micro-lending to the poor and, more specifically, women, in order to demonstrate how the nation-state and banking institutions co-opt the people's social claims in order to acculturate subalterns to the benefits of neoliberalism (106).

Grameen Bank was founded by the, now Nobel Prize Laureate, Muhammad Yunus in 1976. The objective of the bank is to provide micro-credit loans with almost zero interest and no collateral and to assist the marginalized women of the Bangladeshi community to stop "begging and become self-sufficient."[5] To this end, its main loaning strategies involve microenterprise loan, young entrepreneur loan, crop loan, bridge loan, livestock loan and struggling (beggar) member loan. Susan Feiner and Drucilla Barker criticize the objectives of the Grameen Bank and claim that the specific project, however benign and innovative as it may seem, reconsolidates social inequalities since it does not address systemic impoverishment and segregation. Feiner and Barker suggest that the project does not tackle the "structural causes" of poverty and unemployment and reproduces "individual myths of wealth and property."[6] The project promotes neoliberal narratives of self-improvement by inferring that the "solution to poverty is getting the poor to work harder, get educated, have fewer children and act more responsibly." Although Feiner and Barker argue that the Grameen Bank has improved the lives of many Bangladeshi women, they claim that it conduces to the growth of informal and unregulated labour since most of the loaners "work outside the range of any laws that protect workers or ensure their rights." More importantly, Feiner and Barker question the ideology of micro-loaning since this strategy "shifts the responsibility" from the nation-state to the individual and conceals the ways in which inequalities are engendered by the very same system that promotes solutions like the ones provided by Grameen. Ultimately,

Feiner and Barker disagree with micro-credit practices since these methods "do not change the structural conditions of globalization" and redirect "collective responses" against social inequality and gendering to myths of individuality and self-improvement. But why should the Bangladeshi women abstain from these practices if they enable them to guarantee a minimum level of dignity? For the marginalized Bangladeshi woman, whose life is determined by a constellation of socio-religious conventions and subjugating ideologies that she does not control, micro-credit enables her to improve her day-to-day struggle for survival and self-determination. Who is to decide about the legitimacy of these practices?

Western criticism has the luxury of dismissing globalization and its practices as dehumanizing and debilitating for developing nations, communities and individuals; but what about the communities and subjects who employ these practices in order to articulate their political concerns, improve their lives and consolidate their sovereignty? One of the interests of this dissertation, therefore, is to explore postcolonial narratives that reflect on the potentiality of postcolonial nations and subjects to utilize the discourses of globalization in order to establish their sovereignty and articulate their self-determination. Do the discourses of globalization enable these subjects to escape their subaltern position or do they hinder their struggle for autonomy? Do postcolonial subjects actually improve their lives by conforming to neoliberal discourses or experience a simulacrum of sovereignty? In the converging and conflictual point of theory with real-life experience, of western criticism with the literary voices of those whose life is conditioned by the vestiges of colonial rule and discourses of globalization, who is to decide upon the destiny of globalization if not the people whose lives are daily and severely impacted by its practices?

1.2 The Event of Postcolonial Literature

The discourses and dynamics of globalization cannot be merely examined by analyzing financial outcomes and how they impact the social body of developing nations and communities. Throughout his writings, Jacque Derrida has been rather critical of the term "globalization" since it occludes the historical processes and discourses which were

conducive to the progressive materialization of this project. Instead, Derrida proposes the term "mondialisation" in order to illustrate that globalization's political economy sprung from a European political heritage conditioned by the events of imperialism, the slave trade, monotheistic religions and the expropriation of communities and subjectivites (*Negotiations* 372).

Derrida maintains that a rigorous examination of globalization necessitates the investigation of "the Abrahamic filiation, Christian predominantly or par excellence, of the concept of world and all the ethical-political-juridical concepts that tend to regulate the process of globalization [mondialisation], the becoming-world of the world" (*Negotiations* 375).[7] By focusing on the religious discourses which constitute an integral part of globalizing discourses, Derrida discloses the exclusionary politics implemented by nation-states and reconsolidate the international division of labour. While globalization promotes the configuration of a global fraternity, the austere identitarian and nationalist tendencies of European nation-states deny access to refugees and migrants who struggle to force themselves in the capitalist domain. Due to globalization's assymetrical impact on disparate communities and subjectivities, Derrida employs the term "mondialization" in order to denote the way in which this commonly-used term obscures the histories and events which were conducive to its materialization. As Victor Li suggests, the term "globalization" reaffirms the supremacy of the English language as the "universal medium of linguistic exchange" and reveals the "troubling ascendancy of a global Anglo-American hegemony" (141). More importantly, according to Li, Derrida is critical of the term because it connotes a teleology of completion while, at the same time, it conceals its "historical or religio-cultural origin" (147). Ultimately, Li argues, Derrida prefers "mondialization" to globalization for the latter demarcates an integrating process "without history or memory" (147). On the contrary, "mondialization" connotes a globalizing process which is open to contamination, to the unpredictable and defies the teleologies of capitalist fulfillment.

Derrida describes globalization as the intensive "circulation of persons, commodities, modes of production and socio-political models on a market that is being opened in a more-or-less regulated way (*Negotiations* 372). Although globalization facilitates the transportation of people around the globe via the "opening of borders," it is

marked by a profound contradiction since it coincides with an unprecedented intensification of “inhospitable acts of violence, so many prohibitions, [and] so many exclusions” (Derrida, *Negotiations* 372). More importantly, Derrida remarks that globalization necessitates an alternative unserstanding of sovereignty since the deregulation of the market, the establishment of international organizations that manipulate and supervise national economies and the international division of labor undermine established conceptualizations of popular sovereignty and autonomy (*Negotiations* 372). Derrida’s aim is to mark the change of the terrain of political struggles from the long-established arenas of confrontation to the virtual and deterritorialized spaces instigated by “international institutions governmental and nongovernmental” which regulate “techno-scientific exchange, the Web” and mandate austere neoliberal agendas (*Negotiations* 373). What hides behind the “euphoric image of globalization,” are “new inequalities and hegemonies,” which Derrida names “homo-hegemonizations”, which seek to cultivate and disseminate neoliberal orthodoxies (*Negotiations* 373). Because globalization rests heavily on technological advances and cannot be located at or engaged through traditional political spaces of debate and confrontation, Derrida maintains that globalization has engendered a “new figure of the concentration of capital” (*Negotiations* 373). In a globalizing world, the concept of capital, national debt and growth rate have undergone profound changes for they are no longer regulated via democratically elected governments but they are supervised, controled and dictated by international organizations which confer on the destiny of sovereign nations. Derrida’s aim, however, is not to dismiss globalization tout-court but to reflect both on its complications and potentialities.

The massive and rapid exchange of information facilitated by advanced “technoscience,” the dissemination of ideas and innovations and the opportunities globalization has presented to disparate communities and subjectivities cannot be denied or outright rejected (Derrida, *Negotiations* 374). The “impossible task,” according to Derrida, is not to reject globalization but reconfigure its discourse and processes so it can become receptive to contaminations, interruptions and modalities of exchange that unsettle its neoliberal tendencies (*Negotiations* 374). Derrida speaks of the urgency of rethinking the concept of “transaction,” of “reinvent[ing] the norm itself, the very

language of the norm for such a transaction" (*Negotiations* 374). What if globalization became a conduit of alternative and vernacular figurations of exchange instead of the aggressive proliferation of neoliberal teleologies? What if globalization were a transnational platform of reciprocal exchange between communities and nations and not the establishment of a uniform system of exchange that compels disparate communities around the world to adapt to a particular political economy? Derrida gestures to a globalizing process which defies the totalizing discourses and orthodoxies of neoliberalism with a view to remaining exposed to disruptive "events" which impel alternative configurations of capital exchange (*Negotiations* 374). Derrida expounds on this gesture more extensively in his work *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (2005).

Although his primary objective is to elucidate the concepts of the "democracy to come" and "autoimmunity" (*Rogues* 1, 36), Derrida reflects on the contingencies of the globalizing process which effaces alternative and vernacular systems of exchange.[8] Regarding the "homo-hegemonizing" propensity of globalization, Derrida critiques the "architectonic vocation of [European] reason" which seeks to circumscribe and co-opt "plural rationalities" that defy any "architectonic organization" (*Rogues* 120). Because of their "distinct historicity," these "plural rationalities" counter the unifying discourses of a globalization that aims at "bending their un-translatable heterogeneity" by resorting to a crippling and debilitating "analogical" thinking (Derrida, *Rogues* 120-1). As Derrida remarks, the binary discourses of "analogical thinking" propounded by the institutions of globalization strive to integrate these rationalities into a Eurocentric conceptualization of a capitalist "world" (*Rogues* 120). The "homo-hegemonizing" dynamics of globalization can be resisted by their exposure to "events" which counter the inculcation of "plural rationalities" to the dictates of neoliberal reason (Derrida 135).[9] The "events" that Derrida contemplates constitute radical disruptions of the calculative and "analogical" strategies promoted by globalizing institutions. As Cheah argues, Derrida gestures to "antiglobalization movements" which do not discredit "world-forming intercourse per se" but the assimilative economies of "neoliberal capitalist globalization" ("The Untimely Secret of Democracy" 90).

Drawing on Derrida's critical reading of globalization and his elaboration on "events" which unsettle neoliberal teleologies and illuminate alternative modalities of

exchange and being in the world, I turn to postcolonial texts with a view to discussing the ways in which communities and subjectivities who have been impacted by colonialism employ the discourses of globalization in order to consolidate their sovereignty. Through a close reading of these narratives, I aim at remaining attentive to their testimonies and contemplate both the contingencies and potentialties the project of globalization might entail for these communities and explore literary "events" in which the sovereignty of globalizing discourses is decentered by modalities of sovereignty beyond the purview of western metaphysics.

1.3 The Challenges of Postcolonial Nations and Neoliberalism: Discourses of Emancipation or Subjugation?

The aim of the literary analysis in the following chapters is to explore texts that refer and implicate places and temporalities in South Africa, India and the United States of America with the aim of contemplating the predicament of disparate communities in the era of globalization. The literary works explored reflect on the lives and quotidian experiences of subjectivities and communities that employ the discourses of neoliberalism and globalization in order to escape subalternity and consolidate their sovereignty. More specifically, I am interested in the ways native communities that have suffered the ravages of colonialism and neocolonialism resort to the discourses of neoliberalism and globalization in order to reconcile their precolonial past with the modernizing mandates of a globalized world.

Written in 1986 during the apartheid regime, J.M Coetzee's *Foe* "counterwrites" (Karavanta "Toni Morrison's A Mercy" 724) Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and is narrated from the perspective of Susan Barton who shipwrecks on Cruso's island while in search of her lost daughter.[10] In Coetzee's text, Friday is not Defoe's submissive native but a mutilated slave who resists Susan's attempts to submit his story of enslavement to the woman's authorial dictates. Although Susan claims to be inquiring into Friday's story in order to help the native, she fails to acknowledge her complicity in his silencing. Coetzee's *Foe* is timely now at a time of international humanitarianism and

in view of the recolonizing process that is often reinforced by the appropriating acts of speaking for the native and the subaltern. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), written after the official end of apartheid, is still one of his most controversial works since it paints a rather bleak picture of South Africa and the state's attempts to democratize the nation.

Coetzee's *Disgrace* dramatizes the ways in which neoliberal discourses impinge upon the postcolonial subject's sovereign claims. In her analysis of South Africa's decolonizing process, Zine Magubane has argued that the discourses of globalization have penetrated and conditioned South African politics "at the level of ideology" (89). Neoliberalism and globalization constitute the vehicle upon which the emerging nation attempts to salvage its crippled economy and resolve social injustices. In their turn, the discourses of globalization and neoliberalism do not only dictate state policy but also saturate the social body and fashion its quotidian experiences and social comportment.[11] Contrary to Zine Magubane, who warns that the South African nation's attempt to instigate a political reform premised on the dictates of neoliberalism will inevitably reinstate "apartheid's bitter economic legacy of white development and black underdevelopment" ("Globalization and the South African Transformation" 89), Coetzee's *Disgrace* symptomatically reveals how the postapartheid nation's uncritical conformance to the tenets of neoliberalism may be conducive to the reconsolidation of the same patriarchal and appropriative strategies of colonialism at the expense of the white community.

Globalization is a process that unevenly and disproportionately affects nations and communities. In the case of India, which constitutes a rather heterogeneous nation comprised of various and disparate communities, globalization developed in the guise of the Green Revolution and the radical restructuring of agricultural economy. Mahasweta Devi's collection of stories in *Imaginary Maps* (1995) is a literary cartography illustrating that while the discourses of globalization and developmental projects promise equal access to job opportunities, modernization and accumulation of wealth they bar subalterns from entering the domain of capitalist hegemony in equal terms. The second chapter of this thesis focuses on the story "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay and Pirtha" and discusses the ways in which Devi's story foregrounds the awakening of the human to, what Gayatri Spivak calls, the "planetary" condition of the world that they unevenly

share (*Death of a Discipline* 72). I am interested in reading Devi's "Pterodactyl" along the lines of the "planetary" condition of being human in order to explore the permeability of the discourse of globalization as a rationality that renders being into a commodifiable presence. This process of extensive ordering and commodification at a global scale does not only reveal the totalizing propensity of globalization but also, in its reductive engagement with being, discloses a sovereign drive that exceeds human understanding.

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) is a novel that charts the course of a subaltern, Balram Halwai, from his impoverished village in Laxmangarh to the dazzling lights of New Delhi. My literary focus is on Balram's decision to progressively dissociate from his tribal life and evolve into a predatory entrepreneur. More importantly, I am interested in discussing Adiga's novel as a text that reveals the eclipse of subaltern political representation and the erosion of the state through the establishment of extra-political committees that dictate national policy in tandem with market rationality. In the second chapter, I also explore Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2008) in order to discuss the ways in which the Bhopal disaster evinced how multinational corporations reproduce the colonial discourse and dehumanizing discourse of casting subalterns as the inhuman other of the western man in order to evade responsibility for the disaster. Sinha's work is rather insightful in its depiction of the ever-lasting and debilitating effects of capitalist toxicity and its capacity to compromise the sovereignty of the community in the long-run since its effects stretch in time and remain undetected by the available medical indicators. Following Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence," I discuss the event of the disaster along the lines of the subaltern in order to reflect on the new challenges neocolonial toxicity poses to subaltern communities and criticism. In my analysis of Sinha's text, I also focus on the ways the main characters of the novel, despite their opposition to neoliberal humanitarianism, reproduce the phallic economies of neocolonialism.

Another focus of this research is to explore literature by Louis Erdrich and LeAnne Howe and contemplate the function of myth in contemporary native struggles for sovereignty. The case of Native American politics constitutes a political paradox since although the settler-state of the U.S.A. recognizes the remaining tribes as sovereign entities it deprives them of every right consistent with the concept of sovereignty.[12] In the limited political space afforded by the settler-state, the remaining tribes endeavor to

regain their land and autonomy through the expanse of the casino business on which their economic autonomy massively relies. Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988) and *The Bingo Palace* (1994) narrate the compromises made by the Anishinaabe tribe to the imperatives of developmental projects and neoliberalism with a view to maintaining their traditional way of life and myths. According to Spivak, "Capital is a writing…" which forces upon the subject a reductive engagement with the world ("Who Claims Alterity" 59); capitalism renders the world an array of commodifiable objects to be exchanged and severs the ties of natives to their lands and myths. Erdrich's work unconceals how the Anishinaabe recontextualize their myths in order to counter the biopolitics of the settler-state and the extent to which these myths are distorted through their resignification. Howe's *Shell Shaker* (2001) follows the struggle of a Choctaw family to expose the tribe's affiliation to paramilitary organizations and the Mafia. The text unravels between alternate native temporalities revealing the haunting of Choctaw myths and spirits in contemporary Choctaw politics and discloses the ways in which present Choctaw sovereignty is compromised by the casino economy.

Gayatri Spivak's reflections on the colonizing tendencies germane to the humanitarian and decolonizing discourses are seminal in my literary analysis of these postcolonial texts. Spivak engages the Subaltern Studies group's project by interpolating the figure of the gendered subaltern in their work.[13] In her analysis of the subaltern that exposes the contingencies of the decolonizing process, Spivak urges western academics, who examine postcolonial narratives and politics, to persistently investigate, "…who decolonizes, and how" ("What's Left of Theory" 87). This question brings to the epicenter of postcolonial theory both the predicament of subaltern communities in the context of globalization and the politics of representation that further conduce to their silencing. Firstly, Spivak's question punctuates the ways in which postcolonial policies that employ the discourses of globalization regress into new forms of recolonization and imperialism. Secondly, Spivak argues that the subaltern should be examined as "agent and not simply as victim" of colonial and state policies since it represents a subject that destabilizes the dehumanizing discourses of colonialism and neocolonialism and illuminates another way of being that challenges capital teleologies (87). Her lifelong engagement and critical work illustrates that reading and writing about subaltern histories

and stories are processes rife with contradictions since criticism tends to ignore the politics of representation that silences subalterns. Reading subaltern histories and stories, therefore, necessitates their examination on two different strands: How are the subalterns represented politically and how are they represented aesthetically (Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 257)? Different forces, ideologies and discourses participate in each modality of representation, indicating that the act of speaking for the subaltern is always mediated by dominant discursive regimes, their representative ideologues and their key practices and concepts that mediate and overshadow the subalterns' voices, thus, often silencing them.

In my literary analysis of postcolonial narratives, I turn to Spivak's elaboration on the figure of the subaltern in order to reveal presences and voices that, in their attempt to articulate their sovereign claims, either conform to the dictates of globalization or perform a critical interrogation of its practices. Dipesh Chakrabarty reads the figure of the subaltern as a presence that disrupts capital teleologies since it discloses alternative modalities of being. Chakrabarty contends that although the subaltern cannot escape the "narrative of capital," she can potentially unconceal "other ways of being human than as bearers of the capacity to labor" (*Provincializing Europe* 94). Subaltern communities, like the ones narrated in Devi's and Erdrich's narratives, attest to a comportment toward being that defies the commodifying rationalities of capitalism. Pheng Cheah, however, remains skeptical of subaltern's capacity to subvert the neocolonial politics of globalization (*What is a World* 206). By drawing on Michel Foucault's concept of biopower, Cheah suggests that, in contemporary globalization, "power generally works by productive incorporation" since the discourses of capitalism assimilate the claims of subaltern people in its processes ("Biopower and the New International Division of Reproductive Labour" 194). Globalization depends on integrating the sovereign claims of subaltern people in the network of capitalist consumption and accumulation so these claims become indistinguishable from the mandates of capitalism. In my reading of postcolonial narratives, I discuss how globalization undermines the sovereign claims of the postcolonial nations and explore the recolonization process secreted in the process of decolonization.

In his elaboration on the potentiality of postcolonial nations envisioning a future beyond the imposed cartographies of colonial and western imagination, Pheng Cheah argues that the first objective of decolonization is to "satisfy the basic biological needs of colonized peoples so that they can survive" (*What is a World* 194). This struggle for survival entails both tackling fundamental social issues that colonization has engendered, such as poverty and unemployment, and the reclamation of political "freedom" (Cheah 194). Apart from the fact that colonial rule refashions the sociopolitical conditions of the colonized, it also performs "cultural genocide" by violently inserting the colonized in the teleologies of capitalist temporality (Cheah 194). One of the tasks of the postcolonial nation, therefore, is to envision a future in which precolonial and vernacular modalities of exchange can be reconciled with the tenets of liberalism and neoliberalism that colonialism has inculcated in the social body. While my aim is to develop a discussion between postcolonial criticism and narratives emerging from South Africa, India and North America, I am also interested in critically analyzing the discourses of globalization by excavating some of the material conditions that shape the postcolonial conditions as manifested in the particular texts under study. For this reason, I draw on Gayatri Spivak's ethics of reading in order to engage postcolonial theory through the spectrum of the quotidian experiences of subaltern people.

According to Cheah, the second objective of decolonization is for the postcolonial nation to "project a future" disentangled both from colonial politics and a "fossilized civilizational culture from the precolonial past" (195). In his reading of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Cheah argues that the objective of the colonized is to "inaugurat[e] a new temporality" and "emerge as new subjects" who are not mere representatives of an idealized and valorized past but subjects that co-articulate past and present discourses in order to envisage a livable future (Cheah 195). Another scope of this thesis is the exploration of postcolonial testimonies as represented in the literary texts under study, which reveal the postcolonial nation's struggles in various localities and temporalities to affirm their sovereign claims for autonomy, independence and democratization after the end of colonial rule. Through a close reading of J.M. Coetzee's, Mahasweta Devi's, Louise Erdrich's and LeAnne Howe's texts, I discuss how this process is superficially resolved with the nation's political alignment and coordination

with the discourses of globalization. For this reason, I employ the concept of the postcolony, as this is elaborated by Achille Mbembe, in order to signify the lingering effects of colonial rule on postcolonial communities.

The postcolony is the product of integration of the colonial discourse in the postcolonial nation's political imagination and social comportment. Mbembe argues that Africa is a "metaphor" which the West employs in order to articulate a set of attributes and significations in order to produce an identity (2). Mbembe discusses the ways by which Africa was exploited by the West in order for the latter to "accede to its own subconscious and give a public account of its subjectivity" (3). The West, Mbembe contends among many other historians before him, developed and disseminated a set of generalizations and misrepresentations of Africa that endowed colonialism with an unverifiable truth substance (11). Colonialism heavily relied on the persistent "provincialism" of Africa based on unsubstantiated discourses in order to "deny African societies any historical depth" and, hence, render them imminently colonizable and governable (Mbembe 11). Mbembe's elucidation of the "commandement" can be quite illuminating in understanding how globalization maintains postcolonial nations in the trajectory of colonial time.

Mbembe elaborates on the psychological imprint of colonial rule on ideological constitution of postcolonial African subjects in general, all great differences among the various localities, temporalities, places and nation-states with their different histories notwithstanding. He argues that a defining feature of colonial rule was the instrumentalization of "phallic domination" (13). Colonialism, Mbembe contends, augmented patriarchal structures and masculinist narratives by integrating them in its quotidian discourses and practices. In other words, colonialism as practice validates sexual, physical and psychological violence as officially approved means of governance and justice deliberation. The moment violence, in all its manifestations, is embedded in the legislative and juridical practices of the colonized country, it is naturalized in the collective unconscious. This thesis draws on this analysis to examine moments when the utilization of neoliberalism and globalization in certain postcolonial localities and temporalities legitimizes phallic economies articulated via the sexual appropriation of the gendered body. In the postcolony, Mbembe argues, the state and its people are tethered

by the same "episteme" of violence and subjugation that colonialism had inaugurated (110).[14] The state reproduces the injustices of colonial rule and the people, in their turn, assimilate these practices and reproduce them in their quotidian experiences. As Mbembe suggests, the postcolonial subjects have "internalized authoritarian epistemology to the point where they reproduce it themselves in all the minor circumstances of daily life" (128). This thesis explores the power of the "commandement" in moments when postcolonial subjects unwittingly reproduce colonial discourses of violence by succumbing to the neoliberal dictates which reiterate colonial metaphysics.

More specifically, at the epicenter of this research is the study of postcolonial narratives which unveil the insidious ways neoliberalism impinges upon the postcolonial subject's journey to self-determination and is revealed as an emancipatory discourse that enables the subject to escape his subaltern position. For this reason, I occasionally employ Michel Foucault's theorization of neoliberalism, as he examines it in his seminars on *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2004), in order to discuss how neoliberal discourses can be quite seductive for postcolonial subjects who strive to overcome the lingering effects of the colonial rule.

In his collection of seminars on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Michel Foucault contemplates the emergence of neoliberalism as a discourse which progressively replaces existing political economies and remodels the relationship between citizens and the nation-state. His main inquiry elaborates the ways in which the market manages to shift from the purview of political regulation and demarcate a financial "regime of truth" disentangled from state monitoring. Since the eighteenth century, Foucault contends, the market becomes "a site and a mechanism of the formation of truth" (29). The market becomes a "regime of truth" in the eighteenth century because its discourses and practices have been disseminated through an expanding colonial project and the capitalist discourse it establishes in the colonies. Colonialism constitutes a proto-globalization for two reasons: Firstly, due to the unprecedented entanglement of distant territories via mercantile routes in order to transfer commodities and, secondly, because of the establishment on a global scale of the "same system of exchange everywhere" (to borrow Spivak's definition); European colonialism, similarly to globalization, mandates the molding of alternative systems of exchange into a Eurocentric version of capitalist exchange.[15] Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, not only does the expansion

of the market become the state's most significant project but, over the course of the seventeenth and nineteenth century, the market overwhelms state politics and becomes its defining political economy. The market, hence, regulates governmental practices and insulates itself from state politics so that it "functions with the least possible interventions" (Foucault 29). The market, both inside and outside Europe, produces its own "regimes of truths," dissociated from the ones elaborated by political economies, and rechannels them to the European metropolis.

The market, Foucault argues, forced the European subject to reformulate its political perception and construe an image of the world, primarily, through the lens of acquisition, profit and capital. This calculative modality of reading saturated governmental practice and state politics since the market established a "standard of truth" which would be retrieved in order to "falsify and verify governmental practice" (Foucault 32). The market, materialized both via European commerce and colonial enterprise, becomes a site of "veridiction" which, in order to function effectively, needs to disentangle itself from state restrictions and regulations (Foucault 32). In this sense, this early version of globalization anticipates the establishment of contemporary transnational institutions which promote neoliberal reason as the panacea to the predicament of developing and postcolonial nations.

Foucault dismisses the link between colonization and globalization by arguing that this "new art of government that is indexed to the problem of the market and market veridiction…is not the start of colonization" (56). Foucault contemplates the emergence of a "new form of global rationality, of a new calculation on the scale of the world" but he does not perceive globalization to be discursively stemming from the colonial enterprise (56). What he diagnoses though, through his reading of Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), is that human beings have inhabited the entire globe and they have, naturally, established commercial relationships (57). Economic activity between humans does not only guarantee their survival, the satisfaction of their basic needs, but it also promises "perpetual peace" for it impels humans to establish laws in order to avoid political and social conflict which would disrupt the flow and exchange of commodities (57). Following Kant's elaboration on

commercial exchange, Foucault concludes that "the guarantee of perpetual peace is therefore actually commercial globalization" (58).

The relegation of the political to the financial and the dictates of the market impact the constitution of the European subject as well. His freedom is no longer measured according to the rights he enjoys but the products he consumes and sells. Foucault suggests that liberalism fashions a subject whose freedom entails primarily market conduct: "…freedom of the market, freedom to buy and sell, the free exercise of property rights, freedom of discussion, possible freedom of expression, and so on" (63). The progressive establishment of commercial globalization propels the European subject to reconceptualize his understanding of freedom not, anymore, as a nexus of purely political and social factors, but as a cluster of political elements tailored to the dictates of market economy; economy does no longer stem from political and social ideologies but constitutes their matrix. The project of the nation-state therefore is to "intervene on society as such, in its fabric and depth" in order to render every aspect of social and political life available to the regulatory practices of the market economy (Foucault 145). What globalization, materialized through neoliberalism accomplishes, in other words, is to establish a discourse which renders political and social ideologies compatible with its capitalist tenets. More importantly, Foucault points out, neoliberalism does not simply connote the transformation of government but of the society per se (145).

Neoliberalism refashions the social body by "giving a strictly economic interpretation of a whole domain previously thought to be non-economic" (Foucault 219). Health care, education, employment, politics, social services and life itself are to be interpreted through the lens of financial reason and market economy. Society turns into an "enterprise society" in compliance with the "dynamics of competition" while subjects are converted into "*homines oeconnomici*," men of "enterprise and production" (Foucault 147). *Homo oeconomicus* is a subject driven by financial interest and drives; he perceives social activity primarily as financial activity, entrepreneurship and promotes myths of individuality while he disregards the communal affiliations and ethics that condition a social body. Foucault perceives *homo oeconomicus* to be both a subject attuned to the mandates of the market economy and enjoying the freedoms that neoliberalism promises and, at the same time, one that is "governmentalizable" (Foucault 252). Economic

behavior and practices, thus, are not mere manifestations of the subject's interpellation by capitalist dictates but they also constitute the "grid of intelligibility" between the subject and the government; it signifies that state "power gets a hold of him to the extent, and only to the extent, that he is homo oeconomicus" (Foucault 252).

Wendy Brown reads Foucault's seminars within a European context in order to explore the ways in which neoliberalism undermines democracy. Brown argues that neoliberalism converts "every human need or desire into a profitable enterprise" and "*marketizes* all spheres" (28, 31 emphasis in original). Market rationality impacts and modifies every aspect of life while it "configures human beings exhaustively as market actors, always, only and everywhere as *homo oeconomicus*" (Brown 31). The most disconcerting symptom of neoliberalism is not only its capitalist objectives but also the fact that these objectives are not directed to the consolidation of the demos; rather, they constitute its "undoing" since the *homo oeconomicus* is interpellated by individualistic narratives of self-determination (Brown 84). The *homines oeconomici* are primarily preoccupied with "the project of macroeconomic growth and credit enhancement…and with which their existence as human capital must align if they are to thrive" (Brown 84). Brown contends that despite the fact that neoliberalism is global it is also "inconstant, differentiated, unsystematic, impure" (20) since every nation engages and utilizes neoliberalism differently depending on its political objectives, its history and culture. Through its unpredictable and "differential instantiations" neoliberalism may "take diverse shapes and spawns diverse content and normative details, even different idioms" (Brown 21). Neoliberalism is identified through specific financial attitudes and practices which entail aggressive liberalization and reduction of the welfare state as well as the privatization of every aspect of life. These instantiations, though, comingle with discourses already present in every country and engender new dynamics of micro-power which either disrupt or reconsolidate existing hierarchies. Brown suggests that, for Foucault, neoliberalism constitutes a "novel contemporary chapter in *liberal* governmentality" in which subjects can, finally, elude the grasp of state power (57 emphasis in original). In Foucault's neoliberalism, the purpose of the state is to facilitate the subject to achieve its self-determination via its minimum interference to market discourses and practices. Ultimately, Foucault's engagement with neoliberalism is quite

ambiguous for although he reveals the ways in which *homo oeconomicus* is interpellated by capitalist discourse and market rationality he seems to be interested in the anti-statist potentiality neoliberalism provides.

Geoffroy de Lagasnerie supports that Foucault was ambivalent toward neoliberalism and that he neither fully embraced nor dismissed the potentialities it presented. De Lagasnerie suggests that the French philosopher perceived neoliberalism “as an original and innovative theory” which contested the sovereignty of the state (xxx). Foucault aims at engaging neoliberalism both as a discourse which “challenges the legitimacy of any number of traditional systems of regulation and control” and as a set of practices and attitudes replete with contradictions and contingencies (De Lagasnerie xxxvii-xxxviii). Throughout his seminars on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault aims at “transform[ing] our perception of the philosophy of right and political theory” by exploring neoliberalism as a discourse that reveals another political potentiality divested from the mythologies and teleologies of state sovereignty (De Lagasnerie 57). According to De Lagasnerie, Foucault wishes to transgress the elaborations of past and contemporary political theorists who always engage the subject as “always-already subject to a sovereign whose superiority and transcendence they are forced to recognize” (57). Put differently, Foucault perceived neoliberalism as a political economy that would enable the European subjects to transgress state suppression. More importantly, Foucault engages neoliberalism as a potentially emancipatory project which can conduce to the “de-subjugation” of the subject by “denaturaliz[ing]” historically established hierarchies of power and domination (De Lagasnerie 85). In the cases of the postcolonial nations and communities under study, neoliberalism seems to be a means of overcoming the social and economical barriers that sustain colonial divisions and injustices. In other words, neoliberalism constitutes a catalyst which enables postcolonial subjects to articulate their sovereign claims in a way that is consistent with the challenges they face in a globalizing world. Foucault’s secreted enthusiasm towards neoliberalism has also been critiqued by Michael C. Behrent and Daniel Zamora in the collection of essays on *Foucault and Neoliberalism* (2014).

The 1970’s was a rather turbulent period for the French society precipitated by economic crisis and a rising critique of Marxism (Behrent 26). Foucault’s intention was

to formulate a political theory which would reveal how French liberalism was “not liberal enough” and that neoliberalism is a “ ‘nondisciplinary form of power’ ” whose emancipatory potentialities are curtailed by the legislative limitations and regulation of the state (Behrent 28, 41). Foucault’s ambivalent attitude towards neoliberalism was stimulated by the emergence of a new class of socially excluded and marginalized subjects whose characteristics did not fall into the category of the proletariat or any other predefined community theorized by intellectuals of the Left (Zamora 64-65). By 1972, Foucault has witnessed the formation of the particular social class of underprivileged, marginalized and expropriated subjects, the “ ‘new plebeians,’ who comprise the ‘non-proletarianized’ faction of the working class” (Zamora 67). What was obvious to Foucault, therefore, was that socialist and Marxist discourse could no longer address the contingencies and challenges of the working class. Zamora argues that the Right managed to win “economically as well as ideologically” for it provided a political discourse which facilitated the people’s gradual detachment from state supervision and control while socialist critique did not fulfill its promise of guaranteeing “greater autonomy and individual freedom” (80). Because the dialogue had shifted from the ineffectual pursuit of equality and justice to the urgency of “creating more equality of opportunity,” neoliberalism and theories of the Right prevailed over socialist ideologies (Zamora 80). Foucault’s elaborations on neoliberalism and biopolitics are rather revealing in the ways the discourses and practices of globalization pervade all spheres of political life and establish themselves as the undisputable rationality of progress and reason. Despite the fact that Foucault’s theory anticipates the intensification of these discourses in late modernity, his elaborations have some limitations that need to be addressed if we are to develop a dialogue between his work on neoliberalism and postcolonial literature.

Behrent argues that Foucault’s fascination with neoliberalism stems from his participation in an ongoing revision and critique of “Marxism communism, and the traditional Left's commitment to state-centered social change and revolution” (180). His intention was not to discredit Marxism but illuminate pathways of liberation untethered to “state-centered social change and revolution” (Behrent 180). His project, therefore, can be seen as an attempt to “reinvigorate” Marxism by introducing some new methodological tools (180). Moreover, Foucault’s fervent “anti-statism” is rather

simplistic since he does not take into consideration how differently each state functions under "different regimes" (Christofferson 181 qtd in Behrent). Foucault also seems to elide from his work on biopolitics how neoliberalism engenders alternative "forms of domination" since it perpetuates class divisions and, more importantly, enthrones market economy as the regulating apparatus of political life (Behrent 181). Subtracting, or reducing, the state from political calculations and appointing market economy as the arbiter of justice and politics, can augment social divisions and marginalization since only a small number of people are able to enjoy the opportunities that neoliberalism promises.

Moreover, Foucault's ambivalent position to neoliberalism reveals some additional limitations that need to be taken into consideration. His elaboration on the potentially emancipatory instrumentalization of neoliberal discourses elides the dynamics of gender, race and religion. Despite the fact that his contemplations are consistent with a specific figuration of the European subject, Foucault does not mention whether the gendered *homo oeconomicus* is impacted equally by the potentialities and contingencies of neoliberalism. Foucault does not consider the ways in which gender, race and religion, within the European context can hinder minorities from forcing themselves in the capitalist domain. Are immigrants to Europe benefitted equally by the discourses of neoliberalism or are their race and religion social variables that exclude them from partaking in the neoliberal arena? We need to keep in mind, though, that the seminars delivered at the College de France in 1978-1979, are but an introduction to the subject of biopolitics and we cannot predict where future research would have led the philosopher in his subsequent lectures. Despite these limitations in Foucault's theorization of neoliberalism, I find his ambivalence towards neoliberalism quite stimulating in my reading of postcolonial literature since the narratives I explore depict communities and subjectivities that occasionally tend to conform to and internalize the discourses of neoliberalism in their struggle to escape their subalternity. One of the main questions I would like to address is whether neoliberalism in the postcolony does enable postcolonial subjects to articulate their sovereign claims and partake, in equal terms, in the processes of capitalist exchange and globalization.

How do postcolonial communities and subjects respond to neoliberalism when discourses of emancipation, traditions and myths can no longer articulate the plight and

challenges of the underprivileged and the disenfranchised? How does the discourse of neoliberalism fill the void created by ideologies that are incompatible with the predicament of the subalterns? The example of the Grameen Bank evinces the tendency of habituating the subalterns in the principles of neoliberalism in order to tackle bonded labour, indebtedness and expropriation. To what extent does the indoctrination of subalterns to the discourses of neoliberalism enables them to overcome these ongoing social injustices? More importantly, can this process of indoctrination enable the subalterns to escape their subalternity and gain access to the circuits of capitalist hegemony?

This thesis draws on the literary texts under study to attend to some larger questions in a symptomatic and theoretical way: How do the discourses of globalization affect the subaltern in her effort to access the channels of hegemony? How is postcolonial resistance articulated in the limited space afforded by the alignment of the nation-state with the mandates of globalization? If international organizations limit the sovereignty of postcolonial nations by dictating the terms of their financial policy, how can the subaltern consolidate a political body that can voice her claims about her current predicament and critique the international division of labour? Does the dissemination of ideas and democratic thinking promised by globalization disrupt or reinforce the patriarchal economies as manifested in these particular texts? My aim is also to discuss whether the casino-based structure of Native economies enables the Anishinaabe and Choctaw tribes to reconsolidate their sovereignty and the ways in which native myths are recontextualized in order to counter the colonial policies of the settler-state.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I focus on J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* in order to explore the process of recolonization enacted through acts of uncritical humanitarian intervention. More specifically, I examine Susan Barton's and Foe's attempts to incorporate Friday's puzzling origins into their neutralizing narrative accounts. In the second section of this chapter, I read Coetzee's *Disgrace* through Michel Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics* and Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* in order to trace the emergence of the black *homo oeconomicus* in the South African postcolony and the phallic economies this subjectivity inaugurates. The second chapter begins with an introduction on the Subaltern Studies group's elaborations on subaltern historiography and Gayatri Spivak's

elucidations of the gendered subaltern. I, then, discuss Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and explore the deterioration of the state in modern India and how the subaltern is silenced by the emergence of extra-political commissions that deregulate the state and ventriloquize state politics. In the second section of the second chapter, I discuss Mahasweta Devi's "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay and Pirtha" in the context of the Green Revolution and analyze how the appearance of the mysterious bird unconceals constellations of the political which disrupt the sovereignty of the Western human. The third section of the chapter concludes with a reading of Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* and elaborates on the affinities between neocolonial discourses, heteronormativity and phallic economies. In the final chapter, I turn my attention to Louise Erdrich's and LeAnne Howe's novels and reflect on the casinoization of the Anishinaabe and Choctaw communities. I am also interested in exploring how Native American myths are retrieved by the members of the tribes and recontextualized according to the mandates of casino economy. Before presenting the analysis of the aforementioned postcolonial narratives, I would like to make a last note concerning the examination of postcolonial texts by European academics.

In engaging postcolonial literature as western readers, we need to stand critically of our social class, our educational privilege, our politics and the ways in which globalization has shaped our European world since we attempt to investigate histories, temporalities and realities which have been impacted unevenly by this global process. In order to avoid simplistic generalizations I chose to structure this thesis by devoting different chapters for different regions so as to avoid comparisons which would reduce the particularities of the narrative events explored in an undifferentiated critique. My intention is to listen to the uncomfortable truths these narratives bear and attempt to document their testimony while questioning the discourses that shape my writing process and, inevitably, compromise this process of documentation and analysis. I am aware that by writing about these stories and histories I am unconsciously violating these testimonies for I imbue them with meanings to which no response is to be given by the people who inhabit these literary spaces. My only wish is to follow their narrative journeys and not allow the convictions of western theory shadow their lives.[16]

Notes

[1] Manfred Steger is rather critical of "dogmatic attempts" which reduce globalization to a single process (32). Steger views globalization as a "*social condition*" defined by "tight global economic, political, cultural, and environmental interconnections and flows that make most of the currently existing borders and boundaries irrelevant" (29 emphasis in text). Globalization can be defined as a condition and a process which traverses territorial and temporal boundaries and challenges established conceptualizations of citizenship and identity. Steger maintains that globalization's "*indeterminate character*" is due to its myriad, occasionally conflicting, manifestations which can range from aggressive "laissez-fair capitalism" to "more communal and cooperative" forms of expression (30 emphasis in original). The critic, while recognizing globalization's asymmetrical and uneven impact, defines this global process as the "expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space" (35).

[2] Both the IMF and the World Bank sprang from the international convention which took place at Bretton Woods conference in New Hampshire in July 1944. The main objective of these organizations was the establishment of an "international monetary system" and the provision of "loans for Europe's postwar reconstruction" (Steger 53).

[3] In his work on the politics of globalization in China, Giovanni Arrighi contends that China constitutes a special case since it managed to reformulate the dynamics and processes of globalization so as to adapt to the social and political characteristics of the nation and not vice versa. Arrighi contends that there are "two different kinds of market-based economic development" (*Adam Smith in Beijing* 41). In the first case, nations are willing to reformulate and compromise the existing "social framework" so as to meet the requirements of the neoliberal agendas, while in the second, the "social framework" remains intact and the politics of globalization are tailored to the national and political characteristics (41).

[4] Sen contends that democratic development can be achieved when the people, and not the state or international institutions, decide which "advantages of modernity" should be adopted and implemented in the national political agenda (32). As he points out, there should be a "participatory resolution" in addressing the cultural dilemmas which development and globalization may engender (32).

[5] For more on the mission and aims of the project see the official site of the bank https://grameenbank.org/about/introduction. According to the introductory page of the Grameen bank site, the primary objective of the bank is to "empower" Bangladeshi women through microcredit. What makes the project more appealing than mainstream banks is that "no collateral is required" in order to receive credit and the "meetings of the borrowers" take place in "village level centers." According to the site, the bank has succeeded in enabling Bangladeshi women to regain their autonomy by "involv[ing] them in economic activities."

[6] See their online article "Microcredit and Women's Poverty: Granting this year's Nobel Peace Prize to microcredit guru Muhammad Yunus affirms neoliberalism" (https://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2006/1106feinerbarker.html).

[7] Derrida explores extensively the concept of the "world" in his seminars on *The Beast and the Sovereign:* vol. 2.(2011) Derrida turns to Martin Heidegerr's elaboration of the "world" in *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1953) and *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1983) with a view to critiquing the totalizing strategies of globalization and, more importantly, maintains that the idea of a unifying "world" is rather restrictive and precarious for it fails to account for singularities and beings which the discourses of globalization cannot acknowledge or master.

[8] The process of "autoimmunity," which Derrida links to the idea of the "democracy to come," refers to the unceasing exposure of democracy to events and discourses that compromise its sovereignty (*Rogues* 38). For democracy, Derrida contends, should be constantly in the making, vulnerable and "unconditional"; instead of remaining static, unchallenged and conditioned, it should be exposed to the "undeniable experience alterity of the other, of heterogeneity, of the singular, the not-same, the different, the dissymmetric, the heteronomous" (38).

[9] Derrida elaborates on the "event" as that which disrupts the architectonics of dominant reason, calculation and predictability (*Rogues* 148). The "event" constitutes the eruption of a "singularity of an alterity that is not reappropriable by the ipseity of a sovereign power" (Derrida 148).

[10] In her article on Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* (2008) and the postnational novel, Karavanta Asimina explores the ways in which slaves, expropriated constituencies and exiles developed communities which unsettled the nationalist mandates of American exceptionalism ("Toni Morrison's A Mercy and the Counterwriting of Negative Communities: A Postnational Novel" 725). These communities "counterwrite" dominant discourses of national homogenization since they reveal a way of co-inhabiting a territory and co-belonging which "betray another history of community in modernity" (Karavanta 725). The act of "counterwriting," which the postnational novel inaugurates, is an attempt to retrieve the politics of these communities before their accommodation by national discourse. According to Karavanta, Morrison's novel "counterwrites prenational time in a transational age" and gestures to the radical politics of "contemporary negative communities" (726).

[11] If globalization is the process in which international institutions promote and impose structural-adjustments programmes on developing nations, neoliberalism is the progressive reformulation of the social body so as to redirect its energies towards the establishment of a market-oriented society disentangled from state intervention and control. Neoliberalism is a process promoted by the states, which have conformed to the mandates of these institutions in order to "liberate latent forces" that can ultimately replace the services provided by the state (Peck, Brenner and Theodore 6).

[12] As I discuss more extensively in the third chapter, while native communities are allowed to establish tribal governments, authorities and state services, they fall under the jurisdiction of federal government and law which dramatically restrict the scope and authority of tribal governments. The most urgent claim of native communities is that the U.S. government respect and implement the treaties signed between native communities and the state before the termination of the treaty-making policy in 1871.

[13] The concept of the "gendered subaltern" is employed by Asimina Karavanta in her essay "The Gendered Subaltern's Cartography of Pain: A Figuration of Homo Sacer in a Global World." Karavanta discusses Mahasweta Devi's short stories "Douloti the bountiful" and "Breast-giver" in order to analyse the "complex condition of the gendered subaltern and her experience of pain" (211). According to Karavanta, the gendered bodies in pain these narratives disclose are "specters that haunt both the ruins of the departed empire and the emerging decolonized world, while standing in-between and apart from the two" (221).

[14] As Mbembe explains in his introductory comments on the concept of the "commandement," his aim is to elaborate on moments when the colonial discourse and its practice linger in "sub-Saharan Africa since the end of direct colonization" (24).

[15] Markus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh elaborate on the globalizing tendencies of colonization in their work *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (2000). By excavating the history of the transantlantic slave trade, Rediker and Linebaugh demonstrate how the system of enclosures, the slave ship, the plantantion and the factory constitue the fist instantiations of globalization since they relied on the forceful relocation and overexploitation of peoples and their intensive commodification. The historians claim that these apparatuses "resettled the globe and transformed the experience of work" (327). See also Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus and Markus Rediker's edited work *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (2007). The aim of their work is to develop connections between the forceful expropriation of millions from Europe and Africa to the American continent, the history of the Atlantic slave trade and the "experiences of slaves, indentured servants, transported convicts, and coerced migrants of all kinds" during the late sixteenth century in order to disclose the "structuring link between expropriation in one geographic setting and exploitation in another" (2).

[16] For more on the distance between academics and postcolonial events that western theory engenders see Mohan Dutta and Ambar Basu's "Subalternity, Neoliberal Seductions and Freedom: Decolonizng the Global Market of Social Change." Basu and Dutta explain how the "image of the subaltern is a business" commodified by scholars, publishing houses and "knowledge production circuits" and contemplate how the field of postcolonial studies may reproduce the politics of "colonial erasure" by depriving the subaltern of her "agentic presence" (86).

2. "Dehumanizing Humanitarianism" and the Emergence of the *Homo Oeconomicus* in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* and *Disgrace*

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to explore the ways capitalist globalization impinges on the postcolonial subject's struggle to consolidate his sovereignty. For this reason, I examine postcolonial novels that contemplate the postcolonial subject's adaptation to neoliberal mandates with the intention of escaping their subaltern status. Before more thoroughly explaining the longer thesis of this chapter, whose objective is to explore how the postcolonial subject in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* and *Disgrace* attempts to overcome his subalternity by capitalizing on the material and financial conventions of his era, it is important to expose some theoretical implications and potential risks concerning the reading of postcolonial literature via western methodologies. I believe that a short exposition of this problematic enables a more enriching discussion of questions immanent in Coetzee's text.

In her work *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), Gayatri Spivak examines the implications of retrieving western philosophical methodologies, especially those under the name of poststructuralism and deconstruction, in order to discuss postcolonial history and literature.[17]The critic examines Michel Foucault's and Gilles Deleuze's elaboration on the proletariat with the aim of revealing the incompatibility between the postcolonial predicament and western discourse. Spivak does not aim at dismissing the contribution of those thinkers; rather, she highlights the necessity to contextualize the discussion on the proletariat and postcolonial subjects within the discourse of imperialism (279). Spivak maintains that by representing subaltern subjects without taking into account the international division of labor, global capitalism and the history of imperialism, conditions that have actually enabled western thinkers to reflect on issues of

postcoloniality, European intellectuals "represent themselves as transparent" (257). However benign their intentions might be, western intellectuals, in their attempt to democratize thinking, may unwittingly reproduce the metaphysics they set out to dismantle. Theory can quite easily become complicit to the neocolonial strategies, which, under the guise of humanitarian intervention, can misrepresent and silence subaltern subjects. Spivak, therefore, questions uncritical readings of the postcolonial predicament along the lines of western criticism for this practice secretes a further re-colonization of the other it attempts to decipher.

In Coetzee's *Foe*, Susan Barton, who claims to be in search of her missing daughter, is shipwrecked on a desert island and found by Friday. He takes her to Cruso who, contrary to Defoe's hero, shows no interest in escaping the island. Susan soon discovers that Friday's tongue has been mutilated and implores Cruso to tell her everything he knows about the native. Cruso is either uninterested or unwilling to provide information concerning his servant's origins and this impels Susan to draft her own story regarding Friday's history. After Cruso's unexpected death, Susan and Friday are found and returned to England where Foe, the author, provides them accommodation. During their stay at Foe's abode, both Susan and the author endeavor to compose a story and history which would accommodate Friday's origins and enslavement.

Mike Marais has analyzed Coetzee's oeuvre primarily through Emmanuel Levinas' deconstructive critique. According to the critic, Coetzee's *Foe* is a text that reveals the authorial intention to develop "a form of writing which posits the other rather than history as an a *priori*" ("The Novel as Ethical Command" 62) while revealing the historical bias that underpins literary writing. Following Levinas' elaboration on the assimilative proclivity of Western metaphysics, Marais contends that *Foe* demarcates a literary space that establishes a "nonassimilative and therefore nonviolent relationship" with alterity (67). Marais reads in Coetzee's text a literary performance that interrogates any authorial intent and agency that claims to be speaking for the other; the text, therefore, by contemplating colonialism and slavery, reflects on the discourses western canon employs to document these events and shows how they are complicit to the unfolding of colonial history and its apparatuses. Through its literary performance of a "careful response to alterity," Coetzee's novel reworks the conventions of the

Bildungsroman in order to "install in the novel an 'unrelating relation' to alterity" (Marais 70). Marais also supports that *Foe* reflects Coetzee's intention to demarcate an "autonomous place" from which the reader may contemplate the discursive contingencies of "identificatory relationships" ("From the Standpoint of Redemption" 243). This "autonomous place" Coetzee's text seeks to delineate is a literary locus where the "work must wrest itself from the very domain in which it is ineluctably located" (Marais 230).[18] According to Marais, Friday's alterity constitutes a presence that unconceals both the limits and contingencies of western discourse and the potentialities the exposure to the radical other might entail for ethics and the documentation of history.[19] This potentiality is manifested in the final section of the novel where Friday, finally, assumes direct control of the narrative and the reader is exposed to his uncanny testimony. While Coetzee's text constitutes a literary performance that does expose how the discursive domestication of alternative narratives by western criticism and the *Bildungsroman* are intertwined with the material conditions of globalization and the commodification of history, its final section resituates Friday in the wreck of the slave ship. Friday remains discursively entombed in the ruptures of colonial history and assumes control of the narrative as a disruptive presence which has no agentic control over the world of the living. As I discuss more extensively later, although Coetzee's novel discloses the problematic of western humanitarianism and the contingencies of the western canon, the closing scenes of the novel, albeit exemplary of Coetzee's lyrical prose, confine Friday to the margins of capitalist modernity.

Derek Attridge explores Coetzee's *Foe* as a text that interrogates canonicity and the body of criticism that consigns novels to the category of the canon (*J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading* 67). Attridge suggests that *Foe* lays claim to the canon not only due to its intertextual reflections, but also because it reveals how the writing process is always contingent on the very discursive conventions it attempts to overcome (Attridge 73).[20] The literary documentation of slavery and colonization is negotiated within cultural norms and structures that may compromise the singularity of these events; albeit necessary in narrating slavery and colonization, the novel, as a product of western metaphysics, may fail to properly accommodate the historical meaning and dehumanizing effects of imperialism precisely because its structure, scope and conventions sprang from

the very same materials that produced these events. Attridge argues that Coetzee's text illuminates this paradox by illustrating how the process of writing about colonization seeks access to the conventions of the canon although these norms may compromise the singularity of colonial or postcolonial testimonies (80). As Attridge suggests: "...to put this experience of absolute otherness into words…would be to appropriate it within the familiar and to lose exactly that which makes it other" (81). My reading of Coetzee's *Foe* and *Disgrace* attempts to explore is how the postcolonial subjects resort to the dehumanizing discourses of globalization and capitalism, discourses which reproduce colonialist practices, in order to consolidate their autonomy. Does this process of resorting to these resources enable the postcolonial subject to overcome the irresolutions of his/her predicament or does it prolong his subalternization?[21]

In the chapter "Literature" and right before she begins to unfold herelaboration on the gendered subaltern's inability to speak, Spivak focuses on Coetzee's *Foe* in order to discuss the commodification of marginality in western literary criticism (*A Critique* 170). The critic goes on to contemplate Jean-Paul Sartre's argument that "There is always some way of understanding an idiot, a child, a primitive man or a foreigner *if one has sufficient information*" with a view to critiquing how the western intellectual, in his attempt to ground the other in his theoretical assumptions, can be conducive either to her silencing or misrepresentation (Spivak 171 emphasis in original). The margin, for Spivak, is the place where the work of the critic is "judged" since it is in this uncharted territory that the contingencies of theory are revealed (175). Spivak's elaborations on the other, the subaltern, and their misrepresentation aims at contemplating "theory's material embeddedness in global capitalism" (Cheah, "Biopower and the New International Division of Reproductive Labour" 179). The theoretical principles western academics retrieve in their attempt to recuperate subaltern speech or the voice of the other stem from the same philosophical matrix that engendered colonialism. Coetzee's text reveals the assimilative tendencies inherent in theoretical frameworks claiming to hold the key to Friday's puzzling mystery concerning his origins.[22] According to Spivak, Coetzee "attempts to represent the bourgeois individualist woman in early capitalism as the *agent* of *other* directed ethics rather than as a combatant in the preferential ethics of self-interest" (182 emphasis in original). In order to reveal the "discontinuous" registers of

speaking for the woman and speaking for the native, Spivak examines Susan's struggle to articulate her authorial agency, countering Foe's and Cruso's patriarchal silencing, and the female cast-away's misapplication of her claims for self-determination on Friday's puzzling story (Spivak 185). The critic reads Friday as the "curious guardian at the margin who will not inform," who remains inscrutable to the normalizing accounts both Foe and Susan submit in order to render the native's disruptive presence discursively manageable (*A Critique* 190).Ultimately, Spivak argues, Coetzee's text deconstructs the binary between "friend and foe" since it illuminates how benevolent acts of speaking for or to the native are usually conditioned by the projects of humanizing and improving the other (194). My aim is to discuss how Susan Barton recolonizes Friday by attempting to "build a bridge of words" (Coetzee 60) with the native and interpret the political significance of this gesture in the context of globalization and the proliferation of international humanitarian aid.[23]

Spivak's elucidation of the intellectual's implication in the theoretical domestication and silencing of the subaltern and the native is also useful in comprehending the process of globalization as a process in which sovereign states and international organizations surrender the human to the dictates of the capitalist "regime of truth"[24] and to a set of calculative western mandates without interrogating the material conditions and historical events that have fashioned these tenets. The establishment of international laws that, supposedly, articulate and adhere to nonnegotiable human rights is promulgated by sovereign nations which intervene in the global political map under the pretext of having the required technological, financial and educational apparatuses that can remedy the suffering of countries ravaged by civil wars, authoritarian regimes and humanitarian crises. We may suggest that a sovereign nation is the one which regulates and determines who or what deviates from and subverts the international law; a sovereign nation, or institution is a political entity that incarnates the law and whose providential objective is to either gather every other nation under its protective wing or determine as rogues those who disavow its calling.

The controversial role that western epistemologies play in postcolonial analysis is staged in Coetzee's *Foe* which invites the western intellectual and reader to contemplate the sovereign proclivities underlying his reading and interpretation of Friday's

indecipherable presence. The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to examine how capitalist globalization fabricates, reorients and impinges upon the consolidation of sovereignty in postcolonial world. My intention is to examine the elaboration of sovereignty in postcolonial literature on a par with the "maritime origins" of globalization (Linebaugh, Rediker 327) and to investigate how colonial and slave economy informed this process of theorization. In other words, I would like to explore how the theorization of sovereign politics by European philosophers is intertwined with the potentialities slave economy and world trade presented to the European mercantile world during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.[25]

In their exploration of the past and contemporary "middle passages" that have shaped the modern world, Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus and Marcus Rediker argue that "history happened on the oceans" (1). The mercantile possibilities revealed by the discovery of sea routes to the South and North American continent and the East Indies during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries "resettled the globe and transformed the experience of work" (Linebaugh, Rediker 327). This resettling of the globe involved the redrawing of the national and imperial borders and the overexploitation of human labor. In the span of these two centuries, both the political events taking place in Europe and the colonization of distant lands demand the reconceptualization of fundamental natural rights such as the right to property and autonomy. The sociopolitical transformations taking place in England involve the enclosure of land in order to prioritize agriculture and "commercial pasturage," the expansion of the world trade and the "institutionalization of markets" in tandem with the "establishment of a colonial system" (Linebaugh, Rediker 16). The multitude of people expropriated, driven homeless and impoverished by these changes was to be exploited in the urban centers, imprisoned, or channeled to the colonial outposts. The very concept of the human undergoes a profound change under the sociopolitical shifts occurring on a global scale, which impel the commodification of being. As Rediker and Linebaugh suggest, the first English political economists and theorists of the seventeenth century were colonists and seamen who developed their political theories with a view to increasing the imperial circumference of the nation and overexploiting slaves, captives and the expropriated (146-147). In order for the imperial project to be sustained, a particular idea of self-determination and sovereignty had to be

developed within which the central imperial authority would command distant territories, foreclosing any negotiations of its power and area of influence. The insurmountable profits of the slave and plantation economy were significant in enabling another conceptualization of time, space, labor, justice, and being.

Although Michel Foucault omits any direct reference to the imperial project and slavery in his seminars on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, he analyzes the ways political theory and governmental practices are conjoined by the dictates of the market. As soon as the market, says Foucault, becomes a “regime of truth” (18) where the value of objects and people, their falsity and validity, are determined by the norms of the capitalist environment, then both governmental practice and political economy receive their “standard of truth” (32) from the capitalist domain. Susan Barton’s humanitarianism, her insistence on documenting a commodifiable and marketable story concerning Friday’s origins, reveals how the process of speaking for the subaltern is intertwined with the discourses of capital accumulation and globalization. Susan’s persistent entreaties to Friday to mimic her logocentric discourse attest to western humanitarianism’s discursive incompatibility with the plight of subalterns. Although Susan assumes Friday’s yearning for autonomy to be identical to her sovereign claims, she unwittingly dehumanizes him by accommodating Friday’s inscrutable presence to her individualistic agenda.

