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Honors Thesis

POWER STRUGGLES: SOVEREIGNTY AND THE NONHUMAN
IN SOUTH AFRICA

by
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Submitted to Brigham Young University in partial fulfilment of graduation
requirements for University Honors

English Department
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ABSTRACT

POWER STRUGGLES: SOVEREIGNTY AND THE NONHUMAN
IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Bachelor of Arts

This thesis uses the theoretical backbone of Jacques Derrida's *The Beast and the Sovereign* to look at the theme of the nonhuman in connection with sovereignty in three novels representing three major time periods in South Africa. Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* uses the nonhuman in the form of the supernatural to reveal the limits of sovereignty in Colonial South Africa. J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* makes use of the nonhuman in the form of animals to talk about the transient nature of sovereignty in post-Apartheid South Africa. Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* is set in an alternate future South Africa and combines the nonhuman forms of both the supernatural and the animal to address the historical impact of sovereignty. Out of a collective study of the nonhuman and sovereignty across all three novels one common theme emerges: the theme of hope. Hope that by learning from the past the future of each novel's particular normative worlds may be in better stead.

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I will draw on Jacques Derrida's ideas expressed in *The Beast and The Sovereign* to show how and why South African writers turn to the nonhuman to think through questions of sovereignty. I look at the deconstruction of sovereignty with regards to the nonhuman through South Africa's three major historical time periods: The Colonial Era, The Apartheid Era, and Present-day South Africa. In my analysis, these periods will correspond to three novels—*The Heart of Redness*, *Disgrace*, and *Zoo City*. In chapter one I will cover the first novel and will look at the limits of sovereignty in Colonial South Africa. The second novel will be covered in chapter two, where I will focus on transient sovereignty in post-Apartheid South Africa. In chapter three I will analyse the third text in light of the historical impact of sovereignty in future South Africa. In each novel we see linkages between sovereignty and different questions of the nonhuman that, when read together, reveal an ongoing effort in South African history and literature to reconcile the shifting boundaries of national sovereignty with the shifting foundations of multiple normative worlds.

A chronological study of the texts offers insight into how Zakes Mda, J.M. Coetzee, and Lauren Beukes use the concept of the nonhuman in the time period of their novels to present the power relationships and struggle for sovereignty that defines the characters and their socio-political environment. Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* is set in 1850's South Africa.¹ In this text Mda uses the supernatural and religion as a form of the nonhuman to comment on sovereignty and its limits during the Colonial era and how it influenced modern day power relationships within a single community. J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*² is set right after apartheid ended in 1994. Coetzee uses the animal³, animal like behaviors, and Derrida's concept of the Beast as a way to understand power relationships and the transient nature of sovereignty within not only the lives of the individual characters but in the political standing of the country as a whole. Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City*⁴ is set in an alternate reality future South Africa. In this text Beukes explores the historical impact of sovereignty in a future South Africa. Beukes combines both the

¹ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000.

² Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

³ Coetzee, J.M. *The Lives of Animals*. Princeton University Press, 1999.

⁴ Beukes, Lauren. *Zoo City*. London: Muholland Books, 2010.

supernatural and the animal forms of the nonhuman⁵ in order to assess the micro power relationships within the story and the macro power relationships that reveal a larger political struggle for sovereignty.

Before conducting a close analysis of the texts, it is important to look at them from a wide lens. First we must look at *The Heart of Redness*: Written after his 30-year exile from South Africa, Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* is a contemporary novel that shuttles between the past and present to uncover how the nonhuman in the colonial past of a single village has influenced power relationships and sovereignty hierarchy in the post-Apartheid community. Although often linked by critics to *Heart of Darkness*⁶, *The Heart of Redness* derives its title from a common KwaXhosa expression where "red people" denotes a people who are backwards and uncivilized as opposed to the self-named "progressives" who have turned to Christianity and left the traditional beliefs, trading one supernatural⁷ for another. To say that a village is the center of redness, or that the village is the heart of redness, is to deem their link with the supernatural as backwards and old fashioned.⁸ Such is the central conflict of this novel between the believers and unbelievers in the prophetess Nongawuse (1841—1898) whose prophecies and exploitation of the nonhuman as a way to assure sovereignty lead to the mass deaths in the Eastern Cape Xhosa in South Africa.⁹

The supernatural plays an integral part in the lives of South Africans. Most traditional Africans believe that spirits in countless forms and guises are visibly involved in the destiny of mortal man. The spirits take the forms of animals,¹⁰ plants and other various forms of ecology. The rivers, skies, and mountains are inhabited with supernatural beings. The sovereign African kings never make big decisions without discussing it with the Sangomas—the diviners. This entrenched belief in the supernatural has often led to legal conflict. *The Heart of Redness* introduces this power struggle for

⁵ Woodward, Wendy. "The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives." Wits University Press, 2008.

⁶ Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. London: Blackwood's Magazine, 1899.

⁷ Oxford University Press South Africa. *Zakes Mda: The story behind The Heart of Redness*. Cape Town, 22 May 2013. Video.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Davis, SB. "Raising the dead: the Xhosa cattle-killing and the Mhlakaza Goliath delusion." *Journal of Southern African Studies* (2007): 19-41.

¹⁰ Woodward, Wendy. "The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives." Wits University Press, 2008.

legal sovereignty between ruling colonial law, supernatural law, customary law, and religious law and how the nonhuman reveals the limits of sovereignty.

In contrast to Mda's focus on the nonhuman as supernatural and its link to sovereignty, J.M. Coetzee places emphasis on the relevance of the symbolic animal¹¹ in the discussion of sovereignty. Published just five years after Apartheid—an era of profound dehumanization¹²—*Disgrace* explores the effects of losing power with clinical precision. Coetzee posits that the individual's violation of the law reduces him to an animal in the sight of both the community and himself. In demonstrating this, Coetzee analyses the power transition of a sovereign white¹³ South African male from Professor to societal outcast. Professor David Lurie becomes a beast in the eyes of the law and his one-time peers, and is seen as a dog-man, a dog undertaker, a harijan and a dog psychopomp who offers "Himself to the service of dead dogs [. . .]. He saves the honor of corpses because there is no one else stupid enough to do it."¹⁴ It is through this absurd scene that Coetzee's articulation of the fall from sovereign to beast through legal disregard and disgrace is most profoundly seen. On the widest scale, "the book is about whites in a South Africa no longer governed by whites, and more universally, about being a middle-aged man in a society where the power of older white men has been reduced."¹⁵ Taking after Wordsworth's Lucy,¹⁶ Coetzee's Lucy concludes that it is necessary to adapt to the changing country, and if need be to start again "at ground level. With nothing. Not with nothing but. With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity. Like a dog. Yes, like a dog."¹⁷ The dogs within the novel then take on a redemptive quality as they become a vessel of hope for the disgraced David.

