

RACES AMONG MEN

RACES AMONG MEN:
MASCULINITY AND INTERRACIAL COMMUNITY
IN
SOUTH AFRICAN CULTURAL TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines interracial community and masculinity in South African literature, film and mass media. It argues that masculinity is intimately tied to histories of racialization and, as such, represents a significant site for the deconstruction of racially segregatory practice and ideology. Beginning with the post-apartheid nation's multicultural self-advertisement as the "Rainbow Nation," which effaces racial difference, this project argues for a conception of community (national and localized) that acknowledges difference and allows for moments of racial tension within the national narrative. My introduction draws on texts from queer theory and critical race theory and my subsequent chapters look at the ways that men construct and reconstruct community in light of the nation's segregatory apartheid history.

My first chapter examines queer masculinity in John Greyson's film *Proteus*. I suggest that queer narratives have been excluded from the national narrative and that Greyson's film carves out a space for queerness in the nation where it had previously been effaced. My second chapter outlines the ways that white men structure interracial community and their motivations for doing so. I examine the fiction of Damon Galgut and argue that his texts reveal the extent to which "Rainbow Nation" discourse and multiculturalism proceed from the economic and social interests of white men. My final chapter looks primarily at exclusions within the national narrative and questions how we might envision "others" outside community in more ethical ways. I examine K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* and interrogate his text for its exclusion of non-normative masculine bodies and women from its conception of interracial community. In my conclusion, I turn to the recent resurgence of "Rainbow Nation" discourse in the 2010 FIFA World Cup to emphasize the need for a continued interrogation of the way that multicultural discourse excludes bodies from the national narrative.

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INTRODUCTION

Nine years on the honeymoon is certainly over. Gone is the euphoria of that first election day with its spirit of camaraderie in the long snaking queues of people waiting for hours to cast their votes, and of black people dancing in the streets of Johannesburg the night our rugby team, the pride of white Afrikaners, won the 1995 World Cup and a beaming Mandela donned the number six jersey of captain Francois Pienaar. Now South Africa is facing its harder realities. There is also a new brittleness in the air and, some think, a recrudescence of racism.

—Allister Haddon Sparks, *Beyond the Miracle: Inside the New South Africa*, 9-10, 2003

During March 2010, South African ANC Youth League president Julius Malema appeared multiple times before a disciplinary committee for making racist public statements. The charges laid before him included singing the *dubul' ibhunu* [shoot the boer] at a number of gatherings, barring a BBC reporter from a press conference and publicly supporting Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party. At the beginning of April 2010, Malema was banned from singing the "shoot the boer" song by South Africa's High Court in Pretoria.¹ Shortly after the Court's ruling, Eugène Terre'Blanche, former Afrikaner nationalist and founder of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, was murdered on his farm by two employees.² While the ANC asserts that Malema's singing of the apartheid-era struggle song had little to do with Terre'Blanche's death,³ the close coincidence of these two events added fuel to the already tenuous state of racial tension in South Africa. Especially as the nation was on the verge of entering the global spotlight over the then upcoming 2010 FIFA World Cup for

¹ See "High Court Gags Malema" And Mandy Rossouw.

² See Charles Molele, Charles, Mzilikazi Wa Afrika and Bobby Jordan. "Terre Blanche Killed." *Times Live*. AVUSA Inc., 4 April 2010. Web. 5 April 2010.

³ "ANC Rethinks Shoot the Boer Song." *The Mercury*. Mercury and Independent Online, 5 April 2010. Web. 10 April 2010.

which South Africa would be hosting, its earlier self-advertisement as the “Rainbow Nation” had certainly faded from view.

Regardless of the possibility that Malema’s singing of the “shoot the boer” song incited violence, it does not alter the fact that both incidents occurring so closely to one another reveal racial tensions that have been at the forefront of South African politics in recent years. These tensions stand out particularly in the wake of South Africa’s May 2008 xenophobic violence has resulted in the ongoing displacement of foreign nationals throughout the nation.⁴ Furthermore, the coincidence of these two events – both signaling ‘old’ racial segregations and apartheid-era politics – brings into question the extent to which old divisions have been reconciled in the South African National community. Malema’s evocation of an apartheid-era struggle song rekindles a particularly violent masculinity once mobilized in the service of liberation. If that is the case, if leaders return to earlier logics of liberation from racial segregation at the same historical moment that a prominent white supremacist figure from South Africa’s past is killed, we are left questioning the extent to which the hype of reconciliation in the early years of the post-apartheid period has been successful. I use these events as a starting point to this study on masculinity and race precisely because they belie the idealism of the early post-apartheid period as prominent men in South African politics add to mounting racial tensions and reconfigure the narrative of the national community.

The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, written seven years ago, begs the question: How has the conceptualization and political instrumentalization of race changed

⁴ “Xenophobia Fears Increase.” *Mail and Guardian Online*. Mail and Guardian, 6 July 2010. Web. 10 July 2010.

in the years since early post-apartheid South Africa's euphoric "Rainbow Nation" view of itself. Certainly, in the two years since outbreaks of xenophobic violence against Mozambican and other African foreign nationals, it is no longer some who think there is a recrudescence of racism. Percy Zvomuya suggests that "[i]n South Africa, more than ... 15 years into democracy, racial tensions have subsided, and yet they remain among the biggest barriers to national cohesion." Also, in the last decade, South Africa has seen talk of the "Rainbow Nation" fade from national consciousness, and an emergence of racial tensions that were perhaps always palpable under a façade of multiculturalism.

This project contributes to hitherto under-examined relationships between gender/sexuality, race and conceptions of the South African national community. Drawing on contemporary queer theory and critical race theory, I want to examine how men conceptualize and – in some cases – resist racial segregation left in the wake of apartheid's history by forging bonds with racial others. But given that the tensions I cited above bring into question how or whether even anti-apartheid liberation was successful in the New South Africa, I want to problematize the very notion of resistance. In post-apartheid academic and cultural criticism it has become commonplace to interrogate the various legacies of apartheid (or discursive "apartheids" that divide races, ethnicities, classes, genders and sexualities) that remain in South Africa's contemporary organization of racialized and sexualized bodies and space, but studies that interrogate the intersections of race, gender and sexuality in the wake of apartheid's segregatory legacies

are still in their infancy.⁵ I suggest that masculinity – queer or otherwise – is a category intimately connected to racialization in South Africa. If we view race as tied to the patriarchal politics of apartheid history, I also suggest that revisionary masculinities represent a significant site for the deconstruction of racially segregatory ideology and practice and of exclusionary politics bound up with narratives of the South African national community.

This project will necessarily draw from apartheid as a crucial point in the history of South Africa for its segregatory practices that racialized bodies and spaces in the nation's geographies, although studies of apartheid racism now abound in South African scholarship. As Nuttall points out "South African studies has, for a long time, been over-determined by the reality of apartheid – as if, in the historical trajectory of that country [...] everything flows as a consequence of [apartheid]" (732). She also points out complex histories of migration, creolisation and new youth cultures that complicate the trajectory of contemporary South African landscapes of racial organization, particularly in the South African city. Any project intending to tackle contemporary interracial communities needs to acknowledge these more complex cultural histories that emerge post-apartheid even as it acknowledges "that there are continuities between the apartheid past and the present" and that "[a]partheid social engineering did and still does work to fix spaces that are difficult to break down in the present" (Nuttall 732). And, as David Theo Goldberg suggests, "all South Africans, like it or not, were dramatically diminished

⁵ Some examples of studies that tackle notions of racialized masculinity include Ian Barnard's *Queer Race*, Graeme Reid and Liz Walker's *Men Behaving Differently*, Robert Morrell's *The Times of Change: Men and Masculinity in South Africa*, and Cecile Jackson's *Men at Work: Labour, Masculinities, Development*. Other scholars such as Deborah Posel, Pumla Gqola, Natasha Distiller and Cheryl Stobie have also contributed to work on race and/or gender/sexuality.

by [apartheid's] segregationist machinations" (*The Racial* 28). Drawing significantly from Goldberg's *The Racial State*, this project aims to take the segregationist histories of apartheid as its starting point to determining how South African subjects reconfigure intersections between notions of race and masculinity, and how the two are tied. But Nuttall's emphasis on the nation's complex contemporary histories forges new possibilities for spaces of resistance to racist ideologies that remain long after the divisive history of apartheid.

Theorizing Racial Community in South Africa

What does interracial, what will be one of this study's central terms, *mean*? What does an interracial "community" look like? If we imagine community to be constructed by the proximity of its constituent bodies, is South Africa not already some form of interracial community – even if the purported "Rainbow Nation" is often fraught with violence across racial lines? South Africa's self-conceptualization as the "Rainbow Nation" is one way of thinking through the national community as an idyllic space of racial harmony, but one in which "ongoing tensions and inequalities are painted over by a colourful palette" (Distiller and Steyn 1-2). Indeed, my opening paragraphs' references to Malema and Terre'Blanche identified the ways that such multicultural idealism does not adequately account for the national community.

I do, however, want to situate my discussion of community within South Africa's earlier efforts to cultivate a non-racial national community grounded in what Pumla Gqola calls "rainbowism." Writing in 2004, she traces the emergence and regression of

idealistic references to South Africa as the “Rainbow Nation” in its transition to post-apartheid which, she argues, “worked to silence dissenting voices on the (then) state of race and racism in South Africa, thereby moderating more radical anti-racist critiques of a society in formation” (“Where Have” 6). Indeed, rainbowism ignores the social and economic differences between bodies in South Africa given that “[m]ost of the economic elite is white (which is not the same as saying that most whites are in the economic elite), and most [black] Africans are poor” (Macdonald 4). She calls such labels (as well as the idealism of South Africa’s progressive constitution) “aspirational” descriptors of “how *we should* relate to one another ... what embracing and accepting that we are all entitled to freedom ... really means. So, it does not hold the thoughts, ideologies, values or held morals of the majority of South Africans” (“How the ‘Cult’” 112). That Gqola draws attention to the aspirational logic of rainbowism immediately signals its failure to actualize the idyllic community it had initially envisioned as South Africa emerged from the sociopolitical segregation of apartheid.

I situate my discussion in the historical trajectory of South Africa as it emerges from the euphoria of rainbowism precisely for the reason that I view the emergence from this idealistic multicultural discourse as an important moment at which to acknowledge and, perhaps, take action against the existence and perpetuation of racial tensions. My central argument revolves around the notion that only by resisting the comfortable idealism of multiculturalism can productive interaction between racialized subjects (both black and white)⁶ come about.

⁶ For a discussion of the racialization of white subjects, refer to chapter 2.

Given the failure of rainbowism's political project, my theorization of interracial community is grounded in resistance to rainbowism's comfortable homogenization of populations. If, following Benedict Anderson's theorization of the nation state, we imagine communities joined by their ideological affinity to a particular national identity, from a global perspective we might recognize South Africa as one form of community. And yet this understanding of community effaces those interactions between various South African subjects that are anything but communal, not least because of the national community's segregatory colonial, apartheid and *present* practices. Indeed, Ballard exposes the way that segregatory practices continue as certain South Africans maintain comfort in discrete communities of whiteness which allow black bodies to enter only on their assimilation of white values masked as "'ordinariness' as citizens of a modern, Western, developed world" (55).⁷ If, following Goldberg, we understand race as "not a fixed and static classificatory category" but rather a "discursive object of racialized discourse" (*Racist* 67),⁸ such communities of 'ordinary' whiteness – whether or not they incorporate non-white bodies – do not alter the discourse that racializes other black bodies in the interest of maintaining comfort and homogeneity. These communities enclose bodies within the strictures of acceptable (white) behaviour. When I use the terms 'interraciality' or interracial community they must absolutely be distinguished from what

⁷ Ballard discusses the ways that, in contrast to the formal segregation of apartheid that mandated geographical segregation of black and white bodies, more recent methods of segregation involve assimilationism, where contact between black and white bodies is often predicated upon black bodies' assimilation of whiteness.

⁸ This project, following Goldberg's discussion of race in *Racist Culture*, views racialization as a discursive projection onto certain bodies that reifies the existence of race. He views racialization as intimately tied to cultural production, suggesting that: "literary and cultural production is particularly well-placed to mold, circumscribe, and stamp radicalized identity, since racial significations are deeply implicit in the signs employed and employable" (149).

Goldberg discusses as the homogenizing efforts of ‘multi’-racialism or multiculturalism. I use ‘interracial’ to describe often transient interactions between differently racialized bodies, that subvert the comfort of social homogeneity by allowing for sites of often violent struggle *between* racialized subject-positions to occur. ‘Interraciality’ might be conceived of as similar to Bhabha’s discussion of ‘hybridity,’ which involves different positionalities coming to a place of exchange – but also a place of *struggle*. As such, a state of ‘interraciality’ refutes the idealism of multiculturalism or rainbowism in that it recognizes the historical primacy of “race” as a sociopolitical category and necessitates sites of struggle that remove subjects from the comfortable idealism of multicultural ideology. ‘Interraciality,’ perhaps, also allows for exchange between bodies where multiculturalism might close exchange off.

Given Goldberg’s definition of race that I cited above, “race” as a concept is already one way to think, quite reductively, of community. He suggests that “race” as a discursive construction of racialized discourse, employed to both *racist* and *antiracist* ends that reify the existence of ‘race’ as a category, fictionally draws together various subjects and “furnish[es a] specific identity to otherwise abstract and alienated subjectivities” (*Racist* 4). Similar to Anderson’s conception of the national community and national identity, racial identity unites an amalgam otherwise disparate bodies who might each occupy wholly different geographical and ideological locations. Somehow, however, according to the logic of racialization, “race” insists on communal identification for subjects who might occupy different subject positions.

Others define communities in less reductive terms that need not be based on particular identities or reductive racial categories. For example, Agamben vies for a community bound up with the singularity of bodies but beyond particular identities. He theorizes community as amalgamations of “whatever singularit[ies]” which relate “to a singularity not in its indifference with respect to a common property (to a concept, for example: being red, being French, being Muslim), but only in its being *such as it is*” (*The Coming I*).⁹ Agamben’s conceptualization of community counters the way that racialization might reduce otherwise disparate subjectivities into one (racial) communal identity. He allows for difference, certainly, since the “whatever singularity” is “neither particular nor universal” (III) and is thus irreducible to individualism or a set of common bodies. Similarly, Jean-Luc Nancy resists the reduction of community to particular identifications. “Community,” he suggests, “is what takes place always through others and for others. . . . It is not a communion that fuses the *egos* into an *Ego* or a higher *We*. It is the community of *others*” (15). In the preface to his book he resists the notion of a “common identity” for a community, contending that “thinking of community as essence . . . is in effect the closure of the political. Such thinking constitutes closure because it assigns to a community a *common being*, whereas community is a matter of something quite different, namely, of existence inasmuch as it is *in common*, but without letting itself be absorbed into a common substance” (xxxviii). The historical primacy of racial categories begs the question of whether such a community *not* based on common

⁹ Agamben uses the example of lovers to describe the whatever singularity. In his understanding, lovers love others not for specific and distinguishable qualities (though these qualities may be components of their affection), but for the whole person, which cannot be reduced to a particular identity category.

substance – other than in momentary identifications with ‘others’ – can be realized.

However, both Nancy and Agamben share the notion of community that allows for but is not predicated upon difference, which aligns with the perspective of interracial community I want to elaborate here.

In the following pages I discuss three major conceptions of race and what it means to cultivate an interracial community. I will be drawing on work from three theorists: David Theo Goldberg, Penelope Ingram and Sara Ahmed to make my central argument in this thesis. I choose these three particularly because all three consider gender identity in their analyses – whether centrally in the case of Ahmed and Ingram or as a component of racial identity in Goldberg’s case. Ahmed’s analysis in particular is a derivation of her work on queer identity and how queer politics and race are intimately tied. Moreover, for the purpose of this study, the South African national community also represents a fruitful starting point for thinking through racial and interracial community given the ways the national narrative moved so quickly in the 1990s from a white supremacist regime toward multicultural rainbowism.

Moving Toward States of Interraciality

Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology* lends a useful lens for thinking through issues of community and how “orientation” determines where individuals and groups draw lines of communal allegiance. Thinking through sexual orientation spatially, Ahmed describes orientations in terms of both inhabiting particular spaces (as in occupying a

particular orientation or “home” space) and “finding our way” (as in the case of reorienting ourselves) (9). She writes that

[o]rientations shape not only how we inhabit space, but how we apprehend this world of shared inhabitation, as well as ‘who’ or ‘what’ we direct our energy and attention toward. A queer phenomenology, perhaps, might start by redirecting our attention toward different objects, those that are ‘less proximate’ or even those that deviate or are deviant. (3)

Her text also elaborates on how orientation renders those that we are orientated “toward,” which becomes pivotal to her conceptualization of race.

Indeed, Ahmed distinguishes between being orientated around and toward as different perspectives from which we direct our attention toward others. In Ahmed’s terms, “[w]hat we are orientated toward is determined by our location; it is a question of the phenomenality of space. . . . We are orientated, then, toward objects, and those objects are ‘other’ than us. They are other than us and must be so if they are to be available within our field of vision” (115). But it is this towardness, she argues, that allows the objectification through which forms of racism emerge:

It is the fact that what I am orientated toward is ‘not me’ that allows me to do this or to do that. The otherness of things is what allows me to do things ‘with’ them. What is other than me is also what allows me to extend the reach of my body. Rather than othering being simply a form of negation, it can also be described *as a form of extension*. The body extends its reach by taking in that which is ‘not’ it, where the ‘not’ involves the acquisition of new capacities and directions—becoming, in other words, ‘not’ simply what I am ‘not’ but what I can ‘have’ and ‘do.’ (115)

Whiteness, she suggests, “becomes what is ‘here,’ a line from which the world unfolds, which also makes what is ‘there’ on ‘the other side’” (121). On the converse side, being “orientated around something means to make that thing central, or as being at the centre of one’s being or action” (116). She also draws from Edward Said’s *Orientalism*,

foregrounding the orientating practices inherent to understandings of “Orient” and “Occident,” suggesting that “[b]y being directed toward the Orient [as an object of desire], we are orientated ‘around’ the Occident” (116). I employ this notion of orientation as central to how we might understand community in South Africa. I refer to orientations as at the center of how both the nation itself and citizens of that nation structure discrete communities by being orientated “around” particular allegiances and “toward” those others who are on the outside of that community. In Ahmed’s sense, we might think of a national community as being orientated around particular unifying ideologies of South African national identity. We might also think of discrete communities within that national community whose orientations direct them around a common racial identity – for example, whiteness – that directs them toward racialized others. In this sense, the orientation of the state’s official narrative and those bodies subjected to the state around certain racial categories – especially whiteness – become the markers of exclusion that consolidate discrete racial communities.

David Theo Goldberg’s work, particularly in *The Racial State*, provides a valuable lens for elaborating on the ways that states structure racial communities through the bodies of its constituents. *The Racial State* extends state theory to posit race as a central qualification of citizenship, suggesting:

[t]he modern state, it might be said, finds itself not just on exclusions, those absences that render invisible, but on the internalization of exclusions. Thus inclusions, those privileged by and in the modern state, assume their privileges in virtue of the exclusions the state at once renders possible conceptually and technologically. Exclusions accordingly become internal to the possibility of inclusions, the latter predicated upon the realization of the former. State apparatuses sew the variety of modern social exclusions into the seams of the social fabric, normalizing them

through their naturalization. So social exclusions in terms of race (complexly knotted with class and gender ...) become the mark of social belonging, the measure of standing in the nation-state, the badge of social subjection and citizenship. (9-10)

The above quotation foregrounds the ways that the state creates racial exclusions that organize subjects into communities based on their assumed racial identity. But those excluded are also, like Agamben's state of exception, incorporated into the nation-state in that race determines a social subjects' standing *within* the nation state. If we think through community in ideological terms – as the collective ideological affinity that unites various bodies – and if we imagine the South African state as founding itself on its subjects' internalization of racial exclusion, then a subject of the contemporary national community is forged in part on ideologies of exclusion. We might say that one of the ideological orientations (following Ahmed) shared by South African subjects¹⁰ through which they enter into citizenship is that of racial exclusion and segregation. Indeed, Goldberg posits racial states as “as much a state or condition of being as [they are] a state of governance” (98), foregrounding the ways that racial exclusions manifest themselves within both nation-states and individuals. If we envision the national community in these terms, the lives of its subjects might be anything but communal in that they come into being on ideologies of exclusion, and yet they cohesively form a particular national community; they remain orientated around South Africa as their nation of citizenship. But – to return to citizens' internalization of exclusion – Goldberg's analysis identifies

¹⁰ My assertions here are not to imagine that racially segregatory ideology is a localized phenomenon particular to South Africa. Indeed, Goldberg's text points to the notion that all modern states are in some sense racially conceived. However, South Africa, given its apartheid history and moves toward reconciliation, represents a fruitful model for conceptualizing interracial community.

the ways that individual ideology and state exclusion mutually inform one another. As such, racial segregation occurs on both a state and psychic level.