One of the questions this section tries to answer is whether those who have been misrepresented can interrupt the sovereign narratives and discourse and, most importantly, whether the testimonies of those marginalized radically rewrite or reiterate the sovereign politics they struggle to dismantle. I would like to suggest that Coetzee’s text symptomatically reveals the coercive tendencies of representation, firstly, through the discursive exclusion of the female narrator, Susan Barton, by Cruso and Foe, and secondly, via her attempt to consolidate her sovereignty by (de)humanizing Friday.

In the literary analysis that follows, I examine the imperial and capitalist mandates conducive to the production of the postcolonial Anglophone novel and the manner in which the imperial project necessitated the production of narratives whose structure and content aimed at addressing the expropriated and impoverished multitude of the English commons. Secondly, I investigate how Barton attempts to consolidate her autonomy by articulating Friday’s story without recognizing her complicity in his further

marginalization and dehumanization. Thirdly, I read Friday and Susan's musical exchanges by employing the concept of the "counterpoint" (*Foe* 97) and explore the potentiality of a dialogue between the two subjects that neutralizes the "interpretative authoritarianism" of the reading subject (Marais 12)). Lastly, I turn to the novel's enigmatic last section with a view to discussing the asynchronous temporalities that haunt the last scene and the signification Friday's body assumes.

2.2 Reading Histories/ Reading Bodies: The Politics of Representation in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*

A close reading of Cruso's amnesiac narrative and levelling project, Foe's teleological documentation and Susan's humanitarian mission to excavate Friday's puzzling past reveal that their objectives are fashioned by the capitalist mandates of the imperial project and the accumulation of wealth. Although Susan's aim is to articulate Cruso's and Friday's history before they were shipwrecked on the island, she realizes that Cruso is an unreliable narrator since the stories he recounts "were so various and so hard to reconcile one with another" (11). His inconsistent narration circumscribes both his ancestry and Friday's origins: "Thus one day he would say his father had been a wealthy merchant…but the next he would tell me he had been a poor lad of no family" (12). The cast-away is equally secretive and vague concerning Friday's past; although Cruso initially recounts that he was a "slave-boy," on a different occasion he suggests that he was a "cannibal whom he had saved from being roasted and devoured by fellow cannibals" (12). Cruso's questionable narration baffles Susan who does not know "what was truth, what was lies, and what was mere rambling" (12).

During her stay on the island, Susan finds Cruso's disdain for escape (13) equally confusing with his unwillingness to "brook" any change on his island (27) and attempts to comprehend his complacency with his "tiny realm" and complete indifference to "salvation" (14). Susan explains his disregard for rescue and documentation of the lives of the three cast-aways on grounds of his old age which "had so narrowed his horizon – when the horizon all around us was so vast and magic" (13). The only project Cruso

seems to be proud of is the gradual "levelling" of the island by removing rocks, trees and bushes in order to build his "terraces" (33). The enclosure[26] of land is one of the first proto-capitalist governmental practices enacted in England and then implemented in the colonial peripheries. The apparatus of the enclosures created a "new problematic" that unconcealed the ways space, time and human labor can be commodified in a way that maximized capital accumulation (Marzec 3). The enclosure of undisciplined land, which is how Crusoe inaugurates his "errand into the wilderness"[27] in Defoe's' text and demonstrates the continuity of the imperial project even though he is shipwrecked in an inhospitable location, constitutes the cornerstone of the colonial event. While Defoe's text delineates the meticulous taxinomization and exhaustive ordering of beings and territory undertaken during colonialism–in other words, the practices of the system—Coetzee's text exposes the way in which literature was detrimental to the consolidation and perpetuation of the empire.[28] I am referring to the prioritization and implementation of western cultural products in the colonial spaces that aimed at enlightening the natives and facilitating their indoctrination in the tenets of the developmental thinking intrinsic to western discourse.[29] Cruso, who sees his "realm invaded" (25) by the presence of the female cast-away and her disturbing inquiry into his and Friday's story, maintains his sovereignty by marginalizing, silencing and consciously forgetting details concerning Friday's origins and how they ended up on the deserted island. Susan's scepticism regarding Cruso's endeavours to "clear the whole island of growth and turn it into terraces" (33) reveals the ways the colonial project's strategy of suppressing the territorial heterogeneity was coterminous with the narrative assimilation of testimonies which subverted the colonial teleologies.

Cruso's "levelling" (33) of the narrative space is also demonstrated via his systematic regulation and monitoring of Friday's vocabulary. When Susan asks "how many words of English does Friday know," Cruso replies that he has provided Friday with "as many as he needs" (21). The discursive "levelling" instigated by Cruso becomes also apparent in his disapproval of Susan's initiative to keep a journal. While the female cast-away insists that a diary should enable them to document the remaining "traces" (17) of Cruso's memories and adventures, his answer discloses the colonial amnesia

constituting a fundamental mechanism of the imperial project:"'Nothing is forgotten,' said he; and then: 'Nothing I have forgotten is worth the remembering'" (17).

As soon as Susan and Friday are rescued and return to England, they find accommodation in Foe's living quarters. Susan begins to narrate the events on the island only to discover that she lacks the literary skill to document the "particularities" and the "liveliness" of their stories: "A liveliness is lost in the writing down which must be supplied by art, and I have no art" (40). She also confesses to Foe that the draft she composed concerning their history on the island is a "sorry limping affair" that fails to articulate the singularity of their lives (47). Hence, she entrusts Foe with the "writing down" of their stories after acknowledging that she lacks the literary skill to document their experiences on the island (40). The female narrator acknowledges that she has to conform to both the principles of the western literary canon and, as I argue in the following section, to the capitalist mandate of rendering her and Friday's story into a commodity.

What the female cast-away realizes is that in order for their stories to be narrated, it is necessary that they comply with the laws, restrictions and aesthetics of a "culturally validated form" (Attridge, *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading* 80). Susan's question "What art is there to hearing confessions?" is equally significant with her entreaty to have Friday's truth narrated (48). The question posed by the female narrator comes to investigate the capacity of the novel, as a predominantly masculine genre, to attend to the "particularities" (18), the singularities, of the discrepant communities and subjects that experienced the brutality of colonialism. The production of literature is indissolubly linked with and fundamentally fashioned by the way the author, as a sovereign being, consolidates his authority by prioritizing and silencing subaltern voices that disrupt his master narrative. The same applies to the male authors of the text who strive to suppress both Susan's and Friday's texts. Hence, I read Susan's question as an inquiry that does not aim at disregarding tout-court the potentiality of the novel to illuminate the alternative worlds[30] obscured by the "levelling" practises of colonialism, but focuses on the novel as a literary form that sprung from the processes of an expanding imperialism and contemplates the extent to which the author can remain critical of the material conditions that shape his interests.[31] Hence, the aesthetics and structure of Defoe's novel cannot be

examined without taking under consideration the reading public of his era and his desperate financial condition mainly due to his insurmountable debts.[32]

While the female narrator is aware of the importance of determining Friday's "truth" (121) concerning his origins, his enslavement and mutilation, she nevertheless confesses her inability to unearth the native's traumatic past and contextualize her own story of loss and disenfranchisement according to the provided cultural mandates: "Return to me the substance I have lost Mr Foe: that is my entreaty. For though my story gives the truth, it does not give the substance of the truth" (51). Susan, whose "life is drearily suspended" until Foe re-contextualizes and refashions her draft according to a culturally acceptable form, soon realizes that in order for their stories to be told they have to comply with certain generic restrictions. Even before submitting her draft to Foe, Susan is led to invent "new and stranger circumstances" (67) in order to make their stories more accessible and popular to both the public and Foe: "Alas, will the day ever arrive when we can make a story without strange circumstances?" (67). Her disappointment intensifies after Foe declares that the story of the island "lacks light and shade" and therefore they "can bring it to life only by setting it within a larger story," as the author suggests (117). Foe postulates that the story of the island, as well as Friday's story, can assume significance only by complying with the teleological imperatives of the western novel according to the genre of the western *Bildungsroman*: "It is thus that we make up a book: loss, then quest, then recovery; beginning, then middle, then end" (117). Susan who sought access to literature in order to "give voice" to Friday (118) becomes aware that the marginalization of the slave's story through its reductive accommodation in Foe's "larger story" will only neutralize the singularity of his occasion.

Foe's inability to engage Friday's alterity and history becomes evident when the author avers that his project is to "make Friday's silence speak, as well as the silence surrounding Friday" (142). The novel Foe desires to compose remains intrinsically bound to the western metaphysical tradition as he proposes to descend in the "eye of story" (141). Foe's claim implies a literary documentation that circumscribes Friday's past and alterity within a reassuring narrative that aims at reducing the colonial crime and event into a mere "episode" (117). His narrative strategy, which is to force Friday's silence to yield its "truth," is not only indicative of the metaphysical restrictions of Western

thinking which demands that alterity succumb to the mandates of the sovereign providential narrative and submit their "truth" to the reifying dictates intrinsic to the apparatuses and discourses that animate this method of inquiry; it also evinces how capitalist production demanded a teleological reading of history and imperial adventure in order to coerce the expropriated and disenfranchised multitude to the infinite potentialities the imperial project encompassed.

Contrary to Cruso's and Foe's disinterested and "levelling" narrative, which discursively encloses or annuls the recalcitrant voices inhabiting its vicinity, Susan maintains that the "truth…resides in a thousand touches" and if her and Friday's stories are not documented, they will eventually lose their "particularity" (18). Cruso's wilful amnesia jeopardizes the documentation of their individual stories and practically neutralizes the singularity of their occasion while Foe proposes that their narratives can be articulated only if they conform to the generic restrictions of a literary account. More importantly, Foe's insistence that Friday's and Susan's story cannot be narrated unless they comply with the mandates of capitalist production necessitating the incorporation of their testimonies according to the teleological imperatives of the western *Bildungsroman* reveals how the marginalization and exclusion of those narratives upsetting the sovereign literary prescriptions is augmented by the demands of capitalist production. Coetzee's *Foe* urges those who partake in the process of recovering testimonies of disenfranchisement and slavery to remain critical of their politics of location, their class and gender and how these factors are overdetermined by the western discourse. More specifically, Coetzee's text symptomatically reveals how detrimental the western intellectual and humanist can be in his attempt to articulate subaltern testimonies by neglecting the sovereign drives that inform his humanitarian politics and the capitalist conditions that situate him/her as the dispenser of human rights.

Susan Barton's project of recovering Friday's past and preventing both Cruso and Foe from assimilating the native's story in their texts becomes evident in her entreaty to remain attuned to the "other voices" that interrupt the narrative flow of their master narratives (30). This is where Susan's intervention in Cruso's narrative gains significance since, contrary to the teleological imperatives of his amnesiac authorship that purposefully elides many details concerning the native's past, she remains attentive to the

implications of the omission of Friday's story. Acknowledging that as long as Friday's story is not represented, he will forever be the victim of an endless play of misrepresentation, Susan seeks Foe's assistance in order to "build a bridge of words" (60) between the discursive world she and Foe inhabit and Friday's mute and traumatized world. Susan argues that Friday will forever be a victim of misinterpretation by the dominant discourses unless he is given the opportunity to narrate his story according to his own decree: "Friday has no command of words and therefore no defence against being reshaped day by day in conformity with the desire of others…What is the truth of Friday?" (121).

Yet, what Coetzee's text articulates is precisely the proclivity to sovereignty secreted within the humanitarian project of "caring" and speaking for the native (*Foe* 39). Although Susan reprimands Foe for not being able to "distinguish between my silences and the silences of a being such as Friday" (120), she persistently conflates her situation with Friday's predicament and assumes that the native's objective is the documentation of his experience of slavery. This becomes apparent both in the moments she assumes responsibility for Friday and in her failed attempts to force Friday to speak, constantly failing to acknowledge that Friday is already in language as his dancing, singing, drawings and "secret writing" manifest (143). As I will discuss more extensively later, Susan's misrepresentation of Friday's alterity is indicative of the Eurocentric and colonial dogma which perceived natives to be devoid of history and that the beginning of native history coincides with the arrival of the colonists. Susan demonstrates this gesture in her attempt to document those "other voices" and, most importantly, in her recognition of the sovereign tendencies her gesture entails: "I tell myself I talk to Friday to educate him out of darkness and silence…There are times when benevolence deserts me and I use words only as the shortest way to subject him to my will" (60). While both Cruso and Foe remain oblivious to the omissions and discursive violence intrinsic to their narratives, Susan acknowledges that forcing Friday to yield his "truth" (121) according to her own narrative structure is yet another kind of subjugation. Even when Susan's authorship seems to be fundamentally aberrant from the neutralizing "longer stories" of Cruso and Foe, there are moments where the text reveals that she is complicit with the silencing of the native.

Although Susan has been systematically marginalized either during her stay in Cruso's island where she became his "second subject his first being his manservant Friday" (11) or later when she resides in Foe's quarters and she is forced to comply with his teleological narrative in order to have their story told, her co-inhabitation with Friday reveals moments when her humanitarian agenda is conducive to the native's marginalization since she persistently demands that Friday articulate his story only through the imperatives of the western register. Susan's humanitarianism is a persistent dehumanization[33] since she constantly refers to Friday as an "animal wrapt entirely to himself" (70), one that lacks fundamental human capacities to reason and attend to his needs. While Friday flees as soon as a passing ship approaches the island the three cast-aways inhabit, Susan urges the captain and the crew to locate the native since it is her "duty to care for him in all things" (39). Susan continues to misinterpret Friday's intentions when, during their voyage back to England, she summons Friday to bid farewell to the dying Cruso assuming that the presence of his master will becalm him: "He would rather sleep on the floor at his master's feet than on the softest bed in Christendom" (41). More troubling, though, is her insistence that Friday is a "helpless" being (128) who lacks the intellectual capacity to comprehend fundamental ontological concepts. The female narrator, who assumes the position of the humanist burdened with the "duty to care for him in all things," purports that since "no man had died on his island since the beginning of time" Friday is unable to perceive the concept of death (45). Not only does Susan decree that the concept of death is foreign and strange to him, but she also contends that his deprivation of speech and the years he had spent as a slave had rendered Friday a being unfamiliar to the concept of "freedom":"He desires to be liberated…but how is Friday to recover his freedom, who has been a slave all his life? …As to Friday, how can Friday know what freedom means when he barely knows his name?" (148). Susan also hints that the slavers had mutilated both Friday's tongue and his genitals and links his inability to have his story narrated and documented to his lack of desire. She initially recounts that possibly his "lost tongue might stand not only for itself but for a more atrocious mutilation" and ponders on the possibility that Friday's limited intellectual capacity is a sign of a "slave unmanned" (119). Contemplating the complexities and contingencies of writing, Susan purports that Cruso and Friday lacked

"desire" (88) and hence having their stories told constituted an unnecessary and unwanted process. Her belief that Friday lacks "desire" is quite problematic for it demonstrates both her inability to acknowledge that the native is already in language and able to articulate his story according to his own discourse, and it also reveals her failure to engage Friday as a sovereign being who actually desires to be liberated and regain his autonomy. Benign as it may be, Susan's humanitarianism is deeply informed by the analogical and calculative thinking inherent in Western logocentric discourse and reveals that although both she and Friday strive to circumvent Foe's and Cruso's "levelling" narratives, their histories of suffering cannot be retrieved by the "same register of language" (Spivak *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 183).[34]

There are moments, exemplified by the various scenes of teaching, where it is clear that Foe and Susan engage Friday's past and alterity merely as a problem to be solved or a puzzle to be deciphered. For them, Friday passively awaits the benevolent interference of the western humanist burdened with the task of humanizing his underdeveloped and traumatised psyche and indoctrinating him in the principles of western reason. Susan correctly diagnoses that her teaching is a method of subjecting him to her will (60), and this also explains her distress and uneasiness when he remains unresponsive to her tutelage:

> Could it be that somewhere within him he was laughing at my efforts to bring him nearer to a state of speech? I reached out and took him by the chin and turned his gaze toward me. His eyelids opened. Somewhere in the deepest recesses of those black pupils was there a spark of mockery? I could not see it. But if it were there, would it not be an African spark, dark to my English eyes? (146)

By avoiding to provide any access to Friday's thoughts and motivation and by impelling the reader to partake in Foe's and Susan's insistent inquiry into his past, the text symptomatically discloses the sovereign bias immanent in the very process of reading, writing and narrating and, at the same time, unconceals Friday's secret as an "aporia"[35] that destabilizes the dominant narratives signed by Foe and Susan.

Dominic Head argues that Susan is an "ambivalent figure" whose persistent and authoritarian investigation of the native's past reveals "affinities" with Foe's teleological narrative structure (64). During an exchange with Foe, Susan avers that the objective of the author, similarly to the painter's, is to "divine which episodes of his history hold promise of fullness" and intertwine them so as to formulate a linear, continuous and progressive story resembling the braiding of a "rope" (88). Susan's retrieval of Friday's story aims at recuperating the native's traumatic past in order for it to be incorporated into the familiarity of a discourse that neutralizes the heterogeneity of his history and presence. She fails to notice that she employs the same assimilative thinking towards alterity that she struggles to critique. Mike Marais argues that Barton's "authorial control actually imprisons" Friday ("Interpretative Authoritarianism" 12). Marais' exploration of the acts of "interpretative authoritarianism" in *Foe* investigates the "master to slave" relation that develops not only between the various voices inhabiting Coetzee's text, but also the precarious "power relation characterized by domination and objectification" governing the reading process (12). The moment the reader identifies with one of the authorities of the text, he/she consciously or unconsciously partakes in a process of "interpretative authoritarianism" by siding with the politics each voice articulates in its attempt to control the narrative space: "Indeed, the process of reading the novel is not a safe, passive, ideologically innocent activity removed from the imperatives of the historical present: it requires an active engagement with the politics of domination" (Marais 12). Marais, however, suggests that the text reveals the urgency to "dissociate" from the given and administered interpretative representations provided by the main characters of the novel since they constitute a repetition of the ethics of reading and writing heralded and inaugurated by Defoe's canonical text.

Marais argues that the achievement of Coetzee's text is in involving the reader[36] in a strife for authorial control by impelling him to side with either character in order to shed light on the puzzles and holes that haunt the narrative. Hence, the reader becomes another sovereign presence that (un)consciously prioritizes or silences voices in order to clarify and determine Friday's traumatized past. Marais also avers that Coetzee's text is delegitimizing the teleological structure of Defoe's text and attempts to develop a "nonassimilative and therefore nonviolent relationship [to alterity]…that is, 'a movement

from the Same towards the other which never returns to the Same'" (Critchley 1992:109 qtd in Marais, "The Novel as Ethical Command" 67). Marais' reading punctuates a modality of writing that renegotiates the assimilative and confrontational comportment between Susan and Friday. Instead of circumscribing the experience with and of the other in a process that empowers and reinforces the same, a symptom rather evident in both Susan's and Foe's discursive interpretations of Friday's story, it suggests a "careful response" and an "unrelating relation" to alterity (Marais, "The Novel as Ethical Command" 70). At no point does the text exonerate Susan or reveal her incentive as purely motivated by benevolence; rather, it exposes how she works closely within and according to the socio-cultural and racial conventions of her era and while she struggles to dismantle the masculine and teleological narratives that endeavor to essentialize Friday's story, she fails to overcome the interpellative mechanisms that shape her humanitarian politics.

I am referring to the literary events where the female narrator's endeavour to unearth Friday's story seems to be motivated by personal gain and a sense of obligation. This becomes evident in her first encounter with Foe when, in her attempt to persuade the author to provide her and Friday with a place to stay, she presents her experience on the island as an opportunity that he should exploit:

> ...you have not heard a story before like mine. I am new-returned from far-off parts. I have been a castaway on a desert island. And there I was the companion of a singular man.' I smiled, not at you but at what I was about to say. 'I am a figure of fortune Mr. Foe. I am the good fortune we are always hoping for. (48)

Susan is aware that, in order for a native and a woman to survive in eighteenth century London and have their stories narrated, they need to comply with the social and financial imperatives of the place they inhabit and, if necessary, to reinscribe their stories according to the requirements of literary and capitalist production. When she strives to explain to Friday the importance of having the "particulars" of their stories narrated and the importance of Foe's skill in revitalizing her draft, she confesses that the

fictionalization of their testimonies will make them “famous throughout the land, and rich too” (58).

In one of her many attempts to “build a bridge of words” (60) between her and Friday, Susan recovers a case of recorders and secretly places the smallest one in Friday’s room. The next day she hears him “toying” with the flute and playing the same tone he practised during their stay on the island (95). She immediately contends that “if there were any language accessible to Friday, it would be the language of music” (96) and begins to escort him musically in his daily practice. Although the recorders were from the same case and Susan follows Friday’s tunes closely, she acknowledges that the music produced was not “pleasing” and that a “subtle discord” revealed an inexplicable incompatibility between them (96). Without losing heart, Susan takes the initiative to vary Friday’s tune and drafts a new one assuming that her composition, more elaborate and melodic than Friday’s, will undoubtedly entice the native into following her: “But no, Friday persisted in the old tune, and the two tunes played together formed no pleasing counterpoint, but on the contrary jangled and jarred” (97). [37] The musical discord between Susan and Friday demonstrates that for the female narrator conversing with Friday suggests that the latter follows, imitates and succumbs to her discursive and cultural directives. Even when Susan invokes the concept of the “counterpoint,” defined as the “ability, unique to music, to say two things at once comprehensively” (Spanos 188), she conceives this moment within a consensus of an end-oriented and calculative structure that would yield Friday’s puzzling secret. Susan fails to perceive her musical intercourse with Friday as a dysteleological and eventful dialogue; while Friday’s past remains an enigma, his musical performance with Susan attests to the configuration of a non-confrontational sovereign being-with.

My intention is to examine the un-productive musical strife enacted between Susan and Friday within the context of Paul Gilroy’s work on the counter-culture of the Black Atlantic as an indication of other-directed politics and art that interrogate the essentializing processes of Western thinking. The analysis I am proposing through Gilroy’s work on the cultural politics of the Black Atlantic aims at reading Friday’s music, dancing and singing as signs of an alternative conflictual, albeit non-confrontational, sovereignty. The conflict between Susan and Friday, their

disharmonious, "jangled and jarred" counterpoint unconceals an (im)possible being-with where the polyphonic dissonance of uneven and discrepant voices (their irrefutable difference) does not reproduce the politics of a conflict, as this concept is understood in the context of Western metaphysics.[38] Rather, it illuminates an itinerary of thinking and being which renders the counterpoint of dissonance an agonistic being-with that enables the envisioning of a vulnerable sovereignty.

Susan's interpellation by the logocentric principles of Western discourse is evident in her persistence to humanize Friday by teaching him how to read and write, constantly failing to acknowledge that the native employs an alternative register of signification. More specifically, Susan decrees that Friday's dancing and singing rituals are inferior to language since she avers that "'he utters himself only in music and dancing, which are to speech as cries and shouts are to words" (142). Gilroy proposes that Black art and, especially, the cultural products deriving from and dramatizing the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade necessitate the interrogation of the "Hegelian suggestion" that thought "outstrips art" and that music is subordinate to philosophy in the scale of "cultural achievements" (73). Gilroy suggests that music constituted a vital instrument in the articulation of the ineffable terrors of the slave trade since the slaves were forbidden any access to language and writing and, hence, music, dancing and singing provided a seminal "surrogate" to literacy (74). The prioritization of textuality and writing over alternative forms of expression, enunciated by the various cultural formations representing the experiences of the slave trade, attests to "modernity's ethnocentric aesthetic assumptions [that] have consigned these musical creations to a notion of the primitive that was intrinsic to the consolidation of scientific racism" (Gilroy 76).[39] The critic does not condemn the testimonies of textual narratives that represent the atrocities of the slave trade; rather, he diagnoses that a critique and examination of modernity without encompassing and submitting the cultural testimonies of music, singing and dancing is "incomplete" and that "the history and practice of black music point to other possibilities and generate other plausible models" (77). Gilroy sees in the black musician "a different kind of intellectual" (76) whose cultural creations come to complete and compete the western critic's narratives and testimonies. Hence, Friday's "secret writing" (143), animated through his various cultural performances, both contests and unsettles the

predominantly textual testimonies and Eurocentric configurations of writing heralded by Foe and Susan.

Gilroy holds that black art, and specifically jazz music, which stemmed from and retains the histories of deracination that constitute the politics of the Black Atlantic, is indicative of the other-directed politics inaugurated through black art. As the critic proposes, the most seminal element of that dramaturgy is the “practice of antiphony which symbolizes and anticipates (but does not guarantee) new, non-dominating social relationships” (79). In jazz, Gilroy detects a blurring of the binaries endemic to metaphysical thought and musical performances where the “meetings and conversations” of antithetical and “antiphonic” elements partake in an open-ended, conflictual strife engendering an un-productive counterpoint “jangled and jarred,” yet retaining the differential traits that define them. During this “essential encounter” of opposites, Gilroy, quoting Ralph Ellison, argues that in jazz the musician “asserts [himself] within and against the group” and “loses his identity even as he finds it” (79). This is why Gilroy diagnoses in black art the capacity to illuminate “non-dominating” relationships that pave the way for an affirmative modality of sovereignty where the opposing parties are involved in an unending strife and their difference is not considered as a corrosive and threatening element, but an unexplored and unencountered potentiality that reroutes exhausted and decayed discourses to more affirmative and polyphonic modalities of being-with. Susan misinterprets the concept of the “counterpoint” as a symphonic compromise where the different parts involved ought to succumb to the allegedly aesthetically superior melody although the term denotes that those divergent elements retain their singularity while negotiating with the whole.

Friday gradually becomes a recluse who performs his dancing rituals night and day. As Barton suggests after finding shelter in Foe’s residence: “In the grip of the dancing he [Friday] is not himself. He is beyond human reach. I call his name and am ignored, I put out a hand and am brushed aside” (92). Days later, Susan decides to escort Friday to Bristol and help him return to Africa, but the journey proves exhausting and the travelers are forced to sleep in the open and they become exposed to the natural elements. When Susan finds herself alone in the countryside, shivering and “soaked to the skin,” she unconsciously begins imitating Friday’s dancing (103). She progressively falls in a

trance and confesses that she can witness an obscure “design unfolding” that allows her to interpret Friday’s performance. Dancing in Friday’s steps allows Susan to perceive the particularities that have evaded her during her encounters with Friday:

> I have discovered why Friday dances in England, I thought, smiling to myself; which, if we had remained at Mr Foe's, I should never have learned. And I should never have made this discovery had I not been soaked to the skin and then set down in the dark in an empty ham. From which we may infer that there is after all design in our lives, and if we wait long enough we are bound to see that design unfolding; just as, observing a carpet-maker, we may see at first glance only a tangle of threads; yet, if we are patient, flowers begin to emerge under our gaze, and prancing unicorns, and turrets. (103)

During her trance, Susan travels in distant places and becomes aware of “other lives open” to her, different than the one she lives with Friday in Foe’s dwelling (104). While Foe and Susan occupy the position of the sovereign burdened with the task of narrating the native’s story by reducing it into a mere episode, thus excluding it by including it in their teleological narrative, this is one of the few scenes where the master-slave pattern is disrupted. What draws Susan to imitating Friday’s dancing is their common experience of exile and homelessness. Friday’s history of forcible dispossession and slavery is implied in various scenes and becomes even more evident in the last section of the novel. Nevertheless, Susan’s story is equally important and marks an untold, or at least opaque, history of loss and dispossession. The loss of her daughter, set adrift by a mutinous crew along with the corpse of the captain, the years spent as a servant of Cruso on the deserted island and also her endeavor to sustain herself by persuading Foe of her wealth of stories she can confide in him (48) connote a life of struggle and exile. It is in the understanding of their shared experience of disenfranchisement and forcible migration and in the articulation of this loss through Friday’s dancing and music that Susan becomes aware of the “other lives open” to her.

The reason I began my analysis of Coetzee’s *Foe* by introducing Spivak’s elaboration of the complicity of western critique, however radical this may be, in

perpetuating and extending the subalternization and marginalization of the formerly colonized and disenfranchised is because western readers and scholars tend to neglect that the theories and methodologies they retrieve, ones that are made possible by the capitalist environment in which they are produced, can potentially develop into master narratives of interpretation which predetermine and co-opt their subject of inquiry. Apart from the fact that western criticism may uncritically engage alterity and, thus, compromise it within the image of the same, what Coetzee's text reveals is that each history of exile, forcible migration and dispossession demands alternate discourses attending to the particularity and singularity of each event. Along with the interminable excavation of the histories that still lie submerged in the wrecks of modernity, Coetzee's text calls for the systematic decolonization of western criticism and humanism, however benevolent and radical they may claim to be. Put differently, and in the context of this thesis, *Foe* reveals the sovereign drives intrinsic in every method of inquiry and narrative; from Cruso's "levelling" project to Foe's teleological narrative to Susan's persistent withholding, prioritization and distortion of events and, finally, to Friday's "soft and cold, dark and unending" stream (157).

The conceptualization of sovereignty in modernity cannot be disentangled from the capitalist apparatuses and practices that have sustained and subtended globalization since the beginning of imperial expansion and territorial accumulation. What the imperial project revealed to the political economists and theorists of the time was how space, time and being, previously understood to be non-economic concepts, could very easily be embedded to the register of economic discourse and assume a predetermined value (Foucault 219). Imperialism, like capitalism, would not have been possible without the multitude of expropriated, unemployed and deracinated people engendered by the practice of enclosures and the industrialization of trade and production. In their discussion of the "maritime origins" of capitalism and the historical, political and social developments that formed the Atlantic proletariat, Rediker and Linebaugh argue that dispossession and expropriation of the masses laid the foundation for the consolidation of imperialism and the colonial system: "European capitalists had to forcibly expropriate masses of them from their ancestral homelands so that their labor-power could be redeployed in new economic projects in new geographic settings" (17). Forceful

dispossession and relocation is a practice, Linebaugh and Rediker suggest, that spans five hundred years. The uneven, asynchronous, yet interminable effects and dehumanizing consequences of imperialism and capitalist globalization are articulated in Coetzee's novel through the various marginalized stories of exile and deracination, which constantly resurface and intertwine with the main narrative.

The fourth, and final, part of *Foe* is delivered in two sections. In the first one, an unknown narrator enters a house at night where he locates a girl curled up close to the staircase, a man and a woman in their nightshirts lying in bed while Friday lies sleeping on the floor. The narrator "presses a fingernail" between Friday's lips "trying to part them" and then lies next to him in an attempt to hear any sounds issuing from his mouth (154). He "presses closer" to Friday's body and by ignoring the "beating of his own heart" he begins to hear "the roar of the waves in a seashell; and over that, as if once or twice a violin-string were touched, the whine of the wind and the cry of a bird" (154). The section ends with the narrator listening to the "sounds of the island" issuing from Friday's mouth. In the second section, the narrator, possibly in our times, visits the living quarters of the real Defoe. The sequence of events narrated closely resembles the first section in terms of the narrator's investigation of a puzzling almost dream-like space. He, again, enters the house where he "stumbles" over the body of a girl, proceeds to the room where he finds the couple lying face to face but, contrary to the previous sequence, now he can light a candle and see Friday more clearly. This time he stands against the wall and the narrator observes a "scar like a necklace, left by rope or chain" on the slave's neck (155). He then unlocks a box which contains the manuscript written by Barton narrating her story and Friday's on the island. The narrator begins reading her draft and is transported to the vicinity of the island where he descends into the deep and locates the wreck of a ship (156). He enters the ship through a "hole," echoing the "hole in the narrative" that Friday's silence signified, and from there proceeds to the cabin where Susan Barton lays dead next to the captain who had been slain during the mutiny. In a corner, with "his knees drawn up, his hands between his thighs," Friday rests motionless (157).

The last section of the novel becomes a space of asynchronous spatio-temporalities. The visitor of Defoe's quarters submerges in the wreck of a ship where

he/she encounters Susan, the slain captain, and Friday. During his dive, he watches Friday's "petals floating" (156) around him alluding to the "petals" Friday had cast in the sea where the other slaves had drowned (31). As soon as he reaches the ocean bed, he admits that the sand reminds him of the "mud in Flanders, in which generations of grenadiers now lie dead," (156) echoing Susan's confession that her father was a "Frenchman who had fled to England to escape the persecutions" (10). Close to Susan's and the captain's body is Friday with a "chain around his throat" (157) marking another shift in time and designating the native's enslavement and transportation in the transatlantic journey. The undocumented narratives of the slain Portuguese captain, Susan's father and Friday's co-travelers are not the only testimonies veiled by the main narrative lines permeating Coetzee's text. The plot concerning Susan's daughter constantly resurfaces and intervenes in the main narrative, but it is never actually resolved. The female narrator enters the textual stage by claiming that she was shipwrecked on Cruso's island while she was in search of her lost daughter who was presumably kidnapped and sent to the New World. Her quest for her missing daughter leads her to Bahia which was a "major plantation zone and an important terminus of the Atlantic slave trade" (Schwartz xiii).[40]Although Susan is haunted by the visitation of a girl who claims to be her daughter, she never provides a full account of the entire story concerning her quest. We are also informed that during Susan and Friday's trek to Bristol, they find a small parcel lying in a ditch (105). Inside Susan finds a dead baby and in fear of being accused of having abandoned it or that Friday's lust for flesh might be reawakened, she decides to leave it in the ditch: "I wrapped the babe again in its bloody winding-cloth and laid it in the bottom of the ditch and guiltily led Friday away from that place" (105). However discrepant, heterogeneous and asynchronous these marginalized and untold testimonies might be, there is a common thread that entwines them all. These marginalized and unearthed testimonies are brought together in the last section where the narrator "fingers" (157) the chain on Friday's neck and asks about the ship he finds himself into. As in the previous section, he pries into Friday's mouth, "I pass a fingernail," but now he/she does not hear the sounds of the island since they are both submerged underwater:

> From inside him comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption. It flows up through his body and out upon me; it passes through the cabin, through the wreck; washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth. Soft and cold, dark and unending, it beats against my eyelids, against the skin of my face. (157)

And "all of it is now."[41] Friday's stream punctuates the convergence of all these heterogeneous and asynchronous histories and stories and designates the contemporary incarnations of the middle passage and the pervading effects of capitalist globalization and the uneven divisions it casts on the territories it affects. Today, what Cheah calls "humanitarian dehumanization" is materialized through international organizations that purport to attend to the needs of subaltern people by employing a logocentric discourse which reiterates the misrepresentations of colonialism under the pretext of benevolence (*What is a World* 281). These interventions, manifested through "philanthropic imperialism and militarized humanitarianism," constitute examples of globalization's morphing into charity and they betray their allegiance to the "capitalist world-system's exploitative logic of commodity exchange" (Cheah 285,279). Although the discourses of globalization and "dehumanizing humanitarianism" invariably compromise subaltern struggle, there is a site of veridiction where hegemonic rationalities collapse. When the anonymous reader/diver enters the hull of the slave-ship, she confesses that "...this is not a place of words...This is a place where bodies are their own signs" (157).

There is a truth, Coetzee maintains, that negates the manipulations and misrepresentations of the dominant discourse; this is the truth of the body. When it comes to narrating the story and history of the wounded body, Coetzee claims, one needn't "grant the authority" to the oppressed, the "suffering body *takes* this authority" (*Doubling the Point* 248 emphasis added). Even in its most vulnerable condition, the suffering body stands sovereignly over its tormentors.

2.3 Not the "Dog-Man" Anymore: Globalization and the Emergence of the *Homo Oeconomicus* in South Africa

In the previous section I discussed how the western intellectual and humanist, in his engagement with alterity, employs discourses and methodologies that prioritize the validation of the *episteme* over the affirmation of the human. My examination of Coetzee's *Foe* enabled me to identify and analyze the concept of sovereignty as intrinsic to western humanism and its discourses employed in the decipherment of the colonial and postcolonial events that exceed their hermeneutic capacity. I also examined how the conceptualization of sovereignty in the European context needs to be examined along the "maritime origins" of capitalist globalization. In this section, I focus on *Disgrace* in order to explore how the self-determination of the black subject in the post-apartheid era is interpellated by the discourse of capitalist globalization and how Coetzee's work portrays this process of sovereign consolidation as a re-appropriation of the land by the black subject. I also examine how the process of the black subject's self-determination is indissolubly linked with the imposition of a neomasculinist patriarchal narrative that accommodates both black and white female agency.

With the completion of twenty years since its first publication in 1999, and a plethora of articles and academic books succeeding it, *Disgrace* remains a work whose status in postcolonial literature is yet-to-be determined.[42] From the day of its publication until today, literary critics and philosophers return to Coetzee's text with the aim of determining and establishing a theoretical vantage point from which they can interpret its controversial politics. The most challenging sections of the novel are the rape of a white lesbian woman and farmer, Lucy Lurie, in the Eastern Cape by a gang of three black South Africans, her decision to remain silent about her rape and not inform the local authorities, her subsequent compliance to her black neighbor's marriage proposal in order for her to avoid further violations, and her father's, former professor of Romantic Literature, David Lurie, racist portrayal of the black community. Lurie seeks refuge at his daughter's farm in the Eastern Cape after having raped one of his students. What is rather disconcerting in Lurie's case is how he persistently justifies his violent act by resorting to abstractions and notions stemming from Romanticism.

Having published three books on Romanticism, and now aiming to write an opera focusing on "Byron in Italy," Lurie continuously repeats throughout the novel how

Romantic poetry, especially William Wordsworth's, have been influential in the constitution of his subject (Coetzee*, Disgrace* 4,13). During a lecture on Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and before a disengaged audience, Lurie invites his students to reflect on the necessity of maintaining the "realm of pure ideas" uncontamindated by the harsh realities of life (22). In the context of postapartheid South Africa, Lurie's invocation of the "realm of pure ideas" connotes the progressive dismantling of the apartheid regime and its colonial politics which rested on the overexploitation of the native population premised on the "pure idea" of racial superiority. The discourse of Romanticism strongly resonates with Lurie for it enables him to redeem his racist and rapist inclinations by reinterpreting them through a benign artistic and literary register. The same applies when he is asked by the college committee to address the accussations leveled against him by one of his studens.

During the college hearing, where Lurie is charged of sexual abuse, he dismisses the accusations by arguing that he was a mere "servant of Eros" (52). Even when his daughter asks him abou the indictment, he confidently retorts that his "case rests on the rights of desire" and "it was a god who acted through" him (89). Lurie repeatedly seeks recourse to a religious and poetic discourse in order to justify his unjustifiable act of violating one of his students. Because he senses the political shift in the country, animated through the gradual limitation and regulation of white privilege, Lurie disregards the emerging political power by calling its subjects "clerks in a post-religious age" (4). During the tribunal, Lurie mocks the proceedings and abstains from pleading guilty for the rape; rather, he denounces the hearing and his colleagues by accusing them of staging a "secular tribunal" demanding a "secular plea" (58). Jeffrey Cass contends that what Lurie experiences in post-apartheid South Africa is the "disintegration" of Romanticism since he gradually discovers that the poetic discourse to which he heavily relied upon is an unfit medium to comprehend the "new South African reality" (Cass 40). Most disturbingly though, Lurie's distorted Romantic ideal constitues the justifying cause, the absolving catalyst, through which he feels confident enough to violate a woman's body and denounce any accountability simply by seeking recourse to the realm of literary abstractions and metaphors. Additionaly, he downgrades the legal proceedings conducted by his colleagues by accusing them of consigning to the "secular" discourse of

justice and retribution, which he, ironically, repeatedly invokes when he seeks justice for the rape of his daughter by three black men.

Lucy Lurie's rape has raised considerable criticism since it rearticulates the colonial discourses which misrepresented the black South African as an uncivilized subject in need of western intervention and discipline. Lucy's rape can be read as the affirmation of the colonial dogma that purported its cultural superiority and order over the African subject's chaotic nature. In the context of the end of segregation and apartheid, it legitimizes white fears that the nation will regress to a previous state of lawlessness that flourished before the country's colonization. Cass argues that the most disconcerting aspect of Coetzee's novel is that "rape is connected to debt" (40). The critic supports that Lucy's acceptance of her rape as debt to be paid illustrates how the victim is involved in a process of "naturaliz[ing] and rationally reconstruct[ing]" the crime committed upon her (41). I would like to suggest that Lucy's rationalization reveals the gradual incorporation of the discourses of capitalism and globalization in the South African sociopolitical sphere and demonstrates that concepts belonging to the political order begin to be rearticulated through a financial register.[43] According to Pamela Cooper, *Disgrace* symptomatically reveals that the patriarchal structures that sustained the discursive edifice of apartheid remained intact (29). As Cooper suggests, Coetzee's text exemplifies how the "black phallus is replacing the defunct white one" and the urgency of a "critique of black patriarchy in South Africa" (29). Elleke Boehmer is also skeptical of the politics of the novel since she suggests that Lucy "achieves an eventual release from her personal and the political past through the unquestioning acceptance of her suffering" (348). Boehmer infers that Lucy's unquestionable acceptance and internalization of her rape, as the only way for both her and the nation to move on, is deeply problematic. In the context of a pain-staking process of reconciliation between the white and black community, the critic rightly asks if "silent women-in-pain remain the ground on which a new society is brought into being" (349). Coetzee's text does tackle the postcolonial event burdened with all its complexities since it challenges the proclivity of the western reader, and the well-intentioned humanitarian, to intervene and correct the discrepancies of what comes after the end of colonization.[44]

Attridge maintains that Coetzee's text contemplates the "pains and strains" of nation trying to "reinvent" itself in the context of an emerging globalizing order (173). Attridge explores Lurie's inability to deconstruct the cultural and discursive tenets that sustain his racist and patriarchal behavior and discusses his attempt to develop meaningful relationships with his family and neighbors through his involvement in the local animal clinic and the composition of opera (174).[45] Lurie attempts to resolve the enigma of the new world he now inhabits by channeling his creativity and energy into domains which, in his mind, might help him find the answers to the impossible questions of his life. This "absurd misapplication" and distortive analogical thinking, which conditions not only Lurie but western thinking as well, indicates the tendency of western discourses to divert its attention from the human body in pain to alternative domains with the hope of resolving or redeeming its previous inability (Attridge 186). According to Attridge, Coetzee's text reveals how responsibility to animals and artistic creativity function in Lurie's case without dismissing their ethical significance (177).[46] My aim is to discuss how the emerging community of the previously disenfranchised articulated its self-determination drawing on capitalist and colonial discourses the post-apartheid state failed to dismantle. I intend to examine both Lucy and Petrus, her former labor tenant, in the context of the politics and quotidian experiences of South African life and to explore how the black postcolonial subject consolidates his/her sovereignty by employing the discourse and potentialities of capitalist and globalizing forces. I am also interested in the ways in which the female body becomes a site that bears the marks of contesting patriarchal inscriptions and the manner in which globalization mandates heteronormative relations.

The policies, legislations and practices of the apartheid regime would not have been viable without the financial support of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United States of America. The apartheid politics guaranteed the export of commodities at low prices while the IMF was conducive to the militarization of the state by granting a two-million rand loan to the regime during the Soweto uprising in 1976 and 1983 (Saul, Bond 147). After the fall of apartheid and in order to address the mounting debt inherited by the former regime, the African National Congress accepted an eight-hundred-fifty million rand loan from the IMF in 1993. As Zine Magubane argues, it was

almost impossible for the post-apartheid government to disentangle the reconstruction of the nation from the capitalist strategies and commitments which had conditioned the state's policies for almost a century (1). After the end of apartheid, those neoliberal forces manifested in the form of international alliances, foreign investors and consultants who applauded heartily the liberating spirit that engulfed the nation and proffered their liberalization agendas as the remedy to the financial and social ills the apartheid regime had bequeathed to the newly elected government. Coetzee's text hints to the gradual assimilation of neoliberal policies when due to the "great rationalization" of the South African universities, David Lurie, once a professor of Romantic literature, has been assigned as "adjunct professor of communications" after the department of Classics and Modern Languages was closed down (*Disgrace* 3).

In a response given to Andre du Toit,[47] Coetzee avers that the "new economic order is not a reality" but a "confidence trick in the sense that it is built on nothing but a shared confidence of its inevitability" ("Critic and Citizen" 110). Aware of the effacement of alternative and radical modalities of worlding the world in the face of an emerging neocolonialism and globalization, Coetzee remarks that the "rationalization" of the South African university in the post-apartheid era involves making academia "responsive to the market" (110). Although this occurs in the name of "subjecting this historically European institution to an African critique with a view to turning it into a properly African institution," Coetzee cautions to a consolidation of a post-apartheid South African subjectivity and sovereignty tethered to the ontological principles that govern neoliberal discourse and policies:

> There is a process of intellectual colonisation going on today that is far more massive and totalizing than anything Victorian England could muster. It originates in the culture factories of the United States, and can be detected in the most intimate corners of our lives, or if not in our own then in our students' lives: their speech, the rhythms of their bodies, their affective behaviour including their sexual behaviour, their modes of thinking. This colonising process is the cultural arm of neoliberalism, of the new world order. It passes my comprehension that we as academic intellectuals in Africa and of Africa should want to spend our time

> tracking down the residual ghosts of the nineteenth-century British Empire, when it is clearly more urgent to recognise and confront the new global imperialism. (110)

Coetzee refers to the neoliberal ideology progressively saturating and corrupting the social and moral fabric of the South African society by reorienting the community's conciliatory and emancipating endeavors into prioritizing national and individual financial interests which undermine the democratizing process the country is undergoing. Contrary to criticism which reads *Disgrace* as a "yearning for the system of apartheid," Attridge suggests that Coetzee's text articulates a "new global age of performance indicators and outcome measurements, of benchmarking and targets" (*J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading* 173). The discourse of neoliberalism came to supplement the democratizing and reconciliation processes [48] of South Africa since subjectivities that had been dehumanized for decades discover in the technologies and discourses of capitalist ideology potentialities which enable them to consolidate their autonomy in the post-apartheid era. As David Attwell suggests, "Africanization and neoliberalism became interchangeable agendas" in the South African universities (190). Hence, the reconstitution of the black post-apartheid subjectivity was intertwined with and woven into the "regime of truth" neoliberal politics and discourse provided. Zine Magubane has written extensively on the tensions, incompatibilities and irresolutions that erupted in the wake of post-apartheid era when the government attempted to restructure the economy by taking heed of neoliberal policies.[49]

Magubane argues that in its attempt to attract investors, the South African government introduced "industrial and macroeconomic reforms" that modified the relationship between market, the state and the people "at the level of ideology" (89). More specifically, the critic refers to Bill Clinton's address to the South African Parliament in 1998 in order to "promote the Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill" (90). Clinton's proposal to the South African government was to liberalize its economy by adhering to "IMF structural adjustment policies," join the World Trade Organization, reduce "government spending" and "corporate taxes" and "privatize state assets" (90). Magubane argues that the government was asked to adopt policies that clearly threatened its attempts for social restructuring for the sake of "providing 'favorable' conditions for

foreign investments" (90). The newly-elected government had to resolve a paradox; it had to instigate a radical restructuring of the public sector in order to restore dignity to the communities that had no access to education, health and job opportunities, by drafting developmental bills, contingent upon neoliberal policies, which could seriously undercut social institutions. According to Magubane, "The need to engage with global capital in order to realize the goals of transformation has introduced a profound contradiction whereby the demands of the former strongly impact and delimit the scope of the latter" (91).[50] Hence, I propose that we complicate the criticism of Coetzee's text by recontextualizing it within the current politics of globalization and neoliberalism that permeate and circumscribe the self-determination of the black subject in South Africa. By studying Coetzee's text through this perspective, I do not aim at developing a redemptive analysis that will occlude the undeniably problematic gender politics of the novel but contemplating how the unworldly process of neoliberalism and globalization impinge the struggle for self-determination and sovereign consolidation on the materialization of capitalist objectives.

What makes Coetzee's texts seminal in the investigation of postcoloniality, imperialism and modernity is the fact that they interrupt established western theoretical frames, reveal their contingencies and fissures in their engagement with subjectivities that dwell outside its epistemological vicinity and persistently abstain from submitting a humanistic agenda as a response to the injustices and complications of postcoloniality. When the literary text enacts the affirmation of the human beyond the scope and jurisdiction of western discourses and episteme, it forces the western reader to tackle his own social, cultural and ontotheological interpellation and perform, what Spivak calls, an "uncoercive rearrangement of desire" ("Righting Wrongs" 526). Spivak's elaboration on literature's capacity to "rearrange desires noncoercively" (532) suggests how a politics of reading might propel the reader to reformulate his ethical convictions and politics of representation and interrogate his or her, albeit benevolent, humanistic assumptions. Spivak conceptualizes this modality of reading and being as a suspension of the self "into the text of the other" (532). During this literary suspension "into the text of the other," the educator, the humanist, the benevolent dispenser of human rights enacts an uncoercive rearrangement of his desires by "giving up convictions of triumphalist superiority"

(Spivak 551). Spivak's aim is to reveal how human rights discourses and politics are contingent upon the "dissolution of imperial formations" and a gradual "global economic restructuring" that maintains defining features of its imperial predecessor (530). It is my contention that *Disgrace* symptomatically reveals how the processes, technologies and discourses of globalization begin to dominate post-apartheid South Africa and interpellate the consolidation and self-affirmation of the black postcolonial subject. It critically examines, rather than fully endorsing, the process of decolonization in South Africa which, co-opted by the politics of neo-liberalism and globalization, undermined the process of reconciliation and reiterated the sovereign politics of the apartheid era.

Spivak argues that *Disgrace* constitutes literature in praxis since it provokes the reader to interrogate his humanistic bias and interpellation by "counterfocalizing" Lurie's perspective in order to detect the omissions and the silences his narrative engenders ("Ethics" 22). The proximity created between the narrator and the author is a technique Coetzee invariably deploys in his fiction in order to draw attention to the cultural, political and ethical principles that inform and shape the narrator's gaze. Through an intertextual reading of *King Lear* and *Disgrace*, Spivak argues that "it is this story of father and husbands, and dynastic succession at the very inception of capitalist colonialism that *Disgrace* destabilizes" (21). Spivak reinforces her argument by drawing on Lucy's resistance to her father's insistence on implicating her story in the racial rhetoric of the post-apartheid era, and maintains that Lucy's decision to keep her baby, the result of her rape, and start her life anew "with nothing" is a defiance of an "affective value system attached to heteronormativity as it is accepted as the currency to measure human dignity" (21). By proposing that Lucy's "nothing" is not an "acceptance of rape, but a refusal to be raped, by instrumentalizing reproduction," (21) Spivak stresses the gender, racial and sexual politics at play that demand the pregnant body to acquire a predetermined place in post-apartheid discourse. Indeed, aborting her pregnancy and prosecuting her violators would only contribute to the re-affirmation of the racial discourse pervading the country and marking the black subject primarily as a criminal and rapist. Spivak concludes her analysis of *Disgrace* by propounding that Coetzee's text "makes the subaltern speak, but does not presume to give 'voice' either to Petrus or Lucy" ("Ethics" 24). For the purpose of this chapter, I intend to examine how Petrus

renegotiates his subaltern status by seeking recourse to capitalist discourse and by re-appropriating Lucy's land and sexuality. If we examine Petrus and Lucy as subaltern subjects, as Spivak proposes, then, Petrus is on his way to escape subalternity at the expense of Lucy and establish his sovereignty via the capitalist and globalizing discourses that undergird the social and financial restructuring of the country in the post-apartheid era.

2.4 The Rise of the *Homo Oeconomicus* in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

Pheng Cheah locates the task of postcolonial literature in narrative events that manifest how discourses and technologies of capitalist globalization penetrate and shape individual consciousness. He suggests that apparatuses of globalization "no longer seek to subjugate or destroy human powers;" instead, they permeate and circumscribe the consolidation of subjectivity and sovereignty "at the level of consciousness and corporeality" to such an extent that the instrumentalization of the subject has "become indistinguishable from the self-determining plasticity of human existence" (*What is a World* 199). My intention is to examine how Petrus affirms his sovereignty by reclaiming the land and by employing a discourse that inscribes human experience within the process of capitalist instrumentality. I would like to suggest that Petrus' consolidation of sovereignty is not contingent upon the complete erasure of Lucy's alterity but on productively assimilating her land and sexuality while affording her a minimal space of agency and freedom.[51]

Immediately after the rape of his daughter by three black men, David Lurie realizes that the new South Africa is subservient to a value system that violently commodifies the human body. What he witnesses, but fails to acknowledge, is not the reversal of the apartheid hierarchy but the lingering effects of the discourses of violence that underpin the colonial project and necessitate the demarcation of the female body as the corporeal site bearing the patriarchal and capitalist inscriptions of the antagonistic parties struggling to prevail. Lurie perceives the post-apartheid era as a period when property, land, even human beings, "must go into circulation" (98). Caught in the

machinations of this "vast circulatory system, to whose workings pity and terror are irrelevant," Lurie assumes that in order to comprehend the violence germane to this process of redistribution, one must begin to conceptualize South African reality "in its schematic aspect" (98). Lurie's reductive and calculative conceptualization of the post-apartheid era reveals how he reduces the historical restructuring of power, class and race relations into a familiar discursive schema which veils the emergence of black subjectivity as a self-determining agency. According to Lurie's schema, the consolidation of the formerly disenfranchised South African community is to be supplemented not only with the redistribution of "cars [and] shoes" but of "women too" (98). Although the disgraced professor of romantic literature seems quite perceptive in recognizing the capitalist discourse that ushers the South African community in the post-apartheid era, his racist prejudices prevent him from perceiving Petrus as a subject capable of employing the potentialities presented by the capitalist environment. The disequilibrium of power and the reversal of the master-slave dialectic, generated by the political transition between antagonistic races and classes, throw Lurie in linguistic confusion during which he struggles to articulate and determine the dynamics of the emerging black subjectivity. Although during apartheid Lurie recognized Petrus, "schematically," as the "dig-man, the carry-man, the water-man," he now finds himself unable to consign "this new Petrus" (151) to an established pattern of recognition:

> But though Petrus is paid a wage, Petrus is no longer, strictly speaking, hired help. It is hard to say what Petrus is, strictly speaking. The word that seems to serve best, however, is *neighbour*. Petrus is a neighbour who at present happens to sell his labour, because that is what suits him. He sells his labour under contract, unwritten contract, and that contract makes no provision for dismissal on grounds of suspicion. It is a new world they live in, he and Lucy and Petrus. Petrus knows it, and he knows it, and Petrus knows that he knows it. (116)

In this "new world," where the formerly privileged white community endeavors to assign the "new Petrus" to a familiar register, the most suitable denomination is "neighbour". Maria Lopez suggests that Coetzee's text appeals to a conceptualization of friendship and

neighboring that dismantles the genealogical and "organic" schema of affiliation perpetuated by apartheid (931). She argues that *Disgrace* gestures to a potentiality of fraternization that necessitates the engagement with alterity in a manner that destabilizes the recognition of the other according to the political and ethical syntax of the western same. This process of reconciliation and fraternization Lopez explores is impeded by Lurie's racist ideology and Petrus' capitalist ambitions. While Lurie keeps reading Petrus and his family by seeking recourse to an "anthropological" (118) register, suggestive of the racially informed legacy of apartheid alive during the reconciliation process, Coetzee's text reveals that Petrus' consolidation of sovereignty and self-determination is inextricably bound to the appropriation of Lucy's land and alterity.

The Land Reform Bill drafted by the South African government in 1996 permits former labour tenants to receive grants and lay claim to the land they inhabited during apartheid.[52]As a recipient of a loan by the Land Reform Bank, Petrus' main objective is to turn his field into arable land and breed animals. Coetzee's text documents Petrus' re-appropriation of the land by establishing his house and demonstrating his mastery of discourses and technologies pertaining to this act of territorialization. Although initially recognized by Lurie as a mere "dog-man" who tends to Lucy's farm and dogs, Petrus becomes "co-proprietor" (64) of her land and finally presents himself as a "farm manager" (154). Lurie becomes a mere witness and passive observer of Petrus' developmental project. He is informed by Lucy that he can become a helpful member of the community by "giving a hand" to Petrus in his endeavour to "establish his own lands" (76-77), and he feels vexed when he realizes that the latter employs him as a "*handlanger*," (to pass him tools) while he adjusts the water pipes for his house (136). It is during this scene that Lurie confesses that Petrus shows off "his mastery" and undisputed crafting skill by elaborating on "regulators of different kinds, about pressure valves…and junctions" (136). The reclamation of the land is completed with Petrus' establishment of his house not long after Lucy's rape. Petrus unloads a lorry of building materials next to Lucy's farm; "cartons, creosoted poles, sheets of galvanized iron, a roll of plastic piping" and "two half grown sheep" he intends to slaughter in a party he holds in order to celebrate the land transfer (113). During this celebratory event, Petrus confesses to his guests that he hopes his pregnant wife carries a boy instead of a girl not

only because “a girl is very expensive…always money, money, money,” as he suggests, but also because a male heir can show his sisters “how to behave” (130). After returning from a short trip, Lurie observes that Petrus has erected a “wire fence” which “marks the boundary between Lucy’s property and Petrus’” (197). What troubles Lurie is not only the fact that Petrus’ “house has become a reality” but also that “it must cast a long shadow” upon Lucy’s patch of earth (197). Petrus’ consolidates his autonomy and sovereignty by revitalizing the colonial discursive legacy where the colonial subject constructs his agency by mastering, disciplining and organizing the untamed land in order to become a productive agent in tandem with the capitalist environment he occupies and by establishing a patriarchal lineage that marginalizes and silences female agency and incorporates its recalcitrant dynamics and alterity.

Petrus’ cynicism and calculative precision become even more manifest after Lucy’s rape. During an encounter after the event, Lurie accuses Petrus of staging the rape in order to force Lucy to abandon her land. Although Lurie assumes that “Petrus has a vision of the future in which people like Lucy have no place,” it becomes apparent that Petrus’ “vision of the future” does not involve the exile of Lucy but the instrumentalization of her body and property in a manner that serves Petrus’ ambitions. After the rape, Lurie attempts to locate Petrus and wonders why the “man has not yet reported to Lucy” (114). Instead of demonstrating any sign of concern and empathy, Petrus only asks if Lucy will go to her market stall the following day and advises Lurie that should she neglect her professional obligations, her place in the market might be lost (115). Contrary to Lurie’s tempered tantrums, which allow his racial prejudices to surface, and to his attempt to comprehend the transitions and power shifts in South Africa by retrieving a disabling “anthropological” register, Petrus addresses Lurie’s accusations in a quite composed manner or, as the latter describes, in a way “very swift and businesslike: all very unlike Africa” (151). To Lurie’s accusation that he harbours one of Lucy’s rapists, young Pollux, Petrus calmly informs him not only that he has family obligations towards the boy but also that, according to the law, he is too young to be incarcerated. Petrus also informs Lurie that he should not probe into Lucy’s rape and the theft of valuables from the farm any further as the insurance company will compensate them for everything stolen from the property. Avoiding any spontaneous reactions, Petrus

takes advantage of Lucy's precarious position as a pregnant lesbian woman and suggests to Lurie that he can protect his daughter only insofar she becomes part of his family; for "all this badness" to stop, as Petrus avers, "a woman must be marry" (203). Petrus' deal involves Lucy signing off her land, becoming his "concubine" (204), yet retaining the rights of her house and garden.