In a fusion of Mda and Coetzee, Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City* merges both the supernatural and the beast in the discussion of sovereignty. This post-Apartheid dystopian text is set in a future alternate reality yet resonates with Mda's utilization of the

¹¹ Coetzee, J.M. *The Lives of Animals*. Princeton University Press, 1999.

¹² Puleng, LenkaBula. "Justice and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: A South African Woman's Perspective." *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 94, No. 372 (2009).

¹³ Jolly, Rosemary. *Colonization, Violence, and Narration in White South African Writing: Andre Brink, Breyten Breytenbach and J M Coetzee*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996.

¹⁴ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 146.

¹⁵ LaCapra, Dominick. "Elizabeth Costello and Disgrace." Cornell University, 2012. Video.

¹⁶ Wordsworth, William. *Lucy, V*. *The Lyrical Ballads*, 1798—1801.

¹⁷ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 200.

supernatural as a way to understand South Africa's reality through the fantastical lens. On the other hand, like Coetzee, Beukes makes use of the symbolism of animals to inform sovereignty. Furthermore, like Mda, Beukes's futuristic novel is intimately connected to South Africa's past in order to better understand the present. Beukes presents the reader with a view of South African society that subjects to scrutiny the dystopia of apartheid segregation violence, tribal law, oppression, and human rights violations which mark the past and persist into the future of the normative world. Central to the novel is a phenomenon called "Animaling" where an individual who breaks the law receives an animal as a physical manifestation of their crime.

By looking at all three novels from a wide lens, one common theme emerges out of the study of the nonhuman and sovereignty: The theme of hope. While Mda, Coetzee, and Beukes offer differing critiques on sovereignty, namely: the limits of sovereignty, the transient nature of sovereignty, and the historical impact of sovereignty respectively and within their respective historical periods, all the novels are linked by the message of hope: hope that by learning from the past the future may be in better stead.

BACKGROUND

Before conducting a close analysis of the novels, we first need to understand the theoretical framework through which I will be reading them. This thesis uses Jacques Derrida's *The Beast and the Sovereign*¹⁸ as the philosophical grounding for exploring the complicated history of literary responses to sovereignty within South Africa. This theme of sovereignty will be traced historically through the three major time periods of the country: The Colonial Era, the Apartheid Era, and Present-day South Africa.

In this study, "sovereignty" is defined in accordance with Derrida's views expressed in *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Sovereignty is a positioning: it is defined in relation to what is above or beneath it. Thus, sovereignty can be broadly defined as the highest position of a power relationship.¹⁹ Alternately, at the opposite end of the power relationship is "the Beast" who has no power relationships below it. The Beast, or the nonhuman—if you will—is the lowest position in a power relationship or hierarchical chain.

Derrida complicates these two positional definitions. Derrida posits that "the question is not that of sovereignty or non-sovereignty but that of the modalities of [power] transfer and division of a sovereignty said to be indivisible—said and supposed to be indivisible but always divisible."²⁰ This transient nature of sovereignty will be extrapolated in chapter two alongside J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*.

To be sovereign then, is to be indivisible from that on which the sovereign depends. To be sovereign requires enmity and subservience—someone or something deemed less than them. Thus, sovereigns are bound by relationships that they are dependent on, yet also want to be separable from. However, to be sovereign is to attempt to possess power indivisibly. Sovereignty then attempts not to share power, and in not sharing power there is often the issue of control and power abuse that disregards law to an extent.

¹⁸ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign*: Volume 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

¹⁹ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. *Sovereignty*. 25 March 2016. 8 January 2020.

²⁰ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign*: Volume 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pg. 291.

With regard to law and sovereignty Derrida writes: “This worrying superposition of these two [the beast and the sovereign] being-outside-the-law or ‘without laws’ or ‘above the laws’ that beast and sovereign both are when viewed from a certain angle.”²¹ Derrida is thus contending that neither the animal nor the king, in their symbolic sense, are subject to the law: “the sovereign stands above it, while the beast falls outside the law from below.”²² This means that the sovereign can be law itself. Law can be understood as the foundation of democracy and indeed all systems of civil governance²³; thus, sovereignty is inseparable from the discussion of South Africa’s political history and opens the discussion concerning the different contending legal structures within South Africa.

Sovereignty in South Africa is intimately linked with the nonhuman. With sovereignty being defined within a western context as being the “supreme authority within a territory, linked with a historical sequence of sovereigns (God, king, people, nation),”²⁴ in the context of South Africa it is then impossible not to reference the sequence of: the reincarnated ancestral gods; Sangomas, prophet(esse)s, and diviners; tribal kings; princes; and then people. Both law and the nonhuman are then part of Derrida’s deconstruction of sovereignty as they are posited as indivisible from each other.

The deconstruction of sovereignty may be threatened by the non-deconstructibility of justice.²⁵ In “The Force of Law,”²⁶ written more than ten years prior to *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida posits that “Justice in itself, if such a thing exists, outside or beyond law, is not deconstructible.” In the deconstruction of sovereignty, sovereignty then cannot hold claim to justice. And yet, sovereignty requires justice if it is to defend its suspension of the law.²⁷

²¹ Ibid. Pg. 18.

²² Ibid. Pg. 285.

²³ Aristodemou, Maria. 2000. *Law and Literature: Journeys from Her to Eternity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²⁴ Leitch, Vincent B. “The Politics of Sovereignty.” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2007): 233.

²⁵ Clarkson, Carrol. *Drawing the Line: Towards an Aesthetics of Post-Apartheid Justice*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.

²⁶ Derrida, Jacques: “The Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority’.” Trans. Mary Quaintance. *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. Ed. David Gray Carlson, Drucilla Cornell and Michel Rosenfeld. London: Routledge, 1992. Pg. 14.

²⁷ Brookes, Peter. 1996. “The Law as Narrative and Rhetoric”. In: Peter Brookes and Paul Gewirtz (eds). *Law's Stories: Narrative and Rhetoric in the Law*. New Haven: Yale University Press: 14-22.

Derrida further complicates the basic definition of sovereignty by saying that within a political context, while the sovereign holds political authority the sovereign state and political man are at times superior to the nonhuman, at other times they appear in the forms of the nonhuman themselves. With concern to the nonhuman Derrida writes: “and, above all . . . in associating in nonconventional beast and God, but also in nonresponse, gives us to think that the sovereign’s sovereign, God himself, like the beast . . . we cannot count on his response. And that is indeed the most profound definition of absolute sovereignty.”²⁸ Furthermore, with respect to the connection between the human and the sovereign Derrida writes that “The (human) sovereign takes place as place-taking [lieutenant], he takes place, the place standing in for the absolute sovereign: God. The absoluteness of the human sovereign, his required and declared immortality, remains essentially divine.”²⁹ The human sovereign is thus “equal, free, self-determined,” is responsible for “ethical, juridical, [and] political” responsibilities and is thus sovereign in its “liberty, equality, [and] responsibility.”³⁰ Within this thesis this struggle for human sovereignty will be analyzed within the context of the Colonial Era, the Apartheid Era, the founding of democracy.

