

Brute Violence and Vulnerable Animality: A Reading of Postcoloniality, Animals, and Masculinity in Damon Galgut's *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*¹

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Introduction: Tracking the Animal through Postcolonial Territory

It would not be a great leap to say that the vast majority of literature and criticism on apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa (to say nothing of the vast majority of postcolonial theory and criticism) has paid little attention to the lives and deaths of animals, even if this trend has recently begun to change.² Moreover, it may be that given apartheid's recent and violent history, any intellectual argument about animals made during a foray into the nation's past might still need to (and probably should) justify itself. This justification is necessary not least because of a potential criticism that concern for non-human life is a frivolous interest in the face of the toll that traumatic histories exact on their human subjects. This oft-leveled criticism against animal advocates frequently by philosophers since Heidegger in comparisons between the Holocaust and factory farming, and such questions represent an important line of inquiry and ethical consideration. Matthew Calarco has spoken of this importance, commenting on situations where violences inflicted on human and non-human life collide, and writes, "the question of the animal obliges us to consider . . . precisely the anthropocentric value hierarchy that places human life always and everywhere in a higher rank over animal life" (110), and this hierarchy is made just as palpable in the plethora of violent histories under the umbrella of the field we call postcolonial studies. Yet we might also justify our position because those of us thinking through our relationship with animals in the fields of animal studies and critical animal studies are only just beginning to understand the complex ways in which they live with us; we know even less about the precarity of animal existence as it intersects with the myriad of politics knotted into the strands of thought left in the wake of apartheid and colonialism.

The project of paying attention to or even citing the importance of animal life in a history such as apartheid's might be controversial given either of the above considerations. As Philip Armstrong points out, "[c]oncerned as it is with the politics of historical and contemporary relations between 'Western' and other cultures since 1492 or thereabouts, postcolonial studies has shown little interest in the fate of the nonhuman

animal,” which he attributes to “the suspicion that pursuing an interest in the postcolonial animal risks trivializing the suffering of human beings under colonialism” (413). Yet, to entertain the lives of animals is not to suggest that their suffering should supersede forms of suffering experienced by humans; it is to allow ourselves to entertain more than one idea of suffering and violence, to allow ourselves to consider ontologies other than our own, and to acknowledge that we are capable of devoting our attention to more than one site of political struggle simultaneously. To entertain the lives of animals might involve recalling Peter Singer’s foundational assertion in *Animal Liberation* that “[i]f we wish to avoid being numbered among the oppressors, we must be prepared to rethink all our attitudes toward other groups, including the most fundamental of them” (xxii). Though as this paper will signal, extricating “ourselves”—whoever the community assumed by the above quotation might consist of—is not always easy or possible. Suffice it to say that this paper focuses on systems of oppression and various subjects’ implication in them even while they might resist oppression.

If we look hard enough, animals (or some figuration of them) are familiar but elided presences within the history of colonial and postcolonial thought. The figure of the animal informs a range of colonial ideologies since their inception, from the species discourse in historical race science to the imperial drive to conquer landscapes. In the first instance, the figure of the animal has been rendered a point of comparison for the bestialized non-white human. Although “humanity has been seen *not* as a species of animality, but rather as a condition operating on a fundamentally different (and higher) plane of existence to that of mere animals,” imperial history has resulted in the “discursive production of social groups identified for their base drives, proximity to ‘nature,’ infantilism, eroticism, and absence of civilized manners” (Anderson 3). According to Kay Anderson’s analysis of the historical construction of race, “[a]nimality has been a crucial reference point for constructing sociospatial difference and hierarchy in Western cultures,” informing “rhetorics of race” (3). Indeed, we might recall that Carl Linneus’s early scientific texts classified different racial groups into sub-species of the human, infusing race with the rhetoric of species. In the latter sense—animals’ implication in the imperial drive to conquer landscapes—domination over actual animals has functioned as an indication of Enlightenment era colonialism’s dominion over nature.³ However, in line with Nicole Shukin’s criticism of postcolonial texts’ tendency to “engage with technologies of animalization in relation to racialized human subjects but rarely with reductions of animals themselves” (24), examining figurative animalizations for the way they primitivize humans leaves us with an impoverished understanding of such modes of oppression, resulting from a half-complete analysis that elides animal beings. In histories as violent as colonialism’s, animals appear everywhere, but only as empty signifiers filled with a figurative essence of violence.

To part with Shukin, however, the suggestion that interrogating only the “human side” of an animal metaphor somehow overwrites the question of the animal is problematic given that animal studies oblige us to acknowledge, in its most fundamental arguments, that the categorical cleavage between human and animal is itself a faulty one. This is not to say that the vast majority of attention paid to human trauma in situations where violence is leveled against both human and non-human animals does not overwrite the lives and deaths of animals in real ways; instead it is to acknowledge that animal lives are not so separate from “our” discourses about trauma and violent history as we might like to think. Jacques Derrida’s seminal *The Animal That Therefore I Am* takes up the human/animal distinction, commenting on what is often perceived as the “abyssal rupture” between human and animal. He suggests that this rupture “doesn’t describe two edges, a unilinear and indivisible line having two edges, Man and the Animal in general” and writes,

[b]eyond the edge of the *so-called* human, beyond it but by no means on a single opposing side, rather than ‘The Animal’ or ‘Animal Life’ there is already a heterogeneous multiplicity of the living, or more precisely . . . a multiplicity of organizations of relations between living and dead, relations of organization or lack of organization among realms that are more and more difficult to dissociate by means of the figures of the organic and inorganic, or life and/or death. These relations are at once intertwined and abyssal, and they can never be totally objectified. (31)

Derrida’s analysis enacts a blurring between those seemingly insurmountable ontological boundaries that categorically divorce the human from its animality. He drops us instead within the heterogeneous multiplicity of relations between beings (rather than strictly human beings). Derrida’s work offers a textual attempt to usher us into a way of understanding the animal not as a separate category from the human but as an occupant of a broader field of what Donna Haraway might call interspecies relationality.⁴ In Derrida’s terms, the question is not necessarily how we justify studying animals in a field dominated by human trauma. Instead, it becomes a question of how or why we draw certain distinctions between human and animal in such a way that the animal *is not* or *cannot be* a subject in our interrogations of violence, as if the categories do not always already intersect by virtue of the animal’s own role in constituting the “human” in the historical Cartesian dualism that defines it. This paper is about that dualism to some extent, but not necessarily in the ways that it has become overwhelmingly commonplace in contemporary animal studies. Rather, it is about suffering, particularly where the lines between human suffering and animal suffering become blurred, where ostensibly easy distinctions fall apart.