Petrus' renegotiation of his subaltern status involves the redistribution of Lucy's land according to the potentialities enabled by the new South African constitution and the incorporation of her sexuality into his "neomasculinist narrative" (Cooper 31). His suggestion to protect Lucy from further violations only if she agrees to marry him demonstrates that the "phallogocentric"[53] discourse and ideology which informed and sustained the project of imperialism and politics of colonialism remains unquestioned and mandates the commodification of the female body and its assimilation into Petrus' heterosexual schema. Cooper argues that the rape of Lucy and her subsequent compliance with Petrus' deal indicates that "patriarchal authority" in South Africa is "reconfigured but not undermined" (29). More importantly, Cooper argues, Petrus' consolidation of sovereignty demands that Lucy's sexuality is "brought back into a phallic economy and sign system" (31). Capitalist globalization impels an unceasing normalization and incorporation of roguish subjectivities and heterogeneities into subject positions that facilitate the extraction of surplus value and maintain the subaltern and overexploited in a permanent state of subalternity; globalization animates relationships of dependency between worker and production and forecloses queer subject formations that disrupt patriarchal discourses. Chandra Talpade Mohanty claims that global capitalism is contingent upon the institutionalization and utilization of "gender and racialized ideologies" (141). Mohanty's feminist critique reveals how the ideological formation of "masculinity, femininity and sexuality [plays] a role in constructing the legitimate consumer, worker, and manager" (147). The "heterosexualization" of women's work mandates that female self-determination is to be consolidated on the condition that it complies with the subject positions provided in the heterosexual schema of capitalist globalization.

Although deconstructive and feminist critique enable criticism to articulate the irresolutions and ontological implications involved in the self-determination of the

gendered subaltern and postcolonial subject we need to remain attentive to literary events that keep disrupting and destabilizing any potential recourse to the comforts of theoretical interpretation. The end of the novel finds Lucy "solid in her existence" tending to her garden and bearing her unborn child. Are we, as western readers, expected to study this moment through the lens of western discourse and elaborate on the ontological interpellation of the female subaltern by patriarchal and capitalist ideology or does Lucy's decision unconceal the need to complicate western critique in order to remain attentive to the particularities of postcolonial events?

2.5 "Solid in her existence": Contesting Phallic Economies and Gendered Autonomy in *Disgrace*

In the previous section, I discussed how Coetzee's *Foe* enables the exploration of the sovereign proclivities inherent in processes of recuperation, narration and archivization of stories and histories that challenge and destabilize western methodologies and modalities of thought. This path led us to consider the dehumanizing humanism of western discourse and the ethical implications involved in the western intellectual's engagement with what is, provisionally, named as postcolonial events and literature. As a professor of Romantic Studies, Lurie struggles to interpret the event of Lucy's rape by performing an "anthropological" examination of the crime and, towards the end of the novel, a redemptive one: "this will be a child of this earth after all" (216). Both Lucy and Petrus, on the other hand, read the event and the shifts occurring on the individual and national level, by remaining grounded to the reality of life and its challenges. They do not employ the teachings of Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Byron, Hardy and William Butler Yeats as Lurie often does; they engage life and its obstacles either by drawing on capitalist discourse or trying to safeguard their quotidian accommodations. If Coetzee is criticized by critics for not providing a moral compass, it is because he impels the western reader to question his own interpellation by a discourse that situates the latter almost always as the arbiter and dispense of human rights and dignity and neglecting the effects of colonial and capitalist apparatuses on the subject's

consciousness. We need to resituate the problematic of globalization within these theoretical parameters. More specifically, instead of instigating a dismissive critique of the technologies and discourses of globalization, we first need to address the singularity of the postcolonial event under investigation and the postcolonial subject's multifaceted overdetermination.[54] Hence, in the following section, I read Lucy's decision to withhold information concerning her rape, her insistence not to press charges and her agreement to Petrus' deal with a view to revealing the discursive contingencies manifested in the female subject's endeavor to consolidate her sovereignty in the intersection of postcoloniality and capitalist globalization.

While Lurie avers that he is "capable of imagining" (140) what it must have felt to be raped, both Lucy and Bev Shaw alert Lurie to the fact that merely being present to an event does not qualify him as able to adequately experience and conceptualize it: "'I know what Lucy has been through. I was there.' Wide-eyed she gazes back at him. 'But you weren't there, David. She told me. You weren't. *You weren't there. You don't know what happened.*" (140 emphasis in original). [55] Even when Lucy acknowledges his efforts to comprehend her ordeal, she reminds him that, no matter how hard he tries, it is not feasible to occupy a body in pain: "You are concerned for my sake, which I appreciate, you think you understand, but finally you don't. Because you can't." (157). Lucy's "Because you can't" alerts western readers to their inability to comprehend and occupy the position of the postcolonial subject; there is a limit to our understanding of the horrors of colonialism and the impact on the subject's psyche and consciousness. This limit should not prevent western criticism from studying these events but disclose his tendency to correct and analyze predicaments that throw our methodological approaches into confusion. As there is a limit to our understanding, we, as western subjects, should abstain from a presumptive critique that all too easily accommodates such events into the comfort zones of theory. Lurie's almost telegraphic response to Lucy's suggestion that he "can't" understand what happened is telling: "'On the contrary, I understand all too well' he says. 'I will pronounce the word we have avoided hitherto. You were raped. Multiply. By three men.'" (157).

By recontextualizing the consolidation of postcolonial subjectivity and autonomy within the dynamics of capitalist globalization and interpellation, I do not aim at

divesting these subjects of their agency but at contemplating the corporeal and psychological inscriptions of colonialism and neocolonialism on their bodies and psyche and at reading their decisions beyond the redemptive and dismissive assumptions of western discourse. I read Lucy's warning to her father, who tries to decipher his daughter's choice not to prosecute her violators, as a caution to an accommodational engagement with the irresolution of postcolonial events: "'No. You keep misreading me. Guilt and salvations are abstractions. *I don't act in terms of abstractions*. Until you make an effort to see that I can't help you'" (112 emphasis added). Lucy does not negotiate her future in the farm by seeking recourse to theoretical "abstractions," as Lurie often does, but endeavors to safeguard her body and property within the restrictions of capitalist discourse. She confesses, hence, that she is willing to accept Petrus' deal and acknowledges that it might be "altogether safer to become part of his establishment" (203). In the scene that culminates to Lucy's "with nothing," she asks her father to contemplate the precariousness of her situation by remaining grounded to an objective conceptualization of her ordeal:

> …take a moment to consider my situation *objectively*. *Objectively* I am a woman alone. I have no brothers. I have a father, but he is far away and anyhow powerless in the terms that matter here. To whom can I turn for protection, for patronage…*Practically speaking*, there is only Petrus left. Petrus may not be a big man but he is big enough for someone small like me. And at least I know Petrus. *I have no illusions about him. I know what I would be letting myself in for.* (204 emphasis added)

Deflecting any potential theoretical interpretation of her actions, Lucy insists on contextualizing her situation within the realm of the practical and the quotidian experience in her farm. Contrary to Lurie's highly sophisticated and elaborate reflections of her ordeal, Lucy cautions him to ponder on her ordeal "objectively," "practically" and with no "illusions." Her only request is that after she contributes the land to Petrus he maintain her sovereignty over her house and garden: "'But the house remains mine, I repeat that. No one enters this house without my permission. Including him'" (204).

With no intention of prioritizing or discrediting alternative or alternate readings, we need to reflect both on critiques that focus on the, undoubtedly, controversial gender politics of the text and Lucy's singularity that cautions to potential "misreadings" of her occasion. In the first instance, Elleke Boehmer is right to assume that "Lucy's self-substitution involves becoming reconciled to the position of conventional object" (349), thus reaffirming the prevalence of Lurie's capitalist "schematic aspect." Boehmer also argues that redemptive readings of the text "reinforce Lucy's scapegoat status" and asks how we can " speak of atonement if it entails that women as ever assume generic poses of suffering in silence or, as Lucy does, of gestating peacefully in her garden" (350). The critic finds disturbing the fact that while Lucy rejects speaking in abstractions, "she lives with what has happened to her by doggedly carrying on, by practical survival, 'immersing' herself in her life on the land" (348). I am interested in the way Boehmer exemplifies her argument by questioning, almost dismissing, Lucy's connection to her land. What the critic perceives, in a dismissive manner, as "practical survival" and "immersing herself" in the land are actual experiences that condition life, subjectivity and thinking in the specific postcolonial moment. I would like to suggest that what the western feminist critique Boehmer proposes can be supplemented and complicated by examining real life conditions and developing a dialogue between theoretical elaborations and engaging the postcolonial predicament "objectively."

Although Lurie and his daughter progressively grow apart after her rape, he soon visits Lucy in the farm. During his approach, he observes the "old house, solid as ever" and makes out Lucy's flowerbeds which resemble "solid blocks of colour" (216). He lingers before Lucy who, unaware of Lurie's presence, attends to her garden:

> 'So: once she was only a little tadpole in her mother's body, and now here she is, *solid in her existence*, *more solid than he has ever been.* With luck she will last a long time, long beyond him. When he is dead she will, with luck, still be here doing her ordinary tasks among the flowerbeds. And from within her will have issued another existence, that with luck will be *just as solid*, just as longlasting. So it will go on, a line of existences in which his share, his gift, will grow inexorably less and less, till it may as well be forgotten.' (217 emphasis added)

Contrary to critics who read Lucy's silence and acceptance of Petrus' deal as "passive self-subjugation" (LeBlanc160), Mary Leblanc suggests that her decision "does not preclude her from continuing her way of life" (164). LeBlanc argues that Lucy's choice connotes an indifference to the entrenched social register of the post-apartheid era and demonstrates that she "sees reconciliation on her own terms" (164). When Lurie (re)visits Lucy, he becomes aware that the conditions he so persistently dismissed "are, to his surprise, working" (LeBlanc 165). This becomes manifest in the previous scene where Lurie contemplates how the old farm, Lucy, and her baby reveal themselves "solid" in their existence. The specific scene constitutes a narrative event in Coetzee's text for it propounds a way of reading that suspends theoretical prerogatives. Instead of projecting theoretical mandates on events that complicate our understanding of the postcolonial condition, narrative events like the one I just examined gesture toward a reading *with* the subaltern.[56]

2.6 Tracing the "Commandement" in the South African Postcolony and the Arbiter of Peace

The process of decolonization is impeded by the convergence of neoliberal discourses with the epistemologies of the colonial "commandement" (Mbembe 128) which the postcolonial subject has internalized and reproduces in his/her quotidian practices. What I am interested in, following my reading of Coetzee's text, is to discuss the ways capitalist and neoliberal discourses become synonymous with and impinge on the postcolonial subject's claim for sovereignty and how the process of decolonization is strategically undermined by the mandates of capitalist production and developmental projects whose tenets are indissolubly linked with and stem from the same matrix colonialism and imperialism sprang. In the analysis that follows, I draw on Michel Foucault's elaboration of neoliberalism and Achilles Mbembe's conceptualization of the postcolony in order to discuss how colonial discourse and neoliberalism in the postcolony intertwine and superficially resolve historical, racial, and postcolonial tensions. More

importantly, I would like to argue that Coetzee's text symptomatically reveals how capitalism and globalization practically suspend and erase history by aligning the postcolonial subject's sovereign claim with neoliberal objectives. Through my reading of Coetzee's text, I wish to explore how neoliberal and capitalist practices establish themselves in the postcolony as moderators that impair the postcolonial subject's sovereign claim. I am referring to the ways these discourses penetrate life and subjectivity and gradually become indistinguishable from the postcolonial subject's claim for autonomy.

The literary analysis I proposed in the previous section aimed at delineating how ethics, race, gender, and history in the South African postcolony[57] are reappropriated by and dissolve in the economic sphere; their urgency and complexity are annihilated and explained away by the superficial and short-term resolution of neoliberal discourses. This is evident in Lucy's disconcerting interpretation of her rape as the "debt" she has to pay in order to remain in her land (158) and in Petrus' reassurance to Lurie and Lucy that the past "is finish" (201) and their main obligations now are to keep the market stall and collect money from the insurance company as a compensation for the theft of valuables that follow the rape. It is also evident in Petrus' wish that his baby is a boy so he can show his daughters how to behave and manage money (130) and, lastly, in Lucy's acceptance of Petrus' offer to become "part of his establishment." Jean Comaroff observes that neoliberal conditions in the South African postcolony have managed to reduce the racial, gender, and social inequalities of the nation into a series of legal and financial processes that actually divest South African history of its troubled past (127). The critic argues that, in the case of South Africa, the state concealed the social and historical injustices of the past behind developmental projects that promulgate "economic efficiency and capital growth" and the "fetishism of the free market" (132). In this way, Comaroff concludes, the "social is dissolved into the natural, the biological, the transactional, or the mythic chimera of the community" (132). What I would like to argue is not only the fact that Petrus exemplifies the concept of the *homo oeconomicus* Foucault analyses in his work on biopower but also that, during this process of subject-formation and consolidation of sovereignty, Petrus, the *homo oeconomicus* of the postcolony, reveals himself as the moderator and arbiter of peace and justice in post-apartheid South

Africa. In a dispute with Lurie over the fate of one of Lucy's rapists who happens to be member of his family, Petrus claims: "'David, it is a hard thing you are saying, that this boy is a thief. He is very angry that you are calling him a thief. That is what he is telling everyone. And I, I am the one who must be keeping the peace'" (137). In order to explore the implication of the emergence of the postcolonial *homo oeconomicus* and the capitalist "worlding" of the postcolony this process entails, I would like to develop a dialogue between Foucault's analysis of neoliberalism and Mbembe's elaboration of the ramifications of the postcolonial subject's internalization and appropriation of what the critic calls the colonial "commandement" (128). The same night Petrus holds a party to celebrate the land transfer, Lurie witnesses, at the back of the house, a group of people who have gathered around a middle-aged man:

> He has a shaven head and a bull neck; he wears a dark suit and, around his neck, a gold chain from which hangs a medal the size of a fist, of the kind that chieftains used to have bestowed on them as a symbol of office. Symbols struck by the boxful in a foundry in Coventry or Birmingham; stamped on the one side with the head of sour Victoria, *regina et imperatrix,* on the other with gnus or ibises rampant. Medals, Chieftains, for the use of. Shipped all over the old Empire: to Nagpur, Fiji, the Gold Coast, Kaffraria. (135 emphasis in original)

As Lurie reports, the man is orating in his native language and, as soon as their eyes meet, his tone rises. The reason I would like to examine this scene in tandem with Lucy's rape by the three black men is because colonial rule vitiated and crippled the process of subject formation of the colonized; it cultivated an environment of violence, terror and subjugation which the colonized appropriated and redeployed in his discourses and practices. Mbembe's work on the postcolony examines how the colonial "commandement," designating the discourses, practices, and rituals of the colonial rule, becomes progressively embedded in the native's life and co-opts his subject formation. More importantly, Mbembe argues that colonialism and slave trade constitute forms of "phallic" domination the colonized reappropriates and redeploys in his everyday life (13). What Mbembe diagnoses is the internalization of the "authoritarian epistemology" of the

colonial "commandement" by its subjects and its reproduction in the postcolony (128). Hence, Mbembe concludes, the postcolonial subject cannot be examined via binary oppositions that situate him either in a passive or recalcitrant position since he/she is constantly "splintering" his/her identities (104). In the case of South Africa, the democratization of the nation rested on the liberalization of its economy which converged and intertwined with the colonial "commandement" whose practices and discourses permeated and persevered in the social fabric.

Although Foucault does not extensively explore the ways imperialism and colonialism were conducive to the ontological formulation of western subject-formation and conceptualization of sovereignty, his work on biopower is helpful in comprehending how neoliberal discourses in the postcolony reformulate and, practically, undermine the process of decolonization and democratization of the formerly colonized nations. Foucault traces the birth of capitalist production and discourse in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth century when governmental practice begins to determine its political discourses according to the dictates of the market (29). More importantly, Foucault argues, the market becomes a site of "veridiction" that reveals a "standard of truth" (32); the market, thus, becomes the metaphysical ground upon which European governmental practice and political theory of the sixteenth and seventeenth century will gradually develop and inaugurate a distinctive process of subject constitution and consolidation of sovereignty. The establishment of the market as the ultimate ground upon which governmental practice and political theory rest leads to the gradual internalization of this "standard of truth" and material "site of veridiction" in the process of subject formation and consolidation of sovereignty. During this calculative and reductive revealing of the world, the people inhabiting a nation are no longer perceived by the government as human beings but as subjects with interests (46). Hence, nonnegotiable values such as dignity, justice, and democracy are determined according to criteria whose truth substance stems from the metaphysics of capitalist and market economy. The interpellation of the subject by the capitalist dictates of the liberal government is conducive to the formation of what Foucault names as the *homo oeconomicus*, who is not merely a consumer or a producer (63). *Homo oeconomicus* is the subject who has internalized the capitalist "regime of truth" and has recognized the

market as the only "site of veridiction" that can resolve the irresolutions and complexities of ethical, social and historical matters. As Foucault observes, *homo oeconomicus* does not need to comprehend the value of concepts such as freedom as long as he/she "consumes freedom" in the form it is produced by governmental practices and apparatuses (63). In his concluding seminar on biopower and neoliberalism, Foucault argues that, due to his interpellation by capitalist discourse, the "homo oeconomicus" constitutes an "individual subject of interest within a totality which eludes him and which nevertheless founds the rationality of his egoistic choices" (277). In Coetzee's text, the aggressiveness of the "commandment" and the brutal cynicism of neoliberal objectives land on the female body and impel Lucy to obey to this neocolonial "phallic" domination by conforming to Petrus' deal.

Apart from revealing the incompletion of the decolonizing project in the South African postcolony, Coetzee's text articulates the transmutation and reformulation of the colonial "commandment" under the aegis of neoliberal mandates and the emergence of a new subjectivity whose sovereign claim is fabricated and interpellated by capitalist production. Resituating the politics of *Disgrace* in my question about the unworldly processes of globalization, it becomes evident that the ensnarement of capitalist mythology impels subjectivities to sacrifice historical, racial, and gender conflicts on the altar of neoliberal discourses. Complex and unquestioned historical issues are superficially resolved under the auspices of development and productivity. Coetzee's text indicates how the realignment of neoliberal discourses and the colonial commandment undercut the decolonization process by strategically interpellating the postcolonial subject's sovereign claim.

Notes

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[17] For the connection between postcolonial theory and deconstruction, see *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial* by Michael Syrotinski. Syrotinski explores the ways in which postcolonial theory and deconstruction may supplement each other and their coarticulation in addressing postcoloniality. Another work that tackles the implication of deconstructive critique in postcolonial history and literature is Walter Mignolo's *Local Histories/ Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking* (2000). Mignolo suggests that despite its radicality, deconstructive critique is a "Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism" (314).

[18] See also Bill Ashcroft's "Silence as Heterotopia in Coetzee's Fiction" in *Strong Opinions:J.M. Coetzee and the Authority of Contemporary Fiction* (2011) edited by Chris Danta, Sue Kossew and Julian Murphet). Ashcroft reads Coetzee's *Foe* along the lines of Foucault's "heterotopias." Ashcroft suggests that "by refusing to make Friday's silence speak Coetzee allows it to open up the utopian horizon of possibility. Silence then becomes the ship, the mirror, the partially desacralized space of heterotopia. In the end, this is the site of an ethical choice, a choice to let the silence speak" (156).

[19] See also Mike Marais essay "Interpretative Authoritarianism: Reading/ Colonizing Coetzee's Foe." Marais reflects on the "interpretative authoritarianism" of criticism leveled on *Foe* by academics who accuse Coetzee of devlivering a narrative that fails to address the nation's political challenges (15). Marais avers that the critics who fail to see the "contradictions between their critical stance on the novel and their political stance on oppression" reproduce the politics of authoritarianism they wish to dismantle (15).

[20] Tisha Turk elaborates on the novel's intertextuality in her essay "Intertextuality and the Collaborative Construction of Narrative: J.M. Coetzee's Foe." Tusk considers Coetzee's *Foe* to be a reading praxis for the reader "construct[s]" meaning by "suppl[ying] additional crucial pieces" in order to excavate the enigmatic story and history that lies at the heart of the narrative (Turk 298).

[21] Benita Parry argues that although Coetzee's text attests to a "highly self-conscious practice which displays the materials and techniques of its own process of production," the dynamics of the European discourse remain unscathed ("Speech and Silence in the Fictions of J.M. Coetzee" 39-40). More specifically, Parry suggests that Foe does "enact a critique of dominant discourse," yet Friday's undecipherable presence and the failure to establish meaningful communication with Susan and Foe "repeats the exclusions of colonialist writing" (52).

[22] For more on the discursive bias that undergirds the writing process, see also Chris Bongie's "Lost in the Maze of Doubting": J.M. Coetzee's Foe and the Politics of (Un)Likeness."According to Bongie, Coetzee's text illuminates that "one can never occupy a position of weakness without transforming it into one of power" (274).

[23] See also Jennifer Rickell's article "Speaking of Human Rights: Narrative Voice and the Paradox of the Unspeakable in J.M. Coetzee's Foe." Rickell argues that the novel illustrates how "literary

humanitarianism actually sustains subalternity as it attempts to aid the subaltern by speaking for them" (168).

[24] Michel Foucault defines as a "regime of truth" the implementation of a set of governmental practices and discourses that reinscribe heterogeneous subjectivities and events in the calculus of governmental reason and capitalism (*The Birth of Biopolitics* 18).

[25] See *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (2011) by Susan Buck-Morss. Buck-Mors examines the ways in which the Haitian revolution impacted Hegelian philosophy and Eurocentrism (13).

[26] For a detailed examination of the history and ontological implications of the "enclosures" of land, see Robert P. Marzec's work *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature: From Daniel Defoe to Salman Rushdie* (2007). Marzek argues that the "enclosures" coincided with the expansion of the English empire and, most importantly, the government's decision to turn East India Company "from a merchant organization into a political apparatus for overseas domination" (2). The objective of the enclosures was to introduce "English citizens to new procedures of existence" and implement "new sociopolitical schemas of land enclosure" in the colony (Marzec 2).

[27] For an explication of the term and its importance for American exceptionalism and Puritan typology, see Sacvan Bercovitch's *The American Jeremiad* (1978). The first European colonists who landed in the New World bestowed religious significance to their endeavours in order to sanction the extermination of natives and the ordering of land. Bercovitch remarks that the colonists perceived their struggles as a pilgrimage to an unholy territory which they were divinely tasked with taming and making it available to the dictates of Puritan doctrine (65).

[28] See Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) where the critic examines the importance of the western novel in the "formation of imperial attitudes, references and experiences" (xii).

[29] For a detailed analysis of the implementation of the western curriculum in colonial India, see *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (1989) by Gauri Viswanathan. Viswanathan's aim is to reveal the ways in which the "institutionalization of English in India" was instrumental in maintaining colonial power and dominance (3).

[30] Pheng Cheah argues that "literature is intimately related to the opening of another world by virtue of its peculiar ontological status" (*What is a World* 180).

[31] The connection between literary production and imperialism has been analyzed extensively by Edward Said in his work *Culture and Imperialism* and, more specifically, in his chapter "Consolidated Vision." Said explores how the production of literature in Europe cannot be dissociated from European imperialism since it was through novel writing that these colonial nations attempted to redeem the atrocities they inflicted.

[32] See *the Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe* (2008) edited by John Richetti and, more specifically, Cynthia Wall's essay "Defoe and London." Wall remarks that in 1692 Defoe was "imprisoned in the Fleet for a debt of about 17000 pounds" and reincarcarated for a second time in 1693 due to his unregulated debts (165).

[33]In his work *What is a World*, Pheng Cheah investigates how Western humanitarianism is conducive to the prolonged marginalization and dehumanization of countries ravaged by civil wars and famine and the ways it secretes the interventionist agenda of European and Western nations. Cheah argues that "contemporary humanitarianism is a symptomatic expression of the power of transnational market mechanisms to undermine the self-determination of peoples in the South [Africa]" (283).

[34] I am employing Spivak's term to signify that although both Susan and Friday have been oppressed by Cruso and Foe, their fight for autonomy and representation cannot be achieved by utilizing the same principles of discourse since each subject is "overdetermined" by multiple and uneven sociopolitical factors (Spivak 183).

[35] Derrida determines as an "aporia" the radical exposure and deliverance to the other (*Aporias* 12).

[36] While Marais uses the term "reader" in general, I read *Foe* as a novel that contemplates the complicity of the western reader, humanist, and intellectual in the marginalization of the colonized and the subaltern.

[37] Edward Said employed the principle of the counterpoint in his "contrapuntal" analysis in order to explore the "cultural archive…with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those histories against which (and together with which) the dominance discourse acts" (*Culture and Imperialism* 59). The musical term connotes a dissonantly polyphonic ensemble that translates dissonance into "concert and order," wherein each individual voice retains its singularity and negotiates against and along with the whole (Said 59). In his reading of Said's "counterpoint," Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan argues that the "contrapuntal structure offers to Said a critical agon or forum where every point can be counterpointed argumentatively, not with the intention of creating a schism but with the objective of realizing a shared, bi-laterally constructed totality" (24). In a similar way, Derrida's elaboration of the Heideggerian "Auseinandersetzung," the strife that holds between opposites, does not engender only "clefts, intervals, distances," but also "joints" in a "unity that strives against itself" (Krell 138). As Radhakrishnan remarks, Said's "counterpoint…does not secede from the text and inaugurate its own separate regime. Both the point and the counterpoint work out and perform their antagonisms with respect to the same text" (25). Hence, the symphonic a-symphony of the "counterpoint" suggests an unending strife where the opposing parties partake in conflict, not with a view to reproducing the image of the same but to developing "joints" of interaction irrespectively of the "schisms" that set them apart.

[38] In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Martin Heidegger retrieves the concept of the Heraclitean "polemos," indicating an endless strife of opposites, in order to illuminate an alternative worlding of the world.

[39] This is the "domestic outline," Derrida elaborates on in his *Of Grammatology* (1967), always already accommodating and excluding by including discrepant and unfamiliar modalities of "writing" by

engaging them through a teleological calculus that reflects on the other only to reinforce the image of the same (80).

[40] The story of the slave ship Zong exemplifies this ontological shift in European consciousness and thought. After having steered the slave ship off course and with the provisions running low, the captain of the Zong, Luke Collingwood, decided to drown one hundred and thirty natives and claim insurance compensation in an attempt to minimize the loss of profit. In his analysis of the Zong massacre, Ian Baucom avers that the owners of the slave ship demanded that the insurance company compensate them for each and every one of the natives they drowned as this was guaranteed under the salvage clause they had signed before embarking (*Specters of the Atlantic* 61). The Zong massacre punctuates modernity's most prominent features which rest both in the incorporation of being in the calculus of capitalist production and the phantasmagoria of capital which transforms the moment of death into a commercial opportunity. What the story of Zong signifies is that in the discourse of imperialism and capitalism the concepts of justice, dignity and humanity acquire a predetermined and negotiable exchange value dictated by the laws of the market.

[41] Bales and Trodd employ this quote from Toni Morrison's *Beloved* to discuss the contemporary incarnations of the "middle passage" (*Many Middle Passages* 222).

[42] On the ongoing controversy over the ambivalent politics of the novel,see Peter McDonald's "Disgrace Effects." McDonald reflects on the ambiguous message of the novel and the reception it received after its publication. According to McDonald, the novel was used by the African National Congress in order to report the "persistence of racism among white South Africans" (323). The most scathing critique was landed by Jakes Gerwel, professor of literature and Director-General of the President's office, who was quite skeptical of the "novel's portrayal of the 'almost barbaric post-colonial claims of black Africans'" (325). In her article, "Not Saying Sorry, Not Speaking Pain: Gender Implications in Disgrace," Elleke Boehmer is rather critical of the gender politics of the novel since she questions Lucy's (self)victimization and asks how can "reconciliation" be achieved when "the woman…is as ever biting her lip" (350).

[43] I am thankful to Professor Evangelou Angelos for bringing the subject of returnism to my attention. A significant claim of the postapartheid South African administration which betrays its insistence on prioritizing financial issues over the examination of entrenched colonial discourses that impact social life is the request for repatriation of artifacts belonging to South Africa. After the death of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022, South African administration demanded the return of the Great Star of Africa which is considered the largest diamond in the world and decorates the Queen's scepter (Muir and Doyle https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/south-africa-is-calling-for-a-diamond-from-the-queens-sceptre-to-be-returned-091622).

[44] For more research on Lucy's rape, see Carine Mardorossian's "Rape and the Violence of Representation in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace." Mardorossian suggests that the rape scene propels readers to "rethink not just the assumptions through which black on white rape is viewed…but also the deeply

racialized way in which rape is naturalized presicely *as* a black on white crime" (74 emphasis in original). See also Lucy Valerie Graham's "Reading the Unspeakable in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace." Graham explores the narrative depiction of Lucy's rape, happening off-stage, and argues that "to consign rape to a space outside articulation may contribute to a wider phenomenon of silencing" (444). For an alternative reading of Lucy's rape, see Mary LeBlanc's "Hushed Resolve, Reticence, and Rape in J.M.Coetzee's Disgrace." LeBlanc argues that Lucy's decision to marry Petrus and not press charges to her violators demonstrate her deliberation not to allow her body to be re-invested with symbolic and historical discourses she rejects.

[45] For more on Lurie's attempt to sympathise with the pain of the other, see Mike Marais' "J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace and The Task of the Imagination." Marais explores how Lurie strives to imaginatively occupy Lucy's position in order to understand her decisions. For the "sympathetic imagination" to work, the subject needs to "divest the self of all subject positions in language and culture" (Marais 81). This impossible act, Marais argues, discloses Coetzee's deep engagement with the historical and political conditions that interprellate the subject.

[46] See also Maria Lopez's "Can We Be Friends Here? Visitation and Hospitality in J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace." Maria Lopez reads *Disgrace* through Derrida's "politics of friendship" in order to discuss the transformation of "old relationships of oppression and inequality into new bonds of hospitality and friendship" (930). According to Lopez, the novel reveals the urgency of interrogating an idea of friendship based on sameness and recognition; following Derrida's elaboration of "friendship," Lopez argues that the emerging social order demands for a kind of filiation premised on "otherness, difference and potential enmity" (931).

[47] Coetzee responds to Andre du Toit's article "Critic and Citizen: The Intellectual, Transformation and Academic Freedom."

[48] The scope, composition and methods of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been rather questionable and the outcome and final reports of the commission are still debatable. After the 1994 elections and in order to prevent the outbreak of revenge crimes, the ANC established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) so as to "grant amnesties to individuals, on condition that they revealed the truth and could prove that their actions were politically motivated" (Thompson 275). The appointment of Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the chair of the commission immediately set a religious tone on the procedures by equating truth and justice with confession and repentance. Despite the fact that the commission employed a highly religious discourse in order to distribute justice, it claimed that only if both previously oppressors and oppressed acknowledged their crimes could the nation enter into the post-apartheid period by coming to terms with the violent legacy of the past. Hence, apart from filing subpoenas to the previous leaders of the Nationalist Party, Pieter Botha and Frederick de Klerk, in order to accept responsibility for the racial practices and violence of the apartheid regime, the commission asked former ANC leaders to recognize the crimes committed by the liberation forces during apartheid. Botha and de Klerk argued in defence of their actions and suggested that their practices aimed at safeguarding South

Africa from the threat of "international communism" and that they perceived apartheid as a strategy for maintaining "'good neighborliness'" (qtd in Thompson 276). Only de Klerk decided to send a "half-hearted apology" to the commission, insisting that the brutal crimes committed by the apartheid regime had never received his approval (Thompson 276). Similarly, the ANC never recognized the allegations made against it concerning its crimes during its anti-apartheid struggle. More specifically, the liberation forces were accused of placing bombs in public places, necklacing, "planting land mines, murdering collaborative counsillors and policemen…and torturing and killing suspected spies in the guerrilla camps in Angola" (Thompson 276). While the ANC acknowledged some of these crimes, they accused the commission of "criminalizing the anti-apartheid struggle" (Thompson 277). Before publishing the TRC's reports and findings, the commission sent summaries to the individuals and groups accused of committing crimes. Both parties disavowed the final reports of the TRC and, practically, abstained from accepting responsibility for their crimes forcing Desmond Tutu to argue that: "'We can't assume that yesterday's oppressed will not become tomorrow's oppressors. We have seen it happen all over the world, and we shouldn't be surprised it if happens here'" (Thompson 277).

[49] See also her article "The Revolution Betrayed? Globalization, Neo-liberalism and the Post-Apartheid State." Magubane contemplates the neoliberal turn of the ANC and whether its controversial financial strategy is a necessary "compromise" or whether it attests to a betrayal of its revolutionary claims (Magubane 658).

[50] For a detailed elaboration on the impact of neoliberal policies on the planning and materialization of RDP (Reconstruction and Development Plan) and GEAR (Growth, Employment, and Redistribution), see Magubane "Globalization and the South African Transformation." According to Magubane, the objective of the RDP was wealth redistribution and "overcoming the structural legacy of apartheid" (95). However, "representatives from the business and financial sector" considered the program "incompatible with the realities and demands of globalization" (96). The GEAR programme also failed to meet its expectations since despite its investor-friendly framework it only attracted the attention of short-term investments that did not help South African economy to maintain the export of local products and become competitive in the global market (Magubane 97).

[51] Rita Barnard draws a literary connection between Coetzee's Petrus and the one we encounter in Nadine Gordimer's short story "Six Feet of the Country" (34). In Gordimer's narrative, a black labour tenant demands that the body of his recently deceased brother be returned by the local authorities in order to receive a proper burial. After many negotiations and the intervention of his landlord, the authorities return the body to Petrus who realises, during the burial ceremony, that the person he is about to bury is not his brother. Petrus fails to recover the remains of his brother and the novel closes with the landlord downgrading the event by suggesting that Petrus' sibling "had no identity in this world anyway" (1352).

[52] For the entire document, see www.gov.za/ documents/ land-reform-labour-tenants-act.

[53] Jacques Derrida has coined the term in order to deconstruct Jacques Lacan's prioritization of the phallus as a master signifier (Wortham 89).

[54] In her work *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* Spivak employs the term "overdetermination" in order to disclose the social, patriarchal and religious discourses that converge and produce a subject (183).

[55] Michael Marais suggests that Coetzee assigns Lurie the impossible task of developing his "sympathetic imagination" by occupying the position of the other ("Disgrace and the Task of Imagination" 77).

[56] In her article "Righting Wrongs," Spivak elaborates on the need of western academics and readers to examine postcoloniality with subaltern subjects and avoid prescriptive theorizations of their predicament.

[57]In his work *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe writes:

> By focusing the discussion on what I have called the "postcolony," the aim was not to denounce power as such, but rather to rehabilitate the two notions of *age* and *durée*. By age is meant not a simple category of time but a number of relationships and a configuration of events— often visible and perceptible, sometimes diffuse, "hydra-headed," but to which contemporaries could testify since very aware of them. As an age, the postcolony encloses multiple *durées* made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another, and envelope one another: an *entanglement.* (14)

3. Constellations of the Political: Subaltern Narratives in the Context of Globalization

3.1 Introduction

In the analysis that follows, I turn my attention to Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger,* Mahasweta Devi's short story "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay and Pirtha" and Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* in order to discuss how globalization implicates subaltern communities and subjectivities in its processes while depriving them of political voice. Adiga's text is indicative of the incompatibility of socialist ideas with the predicament of the subalterns and the latter's embrace of neoliberal discourses as the only way to escape subalternity. I would also like to explore how Adiga's work gestures to the gradual erosion of the state as an apparatus that materializes political will and the surrendering of the state to international extra-political committees and organizations which promote the deregulation of the market. In the second part of the literary analysis, I study Devi's "Pterodactyl" in order to discuss the liberalization of Indian agriculture through the mandates of the Green Revolution and the disruptive potentiality of the prehistoric bird which discloses the urgency of complicating the biocentric tenets that sustain western metaphysics. Lastly, I examine the sexual politics of Sinha's text with a view to exploring how phallocentric economies are continuous with neoliberal discourses and how a dysteleological sexual politics can inaugurate an alternative figuration of sovereignty.

Adiga's novel is the first-person narration of a subaltern, Balram Halwai, who struggles to escape feudal oppression and bonded labour by capitalizing on the neoliberal dictates modern India espouses.[58] Balram decides to leave his village and pursue a career as a chauffeur in Dhanbad after he experiences his parents' disgraceful death due to their impoverished state. He begins to work for the wealthy Mr. Ashok who introduces him to the world of business mischief, state corruption, and lavish spending. Balram's primary concern is to divest himself of his communal bonds and traditions and emerge as an aspiring entrepreneur capable of surviving in the metropolitan jungle of Bangalore. In order to achieve his goal, he assassinates Mr. Ashok, steals his money, and begins a start-

up company at the emerging metropolis of Bangalore. Although Ashok's associates trace Balram's family and avenge his death, Balram rationalizes his choices by claiming that escaping subalternity and assuming a defining role in the entrepreneurial scene demand certain sacrifices and compromises. From this constellation, or rather eclipse,[59] of the political intimated via the false pretenses of neocolonialism, I move on to discuss Devi's short story "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha" along the lines of the Subaltern Studies group methodology and Spivak's elaboration on the subaltern in order to explore how the enigmatic appearance of a prehistoric creature impels a radical engagement with the "monstrously impolitic" in the context of the Anthropocene (Farrier 15).

The sightings of a prehistoric bird at the district of Pirtha urge middle-class journalist Puran Sahay to visit the area and investigate the event. Located in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Pirtha is a tribal area ravaged by famine, bonded labor, and land encroachment by state and private companies. Accompanied by the Block Development Officer, Harisharan, Puran meets young Bikhia, who takes Puran to the location where the prehistoric bird lays dying. After its demise, the two men bury the bird and Puran submits a report documenting the struggle of the tribals for survival but he abstains from disclosing the appearance of the mysterious creature.

Born in 1926 in East Bengal, Devi witnessed both the injustices of colonial oppression and the failure of the post-independence state to develop a more inclusive national vision that would recognize subaltern communities as integral and constitutive parts of its political body and history. As a journalist, activist and novelist, Devi experienced firsthand the persecution both of tribals from their native lands and of leftist political parties which sought to undermine the liberal aspirations of the nation-state (Spivak, *In Other Words* 181). Her political affiliation to the radical Maoist group of the Naxalites attests to her sensitivity towards the peasant insurgency that took place in the village of Naxalbari in 1967 demanding land redistribution and the end of bonded labor and sexual exploitation of subaltern communities (Chakraborty 283).[60]

Through her journalistic and literary work, Devi reveals how the Indian nation-state reproduced and reconsolidated the injustices of the colonial era by maintaining peasant and tribal peoples in the margins of its national vision and neglecting to tackle the issue of state corruption and the encroachment of tribal land by landowners and state-

initiated developmental projects (Devi *Dust on the Road* 8-9). Her activism, journalism and creative writing deal with the issues of bonded labor, land theft by lumber companies and landowners, destruction of tribal eco-systems, sexual exploitation, internal immigration, and unrecognized tribal struggles which dominant Indian historiography meticulously overlooked. After conducting her journalistic work on the ground, she submits detailed reports where she names state officials, police officers, landowners, and tribals who prey on subalterns and farmers. Her objective is to depict "the pattern of exploitation" that permeates both the elite and the lower strata of the Indian society (Devi *Dust on the Road* 57). Devi is always specific about the place, the people and the conditions that enable peasant and tribal disenfranchisement. While her work focuses on revealing the social, financial and sexual exploitation of tribals, she does not hesitate to report how tribals themselves become part of the constellation that oppresses subalterns. Her persistence to detail, acute description and naming is what makes her work so important for postcolonial theory for it provokes the interrogation of binaries and generalizations that, more often than not, compromise the methodological accuracy of postcolonial criticism and reveal the uneven and complex relationship developed between colonialism, nationalism and subalterns.[61]

As she confesses in an interview given to Gayatri Spivak, her literary, journalistic and political work aims at promulgating the plight of the "'denotified'" tribes that remain unincorporated to the national vision of the Indian state (*Imaginary Maps* xiii). Her mission was to document the abuse of the tribals' basic human rights by landowners and the state and help them consolidate a representative political voice that would guarantee these rights. To her epistolary address to the United Nations, Devi describes how the British rule designated specific tribes as "criminal" in order to accentuate their exploitation and persecution ("The Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India" 592). Despite the termination of bonded labor and colonial rule, the Indian state refuses to register these "unspecified" tribes as equal collectivities in its political agenda (591). As Devi suggests, these tribes remain unassimilated to the national discourse and "excluded from the memory of enumeration" (591). According to Devi, the amorphousness and singularity of these communities makes them unintelligible both to the national consensus and state politics: "Being unorganized and not easily identifiable they seldom

appear in the electoral rolls, and hence they do not attract the attention of political parties" (593). Through her reports, short stories and political interventions, Devi seeks to articulate the claims of the tribals so they can be productively, and not exploitatively, included in the "programmatic help" of the state (592). Devi clarifies that state intervention and budget allocation should focus on assisting the tribals through the construction of facilities, health centers, schools, infrastructure and the guarantee of minimum wage (*Imaginary Maps* x). This way the tribals can maintain their traditional way of life and establish a representative political body that can emerge in the national discourse as equal to the dominant ones.

The short stories included in the collection *Imaginary Maps* are literary testimonies which expose how the "forces of global capital" cannot be dissociated from the social injustices that condition tribal life (Spivak *Imaginary Maps* 198). Devi's work has been at the epicenter of Spivak's literary criticism since it provides the critic with the opportunity to expose the myriad ways western theory, in its attempt to interrogate the discourses of colonialism, patriarchy and globalization, can become complicit in their reconsolidation. Spivak's task is to designate how western discourse can saturate the decolonizing process and reify the colonial politics the nation wishes to dismantle. According to Spivak, Devi's work stages the tensions that underline the decolonizing process which followed the Independence of India. Spivak argues that the politics of the state rested heavily on European concepts and metaphysics whose content was inconsistent with a deeply fragmented and heterogeneous nation such as India ("More on Power/Knowledge" 163-164). Despite this incompatibility between the people who composed the nation and the national vision, Spivak maintains that the task is to "reclaim" these "concept-metaphors" so as to perform a democratic practice which will enable subalterns to be active participants in the development of the nation and not mere spectators (164). The concepts of "justice," "human rights" and "state," albeit essential to the consolidation of a nation's state and sovereignty, need to be meticulously examined along with the discourses that criticism utilizes in order to investigate the legitimacy of these concepts.[62]

While Spivak performs a feminist critique of Devi's novels, she cautions against any potential exemplifications of the latter's work that would efface alternative

interrogations of gendered subalternity (*Outside in the Teaching Machine* 88). Spivak suggests that Devi's writings are literary fragments that depict only part of the massively heterogeneous space that constitutes India and enable the former to expand her interrogation of the contingencies of postcolonial theory and Western philosophy that tend to resort to the exotification of subaltern communities and the prioritization of specific postcolonial narratives over other testimonies. Works like the collection of short stories in the *Imaginary Maps*, *Breast stories* and *Mother of 1084* conflate literature with journalistic documentation, delineating a body of literary work that does not aim at speaking for or to the subaltern communities but at revealing the religious, racial, financial and gendered ideologies that partake in the silencing of subaltern voices (*Outside* 55).

Devi's writings are aligned with the Subaltern Studies' project since they both proposed and initiated a radical revision of Indian historiography that would recontextualize the peasant and tribal insurrections as seminal and integral part of India's national history. The revision instigated by the collective and supplemented by Devi's journalistic mission disrupted the reductive historiography drafted by the Indian elite who represented subaltern insurgency and tribal culture as archaic and premodern. It was in the documentation of the disparate peasant insurrections and rebellions that Devi witnessed the politics of an alternative Indian modernity that complicated the democratization and decolonization process of a heterogeneous nation.[63] My reading of "Pterodactyl" follows the methodological itineraries of the Subaltern Studies group in order to explore how Devi's story reveals another constellation of the political that unsettles the ontological binary between life and nonlife. In the last section of my analysis, I read *Animal's People* through the psychoanalytic elaborations of Luce Irigaray and Sarah Kofman with a view to exploring Animal's phallocentric proclivities.

Set in the fictional city of Khaufpur, Sinha's novel recounts the post-disaster life of the Bhopal community and the struggle of its victims to bring the company responsible for the poisonous gas leak to justice. The story is the literary transcription of numerous tape recordings where Animal, a young man suffering from a severe spinal mutation due to the gas leak, documents the realities in the Khaufpuri slums and the long-lasting effects of the disaster which compromise the social, physical and psychological integrity

of the community. Despite the harsh conditions they have been living in, Animal detests the parade of reporters, NGOs and state officials who visit the disaster zone only to prey on images of devastation and "marvel the pain" (5). Refusing to feed the discourses of "disaster pornography" which sustain and proliferate images of subaltern communities unable to act, speak and heal on their own, Animal insists that he is not interested in becoming an "extra" in their international trauma narratives (Sinha 9). The coming of Ellie Barber, an American doctor who wishes to build a health clinic in Khaufpur, raises the suspicions of the community since her arrival coincides with the approaching hearing proceedings between the victims and the company. While Ellie's clinic promises to help the afflicted members of Khaufpur and Animal to walk upright again, Zafar, a middle-aged activist and community leader, urges the victims to boycott the health center.

The literary analysis that follows focuses on these three texts in order to articulate the complex and multifaceted discursive dynamics of globalization and the myriad ways in which they can refashion subjectivities and their struggle for sovereignty. In the case of *The White Tiger*, I am also interested in examining the epistolary form of the text and the reason why Balram chooses to address China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. Globalization constitutes a process that challenges forth "planetary" dynamics which remain undecipherable by dominant methodologies of interpretation. In the second part of my literary analysis I turn to Devi's "Pterodactyl" with the aim of exploring the ways in which the exhausting ordering of the planet accentuated by the processes of globalization propels the human to encounter alterities which unsettle western conceptualizations of the political.

My analysis of Sinha's text draws on the work of Rob Nixon and Justin Johnston, who contemplate the pernicious after-effects of the Bhopal disaster, in order to discuss the insufficiency of legal and cultural representation to grasp the magnitude of the event and ground it within existing discursive norms. Nixon's analysis of the "environmentalism of the poor" focuses on neocolonial forms of expropriation and exploitation that necessitate the reformulation of existing methodologies of thought since the everlasting impact of the disaster transgresses established presuppositions on the concepts of time, the body and the human. The subaltern communities that cope with the dehumanizing consequences of the developmentalist agenda adopted by the nation state

of the Indian postcolony are forced to "inhabit intimately, over the long duree, the physical and environmental fallout of actions undertaken, by distant, shadowy, economic overlords" (Nixon 450). In the last part of my literary analysis I examine Sinha's text and focus on the discursive continuity between globalization and phallocentric economies. Neoliberal discourses are inextricably linked with the intensification and proliferation of patriarchal structures and phallic economies. I examine Animal's masculinist proclivities in order to discuss how a critique of neoliberalism is inadequate unless it is complemented by the dismantling of phallocentric schemata.

3.2 The Subaltern in/outside History

In the following pages, I reflect on the subaltern as a subject of historiography by tracing its trajectory through Ranajit Guha's and Gayatri Spivak's work. My aim is to explore their critical examination of the subaltern and draw on their itineraries of research that resituate their analysis within the context of capitalist globalization and the Anthropocene. Reading subaltern stories along the discourse of globalization and the Anthropocene impels the redefinition of what falls under the rubric of politics and the political.

In his introductory essay in the first Subaltern Studies volume, Guha lays the foundations for what came to be a radical critique both of colonial and Indian elitist historiography that narrated peasant insurgencies as marginal and inconsequential to India's colonial history. According to Guha, the aim of the Subaltern Studies group is to interrogate the "un-historical historiography" of elite Indian academics and the Cambridge school that failed to acknowledge that the subaltern classes have been the "principal actors" in the unfolding of Indian history (*Subaltern Studies* vol.1: 4). As Guha states, "This was an *autonomous* domain, for it neither originated in elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter." (vol.1: 4 emphasis in original).[64] According to Guha, what the group diagnoses in the body of historical archive that was created by the colonial administration is an ideological tendency to "exclude the insurgent as the subject of his own history" (Guha *Elementary Aspects* 4). The group, therefore, set out on a

project to excavate the minority histories of the subaltern acts of resistance in the colonial archive in order to historicize the ways the subaltern communities were not passive viewers of the unfolding of colonial history but, rather, an agentic force that resisted colonial practices and discourses.

Guha diagnoses in the colonial and elitist archive, ranging from administrative documents, colonial narrations and autobiographies, a failure to assign political meaning to subaltern mobilizations and insurgencies. Because these mobilizations were devoid of a "conscious leadership," colonial discourse failed to register "the trace of consciousness in the apparently unstructured movements of the masses" (*Elementary Aspects* 5). Guha detects a similar narrow understanding of peasant insurrections by Marxist thinker Eric Hobsbawm who, failing to acknowledge the political coherence of subaltern communities, would consign their peasant mobilization to the sphere of the "pre-political" (*Elementary Aspects* 5). Hence, from its inaugural address, the Subaltern Studies group gestured to a methodological critique that would attempt to resituate tribal insurgencies as a determining force within and of Indian history and, at the same time, reveal the appropriating tendency of dominant historiography to erase the past of Indian minority histories. Guha provides a meticulous analysis of the ontological implications of this retrieval in his work *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (1998). Guha examines the political alignment of colonial administration, Indian landlords, and historiography so as to trace what he understands to be, following Marx, the "universalizing tendency of capital" which mandates its actors to "subjugate all antecedent modes of production" and annul pre-existing modes of vernacular capitalism (14). Historiography was, then, employed to promote landlords and the elite as the rightful owners of Indian land and, hence, link the dominant interpretation of Indian history to the liberal idea of capitalist progress.[65]

According to Guha, dominant Indian historiography registered historical events only insofar they manifested signs of disciplined and organized constituents who worked in the advance of the nation-state (75). The historiography produced by colonial administration, travelers, merchants, military officials, and the East India Company reproduced racial and religious stereotypes in order to divest tribal communities of their right to property and enthrone landlords and their colonial custodians as protectors of the

realm. For Guha, the need to collect land revenues in order to finance sea trade, colonial administration and investments was not the only reason colonialists made the effort to consolidate their version of Indian history.

Guha avers that the early colonial enterprise rested heavily on the collaboration of the native informants in its mapping of the vast Indian empire and transgression of the intricacies of lineage and caste that permeated the complex land relations of the nation (157-158). The early colonial officers became gradually aware of the impossibility of demarcating the heterogeneity of the land and the communities that inhabited them. Their only access to the specific information was via the local native informants who invariably refused to provide information regarding property and their communities (158). But "why," Guha asks, "…of all possible means it was history that was summoned to rescue the 'new masters' from the deceptions supposed to have been perpetrated by their indigenous servants" (161)? What colonial administration dreaded was that subaltern insurgency and non-cooperation were not merely disorganized and chaotic reactions by subalterns but a clear manifestation and "unmistakable sign of an ethnological encounter" (162). Historiography is employed to salvage the colonial and racial discourse of the colonists by discursively co-opting moments of tribal insurrection and pre-empt them of any "assertion of ethnic identity," which would bring the entire colonial discursive edifice to the ground (162). Hence, the writing of a historiography riddled with "generalizations' was the only recourse of the officials in order to divest tribals of any potential claims to land and property (162).

Guha's interrogation reveals that a critique of historiography cannot be dissociated from a critique of imperialism and capitalism. Contrary to the colonial archive that co-opted Indian history by consolidating a reductive version, the Subaltern Studies group unearths the silenced histories of subaltern insurgency with a view to deconstructing the dominant historical narratives and proposing a radical engagement with history and the human in history. Put differently, the deconstruction of historiography that the group performs complicates dominant interpretations of subalternity and illustrates how the metaphysics of capital have framed the reading of history in the present. Guha gestures to that direction in his ending remarks concerning Indian historiography:

> Appropriation is an exercise in proprietorship. One can say, after Hegel, that to appropriate is to put one's will into a thing and then objectify such willing by occupancy and use. To appropriate a past is, therefore, to make time, dead time, into a thing before grasping it by one's will. That, of course, is no problem for the bourgeoisie, who constitute themselves into a class precisely by turning time into that ultimate and most generalized form of the thing, money—the thing which, under the rule of that class, becomes the measure and symbol of all other things...That is why the objectification of the past as a thing to seize and possess comes as easily to the capitalist in the sphere of culture as in that of commodity production. (194)

The historiographical narratives produced by colonialists aimed at designating subaltern histories as manifestations of an archaic, underdeveloped and undisciplined people; by discursively repurposing the Indian past, the colonial historiographers intended to produce a history that justified and consolidated the practices of the Empire and its discourses of Improvement. The Subaltern Studies group interrogates dominant historiography in order to suggest that the subaltern, far from a subject in want of improvement, was already political and produced a counter-history that interrupted the imperial project. It is this moment of defiance, of refusing to be complicit with colonial interrogation and discourse, that enables us to perceive the subaltern as a defining actor in the unfolding of Indian history that becomes manifest in the historiographical field of colonialism and nationalist narratives by receding into silence.[66]

Spivak's theorization of the subaltern complicates readings of postcolonial narratives which present the subaltern as presence within and beyond the interstices of capitalist globalization and world history. Spivak introduces the figure of the gendered subaltern and invites the collective to reflect on issues concerning subalternity beyond the male subject and the idea of "consciousness" as grounds for subaltern agency ("Deconstructing Historiography" 211).[67] Her intervention aims at unbinding the intrinsic, yet unexamined, methodological capacities of the collective by performing a deconstructive reading of the archive that will enable the group to "question the authority

of the investigating subject without paralyzing him, persistently transforming conditions of impossibility into possibility" (209). Spivak contends that "consciousness" cannot be the only determining factor in documenting subaltern agency since "cognition" is the product of multiple dynamics at work within a community (208). The attempt to employ the term of subaltern consciousness, Spivak suggests, is fundamentally problematic since we cannot register the discrepant "texts"[68] that intervene in the formation of a subject. Especially in the case of the multiplicity of Indian tribal communities inhabiting the nation, each demarcating an/other world, what is provisionally called the "pure subaltern will never be recovered" (212). Spivak elaborates on the irretrievability of the subaltern by suggesting that:

> A subject-effect can be briefly plotted as follows: that which seems to operate as a subject may be part of an immense discontinuous network ("text" in the general sense) of strands that may be termed politics, ideology, economics, history, sexuality, language, and so on. (Each of these strands, if they are isolated, can also be seen as woven of many strands.) Different knottings and configurations of these strands, determined by heterogeneous determinations which are themselves dependent upon myriad circumstances, produce the effect of an operating subject. Yet the continuist and homogenist deliberative consciousness symptomatically requires a continuous and homogeneous cause for this effect and thus posits a sovereign and determining subject. ("Deconstructing Historiography" 213)

Spivak's critique of the methodological approach of the collective contributes to its systemic excavation of the forces of colonialism, nationalism, caste and religion. Spivak does not aim at prioritizing the gendered subaltern as a new ground for research; rather, she attempts to complicate the methodology of the group by revealing that the project should constantly interrogate its limits.[69] Hence, the figure of the gendered subaltern, Spivak claims, will propel the collective to conceptualize the subaltern as the "absolute limit of the place where history is narrativized into logic" (217). Although Spivak examines dominant narratives of Indian historiography through a deconstructive reading

and the work of western thinkers, she remains attentive to the methodological pitfalls this gesture may entail.[70]

Spivak critiques Michel Foucault's and Gilles Deleuze's theorizations of the proletariat, in order to contemplate how European discourses, in their attempt to democratize thinking, can unwittingly reproduce the metaphysics they set out to critique. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Spivak claims that in their elaboration on the European subject, the metaphysics of power and the "Other," Deleuze and Foucault fail to contextualize their analyses within the discourse of imperialism (279). Spivak's interrogation does not aim at discrediting the philosophical trajectories of these thinkers; she, rather, discusses how the representation of alterity cannot be dissociated from the international division of labor, capitalist globalization and neo-colonialism, for it is precisely these grounds that enable the European subject to contemplate and theorize on the predicament of postcolonial nations and their communities (249-250). When these thinkers, Spivak suggests, examine the predicament of tribals and subalterns by uncritically employing the terms of the "Third World" and the "oppressed," they reiterate the colonial discourse which resorted to simplistic generalizations that explained away the singularity of peoples and tribal communities (270). Spivak maintains that "the colonized subaltern is irretrievably heterogeneous" since, in the case of India, each tribal community constitutes another world conditioned by disparate discourses and each of these communities develops a different response to colonialism and neocolonialism (270). In developing her thesis on the question concerning the subaltern's ability to speak, Spivak examines Foucault's and Deleuze's suggestion that the "oppressed, if given the chance…can speak and know their conditions (269). The analysis that Spivak provides maintains that although the subaltern does speak, criticism should not bypass questions of representation and the "texts" and discourses that intervene and mediate subaltern speech.[71] In order to demonstrate how dominant narratives and theories may interfere in the name of international humanitarianism and how justice can actually reproduce the violent muting of the subaltern, Spivak focuses on the abolition of sati in India in 1829 (285).[72]

The abolition of the ritual of widow-burning by the colonial authorities constitutes a telling example of the double effacement of the gendered subaltern since it

demonstrates the way dominant discourses collude and produce a compromised speaking subject by actually silencing it. Spivak explains that the colonial authorities "collaborated and consulted with learned Brahmans" before abolishing the ritual (297). The critic, however, detects a number of mis-transcriptions and misinterpretations in the colonial archive that expose the patriarchal and racial biases which conditioned the "recodification" of the Hindu law (287, 301). Even more significant for Spivak is the fact that although these discourses conspire in order to, purportedly, rescue Indian women from sati, they fail to document the "testimony of the women's voice consciousness" (287). As Sandhya Shetty and Elizabeth Bellamy have pointed out, Spivak engages the colonial archive as the "palimpsestic narrative of imperialism" which privileges a compromised reading of subaltern history and agency, thus "producing" a simulacrum of subjectivity (38). Spivak examines the dominant discourses that worked in unison in the "production" of a gendered subaltern in need of the colonial humanitarian intervention and suggests that: "the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling that is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development" (Spivak, *A Critique* 304). Spivak, thus, supplements the earlier methodological reflections of the Subaltern Studies group by proposing a deconstructive reading of subaltern history that disrupts the metaphysics of presence and consciousness. Her contribution enables the collective to examine history not merely as a site of male subaltern mobilization in order to assume autonomy but also as the space of an "aporia" demarcated by the spectral presence of the gendered subaltern (304).[73] In reading history through the spectrum of discursive ventriloquism and mediating representation, Spivak tasks the group with examining the interruptive silences that haunt the collusion of discourses which overdetermine the gendered subaltern. For Spivak, the figure of the gendered subaltern exposes the silences and "aporias" haunting the colonial archive and Indian historiography. As Spivak has aptly described: "Why have I written largely of women to launch the question of the recognition of ceaselessly shifting collectivities in our disciplinary practice? Because women are not a special case, but can represent the human, with the asymmetries attendant upon any such representation" (*Death of a Discipline* 70). Spivak's elucidation on the gendered subaltern has been quite instructive

both in designating how a cluster of discourses which attempt to represent the gendered subaltern may be conducive to its muting and how the narration of subaltern histories may expose the contingencies and fallacies of these discourses.[74]

Spivak's theorization of the subalterns as subjectivities "removed from all lines of social mobility" illustrates how subalterns are both blocked from accessing state positions and undermined in their struggle to consolidate a representative political body ("Scattered Speculations" 430). Even when they consolidate a representative collectivity, the state fails to recognize it as such and resorts to its misinterpretation or misrecognition of its political coherence. As Spivak contends: "Subalternity is where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognizable basis of action" ("Scattered Speculations" 431). In her analysis of Spivak's elaboration on the subaltern, Rosalind Morris suggests that "subalternity is less an identity than what we might call a predicament" since what defines subaltern subjects is the fact that their "capacity to access power is radically obstructed" (8).[75]

Both the Subaltern Studies group's project and Spivak's elucidations illustrate the discontinuities between the discourses of development and modernization and the ontological constitution of the tribals. Apart from the contingencies of representation inherent in elaborations on subaltern histories, Chakrabarty also argues that:

> …the subaltern is that which constantly, from within the narrative of capital, reminds us of other ways of being human than as bearers of the capacity to labor. It is what is gathered under "real labor" in Marx's critique of capital, the figure of difference that governmentality (that is, in Foucault's terms, the pursuit of the goals of modern governments) all over the world has to subjugate and civilize. (*Provincializing Europe* 94)

According to Chakrabarty, the figure of the subaltern is a disruptive presence that unconceals the alternative modernities which the teleologies of globalization and capitalist attempt to overwrite by negating tribal ontology.[76] This process of negation involves determining peasant ontology as anachronistic and debilitating to the nationalist vision of progress.[77]

The theoretical elaboration on the subaltern provided both by the Subaltern Studies group and Spivak reveal the ways in which dominant narratives and capitalist apparatuses bar the subaltern from inserting themselves to the capitalist and hegemonic channels. Subaltern subjects and communities paradoxically dwell on the indeterminate site located both inside capital, as they are being overexploited, and outside, as they are blocked from assuming a sovereign role both in state formation and capitalist production. The literary texts I explore complicate this paradox and urge the reader to contemplate how subaltern subjects can escape their subalternity via the opportunities provided by globalization and in what ways the discourses of globalization fashion the sexual politics of subaltern people. The protagonist in Adiga's novel, a subaltern himself, does manage to insert himself into India's power structures and circuits of globalization. Yet, while Spivak sees subalterns as subjectivities that may instigate the "undoing of class apartheid" ("Righting Wrongs" 536), Adiga's antihero escapes subalternity only to reproduce the injustices of feudalism and neocolonialism. I am interested in charting the course of Adiga's protagonist, from a subaltern to a predatory entrepreneur, in order to examine the distorted version of ethics Balram espouses as he is enchanted by capitalist discourses. I also examine the epistolary structure of the novel in order to discuss the signification of the *homo oeconomicus* in relation with the reformulation of the state inaugurated by the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in 2003.[78]

In the second part of my analysis, I read Devi's "Pterodactyl" within the context of the Green Revolution with a view to discussing the ways in which subaltern peoples were converted from farming communities into indebted subjects. The second strand of my reading of Devi's story focuses on the function of myth and how it gestures to the expansion of the political to the "monstrously impolitic" (Farrier 15). In the final part of my analysis I build on Julietta Singh's elaborations concerning the potentiality of postcolonial novels to interrogate the masterful tendencies inherent in anticolonial and postcolonial projects and the mapping of "dehumanist solidarities" that bring these mastering proclivities to crisis (Singh 123). More specifically, I would like to focus on Animal's sexual desires and study the continuity between neoliberal politics and phallocentric economies.