Derrida’s original lecture title is “Séminaire: La bête et le souverain.” “The [la] beast and the [le] sovereign . . . remains our title. Not the bestiality of the beast – and the sovereign. Not the bêtise of the beast – and the sovereign. But the beast itself and the sovereign.”³¹ The nonhuman then appears to be linked to femininity at first glance: “The [feminine] beast and the [masculine] sovereign. Marionette and marionette . . . Do marionettes have a soul, as people used to wonder about both women³² and beasts?”³³ He then defines the beast not as a literal thing, but as being defined by “what is proper to the beast.”³⁴ The status of being a “beast” is thus defined by behavior: “given that in our

²⁸ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pg. 57.

²⁹ Ibid. Pg 54.

³⁰ Leitch, Vincent B. “The Politics of Sovereignty.” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2007): 235.

³¹ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pg. 138.

³² Mill, John Stuart. “On Liberty”. In: *Three Essays: On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 5-141, 1975.

³³ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pg. 137.

³⁴ Ibid. Pg. 138.

genecological [sic] doggedness we saw multiplying beneath our steps the steps of wolves and warewolves [sic], on whose track we more often found man himself, man made [sic] bête, man-bete, more often than the beast itself.”³⁵ Sovereignty is thus both transient and fluid depending on everchanging power relations between the pinnacle of the sovereign and the nadir of the beast.

Against the background of Derrida’s *The Beast and the Sovereign*, this thesis sets out to understand how Mda, Coetzee, and Beukes look to South Africa’s past and future in order to understand and aid the present through an exploration of what it means to be sovereign as understood through the nonhuman. Just as Beukes uses the symbolism of the “animalled” in an alternate future to offer a new horizon of hope for South Africa, Coetzee too, through his exploration of one man’s descent to the lowest point of the power hierarchy as a beast offers a new take on what it means to be sovereign and to receive redemption from the past in current day South Africa. In addition to Beukes and Coetzee, Mda’s productive look at the tragic past of the country helps his characters create a more informed and more hopeful future.

These texts all suggest that the South Africans within the novels must change the way they look to the past during the present time of conflict within each specific novel over the concept and practice of sovereignty in order to create a better South Africa. Mda’s protagonist, warns that his village should not “spend their time moaning about past injustices³⁶ and bleeding for the world that would have been,”³⁷ but should “accept . . . that what has happened has happened,”³⁸ in order for the country to heal, and to move forward with the face of hope.³⁹ This overarching theme of hope emerging from the discussion of the nonhuman and sovereignty transcends the novels themselves.

³⁵ Ibid. Pg. 138.

³⁶ Corder, Hugh. *Judges at Work: The Role and Attitudes of the South African Appellate Judiciary 1910-1950*. Cape Town: Juta, 1984.

³⁷ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 1.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible – a more human face.”- Steve Biko. Found in: Biko, Steve. “I Write What I Like.” University of Chicago Press, 2002.

CHAPTER 1:

Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* and the Limits of Sovereignty in Colonial South Africa

In the Eastern Cape of South Africa during the Colonial Era a child prophetess named Nongqawuse caused the cattle-killing movement and famine of 1856 that led to the death of over 400, 000 cattle and around 40, 000 people. Against the backdrop of this event Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness* shuttles between the colonial past and post-Apartheid present of a single village to trace the limits of sovereignty through a discussion of the nonhuman. The nonhuman presents itself in the form of Colonial Christianity, entrenched African belief in the supernatural, established ideological systems and how those systems either enable or disable sovereignty. As Derrida cautions, sovereignty is dependent on those who uphold it. Mda also addresses the link between law and the nonhuman and cautions on the limits of sovereignty in terms of regulating justice. Through an analysis of the power struggles for sovereignty, Mda offers a way to heal the conflicted village from the traumas of its past.

In keeping with the Xhosa cyclical view of time, the scars of history are an ever-present backdrop that plays an important role in Mda's *The Heart of Redness* by revealing the limits of sovereignty. The "scars of history" supernaturally appear on Twin-Twins progeny and are used by Mda to segue between the two time periods. To inform the limits of sovereignty Mda uses the supernatural and religion as a form of the nonhuman. Mda looks back on the limits of sovereignty in the village's past to inform the present: "Holding desperately to the quarrels of the past,⁴⁰" the main Xhosa characters within the novel bore the pain of history and lived with it right up until they passed on to the world of the ancestors.⁴¹ There is a moment, where one of the modern Xhosa characters smiles, "then he remembers that as an Unbeliever [in the supernatural] he is not supposed to smile. He is supposed to be angry . . . about the sufferings of his ancestors. That must be reflected on his face."⁴² Using the scars of history⁴³ to segue

⁴⁰ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 116.

⁴¹ Ibid. Pg. 3.

⁴² Ibid. Pg. 114.

⁴³ Modisane, Bloke. *Blame Me on History*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1986.

between colonial and modern South Africa, Mda uses the power struggle for sovereignty to challenge the present state of the village—a community desperately holding on to the quarrels of the past.

Mda's novel reflects how the supernatural plays an integral role in the discussion of power relationships and sovereignty within the Eastern Cape village. Whether the rise of AIDS or the downfall of the amaXhosa nation, ancestors often take the blame⁴⁴. There are four different kinds of ancestors in Xhosa tradition: “the ancestors of the sea, the ancestors of the forest, the ancestors of the veld, and the ancestors of the homestead.”⁴⁵ All the children of the village were taught “to fear and respect Qamata, or Mvelingqangi, the great god of all men and women, and to pay homage to those who are in the ground—the ancestors.”⁴⁶ Before a sovereign, such as the village king, makes any major decision, they consult the local Sangoma⁴⁷ (a highly respected diviner, called by the ancestors and second to them in the Great Chain of being).⁴⁸ In addition to ancestors, there are gods or different races, “Mdalidephu, the god of the black man” and “Thixo, the god of the white man: and Thixo's son, Tayi [or Jesus] who was killed by the white people.”⁴⁹ For this reason, the Xhosa village could not trust the “cursed white conquerors who were capable of killing even the son of their own God.”⁵⁰ Additionally, some believed the God of the white man was not the true nor most powerful sovereign because he could not stop his son from being killed.⁵¹ Others “turn[ed] to the god of the white man, for they ha[d] seen that he is more powerful than our god,”⁵² whether this be by their own experience or Colonial influence.