To resist racial segregation and work toward establishing an interracial community is not necessarily, as popular opinion might suggest, to promote a multicultural or non-racial state as South Africa has attempted to do. Goldberg discusses South Africa's initial move toward "racelessness" with policies of non-racialism, policies he equates with Canadian conceptions of multiculturalism that insist on a racially homogeneous social body. "These various commitments to racelessness ... served ... to renew white social control and to promote white power and privilege in the face of emerging challenges," he argues. "In all these variations, racelessness was at once as much a refusal to address, let alone redress, deeply etched historical inequities and inequalities racially fashioned as it was an expressed embrace of the principle of a race-ignoring fairness and equal opportunity" (213). As such, he suggests, multicultural, non-racial and raceless states fail to address socioeconomic differences between different racial groups and homogenize the population according to a standard of whiteness. The failure of rainbowistic discourse and the resurgence of racial tension in the South African national community I earlier drew attention to signal the extent to which non-racialist policy has failed to address segregation within the national community. In these terms, multiculturalism and non-racialism function as a national façade to create the illusion of racial reconciliation and idyllic community. Speaking specifically of South Africa, Goldberg writes,

[r]acelessness renders the material conditions of historically reified racial, and through them gendered, formations unreachable. Indeed, while

opening up a window of opportunity to a small sector of especially black women at the elite end, it has done nothing to make significantly less privileged black women less vulnerable either to employment or sexual exploitation. Thus unemployment, rape, and the incidence of AIDS among poor black women have risen dramatically in the past decade. (216)

Indeed, his last point draws attention to the gendered nature of racial states in that poor black women occupy the lowest rung of the proverbial national ladder, evidencing the extent to which many men have been the beneficiaries of non-racial politics. Moreover, given the patriarchal history of apartheid, his observation also signals the need to interrogate those masculine identities (ostensibly those structured by men) that produce oppressive social relations which ensure that certain black women are underprivileged.

Given the failure of non-racialism to redress historical racisms, how do we come to a conception of community in which ethical bonds between differently racialized bodies occur? In spite of the sociohistorical as opposed to biologicistic nature of “race” as a category, given its pervasiveness within contemporary culture, I speak of interracial community or states of interraciality as a way to acknowledge racial difference counter to non-racialism’s tendency toward erasure. Indeed, for Goldberg, a “future” state without racism (what he points to as one of the goals of his text) “in the wake of the long and vicious racist histories of the present cannot simply be a raceless state” (248).

Goldberg elaborates on what we might think of as a ‘post’-racial state, which is closer to the conception of interracial community I work toward here. The question of what constitutes such a state, he argues, must be “emphatically distinguished from that of the shape of *raceless* states” (241). He calls for a state that recognizes heterogeneity rather than multicultural homogenization. He suggests that homogeneity is propagated by

comfort as a form of social control. Comfort, he writes, “is most easily reproduced in the setting of those one best knows, kin and extended kin, family and friends, cultural brethren and common citizens” (240). In order to subvert the politics of racialization, he calls for heterogeneity to enter state ideology, not “a state in which black (or white) people necessarily would *not* be recognized as black (or white) ... Rather,” he suggests, “such a state would be one in which people of color in general, like white people generally, would be recognized as fully human” (264).

Ingram’s work in *The Signifying Body* elaborates on the mechanisms by which racial others are dehumanized and, conversely, how we might recognize racial others as fully human. Citing the Heideggerian concept of “being,” she argues that non-whites are denied being by being caught up in the white gaze. Following Fanon’s discussion of race as functioning within a scopic economy, she writes: “The black man is robbed of a Being-for-itself because he is imprisoned by a white gaze that cannot recognize him as an ethical Other, but rather reads him according to a string of empty racial signifiers” (xiii). In Ingram’s terms, this study’s conceptualization of community is tied to recognizing racial others as human without imagining non-racialism as a significant move toward interracial community. Following Goldberg, cultivating interracial community necessarily involves coming to a point where the comfort of whiteness comes under crisis. Part of this process might involve rethinking empty racial signifiers and redirecting the gaze that denies racial others humanity, but I also want to think through community as the proximal organization of bodies. I do this because, from a privileged white positionality (including my own within a Western academic institution), thinking through

ideological racisms does not automatically disrupt the discrete lines of community that segregate differently racialized bodies.

Where Goldberg's discussion of race outlines the discursive elements of racialization, Ingram's work additionally calls for an acknowledgment of bodily signification in conceptions of racial and sexual difference. She calls for thinking "racial difference and matter outside representation" (2). She suggests that "viewing the body beyond representation does not rob the body of meaning. Instead, it recognizes the multiplicity of meanings that the body is capable of effecting prior to the representations it must accord with upon entering the Symbolic" (3).¹¹ Especially since Goldberg points to the various ways that representational language racializes the body, Ingram's work is valuable for conceiving a "signifying material language, rather than a transcendental representative language, that provides an opportunity for ontological becoming in and through an ethical relation with the other" (3). "Whereas many critics focus on Fanon's exploration of the psychic alienation experienced by the person of color," Ingram "use[s] his insights to produce ... an understanding of how such alienation for the racial subject can be disrupted, how a new grammar of the body can subvert the scopic economy of racism and lead to an ethics of recognition" (xxxii). The "scopic economy" of race is intimately connected to Goldberg's theorization of the way that particular racializing discourses of the white gaze work through bodies of colour. Natasha Distiller and Melissa Steyn position race, "like gender ... [as] something we *do*, and those myriad everyday choices that reaffirm raciali[z]ed norms are responsible for reproducing the illusion of

¹¹ Ingram works here with a psychoanalytic definition of the Symbolic derived from Irigaray and Lacan.

racial stability” (4). If we consider the racialized body as the affect of particular racialising discourse – what we might understand as the performativity of race – we might begin to think of how bodies can perform outside the parameters of racializing discourse and redirect the normativity of race.

Ingram works toward an ethics of sexual and racial difference that foregrounds bodily proximity as a necessary component of confronting racial difference and that – I hope – will have implications for the ways that reorganizing communal boundaries might resist racially segregatory narratives in South Africa. Ingram proposes “a[n ethical] language of physical signification,” rejecting the notion that metaphysical and representational language (for instance, discourses of rainbowism that, in the past, have flooded South Africa’s dominant international self-image) can bring about ethics. She suggests that “representational language impedes ethics but signification enacts it. I propose a language that is ethical, not one *about* ethics but one *of* ethics, or more precisely a language that *is* ethics. This language is gestural, corporeal, proximate. It is performative, not constative” (xi). Ingram’s notion of proximity foregrounds the ways in which bodies might enact interracial community, and her notion of performative ethics might be a site of resistance to racial segregation. In the wake of the history of the apartheid state, which physically separated communities based on race and which extends to the contemporary material realities of many populations in South Africa, I am interested in cultural texts that reposition racialized bodies and communities.

Ahmed also accounts for the body in her conceptualization of racial difference. She examines the genealogy of racial markers, “thinking about whiteness as a form of

bodily inheritance” along heterosexual genealogical lines (121). As a result of race being understood as having a “shared ancestry,” race, she suggests “‘extends’ the family form; other members of the race are ‘like a family,’ just as the family is defined in racial terms. The analogy works powerfully to produce a particular version of race *and* a particular version of family predicated on ‘likeness,’ where likeness becomes a matter of ‘shared attributes’” (122). In this mode of thought, the constructed “family” of racial community becomes a way to naturalize race by analogously drawing connections between racial orientations and biological family lines. She also compares “the reproduction of heterosexuality (the requirement that we bring home the ‘other sex’),” to “the reproduction of culture as a ‘shared attribute’ through the very demand that heterosexual love returns to the family in the sense of reflecting back its image (the requirement that we bring home the ‘same race’).” She goes on to suggest that “compulsory heterosexuality is the ground for the reproduction of ... normative whiteness” and that “[t]he prohibition of miscegenation and homosexuality belong, as it were, in the same register ... This register takes the form of family love, expressed as the demand to return to such love though how one loves: in other words, the love that you receive, narrated as the gift of life, converts quickly into a pressure to continue the ‘good lines’ of the family” (127-128). Resistance to such familial ideologies, then, might take the form of resistance to genealogical lines that produce racisms. Furthermore, one of the central questions this thesis will interrogate involves the ways that race and heterosexual notions of the family are connected. In light of Ahmed’s assertions, I question the extent to which

deconstructing the masculinity from which patriarchal and racial social structures derive might rework communal ties.

In ideological terms, what are we oriented around when a body becomes a racial other? Drawing from Goldberg, we might take the orientation ‘around’ the ‘home’ space as an orientation predicated on maintaining comfort within our discrete communities. By extension, this orientation – ostensibly around whiteness – maintains the homogeneity of white culture. Also, how do we disrupt the trajectory of these orientations? Ahmed calls for a queer phenomenology as a means to reorient ourselves from normative positions. If, as Ingram suggests, we need a language of bodily signification and proximity between different “races,” a productive site of disorientation might derive from the reorganization of bodies. Indeed, Ahmed’s spaciality of orientation posits that “[d]isorientation involves failed orientations: bodies inhabit spaces that do not extend their shape, or use objects that do not extend their reach.” Part of that disorientation occurs, for example, when “[b]odies that do not follow the line of whiteness ... might be ‘stopped’ in their tracks, which ... changes one’s relation to what is ‘here’” (160). Ahmed refers to the possibility of disorientation (stopping on one’s tracks) being accidental.¹² If we think of disorientation as a plausible resistance to racial segregation (not necessarily conscious resistance forged through political [op]positionalities), resistance might take the form of those experiences that jar us out of comfort zones and into a site or ideology that forces us to confront a racial other as human. If we think through the spatiality of disorientation

¹² My understanding of resistance is also informed by James C. Scott’s definition of everyday forms of resistance that do not necessarily evoke widespread political opposition, but small-scale individual resistance that collectively undermines certain mechanisms of social control.

literally, in terms of the organization of bodies into communities, disorientation might occur when subjects forge communal bonds with racial others that disrupt the very foundations of what they are orientated around. Following Goldberg, this disorientation must necessarily disrupt the homogeneity of particularly whiteness and make room for racial difference.

Also, if we take orientations around whiteness as the source of particular racisms – as Ahmed signals above – can revisionary masculinities be a site of resistance to racial segregation? Part of this project involves examining the ways that men construct national community. Given Goldberg’s assertion that state politics are largely made in the interests of men and at the expense of women,¹³ I examine masculinity as intimately bound up with race in the chapters to come. Indeed, Ahmed points to the heterosexual family as a crucial structure for continuing racial lines and, given the patriarchal organization of family as an institution, masculinities represent a necessary site of deconstruction to undermine oppressive logics of race and racial (as opposed to *interracial*) community.

The following chapters of this thesis attempt to elaborate on the ties between masculinity and racialization in contemporary South African cultural texts using the above formulation of interracial community. My earlier work examined apartheid military masculinities and stressed the importance of rigid gender strictures to apartheid

¹³ Morrell (“Men, Movements”) foregrounds that South Africa’s progressive constitution has “not overthrown patriarchy or removed men from their domination of public life, politics, and earnings” (310).

ideology.¹⁴ If we understand the apartheid state as a production of and for primarily white men, we must be cognizant of the ways that rigid gender strictures (often rooted in whiteness) are a product of racialized discourse. Indeed, Jackson asserts that “[h]egemonic masculinities in South Africa have both formed and been formed by the politics of racialization” (162), and we must acknowledge the ways that masculinity and race have co-constructed each other in the trajectory of South African history. Goldberg suggests that “the racial state trades on gendered determinations, reproducing its racial configurations in gendered terms and its gendered forms racially” (*The Racial* 99). If we accept Jackson and Goldberg’s assertions about the co-construction of gender and race in light of the patriarchal history of apartheid, masculinity provides a fruitful venue for the deconstruction of racist apartheid ideologies. As the coming chapters of this thesis contend, men have been wielded as pivotal figures in the construction of national community (and to some extent have excluded women and feminist struggles). I question how, by disrupting hegemonic masculinities, we might also subvert oppressive logics of racialization.

Outline

My thesis is laid out in three chapters that deal chronologically with narratives of South African national community. Moving from colonial conceptions of masculinity, to the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa and, finally, to contemporary

¹⁴ Pumla Gqola’s “How the ‘cult of femininity’ and violent masculinities support endemic gender based violence in contemporary South Africa” examines the pervasive effect of military ideology in producing rigid gender strictures in South African society.

youth culture in Cape Town, I examine how narratives of national community have changed to accommodate different conceptions of masculinity and race over time.

My first chapter examines particularly queer masculinity in John Greyson and Jack Lewis's film *Proteus*. I examine conventional forms of heroic masculinity associated with anti-apartheid activism and their implications for narratives of the national community. In this chapter I suggest that, by presenting a queer interracial romance, the film carves out a space for queer identity in the national narrative where it had previously been denied. Greyson and Lewis's film is also pivotal to understanding queerness in South African history, since it covers an eighteenth century sodomy trial that writes queer identity into the nation's historical narrative. I also examine how the film disrupts contemporary gay communities' orientations around whiteness as the two men in the film struggle through a relationship in the landscape of South Africa's racist and heteronormative colonial history.

My second chapter turns to the post-apartheid period for an examination of whiteness, in particular focusing on the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa. I look at two novels by Damon Galgut, *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* and *The Imposter*, for the way that they problematize contemporary South African discourses of rainbowistic community. I suggest that his novels expose the ways that such discourses remain orientated around whiteness, motivated by the capital and social interests of white men. I also position white men's efforts toward establishing a multicultural community within genealogies of racist whiteness. Furthermore, I examine the ways that Galgut's

work figures the moment of struggle in South Africa's transition from apartheid to post-apartheid as a significant moment for forging interracial community.

My final chapter takes a more prominently feminist focus on interracial communities of men and examines contemporary city culture in K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*. Duiker's text gives a particular representation of an interracial community of men that offers an alternative to the rainbowistic discourse of the post-apartheid period as its protagonist, Tshepo, a 23 year-old Xhosa man, forges an interracial community when he begins a job as a male sex worker in Cape Town. His novel emphasizes the ongoing struggles of interracial communities given the historical primacy of racial categories. However, I suggest that the community of Duiker's novel leaves women and non-normative masculinities out of the work of post-apartheid nation building. His novels, I suggest, especially individualize and exclude women's suffering from the narrative and thus preclude them from participating in meaningful interracial community.

Conclusion

Through the course of this project I will be mapping how men construct community. While this study's goal is to imagine ways that lives and bodies in South Africa might reorient themselves in ways that allow for racial *difference* to occur, to understand a site of racial difference as community is not necessarily to imagine an idyllic landscape of racial harmony as the discourse of rainbowism has done. I view community as often fraught with struggle, often predicated on violent differences or

exclusions. Indeed, community ideology always risks turning “the opposition, or at least disparity, between various cultural mindsets, traditions or peoples into an instrument for idealizing, if not reifying, one of them at the expense of deprecating the other, of differentiating the individual or collective self from those defined as ‘others’” (Gunn 278). Given Gunn’s assertion, I also want to draw attention to the lines along which exclusions exist, and think through the ways that conceptions of community might acknowledge as human those excluded.

CHAPTER 1

QUEER DESIRE AND MEN OF THE NATION:

DISRUPTIONS OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY IN JOHN GREYSON'S *PROTEUS***Introduction**

This chapter elaborates on many of the questions I raised about community in my introductory chapter as they pertain to queer communities in post-apartheid South Africa. I examine John Greyson and Jack Lewis's film *Proteus*, a 2003 filmic rendering of an 18th century interracial sodomy trial of a Dutch sailor (Rijkhaart Jacobsz) and a Khoi man (Claas Blank) imprisoned on Robben Island. I suggest that the film disorients assumptions about normative masculinity in the official narrative of South African national community. As part of my introductory chapter I set out to think through disorientation in Ahmed's terms as a type of resistance, since disorientation can be a profoundly disruptive experience, but one with the potential to reorient subjectivities and carve out new trajectories of racial and sexual orientation which undermine largely heterosexist assumptions about masculinity. I trace how the film disrupts South Africa's official national historical narrative in ways that reconstruct who is acknowledged as a subject of South African national community. In particular, I look at the legal politics of queer intimacy in contemporary and – to some extent – historical South African contexts and their potential toward homonormalization¹⁵ as the legalization of gay marriage risks

¹⁵ In *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy*, Lisa Duggan conceptualizes homonormativity as the assimilation of heteronormativity within queer culture as

effacing sexualities that fall outside of legally acknowledged forms of intimacy.¹⁶ This chapter questions how the nation's law has constructed queerness, and how the film accounts for and expands conceptions of "gay community"¹⁷ in non-homonormalizing terms and in ways that account for racial difference.

Given the relatively recent legalization and legal acknowledgment of same-sex sexualities in South Africa, the film – released in 2003, prior to same-sex marriage's legalization in 2006 – aesthetically renders a criminal sodomy trial and uncovers an instance of homosexual sex in the narrative of South Africa's national history. In so doing, the film expands the definition of citizenship in the national narrative. "Arguably," Deborah Posel writes, "post-apartheid South Africa is in the throes of ... an historical moment, in which the politicization of sexuality is perhaps the most revealing marker of the complexities and vulnerabilities of the drive to produce a newly democratic, unified nation" ("Sex" 127). Posel's commentary reveals the extent to which sexuality occupies a central but precarious focus within constructions of the national community. Drawing from claims I made in my introduction about community, I want to examine orientations in terms of the narrative of South African history and ask: Since the very premise of the film deals with South Africa's historical suppression of queer sexuality, how does

queer communities privilege reproduction, monogamy, and other heterosexist values. Homonormativity, she suggests, creates degrees of worthiness among LGBTQ individuals.

¹⁶Judith Butler's "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual," for example, critiques gay marriage for legislating kinship exclusively along bloodlines or marriage and failing to consider intimacies outside these heteronormative definitions of kin.

¹⁷"Gay" and "queer" in this study are not to be conflated. In Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*, the term "queer" functions both as an indicator of non-normative sexuality and as a descriptor of practices that alter the direction of our normative orientations (161). For example, she suggests that bodies of colour disorient the normative orientations of whiteness. "Gay," in this context refers to a particular sexual orientation, popularly denoting men who have sex with men, but a "queer" orientation carries the potential disrupt homonormativity within gay communities.

Greyson and Lewis's film disorient South African communities of men and their construction in largely heteronormative and hypermasculine terms? To what extent does this film bear implications for the way that community and masculine interrelationality (queer or otherwise) are imagined and – following Ingram's claims regarding an ethics of signification – *enacted* in South Africa today?