3.3 "Digesting" Neoliberalism: Subalternity and the Deterioration of the State in Globalization

What is interesting in Balram's recollection of his childhood years in the impoverished village of Laxmangarh is how he de-romanticizes indigenous life. While Devi engages tribal life critically, fleshing out both the ontological attunement of the tribals with nature and the call of modernization they need to address, Adiga satirizes traditional life and sets the tone for his subsequent critique. From the beginning of the narration, it becomes evident that Balram perceives the world in dualities: "India is two countries in one: an India of Light and an India of Darkness" (14). Adiga's novel charts the course of man from the "Darkness" of subalternity to the providential "Light" of entrepreneurship and neoliberalism.

According to Lena Khor, Balram is progressively espousing "modernization" and "neoliberal globalization" as the incontestable discourses and politics which can resolve the marginalization and disenfranchisement of subalterns (42).[79] The critic asks why Balram chooses mischief, assassination, and bribery of state officials in order to escape his subalternity and whether this is the "only viable option for a subaltern figure like Halwai to right the wrongs of class apartheid" (44). Balram becomes progressively mired in the potentialities of neoliberal India and unwittingly reinstates the abuses and injustices of colonialism and capitalism by designating tribal and communal life as an impediment to the liberalization of India. Balram perceives the "Indian family" and tribal life to be the main sources of India's underdevelopment since they prevent subaltern subjects from immersing themselves to the myriad potentialities globalization presents to the Indian constituents (Khor 48). The "Indian family," which Balram considers as the main obstacle to the neoliberal salvation of subalterns, is metonymic of tribal communities and solidarities that resist the calculative logic of "developmentality"[80] through their attunement to modalities of being and exchange that neoliberal politics consign to the category of the premodern and the archaic. What is interesting in Balram's case is that despite him being the main reason for his family's assassination, he does not perceive himself as an abettor to the crime; rather, he insists that their sacrifice propels him to a

social position from which he can, finally, act ethically and make a difference for other subaltern subjects.

Snehal Shangavi examines the reasons why Balram avoids following the path of a law-abiding businessman utilizing his family fortunes in order to produce "surplus capital that can be reinvested" but opts for "legitimizing a caste atrocity against his kin" (5). The critic is skeptical of the "politics of the novel" since Balram takes pains in justifying Ashok's murder while the assassination of his family remains "off-stage" (Shangavi 9). According to Shangavi, "becoming an entrepreneur in the context of the novel requires two symbolically dense murders: the murder of the employer (and therefore murder of the self-as-laborer) and the murder of the family" (9). Swaralipi Nandi shares Shangavi's skepticism concerning the politics of Adiga's text and argues that Balram's "fluctuating narrative voice, which swings between self-parody and serious testimony" cannot mask the novel's ambiguous message towards neoliberalism and globalization (279). Nandi reads Adiga's novel as a text that defies the politics of the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* in which the "protagonist…rejects the larger society only to assert his allegiance to the marginal community" (289). Adiga's text, Nandi contends, reproduces the politics of the western *Bildungsroman* since Balram "reaches maturity through integration in the structures of bourgeois society" (289). The critic maintains that Adiga's text, far from a parody of Indian entrepreneurship, "reinstates the rhetoric of neoliberalism albeit in apologetic terms" since it regards tribal life as a nexus of "pre-capitalist structures" that impede India's nationalist and neoliberal vision (280). It seems that Adiga's novel balances between two extremes; on the one hand, it portrays a "malfunctioning welfare state" that fails to recognize subaltern subjectivities as political constituencies and, on the other hand, endorses "global capitalism" as the only political economy that can enable subaltern communities to be integrated both in the local and global circuits of power (Nandi 294).[81]

Alexander Adkins reads Adiga's novel as a parody of neoliberalism and employs the trope of waste and excrement to explore the ways "scatological disgust indexes the moral and political outrage of an underclass witness to the abandonment of the state's caretaking role in favor of market facilitation" (171). Adkins is interested in reading narrative moments when the idiom of disgust is utilized to reveal how "neoliberalism

repurposes a proletarian discourse of disenchantment to create and dispose of waste populations on the subcontinent" (171). The critic argues that the protagonist retrieves the rhetoric of disgust to express his aversion both to the subaltern subjects who impede national development and to the malfunctioning Indian state which perennially disregards the claims of the subalterns (173). Following Wendy Brown's reading of Foucault's seminars on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Adkins avers that the rise of *homo oeconomicus* simultaneously signals the "eclipse of the creature of democratic sovereignty – homo politicus" (174).[82] Despite the unclear politics of the novel, Balram Halwai's divisive figure attests to the emergence of the *homo oeconomicus* as a political subjectivity that incarnates the discourses of neoliberalism and, by extension, deems subaltern communities as another space of exploitation.[83] In my analysis on Adiga's novel, I intend on exploring Balram's subalternity and his gradual transformation into a *homo oeconomicus*. What makes Balram's case seminal for my study is that it symptomatically reveals how the subaltern may incorporate the discourses of globalization and produce a reformulated version of the *homo oeconomicus*; one that assumes that his improved social position can work for the benefit of subaltern people. I, then, examine the epistolary form of the novel which constitutes Balram's narrative confession to China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. As the political pioneer of a reformist group that organized and implemented the reformulation of the Chinese state and economy, Jiabao's neoliberal agenda epitomizes the ways in which globalization and neoliberalism integrate ethical and political issues in the realm of capitalist exchange and negotiation.

What Balram distinctly remembers from his childhood years in the impoverished village of Laxmangarh are the "defunct" electricity poles, the broken water taps and the skeletal children: "…too lean and short for their age, and with oversized heads from which vivid eyes shine, like the guilty conscience of the government of India" (19). Laxmangarh is peopled with farmers and rickshaw-pullers, who co-inhabit the village with "families of hogs" whose bodies are "glistening from sewage" (19). While cows are beings of vital importance for tribal and agricultural families, Balram recollects the water buffalo at his house as the "dictator" of his house (20). He cannot fathom how all the family's "hopes were concentrated in her fatness" and he confesses with disgust how the family struggled to keep her fed while "she sat all day in her own stupendous crap" (20).

Balram and his family are forced to work as bonded laborers at a coal mine and a tea shop in the vicinity of Laxmangarh since his family is indebted to local landowners who have lent them money for his cousin-sister's wedding (36). Balram also narrates how the democratic message of Independent India remains undelivered to the lower strata of the Indian society since the political representatives that constitute the government have been accused of "murder, rape, grand larceny, gun-running, pimping, and many other such minor offences" (97). The young tribal witnesses the failure of democratic processes when during election time the governing party announces the winner even before the end of the process (97). Balram is puzzled by the fact that all his co-villagers have unanimously voted for the "Great Socialist" and not even one vote has been cast for the opposition (101). Bonded labor and botched electoral processes are not the only conditions that block Balram from escaping his subaltern position.

When his father falls ill, Balram and his brother take him to the local hospital where they see numerous patients waiting on the floor which is littered with "goat turds" (48). The doctor never arrives and his father dies in a hospital filled with desperate crying voices and stray animals. Another catalytic event that scars Balram and causes his alienation from tribal life is his mother's burial ceremony. After his mother passing, the family brings her body to a funeral pyre to be disposed of in the river of Ganga. As the fire engulfs her body, "a pale foot jerked out, like a living thing; the toes, which were melting in the heat, began to curl up, offering resistance to what was being done to them" (17). Balram observes a mold of black mud next to the platform as his mother's body defies the pyre. He realizes that, sooner or later, his mother's decomposed body will eventually become one with the mold and wash away in the polluted Ganga River (18). Balram perceives her final insurrection, her resistance to the fire, as her last stand to a dishonored life: "My mother wasn't going to let them destroy her" (17). The grotesque tone that encompasses the scene unsettles any potential romanticization and exotification of subaltern life. The undignified burial that Balram narrates depicts subalternity as a sociopolitical predicament that reduces life to its most disgraced condition. In Balram's case, his family belonging to the mass of underprivileged and unrepresented people constitutes an ontological condition in which the subaltern is deprived of all the rights that are constitutive of being human. Even after having spent a life struggling to survive,

his mother's burial ceremony is devoid of any ceremonial spirituality. Her unflinching corpse, defying the disremembering of a life lived in poverty, haunts Balram who comes to the realization that "Nothing would get liberated here" (18).

Dejected by the oppressive landlords and the hopelessness of life in rural India, Balram leaves his village for the city of Dhanbad where he becomes a chauffeur for a wealthy businessman named Mr. Ashok. His interaction with corrupted politicians, businessmen and officials gradually enables Balram to develop a different perspective of his class position and contemplate his subaltern mentality. It is there that Balram gradually becomes aware of the class apartheid and that he will either be the victim, the slave, the oppressed, the subaltern who is perennially barred from social mobility and positions of power or he will adapt to the new world India is ushered into and partake in the country's neoliberal euphoria: "These days, there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat – or get eaten up" (64). His understanding of his subaltern position is further elaborated in his description of the Rooster Coop (173). Through a graphic illustration of the chickens waiting to be slaughtered in a slum neighborhood, Balram reflects on the submissiveness of lower castes and subalterns:

> Hundreds of pale hens and brightly colored roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly, pecking each other and shitting on each other, jostling just for breathing space; the whole cage giving off a horrible stench—the stench of terrified, feathered flesh. On the wooden desk above this coop sits a grinning young butcher, showing off the flesh and organs of a recently chopped-up chicken, still oleaginous with a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. The very same thing is done with human beings in this country. (173-174)

Oblivious to a history of subaltern insurgency, Balram conceptualizes subalternity both as a class indicator and a submissive mentality instilled in India's marginalized subjects. His

willingness to please Mr.Ashok at all times urges Balram to realize that "the desire to be a servant had been bred into me; hammered into my skull, nail after nail, and poured into my blood the way sewage and industrial poison are poured into Mother Ganga" (193). In the company of Mr. Ashok, Balram begins to see the bigger picture, the international vision people like his employer are sharing. As The Great Socialist confesses to Mr.Ashok, the aim of the nation is to "build India into a superpower" (104); the political agenda the corrupt politicians and businessmen serve is to force India into the global networks of power and capital so it can compete foreign superpowers. The Great Socialist is paid handsomely by Mr. Ashok in order to allow him to exploit the national coal mines and sell it to China. What Mr. Ashok abhors in their relationship is the amount of money he has to spend during election times in order to bribe the right people and facilitate the bureaucratic procedures in his favor (240). A peculiar relationship develops between Mr. Ashok and Balram who seems to mimic his employer's behavior and mindset.

From the very first scene the two men meet, there seems to be an erotic attraction that brings them together. Balram illustrates their first encounter the way a person describes the first time he set eyes on his loved one: "My heart sank, and I was about to turn away—when I saw a figure on the terrace, a fellow in long loose white clothes, walking around and around, lost deep in thought. I swear by God, sir—I swear by all thirty-six million and four of them—the moment I saw his face, I knew: *This is the master for me*" (60 emphasis in original)**.** In another scene, Balram describes in detail how their bodies come extremely close in Ashok's car. Ashok asks Balram to change positions so he can take over the steering wheel:

> Around noon, Mr. Ashok tapped me on the shoulder. From the start, sir, there was a way in which I could understand what he wanted to say, the way dogs understand their masters. I stopped the car, and then moved to my left, and he moved to his right, and our bodies passed each other (so close that the stubble on his face scraped my cheeks like the shaving brush that I use every morning, and the cologne from his skin—a lovely, rich, fruity cologne—rushed into my nostrils for a heady instant, while the smell of my servant's sweat rubbed off onto his face), and then he became driver and I became passenger. (111-112)

The homoeroticism which punctuates this scene is also evident in their car drive at the less known streets of Delhi. During a traffic stop, Balram observes an attractive woman passing the road. He, then, turns his gaze to the rearview mirror and sees Ashok looking lavishly at the woman as well (198). When the eyes of the two men meet, Balram feels embarrassed for as he explains: "…every now and then, when master and driver find each other's eyes in this mirror, it swings open like a door into a changing room, and the two of them have suddenly caught each other naked" (199). After this uncomfortable encounter, Balram's sexual drive intermingles with and becomes attuned to Ashok's desire: "Now I understood why the city looked so different—why my beak was getting stiff as I was driving. Because *he* was horny. And inside that sealed car, master and driver had somehow become one body that night" (199 emphasis in original).[84]

After his wife abandons him, Ashok spends the night drinking with Balram. The latter assumes the role of the supportive companion who tries to console his master. Balram becomes so compassionate to Ashok that he even forgets how his master tried to frame him for a murder he did not commit: "Whatever anger I had against him for trying to pin Pinky Madam's hit-and-run killing on me passed away that evening. That was *her* fault. Mr. Ashok had nothing to do with it. I forgave him entirely" (186 emphasis in original). Interestingly Balram sees Pinky, Ashok's wife, as his antagonist and concentrates on comforting Ashok either by sharing village stories or rubbing his back and clearing the vomit off his lips (187). The young chauffer begins to question his motives and the reason he manifests such sympathetic behavior to a man like Ashok: "Do we loathe our masters behind a facade of love—or do we love them behind a facade of loathing (187)?" Balram's submissiveness is indicative of a long and painstaking process during which the subaltern adopts the mentality of his master and exploiter. Balram undergoes a transformative experience in which his drives and wishes become indistinguishable from his master's. This becomes apparent early in the story when Ashok visits and supervises Balram's premises. He observes the paint peeling off the walls and the "spiderwebs in every corner" and sits on Balram's hard mattress (79). Filled with shame, Balram saw the room "with *his* eyes; smelled it with *his* nose; poked it with *his* fingers" (79 emphasis in original). Balram's begins to acquire his master's elitist

vision; not only does he undergo a process of incorporating his master's desires and blending them into his own, but he also contends that he has begun to assimilate his master: "I had already begun to digest my master" (79). The first steps towards escaping subalternity involve Balram absorbing, "digesting" and integrating his master's mentality in his own moral compass. Balram, however, maintains that his objective is not to reproduce the feudal tyranny he has experienced in his past but, through this process of assimilation, to cultivate those ontological tenets that may enable him to emerge as a reformed *homo oeconomicus*. Why does Balram progressively distance himself from the realities of tribal life and his family? What does this disaffiliation signify for the young entrepreneur and what is its political dimension in the context of the epistolary confessions Balram sends to China's Premier?

Balram contends that the main reason subalterns avoid rebelling against landlords and their masters is the Indian family since any attempt to avoid bonded labor or any act of insurrection would have repercussions to the rebel's family: "only a man who is prepared to see his family destroyed – hunted, beaten, and burned alive by the masters – can break out of the coop" (176). Balram gradually disaffiliates from his relatives and struggles to unlearn attitudes and behaviors he inherited from his family: "Why had my father never told me not to scratch my groin? Why had my father never taught me to brush my teeth in milky foam? Why had he raised me to live like an animal? Why do all the poor live amid such filth, such ugliness…If only a man could spit his past out so easily" (151). Balram assumes that the first step towards social mobility, from which the subaltern is excluded, is to be disentangled from the ethics of responsibility that bind subalterns to their indigenous ties and communal way of living. Lena Khor suggests that Balram's decision to reject his filial bonds and sever ties with his past illustrates a moment of crisis "in postcolonial and globalizing India" (52); it demonstrates how postcolonial India revitalizes the colonial discourse by consigning the native to the position of the uncivilized other who has to be illuminated by the providential light of Progress. In the case of Adiga's novel, it is capitalist globalization and neoliberalism that emerge as the discourses of salvation. Balram gradually realizes that it is the obligations and responsibilities which derive from communal and filial bonds that conduce to India's underdevelopment (Khor 48).[85] Capitalist mythology imbues the Indian postcolonial

subject with the idea that by adopting and adapting to capitalist mandates they can consolidate their sovereignty bypassing national, religious, social and ethical irresolutions the country still struggles to resolve. As in the case of South Africa, capitalist globalization de-historisizes the nation's deep colonial and postcolonial traumas by reducing ethics to a series of financial transactions.

Balram assassinates Mr. Ashok, knowing that this will lead to his family being executed, steals his master's money, and moves to Bangalore in order to become an entrepreneur. Bewildered by the immense potentialities of the Indian metropolis, the euphoria of modernization manifested in the architecture of buildings, neon signs and advertisements that engulf the urban landscape, Balram sees himself as an integral and natural part of the neoliberal mythology unfolding before his eyes: "Outsourcing…That's it. That's how I fit in" (298).[86] He invests his master's money in starting up a driving company which escorts businessmen, politicians and tourists in their everyday ventures. In tandem with his previous master's mentality, he bribes the police commissioner and manages to undermine the other driving companies antagonizing him. Most importantly, Balram assumes that his ethical compromises, the assassination of Mr. Ashok, and the consequent execution of his family members are necessary steps to establishing not only a flourishing company but also an ethics of responsibility disentangled from the injustices and oppression perpetrated by Indian landlords and feudal aristocracy; he visualizes his neoliberal aspirations and adventures as an opportunity to right the wrongs of class apartheid since, in the modern and globalizing India, capitalism provides subalterns with the opportunity for social mobility and access to power. This becomes manifest in the way he perceives his relationship with his employees and the responsibility he assumes for the accidental killing of a young man by one of his drivers.

Balram knowingly mimics the attitude and strategies of Mr.Ashok in order to survive in Bangalore's competitive landscape. He changes his name to Ashok Sharma and bribes police officers to disrupt competition. Yet, to his mind, all these steps enable him to promote an ethics that departs from the obsolete Indian feudal system which exploited subaltern communities and individuals. Balram claims that he treats his drivers neither as servants nor as friends: "I don't insult them by calling them my 'family' either. They are my employees, I'm their boss, that's all. I make them sign a contract and I sign

it too, and both of us must honor that contract" (302). Once informed that one of his employees has hit and killed a young boy during a ride, Balram firstly makes sure that the passengers are taken to their destination, for as he confesses: "I have signed a contract with their company, and I honor all that I sign" (307) and, secondly, he has the police officers threaten the family not to lay any charges. Before setting up his company, Balram has made sure that competition is eradicated and the police are "lubricated often" (308). While the victim's brother wants to press charges against Balram, the police threaten the man that unless he forgets the incident, he will find himself in trouble. Balram justifies the accident by seeking recourse to the capitalist teleology he devoutly serves; he explains his cynicism and lack of guilt through the high standards of competition that globalization mandates:

> Our outsourcing companies are so cheap that they force their taxi operators to promise them an impossible number of runs every night. To meet such schedules, we have to drive recklessly; we have to keep hitting and hurting people on the roads. It's a problem every taxi operator in this city faces. Don't blame *me.* (310-311 emphasis in original)

Contrary to the landowners and his previous master, who would not take responsibility for the suffering they would cause, Balram is determined to promulgate an alternative ethics of responsibility enabled by the potentialities of capitalist globalization. He visits the victim's family and asks to be forgiven by providing financial compensation and offering to hire the brother of the deceased (312). Balram constantly dissociates himself from the powers of domination and oppression that have silenced subaltern subjects. His belief stems from the fact that, in contemporary India, those willing to conform to the dictates of neoliberal and capitalist globalization can actually make a difference and, ultimately, act ethically and responsibly; for Balram, subalternity is fundamentally an ontological space of impotentiality. Although he is aware of the injustices, silences and oppression germane to globalization, he contends that this system of power is ethically superior to the previous ones for it enables the calculation of suffering according to the facts and figures of capitalist discourse: "But I had to do something different; don't you

see? I can't live the way the Wild Boar and the Buffalo and the Raven lived, and probably *still* live, back in Laxmangarh. I am in the Light now" (313 emphasis in original).[87]

As Balram becomes progressively enthralled by the potentialities presented by globalization and his integration in the circuits of capitalist hegemony, he argues that since he has managed to become socially mobile, he has the "choice" to act ethically. In an attempt to illustrate the urgency of ushering India into a course of modernization, Balram confesses:

> Understand Mr. Jiabao, it is not as of you come to Bangalore and find that everyone is moral and upright here. This city has its share of thugs and politicians. It's just here, if a man want to be good, he *can* be good. In Laxmangarh, he doesn't even have this choice. That is the difference between this India and that India: the *choice*. (306 emphasis in original)

For Balram, the only way to right the wrongs of class apartheid is via the subaltern's indoctrination in the calculative and dehumanizing politics of capitalist globalization. The novel concludes with Balram pondering the immense potentialities his integration in Bangalore's neoliberal arena reveal. This involves returning to his village, start a "school full of White Tigers," where the students will no longer be taught corrupt "prayers and stories" but only "the facts of life" (319). Adiga's novel symptomatically reveals how fundamental democratic tenets that cohere the modern state and democracy, such as justice and responsibility, can assume relevance to the social body only insofar they are relegated to a set of financial transactions. Balram's progressive disavowal of his tribal life is metonymic of the neoliberal turn of many nations that promise equity, justice and opportunities by eroding the sovereign claims of subaltern people. This neoliberal paradox was the political agenda Jiabao reified during his presidency.

In the past two decades, Chinese policy has been committed to intertwining the national objectives with the strategies of globalization (Moore 88). According to Thomas Moore, Chinese leadership is serving the dogma of "'economic nationalism'" by blending the politics of national economy with globalization in order to rekindle the economy (88). This strategy is espoused and promoted by the majority of Chinese politicians despite the

fact that this might lead to "higher levels of interdependence" between the state and the global market (Moore 88). Interestingly, the Chinese leadership fosters the rationalization of the state according to the mandates of market economy as the most viable solution to the growing "socioeconomic cleavages" that have deepened between "coastal and interior areas and the urban and rural areas" (Moore 71). What makes Wen Jiabao's tenure important in China's adaptation to the dictates of globalization is his determination for a full-scale state reform which simultaneously signals its compromise as a system that materializes political will.[88]

Jiabao gained prominence quite early in his political career when, after graduating from the Beijing Institute of Geology, he was appointed as surveying officer in the Gansu district in 1968 (Naughton "The Emergence of Wen Jiabao" 38). His research and effectiveness on the field of geology earned him a position in the Policy and Law Research Office in Beijing in 1982 (Naughton 38). Despite the violent suppression of protesters at the Tiananmen Square by the state in 1989, Jiabao was one of the few politicians who showed real concern for the claims and well-being of the protestors (Naughton 39). His political stance during these events was imprinted on the collective unconscious of the people who saw in Jiabao's face a political figure that could amend the socioeconomic fallacies of the Communist Party and promote the necessary changes so that the nation can adapt to the challenges of the modern world. In other words, Jiabao's political presence symbolized the bridge that would connect two completely different worlds; he would bridge the gap between a failed socialist reform and the demands of globalization by planning and materializing a massive reform of the state. His main objective as a Premier was the "redefinition and reorganization of the government" so as to become flexible in its negotiations with international corporations (Naughton 45). This actually meant that commissions, not controlled by the government, would be entrusted with conducting negotiations and managing state assets with international business agents without the necessary approval of the state (Naughton 45). As Barry Naughton argues, the political reform and redefinition of the government Jiabao proclaimed could prove detrimental for the state since these commissions would be subject to the rationality of the global market and not to the political claims of the people (45). Additionally, Naughton suggests, these managerial commissions would not be

legally accountable to the National People's Congress (45-46). The ultimate goal was to establish a "smaller, more capable government, one more appropriate to a market economy" and "reduce the number of government approvals necessary for company investment projects" (Naughton "Hunkering Down" 2).

If the subaltern, in Spivak's terms, is a subject barred from accessing hegemony and one whose political presence is misconstrued or misrepresented by the dominant discourse, in the context of globalization, we witness how the very channels of power the subaltern strives to enter are completely removed from his political purview. They are now located in extra-political commissions whose agenda is not in accordance with the welfare of the subaltern but in tune with the global market economy and corporate rationality. Even if the subaltern manages to consolidate a representative political body, his speech remains unregistered by the extra-constitutional processes of these commissions.

3.4 "Seeds of Imperialism": Mahasweta Devi's "Pterodactyl" in the Context of the Green Revolution

The sighting of a mysterious bird, bearing a striking resemblance to a pterodactyl, motivates journalist Puran Sahay to visit the famine-stricken Pirtha located in the state of Madhya Pradesh. With the help of state officials, he comes in contact with the local tribal community struggling to survive in an attempt to help "put Pirtha on the map" ("Pterodactyl" 112). Harisharan, Puran's old friend and now Block Development Officer, escorts the journalist during his stay in Pirtha with the hope that the latter will voice the plight of the tribals and attract national and international humanitarian aid.

In the introduction to her collection of stories *Imaginary Maps*, Devi argues that: "if read carefully Pterodactyl will communicate the agony of tribals, of marginalized people all over the world" (xxi). Their agony stems from the fact that the sweeping tide of capitalist globalization mandates that indigenous ontology be replaced with a market-oriented value system thus rendering "eco-system"[89] people docile and governable *homines oeconomici*. Devi documents the dilemma of the tribals who, witnessing their indigenous modalities of living undermined, have to either "be preserved as endangered

species or mingle in the mainstream" (151). To be preserved as an "endangered species" involves their way of life being paraded in international conferences aiming at battling Third World poverty and becoming a spectacle of "disaster pornography."[90] On the other hand, mingling in the mainstream necessitates that they collaborate with corrupt state officials who are tasked with the allocation of relief-aid. In his report, Puran explains how international financial aid designated to be used for the relief of tribals is embezzled by state officials and landlords who present fake tribals in order to defraud state budget (188). What makes the predicament of the tribals direr is that in order to become recipients of relief-aid they need to be inculcated with a liberal value system that corrodes their ontological attachment to their community. Puran witnesses the incompatibility between state policies and the indigenous way of life when notions such as "career-planning" and "family-planning," albeit foreign to tribal discourse, become increasingly embedded in their ontological frame (153). Yet, the indoctrination of the tribals of Pirtha in the political economy of capitalist globalization was not only to be achieved via their graduation into liberalism but also through the modernizing technologies of the Green Revolution.

Situated in central India, Madhya Pradesh is financially dependent on its abundance of minerals and agricultural production (109). Harisharan informs Puran that although Madhya Pradesh implemented the modernizing techniques and strategies of agricultural production promoted during the Green Revolution of 1983-1984 (126), food scarcity and bonded labor persist: "Millions of tons of food grains, green revolutions in Central India, in Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal. Why this poverty then, and why do hundreds of thousands of people leave home mesmerized by labor contracts" (127)? Even though the advocates of the Green Revolution in India purported that its innovations would tackle the nation's social apartheid, it soon became apparent that it had deepened inequalities and proliferated the dispossession of tribals. As Vandana Shiva contends, the objective of the Green Revolution was to implement the "seeds of a new political economy" in developing nations (46).

The idea of the Green Revolution was conceived and advertised by the Rockefeller and Ford foundations, the World Bank, and various seed and chemical multinationals (Shiva 12). These international organizations claimed that food scarcity

and communal violence that have torn India and other postcolonial nations could be resolved through the modernization of agricultural production and the exhaustive manipulation and domination of nature. Shiva argues that far from promulgating peace and prosperity in India, what these organizations desired was to instrumentalize food and agricultural production so as to undermine tribal insurrections that seemed to gain momentum in developing countries. Thus, food became a weapon promising to "stabilize" the social and religious turmoil in India (Shiva 51).

The American advisors and researchers who arrived in India in order to boost its agricultural production failed to comprehend the symbiotic relationship between the tribals and nature (Shiva 29). Instead of "repairing nature's cycles" in tandem with its processes, they drafted strategies and imported technologies premised on the exhaustive ordering of nature (29). Disregarding the attunement of "eco-system people" with nature and indigenous agricultural technologies, the Indian state replaced indigenous varieties with imported and genetically-modified ones in order to increase the yield of the land. Shiva suggests that the "miracle seeds" of the Green Revolution were more tolerant to pesticides and chemicals than indigenous varieties (36). The Indian agricultural diversity and mixed cropping were gradually replaced by "varietal simplicity" and monocultures imported from chemical multinational companies which began subsidising in Asia and Africa (45). In the state of Madhya Pradesh, the official Rice Research Institute, which conducted "pioneering work" on indigenous rice varieties, was closed down after pressures from the World Bank (Shiva 44). Not only did the "miracle seeds" endorsed and exported by research institutes and multinational organizations located in the west began replacing indigenous varieties, but also farmers were obligated to invest in chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and machineries produced by the same conglomerates that exported those seeds (44). Hence, apart from importing agricultural technologies, the Indian state, whose economy depended heavily on agriculture, was also compelled to rely on agricultural credit.

Harisharan informs Puran that while the state of Madhya Pradesh has been at the forefront of the Green Revolution, with agricultural production rising, and India's exports covering "25 percent of the spices on the international market," this is not reflected upon the lives of the tribals (126-127). The genetically-modified and pesticide tolerant seeds

imported from American research institutes and endorsed by the Indian state evinced both the "penetration of agriculture by capital" and the imposition of a neoliberal political economy (Shiva 241). The introduction of agricultural capital clearly undermined subaltern claims for the "Seeds of Imperialism" amplified the tribals' dependency on imported capital and state authority since their survival would involve their official recognition by the state and the approval of loans in order to invest in agricultural equipment and chemicals.

The Green Revolution did not meet the initial expectations it had created, for it actually augmented social apartheid in India and sustained the international division of labour. The immediate outcome of the modernization of agricultural production was an ephemeral food surplus for industrial centres combined with an increase of "agricultural credit, which over time was converted to indebtedness" (Shiva 178). While the Green Revolution becomes widely advertised and endorsed by Asian nations, Indian commercial banks found the National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) with the aim of financing landowners and farmers (180). Indian farmers and tribal communities were obligated to reduce their multi-cultures to specifically designated monocultures that were on high demand in the international market and could absorb the chemical imprint of imported fertilizers and pesticides. Yet, the homogenizing imperatives of the Green Revolution planted the seeds of social separatism and fragmentation since food scarcity persisted in rural India and relationships of kinship and solidarity reverted to competition and "erosion of cultural norms" (Shiva 171). The social and financial challenges tribal and farm communities faced, after the implementation of monocultures and agri-credit, intensified state intervention and deepened their dependency to state officials and electoral politics (175). The "eco-system people" of India were called to progressively divest themselves of their ontological attunement to community ethics and nature since the state mandated tribals to "forget the ways of the soil and learn the ways of the market" (Shiva 191). Devi's text reveals the impacts of this forceful conversion and studies how the unexpected arrival of the bird shadows the certainties of developmental projects and human intervention in the life cycles of nature.

In her work *No Country: Working Class Writing in the Age of Globalization* (2014), Perera Sonali focuses on working-class literature with the intention of mapping

the "crossing and crisscrossing of cartographies of labor" (5). Drawing on working-class literature from different parts of the world, Sonali aims at tracing the connections between texts and explore whether working-class writings can redefine fundamental literary tenets (5). Through a close reading of Devi's "Pterodactyl," she argues that the puzzling appearance of the pterodactyl constitutes "a sign of other times outside *in* capitalism" (109 emphasis in original). Sonali sees in the figure of the prehistoric bird "the starting point for histories of socialism" which bespeak of the urgency to oppose "neoliberal globalization and development" (110). Sonali's analysis of the "Pterodactyl" focuses on the class struggles of the subalterns, how their histories of insurbodination reverberate in the present and the call to resist the aggressive liberalization of the subalterns. In his analysis on "Pterodactyl," Neil Lazarus argues that Devi's story exposes the ways western thinkers and benevolent humanists may potentially "objectify" subaltern narratives by "superimposing" their "own cognitive maps" on tribal testimonies (*The Postcolonial Unconscious* 145,146). Devi's text, Lazarus suggests, is a narrative that contemplates "the content of subaltern consciousness" and the ways this consciousness might also be "limited [and] partial" (155).[91] Despite the discursive and ontological lacuna that separates the tribals and Puran, the latter can, finally, "gain a degree of insight into the tribal structure of feeling" (Lazarus 159).

In her reading of Devi's "Pterodactyl," Spivak maintains that modern India and the tribals register the appearance of the mysterious creature differently and the literary work discloses this tension without prioritizing one reading over the other (*A Critique* 145). Spivak's insistence that the "Pterodactyl is not a symbol" cautions to readings which aesthetically exotify subaltern struggle and overlook their intention of gaining access to the channels of power. As Spivak contends, Devi's primary objective is to "plac[e] the subaltern into hegemony" (*A Critique* 141). Spivak returns to Devi's text in her work *Death of a Discipline* (2005) and recontextualizes the story within, what she calls, the "planetary" (*Death of Discipline* 72). Spivak employs the concept of the "planetary" in order to oppose the reductive and unifying discourses of globalization. Most importantly, the "planetary" punctuates the urgency of engaging the planet through "the species of alterity" (Spivak 72). This impossible task of posthumanist praxis seeks to decenter the biocentric prejudices which govern western metaphysics and affirm life only

by retrieving binaries. When Spivak claims that "to be human is to be intended toward the other," she does not only mean toward the human other but the monstrous other (73); "to be human," in other words, is to engage and acknowledge being in manifestations that transgress the axiomatic valences of western metaphysics. The task, therefore, for the western reader/ scholar is not to engage indigenous myths as mere traditional stories but as testimonies whose truth-substance is as irrefutable as the validity of scientific research.

My intention is to read "Pterodactyl" within the context of the Anthropocene and reflect on the ways Devi's story intimates another constellation of the political by reformulating discourse to the politics of the inanimate. David Farrier claims that the concepts of the Anthropocene and Capitalocene are inadequate to tackle the ecological shift humanity is experiencing worldwide (1). Farrier shares the skepticism of many critics on the validity of these terms since they seem to engage ecological disaster either by resituating the western male at the epicenter of its analysis (Anthropocene) or by considering capitalism and its incantations as the only factors responsible for the global ecological shifts occurring on a world scale. By drawing on Jacques Derrida's concept of the "gift," the critic examines the task of being human as the "gift of the inhuman" (Farrier 1). The advent of the "inhuman" impels the interrogation of anthropocentric discourses which have prioritized the western Man as the primary manifestation and modality of being, hence, dismissing and disregarding creaturely lives which decenter the hegemony of these ideologies. Derrida elaborates on the "gift" as "the very figure of the impossible" (Farrier 11); it constitutes an incalculable and unsettling event which, although it cannot be registered as a "gift" per se, in the context of climate change, it can invoke "an ethical response to the uneven time of environmental disaster" (6).The critic suggests that the appearance of the pterodactyl in Devi's story connotes the concept of the "gift" since it probes Puran to reconceptualize his ontological tenets and, hence, it provokes him to reflect on the "indebtedness of life to the 'monstrously impolitic'" (15). Dominic O'Key introduces the term of "de-extinction" (75), in his elaboration on "Pterodactyl," in order to demonstrate how Devi's story complicates the "anthropocentric archival tendencies of the novel form itself" and "proposes innovative ways of textually reckoning with the nonhuman" (78). O'Key argues that Devi's narrative reanimation of the pterodactyl illustrates how western readers tend to invest in the metaphorical

connotation of the "dinosaur-sign" neglecting the political dimensions of the story (87). Nevertheless, Devi's story, O'Key contends, "…betrays rather than portrays the pterodactyl" in order to probe western readers to focus on the urgency of tribal struggles (87).

Reduced to mere "spectators" of the "broad arrogant roads" tearing tribal land, enabling "owners of bonded labour, the moneylender, the touts and pimps, the abductors and the bestial alcoholic young men" to enter tribal territory unobstructed, the peasants remain marginal to the developmental teleologies the nation espouses (Devi, *Imaginary Maps* 117, 109). In the midst of these cataclysmic developments that disenfranchise the tribals, a young boy chisels on a stone tablet the figure of a pterodactyl which has been flying along the diminishing horizons of the famine-stricken Pirtha.

3.5 "Homo Mapiens" and the time of the Pterodactyl

One of the most seminal questions the revisionists of subaltern historiography were called to answer was how the scientific methodology of contemporary Marxist historiography can engage the mythical and religious background of a considerable number of peasant insurgencies.[92] What they detected in the colonial archive was that the exhortations of mythical figures was all too easily translated as signs of an underdeveloped people whose political mobilization rested on prejudices. As David Hardiman suggests, the appearance of gods, goddesses and spirit mediums in tribal tradition connotes moments of political turmoil which the peasant community attempts to decipher by evoking divine figures and mythical creatures. Hardiman examines the appearance of the goddess Salahbai (Devi) in the rural area of South Garajat in 1922 when the tribals of the region gathered and, by surrendering to a "state of trance," adhered to the demands of the goddess (196). According to Hardiman, the Devi ordered the *adivasi* communities to "abstain from eating flesh, or drinking liquor or toddy," to attend more regularly to personal hygiene, and to "boycott Parsi liquor dealers and landlords" who had been systematically exploiting tribal communities through money lending and bonded labor when the tribals failed to repay the loan (204). While colonial historians read the cases of divine intervention as anachronistic religious traditions,

Hardiman argues that it was during these rituals that the communities voiced their solidarity and expressed their "collective grievances and desires" (210). By interrogating dominant historiographical narratives that would misrepresent these instances as manifestations of "chaotic hysteria," Hardiman claims that these events denoted the *adivasi* "protest against their oppressors" and a "formalized phenomenon" where the political was imbricated with the mythical or, put differently, the mythical was unconsciously conjured in order to intimate deep political unrest (Hardiman 210).

Under the sounds of the "emergency drum," Puran descends the hills of Pirtha in order to document the unearthly sight of the Pterodactyl (114). The journalist arrives at a house where the bird has found refuge and he follows the "passage" that connects the main house to the "inner shrine" where the Pterodactyl rests (141). Upon meeting the Pterodactyl's gaze, Puran's "brain cells, spreading a hundred antennae, understand nothing of that glance" (141). Puran realizes that the secret of this uncanny arrival cannot be revealed by relying on reason alone. The unassimilable presence of the prehistoric animal disrupts Puran's logocentric and discursive capacities, and impels him to assume the role of the historian in order to decipher the animal's inscrutable message. Puran becomes aware that for the tribals the mythical and the political unceasingly blend, supplement each other and produce a historical account that decentres dominant historiographical tenets: "And who is going to tell us what is legend and what history from the perspective of these totally rejected tribals? Where is the boundary between history and story?" (146). The myth, therefore, constitutes a communal device that suspends the political in the sphere of the supernatural only to retrieve it as an ethical mandate that addresses pressing political predicaments. In the mind of the secular historian and the colonial administrator, these tribal rituals and apparitions are explained away via the reductive and calculative imperatives of western metaphysics; they are consigned to the sphere of the pre-political as evidence of a people in need of the humanitarian intervention of the colonial authorities and epistemes. Harisharan, the official who is burdened with guiding Puran in Pirtha, warns him that the tribals cannot survive against the developmental projects that gradually deprive them of their natural resources, their hunting grounds, and their cultivating fields. He perceives the tribals fighting a losing battle for, contrary to their ethics of "communism, harmony, co-

existence," the "arrogant roads" that progressively surround Pirtha constitute an undisputable fact: "This is reality, this is history" he confesses to Puran (120). Indeed, this is history; yet, it is the "un-historical" history of modernity and imperialism that reads the eventful only insofar it registers within capitalist discourses. It is precisely the mandates of this disinterested history that the arrival of the Pterodactyl comes to disrupt.

Puran assumes the role of the historian in an attempt to comprehend the Pterodactyl's "worldsoundless message" (155). The books of geological history he consults, although rich in detailing the biological and physiological features of the species, do not facilitate Puran in grasping the mystifying arrival of the bird. During his muted interlocutions with Bikhia, the young tribal who chiselled the figure of the bird on a tablet, Puran realizes that "one can do with many fewer words" and attempts to perceive the advent of the pterodactyl by engaging the concept of time in a manner radically different from the one employed by dominant historiographical accounts (155). Puran contends that the present registers the past only via a stagist and teleological conceptualization of time and, thus, stories and histories which do not meet the requirements of dominant historiographical accounts is considered marginal: "The world of today cannot be informed about you. 'Today' does not know the 'past,' the 'ancient.' 'Today,' 'the present times,' 'civilization' becomes most barbaric by the demands of getting ahead" (156). The concept of time the figure of Pterodactyl connotes unsettles the idea of time established by capitalist globalization and imperialism. Puran cannot fathom how contemporary epistemes and devices of calculation may grasp the "time, complex time" the arrival of the Pterodactyl announces (156). Puran retreats from this attempt to calculate the incalculable concept of time the prehistoric animal conjures:

> No, I don't want even to touch you. You are moveless with your wings folded, I do not wish to touch you, you are outside my wisdom, reason and feelings, who can place this hand on the axial movement of the end of the third phase of the Mesozoic and the beginnings of the Cenozoic geological ages? That is a story of seventy-five million years. The Mesozoic ended in a tremendous turbulence, with the inception of the ancestors of the human being, and the Cenozoic, which is still going on, got its start. (156)

Puran contextualizes the human species within the planetary geological time in order to chart its trajectory from the emergence of the *Homo sapiens* to his metamorphosis into modernity's homo "mapiens" (158). The "anthropologos"[93] of modernity, the being that engages life only by discursively and politically assimilating it in a reductive binary that divests it of life, comes to encompass the Earth by charting a cartography of domination which renders the human and the animal commodifiable quantities in a discourse of exploitation (Spanos 220). More importantly, the "modern man," Puran contends, "is afraid to know life by entering life" (158). The arrival of the Pterodactyl awakens in Puran the urge to "enter life" not by penetrating, classifying and mastering it, but by sustaining a "care"-ful[94] engagement with all the diverse manifestations of the living.

In Devi's story, the local and the global, the mythical and the political, the human time and geological time intertwine evidencing their interruptive supplementarity. The arrival of the pterodactyl decenters Puran's logocentric and ontological assumptions and impels him to read history and the human in history beyond the established tenets of an anthropocentric historiography. In his recasting of history, Puran contemplates the precariousness of the human condition and how he has become the victim of his own undoing by the systematic overexploitation of natural resources:

> We are extinct by the inevitable natural geological evolution. You too are endangered. You too will become extinct in nuclear explosions, or in war, or in the aggressive advance of the strong as it obliterates the weak, which finally turns you naked, barbaric, primitive, think if you are going to forward or back. Forests are extinct, and animal life is obliterated outside of zoos and protected forest sanctuaries. What will you finally grow in the soil, having murdered nature in the application of man-imposed substitutes? 'Deadly DDT greens, / charnel-house vegetables,/ uprooted astonished onions, radioactive potatoes/ explosive bean-pods, monstrous and misshapen/ spastic gourds, eggplants with mobile tails bloodthirsty octopus creepers, animal blood-filled/ tomatoes? (157)

The indiscriminate implementation of the imperatives of the Green Revolution in India, with the introduction of genetically induced seeds, the intensification of chemically augmented pesticide use, and the reformation of agricultural economy it precipitated, is only a fragment of the various historical events attesting to the culmination of the dehumanizing discourses and practices of capitalist globalization. The Pterodactyl's unsettling gaze compels Puran to conceptualize the human beyond the history of modernity, the "two World wars, Hiroshima-Nagasaki...the current planetary arms race and the terror of nuclear holocaust," and read the human within the context of "prehistory" (180). This reading resituates the human in the violent shifts of "continental drifts" and the "seasonal changes after much geological turbulence" (180). Puran's reflection of the human brings together the cataclysmic changes inscribed in the planet's geological historiography with catastrophic events of modern history which attest to the ascendancy and dehumanizing sovereignty of the homo "mapiens" (158). During his unfolding of the incalculable geological time, in which the human occupies but a speck of time, Puran is "witnessing his own futility" (180). The arrival of the Pterodactyl, which disrupts the unity of time established by the homo "mapiens" and capitalist globalization, does not signify a moment of defeatist acceptance of fate and nihilism; rather, it constitutes an event that compels Puran to reconceptualise the discursive capacities of the "inquisitive world" encroaching Pirtha (162). In his encounter with Pterodactyl's alterity and the disruptive conceptualization of time his arrival animates, Puran inverts the politics of the homo "mapiens" by accepting that "one has to leave finally without knowing many things one should definitely have known" (180).

One of the reasons why Spivak persistently returns to Mahasweta Devi's texts is that they carefully abstain from plotting and prescribing political solutions to the predicament of the tribals; her texts, in other words, perform the engagement with the alterity by remaining aporetic since they invite the reader to revisit the literary space with a renewed set of questions never foreclosing alternative readings. The "Pterodactyl" performs this gesture by sustaining ambivalence between the message which the arrival of the bird conveys, Puran's reading of his engagement with Bikhia and the journalist's final account of the event. Dominick O'Key suggests that Devi retrieves the image of the pterodactyl in order to "construct a shared vulnerability and interrelatedness between the

human and the inhuman" (83). In a vein similar to Spivak's warning that the "Pterodactyl is not a symbol" (*A Critique* 145), the critic suggests that the death of the bird demystifies any potential symbolization by urging the reader to refocus to the plight of the tribals (87).[95] Puran, overwhelmed by his encounter with the Pterodactyl and by the bond created between him and the muted Bikhia, recognizes initially that a "time of danger has brought them together" (182). However, as soon as the pterodactyl is buried and Bikhia breaks "the fence of his self-imposed silence," Puran feels that their "intimacy had been in fact a myth" (183). This does not discredit the importance of the engagement between Puran and the tribals of Pirtha but underlines how Devi's text narratively inhabits a space of undecidability where both Bikhia and the Pterodactyl "remain unincorporated into the orbit of human understanding" (O'Key 90).

Puran leaves Pirtha and submits a report to the newspaper he is working by meticulously detailing the political and financial irresolutions of the tribals who are not benefited by the proliferating developmental projects. As he is ready to depart the tribal land, Puran acknowledges that the message of the prehistoric bird remains undecipherable and that the "pterodactyl was *myth* and *message* from the start" (195 emphasis in original). Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that the revision of subaltern stories and histories performed by the Subaltern Studies group and Spivak has dislocated dominant preconceptions concerning historiography and propelled institutionalized modes of thought to "interrogate" each other (*Provincializing Europe* 93). During this process, the history established by the capitalist discourses and epistemes is interrupted by radical temporalities which remain ungraspable by the logocentric imperatives of dominant historiography. Although these histories are recounted within the discursive frame of "history," they cannot be merely situated in the reductive grounds of the "historical," for they interrogate the historical by inhabiting it (Chakrabarty 93). Subaltern histories, Chakrabarty claims, should not be examined as narratives that escape the metaphysics of capital since there is no outside of capital; rather, there are differentiated modalities of capital exchange (95). Hence, the disruptive potentiality of subaltern histories attests to radical temporalities that can "happen only within the time horizon of capital and yet it has to be thought of as something that disrupts the unity of that time" (Chakrabarty 95). Without discrediting the benefits of globalization but

maintaining a "permanent tension" between the "universal narrative of capital" and the subaltern narratives that persistently "modify and interrupt" the homogenizing tendencies of capitalist globalization, Chakrabarty suggests that we may "'world the earth'" through the negotiation of "our different senses of ontic being"; maintaining, that is, both "myth and analysis" (Devi 193) as incompatible, yet supplementary and interruptive modalities of an alternative conceptualization of sovereign being.

3.6 The Legacy of the Subaltern Studies Group and the Awakening to the "Planetary"

During its course, the project and methodology enacted by the Subaltern Studies group has received a lot of criticism. Some of the questions raised by its critics were quite enabling since they probe the collective to refine its research and reveal new spaces of subalternity previously unimaginable.[96] Other critics have chosen to condemn the collective's methodology and accuse the group of resorting to an uncritical conflation of postcolonial theory with poststructuralist studies. Concerning the last argument, I would like to suggest that the Subaltern Studies had, since its inception, declared that in order to deconstruct elitist theorizations of subaltern history and interrogate the unceasingly evolving discourses and apparatuses of capitalist globalization, it was vital to incorporate emerging fields of research that could relaunch earlier concerns into a new trajectory. Spivak contends that capitalist globalization animates new methodologies and spaces of disenfranchisement and overexploitation. "Biopiracy," "human genome engineering" and biopolitical apparatuses are starting to gain a central role in political processes creating new social divisions and injustices (Spivak "A Silent Interview" 326). On the new challenges presented, she elaborates on the "assymetrical" relationship between "gender and development" and punctuates the need to remain attentive to the ways democratic processes read the "subaltern will for globalization" (332). I would like to argue that the methodological reflections presented by the Subaltern studies group enable contemporary criticism to decipher the emergence of another political field previously unacknowledged by dominant discourses.

In the introductory section of the *Subaltern Studies Reader* (1997), Guha maintains that the collective did not aim at producing a stagnant and monolithic methodology that would superficially examine nationalist and elitist historiography, but at formulating a thinking group that would "generate and continually renew" its methodological presuppositions (ix). The critic argues that the collective's main preoccupation, despite its discrepant methodological approaches, was to reveal that the "domain of politics…was structurally split and not unified and homogenous, as elite interpretation had made it out to be" (xiv). Their objective, Guha goes on to suggest, was to illustrate that the political cannot be regarded as the "sum of all transactions between the masters themselves" (xvi); that for Indian historiography to be complete, research had to take into account the "'other domain'" which decentered the uncritical historiography of the elite (xvi). In his work *Dominance without Hegemony,* Guha elaborates more extensively on the strategic misrepresentations performed by colonial historiographers who registered peasant insurrections and communities as spontaneous and disorganized. This strategic misconstruction of peasant communities discloses the metaphysics of the colonial discourse which endeavored to co-opt any social mobilization that would constitute an "assertion of ethnic identity" (*Dominance without Hegemony* 162). By officially recognizing their ethnic identity, the colonial administration would be compelled to acknowledge the political resonance, strategic planning and sovereign claims of communities and subjectivities whose political coherence was disputed by dominant discourse. The deconstructive reading of nationalist historiography the group performed can prove to be valuable in contemporary readings of late modernity, capitalist globalization and climate crisis, for the collective persistently interrogated conceptualizations of the political that disrupt present theorizations of politics and the human.

In his answer to the question "whether time [has] rendered Subaltern Studies invalid" ("Subaltern Studies" 12), Chakrabarty contends that the methodological legacy of the group is rather significant in revealing "political subjects" and domains that contemporary criticism cannot register and trace:

> The peasant insurgencies Guha wrote about were the forerunners of this political subject and their modes of mobilisation are still visible in many of the riots and insurgencies in India. Guha's hunch that peasants of colonial societies were not 'pre-political', as Hobsbawm had imagined them, but rather political, captured something of the spirit of his (i.e. Guha's) times. *But we did not know very clearly what 'political' meant in this context*. ("Subaltern Studies" 17 emphasis added)

Chakrabarty infers that the outcome of the historiographical revision conducted by the group led the subalternists to question the very concept of the "political" and its contemporary manifestations. In his latest work on climate change, the legacy of the Subaltern Studies and postcolonial theory, Chakrabarty finesses his earlier argument by explaining that although the group's early elaborations on peasant insurgency demonstrated that peasants and tribals were dominant actors in the unfolding of Indian history, the subalternists had to ground this elaboration within a political discourse that could not accommodate the eventfulness of those uprisings:

> …the peasants were political in the already understood sense of the term—in that they dealt with the institutions of colonial rule—but they were also 'political' in some other sense about which we were not clear at all. But the political claim that nineteenth-century peasant rebellions were political could only be made on the assumption—and this remains an assumption—that we already knew completely what being political meant. *What was new about peasant resistance in nineteenth-century India could only be expressed in the guise of an old category: 'politics.'* (*Crises of Civilization* 32 emphasis added)

The collective, therefore, inaugurated a methodology of reading which unconcealed subjectivities and communities which had perennially haunted the sovereignty of the colonial administration. The methodological objective of the group was to retrieve the voice of the subaltern from the interstices of colonial historiography and maintain a continuous reckoning with alterity in all its manifestations. Chakrabarty suggests that the "utopian horizons" of the group were "to hear that which one does not already

understand;" that is to remain attentive to the unsettling presences that shatter dominant discourses (*Habitations of Modernity* 36). Devi's "Pterodactyl," I would like to argue, stages this reckoning with alterity and provokes a reading on the awakening of the sovereignty of the human to, what Chakrabarty following Spivak has named, the "planetary."

Reimagining the human along the lines of the "planetary," as Spivak discusses the term, entails engaging alterity in a dialectical relationship that does not negate it (*Death of a Discipline* 73). It is a task that necessitates that the human develop a non-confrontational comportment towards being and perceive himself more as a "planetary creature" and less as a "global agent" (Spivak 73). Chakrabarty recontextualizes the "planetary" within the predicament of the climate crisis, the depletion of natural resources, the deforestation of natural habitats and animal extinction, while gesturing to the rude awakening of the human to his evolution into a "geological force" inaugurating the Anthropocene epoch (*The Climate of History* 35).[97]

Devi's story stages, what Chakrabarty calls, the unsettling "entanglement" of human history with geological time (7). By "human history," Chakrabarty refers to the technologies and discourses which enable the human to commodify the planet. Industrialization, capitalism and globalization are among the most dominant discourses and practices which, primarily, western man fabricated, proliferated and established as indisputable rationalities of governance and existence and through their intensification interfered and moderated the planet's life-cycles. Although climate change and the cataclysmic phenomena that define the event are not the symptoms of capitalism or industrialization alone, it cannot be denied that capitalism and globalization depend on the exhaustive ordering of the Earth so as to yield to the demands of the market economy. As Chakrabarty contends, "the harder we work the earth in our increasing quest for profit and power, the more we encounter the planet" (*The Climate of History* 69). This process of overworking the Earth has rendered humanity witness to what was always present, but the metaphysics of dominant discourse failed to register. What becomes manifestable in the phenomena of climate change is the presence of a force that decenters human sovereignty; sweeping floods, wild fires, lasting droughts, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions bespeak of a presence that necessitates the inclusion of the nonliving in the

sphere of the political. Scientific development has extended our understanding of animal behavior and contributed to the establishment of laws that protect their rights. The same applies to plants and trees which are, slowly but steadily, acknowledged as living beings.[98] Extending the concept of the political to nonliving organisms is a necessary step to realizing the extent to which human activity affects inanimate beings, however insignificant they may appear to western metaphysics. The stone, the plant, the tree –far from a comforting background to the unfolding of human history— are actually living beings that demand their acknowledgement in the political spheres of late modernity.