The nonhuman in the form of religion was used during the Colonial era of the village by the white colonists as means of supernatural control. They used God as a means to spread British civilization by “convert[ing] the amaXhosa from their barbarous ways”⁵³. This means of supernaturally regulated sovereignty relied on the fact that the

⁴⁴ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 45.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Pg. 38.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Pg. 13.

⁴⁷ Ndebele, Njabulo. “The Prophetess.” Viva Books, 2002.

⁴⁸ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 40.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Pg. 15.

⁵⁰ Ibid. Pg. 77.

⁵¹ Ibid. Pg. 53, Pg. 259.

⁵² Ibid. Pg. 259.

⁵³ Ibid. Pg. 123.

Xhosa traditional beliefs and Christianity shared many similarities: “the Khoikhoi people were singing the story of Heitsi Eibibi long before the white missionaries came to these shores with their similar story of Moses and the crossing of the Red Sea.”⁵⁴ However, there were limits to this supernaturally regulated sovereignty. The community split in two: the self-named Believers and the Unbelievers. The Believers were the ones who embraced the modern, Christian form of religion while the Unbelievers at first remained true to the traditional beliefs of their ancestors.

Within *The Heart of Redness* the colonists used their power and the linking of the village people to beasts in order to pass over law. Derrida cautions on the link between law and sovereignty⁵⁵: “This worrying superposition of these two [the beast and the sovereign] being-outside-the-law or ‘without laws’ or ‘above the laws’”. The colonists are then outside of the law⁵⁶ because they believe themselves above it.⁵⁷ The Colonists then cut off the villagers’ ears as souvenirs⁵⁸ and took the heads of the village members, boiled them, and sold their skulls to British universities and museums for “scientific inquiry”.⁵⁹ The Great White Chief ordered his colonist commanders to “exterminate the savage beasts” and proclaimed that “extermination is . . . the only word and principle that guides us.”⁶⁰ The “barbarous natives”⁶¹ with their “savage practices”⁶² were “savages who needed some enlightenment.”⁶³ This ‘enlightenment’ was enforced through religion. This conflict between Christianity and traditional beliefs then started a transgenerational war of the nonhuman and sovereignty.

The Heart of Redness pivots on the conflict between the Believers and Unbelievers concerning the limits of the child prophetic. In accordance with the

⁵⁴ Ibid. Pg. 250.

⁵⁵ Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff. 2006. “Law and Disorder in the Postcolony: An Introduction”. In: John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (eds). *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1-56.

⁵⁶ Boire, Gary. 2004. “Symbolic Violence: Law, Literature, Interpretation An Afterword”. *Ariel* 35(1&2): 231-45.

⁵⁷ Boire, Gary. 1994. “Ratione Officii’: Representing Law in Postcolonial Literatures”. *Mosaic* 27(4): 199-214.

⁵⁸ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 77.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Pg. 20.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Pg. 19.

⁶¹ Ibid. Pg. 85.

⁶² Ibid. Pg. 124.

⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 146.

Unbelievers, Derrida reveals the limits of God's connection to sovereignty. Derrida says: "to think that the sovereign's sovereign, God himself . . . we cannot count on his response. And that is indeed the most profound definition of absolute sovereignty."⁶⁴ The most profound definition of sovereignty then is its unreliability. The child propheticess named Nongqwuse foretold the victory of the Xhosa over the colonists, the return of their ancestors, the renewal of their crops and the reincarnation of their cows who were all but wiped out by lung sickness. The Believers believed that she was a "goddess"⁶⁵ sent to save them from Colonization while the Unbelievers believed that "the propheticess was a liar who had been bought by white people to destroy the black race,"⁶⁶ and that her prophecy was "a lie concocted by white people to defame blacks."⁶⁷ She was later deemed by Mda as the "young girl who deceived the amakhose nation into mass suicide."⁶⁸ Instead of following her, the nonbelievers decided to wait for the Russians, who were "a black nation. They were the spirits of amaXhosa soldiers who had died in various wars against the British colonists."⁶⁹ Supernaturally imposed sovereignty is thus controlled and limited by the faith of those who uphold it.

The nonhuman balances power relationships by regulating law and justice. Derrida writes: "The (human) sovereign takes place . . . standing in for the absolute sovereign: God. The absoluteness of the human sovereign, his required and declared immortality, remains essentially divine."⁷⁰ Humans then often take it upon themselves to regulate justice.⁷¹ This is a problem because justice is divine in nature and should be regulated by God. This issue is seen when a young girl in the village tries to steal another woman's husband by paying the Sangoma to supernaturally assure his love transfers to her. That same Sangoma alerts the true wife who uses witchcraft to give the girl incurable cervical cancer.⁷² The village understood this as supernaturally regulated justice. Law is also enforced by the nonhuman: Tsiqwa is the God who created the Khoikhoi and all the

⁶⁴ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pg. 57.

⁶⁵ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 61.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Pg. 62.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Pg. 150.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Pg. 35.

⁶⁹ Ibid. Pg. 82.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Pg. 74.

⁷¹ Sachs, Albie. *Justice in South Africa*. London: Sussex University Press, 1973.

⁷² Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 41.

world. His other important creation was the snakes in the springs. Because of this, it is forbidden to kill a snake from a spring, for if the Xhosa did, the spring would dry out.⁷³ Thus, religious beliefs often give rise to strict cultural laws.

In terms of legal power, the sangoma as mouthpiece of the nonhuman is sovereign over the village chief. During the early colonial period of the village there was a prophet named Mlanjeni who “had contact with the spirit world and was charged by the ancestors with the task of saving humankind from itself.”⁷⁴ Mlanjeni “cured the sick, and made the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, the blind to see.”⁷⁵ The village elders said that they saw “the star of the morning coming down from the sky and placing itself on his forehead.” After this they cried out “Mlanjeni is our true Lord! The Man of the River is the conqueror of death!”⁷⁶ After declaring that witchcraft was poisoning the nation, Mlanjeni ordered all the dun and yellow cattle to be slaughtered for they were an abomination, and declared that the bodies of the slain British soldiers should be mutilated⁷⁷ to render their iqungu (their vengeful force generated through war medicines) powerless, all obeyed his spoken law swiftly.⁷⁸ However, many struggled against this declaration of law which was based on access to supernatural power. When the prophet required all the village members to walk between “sacred poles”⁷⁹ that could detect witchcraft, Twin-Twin’s wife fainted before she could walk through and was declared a witch. When Twin-Twin tried to help his wife he was violently beaten and whipped by the entire village. “His progeny was destined to carry the burden of the scars” and “for a long time he was angry with the injustice of it all.”⁸⁰ These “scars of history”⁸¹ supernaturally manifested themselves on the first born of every son and were used by Mda to segue between the past and present of the village. The event with Twin-Twin was one catalyst that triggered

⁷³ Ibid. Pg. 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Pg. 14.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Pg. 14

⁷⁶ Ibid. Pg. 14

⁷⁷ Fitzpatrick, Peter. “Crime as Resistance: The Colonial Situation”. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 28(4): 272-81, 1989.

