

Return to the Motherland: Maternal Landscape and Evolution of *Homo Sacer* in Beckett,

Coetzee, Fugard and Duiker

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This paper examines how Beckett and Coetzee probe the limits of the human (physically, psychologically, spiritually, legally, politically) and compares and contrasts these two writers (who operate in a more-or-less allegorical land- and timescape) with Athol Fugard and his *Boesman and Lena* (which operates in a more particularized, apartheid-specific setting). The latter portion considers how K Sello Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* explores internal displacement and being on the fringes of personhood/humanity and reproduces a similar kind of circular mini-odyssey not unlike Coetzee's *Michael K*. Also of interest is Nixon's "environmentalism of the poor," in relation to the lightness of being that K aspires to--what is the very least one actually needs to sustain human life?

Dedication

Dedicated to my mother.

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Introduction

Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* opens as, across a forested landscape conceivable as France or Beckett's own Ireland in the 1950s, the gaunt form of Molloy staggers in search of his mother, long since dead. Similarly, John Maxwell Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K* commences with K's birth and eventual journey to Prince Albert, the land of his mother's and grandmother's birth, the "line of children without end," the maternal line whose successors, like Michael, have left behind no trace, their recollections and earthly presence having been "washed clean, blown about, and drawn up into the leaves of grass" (124). Like Molloy, Michael K. seeks in the landscape of his foremothers a sense of rootedness, identity (as gardener, pastoralist, spiritualist), and kinship with a land from whose economic, political and social benefits he has been disenfranchised. Both Molloy and Michael K., moreover, function as orphans in a dual sense of the word. Molloy, as a seasoned vagrant and for all intents and purposes homeless and stateless, reduced to near-primeval subsistence, acts as an orphan both literally in the sense that he is motherless and figuratively as a man without a state. Michael K., as a black South African in the 1970s and '80s, suffers as an orphan in a dual sense as he not only loses his mother, his last remaining link to his ancestors, but comes of age under the apartheid regime (1948-1994), which effectively rendered its subjects stateless and, under the Black Homeland Citizenship Act (1970), deprived them of the status of citizens of South Africa, assigning them instead to ten "tribes-based" autonomous homelands (Giliomee 19). Moreover, apartheid legislation such as

the Group Areas Act (1950) enacted an exodus of black South Africans from their original birthplace to townships, or underdeveloped urban areas on the periphery of towns and cities reserved for non-whites (blacks, “Coloureds,” Indians). Michael K. further embodies the identity of an orphan of the state in that the apartheid regime denied its subjects the right to travel freely within the confines of their own territory; the infamous Pass Laws (1952) not only segregated the races, but required black South Africans to carry pass books when outside designated areas, or “homelands,” on penalty of arrest (Landis 46). This legislation culminated in the notorious Sharpeville Massacre, in which South African police opened fire on black anti-Pass Law protestors in Sharpeville and nearby Vanderbijlpark in the Southern Transvaal, killing 69 unarmed civilians and injuring hundreds (Gurney 149). Coetzee reveals the injustices of the apartheid system in *Life and Times* not only in its blatant violation of human rights, but the disenfranchisement of black South Africans to the extent of excluding them from all political and social activity so as to render them stateless. Michael K., for instance, finds himself reduced to a refugee existence as the aloof state bureaucracy delays his travel permit and, after the various ignominies he faces on the road (robbery, forced labor, imprisonment), returns to Cape Town to live a disillusioned existence in South Africa's police-state atmosphere. Likewise, Molloy lives as a fugitive and orphan of the state, subject to arbitrary detainment and interrogation by the police, imprisonment by Lousse, an inverted mother figure who fancies him her replacement pet, and molestation by the charcoal burner in the forest.

Part One: Maternal Landscape in Beckett & Coetzee

Both Michael K. and Molloy, as refugees in search of homelands, particularly the landscape of the maternal, act as Diasporic figures in that they have each been driven forth from their homelands at the behest of exterior forces and from thenceforth exist within an interstitial space, neither within nor wholly outside the state. According to Oliver Bakewell, though Africa is typically portrayed as a “continent which generates diasporas rather than one in which diasporas can be found,” the term Diaspora has since “moved out of its specialist corner” where it referred to a select set of peoples so that one can now speak of an “intra-African Diaspora” outside of long-standing patterns of mobility and integration (1-5). Likewise, George Shepperson adopted a far-reaching approach to diaspora, which includes the movement of slaves to Europe prior to the Atlantic slave trade, the Islamic slave trade, and “the dispersal of Africans inside [Africa] as a consequence of the slave trade and imperialism” (Shepperson cited in Alpers, 2001: 5). As examples of the latter, he cites the formation of Sierra Leone and the dispersal of Africans from Malawi across Eastern and Southern Africa. Michael K. exemplifies such an intra-African diaspora in that the British colonial power precipitated his flight from his original homeland and, as is characteristic of narratives of diaspora, this flight is accompanied by a collective myth of an ideal ancestral home: “...there was a chicken run against one wall of the wagonhouse, a long chicken-run, and a pump up on the hill. We