3.7 The "Slow Violence" of Capitalist Toxicity: Before and After the Bhopal Disaster

In the third part of my analysis, I turn my attention to the sexual politics of the novel and how they disrupt heteronormative schemata. Taking my cue from Julietta Singh's reading of Sinha's novel that contemplates the potentiality of revealing "unmasterful forms of being" (122) untethered to the metaphysical tendencies inherent in western epistemologies and politics to discipline and master being I also focus on the relationship Animal develops with a deformed fetus preserved in a glass jar. Singh is interested in examining anticolonial and postcolonial novels with the aim of exploring both how postcolonial literature interrogates the proclivity of Western Man to appropriate and commodify being and how it may unconceal "antimasterful possibilities that can emerge from dehumanized forms of living in the world" (123). Animal's sexuality is central to the second part of my analysis since it investigates the affinity between heteronormativity, masculinity and sovereignty.

Sinha's novel raises critical questions concerning the neocolonial agendas encrypted in humanitarian discourses and organizations which reconsolidate cultural and racial divisions by engaging nations faced with disaster as impotent countries in dire need of humanitarian intervention. The text challenges western discourses of empathy and humanitarianism promulgated both by corporations and non-governmental organizations. In his reading of *Animal's People*, Jans Elze claims that Sinha's novel tackles the

complicity of western empathy to the perpetuation of "cultural difference" (156). Elze suggests that humanitarian interventions tend to accentuate cultural difference and subalternization of native communities since they depend on the uncritical "transportation of various liberal and cosmopolitan feelings and assumptions onto the experiences and conditions of non-European others" (157). Western humanitarian intervention, Elze argues, sustains non-European otherness by failing to account for its complicity in the international division of labor and the "depolitization of inequality into cultural difference" (160). The critic concludes that, despite the fact that the novel does invite readers to reflect on the "production of abject otherness" germane to the practices of globalization, it, ultimately, embraces "globalized empathy" (164).[99]Andrew Mahlstedt, on the other hand, contends that, while the novel depicts the marginalization of subalterns, it does not reproduce images of disempowered communities (72). Mahlstedt explores the ways in which the poor and disenfranchised communities of postcolonial nations are recognized by western discourses only insofar they are perceived "through the spectacle of 'third-world poverty' that structures seeing" (59). By exploring literary moments of "spectacular invisibility," Mahlstedt argues that Sinha's novel contemplates how subaltern communities are, paradoxically, both "invisible and spectacle" (60). They are deemed "invisible" because western discourse and media acknowledge their existence only through "spectacles" of disaster and hopelessness. According to Mahlstedt, Sinha's novel "represents disempowerment without disempowering" since the Khaufpuris constantly disrupt the politics of misrepresentation enacted through international organizations and activists (61). More importantly, Mahstedt argues, by refusing to provide a superficial resolution to the predicament of the Khaufpuris, Sinha recognizes the limits and responsibility of literature to narrate the entanglements between globalization and subaltern communities and avoids accommodating the political implications of this event in the comforts of the literary *Bildungsroman* (72). Put differently, in the case of Animal's People "aesthetic justice" does not supplant political justice (Mahlstedt 72).[100]

In his article on *Animal's People*, Omar Johnston remarks that the novel documents the proliferation of posthuman subaltern communities and ways in which the effects of capitalist toxicity are imprinted on their genetic code. Animal is just one

example where the toxic reach of corporate capitalism penetrates and alters the chemical composition of subaltern communities (Johnston 118). The critic suggests that the "nother world" Animal and his fellow Khafpuris inhabit constitutes a "zone of contestation…filled with communities of prosthetic assemblage and networks of domination" (122). While the struggle for the recognition of the ever-lasting effects of the Bhopal disaster continues, Johnston suggests that Animal's figure "opens to the possibility that the prosthetic touch of abject materiality might constitute a nonhuman political community" (136).

Due to its posthuman implications, *Animal's People* has been analyzed by Rob Nixon through the concept of "slow violence" with the aim of revealing the ways in which capitalist toxicity affects subaltern lives in the long-term with unpredictable consequences (452). "Slow violence" connotes the "chemical and radiological violence" that remains concealed and unincorporated by contemporary narratives since its effects, mutations and corrosiveness evade "the visual orthodoxies of victory and defeat" (Nixon 445). The neoliberal agenda that underpins the practices of international corporations, like Union Carbine, "erodes national sovereignty" both by denying political and legislative accountability and by physically compromising the community's present and future generations (Nixon 444). In these puzzling "geographies of concealment" that neocolonial practices chart, *Animal's People* discloses attentive posthuman solidarities that interrogate corporate politics and reverse the dehumanizing effects of toxic globalization (Nixon 444). Jesse Oaks Taylor suggests that Sinha's narrative draws attention to the subaltern communities' potentiality to "transform a narrative from weakness to power" (178). Taylor argues that as long as "monetization of life" constitutes the primary principle that undergirds humanitarianism and developmental projects, subaltern communities will perennially be represented as disempowered (181). Although the capitalist toxicity emitted by Union Carbine has penetrated the social, financial and psychological fabric of the community, the Khaufpuris manage to forge alliances and collectivities that mandate the recontextualization of subaltern politics to include bodies and subjectivities that question previous political classifications.

Jennifer Rickell suggests that Animal's "posthumanist perspective" unsettles both the uncritical humanitarian agendas promulgated by the discourses of globalization and

dominant conceptualizations of the human (98). Animal's deformity complicates theorizations of the human since the young Khaufpuri perceives his deformity not as a mark of subalternity or victimization but as an empowering position from which he may contemplate the contingencies of humanitarian politics articulated according to the mandates of globalization (Rickell 100-101). By employing Joseph Slaughter's concept of "literary humanitarianism," Rickell contends that Sinha's novel demonstrates how the reading of disaster narratives may occasionally supplant humanitarian initiatives (88). More importantly, the critic suggests that Sinha's novel focuses on the ways "literary humanitarianism" can undermine sovereignty and the community's struggle for self-determination by occluding the "economic and political realities" that are responsible for their subalternization in the first place (104). In the literary analysis that follows, I contemplate the visceral effects of capitalist toxicity and the ways in which its ever-lasting impact on the Bhopal survivors demands another reading of the concepts of time, space and political accountability. I also examine the subaltern solidarities that emerge out of this constellation of capitalist spillage and pollution and reflect on the ways they complicate the methodological tasks of the Subaltern Studies group.

Deformed by the toxic waste of the Bhopal disaster, walking on fours and destined to view the world from below, Animal persistently rejects the idea of the human and justice propounded by Zafar and the Kampani. Zafar is a controversial figure in Sinha's text for he seems to embody the benevolent activist who organizes the local subaltern struggle by constantly retrieving concepts whose truth substance is highly contestable in postcolonial India. Constantly trying to convince Animal that the ideas of justice and humanity are nonnegotiable and can be reclaimed in the ruins of the disaster, he urges Animal to side with their struggle. Although Animal is marginalized due to his deformity and radical behaviour, living in the ruins of the factory, he is regarded by Zafar as a "human being, entitled to dignity and respect" (23). What Animal finds rather disconcerting is the way in which Zafar romanticizes the lives and struggles of the subaltern. This becomes evident during Zafar's dream where he juxtaposes the "power of zero" to the Kampani's inscrutable facelessness: "…he remembers that he is not helpless, that he possesses the invincible, undefeatable power of zero" (229). Zafar constantly repeats to Animal that what makes the subaltern strong is precisely her subalternity:

"Yes, we have nothing and this makes us strong. Not just strong, but invisible. Having nothing we can never be defeated" (54). A fervent believer of political struggle and theory, Zafar goes as far as ordering the injured Khaufpuris to boycott Elli's clinic until she discloses her motives (99). In the figure of Zafar, Sinha animates the humanitarian activist who prioritizes his political agenda over the everyday struggle of the subalterns. Animal does not reject the idea that subaltern subjects can develop counternarratives to oppression and disenfranchisement, but he disavows attempts to romanticize subalternity. He is opposed to Zafar's uncritical benevolence that the "poor have virtues:" "He speaks of how people whose lungs were ruined by the Kampani's poisons, who have difficulties just breathing, still manage to laugh. But when Zafar talks like this it's not the laughter of the poor I hear, it's the laughter of the Kampani that slaughtered them" (141). Aware of the plasticity of his (in)human condition, constantly in the making by the dominant (mis)representations of capitalist and humanitarian discourses, Animal rejects being defined according to concepts and ideologies that keep marginalizing him: "'My name is Animal,' I say. 'I'm not a fucking human being, I've no wish to be one'" (23).

Animal not only rejects the banality of concepts and political agendas which tend to gloss over and oversimplify complicated ethical issues but also remains aware of an everlasting and undetected, at first glance, assault on subaltern communities. Animal recognizes that time and space have acquired another dimension in Khaufpur. The legal concepts and political theories propounded both by the state and Zafar are inadequate to the task of grounding and engaging the violence suffered by the local community. For Animal, time in Khaufpur is "Now o'clock, always now o'clock. In the Kingdom of the Poor, time doesn't exist" (185). Animal's conceptualization of time does not refer merely to the post-Bhopal disaster zone established in the area but designates a neocolonial practice whose spatial and temporal contaminations are viscerally manifested on the subaltern body-politic.

The reason behind the poisonous leak of methyl isocyanate gas on December 3rd 1984, one that killed 3,828 people and 2,544 livestock, injured 30,000 and contaminated the regional eco-system for the following years,[101] was the company's aim to reduce expenses which, ultimately, compromised safety procedures (Johnston 137). The aftermath of the disaster cannot be fully grasped since it crippled the Bhopal community

socially, financially and ecologically and, furthermore, it posited legislative challenges the nation has not overcome. The company responsible for the pesticide factory constructed in Bhopal, Union Carbide, has a long history of research in the field of technology, agriculture and armaments. From 1905 and onwards, Union Carbide started investing in Indian agriculture and business (S. Mukherjee18). The company began building facilities and plants in India after Independence and in 1968 it "shifted its agricultural products from Mumbai to Bhopal" (S. Mukherjee 18). The Indian state facilitated and endorsed corporate investment and the proliferation of subsidiaries in the country for it conceived capitalist globalization and the Green Revolution to be vehicles that would align India with the developed Asian nations and bring the decolonization process to its successful end. Hence, India, similarly to other third world countries, became a "hotspot" for multinational companies that desired to create "chemical hubs" (S. Mukherjee 19). Hence, in 1979, the Bhopal facility expanded into building a methyl isocyanate production unit.

The accident that occurred in the Bhopal factory on December 2nd 1984 was only the manifestation of a disaster that predated and continued after the main event. S. Mukherjee suggests that critical inquiries should no longer engage the event as the Bhopal disaster but as "slow Bhopals" indicating the ongoing spillage of capitalist toxicity onto the Bhopal community. According to S. Mukherjee, there were numerous minor working accidents that did not alert the company to the security irregularities of the facility since the administration turned a blind eye to cases of "slow poisoning of both workers and residents…caused by the release of low levels of toxic chemicals into the air water" (24). Almost one kilometer away from the factory, the toxic waste produced was stored in pits, tanks and evaporation ponds (71). During 1981 and 1982, local farmers noticed that "cattle died as a result of exposure to poisonous water" and documented unprecedented soil infertility (71). The Bhopal disaster cannot be chronologically designated as an industrial accident that occurred on December 2nd in 1984 nor does the Bhopal community need to *remember* the date or the event for it had been living *in* the event long before the fatal gas leak of that night. This is why Animal grounds this experience in the temporal vacuum of the "now o' clock" for essentially the Bhopal disaster constitutes:

> …a continuing disaster that has damaged the body systems of men, women, and children and has caused serious ecological imbalance. While the cocktail of deadly chemicals and pesticides has continued to act slowly on the body, the communities living in the vicinity of the factory have been drinking poisoned water, breathing poisoned air, and growing their vegetables on heavily contaminated soil. The accident on that fateful night was only a small indicator of a much larger process of environmental degradation. (S.Mukherjee 71)

As Suroopa Mukherjee's account discloses, the Bhopal disaster constitutes an event that not only stretches in time but also extends to, permeates and genetically modifies both people and their eco-system. Bhopal's "continuing disaster" challenges dominant representational discourses and official lines of detection for its everlasting repercussions affected the community socially, financially, physically and psychologically (71).[102]

In Sinha's novel, the struggle of the community to bring the company to justice is manifested through Zafar, a middle-class leading activist advocating for the compensation of the injured and the deceased. After abandoning his studies and devoting himself to the plight of the Khaufpuris for justice, Zafar organizes the community's policy in their legislative endeavor to hold the "Kampani" accountable. Zafar, who repeatedly claims that his aim is that "simple natural justice" prevails (227), is aware of the bureaucratic abyss and legislative maneuvers that shield the multinational company from assuming responsibility for the disaster. During a dream in which he sees himself flying over the ruins of Khaufpur accompanied by a crow, Zafar asks the bird to show him the face of his enemy (228). The crow takes him to a metropolis where a giant concrete building towers above other grey structures. His gaze travels though the numerous floors of the building only to reveal a crowd of lawyers, researchers, doctors, Personal Relations staff, soldiers and politicians feasting on the industrial ruins of Bhopal (229). It is there that Zafar realizes that the company's multi-corporeality and its myriad proxies actually produce an uncanny and intractable facelessness that leads him to conclude that "'The Kampani has no face'" (229). What the Bhopal disaster unconcealed, apart from the systematic contamination and destruction of peoples and their ecosystem,

is how a multinational company would resort to the same colonial and dehumanizing discourse of the less-than-human other in order to disavow any responsibility for the disaster.

One such example is Union Carbide's chairman, Warren Anderson, who claimed that the responsibility for the accident laid to the plant operators since the safety protocols applied to a United States factory are identical to the ones applied in Bhopal (qtd in U. Mukherjee 137). The company's legal representatives argued that the case cannot be tried in an Indian court for the latter had no jurisdiction over a multinational based in the United States (142). In 1989, the Indian state reached a settlement with the company which paid 470 million dollars in order for all charges to be dropped. Mukherjee suggests that this amount equals to "3000 dollars in today's money to every human victim" (143). Although the settlement was rejected by the victims' organization, the United States government threatened the Indian state not to press any further charges for they would be economically assaulted by the former (Mukherjee 143). Despite the predictable legal maneuvers of a multinational company and its attempts to reduce the extermination of human lives, animals and plants to logistical compromise, what is rather disconcerting is how the colonial discourse undergirds contemporary neoliberal practices. I am referring to a statement made by the Dow Chemical's spokesperson, Kathy Hunt, in an attempt to defend the merger during which Union Carbide was bought and dissolved by the Dow Chemicals Industry. Referring to the amount allocated to the victims after the settlement, Hunt argued that: "'You can't really do more than that, can you? 500 dollars is pretty good for an Indian'" (qtd in Johnston 128).

This is the cynical outcome of capitalist and neoliberal discourses which propound an idea of the human as a fully commodifiable being according to financial markers. This is also an indication of the colonial discourse that sustains neocolonial and neoliberal forms of domination. Sinha's novel articulates how the Indian elite and the West (mis)recognize subalterns as less than humans in a scene between Elli Barber, a doctor who abandons the United States and relocates to India in order to build a clinic to assist the survivors, and one of her colleagues. In an attempt to make Elli abstain from any sympathetic approach to the suffering community of Khaufpur and face the facts, he contends that: "'Those poor people never had a chance. If it had not been the factory it

would have been cholera, TB, exhaustion, hunger. They would have died anyway'" (153). Both the actual statements by the company's spokespeople and Sinha's text articulate the challenges subaltern communities face in their struggle to be heard. Spivak, I would like to suggest, does not imply that the subaltern is devoid of speech, but that his speech is violently misinterpreted and muted by a nexus of neoliberal, capitalist and patriarchal discourses that accommodate subaltern speech to their calculative frame and dehumanizing policies and, hence, discursively silence it. The Bhopal disaster unconceals the perpetuating and evolving colonial practices, apparatuses and discourses which produce a postcolonial subject whose death does not "fully count as death" (Johnston 131). It also reveals, how in the age of capitalist globalization, multinational companies can, through the vanishing act of the merger, evade accountability for an event, whose debilitating repercussions are still evident.

The tragic event also revealed that a new kind of violence is being unleashed upon India's subaltern communities and subjects. In Sinha's novel, this becomes manifest in Elli's visit to the slums of Khaufpur where she witnesses the ongoing effects of the disaster. Accompanied by Animal and a Khaufpur survivor, named I'm Alive, Elli realizes that relief policies are inadequate to the task of ameliorating the people's suffering. During her visit in one of the houses, she observes a mother who presses the milk out of her swollen breast onto the earth. The mother confesses to Elli that everything in the Khaufpur district is poison: "'Our wells are full of poison. It's in the soil, water, in our blood, it's in our milk. Everything here is poisoned'" (107). I'm Alive narrates to Elli how he got his nickname after his neighbours, one after the other, started developing cancer making him the last man standing (109). S. Mukherjee argues that the disaster tore "the very fabric of social life" since many children were orphaned while others were forced to migrate to secure a minimum level of income. The event, S. Mukherjee suggests, changed "relationships within the family" as many bread-earners either died or suffered from serious diseases (48). The disaster crippled the community in the long run since it deprived many of its members of the ability to exchange their labour for a steady income due to the diseases, the loss of family members, dementia and the social dislocation the event engendered.

This new kind of violence, manifested in Animal's deformation and the thousands who suffered, and are still suffering, the effects of that night, is indicative of the ways capitalist globalization produces "novel forms of biological citizenship" (Nixon 445). If the subaltern constitutes a subjectivity marked by the misrepresentation and misrecognition of dominant discourses, the posthuman subaltern[103] bears the marks of capitalist toxicity which permeates the subaltern at its molecular level. Rob Nixon identifies this kind of violence as "slow violence" in order to articulate how capitalist globalization produces a new "factory life" (Johnston 118) that internalizes the pathogenic teleologies of capital:

> Chemical and radiological slow violence is driven inward, somatized into cellular dramas of mutation, into unobserved special effects. From a narrative perspective, such invisible, mutagenic theater is slow-paced but open-ended, eluding the tidy closure, the narrative containment, imposed by the visual orthodoxies of victory and defeat. (Nixon 445)

Nixon discloses how capitalist toxicity becomes physically embedded and manifests in ways that remain undocumented by dominant methods of representation leading to confusion over who counts as a sufferer. More importantly, "slow violence" constitutes a complex procedure of genetic mutation whose "open-endedness" cannot be documented either by medical or legislative apparatuses and discourses. Attuned to its ecological temporality, the Bhopal community relives and re-internalizes capitalist toxicity since during the monsoon season the remaining toxics re-poison the community's wells "producing new cycles of deferred casualties" (Nixon 457).

Animal's deformed body is a manifestation of a new stage of capitalist globalization for it reflects the ways in which the leakage of capitalist toxicity by international corporations located in the West contaminates and undermines the consolidation of sovereignty of indigenous people around the world. Nixon argues that "slow violence" constitutes the outcome of a "neoliberal ideology that erodes national sovereignty" since it cripples subaltern communities exponentially (444). In the midst of the toxic fallout that tore the social fabric of Khaufpur and compromised the present and

future of the community, an uncanny affiliation begins to form between Animal and an unborn fetus maintained in a glass jar.

Singh argues that *Animal's People* is a text which articulates "dehumanist solidarities" that engage "animality" as a point of departure in order to interrogate the "sovereignty of man" and anticolonial mappings of the human that fail to deconstruct the inherent mastering proclivities this project entails (122). The critic maintains that Animal is doubly "dispossessed" since he is the victim of the neocolonial powers that caused his physical deformation and due to his own choice to "willfully reject 'the world of humans' in an effort to cultivate other forms of solidarity" (123). Sings detects traces of Animal's "dehumanist solidarities" in his befriending of the wild dog Jara and the relationship he develops with Anjali. I would like to add to the "queer" community Animal inaugurates the unborn fetus, Kha-in-the-Jar, and suggest that the specific affiliation invites us to reflect both on the new spaces of subalternity that capitalist globalization reveals and on the importance of the methodological legacy of the Subaltern Studies collective.

Animal becomes initially aware of Kha-in-the-Jar when Ma Franci, a French nun, takes him to the local health center to ask for some medical advice concerning the former's deformation. While the doctor informs Ma Franci, Animal's eyes rest on a glistening jar containing an unborn fetus (57). Upon closer inspection, Animal observes that a "second head is growing out of the side of his neck" attesting to a potential premature birth due to the fetus's teratogenesis. The fetus introduces himself as "Kha-in-the-Jar" and narrates to Animal how he has been the object of various tests and experiments by doctors and scientists who wish the study its physiological irregularities (58). In their following sessions, Kha will confess to Animal that he is not the only teratogenic fetus the disaster produced. During one of his hallucinations, Animal imagines an entire table filled with jars encasing deformed embryos (236). Kha welcomes Animal to a meeting of the "Board of Directors" consisting of unborn fetuses whose objective is to "undo everything the Kampani does" by replanting deforested areas and "make medicines to heal the hurts done" by the poisonous leak (237). In his reading of the "posthuman communities" Sinha's novel connotes, Johnston suggests that capitalist toxicity does not only produce deformed and abject bodies but it also conjures posthuman assemblages that counter the deleterious effects of capitalist globalization (136). In a

similar vein, Upamanyu Mukherjee reads in the text "the emergence of a politics of transpersonality and collectivity in response to the toxic degradation of a postcolonial environment" (228). Works like Sinha's and Devi's interrogate the liminalities of criticism and the concept of sovereignty for they urge us to contemplate how that which is perceived to be inanimate can, not only disrupt the existing domain of human politics, but also constitute an alternative cartography of the political.

I would like to argue that the Subaltern Studies' methodological inquiries gestured to this direction since their objective was to constantly interrogate the voices and subjectivities that political discourses reductively accommodated by consigning them to the sphere of the pre-political. The environmental crisis engendered by capitalist globalization and over-exploitation of natural habitats necessitates methodological inquires that examine the politics of natural elements and (non)beings conceived to be inconsequential and external to human history.

3.8 Radical Bodily Encounters and the Deconstruction of Phallic Sovereignty

For Animal, walking on his legs and having intercourse with Nisha are the main requirements in order to reclaim his position in the world of humans and relinquish his inhuman identity: "Sex was the one thing I could never forget, my second impossible wish. My first wish was to stand upright but why did I want that if not because it led to the second" (75)? His desires are aggravated when he becomes aware that the object of his desire, Nisha, has befriended Zafar and, probably, the two of them maintain a relationship:

> I hate Zafar, he could have any woman, but he'll take the only girl who treats me like normal, which by god I am, one day I'll prove it by plunging this thing of mine into a living woman. I'll pierce her and open her up until my cock is stroking her heart and she's crying my name, "Animal! Animal! Animal!" and I will suck the sweetness of life from her lips. (231)

In order to render Zafar sexually impotent and claim Nisha as his own, Animal begins to poison Zafar with castration pills. Interestingly, he administers the first dose before Zafar's meeting with the community in order to discuss the boycott of the health clinic (123). Unwittingly, Animal reproduces the strategy of chemical contamination deployed by Union Carbine in order to establish himself as the rightful contender of the young girl. Johnston argues that Animal's struggle to reclaim his position in the "patriarchal 'world of humans'" is inextricably linked with the "heterosexual fantasy of also becoming a husband" (138). Animal's voyeuristic tendencies, spying Nisha and Ellie when they bathe, and his constant preoccupation with his "lund of lunds," his "heavy monster" (241) attest to an unresolved castration anxiety that conduce to his patriarchal and sexist fantasies. Nevertheless, Animal undergoes a radical transformation when he visits the prostitute Anjali.

Anjali has been abducted from her village and forced to sex labour in Lucknow (242). She confesses to Animal that escaping the *kotha* equals to suicide for the prostitutes who run away are captured and burnt with acid (242). Instead of materializing his sexual fantasies, Anjali and Animal spend the night cuddling like "two rainbow-coloured animals" bathed in the soft hues of an approaching dawn (242). Animal's only request is to allow him to observe her genitals. Although he initially compares her physical figure to that of a "Coca Cola bottle" with "plump brown legs," he is gradually mesmerized by Anjali's genital anatomy (243). He describes the outer part of her labia as a "large cowrie" with "two whorled petals...tinged with purple" (243). In the "frilly" edges of her genitals that "collide in small peak," Animal imagines the figure of a "woman with her head veiled" (243). Anjali parts her "petals" and reveals to Animal a "rosy cavern" that reminds him of the hibiscus flower. It is the gradual revelation of her interior vagina that urges Animal to interrogate his sexual drives:

> She shows me how the rose cave leads to a tunnel whose mouth at first was hidden, this is the way that leads to the womb, where life begins, where I began, where we all began. I try to imagine the womb and realise that it's an empty space, which means there's nothingness at the very source of creation. (243-244)

In her feminist reading of Sigmund Freud's and Jacques Lacan's elaborations on the castration complex and the perception of female genitalia in psychoanalytic discourse, Larysa Mykyta argues that the early psychoanalytic studies conducted by the father of psychology establish the phallus at the center of analysis rendering female genitals and sexual development as marginal to the centrality of the male organ. Freud, tracing the trajectory of the Oedipal and, later on, of the castration complex, avers that the male child cannot fathom that his genitals, to whom they are indissolubly linked to his subjectivity, "could be missing in other people to whom he feels he resembles so much" (Freud 460). As soon as the male child observes the female genitals, Freud argues, he develops the idea that the female is actually castrated and left with a "wound" (460). Conceiving female genitals and women as wounded and lacking propels the male to "tremble for his masculinity" and perceive his sexuality as foundational for the conceptualization of the female (Freud 460).

Sarah Kofman's work *The Enigma of the Woman: Woman in Freud's Writings* (1985) is an extensive elaboration on the phallocentric discourse that conditions Freud's psychoanalytic research. Kofman reveals how Freud's basic concepts and research findings situate the woman at the margin of psychoanalytic behavior while the phallus constitutes the epicenter of behavioral development. According to Kofman, Freud read women primarily as the main cause of men's ailments and neuroses (30). In his charting of the development of the male child's behavior, Freud contends that the most defining moment in his life is the moment he sees the girl's genitals and "imagines this 'nothing' as the result of castration" (Kofman 142). In order to overcome the horror that female genitals engender to the male, the latter would unconsciously "endow the little girl with a little penis" (142). While boys perceive female genitalia as an anxiety-provoking "nothing" that ignites their castration complex, girls are overcome by envy when they encounter masculine genitalia (179).When Animal is exposed to Anjali's genitalia, he perceives her "nothingness" not in terms of a lack or wound, but as an undecipherable locus which does not bend to the mandates of heteronormative and phallic economies. Kofman argues that in Freudian theory while the sexual development unfolds in a "simple, linear, logical fashion from beginning to end," women need to follow a reverse course since in the primary stages of their sexual behavior they are tasked with

suppressing their "original masculinity…so as to let the woman emerge, so as to pass from a masculine erogenous zone to one that is woman's own, the vaginal zone" (143).

Kofman's feminist deconstruction of Freud's writings illustrates how the father of psychology, in his attempt to decipher the enigma of the woman, developed a psychoanalytic discourse that situates the woman as the object of a phallocentric world. "Why," Kofman asks, "was it unusual for Freud to regard woman as self-sufficient? Why did he seem panic-stricken, unable to bear the sight of his 'double'" (65)? According to Kofman, Freud does provide a solution to the enigma of the woman yet the answers he offers are only satisfying to the male audience he obeys. Freud's examination of female sexuality and subjectivity are in tandem with the patriarchal discourses that condition colonialism where native land, similarly to female genitalia, is perceived as an anxiety-provoking space in anticipation of the male subject who will imbue its "nothingness" with meaning. Following Lacan's examination of the importance of the "phallus" in the sexual economy of the symbolic order, Mykyta affirms that it is the visibility and "tangibility" of the male organ that conditions the signifying values it has acquired in dominant discourse and culture:

> The phallus 'is chosen' to be privileged because 'it is the most tangible element in the real of sexual copulation. . . .'. And if there is any doubt that the functioning of the symbolic finds its support in the vision of a real organ, it is effaced with Lacan's assertion that 'the phallus . . . is something the symbolic use of which is possible because it can be seen, because it is erect.' Lacan immediately adds that 'of what cannot be seen, of what is hidden there can be no possible symbolic use.' (Mykyta 50)

Situating the "phallus" as the master signifier, from which all other significations derive, conduces to the conceptualization of female genitals, sexuality and subjectivity as supplementary to the male, incomplete and lacking. "Woman then," Mykyta argues, "becomes a being that from a male point of view…is not-all ('pas-toute'), that is, a creature that is not whole…" (51). The invisibility of the female genitals, in contrast to the visible and erect phallus, constitutes an uncharted anatomical cartography that the

patriarchal gaze strives to decipher and master. Similarly to the vastness of the Indian land, which challenged the colonial administration in its mapping, the womb, this "nothingness at the very source of creation" as Animal perceives it, demarcates an uncanny locus that bewilders the politics of the colonial and patriarchal gaze. The female organ, Mykyta suggests following Lacan, "means nothing to man; he does not understand it/her because the female tells him nothing" (51). There is, therefore, an unsettling "not speakingness," to borrow Spivak's term, the moment the male gaze encounters the female organ; a silence that disrupts the sovereignty of the male gaze. Anjali's womb cannot be represented by and grounded into Animal's reductively patriarchal discourse. It evades signification for, as Mykyta suggests, the figure of the woman is "repressed" in the male economy; it constitutes his radical other and an "image that cannot [does not] speak" (51).

The encounter between Anjali and Animal unconceals a sexual politics that dismantles the phallocentric economies which fashion heteronormative relationships. Instead of reaffirming the master-slave dynamic between a prostitute and her rapist, the couple opts to cuddle throughout the night and engage each other's sexuality in a non-confrontational and non-assimilative manner. Put differently, what Animal and Anjali, a gendered subaltern forced to sexual bonded labour and a young man whose physical disfigurations evince the toxic pervasiveness of globalization, illuminate throughout this scene is the potentiality of demarcating a political imaginary that reconfigures the subjugating proclivities intimated by neocolonial and patriarchal discourse. Following Luce Irigaray's elaborations on an alternative ethics of sexual difference, I would like to argue that Anjali and Animal's encounter illustrates, what Irigaray calls, "another parousia of the body" (Irigaray 16).

In her work *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (1982), Irigaray underpins the urgency of reconceptualizing the ways in which the female body and subjectivity is perceived. The philosopher claims that "a change in our perception and conception of space-time" is necessary in order to deconstruct the phallic and patriarchal inscriptions that mark the female body as "places," "containers" or "envelopes of identity" (8). Irigaray's aim is to reveal how female subjectivity is stereotypically defined according to the roles assigned by patriarchal discourses established by male philosophers and thinkers. Female

subjectivity and body constitute a heterogeneous space which phallocentric and patriarchal discourses struggle to decipher and, as Irigaray maintains, situate in a predefined ontological site. This process of misrepresentation enacted by male philosophers and thinkers conduces to the objectification of the woman since she is "delineated as a thing" awaiting the providence of male intervention in order to find her place in his political and social imaginary (Irigaray 10). Patriarchal discourses, the thinker claims, misconstrue female bodies as "envelopes" and "containers" in order to prevent female subjectivities from demarcating political and ontological itineraries that could unsettle established male narratives (Irigaray 10). Although patriarchal discourses have engaged the enigma of the woman as a space that needs to be disciplined, mastered and assigned a functional role in male political and social imaginaries, there are moments when the woman "undoes his work" by "creating some interval, play, something in motion and unlimited which disturb his perspective, his world, and his/its limits" (10).

The non-sexual encounter between Anjali and Animal constitutes a moment that incarnates an "interval" since the two "rainbow-coloured animals" abstain from engaging in an act that would reaffirm the sexual politics of mastery and colonization (Sinha 242). In her elaboration on the "interval," Irigaray contends that it signifies an encounter where "one sex is not entirely consumable by the other. There is always a remainder." (14). The "interval" designates an erotic encounter that defies the preordained objectives of the sexual act since "no alliance is forged; nothing is celebrated" and the "encounter is annihilated or deferred to a future that never comes" (Irigaray 14). The sexual politics Irigaray contemplates disrupts phallocentric economies which place the sexual act within established narratives of mastery. By remaining unincorporated to phallic fantasies, this dysteleological encounter unconceals "another parousia of the body" (Irigaray16). Merely observing Anjali's anatomy, foreclosing any potential consummation, penetration and assimilation of her sexuality and subjectivity, enables Animal to interrogate the phallic drives which condition both his sovereign claims and his subjectivity; during this non-confrontational encounter with Anjali, Animal witnesses an alternative conceptualization of politics which is wrenched from the colonizing drives that fashion his masculinity and ontological comportment.

Animal undergoes a profound transformation after his encounter with Anjali for he understands that his rapist fantasies constitute a reanimation of the colonial and neocolonial politics enacted via the enclosure and overexploitation of native land and its penetration by chemical multinationals that defile native grounds with toxic spillage. Before Animal leaves Anjali's room, she asks him to give her some money. Animal refuses not because he is broke but because he refuses to legitimize a patriarchal system that disgraces female subjectivity and body. He chooses not to validate a system, both global and local, that perennially disenfranchises tribal women and children.

3.9 Conclusion

While Adiga's protagonist is oblivious of subaltern insurgencies and solidarities which attest to historical events when communities were brought together against landlords, bonded labour and expropriation, his predicament is indicative of subjectivities that cannot rely on communal dynamics in order to counter exploitation and indebtedness. The compromised electoral processes and the criminal network comprised of landlords, businessmen and politicians evince the failure of decolonization and the ways in which neoliberal discourse seems to be one of the few means available to subalterns to achieve autonomy. Balram's basic objective is to be "liberated" from the oppressive conditions that perpetuate an undignified life. His final resolution to establish a "school of White Tigers" where students would be indoctrinated in the undisputable "facts of life" and not in anachronistic fairy tales with no application to the modern world exposes how neoliberalism and market rationality progressively evolve into an indispensable capitalist pedagogy to which many subalterns need to concede if they are to be "liberated" from feudal oppression. As Balram confesses, it is from the vantage point of capitalist hegemony that he can ultimately act ethically and liberate the rest of his family from the degrading conditions of subalternity.

Balram's epistolary confession to Wen Jiabao gestures to the transformation of the modern Indian state so as to reconcile the potentialities of neoliberalism with the tasks of socialist critique. Jiabao's reform of the state aimed at ushering the Chinese nation into the channels of globalization without dismissing basic democratic ideals that protect the

dignity of the people. However, this project is rife with contradictions especially when state and developmental projects are now regulated by extra-political commissions which have pledged their allegiance to the dictates of market rationality and less to popular sovereignty. The deregulation of the market and deterioration of the state are fundamental requirements for countries which wish to insert themselves in the channels of globalization. By the deregulation of the state, we refer to the progressive surrendering of numerous social sectors and services to international commissions which read the biological needs of the social body solely through the register of their exchange value.

Sinha's novel is quite illuminating in revealing the discursive continuity between globalization and phallic economies. Addressing the inequalities germane to the processes of globalization mandates the interrogation of the deeply embedded masculine propensity to dominate and tame female space and subjectivity. Animal constitutes a valuable literary example since he is a subaltern who realizes the proximity between his desires and the capitalist drives that propel international corporations to plunder and overexploit native land. His unproductive copulation with the prostitute Anjali, though, impels him to question his masculinist fantasies and comprehend the extent to which his sexual drives and comportment bear resemblance to the appropriating politics of the Kampani. The non-assimilative encounter he experiences his Anjali does not only connote an alternative politics of the body but also unconceals a future beyond the restraints of capitalist hegemony.

Notes

[58] See Spivak's essay "Megacity - 1997: Testing Theory in the Cities" in her work *Other Asias*. While various international corporations have branched out in India, limited access to social welfare and inequalities remain unresolved. Despite its official abolishment in 1976, bonded labour still persists in India. In his work *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labour Servitude in Colonial India*, Gyan Prakash explores how bonded labour was historically materialized in colonial India and its perseverance in postcolonial times. Prakash is interested in examining religion, economy and myths in order to discuss the consolidation of bonded labour in India. According to Ravi Srivastava, bonded labour is "characterized by a creditor-debtor relationship" which can affect other members of the debtor's family and draw them in bondage indefinitely (2). In his article on "Capitalism and Bonded Labour in India," Tom Brass argues that neoliberalism has augmented bonded labour relationships and that the subalterns are currently exposed to "neo-bondage" forms of exploitation (212).

[59] Wendy Brown analyzes how the figure of the homo oeconomicus can potentially overshadow the democratic figure of the homo politicus in western democracies. See *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (2015).

[60] The ascendancy to power of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in West Bengal during the 1960's caused a lot of anxiety among the landowners who feared that the contracted laborers who cultivated the *jotedars* property would demand a share of their land, crops and profits (Bhattacharya 99). In order to avert farmers from making any political claims, the landowners began laying off and illegally evicting the peasants (Bhattacharya 99). The Naxalbari peasant demonstrations led to violent police suppression which indiscriminately opened fire killing women and children (99). This led to a systematization and radicalization of leftist armed struggle led by CPI leaders (Bhattacharya 99).

[61] Devi has confessed that she started living with tribals since she wanted to "to solve the problem by seeing everything from his or her point of view" (*Imaginary Maps* xii). In an interview to Gabriele Collu, Devi has stated that Spivak accompanied the former in her visitations to tribal areas and, since then, the critic visited "at least ten times" tribal villages (144). According to Devi, Spivak's involvement in the tribal way of life and their struggle for recognition has divested the latter of any pedagogical presumptions; as the critic has stated to Devi "'I go to the village to learn, not to teach. I go to learn. I listen to them in reverence' " (Collu144). Their engagement with subaltern communities has enabled, in Devi's case, to compose a body of work that dwells on the contradictions of globalization without dismissing the benefits of modernization and in Spivak's, that literature and theory need to be examined reciprocally, the one interrogating the other embracing the "constructive questions" and "corrective doubts" this exercise may entail (*In other Worlds* 258).

[62] In her elaboration on the potential misapplication of western discourses to postcolonial India, Spivak refers to Devi's short story "Douloti the Bountiful." Spivak discusses how Douloti remains unassimilated both by the "critical collectivity of prostitutes" to which she is forced into and the "armed

struggle of the men in the gendered-divided word" ("More on Power/Knowledge" 166). Devi's protagonists, Spivak argues, resemble a series of "unconnected letters in a script neither archaic nor modern, caught neither in a past present, nor on the way to a future present. They are monuments to the anxiety of their inevitable disappearance as 'justice is done,' and the episteme is on the way to regularization. If you consider Mahasweta's fictive and social text together, 'feminism' becomes a necessary but misfitting name" (166).

[63] In reporting the injustices committed against the tribals and events of insurrection, Devi aimed at revealing that, despite their failures, peasant insurgencies were testaments of communities that resisted the nationalist and globalizing tendencies of the nation-state and the landowners. For Devi, "'failure can be more glorious than victory' " for the fallen " 'continue to live in our minds' " (Sonali 102). A telling example, which demonstrates how Devi's anti-colonial reporting is in tandem with the revisionist project of the collective, is narrated in her article "Palamau, a Vast Crematorium" (*Dust on the Road 122*). During a visit to the district of Birsa Chowk, Devi stands in anger before a statue of Birsa Munda who is depicted in chains (125). The image propels Devi to ask why the leader of one of the most important tribal insurgencies is represented as defeated when tribal struggles live on and persist precisely because insurgents like Birsa Munda stood up to colonial powers. "Is it to emphasize," Devi asks, "the fact that tribal existence is better preserved in chains and that, to protest, against bondage is futile" (125)?

[64] Dipesh Chakrabarty elaborates extensively on the Cambridge historians who discursively relegated peasant insurgency in his work *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (2002). Subaltern Studies Group's objective was to present an "antielitist approach to history" in order to reveal that the subaltern, far from a passive observer of the unfolding of Indian nationalism, was actually a "subject of history" (Chakrabarty 7).

[65] One of Guha's main concerns is to examine the reasons why the colonial administration and the East India Company utilized historiography in order to salvage the colonial project from the subaltern insurgents and non-collaborators who, through mass mobilizations and acts of resistance, undermined the establishment of the colonial rule. The main objective of the East India Company, Guha claims, was the collection of revenues with the assistance of the Diwan across the Indian territory in order to finance the expansion of the empire and the sea trade (*Dominance without Hegemony* 3). For the efficient collection of revenues, the colonial administration had to establish the legal relation of tribal communities to the land they inhabited. Such a project was practically unfeasible since the colonial administrators were tasked with first comprehending the various "intricacies of proprietorship" that connected the tribals to their land (1). In practice, that meant tracing and documenting "lines of descent," traditional inheritance laws and oral testimonies whose truth-value could not be sustained through the bureaucratic and legislative discourse employed by the colonial administration (Guha 1). It was under these circumstances, therefore, that the "Diwan had to undertake the function of the historian as well" (Guha 1). However, this exercise of colonialists historiography would not have succeeded had it not been sustained by the concept of

"Improvement" (Guha 33). Hence, the documentation of Indian history bestowed on the Indian landlords "permanent proprietary rights" who also acted as "prudent trustees" of the colonial administration in order to bring Indian land in the fold of agri-capital and Improvement (Guha 32).

[66] This also explains Spivak's argument that we cannot point towards the "pure subaltern," for, by definition, there is "something of a not-speakingness in the very notion of subalternity" (*The Postcolonial Critic* 298).

[67]See Asimina Karavanta's essay "Interculturality as the Imaginative Genealogy of an Undecidable Present: A Planetary Configuration of the Gendered Subaltern" in *Interculturality and Gender*. Karavanta suggests that Spivak's gendered subaltern "unconceals the essentializing language of the Subaltern Studies Group that signifies the real consciousness of the subaltern, a priori her ability to claim and represent it for herself and the essentializing post-representational discourse that redefines the subaltern from a western epistemological perspective, such as that of Foucault and Deleuze" (76). According to Karavanta, the subaltern constitutes a "transhistorical, translocal but also postnational figuration" and a "way to think of the world in the present—a yet-to-come from within the world as it has been constituted so far—to think of the yet to- come as the here and present of what has so far been" (77).

[68] When Derrida employs the concept of the "text," he refers to the "interpretive experience" that construes reality and ideology (*Limited INC* 148). Derrida does not aim at representing the material conditions that shape reality as fictional, but, rather, at revealing the contingency of assigning meaning without interrogating the ontological frame and the discourses that partake in that gesture.

[69] For further elaboration on the gendered subaltern, see Asimina Karavanta's "The Global, the Local and the Spectral: Contemplating Spectral Politics" in *Global Babel: Questions of Discourse and Communication in a time of Globalization* (2007) edited by Samir Dayal and Margarite Murphy. According to Karavanta, the "subaltern is the embodiment of an incommensurable difference that symptomatically reveals the 'unconstituted constituency' as the *aporia* of the turbulent and unavoidable co-existence of the local and the global, the colonial and the post-colonial, the national and the supranational" (214-5).

[70] For a critical reading of both the collective's and Spivak's elaboration on the subaltern, see Vivek Chibber's *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (2013). Among other things, Chibber accuses the collective of misreading the dynamics of capitalism and, occasionally, confusing its incarnations with liberalism.The reader can study Spivak's response to Chibber's scathing criticism of the collective in "Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital." In her review of Chibber's book, Spivak critiques Chibber's for various misreadings of the Subaltern Studies Group's bibliography and his often convoluted application of various theoretical terms. See also "The Decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies" by Sumit Sarkar in the collection of essays *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (2000). Sarkar cautions the group to potential valorizations of the subaltern by disregarding the concept of "class" in their critique (304). Another article that sets some insightful questions on Spivak's elaboration on the subaltern is "Death and the Subaltern" by Rajeswari Rajan in *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (2010). The critic explores the differences between Spivak's figural and literal

evocations of the subaltern. See also Partha Chaterjee's "After Subaltern Studies." Chaterjee expounds on the contribution of the collective to the field of postcolonial theory, the methodological shortcomings of the group and the need to inaugurate new projects in order to tackle the challenges neocolonialism engenders (8).

[71] See the collection of Spivak's essays in her work *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* and, more specifically, "Scattered Speculation on the Subaltern and the Popular." Spivak elaborates on the origins and trajectory of the Subaltern Studies group and how the concept of the subaltern has been reconfigured over the years. In her analysis of her contribution to the collective and the criticism she has received for arguing that the "subaltern does not speak," Spivak states:

> Agency was the name I gave to institutionally validated action, assuming collectivity, distinguished from the formation of the subject, which exceeds the outlines of individual attention. The idea of subalternity became imbricated with the idea of non-recognition of agency. Did Marx intend this? I believe so. When I came across Bhubaneshwari's story, the resource that was to hand produced the account that this woman's resistance in extremis was not recognized. *It was unfortunate that I used the metaphor of not-speaking for this.* It caused a lot of confusion. (412 emphasis added)

[72] Lata Mani discusses Spivak's theorization of the subaltern in her work *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India.* More specifically, Mani questions the validity of the colonial archive and argues that the voice of the burning widow remains irretrievable.

[73] The "specter" is a haunting presence which disrupts capitalist and hegemonic teleologies and temporalities. See Jacques Derrida's elaboration in *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (1993).

[74] Drucila Cornell argues that Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" probes the western intellectual to contemplate the "representational space" provided to the gendered subaltern and reflect on the discursive artificiality of this space which compromises subaltern speech ("The Ethical Affrimation of Human Rights: Gayatri Spivak's Intervention" 101).

[75] In her examination of a "new pedagogy," Gayatri Spivak underlines the double task of the educator "to learn to learn from below" in order to designate how capitalist and neoliberal discourses impinge on benevolent pedagogical institutions and teaching methods and inculcate indigenous populations in capitalist metaphysics ("Righting Wrongs" 551). What is rather revealing in her elaboration is both how capitalism becomes coterminous with responsibility and how modern pedagogy teaches the rural poor of Asia that "their entry into (a distancing from) modernity" is concomitant with their "gradual slipping into atrophy" (551). See also Spivak's *Other Asias*, and her article on "Responsibility," where she discusses how development has become the "dominant global denomination of Responsibility" (85).

[76] In her meticulous examination of the *Stages of Capital* (2008)in colonial India, Ritu Birla charts the trajectory of the colonized to his transformation into a figure of *homo oeconomicus*. Focusing on the years between 1870 and 1930, Birla examines how the English empire and colonial officials attempted to "synchronize," via legislative restructuring, indigenous modes of production and labour, (what she names as "vernacular capitalism") with contemporary "entrepreneurial instincts" in order to build the "foundations for a modern Indian capitalism" (1). Colonial legislative reform, argues Birla, aimed at disentangling vernacular capitalism from bonds of kinship, caste and religion, which formulated a flexible frame of negotiation between the interested parties. By implementing a modern capitalist discourse, colonial officials institutionalized and produced a new concept of the market which radically departed from the traditions of exchange established in colonial India (3). Hence, by the end of the 19th century, colonial officials were able to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate modalities of exchange and production in colonial India. This was achieved with the introduction of a legislative and economic discourse that institutionalized market activity and "disembedded" commercial activity from its social aspect (Birla 4). The objective of this process was not only to transform the "ragged bazaar merchant to the Indian economic man" (5) but also to produce docile and governable subjects that would "distinguish capital from community [and] economy from culture" (233). In fact, Birla argues, the "telos of empire" is not the production of political subjects, but of economic subjects who would all too easily succumb to the dictates of the market and relinquish their filial and communal bonds (234).

[77] According to Drucila Cornell, Spivak's elaboration on the subaltern articulates a presence which is "not assimilable into the assumptions of modern capitalism ("The Ethical Affirmation of Human Rights: Gayatri Spivak's Intervention" 110).

[78] Partha Chaterjee's work is rather illuminating in exposing the ways the state impinges on and compromises the subaltern's claim for sovereignty. In his work *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1993), Chatterjee illustrates the trajectory of the Indian state from its birth to modern times and the ways it attempted to assimilate subaltern populations. Chatterjee examines the liberal politics of the state and its urgency to modernize its economy and state apparatuses. The Indian state, Chatterjee argues, regarded the tribals as "backward and premodern" and, hence, as an obstacle to the discourses of development it tried to cultivate (158). The peasants had to discipline to the developmental dictate of the state by "transform[ing] into citizens" (158). This political shift would render subaltern populations, previously undocumented by and inassimilable to the bourgeois structures, governable subjects that would conform to the mandates the nationalist agenda dictated. The state, unable and unwilling to tackle the issue of social injustice colonialism bequeathed, propounded a political strategy where the peasants "would be regarded as part of the nation but distanced from the institutions of the state" (Chatterjee 160). Hence, the state produced a simulacrum of political representability for the subalterns in which collectivities "deriving from the precapitalist community insert themselves into the representational process of a liberal electoral democracy" (Chatterjee 218). The reason, Chatterjee argues, the state affords

political space to these "precapitalist communities" is to "manipulate" their claims and further their developmental agenda under the façade of a more inclusive and democratic state (218). So, even when the representative body of subaltern communities is given space on the political stage, they still cannot speak.

[79]According to Sandhya Walther, "Balram is not a subaltern" but constitutes the literary "embodiment of the predatory power of contemporary Indian and global capitalism" (579). Walther reads Adiga's novel as a text of "postcolonial humanism" which illustrates, via Balram's dehumanization, how globalization has "created an unnatural way of being for the majority of the nation's human population" (580, 584).

[80] In his article on "The Abiding Binary: The Social and the Political in Modern India," Pratham Banerjee employs the concept of "developmentality" to describe how the Indian state perceived its subjects as "inadequate to the modernity and rationality of the very state that they inhabit and governs them accordingly" (87). While governmentality relies on facts, developmentality constitutes a regime that views its subjects as being regressive and lacking.

[81]In his reading of Adiga's novel, Manav Ratti examines Balram's motives and argues that the text "reproduces for readers the experience of undecidability that decisions of justice themselves entail" (7). In so doing, it complicates and "destabilizes the meaning of 'crime' and 'justice' (7). According to Ratti, the final part of the novel promotes "embourgeoisement – becoming the master class – [as] the only path toward humanization (14).

[82] For an analysis that examines the relationship between the city and subalternity, see Ines Detmers' "New India? New Metropolis? Reading Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger as a 'condition-of-India-novel.'" According to Detmers, Adiga's novel manages to "undermine as well as uncover the gridlocked social and economic hierarchies unfolding so nakedly in India's new market society" (536).

[83] As I discuss in the concluding remarks of this thesis, Balram envisions the establishemnt of a school of White Tigers village in which he will teach "poor children" the "facts of life" (319).

[84] For more on the homoeroticism of the novel, see Fernando Sanchez's "Queer Transgressions: Same-Sex Desire and Transgendered Representations in Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger." Sanchez argues that although Balrman and Mr. Ashok share "homosocial spaces," the author prevents them from exploring "same-sex desire" and confines them to "heteronormative" roles (176).

[85] Retrieving John Camarroff's concept of "millennial capitalism," Swaralipi Nandi suggests that *The White Tiger* reveals how capitalist globalization and neoliberalism emerge in postcolonial India as a neoliberal Second Coming (294).

[86] See Spivak's essay "Megacity – 1997:Testing Theory in the Plains" in her work *Other Asias*. According to Spivak, although Bangalore has become a center of entrepreneurship and outsourcing companies, "the subaltern is still not speaking" (164).

[87] Khor argues that capitalist globalization actually "naturalizes this disabled form of ethics" since it reduces life to its exchange value (58).

[88] See also Deng and Moore's article "China Views Globalization: Toward a New Great-Power Politics"? The critics argue that the Chinese state desires to insert itself in the channels of globalization in order to " 'democratize' the U.S. hegemonic order" and "minimize unilateralist power politics" (118).

[89] Ramachandra Guha and MahdavGadgil use the term to designate indigenous populations whose labour and ontology is indissolubly linked with their natural surroundings (*Ecology and Equity: The Use and Abuse of Nature in Contemporary India*).

[90]Cheah uses the term to articulate how international relief aid systematically misrepresents disenfranchised people and succumbs to a "predatory sensationalism and aestheticism" of their suffering (*What is a World* 285).

[91] According to Lazarus, "The most extraordinary and resonant passages in the story are those in which the narrative reaches out beyond the individual consciousnesses of elite and subaltern characters alike, to articulate a transcendental understanding attributed either to the soul of the ancestors or left unattributed, and therefore appearing as something like a narratorial consciousness" (156).

[92] In his essay, "Origins and Transformations of the Devi" David Hardiman explores the political signification the appearance of the Devi assumed in the collective tribal unconscious. As Hardiman states, the Devi "proved an open-ended force, emerging from a cosmos of belief and practice shared by peasant communities throughout this region but adaptable to a whole range of different aspirations and needs" (132).

[93] William Spanos reflects on the "anthropologos" of modernity as the being that circumscribes the eventful and the inassimilable through a reductive metaphysical binary that grounds and reduces the singularity of events and beings beyond his discursive purview ("Humanism and the Studia Humanitatis after 9/11/01: Rethinking the Anthropologos" 220).

[94] I may be mis-appropriating Spivak's suggestion, in her work *Death of a Discipline*, that "We have forgotten how to read with care" (42). A "care-ful" reading is deconstructing the "anthropologos'" unhistorical engagement with alterity by remaining vigilant to the inherent anthropocentric biases that circumscribe every reading attempt.

[95] On the contrary, Neil Lazarus suggests that the pterodactyl remains a symbol that obscures the tribals' claim against developmental projects (see his analysis on *The Postcolonial Unconscious*).

[96] See "The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview" with Gayatri Spivak in *Mapping the Subaltern Studies* edited by Vinayak Chatuverdi. Today the subaltern is progressively integrated in the discourses and strategies of globalization in the name of "democratization and gender-and-development" (Spivak 332). Because the discourses of globalization embed subalterns in their processes and they are "no longer cut off from lines of access to the centre," the concept of the subaltern "must be rethought" (Spivak 326).

[97]The concept of the Anthropocene was first coined by Paul J.Crutzen and Eugene F.Stoermer in a statement published in 2000 (Chakrabarty *The Climate of History* 32). Since its inception, the term has received a lot of criticism since it reinstalls the western man as the epicenter of its interrogation while

eliding various factors that have engendered the event of climate change. More specifically, the concept of the Anthropocene brings under its fold the sum of humans irrespectively of their impact on climate. Simply put, do subaltern communities have the same impact on the planet as western industrialized societies? Moreover, the concept of the Anthropocene overlooks the role of gender in the development of human history. Are female subjects equally responsible to male in the development of colonialism and capitalism? For more elaborate critiques on the Anthropocene see *Anthropocene Feminism* (2017). In this collection of essays, the critics reflect on the gender implications of the Anthropocene and, most importantly, whether women are equally accountable for the event of climate change. See *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism* (2016) which reflects on the ambiguities the naming of climate change involves and the implications this discursive act may engender. Lastly, Amitv Ghosh's in *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016) contemplates the challenges in literary representation and critical analysis that the climate change creates.

[98] See Elizabeth Povinelli's *Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism* (2016). Povinelli's aim is to question the "biocentric bias" which governs western metaphysics and elaborates on the urgency of deconstructing the binary between "life and nonlife" (79, 74).

[99] See also Liam O'Loughlin's "Negotiating Solidarity: Indra Sinha's Animal's People and the NGO-ization of Postcolonial Narrative." According to the author, Sinha does not reproduce western narratives of "heroic salvation or radical rejection" of humanitarianism; rather, he documents the potentiality of "reimigan[ing] the subaltern-humanitarian relationship" (101).

[100] Brigitte Rath argues that Sinha's novel does not voice the concerns of subalterns since the author avoids to provide narrative space to the actual protagonist that inspired the author to write the novel:

> …if Sunil Kumar is the source of the voice, then the ultimate and quite remote source of the voice we read is a subaltern speaker – but presented by the author in a way that disenfranchises, exploits him (as Sinha gets all the credit) and thus raises an ethical issue; if Sinha is the main source (maybe somewhat 'inspired' by Sunil Kumar's story), then it is not a subaltern speaking, and the very beginning of his own novel then raises the question why Sinha did not provide his informant with his own space, as the journalist in the novel does for Animal. (" 'His words only?' Indra Sinha's Pseudotranslation Animal's People as Hallucination of a Subaltern Voice"165)

[101] These figures are estimated by Suroopa Mukherjee who has been covering the disaster and its aftermath as a journalist. Upamanyu Mukherjee suggests that the people killed are between five and ten thousand (136). Industrial disasters, like the one that occurred in Bhopal, present immense difficulties in their documentation for it is difficult to track the following casualties which were not reported as relative to the event.

[102]According to S. Mukherjee "What makes the study of Bhopal pertinent, as a global signifier of toxic poisoning, is the crucial link between acute and chronic toxicity, and the fact that both can happen

simultaneously. The story of Bhopal's toxic legacy predates the disaster to 1979, when UCIL started manufacturing the pesticides it had previously been importing. As a by-product of its expanded operations, hazardous wastes were being produced. UCIL dumped these wastes in tanks and pits at the plant site, as well as in three solar evaporation ponds (SEP) constructed on the leased property some 800 meters north of the factory. The ponds covered an area of approximately fourteen hectares. In 1981 and 1982 several cattle died as a result of exposure to poisonous water in the SEP. According to an internal UCIL document of 1982, the company was aware of leakage from two of the ponds, and it was notified as a matter of concern. In 1983 farmers in the neighborhood of the SEP were experiencing a drastic reduction in the fertility of the soil due to the overflowing of the SEP into their fields in the rainy season. Two tube wells dug near the solar ponds had to be abandoned because the water had an obnoxious smell and taste" (71).

[103] Julietta Singh's reading of Sinha's novel in her work *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (2017) has influenced me in developing the idea of the posthuman subaltern. What we witness in the Bhopal incident and Sinha's fictional account is how capitalist globalization and its toxic imprint on postcolonial India produce subaltern assemblages and subjects that depart from established understandings of disenfranchised solidarities. By referring to posthuman subaltern solidarities, I am designating affective subaltern alliances, whose ethics of responsibility reveal vulnerable intertwinements between the human and the non-human, the living and the dead, the present and the past. I would like to argue that Animal's posthuman solidarities lead us to reflect on the concept of the posthuman subaltern as a "critical posthuman subject within an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings" (Braidotti 49).

4. How to Live with Spirits: The Function of Indigenous Spirits and Myths in Louise Erdrich's and LeAnne Howe's Novels

4.1 Introduction

In April 2016, a coalition of indigenous tribes came together at the Standing Rock reservation in order to protest against the construction of a 1.712 mile long pipeline which would transfer oil across Illinois, North and South Dakota, Iowa, the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers. The main claim of the Water Protectors, the people who vowed to disrupt the construction, was that any pipeline leak would "jeopardize" much more than the quality of life and means of subsistence for both humans and animals that inhabit the region (Nick Estes, Jaskiran Dhillon 1). The persistence of the protestors and the severity of state oppression that followed disclosed the synergy of the settler state's apparatuses with its compromised legislative discourses in order to suppress indigenous voices. Despite the fact that the construction of the pipeline was finalized in 2017, the defiance of native and non-native protestors rekindled the discussion on the essence of native sovereignty.