Sexuality and Community in South Africa's Historical Narrative

The film's unearthing of an actual historical trial is significant in that *Proteus* disrupts official narratives of South African history and redraws the lines of community that have privileged particular gendered (masculine) modes of nationalism, even in anti-apartheid activism. The film both places queerness within South Africa's historical narrative where it had been effaced, *and* queers South Africa's history by putting a same-sex interracial romance on a geography crucial to South Africa's post-apartheid national identity (and, I add here, a particularly masculine identity bound up with anti-apartheid heroism): Robben Island. Indeed, that Nelson Mandela spent much of his 27 years in prison there marks the space as an iconographic site associated with the masculinity exuded by heroic figures like him. The film's setting at this crucial location for the narrativization of South African heroism carries the potential to redefine the history of that particular terrain in new and perhaps unexpected ways outside the particular masculinities that have been associated with it.

The film's queering of South African history also responds to the nation's – and the continent's – conservative backlash against progressive constitutional protections for

sexual minorities in 1996 and the legalization of gay marriage in 2006. Indeed, the notion that homosexuality is “unAfrican” or a Western import is a mantra that pervades African leaders’ derision of queer sexuality.¹⁸ Even Jacob Zuma, South Africa’s current president, when asked about same-sex marriage in 2006 called it “a disgrace to the nation and to God” and said that when he was growing up, if he encountered a homosexual man, that man “would not have stood in front of me. I would knock him out” (qtd. in Rossouw). Zuma’s comment, drawing on a construction of Zulu hypermasculinity against which he posits gay men as inherently inferior, overtly normalizes violence against gay men. Furthermore, Zuma’s later rise to the presidency and association with nationalism colour his comments in a way that posits gay men in opposition to the nation rather than protected members of its community. Also, queer rights even post-2006 have come under attack as the National Interfaith Leadership Council in South Africa, led by Rhema church leader Ray McCauley, who has been associated with Zuma, called for a revisitation of abortion and same-sex marriage laws in South Africa in late 2009.¹⁹ So this discussion of queer marriage in South Africa is particularly pertinent to the current social climate in the nation as many leaders’ comments construct national communal identities that decidedly excise queer masculinities from their conception of nationhood.

¹⁸ Cheryl Stobie’s *Somewhere in the Double Rainbow: Representations of Bisexuality in Post-apartheid Novels* refers to a number of African leaders who have decried homosexuality as un-African (including Namibia’s Jerry Ekandjo, and Kenya’s Daniel arap Moi) or as a morally reprehensible lifestyle in violent commentary directed against LGBTQ populations (including Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe, Namibia’s Sam Nujoma and Zambia’s Frederick Chiluba) [include the page numbers in your reference].

¹⁹ Rossouw, Mandy. “Zuma’s New God Squad Wants Liberal Laws to Go.” *Mail and Guardian Online*. Mail and Guardian, 11 Sept. 2009. Web. 24 Sept. 2009.

The statement that queerness is “un-African” is not only false²⁰ in that it dismisses queer sexuality from an African community, it also fosters a particular construction of black ‘culture’ that posits homosexual sex as an exclusively white phenomenon. If we understand the term “un-African” as attributing homosexual practices to Western ideologies, imported into Africa, it then follows that homosexuality is one of those undesired specters of colonial or western capitalist domination over Africa. But it also marginalizes and disregards those black bodies who are queer and actively constructs LGBTQ communities as Western or as “white.”²¹ These leaders’ assertions remove even African queer bodies from “African” community. Contemporary research also frames gay communities as white phenomena. Graziano points out that “available research on gay men and lesbians in South Africa often reflects the experiences of White middle-class, urban men, and sometimes, White women” (303), emphasizing the extent to which common assumptions by researchers about gay communities structure them as white and “un-African” in ways that disregard social inequalities of race, class and gender.

Discussing the state of gender in post-apartheid South Africa, Deevia Bhana, Robert Morrell, Jeff Hearn, and Relebohile Moletsane suggest that “[essentialist] constructions of identity, in particular sexual identity, are by now self-evident, [and] in contemporary South Africa, notions of culture and what is culturally acceptable or

²⁰ Mathilda Piehl’s *The Kuchus of Uganda*, Nkunzi Zandile Nkabinde’s *Black Bull, Ancestors and Me: My Life as a Lesbian Sangoma* and Murray and Roscoe’s *Boy-wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities* are three examples of texts that both discuss and refute claims to homosexuality being “un-African.”

²¹ I use the term white – carrying from Goldgerg’s assertions I discussed in my introduction – to designate a particular social, ideological, historical, and economic position, unlike the way the term is popularly wielded as a biologicistic and immutable category pertaining *only* to skin colour. See the following chapter for a detailed analysis of South African whiteness.

‘normal’ continue to occupy centre stage in national debates around issues of identity [and] gender equality.” They also suggests that “in contrast to the very progressive nature of the country’s constitution, in practice, patriarchal and heteronormative discourses and practices ... continue to circulate” (135). That notions of culture and, indeed, the “emotive power of ‘culture’ [tend] to act as a barrier in the fight against patriarchal and heteronormative notions of sexuality” (Bhana et al. 135) reveals how community identity revolves around the preclusion of homosexual sex from communal ideals. If, as in the context of Bhana et al.’s article, we understand “culture” in the above usage as referring to racial lines of allegiance, then such heteronormative constructions of culture contain a racial dimension that falsely heteronormalizes blackness.²² Bhana et al. call for resistance to these conceptions of culture, suggesting that such “oppressive and limiting notions of culture as static and untouchable” must be “successfully challenged and disrupted ... [if] we can hope to free individuals and groups to construct, configure and perform their sexualities and to make choices that are not policed through these lenses” (135). But how do we disrupt the community lines drawn by such limiting and racialized concepts of culture? And, more importantly, how do we reinvent such notions of culture?

With the above ideas of racialized heteronormativity in African “culture” and community in mind, I argue that John Greyson and Jack Lewis’s film carves out a space for queer communities within (historical and contemporary) conceptions of the national community where it had previously been denied. I especially discuss this in terms of the

²² For example, Donald Donham’s study of sexuality in Soweto reveals more complex and inclusive understandings of non-normative gender and sexuality than South Africa’s national narrative allows. Bhana et al. also refer to Jacob Zuma’s rape trial in which the complainant was “accused of betraying her culture because she had undermined the dignity of an important black man” (135), so culture here is in many ways tied to conceptions of race.

way that gendered discourses, even in anti-apartheid struggles, have constructed a particularly masculine national narrative that excludes queer sexuality from the community effort of post-apartheid nation building. The film, I suggest, attempts to reconfigure with queer masculinity as a vehicle those discourses of masculinity that leave same-sex sexuality out of the national narrative. It disorients the trajectory of South African history and its narrative of white heterosexuality, circulating a recorded instance of queer sexuality in the historical narrative.

Queer Time and South African Masculinities

I situate this chapter within a framework of queer time in order to account for the claims I cited above that speak for the heteronormalization of South African national and African continental community. I also do so to foreground the ways that the film queers historical narratives through which masculine identities are purchased. Judith Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* discusses queer time as "a term for those specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance" (6). Queer, she suggests, refers to "nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time" (6). She posits queer time in contrast with the "time of inheritance," which involves "time within which values, wealth, goods, and morals are passed through family ties from one generation to the next. It also connects the family to

the historical past of the nation, and glances ahead to connect the family to the future of both familial and national stability” (5). If we think through “normal” sexualities as bound up with notions of preserving a heterosexual family structure that ensures national and reproductive futurity, queer sexualities that decenter the importance of reproduction represent a site of potential resistance to the normative (hetero)sexuality of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed, if historical narratives of the South African past, bound up with the time of inheritance, connect contemporary communities to national stability and futurity, I suggest that this film disorients – to borrow Ahmed’s terminology – that community identity by queering the national narrative. Interrogating the film through a framework of queer time also complements Ahmed’s concept of disorientation and allows for a reading that might disrupt the narrative of South African heterosexual masculinity orientated around racial segregation.

The film’s rendering of queer identity also resists heteronormative temporalities of love and intimacy. The two prisoners, Claas and Rijkhaart, opt for execution at the possibility of being separated from each other at the film’s end. Their choice for death instead of preserving a socially and legally acceptable lifestyle bears the marks of Lee Edelman’s conception of queerness in that it lies outside the “politics that confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism” (3). Edelman suggests,

In a political field whose limit and horizon is reproductive futurism, queerness embodies [the] death drive, this intransigent jouissance, by figuring sexuality’s implication in the senseless pulsions of that drive. De-idealizing the metaphors of meaning on which heteroreproduction takes its stand, queerness exposes sexuality’s inevitable coloration by the drive: ... above all, [in] its rejection of spiritualization through marriage to reproductive futurism. (27)

In South Africa, notions of even anti-apartheid masculinity derive largely from heteroreproduction in that they have been tied to the time of inheritance, nation-building and the future of a national community. Robben Island itself, on which *Proteus* is set, is a site of significance to Nelson Mandela's heroic anti-apartheid construction of masculinity. While this masculinity is liberatory in some senses, wielded as an emblem of rainbowistic post-apartheid discourse, the nation still effaces queer sexuality in its very apotheosizing of a heterosexual figure.

Indeed, tracing discourses of masculinity in anti-apartheid autobiography, Elaine Unterhalter suggests that within such narratives masculinity is significantly aligned with a heteromasculine type of nation-building. In these narratives,

Across the divisions of race, class and generation masculinity appears linked to two key notions – autonomy and comradeship. For men imprisonment is on the one hand the negation of this independence, but on the other hand the setting in which friendship is forged in adversity. In the prison autobiographies men often write about asserting identity, a sense of self. Despite the degradation of imprisonment, literally or figuratively in an oppressive society, what they seek to narrate is the spirit of male autonomy and heroism. (163)

So, according to Unterhalter's understanding of prison and anti-apartheid masculine narratives, rather than subverting the patriarchal trajectory of apartheid, they reinforce many hypermasculine values and homosocial desires in exclusively heterosexual terms. In these prison narratives that glorify heroism, masculinity is "not linked to material survival, but to political, cultural and social survival" (165), which connect it to notions of heteroreproductive time by assuring the future of the post-apartheid nation state. While such futurity is ostensibly important and necessary to work through the social inequalities that exist in South Africa, what does this masculinity leave out? Unterhalter points out

that, though men's homosocial desire pervades the language of antiapartheid masculinity as they structure bonds through their mutual struggle and shared political oppression, that desire is still decidedly heterosexual. *Proteus* is significant in that it is more of a romance than a film about political struggle, even while it takes place at an iconic space of political struggle and is in many ways a prison narrative about forging friendship in adversity. But rather than propagating a specific type of narrative tied to national and heteroreproductive futurity, the film instead problematizes the cultural narratives along which such national communities cultivate themselves.

The Sexual and Racial Lines of Community in *Proteus*

In my introduction, I addressed the problems with overdetermining the role of apartheid in the contemporary trajectory of South African history; while apartheid is of prime importance to *Proteus*, its history does not overshadow other facets of the nation's past and present. According to the filmmakers, in what largely began as financial limitations, the film could not get rid of the contemporary Cape Town cityscape, nor do away with modern architecture and scenery on its filming location of Robben Island. So all over the film, artifacts of apartheid and contemporary history pervade the 18th century landscape: a Land Rover drives over the horizon in the opening scene and colonial era soldiers emerge from it, Cape Town's contemporary cityscape fills the background of scenes set on Robben Island, apartheid-era prisons mark the island's terrain, prison guards have radios in their homes, and a policeman in apartheid-era uniform tortures Rijkhaart with a wet bag to produce his confession. This last item is particularly

important as it metaphorically and hyperbolistically foregrounds the influence of apartheid on contemporary queer sexuality and identity. As the apartheid era law enforcer subjects the body of Rijkhaart to punishment, we are reminded of the legal “stifling” of nonnormative sexuality under apartheid (sodomy was a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison).²³ More than that, the placement of contemporary artifacts within an historical horizon sets up a queer temporality and resists futurity as it confounds any linear narrative of historical progress. In *Proteus*’s take on history, colonialism and apartheid mutually shape the queer identity embodied by Claas and Rijkhaart, and the film extends their struggle to contemporary conceptions of queerness by contemporizing the film’s horizons.

The film begins by foregrounding how colonial and apartheid history mediate narratives of identity and community. It opens with a focus on the three court transcribers, all sitting at typewriters, dressed in 1960s garb with beehive hairstyles, arguing over whether to translate the word “fuck” into the written court record from Rijkhaart’s testimony. After one transcriber, Betsy, says, “In Dutch it can only mean fuck. ... ‘I fucked him up the ass’” another suggests, “That makes it sound so modern, Betsy.” Eventually, the three decide to translate Rijkhaart’s confession into, “I performed an offence against God and man.” Off screen, the prosecutors shout “Quiet!”, and the three redirect their attention to the courtroom. Not only does this scene draw attention to the ways that queer identity has been suppressed in South African history as the

²³ Gerald Kraak’s *Property of the State: Gay Men in the Apartheid Military* is one film that examines treatment of gay men under apartheid.

transcribers impose moralistic diction on Rijkhaart's testimony, it also uncovers the process of modernization taking place as the audience watches the film. The three women, clothed in fashion reminiscent of the early apartheid era, quibbling over what should be included and excluded from record (the language that lies outside heteronormative conceptions of sex is excluded) signals that the story being given in the film is one mediated by the language of historical record and temporal distance. Indeed, the prosecutors are out of focus and out of reach from the audience in this scene.

As the film draws attention to the interpretive process, it also questions the way that identities and communities within the nation are shaped by that interpretation. Maingard views South Africa as "a laboratory for the study of identity, fraught as it has been (and is) by constructions of identities wrought in its colonial and apartheid histories." She comments on the nation's cinema as "a fertile space for investigations of representations of identity, for exploring how these might be bound to the histories of the country's development" (84). The interpretive process of the opening scene reveals the extent to which our understanding of historical sexuality – and recognition of queer identity within the national narrative – has been mediated by legal discourse. Furthermore, the voice of the prosecutors offscreen emphasizes that our only access to this story is through interpretation; the historical voice of the prosecutor remains offscreen, out of our reach.

An early subtext of the film involves Claas working for Virgil Niven – a botanist employed by Carl Linnaeus – in ways that subvert racialization and racial exclusion within South Africa's national narrative. Through the course of the film, Virgil arranges a

monograph documenting species of the South African sugar bush. Claas then helps him name the various species of the plant. Early in his employment, Claas comes across a text outlining Linnaeus's classification of the "species of man" (an early version of his 1735 text, *Systema Naturae*). In it, Virgil reads him the description of Europeans as "Sanguin, brawny, gentle and pensive," followed by a description of the "Hottentot," as one of the "three subspecies of man, the bridge between human and simian." Making reference to Carl Linnaeus's work, the film engages with a historical document that biologically inscribes hierarchical differences between European and other races.

But Claas confounds this system of categorization. An early scene in the film shows Virgil asking Claas to give him the traditional names for two plants and Claas gives him names which the film's subtitles translate as "cunt" and "fart." After their exchange the camera follows Claas away from Virgil's group as Claas kneels with another prisoner, Nanseb, to begin work on planting Virgil's bushes. Alongside the dramatic irony in the audience's knowledge that Claas has given Virgil misnomers for his plants, audience members are also physically drawn into the exchange between Claas and Nanseb. The film thus directs the audience's focus away from the Linnean nomenclature from which racist, biologicistic classifications of humans derive. Moreover, *Proteus* draws the audience into a system of knowledge that disrupts the unilateral power of that classification by perverting its nomenclature. When Nanseb asks Claas, "You know the plant names?" he knowingly responds, "Maybe," indicating his disregard for the nomenclature Virgil so rigorously dedicates himself to in the film.

This scene resists the process through which official histories racialize and exclude identities from the national narrative. Claas's disregard for the colonial system of nomenclature – and the audience's invitation into Claas's "inner circle" – also moves them away from the official narrative of racialization in South African history. Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* examines Carl Linnaeus's nomenclature in detail for the way that its classifications associate the colonized with a primitivistic state of nature opposed to the elite modernism of Europe. Indeed, these classifications biologically separate European, "white," communities from nonwhite Africans. Claas's disregard for this nomenclature as he turns it into a dirty joke, comically undermines this language.

More than that, while Linnaean classification designates Claas's racial identity as subhuman, Claas's participation in the act of naming renders him an active figure in building South Africa's historical national identity. Instead of a primitivized "Hottentot," Claas is an authority who both gives alternative names for the King Sugar Bush and perverts official classifications by European colonizers. Moreover, as Claas moves away from Virgil, the camera positions the audience on level with Claas, kneeling, planting the sugar bush, and places Virgil (the colonizer) in the background. Claas's planting of what would later become South Africa's national flower, concomitant with his act of naming, posits him as an active figure in sowing the beginnings of nationhood where non-white subjects had been excluded by colonialism. Since Maingard suggests that South African film during apartheid "construct[ed] black people as either barbarous or servile" (83), this scene especially undermines logics of racialization that impede black subjects'

participation in discourses of nation-building and the national community. The audience's removal from the white colonialist and placement across from Claas and Nanseb orientates them around marginalized narratives actively constructing new conceptions of nationhood. The film's representation of Claas as a queer figure also leaves room for him to actively construct queer narratives within the national community.

The trial scene of the film is of crucial significance to redefining the lines that demarcate contemporary South African queer communities. Drawing the transcript of the trial from historical record, the filmmakers end the film with a scene that shows the two men chained together before their prosecutors. At this point in *Proteus*, Rijkhart has confessed under torture to sodomy and is sentenced to death. Claas has not confessed and, in the absence of his admitting to their relationship, faces only an extended prison sentence. But under the threat of losing Rijkhart, Claas utters three words, "*di ta go*," which the court transcribers translate as "we did it." After his confession, the court orders that Claas and Rijkhart "be bound together with chains and executed by drowning in Table Bay." Given Ingram's discussion – raised in my introductory chapter – of the importance of bodily proximity to ethics of racial difference, what does it mean that the film focuses on this moment in which Claas and Rijkhart's bodies are literally joined together under the sovereignty of the law? How does this scene affect or produce affects in the dominant national narrative of heroic masculinity, being as it is on Robben Island and a product of South African legal history?

I read this final scene as a sort of marriage that resists legal understandings of queer sexuality (often reduced to gay or same-sex marriage) and racial segregation.

Indeed, similar to marriage vows, the binding together of Rijkhaart and Claas's bodies metonymically joins the two together until death. This joining is paradoxical on the part of the law. Reminiscent of Giorgio Agamben's State of Exception in that the two are incorporated into the law by their very exclusion,²⁴ their sentence at once prohibits same-sex interracial intimacy and yet joins the two men together under the law as it transcribes their union into historical and legal record. The two men are curiously placed outside the law as criminal at the same time that voices of the prosecution interpellatively acknowledge their union. If we understand marriage, in Louis Althusser's terms, as an interpellative act, in which the marriage vows usher a relationship into legally acceptable forms of intimacy and acknowledge two people as a unified subject under the law, the death sentence in this scene serves a similar function.

Claas's confession also exceeds legal language of the period that would categorically relegate the two prisoners into lexicons of sodomy or criminality. His utterance ("we did it") is in many ways similar to the interpellative "I do" of marriage, but it also differs. Claas's decision to use the vague pronoun "it" in "we did *it*" enables him to resist categorizing their relationship into lexicons of sodomy or deviant interracial sexuality employed by the prosecutors, and of potentially homonormalizing contemporary language of popular gay culture. The "it" admits to a criminal act, certainly, but Claas does not proclaim his criminality before the court. The term 'it' leaves the act open to possibility by being vague. It brings about legal recognition of

²⁴Agamben's *Homo Sacer* describes sovereign power's approach to the state of exception. Sovereign power excludes "bare life" – in this context, Claas and Rijkhaart – from legal protection, but bare life is also constitutive of the sovereign's power. As such, those excluded from legal protection become the defining limit of the sovereign's power.

sexuality between the two but, as R. Bruce Brasell's comments on Claas's confession point out, "rather than some Foucauldian confession or the force of the law compelling him to speak the truth of sex," his utterance is instead "a result of the force of love" (454). So even in the act of confessing his actions, Claas deliberately evades categorizing the act of sex within the legal language available to him from the courts. His motivations are not merely an interpellative response to the criminalizing call of the law. Instead, paradoxically, he brings about recognition for his relationship under the law as sodomy, but resists legal and criminal categorization by employing a vague pronoun that – in its very vagueness – refuses to admit to criminality.