In a history such as apartheid, animals and animality are intimately connected particularly to notions of violence and colonial manhood and masculinity. This paper will elucidate this connection in the pages to come, but a more pervasive connection between animals and masculinity becomes clear when we note a crucial and underexamined part of

Derrida's text, which involves its evocation of a history of gendered terminology in the oft-circulated supposed caesura between "Man" and animal. This terminology requires us to think through not only how the category of animality has been manipulated in the service of insular definitions of the human, but also how the human has been understood under the umbrella term "Man." Not simply a synonym for "human," the "Man" pitted against the animal compels us to ask certain questions about masculinity which themselves carry a history of violence and exclusion. This paper, drawing on previous analyses within animal studies, assumes that the human/animal dichotomy is a very gendered one in which animality is something pitted against the human not *in general*, but also against particular iterations of masculinity that constitute the "Man" in the "Man"/Animal dichotomy. This paper also engages with histories of colonial masculinity that are tied to notions of the animal.

This paper's reading of the relationship between animality and masculinity focuses on Damon Galgut's early novel *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. Galgut's novel examines the life of a former soldier in the apartheid military after he has been discharged with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder following the shooting death of his friend, fellow soldier, and one-time lover, Lappies. It follows the journey of its narrator, Patrick, with his mother, Ellen, to witness the first free elections in Namibia (then Southwest Africa) in 1989, after its long and fraught German colonial occupation. Interspersed with memories from his early family life to his experiences of post-war trauma, the novel's account of Patrick's journey offers a compelling look at a range of concerns, including apartheid's history, queer sexuality, masculinity, and whiteness.⁵ Alongside all of these concerns, however, animals occupy a curious focus. Unlike common renderings of animals within colonial and postcolonial accounts of history (in which mutilated concepts of animality or animal bodies often serve as a placeholder for subhumanity or the violence and oppression of colonialism), Galgut's handling of violence against non-humans presents animals in their own corporeality, as bodies capable of suffering alongside human ones, as beings in a complex socio- and eco-political network of oppression shared between species, and as lives for whom postcolonial analyses might extend concern.⁶ It also questions the legitimacy of liberal white masculinities, challenging the white male's ability to overtly oppose instances of violent oppression and extricate them from himself. This paper returns to a history that has been pored over by innumerable scholars in order to account for overlooked animals, but it does so to suggest that Galgut's text is an important early intervention in thinking about animals, among other things, as subjects of ethical concern in postcolonial contexts.

“Man” and Animal, or How the “Animal” Makes the “Man”

We need not look very far to see how closely (particularly white) masculinities and animality are tied (nor to see how vehemently disavowed these ties are). We are probably familiar with the trope of “brutishness,” often applied to the male body either as a fetishistic ideation of a male propensity for “brute” strength or as a condemnation of certain forms of hypermasculinity in instances of male-perpetrated violence. In these cases, we might understand masculinity as shored up through the accumulation of qualities presumed to belong to a particular figuration of the animal.⁷ For Derrida, the “brute” connotes “not only animality but a certain bestiality of the animal” (*The Beast* 21). It might also be valuable to recall Judith Butler’s critique of bestializing discourses of the human which assert that these tropes “[have] little, if anything, to do with actual animals, since [they] are a figure of the animal against which the human is defined” (*Precarious* 78). But certain masculinities also manifest themselves under a disavowal of those qualities deemed bestial or brutish. This is certainly the case for a history of philosophy, countered by many animal studies scholars, which grounds the “human” in its opposition to the esteemed lack (of language, culture, intellect, or *dasein*) embodied by the animal, not to mention animalized “other” races. The philosophical repudiation by which humanity as a category emerges always in opposing tension with a contrived concept of the animal also carries with it a gendered dimension. We could point to the notion that this history of repudiation derives from a “Western philosophy . . . developed and practiced by privileged white men who regarded themselves and their own situations and values as universals” (Oliver 26)—men spanning Aristotle, Hegel, Descartes, Heidegger, and Lacan, to name only a few—to emphasize the extent to which “man” identifies an insular *himself* against animality.

More particularly, in the case of African colonialism, animal figures occupy a place in relation to historical colonial masculinities. For the particular case of South Africa, Sandra Swart notes an historical association between horses, masculinity, and Afrikaner nationalism, citing “a mythic image [of the] ‘Man, Horse[,] and Gun’ [that] meant military preparedness” (80). Derrida, in his discussion of the animal’s relationship to sovereignty, places an emphasis on a pervasive masculine figuration of the sovereign (*le souverain*) and the feminine figuration of the beast (*la bête*) which creates a gendered notion of sovereign power.⁸ Paul Hoch foregrounds early imperialistic foundations for white masculinity orientated around the domination of the racialized other figured as a bestial threat; such figurations of the other as bestial functioned as a way to legitimate the violent work of colonial civilization by cultivating an ideal of white masculinity that rendered others “inherently bestial and in need of strict control” (93). Hoch traces a “close interrelation between the predominant Western conception of manhood and that of racial (and

species) domination” in which—in canonical Western myths and fables—“the white hero . . . achieves his manhood . . . by winning victory over the ‘dark beast’ (or over the barbarian beasts of other—in some sense ‘darker’—races)” (94). It is significant that animal death (or the defeat of a bestialized human) purchases for the European man his manhood. In this sense, the vanquishing of the bestial other is also identification with it in that the white masculinity in question requires quelling the life of the other to emerge. In such cases, the animal whose bestialization is produced by the “man” in turn produces the grounds on which the man stakes his masculinity. As Peterson puts it, more generally, “that what names itself human”—or in this case, *man*—“does so precisely by suppressing the animality that conditions its emergence” (2). In the cases of Derrida and Swart, the animal is a category whose subjugation shores up masculinity for certain iterations of power.