had a house on the hillside. There was prickly pear outside the back door. That is the place you must look for” (27). Michael K. also cherishes a distinct “ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time” (5). Samuel Beckett, a writer of the Irish Diaspora, likewise presents a migrant figure who echoes the Irish Diaspora not only in the continual wanderings from town-to-town which characterize the majority of the plot, but the anonymity of his surroundings, which could place him virtually anywhere in the forests of northern Europe, the proliferation of Irish surnames in the text notwithstanding. Accordingly, critic and Beckett biographer Leslie Hill addresses the significance in Beckett’s words of “the movement of the body across and through languages, coming and going, stopping and starting, ingesting and excreting” (3-4). Hill emphasizes the fact that “Beckett places *Molloy* in a world that bears the marks of anti-Semitism and the diaspora” (2). The former is especially pertinent in that the expulsion of the Jews from their historical homeland in Israel figures prominently in the implication of the term where it was traditionally “used with a capital ‘D’” to indicate a limited group of individuals (2). Shepperson's broader definition of diaspora upholds the argument that both Michael K., a refugee in flight from his homeland who cherishes a collective myth of an ideal ancestral home, and Molloy, who mirrors the migrant existence of subjects of the Irish Diaspora, function not only as orphans but diasporic figures who exist in-between states.

Life and Times and *Molloy* not only feature protagonists with an intense fixation on the mother and the homeland of the maternal line, but ostensibly deny the reader tangible

father figures. That is not to say, however, that the presence of the father is not salient to each piece; rather, the father exists as an invisible yet authoritative force that shapes the development of the character. In *Life and Times*, the oppressive South African police-state exerts its influence in a hyper-masculine, Kafkaesque bureaucracy peopled by khaki-clad administrative officials and police officers who “[pass] by [in] long convoys of vehicles with armed escorts,” empowered to shoot vagrants on the expressway “no warning, no questions asked” (22). Significantly, K. overtly equates the authoritative influence of soldiers, district officials and schoolteachers of Huis Norenus with that of a father figure: “My father was the list of rules on the door of the dormitory . . . and the woodwork teacher . . . they were my father” (105). Michael K., for his part, represents a protective and nurturing father figure, the benefit of which he lacked in his own austere upbringing; in the work camp at Jakkalsdrif, for example, he shelters two small girls from the brutality of the looting soldiers: “Without taking her eyes from the destruction . . . she stepped over his legs and stood within the protective circle of his arms . . .” (90). Later, his relationship to the “two beloved melons,” which he identifies as daughters, parallels his affection towards the sisters in the camp: “It seemed to him that he loved these two, which he thought of as two sisters, even more than the pumpkins, which he thought of as a band of brothers” (113). Here, K. genderizes and, to an extent, humanizes the fruit of his labors as a gardener with the immeasurable pride and affection characteristic of a father. Similarly, in *Molloy*, the hyper-vigilant police force acts as a relentless and dictatorial fatherly presence; when Molloy pauses to rest on the handlebars

of his bicycle, for instance, a police officer immediately accosts him: “What are you doing here? he said . . . Your papers, he said . . . Your papers! He cried” (16). Here, the ever attentive police force is reminiscent of the district officials of apartheid era South Africa in the insistence on immediate proof of one's identity on demand; indeed, according to Article One of the Pass Laws, non-whites were required to “carry and produce on demand up to 27 different kinds of documents, including tax receipts, travelling passes, immigration permits, permits to seek work, after-curfew passes . . . punishable by fine or imprisonment” (Landis 46). Molloy likewise roves the perimeter of a police-state where officials require proof of identification on penalty of imprisonment; moreover, like K., Molloy finds himself subject to arbitrary detainment and interrogation. In a critical scene at the police-station, Molloy is commanded to account for himself, not only to provide documentation of identity, but to answer for his existence and the author thereof: “My name is Molloy! I cried . . . Is it your mother's name? Was mother's name Molloy? Very likely. Her name must be Molloy too” (18-19). Here, the shadow of the father exists in the surname Molloy, a common Irish surname, which presumably the protagonist and his mother inherited from his father, an intangible yet magisterial force in the text, as reflected in the intensely disciplinarian relationship between Moran and son Jacques. Like the dimwitted Jacques, the lame and enfeebled Molloy is “full of fear, [has] gone in fear all [his] life, in fear of blows,” in this case of the police force (17). Thus, the highly regimented and police-run state of both South Africa and the enigmatic northern European setting of *Molloy* exercise tyrannical, unremitting control over the

disempowered bodies of its peoples, whom it effectively renders non-citizens; K. suggests that this all-encompassing body of regulations represents his father, while Molloy flees the father embodied by the state in search of the comforts of a mother long-deceased. Critic Alan Astro concurs that Molloy is enthralled with the mother, as with equal fervor Moran embraces the traits of the police-state: “Despite the similarity of the two narratives, Molloy's is placed under the sign of the mother, whereas Moran's is dominated by the father figures Youdi and Moran himself” (64). Indeed, Youdi (and the cryptic personage who “collects pages” from Molloy) represent the remote paternal presence that hovers in the background of both texts.