The film also carves out new possibilities for queerness that exceed legal categorizations of same-sex sexualities and masculinity. Already, since the two opt for death together instead of life under the law, they resist conventions associated with Robben Island prison narratives. By opting for death, Claas and Rijkhaart undermine the futurity of these narratives' conceptions of masculinity and national community building. To avoid romanticizing the fact that the two opt for death, I still question to what extent their acceptance of death allows for queer identity to enter the future of the national narrative *within* legal protection. However, unlike conventional narratives of masculinity, the film does not focus on potentially limiting masculinities predicated on survival, autonomy and the futurity of the nation state.

More than that, this allegorical "marriage" bears implications for expanding gay communities beyond westernized paradigms which have been criticized for being overly white-centered in their politics. A roundtable interview with the creators of *Proteus*

speaks to the film's potential to redirect racially segregatory ideology. Brassel comments on trends in Western television (citing *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* as an example) which "position gay men as ... facilitators for the reconciliation and formation of the heterosexual couple" (qtd. in Ben-Asher et al. 454). He reads the film's ending as an "allegory for the joining of the races in a South African context," suggesting that:

Proteus appears to place gay men in a similar position, but instead of contributing to a reconciliation of the sexes, it seeks to reconcile the races in a particular national context. ... These men are able to transcend their racial and cultural differences and form a relationship of mutual trust and love, an analogy for what the relationship between the races in South Africa can become or is becoming. (454)

However, what is significant about this allegory is that, like Homi K. Bhabha's conception of hybridity, the place at which the two men come together is fraught with struggle. Their joining does not idyllically fit into the rainbowistic discourse of the immediately post-apartheid period. Indeed, Brassel continues, "This particular textual reading of the film, if logically extended, acknowledges the sacrifice that black South Africans [because of Claas's choice for death] are called on to exact for the two races to be 'bound together' into one nation" (454). Significantly, Brassel foregrounds sacrifice as a component of the national community. That being *bound* together is a component of this coexistence also figures conceptions of interracial community that allow for struggle, unlike rainbowistic multiculturalism. This allegory for the nation does not necessarily account for women and other South African racial identities, but it reconfigures the normative heroic hypermasculinity other men have built the nation under. As I have already discussed, the two men opt for death, undermining claims to heteroreproductive and national futurity, which, at the very least, redirects normative masculinity and,

according to Brassel, reorients its audience toward acknowledging racial difference within national and queer communities.

The trial scene cuts to a shot of the two prisoners chained together with bags over their heads on a sailboat in Table Bay. Virgil Niven, sometime advocate of Claas escaping his own Sodomy scandal in Europe, watches through a telescope from the mainland with the modern Cape Town cityscape at his side. Closing with the two looking toward each other, resigned to being drowned in Table Bay, the film ends with a focus on intimacy rather than overt political action and, perhaps, draws attention to ways of being outside heroic, hypermasculine nationalism. The film reconfigures the narratives of masculinity that work to preserve patriarchal future-oriented nationalism, opting for identities outside the legal bounds of the nation state's official narrative of progress and futurity. Like queer time, *Proteus* disrupts the trajectory of visions of history determined by heteronormative, white values. Significantly, however, the audience does not see Claas and Rijkaart's execution. The camera cuts to a shot of the sailboat obscured through Virgil's unfocused telescope. We remain aligned with the contemporary mainland, and Claas and Rijkaart out of our line of sight, obscured by historical record. The film closes by drawing attention again to the notion that this historical moment is out of our reach. We only hear the splash of their bodies in the water accompanied by mournful music, foregrounding the absence of focus on (historical) narratives of queer intimacy in our contemporary moment. Furthermore, the film ends with a panoramic shot of Cape Town's contemporary cityscape – a popular site of South African gay

culture. This shot reminds the audience of the nation's present moment and, perhaps, the state of queerness in South Africa at the time of the film's release.

My analysis speaks particularly to identity categories that construct community within South Africa today, and *Proteus* bears implications for the way that LGBTQ communities are mobilized (sometimes inaccurately) around particular definitions of “gay” identity. Toward the end of the film, Claas and Rijkhaart encounter an impasse when they try to define the relationship they've built over 17 years (10 years in the film) as prisoners. Subjected into legal lexicons of criminalized sodomy and miscegenation, the two are unable to find appropriate language to fit their relationship into existing sexual paradigms. After Rijkhaart, seeking recognition for the relationship they share, implores Claas to “Say it! Say what we have, what it is. What's the name? Why can't you say it?” Claas replies, “There is no name.” Indeed, the film never names ‘what they have,’ but – as I examined above – it attempts to render what happens between them in a way that at least exceeds the heteronormalist language of the historical trial record. Within the prison community, however, the two occupy a precarious existence, both in terms of being criminals excised from society and in terms of their ostracism for breaching sexual norms that violently privilege heterosex and racial purity. The scene ends with a low-angle shot of the two behind the barbed-wire prison fence, emphasizing their ostracism. But the placement of the fence is also ambiguous: Is it them who stand imprisoned behind it, or the audience? Are they imprisoned because of their ostracism, or are we as witnesses imprisoned within the categories we have imposed – both racially and sexually – on lives like theirs? In either case, the audience is made aware of boundaries that segregate

communities. Prior to the appearance of the fence, the exchange between the two takes place atop a concrete reservoir, away from the main prison area of the island. Throughout their conversation, the background shots show an expansive wilderness, and the open ocean, gesturing toward the open potential of the two men's situation, even as the appearance of the fence reminds us of their ostracism. Moreover, shots of the natural landscape leave the film open to redefining the iconography of Robben Island beyond the histories of masculinity associated with its prison terrain.²⁵

The inability of Claas and Rijkhaart to come to a definition of their relationship also speaks to South Africa's emerging gay community at the time of the film's inception. While making what he calls "South Africa's first 'gay' feature," producer Jack Lewis was "looking for a story that would relate the need for constitutional guarantees of equality for gays and lesbians to the lives of people today" (438). Already signaling the film's relationship to a developing South African "gay" community as he speaks to a need for constitutional recognition of non-heterosexual sexualities, Lewis's claims not only assume but constatively speak into being a particular gay community who identifies with *Proteus*. Also, that the film is meant to be a representation of this particular community and documents an interracial relationship identifies a need for engaging with racial intersubjectivity within conceptions of gay South African community.

²⁵ Harriet Deacon's *The Island: A History of Robben Island, 1488-1990* gives a history of Robben Island's use. The island was home to both female and male prisoners, countering the masculinization of this terrain in the post-apartheid period. The island was also a critical site for exploiting mineral resources for South Africa. *Proteus*'s many scenes showing the prisoners unearthing these resources also allegorically emphasizes the practice of "unearthing" South African history. Claas and Rijkhaart are thus posited as active figures in the construction of (queer) South African history as they "leave their mark" on its landscape.

But my analysis does not suggest that *Proteus* sets up a standard that queer communities should emulate; I suggest that this film is meant to disorient, to bring into question, the values of such a community and to privilege liminality and uncertainty. Indeed, Lewis suggests that the film asks questions about

how we come to be who we are, and about the role of a “gay identity” in that. In the West things are getting beyond “gay identity,” which is correctly seen as kind of limiting. The film is about what it means to have lived at a time when that identity didn’t exist, when it wasn’t available, and how you defined yourself under those circumstances. (439)

Lewis extends the film beyond the uncertainty of queer identity in the eighteenth century to uncertainties in contemporary South African “gay identity.” At the film’s release in 2003, South Africa had seen the implementation of a progressive 1996 constitution that prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation, but the legalization of gay marriage in 2006 was still on the nation’s horizons. Drawing a distinction between the West – where the advantages and limitations of a “gay identity” are apparent in contemporary queer theory – and South Africa, Lewis privileges a place of uncertain definition for queer intimacies. While I (nor, I assume, Lewis) do not want to suggest that South African queer identity is somehow hierarchically underdeveloped compared to Western notions of queerness, the designation of *Proteus* as South Africa’s first gay feature certainly foregrounds that the film speaks to a community still negotiating the terms of its existence. The film emerges amidst the nation questioning what constitutes a South African “gay identity,” an aesthetic community organized around such an identity, and how this community fits into the national narrative. The film’s focus on queer interracial intimacy, to recall my discussion of Ahmed from my introductory chapter, also

disorients the nationalistic narratives of masculinity by foregrounding how queer sexuality has been excluded. The film also reorients its audience toward a conception of community that incorporates interracial intersubjectivity.

The question remains: How does the film reorient notions of race and masculinity? I return to the question of what it means to be orientated “around” and “toward” in Ahmed’s terms. As I point out in my opening chapter, Ahmed suggests that the distance from the racial other, being orientated “around” whiteness and “toward” the racial other, is the very process by which one is allowed to oppress the other. And this distance negates, to a large extent, any possibility for ethical interaction, as Penelope Ingram suggests. But the way that male bodies are positioned in *Proteus* redraws the lines of male community to incorporate an interracial ethics.

Amongst the community of male prisoners on Robben Island, the space of the campfire is particularly important to how *Proteus* redraws the lines of community. After Claas and Rijkhaart have been whipped for allegedly sodomizing each other (with no proof available), the film focuses on a moment when they are rejected from their respective circles of fellow prisoners. Claas, trying to sit around a campfire and get food from a circle of other black men he had previously sat with, is rejected from the circle, and told by one of the other men, “You can’t sit with us!” Similar to the ostracism earlier experienced by Rijkhaart, this scene reveals the mechanisms of racialization in that Claas is removed for violating racial codes that exclude queer masculinity. As he moves away from the group to sit alone, Rijkhaart joins him and offers him food. At this point, the film’s soundtrack is reduced completely to the sound of the two’s clanging dishes as the

crackle of the campfire fades, further emphasizing their ostracism from the center of the others' community. But this scene also reconstructs community as the camera follows Claas and positions the audience directly across from the two men, on level with them, while they sit on the ground to eat. In some way, the viewer is thus invited into a new circle with the men. Both men experience disorientation at being removed from their circles, each circle orientated around physical significations of race, but they also curiously reorient themselves into a new community, and the audience is invited with them into that circle. Queer desire and the other men's homophobia ostracizes the men from their communities, but also opens up the possibility for different communal ties to emerge that move the two men – however traumatically – into a space of negotiating racial difference.

Conclusion

Although Claas and Rijkhaart themselves do not necessarily constitute a community unto themselves, they certainly carry implications for the broader “gay community” of South Africa. If, as Jack Lewis suggests, this film is meant to apply to a broad gay community in South Africa as its “first gay feature,” then the type of community this film speaks to involves an understanding of community that disrupts the boundaries that mechanisms of racialization have constructed. And perhaps one of the messages of the film is to move away from the communal boundaries that keep us oriented around ideals of racial segregation. The film, as it foregrounds the process that Rijkhaart and Claas go through, disrupts racially segregatory lines of community and

follows characters who construct new subjectivities outside those communities based on queer desire. In this way, we might begin to think through queer desire, homosocial desire, or other ways of being with other men, as ways to disrupt the normativity of racial segregation.

CHAPTER 2

WHITE MASCULINITIES IN THE FICTION OF DAMON GALGUT

Introduction

This chapter examines how communal ideology within South Africa has been constructed by particularly white masculinities, both in terms of how white men ideologically and physically structure community and to what ends they imagine interracial bonds as part of the organization of bodies in the post-apartheid period. I turn specifically to the novels of Damon Galgut because, since his rise to prominence in 2003 when his novel *The Good Doctor* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, he represents an influential voice in contemporary South African literature. His international prestige allows him to construct particular narratives of South African community in Western literary markets. Indeed, in a British review of Galgut's 2008 book, *The Imposter*, William Skidelsky touts Galgut as part of "a new generation of South African novelists ... that would topple the old guard of Nadine Gordimer, JM Coetzee and André Brink." At the same time that he constructs Galgut as a voice of the new South Africa in a review entitled, "A Fresh Eye on the Rainbow Nation," (signaling the extent to which discourses of rainbowism still pervade contemporary international understandings of South Africa), he praises Galgut for exposing "a world of corruption and rapacity behind the talk of 'new dawns' and 'reconciliation.'" That Galgut's work has been received as critical of contemporary South African race relations not only foregrounds his novels (almost exclusively narrated by or around white male protagonists) as constitutive of

contemporary understandings of post-apartheid South African community; it also positions him as a white man actively participating in the construction of particular ideologies of white masculinity.

Galgut's work is a fruitful place from which to examine particularly masculinity in South Africa's multiracial context. Galgut has been a prominent gay South African voice, reconfiguring notions of heteronormative masculinity. Although Rita Barnard criticizes his work for "representing homoerotic impulses as self-evidently liberatory and connected to political dissent, the obvious alternative to the 'male mythology' of apartheid" (210), I would contend that his work delves into underpinnings of white masculinity in more complex terms than that particular reading allows. Indeed, Michiel Heyns praises Galgut for considering multiple sites of struggle in South Africa. He suggests that Galgut "consider[s] the white gay man as *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).

I want to continue the line of thinking I began in my previous chapter, which involved *Proteus*'s disruption of South African communal narratives that privilege heroic masculinities and the film's troubling of gay communities' orientations around whiteness. This chapter moves beyond pre-apartheid historical narratives of race and masculinity to contemporary South African history and the nation's transition to democracy. Drawing on theories of post-apartheid whiteness, I examine the ways that Galgut's novels construct particular white masculinities from over the last two decades of South African history. His novels often deal prominently – as much contemporary white writing in

South Africa does – with the predicament of being a white man who must relinquish power in the nation’s contemporary landscape. My analysis of Galgut also questions the extent to which his texts, which are typically narrated from a white male perspective, attempt to build communal bonds with racial others in ethical ways. Community-building in Galgut’s novels often involves white men relinquishing power in the wake of the nation’s official narrative transitioning from white-centric politics. While I do not want to criticize Galgut for speaking from white male subject positions since they are tied to his own positionality, his novels pose challenges to the liberatory potential of the “New” South Africa in that they show the contingency of interracial bonds on economic gain and social clout.

I choose Galgut’s novels *The Imposter* and *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* partially because of the limited critical attention that has been given them. With the success of *The Good Doctor*, comparatively less attention has been paid to these novels – though *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs* marks a pivotal moment in South Africa’s history as it is written during apartheid’s dismantling. The most sustained analyses of masculinity in Galgut’s work have focused on *The Good Doctor*, such as those by Horrell and Titlestad, and little attention has been paid to the intersections between race and masculinity in his work.

My reading traces the chronology of Galgut’s work using these two novels and their representations of whiteness from the early 90s to the present. I suggest that as his work progresses beyond the immediate struggle of the early 1990s it is marked by a gradual disillusionment over the possibility of his white protagonists forging communal

bonds across racial identity lines as the nation and his characters leave sites of political struggle and settle into the routine of post-apartheid life. Set in periods in which white men are often asked to relinquish power, his novels question the motivations behind the way white men make concessions to the “New” South Africa. His novels expose white men’s move toward forging interracial bonds as a reinscription of “white” economic and social interests (though I hope to complicate what “white” means in this chapter). As they pose challenges to the ways in which a “New” South African community is taking shape post-apartheid, his novels foreground the work still to be done within the field of revisionary masculinities and whiteness studies in terms of imagining how ethical bonds across racial lines might be forged.

Theorizing White Masculinity: Implications for the National Community

In light of apartheid South Africa’s white supremacist history that sought to antiseptically separate white and black identity, this project draws on work by Melissa Steyn and David Theo Goldberg that undermines such limiting conceptions of whiteness. Steyn describes whiteness as “an ideologically supported social positionality that has accrued to people of European descent as a consequence of the economic and political advantage gained during and subsequent to colonial expansion” (“White talk” 121). If we think through whiteness in Steyn’s terms as a particular orientation around a sociohistorically advantaged positionality, we avoid reducing whiteness to a particular, immutable and biologist identity position and begin to think of it as a particular communal identification. Just as hegemonic masculinities are complex and contingent to

particular contexts, as the work of Connell and Donaldson has revealed, recent work on whiteness has also complicated its structure and power dynamics. As Melissa Steyn points out in *'Whiteness Just isn't What it Used to Be'*, “it is appropriate to think in terms of *whitenesses*, rather than whiteness, just as we now know to speak of *racisms*, and *patriarchies*” (xxx). For example, she reveals the conflicting and often hierarchal divisions between different versions of whiteness in South Africa when she points out historical divisions between Afrikaners and English-speaking white South Africans, explaining that, “[w]hile they did, in varying degrees at different times, recognize a unity in whiteness, neither wanted to be white in the same way” (26). She describes how Boers cut ties to their European origins and the very name “Afrikaner” grounded a connection to the African continent while “the British remained psychologically more alienated from the African continent than the Afrikaners” (26) Furthermore, she points out multiple, non white-supremacist communities that circulated during the apartheid era, citing those people “who envisaged a more tolerant, liberal white society, those who envisaged a nonracial society, such as the African National Congress and the Communist Party, and those who envisaged an Africanist regime, such as the Pan African Congress, constantly challenged the narrative of white supremacy” (39). Drawing on multiple narratives of whiteness, she emphasizes that essentialist constructions of racial identity were often a product of the uniformly white supremacist apartheid government.

This chapter questions how communal ideologies operate within notions of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa, and whether lines of community are redrawn for white men in the post-apartheid period in ways that resist racially segregatory

attitudes. Especially given the propagation of patriarchal gender categories under apartheid in which men wielded a great deal of power that I foregrounded in my introduction, the post-apartheid period represents a time at which white men are expected to relinquish power. In this context: How do white men actively structure interracial bonds and what are their motivations for doing so? And, by extension, is bodily proximity of interracial bodies – what Ingram suggests is necessary to work towards an ethics of racial difference – enough to undermine racial segregation that takes place not only in terms of the racialized organization of bodies, but ideologically as well?

In her landmark study on whiteness, cited above, Steyn examines contemporary variations of how white South Africans narrativize their whiteness in light of a historical master narrative of white supremacy. One particular narrative, which she dubs “Don’t Think White, It’s All Right,” is one of the only versions of whiteness she examines that concedes to the realities of post-apartheid life and looks toward some interracially complex future. White people who subscribe to this narrative

accept the fact that whiteness has been relativized (though most say marginalized) within the New South Africa. While still drawing on some of the discursive repertoires from the “old order,” there is a realization that the tools of the master narrative will not build a sound home in a future organized from fundamentally different ground rules. ... [These whites] are working on accepting the present, though not without a good measure of griping and complaining. (*Whiteness Just* 83)

She suggests that “[t]hose who talk this talk feel a very strong connection to their ethnic and cultural traditions. Some now feel this more than ever before. They see the way ahead requiring a steadfast grip on their heritage, for personal and collective survival” (86). Even though this particular narrative of post-apartheid whiteness incorporates a

commitment to imagining a multiracial South Africa, it itself remains orientated “around” whiteness, in Ahmed’s terms. Steyn’s analysis implicitly foregrounds the ways that such whiteness only strengthens ties within communities of white people – even while it acknowledges historical racism and is prepared to accept the heterogeneity of the South African community – by uniting them under a common heritage. However reconciliatory such whiteness may be, it still preserves an ideologically closed community and brings into question the efficacy of South Africa’s current efforts to cultivate interracial bonds.