Galgut’s novel is attuned to the ways in which certain (white) men accumulate hypermasculinity as a by-product of two particular colonial apparatuses that require this kind of othering: the military and the white patriarchal family. The novel is filled with passages pertaining to a terse relationship between the narrator, Patrick, and his father and memories of the patriarchal family farm as a cultivation space for certain hypermasculinities. In one passage detailing his induction into apartheid military service, Patrick outlines his difference from the men around him, clearly delineating his exclusion from dominant modes of masculinity. He states, “[t]here was a brotherhood of men, I . . . clearly saw, to which I would never belong. My father, my brother, the boys at school—they knew things I didn’t know” (63). He also signals his ostensible inability to engage in those activities that allow induction into this brotherhood, suggesting, “it was beyond me to participate in their rituals of kinship. I would never hunt animals in the bush, or stand around a fire with them, beer in hand, tugging at my moustache. I was pale, I was weak, my jokes made them blanch. I would never be a part of their club” (63). Integral to his segregation from the community of men is the notion that his very body is depleted of vigor; pale and weak, he appears sickly in his ostracism, as if his very claim to livelihood is cut off with his removal from the community of men around him. Moreover, that he makes men blanch on hearing his jokes casts him as an infectious presence, affectively inflicting the same pallor on the men around him. But that Patrick’s jokes affect the men in such a way renders his dissociation from them perhaps too hastily spoken into being; the affective force of his presence as other men come to assume the same pallor as his casts him as, at the very least, an unsettling force to the vigor of others’ masculinity. We can therefore also read Patrick’s situation outside the “brotherhood of men”—a phrase (along with the reference to his brother and father) that underscores a patriarchal fraternal relationality through which men practice masculine behaviour—in terms of its unwitting resistance to this masculinity. His non-belonging not only disrupts his inheritance of a patriarchal mode of relating to other men, it also carries the potential to unsettle the

relationality of those men around him. This is not to say that Patrick's ostracism is wrought without pain, but it carries affects which disrupt the life of certain gender norms.

That Patrick signals "rituals of kinship" through which masculinity is cultivated recalls (or perhaps preempts, since his novel was first published in 1991) Judith Butler's early articulations of gender as a ritual performance in *Bodies that Matter* and later texts such as *The Psychic Life of Power* and *Undoing Gender*. Performativity, Butler suggests, "cannot be understood outside a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms . . . This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular act, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism" (*Bodies* 95).⁹ Patrick's experience of ostracism as a result of his purported inability to participate in masculine rituals correlates with Butler's account of ritualized gender formation. When he describes his brother as "[his] father's son" and himself as "the imposter" (14), he figures the performativity of gender by relating his explicit attempts to perform belonging. But we might also read Patrick's claims as a sort of resistance; not in the conventional sense of oppositional resistance where Patrick pits himself against the men around him, but where his body and psyche unconsciously resist rearticulations of white hypermasculinity. Indeed, in this sense, Patrick's characterization embodies a literary exploration of one protagonist's disinheritance of such a masculinity—a masculinity cultivated through disavowal, through its ostensible but never convincingly neat and tidy disassociation from the non-hypermasculine or animality, concepts I will elaborate in the pages to come.

If we turn towards the animal, we might note that the above quotation from Galgut's text also draws a connection between the white masculinity of his counterparts and hunting. In a sense, it is the first of many subtle instances in his novel in which Patrick signals a history of mutual constitution between figurations of animality that accompany logics of the so-called African "white hunter" and masculinity. Southern Africa has long been prized for its "game," evidenced by a long scholarly archive which discusses historical hunting practices on the continent, as hunting gradually shifted from a necessary practice for early white colonizers to a sport practiced widely in the nineteenth century and by tourists in the present.¹⁰ John MacKenzie's work on the subject notes "the centrality of hunting in the imperial adventure" (Beinart 165), in which "[during] the era of conquest and settlement animals sometimes constituted a vital subsidy to an often precarious imperial enterprise, while in the high noon of empire hunting became a ritualized and occasionally spectacular display of white dominance" (MacKenzie 7). Moreover, as John Nauright describes, "by the 1820s, hunting . . . [was a] regular [occurrence] as the social trappings of elite English sport appeared on the South African scene" (43). It is important to note that MacKenzie's quotation draws attention to those ritual performances of white dominance that accompany

colonial hunting, not unlike those same rituals that constitute masculinity for Galgut and Butler.