⁷⁸ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 19.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Pg. 16.

⁸⁰ Ibid. Pg. 17.

⁸¹ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 12.

the generational war between the Believers and Unbelievers over the nonhuman's connection to law and justice.

The village chief continues to lose power throughout the novel until the village finds itself in the new and democratic South Africa where the “chief is powerless” when it comes to the new systems of Dutch and English law⁸² which have “no mercy.”⁸³ When white developers go into the village to begin “civilizing” it by building a casino, when the people declare their sovereign state and their power to prevent this project, the white developer “tells the villagers how lucky they are to be living in a new and democratic South Africa where the key word is transparency. In the bad old days such projects would be done without consulting them at all. So, in the same spirit in which the government⁸⁴ has respected them by consulting them, they must also show respect . . . by not voicing objections.”⁸⁵ When the principal at the local school is kidnapped by the students demanding the government better their school, the minister of education “was doing a jig of joy, of victory with people who had committed offenses. In the course of the jubilation the rights of the principal who lost his freedom for a whole week were not considered at all. His children counted for nothing. The message was clear: to get your way with the government you must break the law . . . kidnap somebody . . . burn a building . . . block roads . . . thrash South Africa!”⁸⁶ The limits of sovereignty due to its fluidity as described by Derrida is thus evident through the progression of the novel as belief in the ancestors' connection to the chief and Sangoma eroded for many of the village members and gave way to belief in the English and Dutch legal system.

By shuttling between the past and present, *The Heart of Redness* traces the limits of sovereignty in the colonial past and how those limits have impacted the present state of the village. Mda often uses the supernaturally manifested “scars of history” that appear on Twin-Twin's progeny to segue between these two time periods. Through this novel the limits of sovereignty are seen through the conflict of religion and established ideological systems, and how those systems either enable or disable sovereignty. As

⁸²Lenta, Patrick. *Introduction: Law and South African literature*. Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa, 22:2, issue 2, 1-18, 2010.

⁸³Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 196.

⁸⁴Coetzee, J.M. *Giving Offence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

⁸⁵Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 199.

⁸⁶Ibid. Pg. 35.

Derrida cautions, sovereignty is dependent on those who uphold it. We also see the link between the nonhuman and the establishment of law and the warning of the limits of human sovereignty when it comes to determining justice.⁸⁷ We are also warned of the dangers a supernatural sovereign like the child prophetesses possesses when their power and influence are left unchecked.

⁸⁷ Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff. 2006. "Law and Disorder in the Postcolony: An Introduction". In: John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (eds). *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1-56.

CHAPTER 2:

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Transient Sovereignty post-Apartheid

Set right after Apartheid ended and the political power hierarchy is restructured, *Disgrace* follows the effects of one man's loss of power in a South Africa struggling to stabilize transient sovereignty. Published in 1999⁸⁸ and set in the later 1990's, this novel coincides with Nelson Mandela's presidency (1994—1999). As the country tries to heal and rebuild itself after its period of disgrace, Professor David Lurie has an inappropriate relationship with a student causing him to be dismissed from his position in the university and self-exiled to his daughter's remote farm to try recover from his fall into disgrace.⁸⁹

Professor David Lurie's fall into disgrace was proof of ephemeral sovereignty. As a professor he and his student are "unequal"⁹⁰ on the power chain. After he rapes his student, during their next class he teaches a lecture focused on what it means to "usurp upon,"⁹¹ such word choice alluding to his position as sovereign on Derrida's hierarchical chain. When the crime is discovered, the university proposes "a ban on mixing power relations."⁹² In his shame, he exiles himself on his daughter Lucy's farm. The first sign that something is not right on the farm is when there is a subtle attempt to transfer sovereignty: Petrus, the black farm hand, comes into Lucy's house uninvited, sits on her couch and, with no regard to David sleeping next to him, he turns the TV on loud and begins enthusiastically watching sports.⁹³ David wakes up startled to see the man he refers to as "boy"⁹⁴ making himself at home in his daughters' private farmhouse. Lucy acknowledges this fluidity of power when she suggests that her disgraced father help Petrus with the inconsequential farm work: "Give Petrus a hand. I like that. I like the historical piquancy. Will he pay me a wage for my labour, do you think?"⁹⁵ Stuck in the mentality of Apartheid, while working next to Petrus, David thinks: "Just like the old

⁸⁸ Macdonald, Peter. *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and Its Cultural Consequences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

⁸⁹ Galgut, Damon. *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*. Atlantic Books, 2006.

⁹⁰ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 51.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* Pg. 19.

⁹² *Ibid.* Pg. 50.

⁹³ *Ibid.* Pg. 73.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Pg. 107, 149.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* Pg. 74.

days: baas en Klaas. Except that he does not presume to give Petrus orders.”⁹⁶ *Baas en Klaas* is Afrikaans saying meaning: “master and servant.” If David does not presume to give Petrus orders, it alludes to Petrus being equal to David in this context: something that David is unsettled by. When Petrus’s impromptu day off coincides with Lucy’s orchestrated rape⁹⁷ in her own home, David realizes that “it is a new world they live in, he and Lucy and Petrus. Petrus knows it, and he knows it.”⁹⁸ David’s fall to disgrace and Petrus’s rise to power support Derrida’s argument for the fleeting nature of power and sovereignty.

In J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, we see the transition of man to animal when man breaks the law. Jacques Derrida stated: “crossing borders of the ends of man I come or surrender to the animal—to the animal itself, to the animal in me and the animal at unease with itself.”⁹⁹ Derrida is then acknowledging the nonhuman within all people. At the beginning of the novel David is referred to as a “viper”¹⁰⁰ by the father of the student he raped. David likens himself to a “wild wolf”¹⁰¹ who cannot help but stalk prey. After David’s crimes are discovered he then becomes a beast in the eyes of the law¹⁰² and his peers. David is then seen as a dog-man, a dog undertaker, a harijan and a dog psychopomp who takes it upon himself to dispose of the dogs who have been euthanized at the local clinic. He offers “Himself to the service of dead dogs [. . .]. He saves the honor of corpses because there is no one else stupid enough to do it.”¹⁰³ While volunteering at the veterinary clinic David has a nightmare that he is a dog on the sterilization table.¹⁰⁴ David’s violation of the law thus prompted his descent into both disgrace and Derrida’s idea of the “beast.”

David’s link to the dogs can be understood through Derrida’s *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Derrida writes, “given that in our genelycological[sic] doggedness we saw

⁹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 114.

⁹⁷ Mill, John Stuart. “On Liberty”. In: *Three Essays: On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 5-141, 1975.