The stand at the Standing Rock demonstrated that native struggles are primarily "intergenerational struggle[s]" (Estes, Dhillon 4). As the activists confess, the majority of the protestors consisted of indigenous families with grandparents demonstrating along with their children, grand-children and, occasionally, their great grand-children (4). The North Dakota protest was not a singular event in the history of indigenous struggle against settler encroachment; the protest was the "continuation" of a long history of opposition against the settlers and the settler state that utilized a deeply colonial, racist and fictitious discourse in order to justify the usurpation of native land (Estes, Dhillon 2). Almost instinctively, the moment the Water Protectors began to actively disrupt and undermine the installation of the pipeline, the settler state organized and retrieved the same colonial discourses and practices it has been employing for centuries in order to portray the natives, who have a legislated right to the land, as "criminals" and terrorists who stand in the way of progress (Estes, Dhillon 2).[104] More importantly, the stand at the

Standing Rock reservation impelled the state to question its debilitating politics which eschews the complexity of native ontology. I am referring to the claims of natives that the construction of the pipeline and its potential rupture could, firstly, endanger the symbiotic relationship between indigenous communities and nature which is of seminal importance for the financial survival of the tribes and, secondly, poison the sacred land that their ancestors and native spirits inhabit. By arguing in favor of water rights, Water Protectors attempt to illustrate both that "water is life" and that "water is alive" (Estes, Dhillon 2-3). Alternatively put, what the native demonstrators argued was that the water sources and streams that permeate the Dakota region constitute a presence, a relative to the natives, a being that remains unincorporated to the hardened language of settler discourses and law. The protest received wide media attention since the body of natives and non-native participants that defied the federal decree reignited and resituated the unresolved issue of indigenous sovereignty within the problematic frame of the United States politics.

Although the incidents at the Standing Rock reservation rekindled the highly controversial discussion on what constitutes indigenous sovereignty and what is the present legislative status of the treaties signed between settlers and tribes, they also brought to the light the ways in which benevolent sympathizers to the native cause reiterated racial stereotypes that arrest indigenous people in a fossilized past. According to Andrew Curley, the misconstrued image, disseminated through media, of natives as "natural environmentalists" undermines the sovereign claims of the indigenous populations since many tribes rely on the "worst forms of extractive industries" in order to maintain their autonomy (158-159). Curley also argues that the uncritical association of natives to "naturalism and environmentalism" is not only "stereotypically racist" but it also precludes natives from inserting themselves to the channels of capitalist hegemony (159). The reason I turn my attention to the work of Louise Erdrich and LeAnne Howe is because their narratives expose the ways in which indigenous communities counter the genocidal politics of the settler state either through the recontextualization of their myths or through their struggles to articulate their own stories of emancipation and self-determination within the imposed national narratives of liberalism and capitalism. Before I explain how I intend to explore these questions through the literature of Louise Erdrich and LeAnne Howe, I analyze the discursive continuity between the colonial politics of

the first settlers and its gradual conversion of into laws through a compromised treaty-making process. I also analyze the pertinence of colonial politics in contemporary conceptualizations of indigenous sovereignty and the function of myths in native ontology.

4.2 The Origins of Settler-State Law and the Paradox of Native Sovereignty

It is no wonder that the "doctrine of discovery," which became progressively embedded in the legislative narrative of the settler state, stems from Locke's philosophical reflections on what he deemed to be *terra nullius* and unexploited land. According to the "doctrine of discovery" any European nation that "discovers" land in America is automatically granted "absolute legal title to and ownership of" the specific territory (Wilkins 19). The particular doctrine and the colonial rationality that informs it was an attempt to portray indigenous communities as bereft of history and an impediment to the providential vision of progress the settlers enunciated. David Wilkins argues that the legislative instrumentalization of the "doctrine of discovery" aimed at reducing tribes to "mere tenants, whose legal claims to their aboriginal homelands are secondary to the claims of the 'discoverers'" (19).

In the *Johnon vs McIntosh* trial in 1823, the Chief of Justice John Marshall employed the "doctrine of discovery" in order to counter the claims of Thomas Johnson who had purchased a parcel of land from the Piankeshaw and wanted to eject William McIntosh who had obtained property rights for the same land from the United States (Barker 6). The issue the participants in the trial had to resolve was which of the property rights was considered legitimate and which invalid. Marshall sided with the defendant based on the argument that the natives "remain in a state of nature" and lack the capacity to "alienat[e]" their land to individuals (Marshall qtd in Barker 7). Some years later, during the *Cherokee vs Georgia* trial, Marshall made a similar claim by arguing that:

> However extravagant the pretension of converting the discovery of an inhabited country into conquest may appear; if the principle has been asserted in the first instance, and afterwards, sustained; if a country has been acquired and held under

> it; if the property of the great mass of the community originates in it, it becomes the law of the land, and cannot be questioned. (Marshall qtd in Wilkins 34)

Marshall's invocation of the "state of nature" aims at reproducing the stereotypes of the natives as natural environmentalists whose limited mental faculties prevent them from organizing and commodifying their lands and its products. As the Chief of Justice decrees, the natives cannot comprehend the mechanics of "alienation" integral to the liberal and capitalist politics the settler state attempted to establish. This discrimination against the indigenous population both reiterates the superficial racial binaries of colonialism and implies that the natives cannot be part of the national vision. If the settler state's project is to espouse and develop the discourses and practices of capitalism, then, the native communities, unable to grasp the cornerstone of a capitalist society which is the process of alienation, cannot partake in the national vision. Barker maintains that the "doctrine of discovery" and the "hunter-gatherer/ agriculturalist dichotomy" the settler state established was inspired by Locke's contention that "hunter-gatherer" communities can legally retain what they hunt but not own the land on which they hunted (7).

What Marshall's invocation of the "doctrine of discovery" in the specific trial suggests is that conquered land which the settlers have "sustained" and "held under" should be regarded as their rightful property. By completing disregarding and annulling native history, Marshall's objective was to convert a racist narrative into legal principle and law (Wilkins 34). Marshall's statement aims at reinforcing the politics of "benevolent paternalism" according to which the natives are deprived of the basic inclination and ability to develop and exploit their territories (Wilkins 21); not only are they deemed incapable of organizing their land according to the dictates of liberal progress but also they are excluded from the unfolding of capitalist modernity. The systematic exclusion of the natives from the realm of capitalist modernity was complemented by their discursive marginalization and erasure.

In the revisionist historical treatment of Native American History submitted by Roxanna Dunbar-Ortiz, the colonization of North and South America was conducted according to practices and strategies that demand its recontextualization within the discourses of genocidal colonialism (6). From the first colony established in 1607 until

the middle of the 20th century, the political objective of the colonial state was to either exterminate or fully assimilate the indigenous population inhabiting its territory. The "genocidal tendency" of colonialism is not a product of irreconcilable cultural differences, but rather evinces the destructive force of colonial expansionism, inherent in the unerring march of capitalist globalization and developmental teleologies that evangelize the purification and rationalization of indigenous lands (Dunbar-Ortiz 8). Despite the efforts by colonial state apparatuses to reduce and dispossess native communities, either through military expeditions, ethnic-cleansing missions, biological warfare or compromised treaties and legislation, the indigenous peoples have resisted the colonial rule that aimed at their physical and discursive elimination. According to Jean O'Brien, the literature produced and disseminated in North America in the 18th and 19th centuries inculcated in the national consciousness indigenous stereotypes and narratives of "degeneracy" in order to write the natives off existence (O'Brien 143).

Part of literature produced during the colonization of North America was to misrepresent natives by defining them as aberrant, undisciplined and uncivilized. The discursive misrepresentation of the indigenous way of life depicted the native only as the "victim" of change, never its "subject" (O'Brien 107). The indigenous population, O'Brien remarks, was deemed unworthy of the European modernity and, hence, it was misconstrued through "degeneracy narratives" which foreclosed any recognition of indigenous modernity (143). The image of the "vanishing Indian" was developed in order to delineate the receding horizon of native ontology and ground its present and future only within the teleologies of European modernity (O' Brien xiii). More specifically, local narratives of "degeneracy," which disseminated during colonization, ingrained in the settlers' consciousness that European modernity was indissolubly linked with "Indian extinction" (O'Brien xiv). Yet, in order to erase and assimilate the native, the colonial state had to recognize his presence; this was to be achieved through the partial recognition of their sovereignty and a compromised treaty-making policy. [105]

The legal edifice utilized during the negotiations between the settlers and the indigenous populations stemmed from a strictly European heritage whose discourses and concepts were incompatible with conceptualizations of native self-determination. Taiaiake Alfred contends that although the concept of "sovereignty" has enabled

indigenous communities to articulate their political and social claims, it remains "inappropriate as a political objective for indigenous peoples" (38). The natives, Alfred argues, are forced to negotiate their claims by borrowing and relying on a discourse which is inconsistent with the cultural coherence of the native nations (38).
By employing the concept of sovereignty and the legal discourses that bind it, the natives have not managed to "protect the integrity of their nations" since their political vision is "framed within a liberal paradigm" (Alfred 39). Is it possible, however, for native nations to consolidate their sovereign claims without taking into consideration and conforming to the discourses of an all-encompassing capitalist and liberal frame? What if the cultural coherence of the indigenous nations can only be maintained through the discourses and practices of liberalism and capitalism? Barker is also skeptical of the concept of sovereignty since it seems to be an umbrella term that "stand[s] in for all the inherent rights of indigenous peoples" (1). Barker argues that sovereignty is a "confused and confusing" concept whose "normalization masks its own ideological origins" (1). What Barker finds problematic about the term is that it forces the natives to implicate themselves in the complex and fraught with ambiguities legal processes of treaty-making which hinder their political claims.

The legal articulation of nationhood, Barker suggests, is materialized through the "national constitution and the treaty" (4). While these documents "assert territorial boundaries and the authority and terms of the nation-so-formed to govern within them" they have to be recognized by another nation in order to be legally effective (Barker 4). According to Barker, treaties are "legally binding documents" whose validity stems from the fact that they are produced and signed by two or more mutually recognized sovereign nations (4). So, how can the U.S. recognize a nation as sovereign in the first instance and then repeal their recognition? Treaty-making, in other words, is a reciprocal procedure in which "the recognition of one implied the recognition of the other" (Barker 4). In the case of the negotiations between the settler state and the indigenous communities, the recognition of native sovereignty was coterminous with its "unmitigated negation" (Barker 6).

During the 19th century, indigenous tribes, exhausted by decades of wars and dispossession, demanded to be acknowledged as equal political entities by the U.S

government and, hence, instigated a series of legal battles against the state. This process entailed indigenous communities employing European concepts in order to negotiate their terms. Indigenous tribes had to familiarize themselves with and assimilate the concepts of the "nation," the "tribe" and "the political vocabulary of sovereignty that goes along with these terms" (Cheyfitz 408).[106] A telling example that reveals the problematic of the undetermined political status of indigenous communities within the U.S. legal discourse is the *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* trial. To prevent the unending encroachment of their land through broken treaties, the Cherokees pursued their claim to be recognized as a foreign, and hence sovereign, nation in 1831. The proceedings that followed the case as well as the ones during the termination of the treaty-making policy signified the development of an "oxymoronic dictum" by the part of the colonial state for, although they recognized the tribes as "domestic dependent nations," they deprived them of every right that designates a nation (Cheyfitz 408). While a nation is, by definition, sovereign and independent, the Congregational Act of 1871 recognized indigenous communities as nations only to co-opt their sovereign claims. The Congregational Act of 1871 bestowed the U.S. government with plenary power over the indigenous communities; in other words, the state was no longer required to conduct negotiations with the tribes, but unilaterally confer upon their legislative status. The vocabulary of the act itself betrays the incoherent dogma the colonial policy had articulated: "hereafter *no Indian nation* or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as *an independent nation*, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty" (Dunbar-Ortiz 142 emphasis added). Native communities are recognized as nations, but they cannot bear the sovereign rights consistent with the term of the nation. Cheyfitz contends that the legislative history between the U.S. government and indigenous peoples constitutes an event of "simultaneous recognition and usurpation of Indian sovereignty: recognition of sovereignty, one might say, precisely so that it could be 'legally' usurped" (Cheyfitz 410).

The "oxymoronic dictum" that permeates the relationship between the indigenous peoples and the U.S. government situates the indigenous communities both inside and outside the national spectrum of the state; on the one hand, they are acknowledged as constituents of the nation and, on the other hand, tribal sovereignty is deemed archaic and

incompatible with the demands and contemporary socio-political realities that condition the American polity. The termination of the treaty-making policy signed in 1871 constitutes a defining moment for the opposing parties since it attempted to pre-empt any future renegotiation and contestation of legislation passed by the U.S. government. Apart from the fact that the treaty-making termination diminished and limited tribal sovereignty, it also compromised the very essence of native sovereignty. In their elaboration on tribal sovereignty and the end of the treaty-making policy, Vine Deloria and David Wilkins contend:

> The doctrine of discovery, which justified the claims of the United States, was at that time nullified. Indians were made subject to the powers of Congress as subjects of the country but had no rights and no standing to contest their change in status. Unfortunately there have been no corrective actions taken to remedy this situation. Indian tribes are still recognized as sovereigns by the United States, but they are deprived of the one power all sovereigns must have in order to function effectively-*the power to say no to other sovereigns*. (quoted in Bruyneel 92 emphasis added)

If the treaty-making era has come to an end what are the means indigenous communities may employ in order to voice their discontent, their grievances and dissent against state oppression and impoverishment? Barker supports that although the concept of tribal sovereignty is rife with contradictions, the "almost aggressive self-definition of indigenous people by sovereignty" discloses the intensification of state oppression (20). The guiding questions that frame the literary analysis that follows are: Can the native communities resist further sovereign limitation by conforming to the dictates of liberalism and capitalism and is it possible to disrupt the settler state's colonial politics through a critical recontextualization of their myths? By strategically retrieving the concept of sovereignty and working through its limitations and contingencies, the native nations disclose a propensity to articulate and promote their claims through the discourses of liberalism and capitalism. In the analysis that follows, I turn my attention to Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace* and LeAnne Howe's *Shell Shaker* in order to

explore sites of indigenous contestation to the biopolitics of settler colonization and the ways the Anishinaabe[107] and Choctaw tribes recontextualized their myths with a view to adapting to and disrupting the colonial politics of the settlers.[108] I examine these novels since they reveal how the mythical intertwines with the political and the ways capitalist interpellation impinges on and distorts native myths. More importantly, I am interested in examining how the Anishinaabe and Choctaw communities seek to consolidate their sovereignty through the discourses of capitalism and the critical revision of their myths.

4.3 Reconciling Indigenous Tradition with Settler Modernity: Reading the Past into the Future in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace*.

In the signed treaties of 1837 and 1842, the Anishinaabe agreed to exchange territory rich in mineral resources and pine forests, located at Lake Superior and La Pointe respectively, with the intention of maintaining sovereign rights over their remaining land (Norrgard 6). What the Anishinaabe gradually witnessed was both the encroachment of their land and the rapid industrialization of the ceded territories since lumber and copper companies developed a network of railroads and shipping routes (Norrgard 7).The development of the settler state was coterminous with the underdevelopment of the natives; in order for the American nation to be born, the native nations had to relinquish their sovereign claims. The violent modernization and liberalization performed by the settler state and facilitated by the political treaties had a seminal impact on Anishinaabe livelihood and ontology. The natives were now part of a global network of exchange that necessitated their acculturation to the concepts of the capital, labour time, accumulation and surplus value. In order to survive in the colonial space and time, the Anishinaabe had to reconceptualize their world according to capitalist and liberal discourses.

One of the narrative themes that feature most prominently in Louise Erdrich's literature is the struggle of the Anishinaabe, a Native American tribe located in North Dakota, to counter European settler colonialism and neocolonialism by drawing inspiration from the ontologies of their spirit world. For the Anishinaabe community, the

spirit world and the land from which it emanates cannot be disentangled. Anishinaabe ontology is indissolubly linked to the life cycle of the land since the community is perfectly attuned to the bio-rhythms of its ecosystem. In *Tracks*, the tribal trickster Nanapush narrates to Fleur Pillager's daughter, Lulu, the reasons why her mother decided to abandon her to a boarding school after she witnesses the loss of her land by the state and lumber companies. [109] Nanapush recounts the decimation of the Anishinaabe tribe by tuberculosis in the beginning of the 19th century. By oralizing a history of dispossession and loss, Nanapush gives young Lulu an account of her mother's endeavors to protect her land against settlers' encroachment and, by extension, safeguard the spirits that inhabit Anishinaabe territory. Yet, there is another testimony that permeates *Tracks* and invariably refutes and complements Nanapush's narration. The second narrator of *Tracks* is the mixed-blood Pauline Payat, who wishes to embrace Catholicism and cleanse herself of her native origins. The fact that both Nanapush and Pauline Payat strive to narratively circumscribe Fleur Pillager's alterity has led many critics to argue that *Tracks* is a novel which invites readers to contemplate the cultural and political misrepresentations that produce a compromised version of Native American history.

Catherine Rainwater argues that *Tracks* is a novel that "produces in the reader an experience of marginality" (406). The critic suggests that the double narrative that frames Erdrich's novel "frustrates narrativity" and "leads the reader away from synthesis into a permanent state of irresolution," thus marginalizing the reader himself (406, 409). The state of marginality the reader experiences does not disempower the reader; rather it impels him to come to terms with the conflicting discursive frameworks that condition both Erdrich's novel and native experience. The reader, Rainwater concludes, is invited to "synthesize these antithetical possibilities" and "pause 'between worlds'" in order to contemplate how Catholicism and western discourses have impacted Anishinaabe ontology and the task of interrogating readings that portray native literature and subjectivity through binary models of representation (412). In the same vein, Nicholas Sloboda, in his reading of *Tracks*, argues that native literary criticism runs the risk of reproducing the methodologies of colonial discourses by resorting to superficial typifications which occlude the negotiations and contaminations between the settler state and the natives (63). According to Sloboda, Erdrich's novels have received considerable

criticism precisely because they circumvent the muddy waters of "over-regulat[ing] her Native American voices;" on the contrary, Erdrich's literary exploration of Anishinaabe struggles constitutes a "subtle exploration of identity and subjectivity" (Sloboda 63). Drawing on Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity, Sloboda suggests that the readers of Erdrich's literature need to remain attentive to the "complexity of socio-ideologic formations" and the existence of a decentered locus of reference in which subjectivities are negotiated and reformulated (64).[110] My point of interest is to examine how indigenous women in Erdrich's texts consolidate ther sovereignty in the Anishinaabe community and the ways the retrieval of myth either empowers or hinders their claims. Reading gendered native experience through diverse narrative voices has led some academics to critique Erdrich's *Tracks* as a novel that reconsolidates, rather than deconstruct, colonial attitudes and stereotypes.

According to Gloria Bird, contemporary native experience cannot be defined along the lines of the "postcolonial" for the natives are still experiencing the crippling effects of colonial laws which disenfranchise native communities (41).[111] Examining native literature through postcolonial methodologies, Bird notes, conduces to the development of a "comfortabl[e] distancing" from the colonial past that elides the continuity of the colonial policies that still compromise native sovereignty (41). The critic argues that *Tracks* reifies racialized typifications through the representation of Fleur as the "inaccessible" savage whose subaltern experience is mediated by Nanapush and Pauline (45). Bird also contends that the novel's conclusion reiterates the image of the "vanishing Indian" and of fractured native communities that bend under the imposition of colonial laws and settler development (46). What the critic finds most troubling about Erdrich's novel is that, in times of political crisis, the tribe seems to lose its coherence and resort to betrayal rather than reconsolidation of its social bonds (46). In their reading of Erdich's novel, Mohsen Hanif and Sajjad Gheytasi seem to reach the same conclusion with Bird since they argue that the characters portrayed in *Tracks* "internalize the dominant ideology and, in doing so, perpetuate its dominance and their own disempowerment" (159). Hanif and Gheytasi read *Tracks* through Stephen Greenblatt's examination of the "dominance of the oppressive forces" and Alan Sinfield's elaboration on the "effectiveness of resisting voices" with a view to exploring the "socio-political and

economic circumstances" that fashion native life and lead to their "alienation and oppression" (153). Drawing on Louis Althusser's "interpellation," Hanif and Gheytasi remark that dominant ideology and "socio-political institutions" impinge on the native's struggle for subversion transforming him into a docile and governable subject that "internalize[s] their own inferiority and hence subjugation" (154). The critics conclude that, although Fleur fails to resist both the settler-state and the lumber companies that encroach on her land, native resistance "if well thought and strategically pre-planned" can subvert the institutions and ideologies that attempt to contain it (165).

Maria DePriest, on the other hand, claims that "Fleur's voice can be heard" despite the narrative mediations that unavoidably misconstrue her as a rogue element of the Anishinaabe community (250). DePriest contends that Fleur constitutes the connective link that brings together the diverse narratives that attempt to ground native experience in a normalizing account. According to the critic, Fleur is "the major story whose multiple components bespeak survival and laughter in the present tense" (250). Nanapush's and Pauline's inability to decipher Fleur's inscrutability reveal the impossibility of narrating the colonial trauma which is "too grievous, too gaping a wound for language to say though language must try" (DePriest 252). Yet, a history of colonial dispossession should not consume the present and future of native sovereignty. Erdrich's work carefully revisits the scene of colonial trauma with a view to illuminating the dual process of reweaving the present by reconstructing the past. If nothing else, *Tracks* is a narrative confession to Fleur's daughter, a gesture to reconcile past and present and carve a new path and an empowering "historicity" (DePriest 252). Since myth and history are intertwined in Anishinaabe metaphysics, the question I would like to address is whether the recontextualization of myths in settler modernity enables the community to develop a new "historicity" or conduces to an insidious erasure of native history.

Nancy Peterson and Kathleen Brogan have taken the task of reading Erdrich's literature as a revisionist project that tackles the complexities of native historiography. Peterson suggests that Erdrich's novels symptomatically reveal the "impossibility of writing traditional history in a postmodern, post-representational era" (982). Peterson employs the literature provided by historiographers, who have elaborated on traumatizing historical events, to argue that Erdrich's project discloses the impossibility of narrating

colonial trauma and the necessity of "'forging a new historicity'" (984).[112] The critic aims at exploring whether literature can "become a witness" and represent the irrepresentable trauma of colonial history and elaborates on the task of incorporating the colonial trauma in native oral traditions (985). Can native historiography, Peterson asks, register the colonial trauma since the narrating subject is interpellated by diverse racial, religious and political discourses? How can the reader of *Tracks* prioritize a specific narrative account without silencing other voices? Why do we identify with a specific voice and neglect alternative accounts of historical interpretation?

In her reading of *Tracks*, Kathleen Brogan reads how the "invocation of the supernatural" in times of political turmoil enables the Anishinaabe community to render the colonial trauma "generative" (170). According to Brogan, Erdrich's literature narrates the ability of native communities to "'incorporate' new, anomalous elements into a traditional framework" (173). The establishment of the Catholic doctrine, the reorientation of native ontology to the mandates of western political economies and the assimilation of native history and resurgence by dominant historiography are part of a wider discursive field of contamination and exchange between the colonizer and the colonized. Brogan maintains that Erdrich manages to "recreate" the cultural resilience of the Anishinaabe who have "internalized, digested and integrated" a ghosted history (184). My aim is to examine how indigenous myths are rewritten and renegotiated both in *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace* in order to explore their interpellation by capitalist and patriarchal discourses. If the community conjures the mythical in times of turmoil in order to articulate its sovereign claims, does this summoning empower or silence indigenous women?[113]

Stuart Christie's exploration of the "plural sovereignties" that emerge in Native American postcoloniality disclose how native communities attempt to redefine their sovereign claims in late modernity. Following Vine Deloria Jr.'s work, Christie maintains that native communities are tasked with the "meaningful reinvention" of their sovereign claims in their postcolonial present (21). The casinoization of the communities has enabled the tribes to reconnect with their past since the improvement of their financial conditions helps them rekindle tribal ceremonies and traditions (21).[114] This renewed sense of "tribalism," Christie diagnoses, evinces the adaptability of the natives to the

capitalist conditions that settler colonialism imposed (Christie 21). Since "there is no other game in town," as the critic suggests, the "wholesale penetration of market capitalism into local indigenous economies has created ideal conditions for the emergence of plural sovereignties" (105). Although Erdrich's novel articulates the "uses and abuses of capitalism," it also "points towards a postcapitalist future" which involves a "newly vitalized understanding of the Anishinaabe past" through the indigenization of capitalism (Christie 127, 135). The revitalized tribalism Christie explores necessitates the realignment of Anishinaabe metaphysics and myths to the discourses and practices of globalization. In *The Bingo Palace*, this process of cultural and political reconceptualization is connoted through the transformation of the Misshepeshu myth, from a spirit beast that preserves natural resources to a force that inspires the community to utilize capitalist discourses in order to promote their sovereign claims.

Margaret Toth's reading of Erdrich's novel cautions western academics who might examine the function of myth without taking into account the oral traditions that shape native experience; as Toth suggests, "…ethical reading and teaching of indigenous –authored texts involves intensive, demanding background research" (95). The critic explores the ways in which the community tackles the casinoization of its economy through Fleur's shamanic powers that still haunt the Anishinaabe. Fleur, who has taken the Misshepeshu as her spirit guardian, remains the protector of native land, this time, not by preventing the younger generation of Anishinaabe from abandoning their casino dreams but "warning them to negotiate carefully when entering this terrain…" (Toth 104). Toth argues that the perseverance of the myth in Erdrich's novel reveals both how the community has survived the biopolitics of settler colonialism and that the Anishinaabe metaphysics and myths are "*alive* in the twenty-first century" (105 emphasis in original).

In order to discuss the sovereign claims of the Anishinaabe community as they are articulated through Erdrich's works *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace*, it is crucial to bear in mind that Anishinaabe sovereignty is inextricably linked with and emanates from the land. The task, therefore, is to engage Anishinaabe myths and legends not as a cultural domain residing in the sphere of the pre-political but as a constellation of traditions and oral heritage that is already political and inscribes the contestations between the

community and colonial powers within their traditions and rituals. During this confrontation, myths transform and adapt to emerging hegemonic and discursive structures in order to counter the encroaching tendencies of colonial forces. The question that I would like to explore is whether the transmutations and contaminations of Anishinaabe myths enable the community to expand their sovereign claims or further undermine and compromise it. Does the recontextualization of indigenous myths within the discourses of neoliberalism facilitate land reclamation and the consolidation of tribal sovereignty?

North Dakota, where the Anishinaabe are located, is a terrain dominated by long rivers and lakes. The fact that water constitutes the source of life for the community illustrates the reason why one of their most important myths and creatures, the Misshepeshu, is said to reside in the waterways of the region. Victoria Brehm argues that although historians and ethnographers have not managed to determine when the myth began disseminating in the community's oral traditions, we need to remain attentive to its alterations for the Misshepeshu, the Great Lynx, and the cult from which it derived, evinces a history of conflicts and negotiations between Anishinaabe politics and colonial discourse (679).[115] As a precontact phenomenon, Misshepeshu was believed to be hiding in water regions and "posed a real threat" for fishing parties and coastal communities (679). His main role was to sustain an ecological balance by regulating the rate of hunting and preventing the exhaustion of natural resources through the overexploitation of land and overhunting practices by humans. Brehm argues that the Misshepeshu was considered a mythical beast that controlled "the supply of food" and "enforced cultural conceptions of power and value" (680). Put differently, the Misshepeshu myth manifests the inscription of Anishinaabe political economy in the domain of the mythical in order to maintain an equilibrium which would enable the community to develop a symbiotic relationship with its ecosystem. In the precontact world, Brehm contends, the Misshepeshu constituted a "nexus of power" that would "enforce wise use of renewable resources to prevent their exhaustion" (682). In that sense, the killings and sightings of the Misshepeshu act in the collective imagination as warnings to abstain from the squandering of resources and resonate with the Anishinaabe communal ethics that prioritize the protection both of the community and its environment.

According to different sources, Brehm argues, the myth might coincide with the gradual encroachment of land and resources by the colonial powers. Brehm maintains that the indigenous population might have observed the resemblance of the Great Lynx to the lion engraved on the insignia of the British army (689). The advanced technology of the colonists and the gradual assumption of commercial control by the British might have established the totem-like figure of the British lion as an unfathomable force that propelled indigenous ideologies to recontextualize their ontology and myths in order to counter the colonial aspirations of the French and the British. Brehm claims that if it is a "postcontact phenomenon," the Misshepeshu attests to a "culture in transition and under stress" to articulate an "avenging model of power in an arena becoming dominated by alien cultures" (681). The interactions and conflicts between the colonists and the indigenous population resulted in the gradual erosion of Anishinaabe ontology and, by the extension, of the Misshepeshu. The establishment and proliferation of commerce in native land reconfigured communal ontology which began to perceive nature, animals and plants only as commodities (Brehm 690). It is also during this historical period that the *midewiwin* cult arises in indigenous lands.

The *midewiwin* is considered to be a postcontact indigenous religion which "incorporated old rituals in a new context" and engendered deep social divisions since the shamans were willing to sell their healing abilities only to the members who could afford their religious services (690). What had begun as a cult to purify the Anishinaabe from their interactions with the colonialists developed into a religious enterprise that restructured the community promoting individualistic and capitalist ideals over communal ones. No longer the arbiter of a symbiotic relationship between the indigenous population and the ecosystem and contaminated by the capitalist metaphysics of colonialism, the Misshepeshu myth, began to connote a "darker, more negative force that had little relationship to food supplies" (Brehm 690).

Joni Clarke suggests that the figure of Fleur Pillager, who haunts Erdrich's trilogy, and her shamanic powers punctuate the progressive adaptability to the emerging biopolitical field the settler state established. Clarke maintains that Erdrich, through Fleur's figure, manages to re-embed traditional Anishinaabe myths "in a new pattern, a new text" (32). This "new text" involves the community performing the painstaking task

of actually rewriting and reimagining their myths in order to consolidate their politics in settler modernity. Clarke names this task as a process of "resignification and recontextualization" where the Anishinaabe attempt to invest their myths with new meanings and functions with a view to disrupting colonial politics and discourses (36). This process, though, is quite precarious due to the fact that the biopolitical field and the capitalist discourses, from which the community draws inspiration in order to "recontextualize" its myths and reimagine the future, augment the very patriarchal structures and colonial discourses the task of "resignification" attempts to dismantle.

The questions I would like to answer in this section are: If Anishinaabe myths are reformulated in order to meet the demands of the capitalist mandates conditioned by settler colonialism's biopolitical field, who stands at the receiving end of this transformation? If "there is no other game in town" and the Anishinaabe have no other option but to remold their myths according to the dictates of capitalist modernity, does this process benefit the community or does it augment existing patriarchal structures conducing to the silencing of indigenous women? My focal point, in reading Erdrich's *Tracks* and *Bingo Palace*, is to explore native sovereignty at the meeting point where Anishinaabe ontology and the liberal politics of the settler state converge. More particularly, I am interested in the ways native female subjects employ both native and capitalist discourses to consolidate their sovereignty and disrupt the patriarchal schemata that struggle to undermine their process of self-determination. Does the recontextualization of myth in Erdrich's novel empower the indigenous woman to speak or does it perpetuate her silencing?

4.4 The Metaphysical Origins of Land Allotment and the Contingencies of Casino Economy

If the casinoization and liberalization of indigenous myths and political economies constitute a necessary evil that enables the community to consolidate its sovereignty, we need to explore whether the emancipatory potentialities this process entails benefit or fragment the native community. Therefore, I turn to the figure of Fleur

Pillager, the last member of the Pillager family, in order to track the metamorphosis and function of myth in Erdrich's work and discuss the struggle of the Anishinaabe to retain their land during the Allotment era and after the federal authorization of Indian gaming.[116] My aim is to examine Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace* as narratives of contestation that articulate recalcitrant indigenous voices within the historical context of the Allotment era in 1887 and after the legislation of the Indian Regulatory Act in 1988. My analysis intends to examine the transmutations of indigenous myths in order to accommodate the historical struggles and challenges the Anishinaabe community has endured and reveal the contingencies and cultural compromises of these changes.[117]

The Dawes Allotment Act signed in 1887 was part of the wider colonial policy to assimilate the remaining indigenous population concentrated in reservations by fragmenting and parceling out their land which would no longer belong to the community but to designated and named individuals. The process was accompanied by an official renaming program which aimed at replacing complex native names with simpler ones (Cheyfitz 412). Dunbar-Ortiz argues that the Allotment Act was inspired by the "enclosures" system that developed during the 16th and 17th century in England and instigated the "privatization of the commons" (34).[118] The enclosure policy constitutes the ideological cornerstone of colonialism and capitalist globalization for it engages indigenous lands and their farming traditions as manifestations of premodern and regressive ontologies that must bend to the mandates of European modernity. Enclosure policy is entangled with the emergence of European colonialism since it "precipitate[d] and prepare[d] the way for England's relocation in the expanding circle of the colonial world map" (Marzec 3). Through the enclosing policy, the colonial apparatuses and discourses inculcated in the minds of their constituents the concept of the capital and the individual; land enclosure, capital and colonialism formed an alliance that attempted to divest indigenous peoples and commoners of their ontological attunement to the life-cycle of the land. Marzec suggests that the enclosures altered the relation between the human and the land for the latter had to be "tamed and managed by being inserted into a colonial system of utility" (4). More importantly, Marzec argues, the policy established a binary in the European mind between a self "who is governed by an unruly nomadic

impulse" and one that has "domesticated this impulse by becoming an agriculturalist (settler)" (4).[119]

The Allotment Act reconfigured the relation between the Anishinaabe, their land and their traditions. The Anishinaabe community was forced to forget "communal hunting" and "gathering organization" and adapt to the discourses of "capitalistic, individualistic agricultural economy" (Peterson 986).[120] The allotted land was given in trust for twenty five years by the government and the owners were taxed with an annual allotment fee. The Dawes Act aimed at the liberalization of the indigenous peoples through their detribalization, by commodifying land and introducing the natives to the concepts of "property" and the "individual" (Cheyfitz 411). Hence, the history of colonialism in North America reveals an unrelenting process of alienating the indigenous peoples from their ontological tenets by co-opting native ideology with liberal and capitalist mandates. Erdrich's work invites us to contemplate how the Anishinaabe recontextualize their ontology within the discourses of capitalist globalization in order to expand their sovereign claim. Gambling provided the ground for the recomposition of myths and enabled the indigenous communities to reconfigure their counter-hegemonic strategies.

The casino economy enabled the tribes to expand and consolidate their sovereign claims for they invested the proceeds to tribal welfare, education and infrastructure.[121] This development did not go unnoticed by the California and Florida states which initiated a long legal battle against tribal gambling during the 1980's.[122] The court dismissed all accusations made by the state and allowed the tribes to expand their gambling operations in other states as well. The tension between state law and tribal casino was resolved with the intervention of federal law that submitted the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988 allowing all tribes to develop their gambling facilities on the condition that it was permitted by state law (Bruyneel 176).[123]

The colonial dogma that has been conditioning U.S. policy and indigenous life mandates that the native may "survive but not thrive" (Bruyneel 193). Oscillating between narratives of the "vanishing Indian" and the predatory entrepreneur, the native struggles to establish a life with dignity beyond the confines of mere sustainability colonial policy dictates. I turn to Louise Erdrich's literature with the intention of

discussing how the consolidation of Anishinaabe sovereignty during the Allotment era and after the Indian Gambling Regulatory Act necessitated the reconfiguration and recontextualization of the Misshepeshu myth in order to envision a future beyond the colonial confinements. The analysis that follows focuses on Erdrich's *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace* and attempts to explore the "meaningful reinvention" of the Misshepeshu myth in order to accommodate the detribalization and liberalization of the Anishinaabe community (Christie 21). I, therefore, focus on Louise Erdrich's literary work in order to explore how the Anishinaabe community articulates their sovereign claims, within the specific historical context, by retrieving, recontextualizing and modifying their myths in order to contest discourses of domination and expand their sovereignty. More specifically the questions I am posing are: Does the reworking of myth in Erdrich's *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace* and LeAnne Howe's *Shell Shaker* attest to the development of an indigenous counter-discourse that enables the Anishinaabe to consolidate their sovereign claims? Does the collusion of gambling and myth, their remolding into alternative native practices, signify the crippling contamination of indigenous subjectivity by capitalist ideologies or does it evince necessary compromises and renegotiations that can benefit the community in the long run? Lastly, in what ways does the "meaningful reinvention" of myths, performed in tandem with the liberalization of the tribe, disorients indigenous ontology?

4.5 The Liberalization of the Anishinaabe Community in *Tracks* and the Disruptive Potentiality of Myths

The commodification and fragmentation of Anishinaabe land was conducive to the intensification of ethnic cleansing and genocidal colonialism the settlers have inaugurated since the 17th century. *Tracks* is the narrative confession of the old trickster, Nanapush, to Fleur's daughter, Lulu. Witnessing the loss of land and people, Fleur decides to send her young daughter to a boarding school. Her choice distances Lulu who attempts to comprehend her mother's actions by assembling conflicting testimonies concerning her mother into a cohesive narrative. In the midst of broken treaties and

ongoing land dispossessions, Nanapush enacts a long tradition of story-telling performances whose aim is to pass on the historical struggles of the tribe and initiate a healing process.

In a passage that oralizes a history of genocidal colonialism, Nanapush attempts to articulate the insurmountable loss of land and people within a very short period of time:

> My girl, I saw the passing of times you will never know. I guided the last buffalo hunt. I saw the last bear shot. I trapped the last beaver with a pelt of more than two years' growth. I spoke aloud the words of the government treaty, and refused to sign the settlement papers that would take away our woods and lake. I axed the last birch that was older than I, and I saved the last Pillager. Fleur, the one you will not call your mother. (2)

Nanapush's confession is an attempt to incorporate a history of land dispossession and cultural annihilation in Anishinaabe oral tradition and, through his testimony, let the healing process take its course.[124] An epidemic of tuberculosis cripples the community and young Fleur loses all five members of her family. At his arrival at the Matchimanito Lake, where Fleur's cabin is located, Nanapush observes the high oaks surrounding the lake and enters the "woods inhabited by ghosts" (2). Although the Pillager family had a long history of following the "secret ways to cure or kill," Nanapush avers that "their art deserted them" (2). The old trickster finds Fleur lying next to the bodies of her family and, after performing the burial rituals, he decides to adopt her. During the harsh winter that follows, Nanapush and Fleur live as ghosts in the midst of ghosts. As he confesses to Lulu, the community underwent a period of mourning struggling to cope with the wounds of a historical trauma. The two Anishinaabe spend the following months in desolate conditions avoiding any human contact and social intercourse for, as Nanapush details: "We felt the spirits of the dead so near that at length we just stopped talking" (6). Experiencing the ramifications of a collective trauma, the old trickster narrates how the presence of the dead became so overwhelming that they gradually lost the will to live:

> Their names grew within us, swelled to the brink of our lips, forced our eyes open in the middle of the night. We were filled with the water of the drowned, cold and black, airless water that lapped against the seal of out tongues or leaked slowly from the corners of our eyes. Within us, like ice shards, their names bobbed and shifted. Then the slivers of ice began to collect and cover us. We became so heavy, weighted down with the lead gray frost, that we could not move. Our hands lay on the table like cloudy blocks. The blood within us grew thick. We needed no food. And little warmth. Days passed, weeks, and we didn't leave the cabin for the fear that we'd crack our cold and fragile bodies. We had gone half windigo. I learned later that this was common, that there were many of our people who died in this manner, of the invisible sickness. There were those who could not swallow another bite of food because the names of their dead anchored their tongues. (6)

The magnitude of indigenous genocide and the collective trauma it engendered challenges established narrative techniques. If there is a feeling Nanapush's confession conjures, this is the feeling of crushing silence and stillness; his testimony conveys the incommensurable loss of people, land, and traditions that cannot be processed by the human psyche and mind. It is after this long period of mourning that Fleur decides to return to her cabin in Matchimanito lake bearing neither possessions nor stories of healing but only "raw power, and the names of the dead that filled her" (7). The Anishinaabe who were unable to pay the Allotment taxes lost their lands to auctioneers and lumber companies. The coming of spring finds Nanapush observing land speculators and Indian agents measuring the lake: "Only now they walked upon the fresh graves of Pillagers, crossed death roads to plot out the deepest water where the lake monster, Misshepeshu, hid himself and waited" (8). The rekindling of the Misshepeshu myth has to be recontextualized within the historical conditions of the Allotment era, the epidemics which reduced indigenous populations and fragmented families, and a period of mourning when the community attempts to reconfigure its ontological and cultural integrity in order to formulate counter-discourses and strategies to reconsolidate its sovereignty.

The spirit world Nanapush conjures throughout his confession to young Lulu is a world ungraspable by dominant discourse and thinking as it destabilizes conceptual boundaries and temporalities entrenched in the essentialist methodologies of western epistemologies.[125] For the settler colonialist and the western academic, it poses a real challenge to grasp that, for the Anishinaabe, the living and the dead co-inhabit in the present. The binary and teleological methodologies of thought governing hegemonic discourses fail to fathom that the kingdom of the living is haunted by the confluence of alternative temporalities and ghostly presences. Nanapush does not envision or imagine the spirits that haunt the Matchimanito Lake, but he actually *sees* them roaming the same roads and waterways with the living. For the Anishinaabe, therefore, the Misshepeshu is a dominant presence to be acknowledged and respected: "Pillager land was no ordinary land to buy and sell. When that family came here, driven from the east, Misshepeshu had appeared because of the Old Man's connection. But the water thing was not a dog to follow at our heels" (175). The community cannot withstand further relocation and dispossession, for what it risks is not merely territory but the cultural cohesion that sustains them as community and human beings.

By the end of the 19th century the indigenous population was reduced to such an extent that there was no need for the United States to be involved in further treaty-making negotiations with the native communities. The federal decisions and legislations were now made unilaterally without the consent and approval of the remaining tribes. The General Allotment Act was another attempt to assimilate the natives by indoctrinating them in liberal principles. Apart from the dramatic diminishment of native land by ninety million acres, the Allotment era inaugurated another period of ethnic cleansing for its authors redefined the ontological attunement between the natives and their land. For the indigenous population, the land is a presence that binds the cultural, religious and social aspects of the tribe together; it dictates the norms of kinship, the modality of their being and ontological constitution.

The land is the narrative that coheres all the distinct parts of the Anishinaabe world; it is the tether that sustains the family, the tribe and the animal world through a symbiotic bond. By parceling out indigenous land, the federal government fragmented the Anishinaabe world since it enclosed and commodified the very sources that are

essential for their survival: "small game, bushes, brambles, and tress bearing fruit, nuts, and berries; birch bark for canoes, baskets and shelter, medicinal plants; reeds, cattails, and other aquatic plants used for baskets and woven mats, stands of wild rice, fish; and water" were no longer accessible to the community (Fitzgerald 58). The Allotment Act "rewrote the narrative" between the Anishinaabe and their environment, as it enforced the splintering of their native land in individual parcels (Fitzgerald 52). For the Anishinaabe tribe, land and sovereignty are interchangeable terms since land does not designate merely territory and space; rather, land connotes the essence of their being as it provides their means of survival and demarcates the junction where alternative temporalities and modalities of being converge. Fleur Pillager's struggle to restore the land to the Anishinaabe community with the collusion of the spirit world is a struggle to reestablish a sense of sovereign self to the Anishinaabe. To accomplish this, Fleur embraces the destructive powers of the Misshepeshu manitou[126] and redeploys them against the land encroachers.

The community begins to circulate stories of Fleur's isolation in her cabin. Pauline, who provides a counter-narrative to Nanapush's confessions, claims that no man would dare approach Fleur because "it was clear that Misshepeshu, the water man, the monster wanted her for himself" (11). Pauline also insists that after her return to Matchimanito, Fleur "went haywire" (12): "She messed with evil, laughed at the old women's advice and dressed like a man. She got herself into some half-forgotten medicine, studied ways we shouldn't talk about" (12). What unsettles the community is that Fleur seems to have acquired a transforming power as well. Pauline remarks that some Anishinaabe were horrified to discover that Fleur's tracks progressively changed into bear claws (12). Concerned about Fleur's embrace of dark medicine, the community ponders her expulsion. In order to gather the Allotment fees and maintain her land, Fleur becomes a worker in Pete Kozka's butcher shop in the city of Argus. Her relocation evinces the progressive transformation of a nomadic community into governable subjects conforming to a process of liberal normalization.

Pauline states that Kozka's workers, namely Lily Veddar, Tor Grunewald and Dutch James, "had carved about a thousand carcasses between them, maybe half of that steers and the other half pigs, sheep, and game like deer, elk, and bear. That's not even

mentioning the chickens, which were beyond counting" (13). When the three men are not involved in late poker nights, they spend time discussing "the auctions to come, equipment or women" (17). According to Pauline, Fleur is employed by Kozka "for her strength" (16). She portrays Fleur as a manly figure with "wide and flat" cheeks, "muscular" hands while her "shoulders were broad and curved like a yoke" (18).[127]Although Fleur's masculine performance earns her work in Kozka's Meats, Pauline notices that the Pillager conceals her dark powers: "They never looked into her sly brown eyes or noticed her teeth, strong and sharp and very white…They were blinded, they were stupid, they only saw her in the flesh" (18). The men are initially shocked when Fleur decides to join them in their poker nights, but their anxiety is immediately relieved for they assume that since Fleur is a native woman, she cannot deceive them. As Tor confesses, Fleur is accepted in their private poker night because "the squaw can't bluff" (20). The poker nights last for a week during which Fleur's peculiar "consistency" to winning exactly one dollar per night begins to alarm her opponents (21). The men decide to "rattle Fleur" by raising the stakes and, consequently, force the native to drop out of the game (20). The men are stunned when Fleur, by successfully bluffing during a poker game, manages to win a considerable amount of money (23). Unable to withstand the humiliation of losing to a native woman, the three men conspire and rape her in her abode located in a nearby slaughterhouse.

All the events that mark Fleur Pillager's early life reveal the biopolitics of settler colonialism which simultaneously effaces and rewrites every aspect of native life according to capitalist and liberal mandates. The biopolitical intervention in Anishinaabe life and ontology becomes evident in the periods of starvation, smallpox epidemics and tuberculosis that decimated Fleur's community. Unable to maintain their traditional way of life and symbiotic relationship to nature, the natives had to migrate to the urban centers in order to make a living; this relocation marks their transformation from hunter/gatherers to working subjects in small businesses and private farms. Moreover, the legislative framework of treaties and the Allotment act that intensified native dispossession and, more importantly, introduced the natives to the concepts of property, taxes and debt constitutes another facet of the biopolitics imposed by the settler state. Faced with the immediate loss of her land, Fleur is forced to relinquish not just her life in nature but a

life with nature and the traditions that make this bond meaningful in the Anishinaabe ontology. Her relocation to Argus to become a worker in a butcher shop that thrives on the destruction of the animal world on which her native world depends constitutes an example of how settler colonialism reformulates the needs of the colonized and embeds them in narratives of liberal teleology. Yet, the question Erdrich's novel quite rightfully poses is whether the native's compromise to liberal and capitalist discourses may enable her to reclaim her sovereignty. Fleur's rape punctuates the biopolitical objective of settler colonialism which "allows the native to survive but not thrive" (Bruyneel 193). Fleur is allowed to participate in the poker game, but she is not allowed to profit from it; her sovereign claims are undermined in their moment of recognition. Fleur's rape is also indicative of the patriarchal discourse that permeates colonialism and forces queer subjectivities to bend to heteronormative economies; her sexuality is normalized and corrected through an act of rape. Rape is a theme that repeats itself through the colonial and postcolonial archive and reveals the deeply rooted patriarchal tenets of colonialism and its tendency to retrieve, through rape, recalcitrant feminine sexuality and economies in heteronormative patriarchal schemata.

The day following the rape, Pauline witnesses an unusual weather phenomenon that levels the city of Argus. She sees the sky hanging low and the weather breaking violently. Pauline hears "a cry building in the wind, faint at first, a whistle and then a shrill scream that tore through the walls..." Heavy clouds descent and tornado cones, followed by a "blinding rain," begin to sweep the city (27). As the storm climaxes, Pauline observes an "odd cloud" enclosing the city, stopping over Kozka's meats and crashing on the butcher shop "like a drill" (28). Fleur's violators meet their demise in their attempt to seek shelter in the same storage locker they have so delicately built. Harnessing the dark forces bequeathed by the Misshepeshu, Fleur manipulates the weather phenomena and creates a windstorm that descends on Argus, demolishing the butcher shop and killing her violators. Without disregarding the fact that the narration of the destruction of Argus is performed by Pauline, a mixed blood, who wishes to embrace Catholicism and renounce her native origins, it is evident that Fleur has manipulated the forces granted by the Misshepeshu in order to restore a provisional equilibrium between the natives and the settlers. In this instance, the myth acts in the benefit of the

community, for the destructive event that befalls the city is registered in the Anishinaabe collective unconscious as a mythical intervention that probes them to remain incompliant with the dictates of colonial discourse. With the money collected through gambling, Fleur pays the Allotment taxes and maintains her land for the time being. Pauline claims that the Pillager "married the water man, Misshepeshu, or that she lives in shame with white men, or that she's killed them all" (31). The young Anishinaabe, although unassimilated by her community, does manage to articulate her sovereign claims through the invocation of the spirit world since, as Pauline confesses, "she kept the lake thing controlled. But she also disturbed the area around Matchimanito" (35).

If Nanapush's narrative testimony aims at redeeming Fleur for her unsuccessful struggle to maintain her land and her controversial decision to send Lulu to a boarding school, Pauline Payat's account of the events surrounding the particular Anishinaabe community denotes an insidious process of biopolitical alignment of the tribe to the politics of the settler state. Pauline's narrative confession, starting in the summer of 1913, coincides with the gradual land expropriation of the community and the imperative to pay the allotment fees for the remaining territory.

Pauline's testimony relies heavily on gossips and rumors regarding the metaphysical relationship between the roguish Fleur and the Misshepeshu monster which inhabits the waters of North Dakota. When Fleur fell, for the first time, in the Matchimanito Lake she was saved by two passers-by who, according to Pauline, were never to be seen again in the community (10). At the age of 15, Fleur falls again in the waters of the lake but this time she manages to swim to the shore where George Many Women rushes to help the young girl. Pauline states that as soon as the man approached Fleur she cursed him to take her place in the realm of the dead (11). Soon afterwards, Pauline argues, George Many Women became a recluse and avoided any social interaction. Ironically, he died by hitting his head and drowning in the bathtub his sons had bought him (11). The thread of rumor and tales that Pauline weaves together in order to produce Fleur's demonological portrait extends to the latter's connection to native spirits and mythical powers. Notwithstanding her native origins, Pauline progressively dissociates from Anishinaabe mythology and recasts native metaphysics as aberrant and satanic.

Pauline recounts that although Fleur was "good-looking, nobody dared to court her because it was clear that Misshepeshu, the water man, the monster wanted her for himself" (11). Her remark that the monster, whom she pictures as a "devil," "wanted her for himself" insinuates to the uncanny copulation between Fleur and the Misshepeshu. Pauline also accuses Fleur of cross-dressing, being able to transform into a bear and considers her responsible for the unprecedented weather phenomenon which befalls the city of Argus killing the three men who conspired and raped the native woman. Why is Pauline so obsessed with Fleur and why does her obsession to depict Fleur as undisciplined and erratic coincides with the land expropriation of the tribe? According to DePriest, Pauline perceives Fleur's untamed subjectivity as a challenge to the indoctrinating mission of Catholicism (258). Pauline's main objective is not merely to detach herself from the Anishinaabe but also to demonstrate, through the impossible task of disciplining Fleur, that she rightfully belongs to the Catholic community. Michelle Hessler, on the other hand, suggests that the unending antagonism between the women stems from Eli's disregard of Pauline's "sexual advances" and his attraction to Fleur (42). I would like to argue that Pauline's fixation with Fleur and her continuous attempt to represent the latter as a witch who has pledged her allegiance to a satanic monster should be read in conjunction with the culminating land expropriation of natives since Pauline's misconstruction of the native woman attests to the reproduction of the discourses of witch-hunting that had been instrumental both in the marginalization and discipline of recalcitrant female subjectivities in Europe and in, what Silvia Federici has called, the "transition" from feudalism to capitalism (*Caliban and the Witch* 219).

Federici traces the co-articulation of patriarchal economies with the transition of feudal societies to capitalism. Witch-hunting, according to Federici, "stands at a crossroad of a cluster of social processes that paved the way for the rise of modern capitalist world" (*Witches* 12). The practice of witch-hunting emerged at the end of the Middle Ages, when the feudal society began manifesting signs of a "chronic disaccumulation" (*Caliban* 62); the concept of "disaccumulation" illustrates how feudal societies become progressively aware of new sites of exploitation but they lack the capitalist infrastructure that can facilitate their overexploitation. Federici states that between 1450 and 1650, feudalism in Europe exhibited signs of financial fatigue and

"began breaking down" as the land owners and merchants could not systematize the commodification of new territories (62). The "capitalist accumulation" continued but due to the lack of new "political formations" which could suppress proletariat resistance and accentuate financial profit the future of the land-owners and merchants was in jeopardy (Federici, *Caliban* 62). What became rather obvious was that capitalist forces could not systematize overexploitation and expand their influence unless they produced an entirely new nexus of "differences and divisions within the working class" (*Caliban* 63-64). Under the auspices of the clergy and the state, the elite had to conceive and impose a new discourse and practice of oppression in order to fragment the solidarity of the dissenting voices against expropriation. By targeting women and accusing them of conspiring with the devil, the state, the clergy and the elite forged a patriarchal alliance which fractured the solidarity between men and women both in the household and at the field of insurgency. Federici suggests that the "transition to capitalism" would not have been possible without the establishment and dissemination, both spatial and temporal, of "new forms of regimentation and division of the work force" which would, ultimately, augment the "proletarianization" of the peasantry (*Caliban* 66, 68).

The impositions of "land privatization" was to be accomplished via the practice of enclosures which affected peasant communities that relied on open pasture for their subsistence and, especially, women who had to be "confined to reproductive labor" (Federici, *Caliban* 74). The discourse of witch-hunting was employed both by the state and the landlords in order to bend the resistance of women who defied their subjugation and reduction to mere tools of reproduction. Although the evidence of witchcraft was not always clear, women who "resisted their impoverishment and social exclusion," those who were "quarrelsome" and prone to "stirring up trouble among the neighbors" were considered rebellious and were charged with being the devil's instrument and practicing witchcraft (Federici, *Witches* 19). Another charge laid on insubordinate women was that they exhibited "promiscuous behaviour" and had developed a suspect relationship with animals (Federici, *Witches* 19, 22). Hence, the practice of witch-hunting was instrumentalized by land owners, the clergy and the state in order to efface the symbiotic affiliation between peasants and nature and supplant it with the metaphysics of capitalism; the long "transition to capitalism" was materialized through a painstaking

conversion of subjectivities to a new array of relationships and comportment towards nature. As Federici remarks, it was during this transitory stage that a nexus of "social/cultural practices and beliefs that had been typical of precapitalist rural Europe" were deemed "unproductive and potentially dangerous for the new economic order" (*Witches* 21).

The discourses and practices which were used by European aristocracy and land owners in order to suppress peasant insurgencies during the 14th and the 15th century were utilized in order to subjugate native populations in the colonies (Federici, *Caliban* 164). Federici suggests that the practices of indiscriminate witch-hunting that occurred in Europe during these centuries were "transported to the New [World] and then re-imported into Europe" (*Caliban* 219). This long process of "cross-fertilization" between continents and across distinct periods marks the ways in which methodologies of subjugation are developed, practiced, proliferate and unceasingly perfected so as to regulate and tame defiant communities and subjectivities (Federici, *Caliban* 198). As Federici points out it was during the "transition to capitalism" that Christian and demonological discourses were summoned in order to suppress insubordinate peasant communities and establish an array of "differences and divisions within the working class" (*Caliban* 63-4).

Pauline unwittingly reproduces the discourses of witch-hunting in order to misconstrue Fleur's insubordination and erratic behavior as marks of satanic behavior that must be isolated and subdued. She fails to comprehend that her compromised narrative, distorted by the discourses of Catholicism, does not merely conduce to the marginalization of Fleur but it also develops a rupture within the community paving the way for intertribal conflicts in a time when tribal solidarity is necessary against the privatization of Anishinaabe land. Her obsession to misrepresent Fleur as a cross-dressing witch who has made a pact with shamanic, hence devilish, forces and exhibits a sexual behavior which upsets heteronormative schemata aims at depicting the native woman as an aberrant subjectivity that cannot be disciplined and tamed neither by Catholic nor native indoctrination. In this sense, the rape that follows Fleur's sabotage of the poker game aims at correcting her disorderly and queer nature by confining her to patriarchal economies and the politics of reproductive labor. Fleur, however, is not the only one who

is impelled to gradually conform to the restrictive biopolitical field that the settler state establishes through land privatization since the following year the community is faced again with land encroachment and allotment fees.

In order to gather the required sum to pay the allotment taxes, the community begins to collect cranberry bark from the surrounding forests and sell it to local and travelling dealers who arrive in the region. Nanapush recounts how the Anishinaabe are forced to "strip away" extensive forestry areas to collect bark:

> The tonic dealer came to town each week with an empty wagon for cranberry bark, and from that day we were ready for him every time, although it meant we stripped every bush around Matchimanito, and when that was done ranged still farther into the outskirts of the woods (176).

The commodification of their natural surroundings, therefore, becomes a regular performance incorporated in the daily life of the Anishinaabe. The tribe is impelled to develop an exploitative relationship with nature that mandates the natives to engage their resources as mere products to be sold to cover Allotment fees. Biopolitical assimilation is achieved through the repeated reenactment of these quotidian performances; these insignificant daily performances are the most insidious techniques of biopolitical assimilation since daily rituals of exchange progressively assume an ideological valence that displaces vernacular forms of exchange and reorients native ontology. Not only does the community familiarize itself with the concepts of the value, profit and accumulation of wealth, but it also realizes that the myths and spirits on which it rested its sovereignty are no longer compatible with the challenges settler colonialism imposed. The biopolitics of settler colonialism demystified the native world while enchanting it with the performances of capitalist teleology. The indoctrination of the natives to the emerging biopolitical field of colonial discourses had to be complemented with their coerced participation in the political processes the settler state had established. Father Damien, the local priest, advises Nanapush to assume a leading position and participate in the upcoming elections for the position of the tribal leader.