MacKenzie, then, signals an important parallel between the integrality of hunting to the colonial imperative and the emergence of certain masculinities in Southern Africa; literature on hunting outside the postcolonial field reinforces this relationship. Lisa Fine suggests that hunting “[taps] into a number of enduring sources of masculine identity” (810), as it is “an activity associated with the land and war and manly characteristics” (812). Adding to Fine’s argument, we might stipulate that given Edward Said’s emphasis on “the primacy of the geographical element” to (anti-)imperial practice in which land (225)—replete with its physical, historical, and ideological meanings—is one of those commodified terrains over which colonial wars are fought, the masculinity associated with hunting perhaps cannot avoid association with a long history of colonial possession of “nature” and the lives it encompasses. Brian Luke extends this logic of possession, tracing erotic language used by hunters, and draws a parallel between hunting and violent male sexuality in that these men “desire to possess those creatures who interest or excite [them]. Taking possession typically entails killing the animal, eating the flesh, and mounting the head or the entire body” (628-29). Not unlike the power-dynamics of rape, in Luke’s analysis, the animal becomes a symbol upon which men found their virility by subjecting another body to extreme displays of violence. His analysis echoes Carol J. Adams’ foundational emphasis on the association between meat-eating and virility in the pervasive “mythology . . . that meat is a masculine food and meat eating a male activity” (48). According to Adams, women and animals become “absent referents” in discussions of violence in that “[j]ust as dead bodies are absent from our language about meat, in descriptions of cultural violence women are also often the absent referent” (67-8), and she cites the metaphorical use of rape as one such description. As such, discussions that note the links between violence against animals and violence against women are not necessarily an equation of these cases, or some attempt to create a hierarchy of suffering between women and animals. Rather, these links emphasize the ways that certain masculinities are practiced through various forms of violence, the infliction of suffering on certain others, and the subsequent erasure of that suffering.

Galgut’s text aligns the violent practice of hunting with particular forms of white masculinity when Patrick figures his father’s hunting as an accumulation of power and prowess. He describes his father’s credentials, of which hunting animals forms a significant portion, in the following quotation:

On the walls of his study, between the disembodied heads of animals that he had deprived of life, were cryptic certificates framed in gold. One of these—a big, ordinary looking bit of paper—was the deal that had started his career. ‘The one that made the difference,’ he told us, beaming. I knew I was supposed to be impressed, but it was just a boring sheet of jargon to me. (15-16)

The language of the passage immediately confronts us with varying degrees of framing. The heads of animals frame Patrick's father's credentials which are, in turn, framed in gold. The study is also a kind of frame that encapsulates the father and his fiscal prowess. The text places emphasis on the deal that "made the difference" and we, like Patrick, perhaps know we are supposed to be impressed even while we read Patrick's skepticism. On one level, this passage gives evidence of the father's power; the heads of animals in his study frame him as the "head" of a family and the "head" of a business. As Luke suggests in his analysis of hunting and animal possession, the deaths of animals cultivate a degree of masculine prowess as fetishized objects imbued with the trappings of male virility. On the other hand, the use of framing here gestures toward his power's artifice. The heads are "disembodied," out of place, and their framing (both taxidermically on the wall and in terms of Patrick's linguistic framing) carries a haunting excess that tells the story of their violent deaths. They are mounted alongside what Patrick calls the "cryptic certificates" on his father's wall, and the term, "cryptic," describes both indecipherability (which constitutes Patrick's ostensible inability to navigate the domain of his father's hypermasculine prowess) and the zoological notion of camouflage. In the latter sense, the term "cryptic" applied to the study wall denotes a second skin—an altered, artificial exterior (indeed, Patrick suggests that his father's "possessions shored up his precarious high-standing" and that "his sophistication . . . was entirely fake" [12]).

A Natural History of Human Life: Topographies of Masculinity, Animal Death, and Shared Suffering in the Animal Farm

Another line of inquiry raised by the above quotation emerges when Patrick claims that his father "had deprived [animals] of life" (16). This statement is striking because it raises questions about what a "life" means. What does it mean to have a life which *can* be deprived? Do animals have lives? What responses does Galgut's novel bring to these questions by suggesting that animals have lives capable of being deprived? Moreover, can animals be subjects *against whom violence is committed* rather than figurative accessories to "brute" violences committed against humans? Judith Butler's work on the concept of a "livable life" signals these questions as well, asking, "[w]hose lives count as lives? And finally, What *makes for a grievable life?*" (*Precarious* 20). She suggests that "normative schemes of intelligibility establish what will and will not be human, what will be a livable life, what will be a grievable death. These normative schemes operate . . . by producing ideals of the human that differentiate among those who are more and less human" and by producing "images of the less than human, in the guise of the human" (146). Oddly, Butler maintains a strictly humanist focus in her ethics in that the humanities'

and cultural criticism's tasks are, ostensibly, to "return us to the human" when its humanity is denied (151). She rightly criticizes technologies of dehumanization which affect human bodies, but this paper's concern lies with the notion that her text relies heavily on the human as a category—one that is brought into question by a host of recent criticism—which has itself been the basis for insularity and the exclusion of certain bodies from the realm of livable life and grievable death. This insularity and exclusivity has been applied not only to non-human but human animals as well, as historical and contemporary associations between, for example, racial otherness and animality teach us. That Galgut draws attention to animals as having lives *capable of being deprived* brings into question the insularity of the human category that has influenced what we have hitherto come to think of as life, a term I use not simply to refer to basic biological functioning, but also to consider its biopolitical and ontological dimensions.

The question of whether violence against animals constitutes violence at all or an attack on legitimate lives brings us into shaky territory, territory where, perhaps, the foundational barriers that delineate the human and separate it from the animal come undone. We might immediately ask whether, in the face of the overwhelming toll of a history such as colonialism's, we can acknowledge the suffering of animals. Butler herself writes that "the fact of enormous suffering . . . must be mobilized in the service of a politics that seeks to diminish suffering universally, that seeks to recognize the sanctity of life, of all lives" (104). She theorizes such ethics in the context of "a world of beings who are, by definition, physically dependent on one another" (27). Whether we acknowledge animals as subjects of grievability or not does not negate the fact that animals embody many of those beings on whom we are dependent as we use their bodies for labour and food, as pets and companion animals, and—in the case of Africa—as fetishized commodities for tourists' consumption.¹¹ However, when Butler elicits a totalizing call to "diminish suffering universally" and to "recognize the sanctity . . . of all lives" (104), she leaves unanswered the question of whether animals fit into her humanist stance. If we were to begin to recognize the sanctity of "all life" as she says—whether that life extends to other forms of bio- and ecological consciousness or not—it certainly need not be a move that undermines or supersedes concern for humans. Instead, following Derrida, who suggests that "[w]e have to envisage the existence of 'living creatures,' whose plurality cannot be assembled within the single figure of an animality that is simply opposed to humanity" (*The Animal* 47), we might expand our consciousness of the "living" and usher animals into the realm of human concern, particularly in postcolonial fields.