⁹⁸ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 115.

⁹⁹ Derrida, Jacques. “The Animal That Therefore I Am.” 2008. Fordham University Press. Pg. 37.

¹⁰⁰ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 36.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Pg. 165.

¹⁰² Lenta, Patrick. *Introduction: Law and South African literature*. *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 22:2, issue 2, 1-18, 2010.

¹⁰³ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 146t

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Pg. 167.

multiplying beneath our steps the steps of wolves and warewolves[sic], on whose track we more often found man himself, man made[sic] bête, man-bete, more often than the beast itself.”¹⁰⁵ Derrida’s idea that the animal is within each person, and Coetzee’s suggestion that the African man’s violation of the law reduces him to an animal, are different takes on the idea that it is the law that enforces legislation that reduces people to animals.¹⁰⁶ Such ideas were seen in Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* when the colonists believed the village people to be nonhuman and thus began enforcing legal restrictions to better control them. Sovereignty is thus both transient and fluid depending on everchanging power relations between the pinnacle of sovereign and the nadir of beast.

Where Petrus denies the dogs in his rise to sovereignty, David’s link to the dogs is the very thing that exalts him out of his state of disgrace. Petrus’s disempowerment is evident at the beginning of the novel: “I am the gardener and the dog-man.’ He reflects for a moment. ‘The dog-man.’”¹⁰⁷ In Petrus’s struggle to assert his sovereignty¹⁰⁸ he invites Lucy to the celebration he is holding after acquiring her land. When she arrives he does not play dutiful host, and instead takes the opportunity to say in front of his family, and Lucy’s rapists who are his kin, to say: “No more dogs. I am not anymore the dog-man.”¹⁰⁹ This denial of beast shows Petrus’s rise in power. On the other hand, David, in saving the “honour of the corpses”¹¹⁰, restores his own honour. When contemplating why he does this he questions whether he did it “for the sake of the dogs? But . . .what do dogs know of honour and dishonor anyway? For himself then. For his idea of the world.”¹¹¹

Just as David acknowledges his link to Derrida’s “Beast” by acknowledging his fall to disempowerment and recognizing the animality within himself, David too yokes his daughters’ rapists to the nonhuman once their violation of the law¹¹² reduced them to animals. When arriving home after a walk, Lucy and David see three young African men

¹⁰⁵ Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pg. 138.

¹⁰⁶ Woodward, Wendy. “The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives.” Wits University Press, 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 62.

¹⁰⁸ Brink, Andre. 1982. *A Chain of Voices*. New York: William Morrow.

¹⁰⁹ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 126.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Pg. 143.

¹¹¹ Ibid. Pg 142.

¹¹² Chanock, Martin. 2001. *The Making of South African Legal Culture 1902-1936: Fear, Favour and Prejudice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

hissing¹¹³ at Lucy's caged dogs. When Lucy yells at the group of men to "Get away from the Dogs!" she also shouts at them to "Hamba": this command is culturally only given to dogs. David notices that the one man has "piggish eyes"¹¹⁴ while the men talk in Zulu. When David realizes their sinister intentions he realizes that English will not "save him in darkest Africa. He is helpless . . . while the savages jaw away in their own lingo preparatory to plunging him into their boiling cauldron."¹¹⁵ After the rape of Lucy, David refers to the men as "creatures"¹¹⁶ with "reptile scales"¹¹⁷ who are "dogs."¹¹⁸ Throughout the rest of the novel instances of zoomorphism are seen in all of David's encounters with black men and are culminated to form David's conclusion to Lucy¹¹⁹ that her rapists "were not raping, they were mating" as animals mate; their "seed driven into the woman not in love but in hatred, mixed chaotically, meant to soil her, to mark her, like a dogs urine."¹²⁰ *Disgrace* can then be read as a novel that informs sovereignty through the use of the nonhuman beast: the individual's descent to beast through the disregard of law¹²¹, and the animal within each person.

Through the fall of David, the rise of Petrus, and the yoking of David and Lucy's rapists to animality, Coetzee explores the transient nature of sovereignty as cautioned by Derrida. Derrida writes: "the question is not that of sovereignty or non-sovereignty but that of the modalities of [power] transfer."¹²² Sovereignty as a state is then fluid and transient. Furthermore, Coetzee uses the animal,¹²³ animal like behaviors, and Derrida's concept of the Beast as a way to understand power relationships and sovereignty within not only the lives of the individual characters but in the political standing of the country as a whole. Through J.M. Coetzee's exploration of one man's descent to the lowest point

¹¹³ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 89.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 90.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 93.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 106.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 119.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. Pg. 128.

¹¹⁹ Anker, Elizabeth. 2008. "Human Rights, Social Justice and J M Coetzee's *Disgrace*". *Modern Fiction Studies* 54(2): 233-267.

¹²⁰ Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. Pg. 194.

¹²¹ Lenta, Patrick. *Introduction: Law and South African literature*. *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 22:2, issue 2, 1-18, 2010.

¹²² Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. Pg. 291.

¹²³ Woodward, Wendy. "The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives." *Wits University Press*, 2008.

of the power hierarchy as a beast, Coetzee offers a new take on what it means to be sovereign and to receive redemption from the past in current day South Africa.

Furthermore, the novel explores the fleeting nature of sovereignty in both the personal life of David Lurie and the country he is living in which has just come out of Apartheid and is trying to equalize and rectify the power relationships.

CHAPTER 3:

Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and the Historical Impact of Sovereignty in Future South Africa

Absolute stability is not to be expected in anything human.¹²⁴ Against the backdrop of colonialism and apartheid, Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City*¹²⁵ shows a potential future South Africa; one that has not learnt from the mistakes of unchecked sovereignty. And, in not doing so, this South Africa has demonstrated the cyclical theory of history — Apartheid in a different form. Derrida's hierarchical power chain spanning from disempowered Beast to most empowered sovereign, has always been a part of South Africa's history. From the San and their Gods, to the Xhosa people during colonialism, to segregation during Apartheid, to an inverted hierarchy in post-apartheid South Africa. But has the country learnt from history? In *Disgrace* when considering resilient Lucy, J.M. Coetzee says: "perhaps it was not they¹²⁶ who produced her: perhaps history has a larger share,"¹²⁷ "The more things change the more they stay the same. History repeating itself . . . though in a more modest vein. Perhaps history has learned a lesson."¹²⁸ On the other hand, Lauren Beukes reveals a possible future South Africa; one that uses science fiction and fantasy as an allegory for a future apartheid in a country that has not learnt from history.