In her essay “‘White Talk’: White South Africans and the Management of Diasporic Whiteness,” Steyn examines whiteness in postcolonial South Africa and raises questions about the extent to which the formation of interracial communities is possible. She reads discourses of South African whiteness (what she calls “white talk”) as cultivating a diasporic identity “bonded through shared structures of feelings, such as their suffering, which gives a sense of being caught up in a common history, despite being scattered from their European origins” (124). She suggests of whites before 1994 that, “a sense of identification with others, ‘like them’ in heritage was maintained, and also a strong economic bond with the West was cultivated, operating from a dominant position within the local context” to preserve their white identity (126). Post-1994, however, “more acutely than ever before ... they confront the diasporic dimension in their positionality: a small minority in the country, separated from their cultural heartlands, their whiteness seems genuinely at risk” (126). Whereas national discourses of rainbowism and post-apartheid idealism might suggest that white South Africans have redrawn the lines of community to incorporate interraciality, Steyn’s analysis suggests

that their emphasis on shared identity has actually strengthened in recent years, tightening the lines of communal identification between exclusively whites. Furthermore, the notion that whites view themselves in diasporic terms, rather than connecting them to a South African national community, leaves their occupation of that community only tenuous as it nostalgically evokes a connection to European origins. Within such communal ideology and, perhaps, in the presence of post-apartheid guilt and pressures to rescind power, how *can* white South African subjects disrupt community ideologies that revolve so stringently around whiteness?

To return to my introductory discussion of orientations and how disorientation from whiteness might occur, Ahmed theorizes white identity as being purchased by racial others. She suggests that “‘Others’ may function as ... resources for extending the reach of the white body—that is, they function as ‘orientation devices.’ In some fantasies of interracial intimacy, the white body becomes all the more white in its very orientation *toward* racial others as objects of desire” (128). As racial divisions and the nationally legislated lines of tightly bound racial communities break down in the post-apartheid period, we might expect a simultaneous breakdown of the type of othering that Ahmed signals. But given the particular situation of post-apartheid whiteness that Steyn draws attention to, many whitenesses have reinforced their definition in opposition to racialized others. In Ahmed’s terms, subjects’ orientation toward racial others might actually reinforce their difference from those others as these others become a site of negative self-definition. Following Ingram, how do we redirect the scopic economy of race in ways

that disrupt othering that occurs even when different bodies come into proximity with each other?

Goldberg also draws a connection between whiteness and masculinity when he foregrounds the patriarchal underpinnings of racial statehood; he emphasizes the ways that the state racializes bodies to the imperatives of white, patriarchal masculinities. He writes that, because state modernization is always defined according to states of whiteness, racial legislation (the starting point for *The Imposter* when its protagonist is fired because of affirmative action policies) “mirrors – and is deeply related to – the condition of law as patriarchal, so well conceptualized in the past two decades by feminist legal theorists. ... Modern states are states governed by a patriarchal whiteness, at once masculinist states of white being, states ... representing the interests of white privilege and patriarchies” (159). If we recall the discussion in my introductory chapter of Goldberg’s central argument that posits race as the marker of social citizenship, the implication of his identification of the patriarchal modes of racial citizenship is that the official national community of racial states – even while it acknowledges heterogeneity and seeks to redress historical racisms – is still predicated on white patriarchal masculinities and communal belonging derives from white male interests. Furthermore, even reconciliatory gestures in the post-apartheid landscape that seek to redress historical racisms run the risk of being motivated by a drive to absolve white populations of their complicity in apartheid rather than in the interests of racial others.

Georgie Horrell’s analysis of post-apartheid South African fiction by white men aptly illustrates Goldberg’s discussion of the gendered dimensions of whiteness. He

examines recent South African novels by authors such as J. M. Coetzee, Damon Galgut, André Brink and Michiel Heyns, among others, and suggests that this fiction represents “a negotiation of an alternative masculinity at play: one which refutes and relinquishes dominance and attempts to enact a position of submission, confession – even ‘voluntary redundancy’” (1). He suggests that these texts’ protagonists perform “a wrenching of conscience” and evidence “a queasy withdrawal from power, an uneasy, shamed and perhaps sour submission to political and social systems operating in the ‘New South Africa’” (3). But even while white men actively withdraw from power, their actions might still be a display of power in that power is still theirs to relinquish. These narratives center around white characters and how or whether they involve movement toward ethical conceptions of interracial relations is a central question in this chapter. Indeed, that Horrell points to the sourness of their withdrawal brings into question the degree to which white men subvert ideologies of racialization or whether their power relinquishment is oriented around white interests. Perhaps rigid organization around white racial identity as a very concept precludes meaningful interracial community from being realized. Even carrying from Ingram’s assertion that bodily proximity is necessary to disrupt racial difference, Galgut’s novels foreground the ways that orientations around a white identity do not necessarily undermine potentially white-centric motivations for building interracial community.

Moments of Struggle in *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*

Damon Galgut's *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, first written in 1991 at the end of the apartheid period, documents the journey of the narrator, Patrick, with his mother, Ellen, to Namibia in the days leading up to the nation's first free elections. Caught up in his own memory of complicity in apartheid's racial segregation as a conscript in its army (later discharged with posttraumatic stress disorder), Patrick's journey is also fraught with memories of his military activity and of his life under the rule of his father's patriarchal hypermasculinity. As he gradually moves away from military and family ideology, Patrick centers particularly on his relationship with his mother's lover, Godfrey. Herself an anti-apartheid activist, Ellen brings Patrick to Namibia on a journey that violently disorients his conceptions of race and brings to light complexities of interracial interaction at the pivotal moment of apartheid's dismantling. The novel reveals these complexities most prominently in his relationship with Godfrey as the two attempt to negotiate through years of racial segregation in ways that pose challenges to South Africa's post-apartheid multicultural idealism. Also, curiously, unlike his later works the novel foregrounds the moment of transition as a pivotal and perhaps more fruitful time for bridging racial boundaries than when South Africa has settled into its post-apartheid moment with its avowed investment in the idealistic narrative of rainbowism.

The early stages of the novel mark the start of a transition for Patrick in which he renders the very concept of race an impediment to interpersonal interaction with Godfrey whom – at the start of the novel – he posits as a racial other. Early on, Patrick shows, at best, a cautiously distant relationship with Godfrey. He states, "All I knew about him

was that his name was Godfrey and that he was twenty-six years old. Also, of course, that he was black” (7), identifying the prominence of racial difference within his conception of Godfrey, though he is quick to add, “I wasn’t disturbed by this fact. A numbness had crept into my life, so that no fact could hurt me again” (7).²⁶ But the very reference to the possibility of race being an issue emphasizes the extent to which it is an impediment to any meaningful interaction between the two. He also foregrounds “the small matter of his race” as one of the reasons that he “didn’t want to meet Godfrey” (43). “The fact that he lived in Windhoek,” he goes on to say, “so far from Cape Town and our normal lives, made him different and somehow powerful” (43). Patrick emphasizes distance between the two at this point in the novel as Godfrey is far from their “normal” lives in Cape Town, echoing Ahmed’s assertion of racial others as a reorientation device that reinforce whiteness. Certainly, in this case, distance precludes ethical interaction as it is Patrick’s very distance that reinforces Godfrey’s difference as a racial other. But how do we read what Patrick describes as “normal,” especially since the normalcy he clings to revolves around its distance from Godfrey, whose race Patrick so prominently foregrounds? It is precisely from his reference to normalcy that I want to interrogate his orientation around the normal and how the novel disorients ideologies of racialization that assume normalcy.

Judith Butler’s discussion of norms in *Undoing Gender* sheds light on Patrick’s conception of ‘normal’ as a ritual performance, which might also be read as an orientation around certain performances of whiteness in Ahmed’s terms. Judith Butler’s work also exposes how the normal is intimately connected to gender norms. She reads

²⁶ His numbness refers to his posttraumatic stress disorder.

norms as “[operating] within social practices as the implicit standard of *normalization*” (*Undoing* 41). Sara Ahmed also discusses orientation as “finding one’s way, by establishing one’s direction” and, using the allegory of a map, suggests that the “cartographic imperative to make maps as technologies for navigation shows how normalization involves the normalization not only of certain kinds of bodies, but also specific directions” (113). Following Said’s *Orientalism*, she emphasizes the ways that certain directions are also an exercise of power, for instance when the Occident orients around whiteness and constructs the racial otherness of the Orient. If we understand orientation as a particular type of normalization and, following Butler, the consequence of particular social practices, we are left with the question of what social practices constitute the normalcy of Patrick’s life and how race and masculinity play into it. What standards of “normal” is Patrick orientated around, in other words?

Early on in the novel, before Patrick meets Godfrey, Patrick describes his life in terms that orient him around whiteness predicated on racial otherness. Up to this point in the novel, he relates his family life and the notion that his mother had never before been in a relationship with a black man. Also, his distance from Godfrey as the racial other – reinforced by his earlier participation in the literal lines of opposition of the apartheid army – help to constitute the normalcy of his whiteness. Melissa Steyn writes that, “[a]s the privileged group, whites have tended to take their identity as the standard by which everyone else is measured” (*Whiteness*’ xxvi), which might apply to the normalcy Patrick assumes when he defines Godfrey as the racial other. Moreover, Patrick’s narrative of his early life also documents living on the family farm, a community of

people who subscribe to racist ideals. The novel describes the farm's matriarchal head, his grandmother, as someone who "disapproved of friendly connections" with black servants (3), which positions Patrick within a family whose day-to-day life is structured around racially segregatory practice. But the prominence of race in Patrick's thinking also evidences that he is in a moment of struggle with the very notion of race as he works through his mother Ellen's relationship with Godfrey. Recalling Ahmed's notion of the family of race I outlined in my introduction, in which whiteness proceeds genealogically through the continuation of family lines and prohibitions on miscegenation, Ellen's relationship – however problematic the novel sets it up to be – allows Patrick to experience a type of disorientation from the continuity of the whiteness of his family.

In many ways, Patrick's disorientation as he moves through the novel's narrative mimics South Africa's transition from apartheid. Especially in the opening pages of the novel, immediately after his discharge from the military, he adheres to certain ideological apartheid when he suggests that "Lives are meant to be separate and apart; when the borders break and we overflow into one another, it only leads to trouble and sadness" (22). But these ideological apartheid fail to hold as he comes into contact with antiapartheid activists and exposes himself to township life later in the novel. Driving through one particular township, he describes the people living in it: "We'd made them what they were, then despised them for what they weren't. They were a negative print of our lives" (49), not only emphasizing the toll at which white communities in South Africa purchase their fictional superiority, but also complicating the very binaries that construct racial categories. Within his metaphor of photography, the people of the township are the

negative from which the portrait of whiteness emerges – in a sense, whiteness and blackness are inexplicably bound through their very definition against each other.

Patrick's disorientation is also linked to an inherited patriarchal masculinity, especially as the whiteness he later brings into question is tied to his early anxieties over his failure to inherit his father's hypermasculinity.²⁷ Describing his father and deceased brother (who was also in the military), Patrick states,

there 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. ... [I]t 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 ... I would never be a part of their club. (63).

This quotation echoes Butler's notion of gender as ritual performance where she describes gender as "a regularized and constrained repetition of norms" and "a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint ... with the threat of ostracism" (*Bodies* 95), but it is also significant to note that the normalcy Patrick adheres to before meeting Godfrey is connected to whiteness and the masculinity of his father – however oppressive these identifications may be. Morrell describes Patrick's father as an "emotionally absent" ("Fathers" 18) man, whose masculinity involves "a combination of unequal and careless relationships with women, children and people of colour or other religions and beliefs; unquestioning self-belief and bluster; and a preference for physically demanding homosocial contexts" (19), revealing the extent to which he is orientated around patriarchal hypermasculinity. But the novel later disrupts the genealogy

²⁷ My earlier work on Galgut's novel, "Ungendering the Animal and Deanimalizing the Man: Toward a Post-apartheid Consideration of Animals in Damon Galgut's *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*," examines in detail the violent masculinity of Patrick's father.

of masculinity connected to his father to the point at which, when responding to a hotel manager suspicious of Godfrey staying with his mother at the hotel, Patrick tells a woman, “he is my *father*.” While his comment is leveled as an anger-inspiring rebuke to the woman, it also disrupts the genealogy of racist hypermasculinity inherited by the family and – through a familial identification with Godfrey rather than one based on his race – resists relegating Godfrey to racial otherness.

Also, later in the novel he encounters a German man nostalgic for days of white rule, and Patrick’s response separates him from the community of white men to which this man belongs. The man decries the present liberatory attitude of Namibia, telling Patrick, “This could have been a great country ... There was hope here once. But now it’s going down the toilet ... I have come back to vote ... for us. For *us*” (80). Patrick then physically separates himself from the man: “I pulled away from his hand. ... I started to walk away and then broke ... into a run. I didn’t look back. I was running from him ... but also from that terrible *us*. I wanted no part in what it presumed. I wanted to leave it behind” (80). Although Patrick’s comments suggest, within the very notion that Patrick *wants* to dissociate himself from the man but does not necessarily, that he cannot fully escape his white inheritance; his use of gesture in this scene shows a profound disorientation from a whiteness he had earlier orientated around. Physically turning away from the man and disorienting himself from the racist white masculinity the man exudes, Patrick dissociates himself from the community of whiteness that the man assumes. Perhaps, Patrick’s desire to break away from that community also orientates him toward the liberation struggles taking place, dismantling whiteness as his central site of

identification. Furthermore, as I will discuss later in this chapter, his interaction with Godfrey allows for a disorientation from his white sensibilities.

White Skepticism in *The Imposter*

Damon Galgut's *The Imposter*, released in 2008, follows the narrative of Adam, a white Cape Town resident who loses his job and migrates to a small rural house owned by his wealthy brother in the Karoo. The novel begins with a brief account of his "apologetic boss" firing him, "telling him about racial quotas" when he is replaced by a black intern as a result of affirmative action policies (15). While *The Imposter* does not prominently signal official legislative discourses of race, its focus on a white protagonist whose narrative is directly affected by racial legislation in South Africa posits national discourses of race, and white disempowerment in particular, as central to the trajectory of the narrative. Even while it might deconstruct narratives of whiteness, the text follows a white character from whom privilege has been revoked by national policy. As such, the state of race (or "racial state, in Goldberg's terms) in South Africa is a specter that haunts the text.

But the novel foregrounds affirmative action as still predicated on white privilege, even if Adam loses access to that privilege. Goldberg views affirmative action as an extension of racial historicism, which he defines as a view that posits whiteness as an embodiment of historical progress and that casts the racialized other as underdeveloped within modernistic standards of whiteness. He asserts that "affirmative action is a later historicist version of educating those for whom there are no inherent barriers to the

degree of economic or moral self-determination. Understood thus, affirmative action is to be seen as the extension of historicist commitment” (157). According to Goldberg’s interpretation of affirmative action, such policies derive from the paternalistic assumption that non-whites are educationally inferior to whites. Affirmative action also excludes those nonwhites without economic privilege. Galgut’s novel, in a similar way, given that the “black intern ... was, in fact, being groomed to replace him” (15) posits affirmative action as a perpetuation of standards of whiteness; as the black intern is *groomed to replace* Adam, affirmative action merely conditions nonwhite bodies to perform standards of whiteness. As such, affirmative action changes who holds privilege, but does not alter the system that precludes others from accessing that privilege.

After the move, Adam tries to write poetry, resurrecting this one-time hobby from his youth with idealistic vision. Early in his time at the house, he meets a high school friend, Canning, who invites him every weekend to his game farm, an inheritance from his dead father. Over time, Adam discovers that Canning is restructuring land within the game farm and its surrounding town to build a golf course resort for wealthy vacationers as revenge against his dead father, though officially he professes to improve the town’s economy.

Adam’s narrative is disconcerting, to say the least, for the way he shows a complete impotence in the face of what he sees as injustice over Canning destroying the natural landscape, and for the way he does not act on racisms he encounters even while he is cynical of ideologies of both the “old” and “new” South Africa. But, in what Trengove-Jones suggests is a surface reading of the novel, “[i]t is easy to plunder this

difficult text (Galgut has said he wanted to make readers feel ‘uncomfortable’) for its topicality, for its ‘commentary’ on the way we live now” (105). Trengove-Jones goes on to suggest that “we need a literary sensitive reading to grasp the nature of its mediation of our coming face to face with aspects of the malaise of cynicism in a ‘post-liberation’ ethos” (105), painting the novel itself as skeptical of such cynicism. Indeed, Adam exudes a not-always likable masculinity that is at once outwardly anti-racist but cynical of the multicultural “New” South Africa, which might foreground the lukewarm commitment whites direct (drawing from Steyn’s analysis) toward the post-apartheid nation. Moreover, this cynicism also foregrounds the extent to which South Africa’s tendency toward idealistic nonracialism has failed. The novel does not necessarily point to an alternative sensibility as a solution to post-liberation malaise but instead problematizes the very notion of “solving” racial tension. Given the contemporary state of South African race relations I discussed in my introduction, the novel undermines those legislative concessions (such as affirmative action) that have been wielded as ‘solutions.’

Adam’s struggle to write poetry is also at the center of the narrative, and it becomes an allegory for a particular whiteness evasive of politics in the New South Africa. Longing to revive the writings he composed in his youth which “were about the natural word, ardent and intense and romantic” (21), he now feels himself “the soul of the country ... at the centre of things” (22). His early poetry orientates around a certain Romantic individualism (not unlike J.M. Coetzee’s David Lurie in *Disgrace*, whose opera on the poet Byron is a central narrative of the novel). But that individualism,

because of Adam's subject position as a South African white man, also orientates him around a distinctly European white Romanticism and masculinity and foregrounds his evasion of South Africa's racial tensions. When criticized by the mayor of the small town he enters, an old writer of resistance poetry, who "realized ... we needed guns, not poems" (38), Adam recalls one review of his early poetry that "charged him with deliberately avoiding the moral crisis at the heart of South Africa" (39). The novel then acknowledges, "Maybe he shied away from history. When he looked at the state of the world, he always shrank away in helplessness and horror" (39). The novel follows his gradual disillusionment with his poetry, from his early admonishments that he is a poet when others ask his occupation, to a stark realization that he is, in effect, an imposter – as the title portends – unable to write poetry, unable to articulate the voice of the nation.

I want to spend some time, drawing from the theoretical frame I laid out at the beginning of this chapter, to discuss the ways that white men in Galgut's novels – even while they posit themselves as liberal, progressive inhabitants of the "New Country" – too hastily figure rainbowism as ethical interraciality. One of the central conflicts in Galgut's novels is that whiteness always remains at the center of white characters' efforts toward forging interracial community. If we read Galgut's novel in Ahmed's terms, white characters who relinquish power or buy into the New South Africa – and I use the economic terminology deliberately since economic motivations underlie Canning's construction of multiculturalism – remain orientated around whiteness. As such, Canning's implication for the national narrative is that interraciality is performed in the interests of whiteness and upholds historicist ideologies of race. Adam himself begins his

narrative and remains skeptical of the “New South Africa,” even while he decries racisms. But his assertion that he is at the center of things brings into question whether his approach to race is motivated by ethical interaction with racial otherness or around a particular liberal construction of his self.²⁸ In other words, what are the motivations for constructing multicultural rainbowism in the New South Africa?

This question comes to a head near the end of Galgut’s novel when Adam attends a gala for Canning’s golf course that emphasizes the way interracial discourse is predicated on the interests of the white men of the novel. At the gala, hosted by Nicolai Genov – one of Canning’s investors who Adam later finds out to be involved in “[m]oney laundering, drug smuggling, [and] maybe human trafficking” (188) – Genov addresses the partygoers with a speech touting rainbowistic idealism in the following quotation:

‘... I want to say, if you look around you tonight... is it not good to see so many different people in one room – all different colours, different cultures, everybody mixed... this really is a new South African party!’