Still, Butler's focus on the importance of shared suffering lends a lens through which to conceptualize our relationship to non-human life, and Patrick's gesture toward animal "life" also later accompanies his identification with animal suffering. He describes an incident in which his father "shot his first impala," and his brother tells him, "[i]t wasn't dead, it

was lying on the ground, kicking. Dad killed it with a knife.” Patrick’s internal response is one of revulsion when he comments, “I nodded solemnly, entranced and appalled. The knife was at my throat” (17). At first blush, we might read Patrick’s response as a kind of melodramatic appropriation of the suffering of the impala. Indeed, much of the novel is written in a way that centers on Patrick’s suffering against the political backdrop of apartheid’s fall, but gradually shifts toward the politics of the struggle around him. Even this early passage, however, directs our attention to broader concerns about the livability of a non-normatively masculine life and its potential associations with precarious forms of animal existence. Understood as more deeply connected to political concerns, Patrick’s early identification with the slaughtered animal foregrounds his experience of violent ostracism in relation to the masculinity of his father. The suggestion that the knife is at his throat imagines a shared suffering, one in which Patrick and the animal live a shared precarious existence, stifled by the proverbial knife at their throats. Patrick’s narration of this stifling speaks into being a kind of relational vulnerability in the face of his and the animal’s shared subjection under the violent hand of his family’s masculinity. That Patrick is “appalled” also signals, at the very least, some concern for the violence with which animal life here is deprived for sport.¹²

Not unlike hunting, farming in the context of Galgut’s novel carries with it a number of enduring assumptions about masculine identity. Particularly for histories of colonialism in Southern Africa, the white-owned farm maps out a patriarchal structure that mimics the broader topography of colonial occupation. Divisions exist between the administrative domain of the white farmer, the feminine-gendered domicile of the home, the (almost exclusively black) worker’s quarters, and the animal pens. The space of the farm maps out the borders that delineate hierarchy between genders, classes, races, and species under the rubric of colonial occupation. Indeed, we need only recall the ongoing political violence in Zimbabwe (made visible internationally in 2001) derived from struggles over white farmers’ contested ownership of land to underscore the importance of farming to Southern African colonial logics.

Within the geography of the farm, the strict control of animal life is immediately apparent in their mass-induced births and bloody deaths, and yet Galgut’s novel shows us that the farm is just as much an integral space for the biopolitical herding of human life into regulatory norms. Galgut tells us that the farm’s “calendar runs on [the] slaughter” of animals— “[a]ll of this death to support human life: the flesh goes into our bodies, to keep us alive, to keep us going” (27). When Patrick sits down to eat a plate of “bacon and scrambled egg and toast,” his grandmother tells him “[e]verything you’re eating . . . comes from the farm. Even the bread. I baked it myself this morning” (36). In this context, human lives emerge always in relation to the production of animal life and the incorporation of corporeal animality into the human body. And yet, the way Patrick describes the capacity for the geography of the farm to shape human lives

brings into question the myth of autonomous human existence against the controlled manipulation of animal life in such contexts. His novel begins with he and his mother returning to the farm as a stop on their way to Windhoek, Namibia. Immediately, the chain of command on the farm is set in place when Ellen (Patrick's mother) greets a servant, and his grandmother, who "disapproved of friendly connections with her underlings[,] . . . frown[s]" (3). This introduction to the human relationships on the farm establishes not only the racial and class hierarchies inherent to the white farm, but also draws attention to the rigid strictures that govern those human lives that occupy it. Even Patrick's grandmother, the farm's sovereign enforcer of proper human relations, invests herself in the systemic regulation of human life. Moreover, Patrick later recalls developing a childhood friendship with Margaret, whose "father was one of the workers on the farm" (33). Patrick insists, "to me Margaret was an equal, a companion provided by the strange spaces of the farm" (33), in spite of their racial and class differences. That the space of the farm brings the two together emphasizes the capacity for this geography to structure human relationships; Patrick and Margaret are not actors in the above statement, but cultivated by the provisions of the space on which they live.

To say that the farm structures human life in certain ways or to say that Patrick and his grandmother are both subject to the farm's spatial organization is not to say that they do not wield oppressive power. Indeed, Patrick suggests that after his grandfather died, "[a]ll the lines of power radiated outwards from" his grandmother—"The servants were afraid of her. The neighbors respected her. She couldn't be separated from the land that she lived on" (37). On the one hand, her rigid occupation of the land is reminiscent of historical Afrikaner identifications with the African landscape, a commitment to the land pitted against what Afrikaner settlers who sought to legitimate their claim to the land saw as the encroachment of British settlers colonizing the Cape of Good Hope long after the Dutch.¹³ On the other, her rootedness infuses the land she lives on with an amalgam of histories of colonialism and racialization that are nourishing components of her existence.