Nanapush, being a witty trickster, understands that his involvement in politics will not hinder land dispossession but coerce the tribe in agreements with ambiguous outcomes. Although he accepts to be a candidate, he confesses that he is aware that his election will turn him into a political puppet: "Unlike the Pukwans, who were government Indians, I saw the deadfall beneath my feet before I stepped. I would avoid the job. I knew what was attached. 'Wires,' I said, 'tied to the hands and arms'" (185). Nanapush wins the elections and realizes that the future of native sovereignty rests on discourses and strategies foreign to the Anishinaabe. The spirit world can no longer be the guiding principle in a struggle conducted through legislations, judicial processes and bureaucracy:

> That's when I began to see what we were becoming, and the years have borne me out: a tribe of file cabinets and triplicates, a tribe of single-space documents, directives, policy. A tribe of pressed trees. A tribe of chicken-scratch that can be scattered by a wind, diminished to ashes by one struck match. (225)

The same trees that fostered the guardian spirits of the Anishinaabe have been reduced to pieces of paper utilized by the state to undermine native sovereignty. The state is not the only enemy the Anishinaabe have to face, for although the community manages to gather the required sum for the fees, Nector Kashpaw embezzles the money and pays only his family's share leaving Pillager land out of the settlement. Nanapush recounts with bitterness how the land struggles engendered civil conflicts within the community: "I know he paid the money down on Kashpaw land from foresight, shrewdness, greed all that would make him a good politician. As he grew older, he resembled Eli more in face and less in spirit. Whereas the elder brother never lost his tie to the past, the younger already looked ahead" (209). Nanapush's words punctuate how the younger generation of Anishinaabe consents to the developmental and, by extension, biopolitical discourse the settler state imposes. Kashpaw's "looking ahead" necessitates the recontextualization of the native past within the liberal teleologies of the settler state. In the wake of these cataclysmic changes, Fleur is asked to marry Eli, Nector's brother, if she wants to retain her land (211). Erdrich's novel symptomatically reveals how heteronormativity is

coterminous with the enclosure of land. The emerging biopolitical field the settler state is producing does not permit undisciplined queer subjectivities the same way it does not permit the existence of uncultivated and unexploited land.

Fleur, who in Nanapush's narration embodies the transforming and destructive capacities of the spirit world, is devastated by the news of the upcoming land auctions and dispossessions. Pauline describes her as a "black slot into the air, a passage into herself. A crushing sadness" (200). Fleur, the sole survivor of the Pillager family, has been ostracized by her community, raped by the men she worked for, lost her second child in birth, and now she is forced to surrender her land to the government and lumber companies. Fleur is not only losing her land, but also her sense of motherhood. How is she going to teach her daughter the healing qualities of plants and berries? How is she going to train her in crafting clothes and baskets from animal skins, oak birch and fur? In which hunting grounds will she lead her? Maria DePriest correctly asks: "How can Fleur be a mother, if she can't be home" (263)?

Nanapush explains to young Lulu that her mother could not withstand any more losses. Although he suggests that he never felt alone in his failures, "there was no room for failures" in Fleur's mind:

> I saw the barriers of her obstinate pride had kept my words safely beyond belief. In her mind she was huge, she was endless. There was no room for the failures of anyone else. At the same time, she was the funnel of our history. As the lone survivor of the Pillagers, she staggered now beneath the burden of a life she was failing to deserve (178).

It is not only Anishinaabe history Fleur is "failing to deserve;" but also that the accumulation of defeats has taken its toll on the Anishinaabe collective consciousness. Unable to guarantee a sense of place and, by extension, a sense of sovereignty for her daughter, Fleur submerges herself in the depth of the Matchimanito Lake. While Nanapush assumes she commits suicide, Fleur seems to have driven herself to the bottom of the lake in order to summon the manitou forces of the Misshepeshu. Nanapush observes that instead of fading away under governmental threats and intertribal conflicts,

Fleur “took strength” (218). On the day of her eviction, Nanapush visits the remaining patch of oaks surrounding Fleur’s cabin and, in the crowd of loggers and agents assembled, he hears “the hum of a thousand conversations” (220). Among the people gathered around Fleur’s cabin, the trickster sees generations of deceased Anishinaabe. He feels the presence of his deceased wives, the children he had lost, his parents and friends, the soldiers who had killed his mother and sister (220). For a moment, a feeling of nostalgia and longing overwhelms Nanapush who contemplates surrendering to the spirit world. Despite his urge, Fleur’s dominating presence draws him to the world of the living: “But Fleur had resisted these ghosts, at least she was not among them. So I would remain with the living too” (221).

Fleur’s final stand against the lumber companies and white encroachers reveals her commitment to the living and the future of the Anishinaabe community. Without succumbing to Nanapush’s nostalgic and defeatist narrative, she manipulates the weather phenomena and collapses the remaining oaks on the agents and loggers waiting to demolish her cabin (223). Contrary to discourses of internalized oppression which recognize native presence only through testimonies of absence, Fleur establishes a heritage that retrieves the spirit world only insofar it guarantees the present and prepares the ground for future sovereign claims.

4.6 Capitalism as Mourning: Ventriloquizing Anishinaabe Myths

One of the seminal questions that permeates Spivak’s critical theory is “Who decolonizes, and how?” I would like to read Erdrich’s *The Bingo Palace* following Spivak’s question with a view to exploring whether the casinoization of Anishinaabe economy, under the guise of decolonization, actually abets the community to improve the lives of indigenous women or it conduces to their perpetual silencing.[128] I am also interested in discussing whether the reformulation of myths according to the dictates of casino economy enables the Anishinaabe to consolidate their sovereignty or further undermine their claims.

Although *Tracks* ends with Fleur leaving Matchimanito and abandoning her land to lumber companies, in *The Bingo Palace* she regains her plot through a rigged poker game with the land speculator and owner Jewett Parker Tatro (143). With the assistance of her young son, Fleur defeats Tatro and reacquires her land in Matchimanito Lake. This time, however, native land becomes the object of desire of her grandson, Lipsha Morrissey, and his uncle, Lyman Lamartine, who wish to turn Fleur's plot into a casino complex.

Erdrich's introductory chapter in *The Bingo Palace*, titled the "Message," outlines the inner conflicts, misplaced expectations and misrepresentations that condition tribal life in the Anishinaabe reservation in the beginning of the 1990s. Blending the personal with the communal, hope with reality, and the past with the present, she invites the reader to experience the story through a narration that performs the multiplicity of interconnections and bonds that shape native life. In the "Message," the reader follows the main characters not through the eyes of an omniscient narrator but through the narrative vision of the entire community: "We see Albertine dancing…," "We shake our heads…," "We do know that…," "We wish that we could…" and "We're all disgusted with the son…" (6-7). Erdrich's narrative lens rests on the young medicine-man of the reservation whose unfitting presence in the tribal powwow serves as a reminder of how inassimilable to the community he has been. Once considered a "successor" (7) to the community's medicine-woman, Fleur Pillager, Lipsha Morrissey has been unable to ground himself in a place: "nothing captured his interest. Nothing held him. Nothing sparked." (8). Erdrich's narrative chorus observes Lipsha entering the winter *powwow* only to determine that "there was no place the boy could fit" (9). The community's disappointment towards Lipsha stems from his dubious medicine abilities, his inability to keep a steady job and the fact that although he seemed to be a promising student, he did not meet the community's expectations, becoming another "sad reservation statistic" (7-8). This intertribal conflict, staged in the "Message," depicts a prevalent ontological fissure that scars many Native communities and undermines their struggle to expand their sovereign claims; it conveys the ways indigenous heritage can potentially hinder tribal self-determination since Native communities seek recourse to knowledge which cannot heal existing colonial traumas and counter imposed federal restrictions. This failure is

driven inward, within the native's and the community's psyche, engendering a new cycle of expectations and desires that remain unfulfilled. The members of the Anishinaabe reservation observe Lipsha entering the tribal *powwow* with scorn and resentment:

> He tires us. We try to stand by him, to bring him back, give him advice. We tell him that he should ground himself, sit on the earth and bury his hands in the dirt and beg the Manitous. We have done so much for him and even so, the truth is, he has done nothing yet of wide importance. (7)

The introductory exposition of characters and their dissatisfaction with the novel's main character culminates into a moment of narrative compassion that pervades Lipsha's journey: "He was none of these, only Lipsha, come home" (10). Although the following analysis attempts to read how Lipsha, in his struggle to voice his self-determination and consolidate his sovereign claims, unwittingly internalizes and reproduces colonial attitudes and discourses that marginalize and appropriate Shawnee Ray, his object of desire, the narrative plea that concludes the "Message" cautions to any reading that grounds the tribal struggle for self-determination within a binary discursive frame which establishes preconfigured spatial and temporal boundaries. It is a plea that tasks the reader with reading the native struggle for sovereignty as a polyphony of voices that can be both fragmentary and unifying, both destructive and healing, and reveals that the consolidation of a sovereign self is a complicated process that upsets the geographies and temporal ontologies of dominant discourse. For this reason, the plea that concludes the chapter invites a compassionate reading, an acknowledgement of the precarious human, however violent and flawed he might be in his pursuit of a sovereign self.

At the epicenter of Lipsha's life stands the enigma of his mother's death and the rumors circulating the community that she tried to drown him when he was an infant. Unable to answer the questions haunting his life, Lipsha returns home hoping to resolve his existential crisis. He finds work as a bartender in the reservation bingo hall, owned by Lyman, when one night his aunt Zelda pays him a visit. Zelda reveals to Lipsha that once he was born, June took him to the Matchimanito Lake and filled his cradle with rocks (50). After she abandoned the little gunnysack in the lake, Zelda dived and retrieved the

baby from the bottom of the pond. According to Zelda, although Lipsha lay in the bottom of the lake for more than a baby could survive, he did not drown: "*So why weren't you drowned?*" (51 emphasis in original). Zelda's revelations confirm the community's rumors and deepen Lipsha's existential despair:

> *Wrong*, I repeat, turning in that night. *Wrong*, I keep insisting in my mind as I turn out the lights. *Wrong, wrong, wrong*, I fall into my dreams. I tell myself that Zelda scared the story up, she made it happen. She never found me in a gunnysack. I remind myself that I believe what Grandma Kashpaw told me- that I was given to her in a sad but understandable way by a mother who was beautiful but too wild to have raised a boy on her own. I had to come to terms with that story, forgave how June was so far out on the edge of life that she couldn't properly care for me. I want to keep that firm ground but my dreams are frightening water. (52 emphasis in original)

Lipsha has failed to give meaning to his life precisely because the biopolitical field that colonialism has established and that conditions native life turns life hollow. Zelda's revelations only validate his deepest fear, but under no circumstances do they explain why his mother tried to drown him, nor do they justify her untimely death.[129] Lipsha bears the perennial scars of colonial trauma, for the fragmentation of native families does not constitute a singular event that only spans the historical period of territorial colonization, but transcends the colonial era and contaminates even the younger generation of Anishinaabe. Fleur abandoning Lulu and June's attempt to drown Lipsha are incomprehensible precisely because the dehumanizing biopolitical field of settler colonialism that penetrates native life allows room only for the unintelligible. It is immediately after Zelda's revelations that June's ghost appears to Lipsha. The young medicine man is ready to drown his sorrow in the bingo bar when his mother's reflection appears in the hall's mirror. Lipsha is certain that his mother is "visiting for a reason" (53). June asks about the car Lipsha had purchased with the insurance money he received after her death. Although he answers that it is "stalled," June comforts him in saying that the reason for her visitation is to help him give it a "jump start" and hands him a pair of

bingo tickets (54). Lipsha takes the tickets and moves to his bedroom falling asleep, unburdened by all the "fear and excitement" that plagued his life (55). Lipsha, who constantly felt the victim of circumstances too complicated to grasp, begins to visualize a wider ontological schema that might bestow some kind of meaning on his purposeless life. This process entails both his involvement in his uncle's entrepreneurial plans and the appropriation of the very place where his mother tried to kill him, the Matchimanito Lake. What makes the particular scene quite revealing is not only that Lipsha's mother appears the moment he is confronted with the unbearable truth about her attempt to drown him; it is also the fact that she consoles him by presenting him with the bingo tickets. In Lipsha's case, capitalist discourses accomplish what neither Anishinaabe ceremonies nor native traditions have; they bring an incomplete process of mourning to completion. Anishinaabe metaphysics and myths, imbued with the rites of capitalism, enable Lipsha to find his place in the puzzling world he inhabits. An incomplete process of mourning seems to haunt Lyman's life as well.

In "Lyman's Dream," Lyman fantasizes slot machines and the proceeds his casino resort will eventually grant him. Although a respectable member of the community and tribal leader, he feels that had it not been for his entrepreneurial schemes and bingo hall, he would be another "sad reservation statistic" like his nephew (147). While he is lost in the flickering lights and buzzing noises of the slot machines, he sees Shawnee Ray's and Fleur Pillager's face flashing before his eyes (147). His business ventures are conflated with his desire to possess both Shawnee's body and Fleur's land. The apparitions of Fleur and Shawnee in the dizzy reflections of the slot machines disclose how Lyman views them as another entrepreneurial objective that must be accomplished. Nowhere does he see the reflection of his own image, for "his own reflection was lodged at the bottom of the river where his brother Henry had jumped in and drowned" (148). After his return from the Vietnam War, Henry becomes a recluse suffering from PSTD. Lyman struggles to bring his brother back to life and revitalize his interest in the community only to see him drown in a lake. After his brother's death-suicide, Lyman constantly attempts to conquer the business world either through the tomahawk factory he raises or the casino he wishes to erect in Fleur's land in Matchimanito Lake. Although water is a dominating element in the Anishinaabe traditions and myths, both Lyman and Lipsha have been

deeply traumatized by it. The scars they bear attest to the enduring impact of colonial politics which condition native life through state legislations and a biopolitical field that impinges on native's struggle for self-determination. Similarly to Lipsha, Lyman perceives capitalist objectives as the only remedy to mourn a family member's unmournable body. Dreaming the erection of the casino is yet another capitalist venture that may abet Lyman in overcoming his trauma:

> He was everybody else's picture creature but his own. And yet, as quarter after quarter fed off his fingers, he began to receive a hint of himself, an ID picture composed of his economic tribulations and triumphs, a personal glimpse from the outside. He was drive. He was necessity. If not him, there was no one who would plan his plans, lift his voice, scheme, and bring the possibilities into existence. (148)

Interestingly, it is immediately after his dream sequence and the reference to his brother that Fleur's ghost appears in his dream with a warning: "*This time, don't sell out for a barrel of weevil-shot flour and a mossy pork"* (148 emphasis in original). Trying to decipher his dreaming of Fleur, Lyman entertains the idea that "maybe during his sleep she had sat by him and spoken these words into his ear. *Put your winnings and earnings in a land-acquiring account. Take the quick new money. Use it to purchase the fast old ground.* He almost laughed at the certainty and possibility" (148-149 emphasis in original). While Fleur never condones the project, Lyman assumes that the Anshinnabe spirit world sanctions the construction of the casino and he begins to fantasize "a possible big-time resort. A marina. Boats, pleasure seekers" (149). Fleur Pillager's struggle has become an essential part of the Anishinaabe history. A living legend, who now lives ascetically in her cabin, she constitutes the ontological pillar of the community. Nanapush's statement that Fleur constitutes the "funnel of our history" illustrates that the medicine woman symbolizes all the traditions and myths that hold the community together. Lyman conflation of his casino project with Fleur reveals how he appropriates myths and traditions in order to legitimize and justify his own entrepreneurial objectives. The Anishinaabe myths and ghosts are summoned only to be subsumed and conflated

with the rituals of capitalist objectives. What Lyman's dream sequence conveys is not the rejuvenation of myth but its actual erasure and forgetting. The most evident moment of confluence between Anishinaabe mythology and casino economy is enacted during Lipsha's and Lyman's vision quests which the medicine man initiates in order to find meaning in his directionless and disorientated life.

Christopher Vecsey argues that vision quests were rituals that bequeathed the natives mental and spiritual qualities they did not possess. The young tribals underwent a long period of fasting and isolation during which an animal manito would confer upon the faster a special ability that would guarantee a safe and long-lasting life. In most cases, the young Anishinaabe would be bestowed with the ability to conduct successful hunting expeditions and, hence, improve his social status in the community. For the Anishinaabe, the manito was the giver and taker of life; it was within its powers to provide nourishment, medicine and permission to kill animals (Vecsey 140). As Vecsey states, the vision ritual "transformed the Indian," for it altered and reoriented his life objectives and mentality towards the "direction of the guardian manito" (138). The link established between the faster and the manito was so strong that the Anishinaabe would perceive the spirit as a member of their family (Vecsey 134). The ritual began to eclipse with the domination of European settler colonialism, since the hunting grounds and game were dramatically diminished and, hence, manitou conjuration and visions became redundant and incompatible with the challenges the indigenous faced. As dispossession and genocide intensified, the indigenous relied more on "white traders and government agents" and less on the potentialities of manito myths and rituals (Vecsey139). Consequently, by the end of the 19th century, vision quests atrophied and lost their validity in Anishinaabe ontology (Vecsey 139).

Lipsha embarks on his vision quest in order to comprehend the imperceptible ontological schema that conditions his life and acquire a life objective that would grant him the required respect and resources to marry Shawnee Ray. What's more, the vision quest is the ritual that will facilitate Lipsha to come to terms with his mother's attempt to drown him and, possibly, reveal his rightful place in the Anishinaabe world. Lipsha feels that the vision will break the circle of suffering that haunts his family. In a moment of clarity, he contends that what had happened to him as a baby is what has been happening

to many indigenous families over the past centuries: “I hear my mother’s voice, feel her touch, and by that I know the truth. I know that she did the same that was done to her – a young girl left out to live on the woods to survive on pine sap and leaves and buried roots” (217). The tribal healer alludes to his family history haunted by images of women whose motherhood was undermined by the dehumanizing conditions established in the reservations they resided. Fleur sends Lulu to a boarding school when she realizes that her land has been allotted, June is abandoned by her mother in a forest, and Lipsha’s cradle is loaded with stones and thrown in Matchimanito Lake. The vision Lipsha hopes to experience will potentially heal historical and familial wounds that have plagued both Pillagers and Kashpaws: “We will do what we were taught, we who learnt our lesson in the dead light. We pass them on. We hurt, and hurt other, in a circular motion” (217). It is this circle of abandoned children that Lipsha hopes to break with his participation in the vision ritual. Initially, though, the ritual does not seem to bestow upon Lipsha the vision and abilities he wished for.

The ritual takes place at the Matchimanito Lake which Fleur had struggled to maintain in her youth and where ‘Lyman intends to erect his gambler’s paradise” (133). Lipsha supports his uncle’s plan to develop a casino in the region since he perceives this project to be a “money-maker scheme that will build day cares, endow scholarships” and “cure the ills of addiction” (190). After days of fasting and isolation and no sign of a vision inspiring enough to reestablish a sense of self in Lipsha, a skunk approaches the young faster counseling him that: “*This ain’t real estate*” (200 emphasis in original). According to Vecsey, the purpose of visions was to initiate the tribal members in the ritual of hunting by granting them the identity and skills of a successful hunter. Lipsha longs for a vision that would reinstate him as the hunter of his casino dream and not the prey of colonial politics and apparatuses. Although the healer returns empty-handed to his house, he realizes that the reason he survived his mother’s drowning attempt was the intervention of the Misshepeshu which rescued him from the depth of the lake:

> Darkened and drenched, coming toward me from the other side of drowning – it presses its mouth on mine and holds me with its fins and horns and rocks me with

> its long and shining plant arms. Its face is lion-jawed, a thing of beach foam, resembling the *jack of clubs*. (218 emphasis added)

The images and discourses of the past find no reference in the present challenges the Anishinaabe face. The tether that held together the community with its myths seems to be severed and the younger generations of the community restore the connection through the teleologies of capitalism. The Misshepeshu myth itself holds no real value for young Lipsha and it is only when it takes the form of a recognizable figure that it assumes a meaningful presence in his mind. It is only after Lipsha discovers a resemblance between the beast and the casino economy that he experiences his vision.

The young medicine man witnesses "bulldozers scraping off wild growth," "trees shaved, tar laid," "cement blocks and wood are hauled into" and the "clouds raining money into the open mouths of the tribal bank accounts" (219). Lipsha sees fragmented Anishinaabe land unifying under the aegis of the casino project: "…the complex is slated to develop Pillager land, partly Fleur's land and partly old allotments that the tribe holds in common, and which is fractionated through the dead and scattered holdouts who have never signed the treaties…" (219). For Lipsha, the project will not only improve the financial and social conditions of the community, but it will also consolidate splintered territories, families, stories and histories in a unifying community. Lipsha perceives these signs to be nothing less than manifestations of the necessary convergence of the mythical world and tribal casinoization: "Fleur Pillager is a poker sharp, along with other medicines. She wants a bigger catch, a fish that knows how to steal the bait, a clever operator who can use the luck that temporary loopholes in the law bring to Indians for higher causes, steady advances" (221).

Lipsha and Lyman are set on developing the casino project on Matchimanito Lake in the hope of reclaiming the land and the world of which colonization has deprived them. The conjuration of the spirit world in *The Bingo Palace* is radically different from Fleur's invocation of the Misshepeshu myth in *Tracks*. Lyman and Lipsha do not experience the intrusion of myth in the everyday, but the simulacrum of myth ventriloquized by capitalist teleologies which produce a compromised representation of myth that can only superficially tackle the colonial traumas the community bears. More

importantly, though, ensnared in the mythologies of capitalism, the two men fail to suppress the patriarchal mandates intertwined with liberal discourses.

4.7 Casinoization and Phallic Economies

Constantly on the move, between places, between jobs and hardened faces, never "grounding" himself, Lipsha is in dire need of a sign that would put his life back on the right tracks. Overwhelmed by a sense of fatalism, he is in search of purpose and a "design" that would clear a path to his directionless life:

> I am out of shape for being told what to do by everything around me. I've been out in a world where everybody cares to manipulate me, and maybe I take this unseen plotting as a sign of concern, even comfort, and fall back under its spell. That might be it, because even when another part of the design comes clear, soon after, I don't register its meaning. (*The Bingo Palace* 19)

His failures and purposeless roaming between the reservation and the city have made Lipsha believe that he is the "subject of a plan greater" than himself and he is destined to constantly fall under its spell, almost "mechanically," regardless of his attempts to comprehend it and become an active presence in its development (21). During the celebrations in the Anishinaabe *powwow* taking place at the local gym, Lipsha meets his object of desire that enables him to find his place in the greater scheme of events that constantly eludes him. Shawnee Ray attends the event along with her newborn son, Redford, her fiancé, Lipsha's uncle, Lyman Lamartine, and his sister, Zelda Kashpaw. Lipsha is fascinated by Shawnee; it is both her beauty and the signification she assumes in his imagination that fascinates him. The young medicine-man fantasizes her as a "prize" and as a hunter/warrior from the "deep" native past spearing cavalry men and killing buffalos with a single punch. Lipsha argues that Shawnee Ray "is the best of our past, our present, our hope of a future" (12, 13). He fails though to engage Shawnee's singularity; rather, he retrieves the all-too familiar stereotypes of native presence which

actually attest to a "native absence" (Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses* 27). According to Vizenor, the misconstrued images of native presence and history animated through dominant discourse constitute the "uncut cord of colonial dominance," for they relegate native ontology to a mere nostalgic and forgotten history oscillating between stories of "either noble or demonic savagism" (33). Lipsha fails to see that by representing Shawnee through native stereotypes, he commodifies her presence and reproduces the typological simplifications of colonialism.

As soon as Lipsha sets his eyes on Shawnee, he develops an antagonistic relationship with his uncle and future employer in the bingo hall, Lyman Lamartine. During the dancing feast, Lipsha observes Lyman performing a dancing routine which simulates a hunting scene. Like a hunter stalking another hunter, Lipsha watches "a guy on the lookout, quick footed, nervous, sneaking up someone unsuspecting" (20). While his "victim sleeps on," he sees Lyman "crouching" and the long grass "closing over him." Lyman, then, "jumps in a circle, his feet landing in a powerful stance…piercing, pointing straight into the deep brown eyes of Shawnee Ray" (20). Although Lipsha cannot decide whether Lyman's dancing routine was that of a "warrior" or a "lover," he does realize that the conquest of Shawnee seems to be the answer to the unanswered questions his life has set him (20).

Lipsha sees Lyman both as his antagonist and a role model since his uncle seems to have grasped the workings of a larger design which remains ungraspable for him. Lipsha admires and envies Lyman since he is a respected member of the Anishinaabe while, at the same time, he embodies a neoliberal spirit that sets him apart from the reservation community. Lyman, Lipsha contends, is a "dark minded schemer, a bitter and yet shaman-pleasant entrepreneur…who had his own interest so mingled with his people's that he couldn't tell his personal ambition from the pride of Kashpaws" (5). Lyman has tried his luck in various businesses; yet, it is the bingo hall he operates and its future expansion that seem to provide a solid financial ground to the native entrepreneur:

> …Lyman has run so many businesses that nobody can keep track – cafes, gas pumps, a factory that made tomahawks, a flower shop, an Indian taco concession, a bar he has added to and parlayed from a penny-card bingo hall kitchen-table

> blackjack parlor into something bigger, something we don't know the name of yet, something with dollar signs that crowd the meaning from our brain. (15)

Lyman represents the future for the Anishinaabe reservation since his entrepreneurial attitude and confidence animate the visions and hopes of the entire community. For Lipsha, it is Lyman's "*have* in a sea of *have-nots*" that makes him desirable both to the community and, especially, to Shawnee Ray (16). Hence, Lipsha perceives Lyman as his mentor/antagonist who can teach him "The sex of money. How it reproduces if you pile it high enough and put in the right circumstances" (101).

In the midst of a directionless life devoid of purpose, Lipsha begins to conceptualize the greater scheme he has been searching throughout his life. The conquest of Shawnee and the accumulation of wealth demarcate a path that would lead Lipsha to becoming a presence and not another "sad reservation statistic" in the Anishinaabe community. Lipsha begins to espouse those neoliberal tenets that would enable him to articulate his self-determination in the community and, most importantly, to become "a man who can impress Shawnee Ray" (62). During his progressive embrace of neoliberal discourse and practices, however, Lipsha's obsession with Shawnee evolves into possessive masculinity which aims at commodifying Shawnee's destabilizing presence.

Initially, Lipsha accepts Lyman's invitation to work as a bartender in his bingo hall. He sets his eyes on a van, part of a bingo competition, and immediately assumes that a semblance of property will inevitably "change the order" of his purposeless life (62). The visitations of his grandmother, Lulu, and later of his mother's ghost, June, in his sleep reinforce Lipsha's motivation who is now able to grasp the "larger picture": "But I am able to investigate the larger picture, thanks to my mother's directions and thank to Lulu, from whom I soon learn to be one-minded in my pursuit of a material object" (63). One would expect that the visitation of his mother's spirit would deter Lipsha from succumbing so eagerly to an individualistic pursuit of material wealth. Yet, it is her ghost that commands Lipsha to start gambling by handing him the magic bingo tickets: " 'Do you play bingo?' 'I never did yet.' I inform her. 'Well, hardly ever.' 'Now you do'" (55). His mother's bingo tickets earn him his first winnings and Lipsha feels that, for the first time in his life, a protective barrier of "insulation" begins to form around him: "People

don't laugh at Lipsha, knowing they might need a loan. Instead of putting on the touch, these days I get touched up" (99). As soon as Lipsha becomes mired in the spell of profitable gambling, he decides to start charging his medicine services in order to buy more bingo tickets and, eventually, win the van: "To get my van, I have to shake hands with greed. I get unprincipled" (64). Yet, his healing powers wither and he realizes that he can no longer perform his medicine ritual; the moment he attempts to conjure his magical powers, his mind and hands fail him: "But when it comes to blanking out my mind, I consistently fail. For each time, in the center of the cloud that comes down into my brain, in perfect focus, the van is now parked" (64). Even when he dates Shawnee, Lipsha cannot help but notice how perfectly she matches the colors of his van: "I take her in, admiring, for some time on that drive before I realize that the reason Shawnee Ray's cute outfit nags me so is on account of she is dressed up to match my bingo van" (68).

As gambling becomes his main preoccupation and means of winning the van that would, by extension, grant him an aura of respect and success among the reservation members, Lipsha's love for Shawnee mingles with his materialistic objectives and she gradually assumes an exchange value in his mind. Lipsha begins to fantasize her image through the objects he uses as a bartender in the bingo hall. He sees the "clean beer glasses" take her shape and he thinks about her as he "stocks the little rack of pocket combs and beer nuts" (104). Even while he wipes the "counters and tables," he imagines that he is "polishing her body" instead (104). Unable to decipher her feelings and thoughts, Lipsha persistently courts Shawnee in a vain attempt to convince her to marry him. Ironically, in one of his visits, Lipsha confesses to Shawnee that she fails to see how Lyman is using her as an "accessory" that completes the picture of the successful businessman (111). Contrary to a life riddled with normative mandates, Lipsha argues that she would rather be with him, as he will give her the liberty to be herself: "With me you own who you'll have to be about yourself. With me, you own who you are" (111). Lipsha constantly misreads and misrepresents Shawnee as a helpless being in need of a patriarchal figure that would guarantee her safety and enable her to discover her real self and desires. Failing to grasp that Shawnee has already planned her own scheme to escape her subaltern position, Lipsha urges her to abandon logic and decide with her heart: "We'll get to the truth quicker if we don't worry about logic" (112). For all his good

intentions, Lipsha fails to acknowledge the phallocentric drives at work that propel him to engage in a confrontation with Lyman over the conquest of Shawnee's subjectivity. Lipsha becomes so obsessed with her that he confesses that: "I want everything about Shawnee Ray, even her motherhood" (166). Once more, a woman's body is objectified into currency exchanged between competing sovereign parties. All the interaction between Lipsha and Lyman are moments where Shawnee's body is claimed, reclaimed and exchanged according to the proclivities of a phallic economy. The commodification of Shawnee's body culminates when Marie Kashpaw bequeaths Lipsha his step-father's pipe.

The pipe is said to be of historical significance for the Anishinaabe and has symbolically sealed many treaties between the settlers and the tribe. Lyman, however, whose real father is Lipsha's step-father, fixates on the pipe and strives to acquire it from Lipsha by any means necessary:

> He wanted that pipe with a simple finality that had nothing to do with its worth as a historical artifact. Although he didn't examine all of his motivations, he knew the desire had something to do with his natural father, for when he imagined himself smoking the pipe that had once belonged to Nector Kashpaw, he saw himself drawing the sacred object solemnly from its bag and also presenting it to friends, to officials, always with the implication that it had, somehow, been passed down to him by right. (85)

Lyman proposes that Lipsha hand him over the pipe and place it at the casino entrance (86). His nephew, being a mere "sad reservation statistic," will probably mistreat or misplace the historical object: "'Keep it yourself and you're liable to lose. Something might happen…. 'Things do happen' Lipsha agreed. 'To you, they happen all the time'" (86). Yet Lipsha's indoctrination to the discourses and strategies of entrepreneurship does not go to waste, since the young medicine-healer counter-proposes that Lyman exchange the pipe with Shawnee Ray: "'Here's the deal: I give you the pipe, and you lay low, step aside'" (88). Both Lipsha's and Lyman's self-determination is inextricably linked with the appropriation of Shawnee's body according to the discourses of neoliberal phallic

economies. They see no future for Shawnee except as an "accessory" to their patriarchal fantasies of self-fulfillment in the context of the emerging capitalist potentialities presented by the legislature allowing the establishment of casinos by Native communities. Both men acknowledge Shawnee's presence only insofar she fits into the materialistic patterns established by the "casinoization" of Native culture and community life. As Lipsha confesses, after her rejection of his marriage proposal: "We can't understand, can't absorb, can't admit, and will not let that woman be her" (189).

Shawnee's interactions are mediated either by Lipsha or Lyman's sister, Zelda, who oversees and micromanages all interactions between the main characters. Zelda's objective is to assist Lyman in marrying Shawnee and complete the image of the successful entrepreneur, husband and father. Her main purpose is to maintain a façade of normativity and convince Shawnee to become Lyman's wife: "She swept, tidied, and maneuvred an explanation and a future that would fit expectations and satisfy all hearts. Through furious gossip, Zelda has got Shawnee and her man semi-engaged, and is doing her best to make arrangements for them both to marry" (16). Lipsha describes Zelda as a "man-woman" whose main interest was to have Shawnee's life "aligned with Lyman Lamartine" and keep her "soldered in their own hopes" (117). Zelda struggles to capture Shawnee in the patriarchal schema Lyman fantasizes. The young woman fits perfectly in Lyman's projected image as the entrepreneurial leader who can tackle the social and financial issues that plague the community. As in Lipsha's case, Shawnee is perceived as a commodity that completes Lyman's liberal fantasy. On no account do Lipsha and Lyman comprehend that Shawnee is steadily and meticulously weaving her own story of self-determination.

Shawnee's plans and ambitions, always mediated either by Lipsha or Zelda, are to design her own clothes, based on Anishinaabe tradition, and open a boutique: "Her idea is to go into business. To pay for college, she wants to sell her original clothing designs, of which she has six books" (67). Although the young man feels "intimate[d]" by Shawnee's "A+ attitude and her gallons of talents and hobbies (67), he lends her money with the intention of bringing all her designs to life and "win prizes at the state home-ec-contest" (73). Shawnee remains unincorporated to Lipsha's and Lyman's plans to marry her and acquire custody over her son. Despite the appropriating tendencies of the

dominant patriarchal narratives promulgated by Lipsha and Lyman, Shawnee's endeavors to establish her sovereignty do not involve a complete negation of liberal discourses. Her plan involves her participation in the "state home-ec-contest" and promises to repay Lipsha with interest as soon as she opens her boutique (73). Even her rejection of Lipsha's marriage proposal does not signify a complete rejection of his intentions, but her wish to marry on her own terms; not as an accessory or a background story to their patriarchal dreams of entrepreneurship.

Shawnee begins secretly to make preparations to participate in the Montana *powwow* dancing competition, win the prize and enroll at the university. She begins plotting her own "design" by crafting a meticulous traditional costume to wear in the competition (117). Although both Lipsha and Zelda perceive Shawnee as currency to achieve their goals, the young woman wins the contest and disrupts all the "transactions" that attempt to accommodate her presence: "Lipsha loses Shawnee; Lyman loses the pipe; Zelda loses Shawnee and Redford. All oppressors lose their objects of desire" (Chen, Tan 5). Shawnee is also the only character who persistently questions Lyman and Lipsha's entrepreneurial scheme to encroach on tribal land and build a casino resort. In one of his visits to Shawnee's house, Lipsha confides to her that he and Lyman plot a "big investment scheme" close to the Matchimanito Lake (108). Shawnee questions their business plan, but receives no answer: "'What do you mean Lipsha, 'tribal'? Does someone live up there now… Quit dodging around. Where's this land for the bingo palace? What lake'" (109)?

With the legislation on native gambling, a more insidious colonization takes place within the Anishinaabe community. The same people who have been deracinated from their land internalize and reproduce the colonial discourse and strategies against their own community in an attempt to reconsolidate their compromised sovereignty. As Lipsha contends, the casino economy constitutes a viable, albeit precarious, option that could potentially guarantee the survival of the tribe. As the young medicine-man admits: "'You have to stay alive to keep your tradition alive and working'" (221). Yet, the ensuing intertribal conflicts and loss of tribal land attest to a neocolonial practice that permeates the fabric of the community, creates fissures within the Anishinaabe and validates phallic economies where the female body is invariably exchanged and negotiated. Although

Lipsha willingly espouses Lyman's project, the former contemplates the perils this decision entails: "'And yet I can't help wonder, now that I know the high and low of bingo life, if we're going in the wrong direction, arms flung wide, too eager" (221).

4.8 Healing Sovereignty and Burial Rites in LeAnne Howe's *Shell Shaker*

LeAnne Howe's *Shell Shaker* traverses Choctaw history, from their first engagement with settlers until the 1990's, in order to document the ways in which their sovereignty has been compromised due to the community's uncritical alignment with neoliberal mandates. Howe intertwines disparate temporalities from the Choctaw past and present and depicts the struggle of the community to counter colonial encroachment by establishing commercial and political alliances with colonial forces and tribes. One strand of the story reveals how an ancient shell-shaker, Shakbatina, sacrifices herself in order to protect her daughter from execution. Shakbatina's daughter, Anoleta, who had been wedded to the Choctaw leader Red Shoes, is accused of killing the latter's second wife. In order to avoid war between the two Choctaw communities, Red Shoes demands blood revenge but Shakbatina intervenes and takes her daughter's place, fulfilling her role as the tribe's peacemaker. On a different temporal strand, Auda Billy assassinates Choctaw chief, Redford McAlester, after the latter rapes her. Auda has been working as his assistant witnessing McAlester's transformation from an inspiring leader to a schemer who endangers Choctaw sovereignty in order to forge alliances with the Italian Mafia and the IRA. The force that unifies the disparate, yet politically similar, native temporalities is Shakbatina's spirit which intervenes in the quotidian experiences of the Choctaw in order to urge the community to realign its sovereign claims with its myths and rituals.

Howe's cultural and political project is to explore the world-forming potentiality of native stories. Through meticulous research of native myths and oral storytelling, Howe aims to illuminate the ways in which native stories were conducive to the creation of America. As the writer explains on her project of "tribalography": "Native stories are power. They create people. They author tribes. America is a tribal creation story, a tribalography" (*Clearing a Path* 29). By delineating native stories as world-forming,

Howe intends on depicting the dynamic of the cross-cultural exchanges that took place during settler colonialism and the native influence on the ontological comportment of the settlers. The settlers, Howe maintains, would not have survived had it not been for native myths and stories to help them understand "how to live in our world" (29).

The concept of "tribalography" is coined by Howe in order to illustrate the "symbiogenetic" proclivity of organisms, humans, communities and histories (*Clearing a Path* 33). Following Chocktawan ontology, Howe argues that "evolutionary change" is the product of the unceasing "merger of previously independent organisms" (33). Hence, "tribalography" registers the contaminations and syntheses between natives and settlers in order to demonstrate how native communities were, and still are, dominant actors in the writing of American history. More specifically, Howe suggests that the narrative for the confederation of the American states was inspired from an Indian confederacy created through the unification of six tribes by the Haudenosaunee (37). The cultural conjuncture between settler politics and native ontology punctuates the political valence of native myths in their co-articulation of the United States narrative. Read this way, native stories are no longer relegated to the domain of the fable and the imaginary but are registered as world-forming narratives that unconceal alternative readings of the world. According to Howe, native stories counter western narratives in their capacity to envisage the connections, overlappings and synchronizations of disparate temporalities, peoples and lands (42). In this sense, native stories do not follow the teleological and linear mandates of western discourse and *Bildungsroman* but demonstrate the interdependent and symbiotic nature of humans, animals and spirits (42). "Tribalography," Howe concludes, attests to the natives' "propensity for bringing things together, for making consensus, and for symbiotically connecting one thing to another" (42).

In an interview given to Kirstin Squint, Howe suggests that "tribalography" aims at revealing how native literature is "foundational," and not secondary, to the establishment and evolution of American literature ("Aesthetics" 216). Her project also entails demonstrating that archaeological, ethnographical and historical interpretations of native history and myths are still entrenched in binary simplifications that misrepresent native ontology (214). Ultimately, Howe avers, the project of "tribalography" is not to prioritize one culture over the other but urge the United States government to engage

"indigenous epistemologies as a way to forge more organic governance in the twenty-first century" (216).

Gina Caison reads Howe's *Shell Shaker* within the context of the NAGPRA legislation in order to highlight the struggle of native communities to repatriate the remains of their deceased members and protect native burial sites and mounds.[130] Developing "interdisciplinary conversations" between literature and repatriation policies is essential in revealing the "material concerns of Indigenous communities" (Caison 32). Caison argues that the repatriation of native remains posits a legal, cultural and political challenge to the United States legislative discourse since it destabilizes concepts which are fundamental to western thinking. Howe's text, the critic claims, reveals the ways in which the dead constitute "agentic beings that continue to affect the community in profound ways" (34). While dominant discourses misrepresent native spirits as "metaphors" imbued with a symbolic meaning, natives perceive spectral apparitions as "actors" that shape the present of native communities (34). For the Choctaw, the act of repatriation does not merely resonate with the religious beliefs of the community; rather it constitutes a deeply political performance since native "remains might very well be political citizens" (Caison 38). The critic avers that the repatriation of native remains is coextensive with native sovereignty and as such it should not "require the invocation of named federal policy" but should be "practiced" (38).

Channette Romero suggests that Howe's novel contemplates the urgency of developing "cross-cultural interactions" and alliances between communities that strive to articulate their sovereignty (14). According to Romero, *Shell Shaker* displaces conceptualizations of tribal sovereignty as static and advocates for more inclusive alliances that can help the community to "resist intergenerational trauma" (24). Howe's text, the critic argues, displays how tribal sovereignty can be sustained via the acknowledgement of both the tribal past and the ways in which native history was the product of cross-cultural alliances and contaminations. In order for the Choctaws to expand their sovereignty, they also need to expand their "understanding of what counts for tribal and intellectual sovereignty carefully balancing discussions of specific tribal traditions with an understanding of individuals' and tribes' past and present political alliances" (Romero 23).[131]

One of the main questions explored in Howe's text is whether Choctaw sovereignty can be maintained primarily through the proliferation of native myths and rituals or whether it needs to be supplemented with the tribe's appropriation of neoliberal discourses. Auda's sister, Adair Billy, who works as a stockbroker claims that in order to "re-establish a Choctaw power base" the Choctaw need to develop commercial relationships with other communities and organizations as their ancestors had done before them: "Adair tells herself she's following a tradition established by her ancestors. After all, Indians were the first commodity traders of the New World. She does much the same by providing a communications network that brings people together who want to exchange one thing for another" (42). The elected Choctaw tribal chief, Redford McAlester, is representative of the tribe's attempt to reconcile ancestral traditions with the need to modernize both their way of living and their means to consolidate their sovereignty.

In her description of McAlester, Auda remarks that the tribal chief would often utilize the stereotype of the destitute Indian in order to gain popularity and achieve his political aims: "That's how he liked to portray himself, poor, with a poor Indian's good luck" (20). Before running for tribal chief, he decided to study law at Harvard and he begins to write treatises on the archaic and pre-modern character of tribalism and tribal sovereignty (20-21). Auda confesses that she has been complicit to helping him establish a fake image in the community in order to promote his election and political objectives. She also feels responsible for creating the image of a man who combined the spirit of the "*Imataha Chitto*," an ancient Choctaw hero, and of a tribal entrepreneur utilizing neoliberal discourses to expand tribal sovereignty (22).

> The national news media may have crowned McAlester the "Casino Chief," the one responsible for bringing his tribe into the twentieth century, but she was responsible for creating his image within the tribe. She sent flowers, in his name, to tribal employees on their birthdays. She sent baskets of food, always in his name, to families who were down on their luck. (22)

McAlester's coalitions with the Italian Mafia and the paramilitary organization of the Irish Republican Army reveal the contingencies of developing cross-cultural alliances in order to promote tribal sovereign claims. As it becomes evident through McAlester's dealings with these organizations, the urgency of establishing tribal sovereignty via any means necessary may endanger the political objectives of the native nation.

Auda's Choctaw attorney, Gore Battiste, confesses to the former that "international gangs or the corporate Mafia" are constantly on the alert for communities that need funds for developmental projects (114). These organizations tend to infiltrate tribal governments through fake corporations guaranteeing the unobstructed finance of developmental projects. In the case of the *Shell Shaker*, the Italian mafia intervenes in Choctaw politics through the "Shamrock Resort, the management company that was financing the Casino of the Sun and its adjacent four-story hotel" (26). As Auda explains to Gore, "Red was laundering money for the Genovese family. They're the ones who own Shamrock Resorts, which bankrolled the casino" (91). Although McAlester managed to have the casino built with the intervention and funding of the mafia, Auda admits that the community cannot disregard the "Retirement Center[s]" constructed with the casino proceeds (67).

McAlester reproduces stereotypical native images in order to develop alliances with communities that, similarly to the Choctaw, endeavor to articulate their sovereign claims. Auda and McAlester organize a trip to Ireland in order to participate in the annual reenactment of the "Great Irish Potato Famine of 1847" (25). The Choctaw delegation will present its own reenactment of the Trail of Tears and, as McAlester confesses, their objective is to "cry at all the international photo-ops" (25). McAlester is exploiting native stereotypes in order to strike a deal between the Choctaw and the Irish that will enable the latter to funnel the money embezzled from the casino to Irish banks: "The more tribal we appear, the more the Irish love us. The more the Irish love us, the more we're able to move our money in and out of their banks" (24). Adair confides to Gore that McAlester "saw similarities between the problems of Northern Ireland and the British, and American Indians and the federal government" (208). McAlester reiterates the discursive appropriation of natives by the settler-state by reproducing misconstrued simulations of native life in order to guarantee the financial agreement with the Irish. Vizenor's

elaboration on the discursive misrepresentation of natives reveals the ways in which dominant settler discourse attempts to present native life as a thing of the past, safely kept at the historical archives. The natives, Vizenor argues, are misrepresented through simplistic metaphors and images that do not account for the heterogeneity and complexity of native life; these misinterpretations attempt to write natives off existence and aim at documenting the "absence of natives" (*Fugitive Poses* 27). As Vizenor infers, and McAlester's actions evince, this "absence is a commodity" exploited both by settlers and natives alike (27). In Howe's text though, the consolidation of tribal sovereignty is not to be achieved through the liberalization of the community but through the retrieval and reenactment of the healing performances of rituals and myths.

Auda narrates how McAlester progressively loses sight of tribal political goals and becomes mired in the conspiracies with the Italian Mafia and the IRA. Although he assumes that his deals will eventually benefit the community, he fails to acknowledge that "he was already transforming himself into what the foreigners wanted: a front man (26). The gradual accumulation of wealth and power endow McAlester with a sense of privilege which results in Auda's sexual abuse and rape. The community realizes that the chief has turned into an "*Osano"* (a bloodsucker) whose only goal is to "continue consuming" (73). Auda witnesses with dread McAlester's transformation from a promising tribal chief, into an abusive schemer who employs tribal politics to his own end. The exchange between Auda and McAlester after her rape is telling: "'What have you become?' She whispered. 'Everything.' he answered dryly" (23). McAlester does not only violate Auda's body but he also abuses the Choctaw claims for sovereignty. Isaac Billy, Auda's uncle, confesses that he has witnessed quite often the engineering and manipulation of tribal claims for personal reasons: "He's seen many a good Indian sell himself to the *Inkjlish okla* profession. Multitudes of them pedal 'sovereignty' like liquor." (77). Howe's text, though, is not a mere condemnation of corrupt native chiefs and politics; rather through the intertwinement of disparate temporalities from Choctaw history it explores the potentiality of rituals to empower the community in their reconsolidation of their sovereignty.

The first timeline focuses on the first encounters between Choctaw and the Spanish invader Hernando de Soto in 1540. The first Choctaw leader who fought the

colonists, Tuscalusa, organized his troops in order to attack "during times of ceremonial gatherings" (*Shell Shaker* 226). Almost two hundred years later, another Choctaw leader, Red Shoes, whose spirit is reanimated through McAlester in the present, establishes commercial relationships with the English in order to consolidate an alliance capable of overthrowing the French. Red shoes, though, is gradually afflicted by greediness and turns into a "giant *Osano*…always hungered for more" (11). Both temporalities collapse and overlap in the present timeline set in 1991, when Auda Billy is accused of killing Choctaw chief Redford McAlester. The ghosts and events of the Choctaw past haunt and impact the present predicament of the tribe.

While Auda is in coma after a failed assassination attempt against her, she has a dream in which she drives a car with Red Shoes. The Choctaw leader confesses to Auda that the reason why he insisted on forging commercial alliances with other communities was to unite "the Chickasaws and the Choctaws against the foreigners" (199). Red Shoes explains to Auda that he perceived commerce to be an effective way of developing political alliances in order to overthrow the colonialists: "It was my dream to have all the advantages the foreigners brought into our nations without surrendering to their rules. It was the same with the casino business" (199). The colonial powers which invaded native land relied heavily on developing commercial relationships with the natives not only in order to survive in the New World but also to establish a new political economy of exchange. The aim of these commercial interactions was to inculcate the natives in the concepts of the commodity, property and profit; terms to which the natives were completely unfamiliar with. Hence, commercial relationships between natives and settlers were a form of political indoctrination into the ideas of liberalism. As Auda confesses to Red Shoes: "It's just the trappings of time that have changed. Whether it was Bienville and the *Filanchi,* or the D'Amato brothers and the Italians, it's just the trappings of time that have changed for Choctaws" (200).

Howe's text reveals the ways in which, after four hundred years of settler-colonialism, the natives are still relying on the same liberal discourse, and its variations, in order to consolidate their sovereignty. Although the assimilation of liberal discourses has helped the Choctaw to improve their standards of living in the reservations, the question Howe's novel poses is whether the liberalization of native subjectivity does,

eventually, lead to the promotion of native claims. Is sovereignty to be consolidated by augmenting the natives' appropriation of liberal and neoliberal discourses or this task necessitates the rejuvenation of existing tribal practices? In *Shell Shaker*, native sovereignty is enacted through the narration of native stories and ceremonial performances that aim at healing the Choctaw who have been impacted by the settler's discourse. Instead of condemning McAlester for his crimes, the community, following the spiritual guidance of Shakbatina, the ancient shell shaker, concurs to reclaiming and healing McAlester's spirit by performing the proper burial rituals at the Choctaw mound in Nanih Waiya.

The community is guided by the spirit of Shakbatina who had sacrificed herself in order for her daughter Anoleta to be spared execution. Red Shoes' tribe agrees that Anoleta has to pay the price with her life but Shakbatina offers herself in the place of her daughter. Shakbatina is not an ordinary Choctaw tribal but a "peacemaker" who performs the ritual of shell shaking so as to confer "peace and the fair exchange of goods between towns" (*Shell Shaker* 4). The purpose of the shell shaker performer, therefore, is to intervene in tribal conflicts and promote a peaceful resolution of disputes. Shakbatina maintains the peace between the two opposing Choctaw tribes by offering herself in the place of her daughter. After Shakbatina's execution, her husband Koi Chitto, is tasked with recovering her body and practicing the burial rituals that would put the woman's spirit to rest.

The burial practice performed by Koi Chitto unconceals a dysteleological conceptualization of death and its celebration as a process of an alternative "incubation" (106). During the bone-picking ceremony, Shakbatina's body is "rolled in every direction" and the remaining flesh is removed from her skin (106). The thighs are cut in half-moon shapes "in order for the blood and the body fluids to run out of the buttocks" and the stomach is pierced so the gasses can "escape in the wind" (106). This meticulous dissecting of the body is "to announce to the animal world that a woman of the people was coming" (106). For the Choctaw, the day of death is actually a day of "rebirth" and for this reason the tribals maintain their natal umbilical cord throughout their lives so as to use them again after their death for their next reincarnation: "The umbilical cord of a peacemaker is their first toy; with them before birth, it accompanies them into death"

(106). During the burial ritual, Koi Chitto witnesses Shakbatina's spirit joining the performance entreating her husband to perceive the ritual as a ceremonial coupling (106-107). In the final stage of the burial performance, Koi Chitto "gathers his courage and tears Shakbatina's skull and spinal column from the rest of her bones" (107). He, then, "salutes the four directions," paints her bones and places them in a box (107). The detailed description of Shakbatina's bone-picking ceremony reveals the healing potentiality of the Choctaw burial ritual and the natives' understanding of death as a celebratory performance that illustrates the "ecstasy of life and death" (107).

Shakbatina's spirit travels in Choctaw history and witnesses the suffering of the natives by forceful removal, famine and war. As time progresses, Shakbatina's spirit "wears a list of wounds" bearing the marks of colonial violence and persecution (172). Shakbatina witnesses the Choctaw Trail of Tears in 1831, the Civil War, along with the "waste and ruin that ensued" and the "plantation children…turned into homeless beggars who would one day birth the Ku Klux Klan" (137-138). Not only does her spirit mourn the natives lost during this bloody history of settler-colonialism but it also grieves for the Choctaw who had perished because "There was no one who could conduct a proper funeral. No one to pick their bones, afterward. Imagine my agony." (137). How can the community heal past, yet tangible in the present, wounds that have marked the Choctaw history? The neoliberalization and casinoization of native life does enable the communities to improve their quality of life, to tackle unemployment and balance the social inequalities germane to reservation life but the historical wounds inscribed on native history demand another reading and response. Shakbatina's spirit witnesses how, after centuries of endless relocation and persecution, the natives' "sweet remains, their flesh and blood seared stories into the land that kept account of such things" (137-138). In order for the Choctaw to reclaim and reconsolidate their sovereignty, they need to reclaim the stories inscribed in the body of native history and practice these rituals that, as Shakbatina claims, animate the reunification of "Earth and spirit and story" (138). Shakbatina's pilgrimage throughout the centuries reveals that the tribe should not disentangle storytelling and native rituals from the consolidation of its sovereignty. Her spirit confides to the Choctaws that "we become indivisible from our memories," the history we bear, however violent, does bespeak of a people who have survived because

they maintained these traditions and performances (137). Shakbatina, whose name translates as "survivor," reappears in the present so as to help the community heal by attending to the Choctaw who have been impacted by the biopolitics of the settler-state (147).

When the community recalls her sacrifice, it reflects on the double meaning Shakbatina's appearance conveyed before surrendering to the Chickasaws: "Remember what she did on the day of her death, she sent a dual message. She painted her face for war, but dressed in white for peace, a very peculiar thing for an *Inholahta* woman to do" (103). Shakbatina's ambivalent appearance demonstrates that her sacrifice is not a sign of defeatist resignation to the enemy but a defying act evincing her unwillingness to reiterate the discourses of violence that govern tribal politics. When her spirit invades the dreams and lives of the present Choctaw community, it aims at reminding their obligation to perform a proper burial of McAlester's in order to appease his trouble spirit: "*Put your dead chief in a mound so he will be protected from escaping again. Give him everything in death he wanted in life. That way he will never leave it again" (*158 emphasis in original). Hence, the community agrees to transfer McAlester's body to the Nanih Waiya burial mound and inhume the dead chief along with the money he has embezzled: "I think it means we've got to bury McAlester in the soil of Mississippi, close to our Mother Mound. We can protect him by giving him everything he ever wanted, and placate his troubled spirit" (160).

Howe's text locates the reconsolidation of Choctaw sovereignty in the intermingling of political action and cultural performances. When Shakbatina's spirit reappears in the end of the text, it confesses that Auda did not kill McAlester all by herself. The killing of the Choctaw chief was an event where "past and present collide[d] into a single moment" (222). Although it was Auda holding the gun pointing at McAlester, Shakbatina argues that "it was then that I slipped my hands in front of her hands, and together we struck a pose" (222). The political vision Howe's text connotes rests on the reconsolidation of Choctaw sovereignty through the tribe's recontextualization of native myths and rituals in a time when most tribes attempt to counter the biopolitics of settler-colonialism by increasing their attachment to neoliberal teleologies.

4.9 Conclusion

By 2021, the North Dakota pipeline had suffered “nearly 500 spills” leaking almost 800.000 gallons of oil endangering both the water resources of the region and the animal habitat (White, Todrys). [132] According to Katherine Todrys and Kandi White, the unavoidable oil spillage undermines “tribal sovereignty” since the pipeline traverses native territory which has not been “ceded” to the United States government and it also jeopardizes the livelihood of the Standing Rock and adjacent reservations. Although the protest at the Standing Rock evinced the solidarity of native nations against further land encroachment and state suppression, it also rekindled the discussion on the feasibility of asserting native sovereignty by employing discourses and practices whose European heritage remains unchallenged. Despite the importance of militantly opposing colonial doctrines and mechanisms of subjugation, native nations are divided between the “re-traditionilization” of their communities and the progressive, albeit critical, appropriation of liberal and neoliberal discourses (Alfred 40).

Taiaiake Alfred infers that tribal communities should “reject the term and notion of indigenous ‘sovereignty’” since it maintains indigenous politics hostages to a colonial rationality which ultimately impairs their process of self-determination (41). Alfred insists that by seeking to promote their claims through the concept of sovereignty, native nations are unable to critique the colonial attitudes which have become “embedded” in native politics (41). What Alfred suggests is that native nations maintain the concept of sovereignty insofar they wrest it from “its Western, legal roots and transform it” (Alfred 42). In the context of globalization and the aggressive neoliberalization of state politics, can the concept of sovereignty be negotiated in terms outside the purview of established legal and political spheres? Can native sovereignty be pursued through the uncompromised retrieval of indigenous myths and traditions, which seem to be incompatible with the challenges present communities face? This unresolved tension between the traditionalist approach and the need to reconfigure myths so they empower

natives to address the challenges of a globalizing world is prominent in *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace*.

Until the moment of her death, Fleur Pillager strictly adheres to the spirit world. The Anishinaabe myths and traditions are her refuge when her land is auctioned and stolen by lumber companies and when she suffers the visceral brutality of colonial violence. Even when Lipsha visits her to ask permission to build on her land, the old Pillager assumes her bear form and rejects her great-grandson's offer. Despite Fleur's existential bond to the land she inhabits, it is through poker that she manages to reclaim her property and return native land to the community. Lipsha, who struggles to escape the confines of the reservation and assume a leading role in the community, ultimately gives meaning to a meaningless life by reinscribing Anishinaabe myths and traditions through the discourses of capitalism. Until that moment, native past, myths and healing powers were mere synecdoches of an irretrievable past severed from the complexities of modern indigenous life. In *The Bingo Palace*, the colonial demystification of native myths is reversed through a re-enchantment predicated on the resignification of these myths according to the discourses of liberalism and capitalism. The challenging and complicated task of asserting indigenous autonomy and self-reliance through uncompromised means and methods is also implied in Howe's *Shell Shaker* through the infiltration of the Italian mob and paramilitary organizations in native politics. Despite her struggle to expose the synergy between McAlester and the gangsters, Auda acknowledges that it is through this pernicious alliance that the Choctaw managed to develop their casinos and build reservation "Retirement Center[s]" (67). Even though developmental projects and entrepreneurial schemes seem to illuminate a provisional way out of the restrictive and repressive legislative frame which hinders native sovereignty, phallic economies and gendered violence remain unchallenged. Fleur's rape and the objectification of Shawnee Ray disclose the ways in which patriarchal discourses and heteronormative schemata are accentuated by and through neoliberal and capitalist discourses since indigenous women who resist their assimilation in these schemata are marginalized or deemed disruptive by the community. While Fleur's ungovernable character and Shawnee Ray's insubordination to Lyman's and Lipsha's objectification disclose how indigenous women need to resist both state and indigenous violence, I

would like to argue that it is Shawnee's strategic instrumentalization of capitalist practices that reveals an alternative indigenous politics.