The banal phrase sounds like one of Canning’s. There’s a spatter of appreciative applause – people congratulating themselves – and from his vantage point Adam briefly caught up in the picture: saris and business suits mingling with African fabrics and Arabic robes. Accents and languages twine companionably together; skin and beads rub agreeably against silk. Even the waiters, in their neutral tuxedos are a harmonious mix of black and white and brown. It really is like an advertisement for the new country. (184)

Certainly, this scene echoes the official narrative of rainbowism perpetuated by the promoters of a “new” South Africa, but this passage is skeptical of the idealism of that narrative. As an “advertisement” of the new country, Galgut renders Genov’s appeals to

²⁸ However, if we understand ethics as deriving from a particular construction of the self, as Judith Butler’s formulation of ethics in *Giving an Account of Oneself* suggests, Adam’s construction of himself might be one that approaches ethical interraciality, but my argument, drawing from Ingram, foregrounds that such narratives of self are not quite complete without reorganization of physical significations.

multiculturalism a façade – something that needs to be sold – and his version of interracial community remains, at best, tied to the hype surrounding this new golf course.²⁹ This passage also suggests that the narrative of the rainbow nation is intimately connected to the upper echelons of South African society and excludes others. The intermingling of black and white creates for the gala an air of multiculturalism, but the text's emphasis on intermingling physical signifiers of race with material objects signaling wealth – business suits with African fabrics, silk and skin – presents such idealistic interraciality in the official South African narrative as a disguise of capital interests. If, following Goldberg, we recognize such interests as a part of the modern state that defines itself against the racial other,³⁰ this organization of rainbowism does not necessarily disrupt orientations around whiteness. This meeting's occurrence at Genov's house also allegorically positions this advertisement for South Africa's rainbowistic narrative within capital interests. The audience of the Gala, clothed in their best fabrics in a constructed façade of the national narrative, faces the figure of international capital enterprise, orientated toward him, performing interraciality as part of his Gala. Indeed that the entire gala is based on restructuring land for a golf course whose "most important principle will be exclusivity. Membership will be very expensive and limited" (136), emphasizes the exclusionary nature of this version of multiculturalism with its underlying class politics; membership is purchased with money and social clout and is uninterested in those underprivileged populations outside this façade.

²⁹ Indeed, multicultural discourse as a commercial advertisement for the nation also coincided with South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

³⁰ "Race," according to Goldberg, is that which the modern state pits itself against.

Galgut's narrative also complicates racial categorization as Adam stands excluded from the group. After the speech from Genov, Adam reflects on his exclusion: "Despite himself, a warm feeling expands in Adam; the impulse to belong is very strong. But at the same time he remains outside; he knows he's here on sufferance, and there is something unreal about this gathering. It's what's absent, what *isn't* in this house, that Adam feels truly part of, and which makes him afraid" (184-185). Adam, out of money at this point in the novel, only present at the party by Canning's invitation, is outside the crowd at the party and, by extension, outside the community of the New South Africa which it attempts to emulate. The fact that he does not feel truly a part of this community foregrounds the multicultural narrative as exclusive to those like Adam; it emphasizes the extent to which race and multiculturalism are tools wielded by the state, motivated by capital interests. More than that, if (following Goldberg) we accept that multiculturalism is based on white interests and privilege, the novel resists a biologicistic definition of whiteness as Adam is excluded from those national narratives rendered in the interests of whiteness and signals underlying class politics bound up with state narratives of race.

Similarly to *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, the novel also exposes patriarchal interests within multicultural community by portraying Canning's investment in the New South Africa as derived from his racist hypermasculine father. When Adam first meets Baby (an alias for Canning's wife, a one-time sex worker, whose real name and history is never revealed to the reader – largely because Adam refuses to confront this history), Canning asks whether Adam is surprised that she is black, insisting, "We're a new South African couple" (65). Canning's appeal to Baby's racial identity signals his investment in

racial categories but, more than that, touts his marriage as an advertisement for rainbowism similar to Genov's. In both instances, men try to enter an interracial community as a political or social maneuver not unlike logics of apartheid in that *they* wield the power to construct such communities.

Indeed, the extent to which Baby's interests are involved in this marriage is questionable. Adam observes that "Baby is the centre and point of Canning's new life," even while their marriage seems less than idyllic when Canning often "will lapse into brooding introspection, and then start muttering about how unfeeling she is" (123), and Baby is narrated in less than flattering terms as "diminutive and gorgeous and angry" (127). Genealogies of whiteness are also at the center of Canning's marriage as the specter of his father haunts his and Baby's union. Canning describes his "New" South African life as "[r]evenge" on his father for his cruelty (135). Curiously, however, he adds, "I sometimes imagine my old man, looking down at me. I know that's not possible, but I imagine it anyway. I like to think of how helpless and furious he feels when he sees my black wife" (135). In spite of Canning's professions at his love for Baby, he still renders her an object to his revenge at his father. While I do not suggest that Canning's emotions toward Baby are not more complex, he still accessorizes her as a component of his vengeance against his father. She is and remains at least partially a direct response to the inferiority he felt under his father.³¹ Baby emphasizes Canning's father's racism when she says, "he'd have shot and stuffed me" if he had met her (120). While Canning's relationship with Baby might be read as an attempt to redress historical racisms embodied

³¹ Indeed, Judith Butler's *The Psychic Life of Power* complicates conceptions of resistance that oppose oppressive forms of power in that their very resistance is, in part, formed by the very power they oppose.

by his father, his cultivation of a “New South African couple” remains predicated on his own vengeance and not necessarily exclusively on his love for Baby. His marriage is formed in the interests of his father; this only reinforces the fact that his racist father is at the center of their union, and that it was not necessarily made in the interests of forging interracial bonds.

Then and Now: A Reading of Interraciality Since Apartheid

Galgut’s earlier novel, *The Beautiful Screaming of Pigs*, written at the time of apartheid’s political dismantling, privileges the moment of political struggle as a significant time of possibility for ethical interracial bonds to emerge, but that possibility comes into question in his later work. At the point when his relationship with Godfrey is about to break down, the two of them find common ground despite the constraints of racialization. While arguing about his mother, Patrick and Godfrey engage in the following exchange in which Patrick tells him, “You shouldn’t treat her badly. You should take care how you speak to her” to which Godfrey responds, “always forcing us to change our culture. Always your way. Always the white way” (116), calling into question the racist implications of Patrick’s statement. Patrick retorts, “I was just trying to talk to you. Not all black people – just you” (116). After an argument in which Godfrey accuses Patrick of being in love with his mother, their fight breaks down in the following passage:

I said, ‘Well, so are you.’ It was a useless reply, but it was the only one that came to me.

It turned out to be the best answer, because in a moment he started laughing. He roared and slapped his stomach. The tension between us, which was about to turn into ugliness – an ugliness, I now think, that was always somehow just below the surface between the three of us through

those days – folded inside out and became something else, something innocuous and innocent. We were just two young men talking on the beach. He came closer to me and put one arm around my shoulders. (117)

One of the central argument of my thesis is that men wield masculinity as a common ground for subverting racial segregation, and this passage offers a pertinent illustration of that thesis. Caught up in the front lines of racial struggle at the first free elections in Namibia, the two identify masculinity as a commonality at which such segregation – if not overcome – can be negotiated. Rather than adhering to racial categories as a way of constructing interracial bonds, Galgut's narrative complicates racialization by introducing a common masculinity as an orientation around which to structure community. What concerns me about the above passage, which I will return to in my next chapter, is that Patrick's mother (and women in general Galgut's other works) are often the objects through which such interracial intersubjectivity is purchased. Figured frequently as objects, they are left out of the project of post-apartheid interracial community-building.

But the novel also raises questions about what happens after the post-apartheid transition, after the political struggle is over, and suggests a return to the normalcy of racial segregation, which is what I want to emphasize of Galgut's later work. The last page of the novel states: "On the far side of the river we drove back into South Africa. We had crossed a line on a map and were in a different land altogether. Hills of grey stone loomed around us, the sky was thorny with stars" (142). The hostility of the landscape here starkly contrasts the earlier optimism of Patrick's encounter with Godfrey where Patrick had come into contact with antiapartheid activism. Even though South Africa stands at the end of apartheid, the novel ends on a vaguely pessimistic note as

Patrick, Ellen and Ellen's new love interest – Dirk Blaauw, a white farmer – return home. Leaving Godfrey and the struggle associated with him behind, they proceed home and “The car was dark again. In front of us, empty and cold, the road travelled onward towards home” (142). Perhaps what the ending of this novel does is problematize the return to normalcy that comes even after the political structure of colonial governments is dismantled. As Patrick and his mother return home, they also return to orientations around whiteness embodied by his family. Also, Ellen discards Godfrey in favor of a new love interest and heads toward home, leaving behind the brief engagement with activism they experienced in Namibia. So even while Patrick participates in and experiences anti-apartheid activism, he still returns home and returns to a racially segregated community. And the novel itself raises the question: how can any interracial community be available given the entrenched apartheid values inherent within South African society?

Galgut's later work is less idealistic on the subject of interraciality. In a scene from *The Imposter*, Adam's understanding of interracial relations questions the extent to which interracial community is possible in the post-apartheid context of the novel. In a moment that echoes his early idealism around his poetry, he goes for a late-afternoon swim in a river to “open up to the world” and reminisces that the “poet in him will sing about moments like these” (79-80). His reverie is quickly disturbed, however, by the presence of a black man described in terms that posit him as the racial other staring at Adam swimming naked:

It's a horrible moment. His body becomes colder than the water. Centuries of history drop away: the forest itself is staring at him – *into* him – with a dark face, lined and worn and old, marinated in ancient contempt. The face belongs here. Adam is the intruder, alien and unwanted; the

single element in the scene that doesn't fit. All his pagan hymns to the landscape depart, unwritten. He is about to vanish without a trace, and the shock jolts him off the rock, into deep water again.

So they look at one another, the black face in the forest and the naked white man, treading water. (80)

This scene's reference to history dropping away is ambiguous: is this scene a complete disavowal of history, or a return to earlier precolonial history? In either case, the landscape's positioning alongside the man's "ancient contempt" and Adam's incongruity with the landscape posits the man's stare in a primitivizing manner, which begs the question: is the third person omniscient narrative of the novel Adam's own thoughts, or those interjected by the authorial voice itself? Is the narrative meant to normalize the primitivizing language of this scene, or is Galgut's novel drawing attention to the problematic nature of Adam's response to this man? That being asked, this scene's incidence within the "natural" landscape disorients Adam's early approach to poetry which had, as I discussed, effaced history and politics. But also, that his "pagan hymns to the landscape depart" remove him from centrality in this narrative. The poetry to which he had earlier clung as the voice of the nation proves to be false and, perhaps, disorients the white masculinity that positions him at the center of things and opens the door for other perspectives to enter. Moreover, Adam's positioning as the outsider within the scene echoes Georgie Horrell's discussion of guilty masculinities, but in a way that is less a relinquishing of power and more a complete impotence as Adam is naked and powerless in this scene. The absence of history also deprives him of a history of white power to draw upon – a history that would give him the requisite power for a relinquishment.

My main concern is that this powerlessness does not bring about any ethical interaction between a figure of whiteness and the racialized other. Instead, it reinforces the opposition between black and white. Indeed, his physical position, looking toward (we might say being orientated toward, following Ahmed) the black figure – because this man is only identified in terms of his race – the black man remains the racialized other rather than a subject of a community. Galgut's description still maintains the lines of racial opposition set out by apartheid, emphasizing that such ideologically entrenched values are not necessarily solved by a confrontation with a racial other. Indeed, this passage tells more about Adam's disempowerment than the man Adam faces and Adam's position as the formerly privileged white man becomes all the more apparent. Passages such as these in Galgut's later novels expose the difficulty of negotiating with ideologies of racialization and question the extent to which they are surmountable in South Africa's current climate. These passages also reveal that rainbowistic modes of community take an uncomplicated approach to post-apartheid life.

Conclusion

My analysis here reveals that white men in Galgut's narratives – themselves representative of many whites' attitudes within South Africa – draw attention to the problems of multicultural community that elucidate the distinction I drew in my introduction between “multiculturalism” and “interraciality.” Galgut's novels bring into question the extent to which the formation of a multicultural community, often motivated by capital interests or liberal constructions of the self, is possible in light of white males'

orientations around whiteness. I have also identified the transitional struggle from apartheid to post-apartheid in Galgut's work as a fruitful moment for negotiations of racial ideology. If we think through interraciality as connected to Bhabha's discussion of hybridity in *The Location of Culture*, in which the hybrid space is meant to be a space of struggle and of negotiation rather than the negation of others, Galgut's texts emphasize that – even while the nation's post-apartheid moment touted rainbowism as its official discourse – such struggles do and must continue given the ideological barriers that maintain racial segregation.

CHAPTER 3

'THE QUIET VIOLENCE' OF EXCLUSION:

WHOSE BODIES MATTER IN THE 'NEW' SOUTH AFRICA?

Introduction

This study has so far dealt extensively with relations between men in post-apartheid South Africa, questioning how men in this period construct racial others and what they are orientated around when they forge interracial communities. But if we examine community in terms of shared physical and ideological orientations as I have done, how do we account for those who lie outside these orientations – those we might be orientated “toward.” By extension, as this study orientates around male bodies, how do those bodies outside its purview – either women or ‘other’ masculinities – inform its central examination of community and masculinity? What is at stake when men remain orientated around self-interested logics of masculinity that do not address others? For example, an increasing number of feminist scholars have challenged the orientations of masculinity studies by pointing out that when we examine men without addressing gender relations between men and women, we run the risk of effacing sociohistorical gender inequalities.³² Given the state of gender inequalities as a site of political contestation in South Africa and the patriarchal histories of apartheid, and given the way that an idyllic multicultural façade has been constructed by certain men, those female and

³² Judith Kegan Gardiner’s edited collection, *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory* elaborates on both the challenges posed to masculinity studies by feminism and the ways that masculinity studies and feminism are necessary counterparts.

other bodies that deviate from this idealism represent a formidable challenge to that façade.

Since this project engages with ideas of national community and community-building discourse alongside masculinity and race, this chapter views the way that men conceptualize bodies who fall outside normative forms of masculinity as paramount to working toward ethical interracial community. Ahmed's concept of being orientated "around" particular ideals or a community involves exclusion as we cultivate communal definitions by being orientated "toward" others. Being orientated "toward" others as sites of exclusion often involves the orientating body using those others as a means to extend the reach of the body as it takes in those others for the "acquisition of new capacities and directions" (Ahmed 115). However, following Ingram's theory of racial and sexual difference which insists on bodily proximity as a component of ethical living, there might be ways of structuring orientations "toward" others ethically; in Ahmed's terms, building ethical communities might mean orientating toward others in ways that do not extend our reach, but that recognize the humanity of those others.

In this chapter I examine K. Sello Duiker's *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* for the way that it constructs interracial communities of men and gay cultures in a post-apartheid urban Cape Town landscape. Duiker's prestige as a canonical South African writer (he was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' prize for 2000's *Thirteen Cents* and the Herman Charles Bosman Prize for *The Quiet Violence of Dreams*), renders him a particularly influential voice within the national community (Stobie 200-201). His novel's polyvocal narration from ten characters' first-person perspectives also reflects an

impulse to reflect a broader community than typical first-person narratives allow. The text follows a main narrator Tshepo, whose struggles as a sex worker foreground deep concerns with racialized black masculinity and the way that men structure interracial bonds and undermine heterosexual masculinities. I draw from critics' assertions that Duiker's novel exposes and disrupts rigid definitions of heteronormative masculinity and race. But Duiker's text is limited in its resistance. The novel posits membership or allowance of bodily proximity within its particular interracial (gay) community as predicated on homogenizing performances of masculine perfection, homonormativity, excluding (for example) those with HIV/AIDS and those who fail to perform specific standards of whiteness. The novel also fails to fully reconfigure racialized and colonial conceptions of manhood in that its formulation of masculinity is predicated on patriarchal politics that exclude female bodies and non-normative masculine bodies. I also suggest that Duiker writes men as important figures in forging bonds across racial divisions in the post-apartheid national community, but writes women as unwilling and often unable to participate in these struggles. In light of the text's disavowal of "different" bodies (whether they be female bodies or non-normative male bodies), it does not necessarily undermine masculinities circulated by apartheid and colonialism in that it maintains segregation between different racial and sexual subjects.

A number of critics of South African masculinity, perhaps too hastily, have viewed male homosexuality as an anti-patriarchal performance of masculinity.³³ As I

³³ For example, Peter Nardi, Vasu Reddy and Pierre Bourdieu have all produced work that views male homosexuality in these terms. While they rightly read homosexuality as a resistance to heteronormativity, the potential of homosexuality to challenge patriarchy needs further qualification.

discussed in my chapter on *Proteus*, homosexuality has certainly been effaced within the national narrative and thus constitutes some resistance to the heteronormalization of national identity. But Duiker's text signals that homosexual sex does not necessarily alter racialization as the gay community in the novel insists that non-white bodies perform particular standards of whiteness. One danger this chapter draws attention to is that viewing homosexuality as a "self-evidently liberatory" alternative to the "male mythology of apartheid" (Barnard 210) potentially overlooks ways that oppressive gender relations and normative standards of masculinity (that are not necessarily undone by homosexual sex) might continue to dominate gay communities in ways that exclude others outside those norms. This is not to suggest that masculinity is itself an impediment to ethical community-building since this study's understanding of community involves acknowledging difference as a part of ethics. For example, in terms of the gendered landscape of South Africa, Morrell points out: "[w]hile it has been common to think that men stand in the way of gender transformation, there are ... indeed instances where men are actively contributing to campaigns for gender equity" ("Men, Movements" 310). However, this chapter's aim is to show particular situations in which certain masculinities reaffirm communal homogeneity – what Goldberg posits as an impediment to post-racial states of being – and, in the process, efface those bodies that deviate from the norm.

Homosexuality does not necessarily undermine what Bhana et al call "racist colonial versions of African male lust and desire ... where women are often seen as passive recipients of sex and sexuality" (133-4). Crous also points out common imagery of the African man as "the untamed savage willing to copulate for an unlimited period of

time” (34) that might remain in place in spite of more progressive views on same-sex sexuality. Both Bhana et al. and Crous reference common stereotypes about African masculinity that posit women as passive recipients of male domination.³⁴ Although male homosexuality perhaps does not posit women as objects of sexual desire, *and* although it may enact resistance by undermining heterosexist masculinities, it does not imply the restructuring of gender norms or the defetishization of black bodies necessary to rupture stereotypes about black male dominance. Indeed, male homosexuality itself (regardless of racial identity) may strengthen relations between men, but allow and perpetuate masculinist ideologies.³⁵ For example, Halberstam criticizes white gay men for having “rejected feminism and a queer of color critique” (“Shame” 219). She suggests that: “[t]he future of queer studies ... depends absolutely on moving away from white gay male identity politics and learning from the radical critiques offered by a younger generation of queer scholars who draw their intellectual inspiration from feminism and ethnic studies rather than white queer studies” (220).³⁶ Halberstam points to venues through which masculinist politics that reinscribe normative standards of sexuality continue to operate within gay communities, and stresses the need to revisit early assertions of queer studies beyond a white- and Western-centric paradigm.

³⁴ Deborah Posel’s, “Sex, Death and the Fate of the Nation” also comments on the common perception of “rapacious black sexuality” left in the wake of apartheid.

³⁵ Isaacs and McKendrick also suggest that “[w]hite gays, who have been suckled on racial prejudice, maintain the status quo. They seek out coloured counterparts for sexual interaction, but refuse to extend this into all aspects of egalitarian living” (94).

³⁶ Halberstam’s critique is leveled at a conference on Gay Shame which she criticizes for being directed at gay white men with predominantly gay white male interests, but she uses this conference as leverage for her broader claims about contemporary queer theory.

My first chapter drew attention to the way that the national narrative excludes queer masculinities by heroizing anti-apartheid hypermasculinities, but the nation's focus on these men also excludes women's bodies from the work of nation-building. Seidman lauds South Africa as having structured a state in which women's interests have been written into national policy, claiming: "Women activists managed to mobilize a constituency sympathetic to feminist claims and to assert the legitimacy of gender issues within the democratic opposition and the negotiation process" (303). Certainly, in contrast to contemporary discussions of democracy that overlook gender as a component of citizenship, South Africa has made headway by addressing gender in the constitution, women's participation in state politics (Goetz), and reproductive rights (Knudsen).³⁷ However, since my project examines national community in terms of the organization of bodies rather than official policy, I draw a distinction between the ways that South African policy writes bodies into legal protection and the way that bodies live within their social context in a nation where racial difference, the spectre of colonial morality and appeals to traditional "culture" often exclude non-normative masculinities and overlook women's participation in nation-building (Bhana et al.).³⁸ And, since moves toward gender equity in policy do not necessarily ensure *actual* gender equity, we also need to examine the ways that men engage with women and the limits of their own definition of masculinity if we want to obtain a broader picture of the state of gender in South Africa.