Moreover, Patrick identifies the farm as a site on which his own inheritance of patriarchal masculinity germinates when its geography sparks an early memory of his participation in its racist logics. The passage describes Margaret and Patrick playing, while "[n]ear [them], on the grass, two dogs were mating" (34). Patrick goes on to say that "[a]ll around on the farm, in between the death that we casually inflicted [on animals], life was making more life: cattle and chickens and pigs were all at it, a rampant, blind, voracious rutting" (34). Amidst the theater of animal sexuality unfolding before them, Patrick states, "[a]ll at once, from the back of the house, my grandfather came running . . . He had his whip in his hand and for a terrified instant I thought that we were the object of his fury. But it was the dogs that he fell upon, spastic with rage, lunging and swearing in a hot vortex of dust" (34). It is important to note that this

passage underscores how permissible behaviours on the farm are produced and enforced under the coercive presence of a white patriarch, as evidenced by the literal and proverbial whip Patrick's grandfather directs toward the dogs. Although he directs his whip at the dogs, the novel collapses distance between them and Patrick as Patrick also interpellatively prepares for the threat of disciplinary action. In the next paragraph, Patrick remembers a moment from later that afternoon in which, "[w]ithout consultation, as though it was planned—and I saw now that it followed on from the dogs that morning—we started to touch each other. We put our hands under clothes and explored. It didn't last long. On some signal again, we each retreated" (35). The encounter ends abruptly, and after "shame [rises] in [him]," he tells Margaret, "You don't tell. Do you hear? . . . Because I'll get you into trouble. You hear me?" (35). His assertion of control also accompanies his early evocation of the patriarchal power bequeathed to him as a white male in his family. He recounts, "Inspiration came to me, a first intimation of power: 'My *Oupa* will fire your father. I'll tell him to throw him out'" (35). Patrick's exertion of power to silence Margaret and suppress any suggestion of intimacy gathers a genealogy of the farm's normatively sexualized and racialized history behind it. We might read this as a moment when Patrick's masculinity comes into being, not as a singular event of adopting it but a "first" moment of ongoing becoming into an inherited power, passed to him through his white, male body. In Butlerian terms, this inheritance, far from being some genetic truth borne out of the whiteness of his body, is activated in the ritual display of familial and racial power.¹⁴

We certainly should recall historical ties between race, class, and species, given the notion that Margaret's perspective in the above passage is elided by Patrick's account. More specifically, the novel's juxtaposition of sexual contact between Patrick and Margaret and sex between nonhuman animals runs the risk of perpetuating colonial and masculinist stereotypes that align black, underclass, and women's bodies with animality for their ostensible proximity to an imagined construct of nature.¹⁵ The comparison between humans and animals in the above passage is stark; Margaret and Patrick go "mindlessly on" alongside the "rampant, blind, voracious rutting" of animals (34). However, we should also note that Patrick is a participant in this mindless, ostensibly animalistic mode of behaviour. It is not that Galgut's novel is not problematic in its elision of Margaret's perspective and its attempt to write an alternative masculinity, but as this paper demonstrates, the novel resists writing animality as a standard for subhumanity in the same way that racist, classist, and masculinist animalizations of the human do.¹⁶ Patrick is a difficult character, both to himself and, ostensibly, for the reader; he wrestles with his own complicity in a racist system as many whites during the post-apartheid era were compelled to do. Given Patrick's first-person retrospective account, the novel is not so much concerned about reconciliation with those such as Margaret as it is about refashioning apartheid masculinities. Indeed, referring to the day of the above series of

events, the adult Patrick states, “[t]he shame of that day, which I hadn’t felt at the time, only touched me now . . . I wasn’t a boy anymore. I was a man on a different mission” (35). Patrick does not identify the specific source of this shame; it is a shame not specifically derived from his behaviour, but from an event—a day. However, it is derived from his account of a day that signals certain masculine norms, evidenced by the presence of his whip-wielding grandfather and his exertion of patriarchal power over Margaret. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick suggests that shame “floods into being as a . . . disruptive moment, in a circuit of identity-constituting identification” (36). Moreover, a recent amalgam of cultural theory on gay shame signals its capacity to function as a signpost for non-normative gender-identifications, even insofar as assertions of gay pride rely on a repudiation of shame.¹⁷ As such, we might read Patrick’s shame as disruptive of certain modes of being a man that no longer work in the post-apartheid moment. Although Patrick never states what his “different mission” is, we might read it as a mission whose trajectory is determined by difference itself, tied to Patrick’s changing masculinity. However, Patrick’s elision of Margaret’s perspective is also an inability to reconcile with her—an inability to change his past. The novel does not give easy access to reconciliation as it leaves unresolved Patrick’s past, except for his admission of shame.

Our understanding of Patrick’s early invocation of power becomes more complex when we contextualize it amidst the life-networks of the farm. We should recall from the above quotations that Patrick and Margaret’s moment of physical contact is described as following on from the sight of the dogs mating, and that it occurs amidst the “blind, voracious rutting” of other animals on the farm. Patrick’s description of animal sexuality here might seem to rely on the figure of the brutish and unthinking beast derived from Enlightenment philosophical ideals, but he also describes his and Margaret’s physical contact as having gone “mindlessly on” (34). Other animals may not necessarily “think” about sexuality, but humans do not either in this instance. What we might note is that the intimacy of Patrick and Margaret is structured amidst the proliferation of life on the farm. Moreover, just as hunting rituals violently set in place certain gender strictures for Patrick, the farm might be read as a space that cultivates in him a patriarchal masculinity that precedes his exertion of power over Margaret. This is not to say that Patrick’s behaviour is some deterministic result of the farm’s structures, as if he were a passive recipient of its logics rather than a participatory agent within them. Rather, that the sight of other animals’ sexuality spurs him and Margaret into their own transgressive discovery shows how such biopolitical regulation places within its own midst the capacity for forms of resistance to oppressive power to emerge through complex interspecies relationalities.

Patrick’s description of the farm’s strict control over life and death recalls Foucault’s seminal discussions of biopower. For Foucault, biopower represents a power that “endeavors to administer, optimize, and

multiply [life]" (*History* 137). Indeed, later in his career, he expanded his account of biopower to include "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy," where power focuses on the "biological fact that human beings are a species" (*Security* 1). Foucault may only have spoken about human life, but scholars since have made a convincing case for the integrality of animals to biopolitical systems.¹⁸ What is of use to our discussion is that the species-life of humans to which Foucault draws attention situates human beings within one category among many. As such, Patrick's sexual life emerging amongst the proliferation of animal sexuality on the farm places human sexuality within, as Derrida would call it, a heterogeneous abyss of the living. More than simply a space on which animal life is produced through physical sexuality and consumed to sustain human life, the farm is a space that structures human life alongside various animal lives.