Shawnee Ray manages to win the money prize at the *powwow* contest and enroll at the university. Towards the end of the novel, we see her having relocated to the university campus with her young son, Redford. The room at the campus is poorly insulated and Shawnee "woke cold every morning" (267). Little by little, she locates all the cracks and fissures in her room and fills them in with towels and shirts until one day all the gaps have been covered: "She must have finally managed to fill every one of the builder's mistakes" (267). She spends her days and nights studying her "patterns and materials" carefully crafting her own designs and weaving a "ribbon shirt" for Lipsha (268). No longer part of the exchange narrative that Lipsha and Lyman had drafted with her serving as a mere currency to their transactions, Shawnee is thinking of "attaching a dime-store wedding ring" at the end of the shirt (268). Shawnee's intention does not constitute a change of plans or any kind of regret, but reveals a need for indigenous women to weave their own stories within the context of capitalism on their own terms, thus disrupting the patriarchal tendencies dominant in neoliberal performances. Shawnee's designs complement Lipsha and Lyman's uncritical entrepreneurial schemes. Erdrich's text does not foreclose the possibility of their plan benefiting the community either with the tackling of unemployment or repurchasing of allotted land. In the shadow of these projects, which articulate one facet of the decolonizing process, the task of articulating the gendered subject's voice is equally significant. For the indigenous woman, in Erdrich's case, does not merely interrogate the inherent patriarchal schemata of capitalist teleologies, but also reveals an alternative way of employing capitalist discourses for the benefit both of the community and those inassimilable to the community itself. This kind of praxis, in which native performances are open to contaminations, negotiations and cross-fertilizations with discourses and practices inherently foreign to them, connotes what Robert Warrior has termed as "intellectual sovereignty."

In his article on "Intellectual Sovereignty and the Struggle for an American Future," Warrior examines the potentialities and limitations of native intellectuals who elaborated on the definition of native sovereignty. More specifically, Warrior studies the

works of Vine Deloria Jr. Joseph Mathews and Gerald Vizenor with the intention of disclosing an alternative conceptualization of native sovereignty disentangled from infertile essentialisms. Warrior is rather critical of the traditionalist strand of native intellectuals who promulgate the alignment of native politics with myths and traditions of the past (1). This uncritical recuperation and application of traditions and performances in contemporary native politics can potentially undermine tribal self-determination since the valence of these rituals is incompatible with contemporary challenges the indigenous face (Warrior 1). Following Deloria's critique of traditionalism, Warrior contends that the thoughtless retrieval of myths and traditions can imbue native politics with "apocalyptic fantasies or critical thought-silencing dogmatism" (1). As a response to the unproductive "revitalization" of myths, Warrior proposes a "post-tribal humanis[tic]" praxis that connotes "the recognition that humans of different cultures need to have the positive experiences of culture affirmation while at the same time they need to confront a set of challenges for which no culture has all of the answers" (3). Warrior argues in favor of an unremitting self-critique of the foundational limitations of native politics that forestall a productive engagement with the postcolonial predicament of the indigenous populations especially when the register the natives employ is incompatible with the challenges they meet.

Deloria recognized that the most demanding task of natives is to make themselves visible to the state and the American people that acknowledge the presence of the indigenous only insofar they appear in racialized stereotypes of a bygone era (Warrior 5). Deloria's intention, according to Warrior, was to develop a dialogue between non-natives and natives on the "deep gulf" that separated the two groups (Deloria qtd in Warrior 5). Beyond the dissemination of simplistic and suspect native stereotypes, which Vizenor has named as "cued simulation[s]" or as a "native absence that becomes a logocentric presence" (*Fugitive Poses* 27, 34), the traumatic divide that has fragmented the nation is the colonial prejudice that the tribals cannot be agents of progress and development; that they are inherently incapable of heralding their own modernity. Warrior, thus, elaborates on the urgency for native intellectuals to promote the idea of "intellectual sovereignty" so as to establish a critique which will reveal the fissures within native intellectual work and perceive them, not as detrimental to tribal politics, but as openings to interdisciplinary

fields which can rejuvenate indigenous knowledge (11). Warrior is interested in redirecting native intellectuals into contemplating the "materiality" of native experience and advises them to relinquish the search for the "Archimedean point" from which they can provide refined solutions (12, 18). Ultimately, Warrior contends, to admit the shortcomings of indigenous criticism, to acknowledge the limitations of native myths and to welcome the productively destructive potentiality of alternative discourses and pathways of questioning is not defeat, but the first step to reconceptualize native sovereignty through "the pain and joy of others" (19). The survival of native sovereignty probably rests in the precarious intermingling of tribal ontology and traditions with the rituals of capitalism; but even during this contingent process it is the natives who should decide which features of this capitalist phantasmagoria they should embrace.

Notes

[104] The construction of the North Dakota Pipeline is in direct violation of the Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868) signed between the Sioux and the U.S. government declaring that the disputed Dakota region is to be managed and organized only by the natives while the settlers relinquish any claim to the land (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/nt001.asp).

[105] Vizenor's work on *Fugitive Poses* (1998) focuses on the logocentric bias that misconstrues native presences by circumscribing them in narratives that reproduce the stereotype of the "Vanishing Indian":

> The invention of the indian is an ethnographic metaphrase, a cultural traducement; the minutes and evidence of that surveillance are the best invitations to reread the indian, a ruined presence in the representations of the social sciences. Natives and indians are not read as the same stories; the indian is a cued simulation, a native absence that becomes a logocentric presence, and that simulation of presence is the successive closure of differences. (Vizenor 34)

[106] Although indigenous governments have adopted the term "tribe" and "nation," Cheyfitz maintains that native communities were based on relations of kinship, and since there was no clear hierarchy, the term "clan" might be more appropriate ("The (Post)colonial Predicament of Native American Studies" 407).

[107] According to Rosenthal, the indigenous communities residing in North Dakota use the old name 'Anishinaabe' to refer to their nation while the state uses the terms 'Ojibwe' and 'Chippewa' (Rosenthal 152). Throughout my analysis, I have retained the old title.

[108]My reference to the "biopolitics of settler colonialism" is based on Patrick Wolfe's and Scott Morgensen's elaboration of the term. The critics do not examine settler colonialism as an event, but as a "structure" whose primary objective is to eliminate by "producing life" ("The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now" 56). Settler colonialism produces life by "amalgamat[ing] Indigenous peoples, cultures and lands into the body of the settler nation" (56).

[109] In indigenous mythology the figure of the trickster constitutes a disruptive and comic presence that illuminates the contingencies of dominant narratives. Vizenor perceives the trickster as a "comic holotrope" which manages to "*elude historicism*, *racial representations* and *remain historical*" (*The Trickster of Liberty: Native Heirs to a Wild Baronage* xi emphasis in original). Often a narrator, jester and medicine man, the trickster embodies the abilities of both "creator and destroyer, giver and negator" (Paul Rudin ix). Rudin also contends that the trickster is a formless "inchoate being of undetermined proportions" that exhibits an erratic and impulsive behavior (x).

[110] Victoria Walker's essay "A Note on Narrative Perspective in Tracks" examines the ways in which Erdrich's text tasks the reader with contemplating his own complicity in the production of the story and native history.

[111]According to Bird, Erdrich's text reproduces the stereotype of the "noble savage" through Fleur's and Moses' inscrutable presence (42). The critic argues that Erdrich's text conveys "mixed messages," as it "reinforces Othering characteristics that often appear in colonialist literatures" (43-44).

[112] Peterson is borrowing the term from Diana Fuss' essay "Getting into History" (*Arizona Quarterly* 45.4 (1989): 95-108).

[113] Similarly to Brogan and Peterson, David Stirrup reads Erdrich's work as a literary revisionist project that addresses "not only the histories [of Native American relationships] but also the historiography itself" (11). While Peterson and Brogan engage native historiography in order to delineate how the Anishinaabe overcome the colonial trauma via the cultural reformulation of a ghosted history and their myths, Stirrup's objective is to explore the ways in which a literary revision of history can facilitate the consolidation of the Anishinaabe community. Stirrup maintains that Erdrich's novels constitute narrative webs depicting a fractured community that is unceasingly "negotiating the terms of community itself" (20). Setting aside "polemical or ideological reductivism," Erdrich's literature explores the discursive exchanges and contaminations between the settlers and the Anishinaabe by refusing to submit to complacent misrepresentations that reproduce stereotypes of native loss and amnesia (Stirrup 91).

[114] The term is used by Paul Pasquaretta in his article "On the 'Indianness' of Bingo: Gambling Sovereignty and the Native American Community."

[115] For more on the relationship between Fleur Pillager and the Misshepeshu see Nora Baker Barry's "Fleur Pillager's Bear Identity in the Novels of Louise Erdrich." Barry supports that Erdrich "Erdrich enriches her post-modern novels with the mystery, power, and potential of bears as breakers of spiritual and cultural barriers, as guardians, as transformers, and as representatives of a tribal spiritual tradition alive in contemporary literature" (28). In their essay, "The Significance of the Lake Monster in Louise Erdrich's Tracks," Mohsen Hanif and Mohammad Marandi maintain that the natives recontextualized the significance of the Lake Monster after their contact with the settlers (249). Since most of the information we get about Fleur comes from Pauline's unreliable and contradictory narrative and due to the resignification of the Misshepeshu, the monster may symbolize the colonizers and not the colonized (Hanif, Marandi 250).

[116] Considered as the bravest band of the Anishinaabe, the Pillagers occupied Leech Lake during the 18th century. According to Warren William, their indigenous name Muk-im-dua-win-in-e-wug translates as the "men who take by force" (*History of the Ojibway People* 243)

[117] For relevant research on the issue of land, gambling and indigenous sovereignty see "Games of Chance: Gambling and Land Tenure in Tracks, Love Medicine and The Bingo Palace" by Kristan Sarve-Gorham. According to Sarve-Gorham, Erdrich's texts promote the idea that the Anishinaabe "receive a

fairer chance at positive resolution to land disputes through gambling than they do through the Euro-American legal system" (287).

[118] David Bergeron, on the other hand, maintains that it was John Locke's political economy that inspired the Allotment Act. Bergeron argues that Dawes shared Locke's belief that self-determination stems from the relation a subject holds with "the ground he inhabits" (22). The liberalization of man entails the rationalization of land and the rendering of uncultivated land into productive spaces of agriculture (Bergeron 22). Bergeron also sustains that Dawes plan was to decollectivize the native by indoctrinating him in the concept of " 'property creation'" and, thus, deliver him reformed to the dictates of American policy (23).

[119] In her work on *Witches, Witch-Hunting and Women* (2018), Silvia Federici examines the ways in which the systems of enclosures instigated the extensive land privatization of the European commons. Federici suggests that "Enclosures were an English phenomenon whereby landlords and well-to-do peasants fenced off the common lands, putting an end to customary rights and evicting the population of farmers and squatters that depended on them for their survival" (15). The main impact of the enclosures system was the "profound polarization" it caused "in what had previously been communities structured by reciprocal bonds" (Federici 16).

[120] According to estimations, indigenous land was reduced from 139 to 48 million acres during the Allotment process (Peterson 986).

[121] The casinoization of indigenous communities has divided indigenous communities and created inter-tribal conflicts. Gerald Vizenor is among the academics who remain skeptical of this process. Vizenor argues that casino economy can only benefit indigenous sovereignty if the profits are invested in developing a "cosmopolitan presence in the world" with the establishment of native embassies (*Native Liberty* 121). For further elaboration on the issue of tribal casinos, see Vizenor's "Casino Coup" and Paul Pasquaretta's "On the 'Indianness' of Bingo: Gambling and the Native American Community."

[122] I am referring to the *Seminole Tribe of Florida v. Butterworth* case in 1983 and the *California v. Cabazon Band of Mission Indians* in 1987. Both cases were ruled in favor of the tribal casinos (Bruyneel 176).

[123] This period is rather revealing of the colonial drive and thinking that undergirds these legal conflicts. What disturbed the states was not that tribes might have been illegally involved in gaming activities but that casino economy can empower tribal sovereignty. The same claim was made by right Californian candidates who fueled voices of antitribalism promulgating that tribal casinos are privileged companies that pay no taxes to the detriment of the people (Bruyneel 179, 192). In 2004, Arnold Schwarzenegger's antitribal campaign relied on misrepresenting tribal gaming as parasitical and predatory to state economy and damaging to the Californian citizens (Bruyneel 192). The future governor would go as far as argue that the tribes "'pay no taxes and virtually nothing to the state' " and it is time for them to "'pay their fair share'" (Bruyneel 191,192). Schwarzenegger's antitribalism does not stem solely from his

ignorance of American history. The colonial thinking that conditions U.S. federal policy could not fathom that the profits created by tribal casinos would be invested in the re-purchasing of stolen indigenous land (Bruyneel 184). The governor's campaign betrays the ambivalent colonial politics towards indigenous communities practiced since the 19th century; while the legislations signed aimed at indoctrinating the native to the liberal and capitalist ideologies which European modernity mandates, the native is now accused of having overdeveloped his capitalist and liberal aspirations.

[124] Gloria Bird suggests that *Tracks* conveys a "mixed message" to the reader since Nanapush's confession to Lulu reenacts " 'The Vanishing Red Man'" by reproducing scenes of internalized oppression and defeatist pride (42).

[125] Margaret Toth remarks that the persistence of myths in Anishinaabe oral history attests to the perseverance and immortality of indigenous traditions which "having survived the devastation American culture and capitalism wreaked on American Indian life" constitute the material from which communities can draw inspiration to envision counter-hegemonic discourses (105). The world of spirits and ghosts that Erdrich's work conjures are not mythological figures of the past but presences still "*alive* in the twenty first century" (Toth 105).

[126] "Manito" or "manido" is the Anishinaabe word for spirit (*A Concise Dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwe* 77).

[127] Caroline Rosenthal notes that Erdrich's novels deliberately inhabit a narrative locus that resists conforming to reductive political agendas and interpretations. Rosenthal reads Fleur's queerness as a symptomatic display of trickster discourse which bespeaks of native adaptability to colonial strategies. The critic terms Fleur's gender fluidity as "transgenderation," marking the strategic movement of characters shifting gender roles (110). As Rosenthal remarks, "only those characters who draw on feminine as well as masculine gender codes and incorporate one code into the other, survive in the novels" (110). Bearing the signs of a "female trickster," Fleur transverses between genders with the aim of reappropriating both native and settler discourses and redeploying them in the capitalist landscape which settler modernity imposed (Rosenthal 110). Rosenthal states that, through Fleur's gender breaking performance, Erdrich "generates a new pattern, a new text" that impels the reader to contemplate native subjectivity as constantly in the making, adopting and adapting to hegemonic structures in order to reclaim its sovereignty (142).

[128] Spivak posits this question in her essay on "How to Read a 'Culturally Different' Book'" in *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*.

[129] Erdrich's first version of *Love Medicine* begins with June Kashpaw, Lipsha's mother, aimlessly wandering the reservation roads, looking for a place to satisfy her alcohol addiction. After a sexual encounter with a passer-by, she begins walking home but due to a snowstorm she never makes it to the reservation.

[130] According to Caison, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act aimed at the "inventory and return of Native human remains and items of cultural patrimony from federally funded institutions such as museums and universities." The process of repatriation is rife with contradictions since

the act is authorized to fund only federally recognized tribes, thus, excluding the repatriation of remains of natives whose tribal status is not acknowledged by the government (Caison 34).

[131]As Horan Elizabeth and Seonghoon Kim argue, Howe's project is to tackle the "binary between the colonizer and the colonized" by illuminating the emancipating potentialities of "flexibility and diplomacy" in Choctaw politics (30). In her work *Evidence of Red* (2005), Howe envisages an alternative "decolonized consciousness" animated by the political alliances that may occur between "sovereign-seeking" communities (34). Howe, more particularly, registers the affinities between the struggle of "Native Americans in the 1970's and of the Intifada during a visit to Jerusalem in 1992" (Horan, Seonghoon 34).

[132] See their article "5 Years after Standing Rock, the pipeline continues operating – illegally" at https://grist.org/fix/opinion/dakota-access-pipeline-operating-illegally-shut-it-down-for-good/.

5. Conclusion

In the concluding remarks of this dissertation, I revise the primary research aims I established in the introductory section and provide a short summary of the ways in which my literary analysis complicated and responded to the driving questions I set out to explore. More specifically, I analyze how the literary figures I examine either succumb to or counter the seductive potentialities of neoliberal discourses. I elaborate on the reasons why globalization and neoliberalism enable postcolonial subjects to articulate their claims and consolidate a voice, however compromised and deceptive, in postcoloniality. I also refer to the paradox of neoliberalism which despite its global dissemination in the postcolonial world, it sustains social divisions and inequality since it constitutes the continuation of colonial discourses. Another theme I revise in these concluding remarks is the confluence of masculinity and patriarchy with neoliberalism. Despite the urgency of studying the material conditions that shape the postcolonial predicament, a critique that does not question the patriarchal and masculinist tenets that sustain the discourses of neoliberalism is inadequate to the task of fully comprehending how neoliberalism manages to captivate the minds of postcolonial subjects. Globalization is a process that constantly seeks new spaces of exploitation and commodification. This unrelenting process of exhaustive ordering and regulation of bodies and territories has revealed presences that counter the claims of globalization. In the disenchanted world of globalization, of development and capitalist rationalization, the perseverance of indigenous myths and the unceasing irruption of spirits and ghosts bespeak of existences, voices and worlds that disclose another figuration of sovereignty and being in this world. Lastly, I propose some further research themes and focus on the urgency to rethink the importance of indigenous myths in the era of globalization as well as the task of critically reconfiguring the concept of sovereignty by reflecting on the biocentric prejudices which condition this concept.

The main research aims of this dissertation are to examine postcolonial narratives in order to explore the ways in which postcolonial subjects articulate and consolidate their sovereignty in the context of globalization. The question it seeks to address is whether the discourses of globalization and neoliberalism either impinge on or empower the postcolonial subject's struggle for self-determination and autonomy. How do postcolonial communities attempt to resolve social, political and financial issues bequeathed by the colonial state and what discourses do they employ in their attempt to decolonize their communities? How do postcolonial communities and subjects negotiate their sovereign claims through neoliberalism when socialist discourses seem incompatible with and inadequate to the challenges their postcolonial predicament entails? Another question I posed in the introductory section was how subalterns can voice their claims by consolidating a representative political body when state politics is dictated by international organizations which circumvent state and public control. I also intend on examining the discursive continuity between phallic economies and neoliberalism in order to ask whether neoliberalism accentuates neomasculinist narratives and gendered violence. Lastly, my intention is to explore the negotiations, compromises, cross-fertilizations and conflicts between the discourses of neoliberalism and indigenous politics in order to contemplate postcolonial events which revealed conceptualizations of sovereignty that disrupted or neutralized the dehumanizing effects of globalization.

In my literary analysis of Coetzee's *Foe* and *Disgrace,* I analyzed the uncritical humanitarian bias that undergirds international humanitarian aid in contemporary globalization and which reproduces the colonial binary between the supposedly impotent African subject and the benevolent European one that is burdened with the obligation of ushering the African countries to the providential light of progress and development. While *Foe* is quite revealing of the colonial bias secreted in the rationality of humanitarian aid, *Disgrace* discloses the ways in which the South African subject, emerging as *homo oeconomicus* in the post-apartheid era, employs the same calculative and quantitative register which the colonial regime had introduced and imposed, in order to voice his claims and consolidate his self-determination. The specific texts disclose how colonial attitudes and discourses aim at producing an image of the African subject that

resists western rationalization and cannot inaugurate its own modernity. In Coetzee's *Foe*, Susan Barton vows to care for Friday because, as she contends, he is a "helpless" being, unfamiliar to the idea of "freedom," lacking "desire" and incapable of perceiving the concept of death (128, 148). While this deeply racial characterization of Friday does reveal the colonial prejudices germane to the politics of the Restoration era, it also aims at excluding African subjectivities from the discourses of modernity; Barton's misconstruction of the native seeks to confine him to the margins of history and progress and deprive him of the right to participate in the capitalist domain. These characterizations do not only misrepresent Friday but they also assign him roles of submission and dependence. Both Susan and Foe fail to acknowledge Friday's subjectivity and autonomy which are repeatedly demonstrated through his musical and religious performances. Friday resists Susan's musical coercions by altering her tune and foreclosing the possibility of producing a "pleasing counterpoint" (97). Susan also fails to acknowledge that his dancing performances (118) and the casting of white petals on the islands (31) constitue ethnographic signs imbued with political and cultural meanings. Friday's insubordination is further exemplified in his decision to wear Foe's attire and wig, occupy his desk and attempt to write in his own private fashion (151). Friday constantly resists the racial typifications and stereotypes that Susan assigns him and struggles to voice his autonomy in the heart of the imperial metropolis. Nevertheless, the figure of the defiant Friday who employs the cultural elements of his community and redeploys dominant discourses in order to regain his sovereignty is undermined in the last section of the novel which takes place in present times.

In the novel's last section, an unknown narrator studies an epigraph which bears Daniel Defoe's name in white and blue (155). Inside Defoe's house, the narrator locates Friday and notices the scar left on his neck by a "rope or chain" (155). While exploring Defoe's house, the narrator/ historian is confronted both with the history of slavery and the cultural discourses which sanctioned and embedded the imperial vision in the collective psyche as integral elements of the British identity. The narrator studies the writings he discovers in the author's living quarters and, metaphorically, dives into the wreck of the slave ship where Friday lies (157). It is worth mentioning that this process

of historical recuperation and contemplation to which the anonymous narrator/ historian is engaged in is provoked, firstly, by his visitation to Defoe's house, an author who provided cultural legitimacy to the imperialistic project, and, secondly, by examining the writings he discovers in his room; the narrator's immersion in the dehumanizing history of slavery is mediated by and experienced through the dominant historiographic and literary archive located in the metropolis. In the novel's final paragraph, the narrator confronts Friday who releases a "slow stream, without breath, without interruption," which extends well beyond the vicinity of the island (157). In my analysis, I mentioned that Coetzee's novel is a literary praxis which tasks the reader with probing the stories that haunt the main narrative. Yet, the final section confines Friday to the history of the slave trade and reiterates the stereotype of the "helpless" being permanently defined by the colonial trauma. The narrator visits Defoe's museum only to reaffirm that Friday, and the subjectivities and communities for which he stands for, are still muted and conditioned by dominant discourses and their traumatic past which hinder their resurfacing in the realm of modernity. Petrus, on the other hand, constitutes a subjectivity that exhibits all the attributes and behaviors of a South-African entrepreneur who utilizes the immense potentialities presented to him after the fall of the apartheid and the state's embrace of neoliberalism in order to force himself in the circuits of capitalism.

While Friday is misconstrued as a subject deprived of all the capacities necessary for his self-constitution, Petrus reverses racial stereotypes which perceive African subjects bereft of reason and he strategically exploits both post-apartheid state law and neoliberal discourses to consolidate his sovereignty. Petrus manages to marginalize Lucy and preempt Lurie by displaying his mastery over the legal rights assigned to former labour tenants permitting them to lay claim to land they inhabited during apartheid and through his cynical and composed demeanor which constantly unsettles Lurie's "anthropological" discourse (118). Lurie's continuous, albeit unsuccessful, retrieval of European culture and of a Eurocentric "anthropological" register in order to grasp the new South African realities he encounters disclose the extent to which the racial discourses of apartheid are ineffective in tackling with the utterly functionalist and materialist discourses of neoliberalism that Petrus employs. Petrus strategically manages

to lay a legitimate claim to Lucy's land and coerce her into marrying him, if she wants "all this badness" to stop, not via spontaneous reactions, as Lurie's "anthropological" register would have him, but through a carefully planned and executed scheme that bewilders the former professor's microcosm (203). Although Lurie insinuates that Petrus orchestrated the attack on Lucy's property, the latter maintains a calculative and restrained attitude which impels Lurie to describe Petrus' responses as very "swift and businesslike: all very unlike Africa" (151). For Lurie, who was born and raised following the teachings of Romantic poets, European composers and artists, the ascendancy of the previous "dog-man" into a "farm manager" is indicative of the emergence of the South African subject as an agent of production (154). Petrus constitutes a threat to the white community not only because he establishes a black phallic economy which replaces the white one, but also because his inculcation in the doctrines of capitalism threaten the class privilege of the white South African community. What is quite disturbing in Coetzee's text is that it connotes a controversial synergy between Petrus's entrepreneurial schemes, criminality and the post-apartheid regime.

Some days after the rape, Petrus holds a party and sacrifices two sheep in order to celebrate the land transfer (124). During the celebration, Lurie spots one of the three aggressors, the youngest one, and approaches him. The young man "does not appear to be startled" and confronts Lurie as if he had been "waiting for this moment" (131). Lucy and her father leave and Lurie implores her to call the police and arrest the young man. Aware of the repercussions this might have for her life in the country, Lucy refuses and asks her father to carefully consider her situation as the boy is related to Petrus and she is the "one who has to live here" (133). Lurie, who seeks retribution for his daughter's rape, visits Petrus in order for justice to be delivered. Petrus dismisses any involvement of the police since the young assailant, as he confesses, "is my family, my people" (201). Not only is Petrus not willing to follow the legal route and seek justice for Lucy's rape but he also announces to Lurie that the former professor has no reason to remain in Eastern Cape: " 'The smile has vanished. 'You go away, you come back again - why?' He stares challengingly. 'You have no work here. You come to look after your child. I also look after my child'" (201). The figure of Petrus, as it presented through Coetzee's text, is

quite disturbing. Although he strategically manages to reclaim his land and assume the role of the farm manager, he consciously chooses to shelter a criminal and reduce Lucy's rape to an insignificant event that belongs to the past. While Petrus demonstrates a rather calculative demeanor that considers carefully the financial and functionalist aspects of his and other people's decisions, his reconsolidation of his sovereignty is premised both on his neoliberal attitude and a crime which forecloses any future claim made by Lucy and declares that their privileges as white farm owners and masters have been revoked. The oration performed by the middle-aged man bearing a gold chain with imperial insignia in Petrus's party discloses that the reconstitution of the South African subject is premised on the very same colonial discourses and violent practices which had subjugated him. Coetzee's text depicts a quite bleak picture of post-apartheid South Africa since the black subjects are presented either as victims of white privilege or as predators who have internalized the colonial attitudes and redeploy them in their quotidian experiences.

My discussion on Coetzee's *Disgrace* concluded with an analysis of the emergence of the *homo oeconomicus* in the South African postcolony. I also read the text through Mbembe's concept of the "commandement" in order to delineate the ways in which the project of decolonization can regress into an insidious neo-colonialism. Not only does the figure of Petrus, the man who throughout the novel evolves from a dog-man to a co-proprietor and farm manager, attest to the progressive integration of neoliberalism to the sociopolitical spheres of South Africa, but it also underlines the signification economy assumes in the postcolony. In a confrontation with Lurie, who accuses Petrus of harboring one of Lucy's rapists, the former dog-man, always in a composed manner, replies: "'David, it is a hard thing you are saying, that this boy is a thief. He is very angry that you are calling him a thief. That is what he is telling everyone. And I, I am the one who must be keeping the peace'" (137). Throughout the novel, Petrus progressively assumes the role of the peacekeeper who discourages any inquiries into Lucy's rape; he impels her to continue working in her market stall, despite her being violently raped and traumatized, and he continues his house development untouched by the events and the accusations landed upon him.

One of the most defining features of late modernity is that politics has been massively assimilated by the rationality of the market and the discourses of globalization since they both constitute the common denominator upon which the value of the human is negotiated and measured. That globalization would evolve into a defining feature of politics was analyzed extensively by Immanuel Kant in his treatise *Toward World Peace*. In his work, Kant contemplates the principles upon which European politics should rely in order to avoid future conflicts. Kant confesses that one of the most seminal forces that would prevent Europe regressing to a state of war is the "spirit of trade" (92). Not only does he argue that the "spirit of trade" will "…sooner or later take hold of every people," but also that world peace cannot be guaranteed merely by "motivations of morality" (92). War, according to Kant, can be prevented through the consolidation of a "lasting alliance" between nations since the prevailing principles that will condition this alliance will be financial stability, economic progress and the uninterrupted continuation of mercantilism (92). What Kant's treatise anticipates, in other words, is the establishment of international organizations which guarantee social stability via market stability. The cases of South Africa and India have been quite illuminating in revealing the intervention of financial organizations in the politics of the postcolonial nation. Foucault remarks that Kant's project is not merely to situate globalization as the defining factor of politics, but also to naturalize globalization as a superior political economy (57). On the altar of globalization, therefore, the ethical and the political are intertwined with the viability and prioritization of financial markers and systems of capitalist exchange. This perverted conceptualization of ethics is also manifested in Adiga's text through Balram's declaration that it is through the conduit of entrepreneurship that subalterns can, finally, act ethically.

Adiga's text is pertinent to the discussion on the ways in which neoliberalism facilitates the self-determination of postcolonial subjects since it deromanticizes subaltern life and reveals the reasons why neoliberal discourses can be quite seductive. Balram wishes to abandon his village and seek his fortune in Bangalore due to the inhuman conditions of bonded labour and India's compromised political system. His mother's undignified burial in the polluted waters of the Ganges river, his father's untimely death

from tuberculosis in a derelict hospital filled with animal feces along with the electoral manipulation he witnesses firsthand compel Balram to acknowledge that "Nothing would be liberated here" and propel him to conform to the neoliberal euphoria that engulfs the Indian metropolis (18). The anonymous "Great Socialist," who plies his trade to Balram's gullible co-villagers, is representative not only of India's corrupted politicians but also of a political critique which fails to reconcile the imperatives of a globalizing world with the sovereign claims of tribals and subalterns. Balram, though, envisions himself as a reformed version of the feudal class which he holds primarily responsible for the social ills of his country. By the end of the narrative, Balram confesses that despite the injustice he incurs now as a predatory entrepreneur, he can actually make a difference due to his social status. The whole process of "digesting" his master, Mr. Ashok, punctuates his metamorphosis into a businessman whose financial prowess will enable him to act ethically and improve the living conditions of his peers (79). This is manifested through his letters to the Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao, which reveal his larger-than-life vision of rendering every aspect of social life available to the dictates of the market rationality.

Jiabao's reform policy entailed the drastic reduction of state expenses by surrendering sectors of state organization to international committees which would test their cost efficiency. This plan of market deregulation, which is the primary objective of neoliberalism according to Foucault, impedes popular sovereignty since the voice of the people is ventriloquized, if not completely silenced and undermined, by extra-political committees aligned with market rationality. In this context, even if the subalterns manage to overcome election manipulation and consolidate a representative political body their claims and voices will be unintelligible to commissions composed of austere financial advisors. Balram's vision does not end there for he also dreams of returning to his village and liberate his co-villagers by starting a "school of White Tigers" which will dispel the fictitious "prayers and stories" of subaltern life and instead will inculcate in the minds of the future White Tigers "the facts of life" (319); Balram's pedagogy draws its energies and inspiration from the materialist and pragmatistic valences of the market and disenchants subaltern life by disclosing the hardened truth of capitalist economy.

Erdrich's texts *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace* narrate the struggle of the Anishinaabe community to reconfigure their myths in order to resolve the enduring colonial trauma and the sociopolitical restrains of federal law. While the embrace of the casino economy seems to improve the living conditions of native communities, it augments patriarchal structures and realigns indigenous myths and traditions with the dictates of neoliberal discourses. For Lipsha, the reconciliation of Anishinaabe myths with casino economy is an opportunity to be readmitted in his community that has marginalized him due to his aimless wanderings and unambitious nature. This reconciliation is accomplished by investing the signs and stories of myths with the seductive properties of the casino economy. The final section of *The Bingo Palace*, though, does not stage a redemptive reading of indigenous casinoization; while the proceeds of the casino economy enable native communities to improve infrastructure and their quality of life, they fail to address the enduring colonial trauma of dispossession and of fragmented communities. For the goal of the communities is not merely to tackle unemployment, substance abuse and prevent further land encroachment but also to reunify the tribe and the family. Lipsha belongs to this long line of orphanage which has devastated both the Pillager and the Morrissey families. His mother June, attempts to drown him in the Matchimanito Lake, Lyman has witnessed his brother's drowning and Lulu is sent to a boarding school by her mother, Fleur. In Erdrich's narrative genealogy, the fragmentation of the family attests to a colonial wound that developmental projects and the liberalization of the tribe cannot resolve. Lipsha's conviction is that the conversion of native land into a casino complex will reconsolidate splintered families and histories into a unifying community. I would like to argue that the theme of fragmented families and orphanage which permeates Erdrich's texts indicates that the reunification of the family and the community, dismembered by settler colonialism, is of utmost importance for the consolidation of Anishinaabe sovereignty. Lipsha, ultimately, develops a sense of belonging to the community, not through entrepreneurial schemes, but by trying to reunite with his father and by consoling a baby amid a snowstorm.

In the last section of *The Bingo Palace* Lipsha agrees to help his escapee father flee the country. In their attempt to escape authorities, the two men steal a car only to

discover that a baby sleeps soundly at the back seat. The runaways aim for the border in order to avoid their pursuers, but Lipsha's father leaves the vehicle the moment June's ghost appears in the distance. By the end of the novel, Lipsha disavows both native and capitalist mythologies and pledges his allegiance to the living future:

> Come what might when we are found, I stay curled around this baby. The heater snaps off, the motor dies down. I rummage in the seat for whatever I can find to keep us warm and find small blankets, baby size. I know it will be a long night that maybe will not end. But at least I can say, as I drift, as the cold begins to take me, as I pull the baby closer to me, zipping him inside of my jacket, here is one child who was never left behind. I bite my own hands like the dog, but already they are numb. The shooting star is in my mouth, cold fire blazing into nothing, but at least this baby never was alone. At least he always had someone, even if it was just a no-account like me, a waste, a reservation load.
>
> As I fall away into my sleep, I'm almost happy things have turned out this way. I am not afraid. An unknown path opens up before us, an empty trail shuts behind. Snow closes over our tracks, and then keeps moving like the tide. There is no trace where we were. Nor any arrows pointing to the place we're headed. We are the trackless beat, the invisible light, the thought without a word to speak. Poured water, struck match. Before the nothing, we are the moment. (*The Bingo Palace* 259)

While the narratives I explore depict how neoliberal discourses are employed by postcolonial subjects and communities to consolidate their sovereignty and articulate their autonomy in a globalizing world, the traumatic experience of colonialism lingers in the community as a painful reminder of an incomplete decolonization process. In the case of Erdrich's work, the liberalization of the Anishinaabe constitutes a necessary, albeit complementary, task that anticipates a long process of forgiving and the integration of the colonial history, however painful, in the oral history of the tribe and, hence, to a less hurtful future.

In the introduction of my thesis, I discussed Cheah's argument that the main objective of postcolonial nations is to develop their autonomy and tend to the basic needs of their subjects. Postcolonial nations and communities, after years of plundering and overexploitation of both natural and human resources, are tasked with reconstructing their economies by conforming to the dictates of a global market and the neoliberal discourses this financial system mandates. Although espousing these discourses might provide a solution to the social and financial challenges the nation faces, it cannot resolve the colonial metaphysics which have been internalized and reproduced by the communities and their members. The excessive commodification of land, gendered violence and the imposition of heteronormativity attest to the lingering effects of colonial discourses that sustain the postcolonial nation within the metaphysics of colonial violence. Coetzee's *Disgrace* is quite revealing of the ground that must be covered in order for South Africa to effectively enter its post-apartheid era. Coetzee's text demonstrates how gendered violence and phallic economies impede the decolonization process in post-apartheid South Africa.

Petrus' project of self-determination entails the appropriation both of Lucy's land and body. In my analysis I discuss the ways in which Petrus gradually and strategically improves his financial condition by retrieving a superficial neoliberal discourse and by enclosing his land. Interestingly, Petrus utilizes the same calculative discourse to negotiate Lucy's body. When confronted by Lurie after Lucy's rape, Petrus explains that for Lucy to be safe in the post-apartheid South Africa she "must be marry" (203). Lucy herself acknowledges her precarious position when she accepts Petrus' deal to marry him, becoming his "concubine" and, more disturbingly, "part of the establishment" (204). Coetzee's text illustrates the ways in which South Africa remains entrenched in colonial metaphysics by perpetuating the patriarchal and masculinist economies of the colonial discourses; the dynamics of colonial violence, in which self-determination is conducted through theft, force and plunder, seem to remain unscathed in the post-apartheid era. More importantly, the colonial vocabulary is now rearticulated through neoliberal discourses which absolve these crimes by integrating them in capitalist reason. Lucy constitutes a threat not only because she is a white landowner but also because her queer

sexuality prevents her from becoming a productive subject of the capitalist rationality which Petrus embraces. Petrus' consolidation of sovereignty is not predicated on the complete erasure of Lucy's alterity but on hetero-normalizing her queer sexuality and affording her a minimal space of agency and freedom; in this case, patriarchal and heteronormative discourses comingle with the materialistic objectives of neoliberalism.

In Erdrich's works *Tracks* and *The Bingo Palace*, the persistence of phallic and heteronormative economies is animated through Fleur's rape and Lipsha's commodification of Shawnee's body. Fleur's rape is symbolic of the oxymoronic status of the natives who are allowed to participate in the casino enterprise but do not enjoy the autonomy this right might entail. Fleur is also the victim of the rumors, spread primarily through Pauline, that portray her as a roguish member of the Pillager family, living in isolation, cross-dressing and having shamanic powers. Pauline's unreliable narrative depicts Fleur not only as an aberrant member of the Anishinaabe but also as an impediment to the progressive liberalization and rationalization of the tribe; put simply, all that Fleur represents, the spiritual bond between the Anishinaabe and their land, the unobstructed foraging and hunting in open pasture and the defiance towards the imposed liberalization and privatization of the land are deemed threatening to the developmental vision that the settler-state inaugurates. Shawnee Ray, on the other hand, articulates her own claims against the phallic economies that attempt to co-opt her agency by interweaving Anishinaabe tradition with neoliberal discourses. Shawnee, eventually, manages to win at the competition, enroll at the university and come a step closer to fulfilling her dream of opening her boutique with traditional clothes and garments. She escapes Lipsha's and Lyman's restrictive patriarchal narratives and gradually disentangles herself from their stifling paternalism. While neoliberal discourses and schemes do not seem beneficial in Lipsha's case, since his maternal trauma haunts him throughout the novel, Shawnee gains her autonomy by carefully weaving indigenous traditions to the fabric of neoliberalism. The postcolonial narratives explored unconceal the continuity between masculinity and neoliberalism as well as the urgency of investigating the sexual politics that govern postcolonial communities and subjectivities in order to illuminate instances of non-confrontational conceptualizations of sovereignty.

The aggressive homogenizing and naturalizing tendencies of neoliberalism cannot be disentangled from the appropriating proclivities of masculinity and patriarchy. This connection is staged and deconstructed in Sinha's text through the non-assimilative intercourse between Anjali and Animal. The erotic encounter between Anjali and Animal unsettles the heteronormative sexual politics of colonialism and patriarchy since it stages, what Irigaray calls, "another parousia of the body" (16). It is important to note that this encounter, between Animal and a prostitute who works to repay her debt, impels Animal to question the sexual drives that constitute the ground of his masculinity. The unconsummated intercourse between Anjali and Animal enables the latter to comprehend the discursive continuity between globalization and masculinity. What this dysteleological erotic performance unconceals to Animal is that the penetration and exploitation of the female body is inextricably linked with the mastery and overexploitation of native land. When Anjali allows him to observe her genitals, she allows him a glimpse into a non-accommodational erotic act that defies and defers the teleologies of consummation and mastery. The erotic "interval" (Irigaray 10) enacted between Animal and Anjali discloses both a non-confrontational body politics and a non-assimilative perception of sovereignty; the sexual sovereignty performed between them remains unincorporated to phallic economies and urges Animal to interrogate the inherent colonial politics which shape his masculinity. Lastly, I would like to discuss the urgency of developing a more inclusive conceptualization of sovereignty in order to complicate the biocentric bias that governs this idea.

In "Pterodactyl's" final section, Puran attempts to comprehend the enigmatic appearance of the prehistoric bird and the undecipherable message it carries to the villagers of Pirtha. Puran concludes that the message of the mysterious bird lingers between "myth and analysis" (Devi 193), punctuating the productive play between dominant epistemologies and destabilizing events which question the truth-substance of established discourses. In my discussion of the legacy of the Subaltern studies group, I referred to Chakrabarty's claim that the collective attempted to articulate the eventfulness of peasant insurgencies by retrieving a vocabulary which could not yet represent the singularity of these uprisings. According to Chakrabarty, the task of the early Subaltern

Studies group was to comprehend the "political" dimension of tribal insurgencies by grounding them in the trivial discourses of "politics" ("Subaltern Studies" 17). The methodology submitted by the group propels criticism to unceasingly investigate discomforting silences and incomprehensible presences that decenter both dominant historiography and discourses which consign these singularities to the sphere of the pre-political. These unsettling silences bespeak of agencies which western epistemologies perceive as either premodern or anachronistic in order to neutralize their singularity. Devi's text does not disregard the need for subalterns to insert themselves in the realm of capitalist hegemony, to conform to the hardened, albeit dominant, reality of pragmatistic and materialistic "analysis" and its developmental discourses. This exchange, though, should be conducted in the form of an unresolved tension and interminable interruption between the mythical and the analytical; between the teleological rationalities that shape the world of the subalterns and the mythical realm which shatters the certainties of these doctrines. Indigenous myths and storytelling, oral histories and the apparition of spirits are not mere evidence of folklore and benign historiography; rather, they constitute mythical manifestations of indigenous political claims and represent openings to worlds that dismantle the teleologies of globalization.

I concluded the second chapter of this research by developing a connection between the project of the Subaltern Studies group, Gayatri Spivak's elaboration on the subaltern and Dipesh Chakrabarty's reflections on the Anthropocene. I believe that the methodology of the collective, its insistence on recuperating subaltern insurgency from the colonial archive and redefining the concept of the political, and Spivak's reading of the subaltern as an alterity that marks a radical difference anticipate the problematic that the time of the Anthropocene has introduced. Stacey Alaimo has been quite critical of the "Anthropocene" since she maintains that the concept is premised on a configuration of the "Anthropos" that "reinstall[s] rather familiar versions of man" (89). Alaimo suggests that the figure of the "Anthropos," which seems to be both the one responsible for the cataclysmic devastation of nature and, paradoxically, the one who reemerges as its protector, is the configuration of the Western Man (89). The concept of the Anthropocene, Alaimo argues, fails to register the complicity of patriarchal discourse in

the destruction of the planet and undermines the political engagement with the event of the Anthropocene and the critical elucidation of its origins. Following Sylvia Wynter's work, the critic demonstrates the danger involved in uncritical uses of the "*referent-we*" that frequents discussions on the Anthropocene (99 emphasis in original). Alaimo argues that the "*referent-we* of liberal monohumanist Man2" should be disentangled from "local formulations of the human" which illumine ways of being that interrogate the rationalities of globalization (99-100). However problematic the theorization of the Anthropocene might be, we should not lose sight of the rupture it engenders to our perception on what constitutes life and whether alternative life forms should be included in the sphere of the political. Jacques Derrida's last seminars on *The Beast and the Sovereign* were already gesturing to the direction of the Anthropocene and the ethical implications of this posthuman turn.

In the second volume of seminars, Derrida develops a dialogue between Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Martin Heidegger's work on *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Derrida aims at deconstructing the binary between the beast and the sovereign in order to underline the sovereign proclivities that condition being irrespectively of its manifestations. He examines the confrontational relationship between the sovereign and the beast through the concept of the "world" in order to explore the potentiality of envisaging a non-confrontational affinity between the two figures and, hence, a "worlding" of the world that does not reiterate the metaphysical violence that conditions this binary (*The Beast and the Sovereign*: 2, 12). Following Heidegger's puzzling statement that "The stone has no world. The animal is poor in world. Man is world-forming," Derrida examines both what registers as life in contemporary discourses and the misapplication of concepts that derive from human sciences on the analysis of alternative modalities of life (*The Beast and the Sovereign*: 2, 6). As the seminar progresses, Derrida shifts his focus on the concept of "physis," which seems to be haunting Heidegger's work.

The French philosopher maintains that "physis" does not only signify the realm of animals, plants, trees and stones but also connotes an "originarily sovereign power" (*The Beast and the Sovereign*: 2, 39). The concept of "physis," Derrida argues, compels us to

contemplate a sovereign power that transcends political or theological conceptualizations of sovereignty; as he explains, it is a force that "exceeds and precedes the theologico-political" (*The Beast and the Sovereign*: 2, 41). Derrida explores the possibility of engaging and registering life beyond the binary of life and death which the western human employs in comprehending being. How do we account for a modality of life that inhabits the space between life and death or, as Derrida asks, "in what ways does the life of the living become accessible to us" (*The Beast and the Sovereign*: 2, 113)? Is there a form of life that rests on the verge between the animate and the inanimate? The concept of "physis," therefore, propels western thinking to extend its inquiring purview so as to include modalities of being that defy the binary of life and death. "Physis" becomes manifestable in moments when human beings encounter a natural phenomenon that bewilders their imagination and exposes their vulnerability; in such moments, the sovereignty of the human is annihilated by the all-encompassing sovereignty of "physis." Derrida's elucidation of "physis," though, assumes greater importance when resituated in the context of globalization.

Although globalization is a multi-faceted process which impacts communities and subjectivites unevenly, its most dominant feature is the unceasing commodification of peoples, animals, plants and land. Yet, narratives like Devi's "Pterodactyl" and Erdrich's *Tracks* reveal presences and voices which remain unincorporated and unassimilated to the discourses of globalization. More importantly, the Misshepeshu monster in Erdrich's anthology and Devi's pterodactyl connote oral histories which should not be merely consigned to the sphere of ethnographic documentation but need to be acknowledged as political entities which destabilize the metaphysical domain of Eurocentric discourses and politics. For the tribals of Pirtha and the Anishinaabe, the pterodactyl and the Misshepeshu respectively, are not simply oral stories but designate their history, their heritage and their future; they stand before them when the developmental mandates of globalization desecrate tribal land and demand their voices be heard and acknowledged. These uncanny presences inform present tribal struggles and continuously rekindle opposition to developmental projects, like the North Dakota pipeline, with a view to awakening the dormant field of western politics to the " 'unrecognizable'" (Derrida, *The*

Beast and the Sovereign:1, 108). Every time tribals and indigenous communities derail the developmental projects of globalization and the nation-state, not only do they take a stand in the name of their sovereign claims but they also speak for the myths and spirits that inhabit tribal stories and territories. And who can then object that even a mere “stone” is indeed “world-forming?”

5.1 Proposals for Future Research

The African National Congress, the South-African party which promised to usher the nation in its post-apartheid era, was determined to tackle social inequalities, unemployment and crime by developing a series of state and market reforms that focused on “fiscal austerity, export orientated development and privatization (Fourie 2).
The political objective of the ANC was to lay the foundations for the creation of a class which would evince the restoration of justice and the government’s effectiveness in dismantling the racial discourses which sustained social inequalities. The project of developing a “Black bourgeoisie” never came to fruition since the ANC did not manage to implement a neoliberal agenda that would modernize both the state and the economy (Fourie 10). In the national elections of 2004, the ANC secured 279 seats in the parliament but in the elections of 2009 these seats were reduced to 264. A further electoral decline was evident in the elections of 2015 when the ANC won 249 seats and the erosion of the party became more apparent in the 2019 elections when it occupied 230 seats. At the same time and in the span of fifteen years, the Democratic Alliance, a predominantly white liberal party whose main agenda is the deregulation of the market and privatization, is gaining electoral momentum. The 50 seats it won in the 2004 elections rose to 67 in 2009 and reached the 89 seats in the 2014 elections. What does that electoral shift signify? Why does the South African electoral body, slowly but steadily, turn its back to a party which represented the claims of the racially segregated and underprivileged and cast its vote to a liberal one? In what ways are the sovereign

claims of the South African black subjects today different from the ones articulated during the dissolution of apartheid?

As India becomes more and more enmeshed in the teleologies of globalization and neoliberalism, one of the questions to be asked is if these discourses have enabled subalterns to tackle bonded labour and indebtedness and consolidate representative political bodies that can voice their sovereign claims. How can the voice of the subaltern be heard, both locally and globally, when her claims are aggressively mediated and recoded by international organizations and compromised political systems? More importantly, it is necessary to study narratives which contemplate the ways in which subalterns have either inserted themselves in the channels of globalization or have been strategically assimilated by the agendas of international organizations. The Grameen Bank case I mentioned in the introduction constitutes an example which manifests how subaltern autonomy is commodified by international organizations in order to convert subalterns into liberal subjects. As Mohan Dutta and Ambar Basu point out "the promise of freedom of subaltern communities is the very instrument of erasure of subaltern voices" (81). The task is to explore how international organizations, non-governmental organizations and poverty alleviation programs impinge on the autonomy of the subalterns by embedding their claims in their discourses and practices. These organizations prey on the challenges subaltern people face and promote solutions which aim at refashioning the lives of tribals according to the mandates of liberalism. These paternalistic implementations reconfigure the cultural and traditional bonds that permeate the communities and establish liberal values as necessary remedies to their subaltern status. Future research, therefore, would have to question how international support that seeks to amend the lives of sex-workers, victims of gender violence or child labour enables these subalterns to pursue their self-determination. Do these projects rest on impelling subalterns to adapt to liberal discourses, namely micro-loan strategies, entrepreneurship and career planning, or do they permit subaltern subjects to draft their own course to escape their subalternity? Basu and Dutta present the example of the Sonagachi HIV/ AIDS Intervention Program in which the sex-workers are responsible for the "planning and implementation of the health campaign and how the campaign

addresses structural needs of the community" (83). The task, therefore, would be to examine subaltern spaces where international organizations intervene with the intention of correcting or reforming a social issue and explore the contingencies and outcomes of these endeavors.

This dissertation focuses on the quotidian experiences of postcolonial subjects in order to ask whether the discourses of globalization and neoliberalism impinge on their struggle to articulate their sovereign claims or produce a simulacrum of autonomy which obfuscates the persisting colonial dictates. My intention was to examine the materialistic conditions that shape the lives of postcolonial subjects because of my contention that literature should be the testing ground of theory and not vice versa. While globalization and neoliberalism do seem to provide temporary relief from social injustice, impoverishment and marginalization, they cannot heal the psychological traumas and communal fissures that colonial rule has engendered. Examining the sexual politics of sovereignty might be a path which would reveal how globalization and neoliberalism mandate heteronormative schemata and phallic economies in postcolonial spaces. How do postcolonial queer subjectivities negotiate their sexual claims in the context of globalization and what is the space afforded to articulate their sexuality? Lastly, it would be interesting to explore postcolonial narratives which illuminate a radical body politics that critically reworks the imposition of phallic schemata and illumines non-assimilative bodily encounters.

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Περίληψη

Κυριαρχικές Διεκδικήσεις: Η Μεταποικιακή Λογοτεχνία την Εποχή της Παγκοσμιοποίησης

Μέσα από την ανάλυση μεταποικιακών μυθιστορημάτων από την Νότια Αφρική, την Ινδία και την Βόρεια Αμερική, η παρούσα διατριβή επιχειρεί να μελετήσει την επίδραση της παγκοσμιοποίησης στα κυριαρχικά δικαιώματα των μεταποικιακών υποκειμένων και κοινοτήτων. Στο εισαγωγικό τμήμα της διατριβής γίνεται μια σύντομη αναφορά κι ανάλυση των μεταποικιακών μυθιστορημάτων προς εξέταση και παρουσιάζεται η μεθοδολογική προσέγγιση των λογοτεχνικών έργων.

Το πρώτο κεφάλαιο μελετά το μυθιστόρημα του J.M. Coetzee *Foe* (1986) με σκοπό να αναδείξει τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η διαστρεβλωμένη αναπαράσταση του μεταποικιακού υποκειμένου μέσα από την δυτική λογοτεχνία μπορεί να συμβάλλει στην διατήρηση και επανασύσταση αποικιακών και ρατσιστικών αντιλήψεων. Το δεύτερο μέρος του κεφαλαίου επικεντρώνεται στο μυθιστόρημα του Coetzee *Disgrace* (1999) με σκοπό να καταγραφεί ο η προσπάθεια των μεταποικιακών υποκειμένων της Νότιας Αφρικής να ανακτήσουν τη γη τους και να εδραιωθούν ως παραγωγικά μέλη της κοινωνίας μετά το τέλος του απαρτχάιντ.

Στο δεύτερο κεφάλαιο της διατριβής μελετάται νεότερη μεταποικιακή λογοτεχνία από την Ινδία μέσα από το πρίσμα του υποτελούς υποκειμένου όπως αυτό εξετάζεται από την Gayatri Spivak και την ομάδα Subaltern Studies. Στο πρώτο μέρος του κεφαλαίου αναλύεται το μυθιστόρημα *White Tiger* (2008) του Aravind Adiga όπου μέσα από τη ζωή ενός υποτελούς υποκειμένου διαφαίνεται η σταδιακή αποκαθήλωση του υφιστάμενου κράτους δικαίου και η αντικατάσταση των παραδοσιακών μύθων και ιστοριών των κοινοτήτων από τις τεχνοκρατικές επιταγές του νεοφιλελευθερισμού. Το δεύτερο μέρος του κεφαλαίου μελετά το διήγημα “Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay and Pirtha”

(1993) της Mahasweta Devi μέσα από το πλαίσιο της Πράσινης Επανάστασης που έλαβε χώρα στην Ινδία τη δεκαετία του 1960. Μέσα από την ανάλυση της αινιγματικής εμφάνισης ενός προϊστορικού πτηνού στο χωριό Pirtha, εξετάζεται η περιθωριοποίηση των υποτελών κοινοτήτων από το Ινδικό κράτος και η σημασία του μυθικού στοιχείου στην πολιτική υπόσταση των υποτελών υποκειμένων. Η μυστηριώδης εμφάνιση του προϊστορικού πτηνού εξετάζεται μέσα από την κριτική ανάλυση της ομάδας Subaltern Studies και της Spivak ώστε να μελετηθεί ο τρόπος με τον οποίο οι μύθοι και ιστορίες των υποτελών αντικατοπτρίζουν βαθύτατες κοινωνικές και πολιτικές κρίσεις. Το κεφάλαιο κλείνει με την ανάλυση του μυθιστορήματος *Animal's People* (2007) του Indra Sinha όπου διερευνώνται οι μακροπρόθεσμες επιπτώσεις του τοξικού ατυχήματος στο εργοστάσιο Μποπάλ το 1984 και η σχέση που αναπτύσσει ο κεντρικό ήρωας Animal με την Anjali. Μέσα από την ανάλυση των δύο αυτών θεματικών εξετάζεται η τοξικότητα της παγκοσμιοποίησης που υπονομεύει την ευημερία των υποτελών κοινοτήτων εις το διηνεκές αλλά και ο λόγος για τον οποίο η ανάσχεση της εκτεταμένης εμπορευματοποίηση των ανθρώπων και της γης που συντελείτε στην εποχή της παγκοσμιοποίησης είναι συνυφασμένη με την αποδόμηση της τοξικής αρρενωπότητας.

Το τρίτο κεφάλαιο της διατριβής εστιάζει στα έργα *Tracks* (1988) και *The Bingo Palace* (1994) της Louise Erdrich καθώς και στο *Shell Shaker* (2001) της LeAnne Howe με στόχο να μελετηθεί ο τρόπος με τον οποίο οι ιθαγενείς της Βόρειας Αμερικής, Anishinaabe και Choctaw, επιστρατεύουν την νομοθεσία που τους επιτρέπει να ιδρύσουν καζίνο ώστε να εδραιώσουν την κυριαρχία τους και να ανακτήσουν τη χαμένη γη τους. Μέσα από τη λογοτεχνική ανάλυση των συγκεκριμένων μυθιστορημάτων εξετάζονται οι επιπτώσεις της αμφιλεγόμενης απόφασης των ιθαγενών να υιοθετήσουν τις αρχές του φιλελευθερισμού και πως αυτή υπονομεύει τις κυριαρχικές τους επιδιώξεις και τους αναγκάζει να ανασυντάξουν τους μύθους και τις ιστορίες τους.

Στο συμπερασματικό κεφάλαιο της διατριβής αναλύεται ο τρόπος με τον οποίο η λογοτεχνική αναπαράσταση του μετααποικιακού υποκειμένου μπορεί ακούσια να ανασυστήσει τον αποικιοκρατικό λόγο, πως οι λόγοι και πρακτικές της παγκοσμιοποίησης εντείνουν τις πατριαρχικές δομές που διέπουν τις μετααποικιακές κοινότητες και πως η αποδόμηση των μύθων ιθαγενών από τις μετααποικιακές

κοινότητες αποτελεί μια προσπάθεια διαπραγμάτευσης με ή και ανάσχεση των υπαγορεύσεων της παγκοσμιοποίησης.

Τα προαναφερθέντα μετααποικιακά μυθιστορήματα μελετώνται μέσα από τα θεωρητικά κείμενα των Michel Foucault, Gayatri Spivak και Jacques Derrida, έτσι ώστε να αναλυθεί ο τρόπος με τον οποίο η παγκοσμιοποίηση διαμορφώνει τόσο την καθημερινή πραγματικότητα όσο και τις φιλοσοφικές, θεωρητικές και παραδοσιακές πεποιθήσεις των μετααποικιακών υποκειμένων και κοινοτήτων. Για τον λόγο αυτό επιχειρώ να μελετήσω τα συγκεκριμένα μυθιστορήματα μέσα από την ανάλυση του *homo oeconomicus* από τον Foucault ώστε να διαλευκανθούν τα κίνητρα που περιστασιακά ωθούν μετααποικιακά υποκείμενα να ασπαστούν τις αρχές του φιλελευθερισμού. Εξίσου σημαντική για την μελέτη των μυθιστορημάτων είναι η κριτική ανάλυση των υποτελών από την Spivak και την ομάδα Subaltern Studies ώστε να μελετηθεί ο τρόπος με τον οποίο η περιθωριοποίηση, καταπίεση και διαστρεβλωμένη αναπαράσταση των υποτελών υποκειμένων της Ινδίας δεν τους επιτρέπει να εισχωρήσουν, επί ίσοις όροις, στα κανάλια της παγκοσμιοποίησης. Τέλος, επιχειρώ να αναπτύξω ένα διάλογο μεταξύ μετααποικιακών μυθιστορημάτων και της αποδόμησης της κυριαρχίας από τον Derrida ώστε να αναλύσω τόσο την συσχέτιση των πολιτικών επιδιώξεων των μετααποικιακών κοινοτήτων με τους μύθους και τις παραδόσεις τους όσο και την κυριαρχική προδιάθεση που χαρακτηρίζει κάθε ζώντα οργανισμό.