³⁷ These concessions on the part of the South African state are not necessarily all-inclusive, however. Since Oldfield, Salo and Schlyter point out that rights-based approaches to feminist struggle "mask the differences that divide and thus privilege some women over others" (3).

³⁸ Morrell ("Men, Movements") points out that patriarchal politics still dominate political practice in South Africa as many men lash out in violence against women or exclude women from political arenas.

Duiker's novel does valuable work in terms of critiquing racial segregation. His novel is fraught with racial tensions that the central narrator, Tshepo, a 23 year-old Xhosa man, encounters, from his stay at a psychiatric hospital for "cannabis induced psychosis" (9), to being raped by his roommate, Chris (211-13), to becoming a sex-worker for mainly white clientele. Marius Crous's analysis of masculinity in Duiker's writing suggests that "male authors [such as Duiker] deconstruct stereotypical notions of masculinity, especially seen in the light of the reconciliatory interaction between men in the post-apartheid society depicted in the case of Duiker" (35). Crous's reading of Duiker's novel derives from his view of homosexuality as a revolt against heterosexual masculinity. "[W]hen South Africans went to the polls in 1994 to vote for a democratic government," he argues, "homosexuals ... did not only vote against the symbolic domination of the white apartheid regime but also against the domination of a heterosexist patriarchy" (22). He suggests that "homosexual men view themselves as men now and they operated in" (23) what Vasu Reddy refers to as "a more liberalized context" (qtd. in Crous 23). Unfortunately, while Crous suggests that Duiker liberates men from heterosexist constraints, he pays little attention to the novel's racial tensions and less to its representation of women.

Viljoen's analysis of the novel, on the other hand, reveals the extent to which race and racism are inescapable components of contemporary Cape Town urban landscapes within Duiker's text. Viljoen argues that Duiker's fiction reveals non-racialism to be a fiction and Viljoen signals "a trajectory [in] which thinking about 'race' [as opposed to non-racialism] has taken over the last fifteen years, from writing under apartheid to

writing in the new democracy” (46-47). Viljoen pays particular attention to Tshepo’s struggle with racial identity and his “impulse towards wanting to live beyond race, in a truly nonracial conglomerate” (51). A Rhodes University educated student, Tshepo struggles with how others limit him based on his racial identity. Viljoen cites a passage in which Tshepo thinks to himself: “Is it possible to feel South African and not to always source my culture to a particular race group? Can I claim Afrikaans, Coloured tsotsi taal, Indian cuisine or English sensibilities as my own? Must I always be apologetic for wanting more than what my culture offers?” (347-8). Viljoen suggests that Tshepo “insists on seeing himself not as a psychotic man or a black man or a gay man but rather as a rich amalgam of shifting, intermingling identities” (51). Tshepo certainly complicates biologicistic assumptions about race, even in the face of those racialising social forces around him, but Duiker does not allot all others’ the same capacities.

Sex Work and the Work of Community-Building: The Men of *Steamy Windows*

In the following section, I examine an interracial community of men represented within Duiker’s novel that posits men’s sexuality as a catalyst for social power. Tshepo begins a career as a sex worker at a massage parlor, *Steamy Windows*, after being raped by his roommate. Through the course of his employment there, his life seems to improve as the other men welcome him into a fraternal community united around queer sexuality. All of the men use chosen pseudonyms in their work (Tshepo uses “Angelo” after the artist Michelangelo), foregrounding their insistence on freedom and liberation from social

constraints as they self-style their identities. With few exceptions, we never discover their given names.

At first, Tshepo lauds the inclusivity of the fraternity and increasingly conforms to its communal standards. His final narrative sections of the novel (each “chapter” of the novel is preceded by the name of its narrator) are preceded by the title “Angelo” where his earlier narratives had been preceded by “Tshepo” (331), emphasizing his assimilation of the communal ideals embodied by *Steamy Windows*. Also, while he thinks that the logic of a brotherhood “might have been a gimmick” to improve business, “it doesn’t matter because the truth is we, the stallions [the male sex workers], have translated it into our work” (286). While at a party with the other men headed by the founder of *Steamy Windows*, Andromeda, Tshepo states: “I feel strangely connected to them ... I catch a glimpse of Andromeda shadow-dancing by himself ... He is also topless. His beauty could enchant any god. ... Perhaps his chest is the face of a god. Perhaps his nipples are eyes, his belly button a nose and beneath his zip lies a curious mouth with a moustache” (304). Tshepo’s deification of Andromeda’s body singles him out as the center of the crowd and at the center of Tshepo’s orientations in this moment. More than that, Tshepo posits a male body which conforms to popular standards of male beauty as the center of this community’s orientations with which he desires association. But his deification of this particular male body also brings into question whose bodies lie outside this community. If Andromeda’s body is the site of beatific perfection (evinced by the ‘godlike’ face mapped on his chest), whose bodies are positioned outside that perfection?

Indeed, the *Steamy Windows* community is predicated on exclusions derived from particular standards of perfection for the male body. For example, when Storm, “breaks into a cough” Tshepo states: “In this industry, coughing or bad health is an ominous sign ... Storm gets up and leaves the room, still coughing. We look at each other but say nothing, Aids [sic] lurking quietly in our thoughts” (313). That the others will not speak to Storm or each other evidences the silence and ostracism surrounding HIV/AIDS, especially since Storm leaves the room and his body is removed from the community of men around him. That Tshepo’s silent introspection does not readily counter the ostracism of bodies with HIV/AIDS – and, in fact, assumes solidarity with the other men around him – indicates that bodily proximity within this community is only bequeathed on those “healthy” bodies that fit into a particular standard.

Moreover, given its approach to HIV/AIDS, the degree to which this community of men reflects the realistic struggles of sex workers in South African communities is questionable. While Duiker might liberate sex work from the moralistic condemnation conventionally associated with it, he certainly does not construct a community representative of the plight of sex-workers in South Africa. Indeed, its excision of bodies living with HIV leaves out a significant portion of the South African sex workers grappling with the HIV/AIDS pandemic (given that South African sex workers show a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS³⁹), and Duiker’s work fails to question the social stigma attributed to people with HIV/AIDS.

³⁹ See Dunkle et al, Campbell and Mzaidume, and Ramjee and Gouws for analyses and statistics on South African sex work and HIV/AIDS.

Steamy Windows is also a community of men who pride themselves on the powerful social networks they garner from their clients, as Tshepo discovers when he is initiated into the 'brotherhood.' Storm's ostracism at the possibility of having contracted HIV evidences the extent to which this community excludes and further ostracizes the disempowered. When Tshepo is 'initiated' (when he sleeps with his first client), another male sex worker, West, tells him, "you're one of us now. We're like brothers here. ... And you will do things that you never thought you would do ... People look at us and think that is all we do – fucking. But I'm telling you with all the things we have done and seen we could do anything. I could be president one day" (244). West's last comment refers to the political prowess of their high-end clients who "[show] them things, [tell] them things for the times ahead" (244). In one reading, West's speech might seem liberatory. That he identifies the networks of power that the men come into contact with certainly gives them more agency than is conventionally attributed to sex workers. Moreover, that West could "be president" (in hyperbolic terms), at least signals that he views this community not simply as a group of sex workers, but as an important social ladder within the national community. Duiker's representation of this community posits its constituents as social conduits necessary to liberating South African men ("What we do, it is very serious ... We are doing important work here" [244], West tells Tshepo).

On the other hand, West inducts Tshepo into an exclusive community of men predicated on political power. West reveals that, "it isn't so much that we want guys that look good or have nice bodies. ... We were looking for something deeper, something real, someone who wants to do something with his life. And you passed. I have a degree

in bio-chemistry from Stellenbosch” (244). Even though West’s comments suggest that “Steamy Windows” does not solely employ men based on limited standards of beauty, these standards are still necessary – they are still a standard by which this community of men excludes others. West’s background also reveals his “something deeper” to be associated with higher education. That he alludes to Patrick “passing,” mimicking the lexicon of institutional education, also signals the exclusivity of this community to those who ostensibly “fail” to get admission to it. The requisite social clout entwined with higher education and limited standards of beauty of this community gives it rigid standards few can achieve, limiting its liberatory capacity to a chosen few. Since this community is constructed in such hierarchical terms as the men of *Steamy Windows* cultivate high social standing, it renders those others who “fail” admission accessories to this community’s superiority. In Ahmed’s terms, these others are the means through which their bodies’ reach is extended – through which their high social clout is purchased. If we understand ethical community building in the terms I laid out above, this community fails to ethically account for difference.

The degree of inclusivity within this community also comes into question in that it is predicated on racial essentialism. As a selling factor, Tshepo’s *Steamy Windows* profile refers to him as a “black stallion” (271), fetishizing his blackness by tacking an animalizing metaphor onto it.⁴⁰ Eventually, Tshepo (as Angelo) states: “I wonder why almost all the men that come see me are white. Where are all the black men? I have seen

⁴⁰ As Butler puts it, “[i]t is important to remember that the bestialization of the human in this way has little, if anything, to do with actual animals, since it is a figure of the animal against which the human is defined” (*Precarious* 78).

one or two disappear down the corridor with one of the other white guys” (331). The fetishized version of Tshepo’s body is of prime importance to his sex work especially since most of his clientele seek him out precisely because he is black (271; 315; 332). Ingram foregrounds the proximity of racially different bodies as a prerequisite for an ethics of racial difference, but the positioning of bodies within *Steamy Windows* – instead of subverting logics of racialization – reinscribes colonial stereotypes about hypersexualised black masculinity and precludes interracial community. Tshepo as a black man within the *Steamy Windows* community is only allotted as much agency as his hypersexual image allows. On the one hand, as Crous points out, the homosexual sex of this community enacts some resistance to heterosexist values, but where black and white bodies interact in *Steamy Windows*, they only do so in the economy of sex and “disappear” down the corridor; interracial gay sexuality remains predicated on capital interests and behind closed doors.

Tshepo is unable to achieve the level gay fraternity his fellow sex workers share as a result of his fetishized figuration as a “Black Stallion.” Late in the novel he is kicked out of a gay club because he is black. His response to the club’s “racism ... belies the notion of a gay fraternity” that the men at *Steamy Windows* earlier display (Viljoen 51). Echoing Halberstam’s assertions about white gay culture being primarily focused on white concerns, Tshepo states, “I can’t believe that [gay men] can be so racist ... They are white people before they are gay, I tell myself” (343). However, this moment of exclusion also causes Tshepo to think about the seemingly innocuous racial politics of his fraternity: “Why are Cole and I the only black faces?” he asks (344). He realizes that the

only black people he has seen accepted into the fraternity's inner circle are "not the ones I would meet in the township or in a squatter camp. They were all dressed in a certain way and spoke with a certain accent, sophisticated, with manners that everyone found charming, endearing" (344). While the brotherhood does not necessarily segregate bodies based on visually signified, biologicistic blackness, Tshepo's comments identify that *Steamy Windows* operates on a similar type of segregation orientated around whiteness. There is a community incorporative only of those black bodies who conform to the accent, sophistication and charm deemed acceptable. Indeed, that Tshepo comments on the fact that there are only a few black faces and that all of these black faces conform to standards of whiteness which excise performances akin to bodies within townships emphasizes the extent to which this community homogenizes the behaviour of its constituent bodies. Duiker's novel also foregrounds the ways that, in spite of a façade of progressive sexuality, racial categories still impede the formation of interracial bonds in post-apartheid South Africa in that the realities of many black bodies in South Africa – those in townships and squatter camps – are excluded from contemporary urban landscapes. As such, Tshepo's membership within the *Steamy Windows* community remains orientated around whiteness; aspects of his identity as a black man remain repressed or fetishised as a commodity.

If we recall from my introduction the way that Ingram and Goldberg call for acknowledgments of difference as a central tenet of ethics and "post-racial" states, respectively, the insisted homogeneity of *Steamy Windows* precludes the formation of an ethical interracial community. On the one hand, the men self-consciously wield race as a

way to “get ahead,” thereby knowingly subverting logics of racialization (Tshepo’s advertisement as a “Black Stallion” is knowingly enacted in same-sex relationships that undermine many heterosexist assumptions). However, in their very act of being social conduits for the rich and powerful, their resistance is only useful for their own fiscal gain and does not subvert any of the power structures around them. Their community remains orientated around homogeneous standards for its constituent bodies. The men do not alter the ideologies of their often racist clientele – evidenced by their fetishization of Tshepo’s black body. Indeed, their business is one that allows for racialization to proceed; it produces a service for men to exoticize and racialize black bodies and, as such, constructs Tshepo as the racial other. In Goldberg’s terms, the homogeneity insisted upon by this community precludes any possibility of a post-racial state of being that allows for racial difference.

That being said, the novel complicates any singular reading because of its polyvocal narrative structure with Tshepo at its center. That Tshepo introspectively troubles the racialization of his body disrupts what Ingram calls representational signifiers that posit black bodies as racial others. Tshepo’s narrative disallows the reader comfortable ignorance to the politics of *Steamy Windows*. As such, Duiker’s novel *draws attention* to certain exclusions in contemporary urban culture and what it means to be the racial other “toward” which communities of whiteness orientate. The narrative might be said to orientate its reader “around” Tshepo’s personal struggle with racism and away from the homogenizing language of whiteness. But the degree to which Tshepo only introspectively resists this logic as he outwardly conforms to the homogenizing standards

of *Steamy Windows*, especially as he contributes to ostracism of bodies with HIV/AIDS, is a troubling component of the novel.

The men of *Steamy Windows*: Reinscribing Colonial Gender Dichotomies

My analysis of women in Duiker's text draws from Ingram's formulation of racial and sexual difference. The colonial gaze, she suggests, denies the feminine and racial other "Being," in Heideggerian terms. These others are reduced to the ontic qualities of race and sex in the metaphysical lexicon of the colonial subject and become a reflection of white masculinity. It is from this reduction inherent within representational language that she calls for a performative language of bodily proximity between racially or sexually different others rather than a constative metaphysical language of representation. In Ingram's terms, Duiker's novel fails to account for sexual difference in that it linguistically reinforces the feminine as a reflection of male sexuality. The men of *Steamy Windows* have the agency to cultivate some sense (however flawed) of non-heterosexual fraternity, but women are denied that agency.

Tshepo speaks with Sebastian about the *Steamy Windows* 'brotherhood,' and Sebastian reveals underlying misogynist logics that ostracize women as one of this brotherhood's central tenets. Sebastian tells Tshepo that "[m]en really haven't been given the chance to explore their sexuality. Men are either married or expected to be" (248-49). Duiker draws attention to the ways that patriarchies are oppressive to men as well as women in that, like women, men must adhere to stringent sexual boundaries within the institution of marriage. He also comments on the way that "Western culture ... sanitises

sex and horniness with politeness and manners, but in a rigid form” (248). A self-proclaimed “queen” and openly gay man (337), he embodies resistance to heteronormative conceptions of gender and the patriarchal family structure (“Society has always been oppressive to gays” [253], he tells Tshepo). However, his comments overlook the extent to which patriarchal family structures oppress women.

His idealization of the *Steamy Windows* community focuses exclusively on the ways that heteronormativity and conservative notions of culture limit men’s sexuality, but his analysis of its affects on women’s bodies is comparatively limited. He tells Tshepo, “I think men have always been more sexual than women ... Their sexuality is a lot more introspective. I don’t think lesbians are as sexual as gay men. I don’t know. It doesn’t seem so. There would be more pick up joints, more bars for them, more porno and skin magazines” (252). Sebastian’s comments posit gender essentialisms that rely on hearsay evidence about the unavailability of sexual commodities geared toward women. But his argument overlooks patriarchal processes in place that produce sexual commodities geared toward men and not women. He earlier criticizes patriarchies’ oppression of male bodies, but here he does not critique the modes through which patriarchal organization of commodities effaces female sexuality and hypersexualizes male bodies by directing sexual commodity toward men and not women. His critique of sexualities does not subvert the patriarchal politics that have moralized sexuality in South Africa,⁴¹ silenced women’s sexuality and hypersexualized particularly black men. His

⁴¹ Deborah Posel’s “Sex, Death and the Fate of the Nation,” comments on moralizing discourse both within South Africa’s apartheid past and within conservative backlash against the post-1994 liberalization of sexuality.

definition of sex is also suspect; is he referring to the act of “fucking,” or other sexual practices? In any case, his definition leaves female sexuality out and encloses sexuality within particular parameters that overlook non-commodified forms of sexual intimacy.

Sebastian reinforces the primitivization and hypersexualization of non-white bodies alongside his reductive analysis of women. He theorizes “so-called primitive societies,” telling Tshepo, “[i]t could be native Indians from the Amazon jungle or the Xhosa in the Transkei” (249). His generalistic analysis of non-Western is also exacerbated by his reduction of them to rigid gender and sexual strictures when he states, “[i]n so-called primitive societies men are more aware of themselves. ... a man, even a boy, knows what he is doing when he puts his penis inside a woman. ... And the women too, they are aware of themselves, of how weak they are against a man’s strength and how to use sex in their favor” (249). Sebastian’s comments echo the tenets of racial historicism in that, while they attempt to counter the primitivization of non-Western bodies, they still posit non-Western societies, in general, in opposition to the modernized urban culture to which Sebastian belongs. Mimicking the colonial gaze, Sebastian’s uncomplicated logic structures gender relations of these societies in exclusively sexualized terms, contributing to hypersexualized stigmatization of particularly black bodies and reducing the sexuality of non-Western bodies to copulation. He also refers to women in nothing but reproductive terms.

He further suggests that “in the new order gay women are going to be the wise women of the community, the wise mothers, the elders. ... Women’s role is going to be greater than men’s because society will revert to a reverence for the earth mother. ... Men

may rule, but women will dominate” (254). What is striking about Sebastian’s projection of his idyllic future is that it does not alter the trajectory of patriarchal politics in that men rule. Women dominate, presumably through sexuality as he suggests they have done, but their revered position leaves them out of an exclusively male political field. Women remain mothers, preserving their idealization exclusively within heteroreproductivity.

Given the novel’s focus on Tshepo’s concerns over exclusions from gay communities, Duiker does not necessarily promote Sebastian’s postulations as truth, particularly not his reduction of racial others. However, the remainder of the novel does not refute masculinist assumptions about community. While Tshepo is skeptical of Sebastian’s reduction of racial others, wondering how Sebastian has “enough authority to make sweeping remarks like that” (249), he does not readily oppose Sebastian’s gender politics. Indeed, later in the novel while having sex with a white female tourist he thinks: “I watch her and want to laugh. There is something so comical about watching a woman having sex. They let go so completely. Really, it makes me want to laugh” (333). In contrast to the complex conceptualizations of male sexuality in the novel (Tshepo’s in particular, as Viljoen points out, is a complex amalgam of identities), Tshepo generalistically reduces women’s sexuality to an uncomplicated object of humour. Similar to Sebastian’s analysis of women, for Tshepo, sex with one woman becomes a springboard for his postulations about sex with women in general as he makes essentialist claims about female sexuality. Stobie writes that “[Tshepo’s] reaction to both sexes differ markedly. He finds having sex with a woman ridiculous [but] ... [b]y contrast, sex with men is seen as transcendental” (203). Indeed, the complex conceptualizations of male

sexuality related to Tshepo by Storm are nowhere found in the novel's formulation of female sexuality. If we think of orientations in Ahmed's logic, whereby a subject orientates toward an other, purchasing its own definition in the reflection of that other, Tshepo's reduction of this woman to a subject of humor draws the woman into an unspoken comparison with his own sexuality and assumes the seriousness and superiority of it. In so doing, he reinforces colonial assumptions about black male sexuality that treat women as objects of sexual prowess. Moreover, as the woman becomes a reflection of his own sexuality. In Ahmed's terms Tshepo renders the woman a humorous object of his own orientation around male sexuality as a means to extend his own body's superiority. He precludes the possibility of acknowledging difference (what Ingram and Goldberg stress as a component of legitimate community-building) with women, as the woman becomes an extension of his self rather than a legitimate other.