The convergence of these multiple and contested facets of identity occurs in the novel at a pivotal moment referred to by its title, when the young Patrick witnesses the death of a pig at the hand of one of the farm's workers. The passage occurs only pages before the one detailing his encounter with Margaret, and both passages' handling of different forms of violence bear a striking similarity in terms of their emergence in relation to violent masculinity. Describing the man killing the pigs, Patrick recalls: "What horrified me most was the mechanical indifference of the killing, the impassive face of the man who held the knife, which contrasted obscenely with the panic of the dying animal" (27). This passage echoes Patrick's description of his own victimization under his father as the masculine figure holds the knife over the pig. It also sets up a kind of disturbing intimacy between the indifferent, knife-wielding man and the dying animal. Recalling a philosophical history of animality, we might note that the contrast between man and animal in this passage is reminiscent of the Cartesian dualism between humanity and animality. The man's indifference comes into being through its "obscene" contrast with the pig's frenzy; the man's impassivity is given meaning in its emergence out of the death of the pig, that figure giving in to instinct and emotion at its moment of death.

But the pig also ruptures notions of rationality through which the "man"/animal divide emerges. Described as "a shriek that tears at the primal, unconscious mind" (28), the pig's voice unsettles the psychic disavowal of the animality in the human. Although the pig is a figure of bestial frenzy, its cry also ruptures categorical distinctions that relegate the primal to the other-than-human. As a cry that evokes the primal, it brings into question the legitimacy of human, and more specifically "man's," rationality. Patrick also describes the cry of the pig as "the noise of babies being abandoned, of women being taken by force, of the hinges of the world tearing loose. The screaming starts from the moment the pig is seized, as if it knows what is about to happen. The pig squeals and cries, it defecates in terror, but nothing will stop its life converging to a zero on the

point of that thin metal stick” (28). The ties between masculinity and animality also come to a head in this quotation as the sound of the pig’s screaming is haunted by figures who have historically fallen under the oppression of certain forms of masculinity. Galgut’s comparison of the pig’s death to infants being abandoned and women being taken by force draws a politically loaded connection to masculinist social categories of victimhood. As such, the pig is aligned with these categories in the sense that it is also experiencing trauma under a masculinist system (evinced by the hierarchies of the farm and the man doing the killing). Although the statement runs the risk of insensitively tackling complex issues (particularly with its reference to rape), Galgut’s figuration of animal death posits it as a traumatic event. His text’s humanization of animal death—in the sense that it aligns it with grievable forms of trauma—asks readers to invest their attention in one pig’s death and acknowledge the typically unacknowledged slaughter of farm animals.

The pig’s death also takes on a more complex dimension when we consider it next to the novel’s title and Patrick’s gender identity. Immediately following this passage, Patrick returns to the present and, as an adult, witnesses a pig being killed in a similar manner. Unlike in his childhood, where the death of the pig is a traumatic event, Patrick now states, “on this particular morning, the screaming of the pig sounded almost beautiful to me. It didn’t evoke violence or fear, but a train of gentle childhood memories” (28). A direct reference to the title, this passage is discordant with his earlier response of revulsion to animal death. It might also be that this statement—and, indeed, Patrick’s entire account of animal life and death—is fixated on the horror of animal death, made more horrible by its figuration as beauty in this instance. The text might also render animals mere objects in what Mahmood Mamdani calls a “pornography of violence” understood as “an assault of images without context” (56) that is “fascinated and fixated on the gory details, describing the worst atrocities in gruesome detail” (66). Indeed, animals rarely take on the role of legitimate subjects of concern in the text, but the grotesque beauty of this situation makes a comment about white masculinity.¹⁹ As the death of the pig brings about a train of gentle childhood memories, it also figures Patrick as a subject whose conditions of emergence rely on certain structures of violence. Indeed, we might recall that the human lives on the farm are kept going, as Patrick earlier suggests, by continual animal death, and by the farm’s topographies of racism. The rendering of the pig’s death as beautiful here is grotesque precisely because it emphasizes Patrick’s implication in these structures; they become something that he can no longer separate from himself in disgust, and instead become integral parts of his subject-formation as a white man, *however much he is also oppressed by that subject-position*. Patrick can never be immutably viewed as a victim of white, patriarchal oppression, but is a complex actor in its mechanisms. The novel cautions against any hasty repudiation of oppressive power and, perhaps, exposes the vulnerability and political

precarity with which our concern for animals under apartheid must reconcile itself.

Conclusion

This paper has dealt with a range of concerns, deriving from a series of different questions about masculinity, animality, apartheid South Africa, and postcolonial criticism in general. These are questions whose connections are difficult to trace in the myriad of works on each of these topics and yet, if we look closely enough, these questions have joint histories. Galgut's *Patrick* is an important interlocutor in a broader conversation about colonialism, race, gender, and animality. As an account of animal life under apartheid written near the moment of Apartheid's dismantling, Galgut's novel represents a foundation to burgeoning contemporary conversations about animal life in postcolonial criticism. His narration of animal lives and deaths pushes the field of postcolonial Studies into a vulnerable place, where its hitherto predominantly humanistic focus comes under scrutiny for taking for granted nonhuman beings who have been, in some way, part of its logics since its inception.

Notes

1. This article has been made possible through my Research Fellowship in the Department of English at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa, during the academic year 2012-2013.

2. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* is a notable exception. Also, reference should be made to the works of Neel Ahuja, Val Plumwood and Wendy Woodward. In particular, Woodward's *The Animal Gaze* is an important first step in literary criticism on South African animals. Ian Baucom's address at the 2011 Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (CACLALS) also dealt with other-than-human concerns. Moreover, J. M. Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals*, though not strictly based in South Africa, has accumulated a wealth of criticism. *Disgrace*, a more recent Coetzee text, has similarly generated criticism in both Animal and South African Studies.