When the protagonist Zinzi is supernaturally linked with a sloth because of her guilt over the cause of her brother's death, she has to leave her job as an up and coming journalist, leave her home, and relocate to Zoo City with the other animalled members of society.¹²⁹ *Zoo City* is the new name for Hilbrow which was an affluent allocated "white" area during Apartheid but after turned into one of the most notoriously dangerous slums. It is where the most disempowered members of society live, and where Johannesburg 'celebrities' are sovereign "little Gods," worshiped only when they do what the people

¹²⁴ Goldsmith, Oliver. *The Works of the Late Right Honourable Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke*. London: Luke Hansard and Sons, 1809.

¹²⁵ Beukes, Lauren. *Zoo City*. London: Mulholland Books, 2010.

¹²⁶ Her parents.

¹²⁷ Beukes, Lauren. *Zoo City*. London: Mulholland Books, 2010. Pg. 59.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Pg. 60.

¹²⁹ Woodward, Wendy. "The Animal Gaze: Animal Subjectivities in Southern African Narratives." Wits University Press, 2008.

want.¹³⁰ Because of this, there are no true sovereigns in Zoo City. On seeing a young boy wandering around the city Zinzi notices that he “doesn’t have an animal, but there’s no rule saying it’s obligatory. We’re all about tolerance in Zoo City. Or mutually assured desperation.”¹³¹ Even between the animals there is a power hierarchy that influences the fate of their human counterparts.¹³² Non-animalled society discriminates against the people of Zoo City by not allowing them to have jobs outside of their area¹³³, yoke them with being inherently evil¹³⁴, use them for human experiments¹³⁵, and legally discriminate against them.¹³⁶ Because they believe that they are the “scum of the earth”¹³⁷ who are linked to animals, “because we were vermin, the lowest of the low.”¹³⁸ In the USA, anyone seen with an animal familiar was unjustly imprisoned.¹³⁹ In China they execute zoos “on principle” because “nothing says guilty like a spirit critter at your side.”¹⁴⁰ These are the echoes of Apartheid. And like Apartheid the authorities are creating camps¹⁴¹ and a “pass system for zoos.”¹⁴² Just as during Apartheid, this pass system would legally confine the Zoos to their city. In response to these injustices, underground movements such as the “Animalled Rights Movement”¹⁴³ rose up to oppose the abuse of legal sovereignty.

Throughout the book there are many theories posed for the supernatural manifestation of the animals: One theory involves law,¹⁴⁴ two involve the supernatural, and one involves power. One theory is that the animals were “physical manifestations of

¹³⁰ Beukes, Lauren. *Zoo City*. London: Mulholland Books, 2010. Pg. 277.

¹³¹ Ibid. Pg. 53.

¹³² Ibid. Pg. 99.

¹³³ Ibid. Pg. 135, 173.

¹³⁴ Ibid. Pg. 161.

¹³⁵ Ibid. Pg. 151.

¹³⁶ Ibid. Pg. 98, 30, 31.

¹³⁷ Ibid. Pg. 12.

¹³⁸ Ibid. Pg. 62.

¹³⁹ Ibid. Pg. 98.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. Pg. 12.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Pg. 102.

¹⁴² Ibid. Pg. 33.

¹⁴³ Ibid. Pg. 79.

¹⁴⁴ Lenta, Patrick. *Introduction: Law and South African literature*. Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa, 22:2, issue 2, 1-18, 2010.

our sin”¹⁴⁵ and thus are the scarlet letters¹⁴⁶ that supernaturally carry out justice¹⁴⁷ by outwardly revealing a person’s guilt.¹⁴⁸ Because the outbreak of the animal phenomenon began in 1998 Afghanistan, many attribute its cause to Pakistan’s nuclear tests.¹⁴⁹ Solidifying the idea that “war. . . is like an animal . . . it is the death of hope.”¹⁵⁰ Another theory is that “the animals are zvidhoma or witches familiars.”¹⁵¹ Religious sovereigns of the time taught in their sermons that the animals are “punishment”, a physical burden that offenders have to carry around.¹⁵² They act as law regulators that deter people from committing crime.¹⁵³ This is because once you have a supernatural animal, you cannot travel more than a few meters from it at all times, it feels everything that you feel, and if it dies a dark force called “the Undertow” will come to kill you.¹⁵⁴ It is also referred to as “black judgement.”¹⁵⁵ But the men “didn’t carry their animals like burdens.” They carried them “the way other men carried weapons.”¹⁵⁶ They were weapons in the sense that each animalled person also receives a supernatural power that raised their power status: one villain in the novel has a marabou and a type of invisibility, another character has a mongoose and the power to prevent other people from using their powers, Zinzi has a sloth and the power to find people’s lost things. While Beukes’ animal and mashavi¹⁵⁷ pairings are arbitrary¹⁵⁸, another writer¹⁵⁹ wrote a section reflective of “Papillon”¹⁶⁰: One prisoner serving life in jail has a butterfly, and each night when he goes to sleep, he lives the day of someone else on the other side of the world.¹⁶¹ Thus, although crime reduces

¹⁴⁵ Beukes, Lauren. *Zoo City*. London: Mulholland Books, 2010. Pg. 62.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. Pg. 60.

¹⁴⁷ Sanders, Mark. *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of the Truth Commission*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Beukes, Lauren. *Zoo City*. London: Mulholland Books, 2010. Pg. 31.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. Pg. 75.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. Pg. 268.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. Pg. 62.

¹⁵² Ibid. Pg. 62.

¹⁵³ Ibid. Pg. 285.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. Pg. 317.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Pg. 189.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. Pg. 62.

¹⁵⁷ Meaning: Power or magic.

¹⁵⁸ All except Marabou.

¹⁵⁹ Sam Wilson.

¹⁶⁰ Charrière, Henri. “Papillon.” 1969.

¹⁶¹ Beukes, Lauren. *Zoo City*. London: Mulholland Books, 2010. Pg. 99.

the people to a state of disempowerment, they are given power, and at times a sort of sovereignty¹⁶², through the help of their supernaturally manifested animals.

Where the old notions of the supernatural were very much in power in *The Heart of Redness*, in *Zoo City* the Sangoma says: “The spirits find it easier with Technology. It’s not so clogged as human minds. . . they still like rivers and oceans most of all, but data is like water— the spirits can move through it.”¹⁶³ Whether true or not, to neglect the country’s roots in the supernatural is to show “no respect for your culture.”¹⁶⁴ While the practice of twin killing¹⁶⁵ is no longer common, the Nyangas and Sangomas and other supernatural healers are still very much entrenched in the culture as people turn to them for medicine made out of rhino horn and other illegal animal products to cure AIDS, fix impotence, and to carry out death spells¹⁶⁶ which becomes an important background discussion within *Zoo City* as the supernatural animals are targeted for animal products that can be sold on the black market. Belief in the supernatural is the leading reason behind poaching in South Africa due to both African and Chinese belief in the healing properties of animal products. As opposed to the Colonial struggle between Christianity and traditional belief systems in *The Heart of Redness*, in the modern era of *Zoo City*, a new power struggle for sovereignty has thus developed: the struggle between traditional healers and modern medicine.¹⁶⁷

As a dystopian novel, behind the text remains the hope for a more egalitarian future South Africa. In *Zoo City* the “death of hope”¹⁶⁸ is a transient state. When looking at a beloved quilt that had been tarnished, one character says: “Dirt isn’t a permanent state, It’ll recover . . . it occurs to [Zinzi] that he is not talking about the quilt.”¹⁶⁹ The supernatural animals which began as the physical burden of the characters internal guilt, soon become facilitators of their redemption. In linking themselves to the guilty, they are supernaturally fulfilling the needs of justice. Where Zinzi was once physically weighted down by her sloth, soon she no longer feels it, and begins to feel love for her burden: “he

¹⁶² Sovereignty being omnipotent power. The highest member on the power chain.