Duiker's Preclusion of Female Community

Duiker's novel writes women as less capable of tackling racism and of cultivating interracial community than the male subjects of the novel. The text revolves around narratives from male characters. While the masculine voice of the text is not intrinsically *unethical*, the text's community of men structures relations with women in a way that writes women out of these communities. The novel's only central female narrator is Mmabatho, a friend of Tshepo's and a university Drama student.⁴² Early in the novel

⁴² The only other female narrator in the novel is Akousia, a woman who lives with her husband, Patrick. Tshepo briefly lives with the couple before returning to Valkenberg. However, she is also "always slightly

Tshepo describes her as having an “ability to gather strength, summon courage as if calculating the storm ahead” (11). But the initial image of Mmabatho as a strong woman fades over the course of the book. As Tshepo navigates the politics of interracial community at *Steamy Windows*, Mmabatho’s life and suffering are progressively individualized.

Mmabatho’s approach to other women paints her as incapable of building community. At a wedding she states: “I hate weddings. They are an excuse for some women to band together and gloat that they are successful because they are married while the rest of us clutch onto irritable dates we just met, nervous about the introspection that weddings stir” (111). While she does momentarily align herself with a particular community of other women who eschew marriage, she later states: “I don’t like women. They are too competitive” (113). While her distrust of marriage perhaps levels a critique at the institutionalization of intimacy, her distrust is directed at other women rather than the institution itself. Moreover, although she earlier describes herself as “the sort of person who takes being a woman seriously” (58), her purported dislike of other women brings into question the legitimacy of her feminist politics. Unlike the camaraderie that Tshepo displays with other men at points in the novel, Mmabatho never achieves this level of closeness with other women. For feminist scholars such as Nina Auerbach, who reads communities of women in the history of English literature, communities of women represent a rebuke to the subjection of female existence to men in patriarchal social

behind this impressive man [Patrick]” (86), which subjects her to her husband and so contributes to the novel’s limiting of women’s agency in the novel.

contexts,⁴³ but Duiker's novel precludes the ability of women to form cohesive social bonds.

Over the course of the novel, Mmabatho regresses into an emotional state that counters her earlier confidence, especially as the novel individualizes her suffering. She rekindles a relationship with her former boyfriend, Arne, a German student in South Africa, after he sleeps with her friend, and makes claims about womanhood that bring into question the extent to which women can participate in interracial (or any) community in the same way as men:

A Woman has to go far to look for herself. She has to go beyond the security of her village, past the men lingering at the gates. She has to go inside herself and get to know the little girl that everyone protected with lies. Rejection, this is not serious, I was told. Men, you must never trust them. Sing, now, alone, like the unsung heroine you must become, for love is unrequited. Sing, for tomorrow may never hear your songs. Sing, always alone because you are destined for your mother's fate – unsung and unloved. Sing because you don't know your mother. Sing always for yourself, because you can't trust men, can't depend on their love. The only real love from a man a woman gets to know is from her father. (132)

While Duiker's analysis of womanhood here perhaps draws attention to the ways women have been positioned as objects in the economy of heterosexual love, he individualizes women's suffering in a way that excludes them from belonging to community. That women must abscond communities of men to find themselves evidences that such communities bear no place for women. Mmabatho draws on an autonomous construction of the self, in which she attempts to "look for herself," a notion that counters poststructuralist concepts of subjectivity that posit the self as dependent on its social

⁴³ For example, refer to Nina Aurbach's *Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction*.

context.⁴⁴ Duiker's individualistic representation of Mmabatho makes essentialist assumptions about femininity that contrast the community-building men are capable of in his novel. In terms of the above quotation, as a part of maturation and the process of 'finding oneself,' women must abscond from communities of men (evidenced by the metaphor of leaving the village) with no alternative. The above quotation even questions whether women are capable of maturation as Duiker's text posits the center of female identity as a "little girl," infantilizing Mmabatho. Even Tshepo's analysis of Mmabatho calls her "ferocious wit ... a consequence of a child who suffered a messy divorce and never got over it. Her flawed relationships with men are an eternal saga" (121). His analysis of her, like Mmabatho's own description of womanhood, infantilizes her and undercuts his early perceptions of her as a strong woman. Also, that her "flawed" relationships are an "eternal saga" precludes her from being a subject capable of building community as her only claim to intersubjectivity lies in heterosexual romance. In contrast to Tshepo who, in spite of the whiteness of his community, is able to forge a place for himself in an interracial community of men, Mmabatho remains completely isolated.

In particular, Duiker's handling of same-sex female desire filters through Mmabatho's one lesbian experience and starkly contrasts the text's depiction of male sexuality. Mmabatho describes an early relationship with Karuna, a bartender, "the deliciously beautiful Indian woman" (72), in what is the only reference to *female*

⁴⁴ For example, theorists such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler conceptualize the subject as a social construction. Particularly for Butler in *Giving an Account of Oneself*, the "sociality of the self" is the beginning of understanding the individual as part of an ethical community as individuals realize their accountability to others for their very existence.

interracial or same-sex desire in the text. Mmabatho reveals: “I had an affair with her”

but was

more attracted to the idea of being with a woman than liking a woman. But we remain friends, soulful, whenever we see each other we kiss on the cheek and gossip. And sometimes she teases me with her long curls and soft butterfly eyelashes. But I know I’m not a lesbian. I like men too much. Women’s bodies make fragile landscapes. (72)

Duiker’s text preferentially complicates male sexuality and same-sex desire as opposed to female. Mmabatho’s comments leave female same-sex desire only an ‘idea,’ beyond the realm of possibility for his one prominent female narrator. As she gives the only indication of female same-sex desire the novel has to offer, the text refuses to entertain the political potential of women’s sexuality, in contrast to the way Tshepo idealizes sex between men as a political and transcendental experience. Similar to what Tshepo and Sebastian do in their interactions with women, Mmabatho here reduces Karuna to weak imagery grounded in patriarchal stereotypes with her “soft butterfly” lashes. Mmabatho’s description echoes Stobie’s suggestion that the novel’s imagery “fetter[s] women characters to the stereotyped roles of incubator, mother and caregiver, revealing a lack of depth, complexity and agency in their depiction” (206). That women’s bodies (women, in general) make “fragile landscapes” posits them as passive objects of exploration, depriving them of strength and agency.

Indeed, Duiker’s construction of Mmabatho precludes the possibility that women might “find themselves” in sites other than heterosexual reproduction. As the novel progresses, Mmabatho increasingly shifts her focus onto Arne to the point where pursuits once important to her fade, as indicated by the following moment when she discusses her

Drama degree: “At Drama I’m restless and moody. The others complain when I miss my cues” (195). Just before finding out she is pregnant, she states: “I look less in the mirror and more into my man’s eyes ... I welcome the woman I will become. ... I feel my waist yielding to the charm of his arms ... I memorize the landscape of his body” (190). In this passage, her exclusive focus lies with Arne, and she becomes increasingly isolated when he deserts her late in her pregnancy. The end of the novel leaves her alone and reduces her only option heterosexual ideals of motherhood. She states: “I hardly see anyone nowadays. ... I am about to become a mother, that is where my focus lies” (447). Her self-assessment starkly contrasts Tshepo’s liberalist closing statement: “[I]n trusting more, we trust ourselves. ... I know where my greatest treasures lie. They are within me” (457). Unlike Mmabatho, Tshepo achieves an individualistic self-satisfaction based on mutual trust with others. In contrast, Mmabatho must rescind ties to others and exclusively focus on motherhood. Duiker does not posit an outside to this isolated intimacy to which women are consigned. While, by the end of the novel, Tshepo achieves some sense of belonging to a community and intersubjectivity, Mmabatho is left alone in the throes of isolation and individualized suffering. This analysis is not to devalue loneliness and solitude as one mode of being, but Mmabatho’s isolation and lack of support system in the wake of her lover leaving her writes her out of the possibility of community. However, Duiker’s handling of women posit them as the ‘other’ of communities of men, incapable of the community-building capacities of men.

In my introductory discussion of Ahmed and Goldberg, I foregrounded the ways that patriarchal and racial politics are intimately connected. For Ahmed, logics of

racialization proceed by maintaining genealogical claims to sameness through the heterosexual family. For Goldberg, state racial politics align with its patriarchal politics that leave particularly black women underprivileged. While Duiker's text potentially disrupts the heteronormative logics of South African patriarchal values, sexual and communal bonds between men function as exchanges of power and exchanges of transcendental experience.⁴⁵ While men achieve some level of interracial community (not necessarily an ethical community of difference, since Tshepo's membership in it is limited by his race), Duiker's under-complicated representation of women disallows them the same community-building capacity as men. The novel individualizes women's suffering and gives a troublingly evasive instance of female same-sex desire. Duiker's failure to write the female as a legitimate other, in Ingram's terms, denies women "being" and precludes any ethical interaction between the sexes. As such, the text reinforces similar logics to those along which racialization draws exclusions.

Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated on exclusions that perhaps *must* occur when we forge interracial community; in some sense, to be orientated around particular community ideologies is already to signal an outside embodied by those who may not belong to that community. That being said, Ahmed and Ingram both posit ethical conceptions of difference whereby an other might not be reduced to objectification within racial or sexual signifiers as a means to extend the orientating self's reach, but might instead be

⁴⁵ Refer to Stobie (204) for a discussion of male versus female sexuality in Duiker's text.

fully acknowledged as human. Duiker's text both draws attention to and reinscribes many exclusions as he draws attention – somewhat problematically – to the racialization of black bodies, but excludes those others (women, bodies with illness, and non-normative masculinities) who fail to replicate standards of normative masculinity. If we accept the closing moment of his text that lauds 'trusting others' and forging communal bonds, we must be cognizant of those his novel excludes from community-formation. Also, if we understand ethical community building as bound up with recognizing difference – in contrast to apartheid logics of segregation and racialization – Duiker's text mimics many of the segregatory logics left in the wake of apartheid.

CONCLUSION

DISORIENTATION AND *INTERRACIAL* STRUGGLE:

WORLD CUP RAINBOWISM IN SOUTH AFRICA'S PRESENT MOMENT

I want us to think about how queer politics might *involve* disorientation, without legislating disorientation as a politics. It is not that disorientation is always radical. Bodies that experience disorientation can be defensive, as they reach out for support or as they search for a place to ground and reorientate their relation to the world. So, too, the forms of politics that proceed from disorientation can be conservative, depending on the 'aims' of their gestures, depending on how they seek to (re)ground themselves.

-Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (158)

This project set out to think through ways of forging interracial community that counter the idealism of post-apartheid rainbowism. I sought to think through texts that disorient rainbowism's multicultural façade, or that narrativize disorienting experiences that jar bodies away from this façade. One of this project's goals was to theorize ways of thinking through the "New" South Africa that allow for *interracial* (rather than *non-racial*) struggle to be a part of imagining the national communal narrative.

I began this study by signaling a historical moment at which South Africa was leaving behind the logic of rainbowism, perhaps because it represented a failed orientation for the country's future. If we think through disorientation in Ahmed's terms as "failed orientations" in which "bodies inhabit spaces that do not extend their shape, or use objects that do not extend their reach" (160), the nation's leaving behind the façade of rainbowism might be considered a disorientation. This disorientation is evidenced in light of the racial tensions (which I highlighted in my introduction) that have recently flooded the nation's consciousness – bringing into question the idealism of the 1990s. With the nation's realization of the extent of the HIV/AIDS crisis, xenophobic violence in 2008,

Malema's singing of the "shoot the Boer" song and Eugene Terre'Blanche's death. Indeed, bearing witness to ongoing racial struggles within South Africa can only expose the failed orientation of the nation's rainbowistic façade. I cite the above epigraph to highlight the need to continue exposing those narratives that disorient the nation's communal narrative that in turn effaces certain bodies in order that we might remember those it leaves out. In recent years, however, failed orientations or disorientations experienced in South Africa have resulted in the nation's regrounding within conservative notions of community.

South Africa has seen a resurgence of rainbowistic discourse since the nation entered the global spotlight when it hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup in June and July of this year. In a recent *Weekend Post* article, Walter Mupangavanhu reminisced that, during the event, "[w]e no longer had the poor or the rich, the black, coloured or the white, but all became a united people." Mupangavanhu's comment recalls the colourblindness of non-racialism. The event was replete with multicultural discourse, with celebrity presences from around the world (though particularly the Western world) and Africa. Jacob Zuma was variously shown on television next to other world leaders. Columbian singer Shakira performed her song "Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)" during the event's kick-off. Also, figures from Hugh Masekela to R. Kelly performed at the opening ceremony, which featured large-screened depictions of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See Verashni Pillay's "South Africa Celebrates Start of World Cup" for a description of the World Cup's opening events.

These latter images of the nation's former leaders seemed to be evoking a historical moment at which South Africa was looking toward a hopeful future of non-racial harmony; it also masculinized the national narrative. Evoking figures from the nation's past which, as I discussed in my chapter on *Proteus*, were influential in propagating the aspirational logic of non-racialism and heroic masculinities, the World Cup covered over the nation's racial tensions with a façade of anti-apartheid masculine heroism to kick-off the World Cup. The event brought the nation back to a utopian moment in its history embodied by heroic masculinities that all could be proud of and, in the current moment, pat themselves on the back for banding together with other nations of the world under the scheme of healthy competition. They could momentarily enter into a 'state' of amnesia, forgetting the racial tensions of mere months prior with Terre'Blanche's death and Julius Malema's disciplinary hearing. It is also curious that the ceremony spent little time heroizing men currently prominent in South African media (for example, Jacob Zuma). This begs the question: if such figures were shown, would the national narrative of masculinity be so idealistic? The answer to that question is, emphatically, no.

Furthermore, the World Cup orientated the nation around particular (hyper)masculinities grounded in notions of healthy competition which the nation was meant to band around in veneration. Mere months before, the film *Invictus* was released, a film that heroizes the efforts of Nelson Mandela (played, of course, by the American actor Morgan Freeman) to unify the nation under the then-upcoming 1995 Rugby World Cup which the country was to host. Documenting the *Springbok* captain François

Pienaar's disorientation as he comes face-to-face with Mandela, a man who has spent nearly thirty years in prison, the film contributes to World Cup hype by ushering the nation back to a moment when sport was utilized to unite people of various racial identities under common aspirations of victory. The film foregrounds the *Springboks'* victory (which is hyperbolized as a victory for South Africa) as the defining moment of the film. Nelson Mandela and male rugby players are glorified for overcoming racial tensions in the interest of sport. The 2010 World Cup, its accompanying film, and the opening ceremony whose showcase of celebrities brought South Africa under the world's eye for a month orientated the nation around a particular past when South Africa could be hopeful.

All of the above events were rendered in the interests of a particular sporting event and view interracial struggle as a thing of the past – something *overcome*. Their coincidence made for an amalgam of texts that orientated the nation around the comfortable idealism of the rainbow nation moment. The nation's veneration of two uncontroversially heroic anti-apartheid figures, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, directed the nation toward these particular masculinities and foregrounded to the world these men's importance in South Africa's the national community. In my first chapter I suggested that the apotheosization of Nelson Mandela constructs particular heterosexual ideals for masculinity and effaces queerness in the national narrative. Indeed, the World Cup's veneration of these male figures reoriented us around these masculinities, diverting our gaze from struggles happening in South Africa, including those around race and sexuality. One of the central arguments of my second chapter stressed moments of

struggle as pivotal to cultivating interracial bonds. As our gaze was directed toward Mandela, the opening ceremony encouraged us to turn away from racial struggle and toward a figuration of non-racial multiculturalism. We were asked to band together once again and celebrate sporting masculinities, ignoring ongoing struggles in the nation.

Invictus, which documents Mandela's use of sport to unite the nation, posits both Mandela and those men involved in sport as imperative to uniting the national community. The film's and the 2010 World Cup's emphasis on unity posited interracial struggle as a thing of the past. Was the film's implication for the present, by extension, that South Africa could once again orientate around this competitive hypermasculinity as an important component of nation-building? Indeed, Mupangavanhu suggests that we should "embrace [The World Cup] and learn from it." The glorification of the FIFA World Cup's masculine nation building also echoes my assertions in chapter three as women and non-normative masculinities are effaced from this sporting events' idealized masculine nation building. That chapter stressed the need to structure communities based on difference in light of the way normative masculinities leave certain bodies out of the national narrative. The resurgence of this hypermasculinity signals the extent to which the 2010 World Cup disacknowledges the work of nation building done by non-normative masculinities and feminist struggles.⁴⁷

Of course, the resurgence of rainbowism produced counter-narratives that sought to make the world aware of the cost of such idealism. For example, just prior to the world cup, urban centers saw forced evictions of various residents to 'clean up' the city streets

⁴⁷ See Cheryl Walker's *Woman and Resistance* for an analysis of the role of women in liberation struggles and the work of nation-building.

for tourism.⁴⁸ These efforts, largely to remove the impoverished from the sight of Western tourists, simply evince an orientation around homogeneity typical of David Theo Goldberg's understanding of racial states. Rather than disrupting the image of comfortable homogeneity of South African life, the supposed non-racial harmony of the World Cup is meant to reinforce it. Moreover, in light of supposed economic benefits that World Cup tourism will bring to the South African economic landscape, Giampiccoli and Nauright foreground that these benefits will not be realized for impoverished South Africans. Instead, these benefits will focus mainly on the urban centers of the nation rather than the rural areas most in need. In these terms, then, the World Cup bases rainbowistic constructions of the national community around urban centers and perpetuates the logic of exclusion of multicultural narratives.

This study has orientated around interracial communities of difference as a potential resistance to hegemonic masculinities that insist on communal homogeneity, which opens a wide range of questions for future research around community and interraciality. I referred to Agamben and Nancy's conceptions of community in my introduction precisely because they allowed for communities of difference that rely on no particular identity category. But I also drew on Goldberg, Ahmed and Ingram for the multi-racial South African context in which racial categories have held historical primacy. That being said, this study interrogated interraciality primarily between white bodies and racial "others" as a central site of oppression, which also limits its scope to whiteness. South Africa, a country with eleven official languages and multiple racial

⁴⁸ See David Smith's "Life in Tin Can Town."

identities, necessitates research that also delves into interracial bonds between bodies other than exclusively those within the conventional “black and white” dichotomy. Furthermore, this study involved problematizing those rainbowistic components of the national narrative that efface difference, but future research might also think through alternatives to that narrative. This conclusion already points to the way that South Africa, in spite of “leaving behind” rainbowistic discourse, has hung onto its façade to cover moments of racial tensions. As such, we need to theorize alternative to the national communal narrative that might account for racial struggle and difference rather than painting these struggles over with a rainbow.

If bodies within the South African community have recently undergone a turn toward the rainbowistic, moments that disorient constructions of homogeneity and reposition differently racialized bodies with one another are all the more prescient in the present moment. The second chapter of this study drew attention to the ways that rainbowistic multiculturalism effaces those differences between people and populations. If, as Ahmed suggests, moments of disorientation might cause bodies to cling to conservative politics as a means of reorientation, bodies that continue to disorient these politics are vital to breaking through the comfortable idealism that effaces struggle. I foreground struggle as a component of interracial community precisely because understandings of multicultural community have posited struggle as a thing of the past. As I asserted in my second chapter, moments of struggle reminiscent of Bhabha’s discussion of hybridity are moments at which we might acknowledge the other *as* an

Other rather than a reflection of our particular orientations and begin to expand the lines of exclusion through which we organize community.

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