3. John Berger discusses the early construction of zoos, suggesting that they were "an endorsement of colonial power. The capturing of the animals was a symbolic representation of the conquest of all distant and exotic lands" (269). See also Crosby's discussion of animal life in *Ecological Imperialism*.

4. Haraway's recent work on relationality describes it in the following terms: "Through their reaching into each other, through their 'prehensions' or graspings, beings constitute each other and themselves" (*Companion* 6). She foregrounds the ways that human and nonhuman animals "are in the midst of webbed existences," and agents in constructing a "ramifying tapestry of shared being/becoming" (*When* 72).

5. In the last decade, following the initial publication of *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, Galgut has emerged as a prominent voice on the South African and global literary scene. His work frequently deals with notions of white masculinity, as my earlier work suggests. He has also emerged as a prominent gay voice in South African literature. Michiel Heyns praises Galgut's work for considering "the white gay man as a *white man* in a racially divided society, and thus suggest[s] ways of positioning a gay agenda [in South Africa] in a context with . . . other things on its mind" (113).

6. Nicole Shukin's *Animal Capital* focuses on the double entendre of the term "rendering," which refers both to mimetic representation and to the "industrial . . . recycling of animal remains" (20). Her use of the term highlights the intersections between ideological and physical uses of the animal under capitalist practices and signals that mimetic uses of the animal are never innocuous. These mimetic uses are part of a representational system whose violent underside is revealed in the mutilation of animal bodies.

7. It is significant to note that one definition of the term "brute" offered by the Oxford English Dictionary cites "The animal nature in man" or "A man resembling a brute" ("brute"), relying on a particularly bestial figuration of the animal.

8. See Derrida's *The Beast and the Sovereign*, pp. 97-98.

9. I cite Butler because her account of performativity offers ways of thinking about gender as well as the human/animal divide, even though some might view this as an outdated reference given an overwhelming body of literature on queer and gender studies since Butler. For a particular discussion of African masculinities, refer to Neville Hoad's *African Intimacies: Race, Homosexuality, and Globalization*. Brenna Munroe's *South Africa and the Dream of Love to Come* also deals extensively with queer histories during and post-apartheid. Pumla Gqola, Natasha Distiller, Deborah Posel, Melissa Steyn, and Cheryl Stobie have also published extensively in South African sexuality/queer studies.

10. For a detailed analysis of hunting in settler narratives and later colonial texts, refer to Gray's "The Rise and Fall of the Colonial Hunter"

in *Southern African Literature*, MacKenzie's "Chivalry, Social Darwinism and Ritualized Killing," and Trapido's "Poachers, Proletarians, and Gentry." There also exists a rich literature on the Southern African ivory trade. However, none of these texts have necessarily considered the animal as a legitimate subject of critique in its own right.

11. In African contexts in particular, the tenuous limit between human and animal is emphasized by political struggle over land set aside for wildlife preservation which often removes those humans who had previously lived on it, and the frequent fears of zoonotic disease.

12. I use the term "vulnerability" in the above paragraph to distinguish strictly from the essentializing terminology of victimization (which Žižek has extensively criticized). Anat Pick's *Creaturely Poetics* critiques victimization for "appeal[ing] to humanitarian sympathies." She suggests that "vulnerability offers a fundamental challenge to liberal humanism, both in terms of the rejection of the notion of rights and in a radical critique of subjectivity" (16).

13. For an analysis of Afrikaans nationalism and farming, refer to Ampie Coetzee's *'n Hele os vir 'n ou broodmes*, and Malvern van Wyk Smith's "From 'Boerplaas' to Vlakplaas." Moreover, Hein Viljoen traces the importance of the "farm novel" in the history of South African literature, which is "particularly associated with Afrikaner nationalist ideology" (107-8).

14. This model of race as inheritance informs a range of critical race theory. Sarah Ahmed, for example, asks us to think of "whiteness as a form of bodily inheritance . . . partly because the concept of inheritance has been so central to biological models of race, where racial hierarchy is seen as a natural product of a difference in kind" (121). Natasha Distiller and Melissa Steyn's work on race has also been influential in thinking of it, "like gender . . . [as] something we *do*, and those myriad everyday choices that reaffirm raciali[z]ed norms are responsible for reproducing the illusion of racial stability" (4).

15. Kelly Oliver writes that "[i]n their reading of philosophy, feminists point out that 'female,' 'woman,' and 'femininity' often fall on the side of the animal in the man/animal divide, as the generic use of the word *man* suggests" (131).

16. The perspective of the novel—that is, its exclusive focus on Patrick, a former soldier in the apartheid military and beneficiary of apartheid—and Patrick's exclusive account of the scene with Margaret are not uncommon for an immediately post-apartheid perspective in South African fiction, particularly for accounts of white men. As Horrell notes, many post-apartheid accounts of white men experiencing the transition

write an “alternative masculinity . . . which refutes and relinquishes dominance and attempts to enact a position of submission [and] confession” (1). Indeed, this passage reveals one of the problems with this type of confessional masculinity in that the first-person narrative perspective unavoidably remains fixated on the white male as the central actor in its own perspective. As I will show, while Galgut’s novel is critical of Patrick’s treatment of Margaret, it is not necessarily critical of its own confessional perspective.

17. See David M. Halperin and Valerie Traub’s collection, *Gay Shame*.

18. Nicole Shukin’s work in *Animal Capital* has been perhaps the most influential recent work on animality and biopolitics. See also to Lemm, Mills, and Van Camp.

19. Indeed, what *would* be a legitimate representation of animal life and death? Would it be J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, in which Bev Shaw and David Lurie’s euthanasia of dogs is a benevolent act, bringing to end a life which would ostensibly die in a much more horrible fashion? It may be that the violence of Galgut’s text challenges the benevolence of these acts by drawing attention to the uncomfortable structures of violence that allow us to take such control over animal life.

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