¹⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 198.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. Pg. 203.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. Pg. 202.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. Pg. 137.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. Pg. 138, 185.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Pg. 268

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. Pg. 140

climbers onto my back, fussing and shifting before he finally settles. I used to get impatient. But this has become an old routine for the pair of us.”¹⁷⁰ In a city that is suffering from a lack of hope because of their segregation and animalled state, it is powerful then that Zinzi finds hope despite her burden which becomes her beloved companion.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Pg. 5

CONCLUSION

When the texts of these South African writers are examined chronologically, both the progression and similarities of how each writer deals with the concept of the nonhuman and how it informs sovereignty becomes evident. Against the backdrop of Derrida's *The Beast and the Sovereign*, in each novel we see linkages between sovereignty and different questions of the nonhuman that, when read together, reveal an ongoing effort in South African history and literature to reconcile the shifting boundaries of national sovereignty with the shifting foundations of multiple normative worlds. Mda's work deals with the supernatural nonhuman, Coetzee focuses on the bestial nonhuman, and Beukes is a combination of them both. Out of the discussion of the nonhuman and sovereignty there emerges a transcending theme across all novels, the theme of hope.

The Heart of Redness shuttles between the colonial and post-apartheid era of a single village to reveal the limits of sovereignty through the nonhuman. The nonhuman referring to the village prophet Mljeni and the injustice that happened because of his decision to place himself in the position of sovereign in order to establish law. The nonhuman also presenting itself in the form of Christianity which the colonists used to supernaturally control believing members of the community. The dangers of limitless sovereignty were seen when the child prophetess Nonguwuse caused the mass starvation of the Xhosa people after claiming she had received a vision that they needed to kill all their cattle and crops as a sacrifice to the ancestors so that they can be saved from the colonists. Her actions caused the deaths of around 78,000 Xhosa.

In *Disgrace* we see a changing South Africa, one that has just come out of Apartheid and is trying to balance sovereignty, law, and justice. With Petrus's rise to power, David falls into disgrace¹⁷¹ along with Lucy's rapists after they all break the law within their different respect. All who break the law¹⁷² are then symbolically linked with animals within the novel. Where Mda used the nonhuman in the form of the supernatural and religion, J.M. Coetzee uses zoomorphism and the symbolism of animals to discuss

¹⁷¹ Lenta, Patrick. "Discipline in Disgrace". *Mosaic, A Journal For the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*. 43(3): 1-16, 2010.

¹⁷² Lenta, Patrick. *Introduction: Law and South African literature*. *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 22:2, issue 2, 1-18, 2010.

the transient and fluid nature of sovereignty in a country that is changing. David's descent into disgrace leaves him likened to a dog. He becomes the dog-man. Interestingly, it is also the dogs that restore his honor and facilitate his rise from disgrace as he regains his sense of purpose through the service of the dead dogs he regains his sovereignty.

Just as David is redeemed through the animals who were his shame, in *Zoo City* we see how the supernaturally manifested animals possess a redemptive power. In a combination of both the nonhuman supernatural as seen in *The Heart of Redness* and the nonhuman animal in *Disgrace*, Beukes uses the symbolism of the supernaturally manifested "animalled" in an alternate future to offer a new horizon of hope for South Africa.

One tool to recapture the foundation of hope is through socially aware writing.¹⁷³ *The Heart of Redness*, *Disgrace*, and *Zoo City*, as representative texts of the Colonial, Apartheid, present and possible future of South Africa, work together to hold up to scrutiny how sovereignty's link to the nonhuman defines the past and continues to characterize the present. In Derrida's "The Laws of Reflection: Nelson Mandela, In Admiration"¹⁷⁴ he writes that Mandela's force, the force that changed the country's future, was driven by the force of the tragedies of the past.

The theme of the "scars of history" as linked to hope runs throughout all three novels. Mda uses the supernaturally manifested flagellation scars of Twin-Twins line to warn of the link between unchecked sovereignty and justice, and to show how the limits of sovereignty will be repeated through history when one does not learn from the past. There is a moment in the novel, when the divided village are all celebrating together: "the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood that permeated the very air that they were breathing" instilled a sense of "hope for the future" and "made them forget the troubles of the outside world."¹⁷⁵ When Twin-Twins ancestor is considering his supernatural flagellation scars he talks to himself in a moment that appears to be just for the reader: "Forget the

¹⁷³ Coetzee, J.M. "Into the Dark Chamber: The Writer and the South African State". In: David Attwell (ed.). *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press: 361-8, 1992.

¹⁷⁴ Derrida, Jacques. "The Laws of Reflection: Nelson Mandela, In Admiration", 1987. In: Mustapha Tlili and Jacques Derrida (eds). *For Nelson Mandela*. New York: Seaver Books: 13-42.

¹⁷⁵ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 107

past. Don't only forgive it. Forget it as well . . . It is a figment of your rich collective imagination . . . Banish your memory. It is a sin to have a memory. There is virtue in amnesia. The past. It did not happen. It did not happen. It did not happen."¹⁷⁶ While the past did happen, and only selective amnesia allows for the cultivation of hope for the future, he is cautioning his people to leave the scars from the past behind¹⁷⁷. Like Mda, Coetzee uses scar tissue as a symbol for healing from his disgrace: "His scalp is healing over . . . so time does indeed heal all. Presumably Lucy is healing too, or if not healing then forgetting, growing scar tissue around the memory of that day, sheathing it, sealing it off."¹⁷⁸ There is hope then for himself and his daughter who have been marked by the scars of history. Beukes too uses the animals as representative of the physical burdens (the scars) of the citizens of Zoo City's past. These burdens of shame prove to be redemptive by giving the individuals advantageous skills and powers, and by reminding them of their past so that they are better able to not make those mistakes again in the present.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Pg. 137

¹⁷⁷ Modisane, Bloke. *Blame Me on History*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1986.

¹⁷⁸ Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2000. Pg. 138.

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