The protagonists of *Life and Times* and *Molloy* both seek asylum in the landscape of the maternal in their flight from the police-state and in this refugee existence embody orphans of the state, victims of intra-African and intra-European diaspora, respectively. Molloy in fact comes to “resemble [his mother] more and more” as the narrative progresses and he deteriorates to a state of near-immobility: “I even crawled on my back, plunging my crutches blindly behind me into the thickets . . . I was on my way to mother . . . from time to time I said, Mother, to encourage me I suppose” (84). Here, Molloy's range of mobility is reduced to that of an infant who has yet to master the ability to walk, emphasizing his desire not only to return to the place of his birth, but to a condition of total dependency on the mother as nursemaid and caregiver and, ultimately, to a prenatal, embryonic state. Critic Ethel Cornwell corroborates the perception of Molloy's increasing physical impairment as an infantilizing process: “Molloy's physical

disabilities increase to such an extent that he is reduced to crawling; and, lying in his mother's bedroom, where he was born, he pacifies himself with 'sucking stones'" (44). In contradistinction to the corporeal infantilization of Molloy, however, his mental capacities not only remain intact but thrive at the level of prodigious intellectual feats, as in the complex mathematical formula he expounds on the proportioning of sucking stones in the pockets of his greatcoat, the final calculation being that he must "[distribute] sixteen stones in four groups of four, one group in each pocket" (66). At the same time, such concentrated intellectual endeavors often come to naught, as in the case of the sucking stones, which Molloy simply "lost, or threw away, or gave away, or swallowed" (69). The futility of Molloy's cerebral exploits, more gamesome than judicious, approximates the aimlessness and impracticability of his quest to be reunited with his mother, whom we learn at the outset of the novel is long-since deceased: ". . . My mother's death. Was she already dead when I came? Or did she only die later" (3). Consequently, Molloy's expedition may be interpreted more as a flight (from the city, the police state, the society of men) than a journey to reclaim the motherland. In Moran's narrative, the once grand householder's voyage into the darkness and uncertainty of a life spent under the bowers of moss-covered trees in the forest, a tent his only shelter, his son's raincoat his only comfort, exemplifies the classic Beckettian character who subsists as a fugitive and orphan of the state: "And in the evening I turned to the lights of Bally, I watched them shine brighter and brighter, then all go out together, or nearly all, foul little flickering lights of terrified men . . . To think, I might be there now, but for my

misfortune” (156). Here, Moran observes the town less from a nostalgic perspective than from the standpoint of one who spurns the civilization that breeds feeble men who, like many of Beckett’s “M” characters, “live in fear of blows.” This recollects James Scott’s argument in *The Art of Not Being Governed* that the so-called “barbarian” tribes on the peripheries of cities were not necessarily stateless, but expressed “widespread [political] resistance” to absorption by the machinery of the state (10). Indeed, Moran scorns the prospect of the regulating power of society and the state: “At the thought of the punishments Youdi might inflict on me I was seized by such a mighty fit of laughter that I shook, with mighty silent laughter . . . ” (156). Youdi assumes the authoritarian stance Moran once exercised over his son, and likewise constitutes the secluded, inscrutable fatherly presence alluded to in Molloy’s narrative, who “gives [him] money and takes away the pages” (4). Here, the writer also represents an inaccessible and impalpable paternal figure, whose characters constitute his progeny, his words their inheritance.

Similarly, Michael K., who has grown up under the despotic police state of apartheid era South Africa, perceives his life’s ambition to be the preservation of his mother, while living a minimalist existence solely focused on survival, or “bare life” : “. . . He had been brought into the world to look after his mother” (7). K.’s devotion to his mother assumes a greater imperative than Molloy’s fixation with the maternal, which at times verges on the obscene and vengeful, in that K. abides not only as a man without a state, but suffers arbitrary acts of violence and persecution on the road; the most appalling of these occurs when, after the hospital in Stellenbosch cremates Anna K. based

on a forged signature of consent, a soldier rifles through K.'s belongings, robs him, and violates the sanctity of his mother's ashes: "[The soldier] pointed his gun at the box of ashes. 'Show me,' he said. K took off the lid and held out the box . . . 'Open it,' said the soldier. K opened the bag. The soldier took a pinch and smelled it cautiously. 'Jesus,' he said" (37). The inequities of apartheid legislation sanctioned such glaring infringements on human rights, while the desecration of the mother's ashes not only accentuates K.'s powerlessness to defend himself by any other means than to "play dumb," but exposes the cataclysmal potentiality of a police state whose officials operate unimpeded by higher administrative command. Moreover, the Kafkaesque vagary of Michael K.'s surname and the hyper-hierarchical structure of the apartheid state, authorized to "shoot [trespassers] dead" on sight, suggest that K. is an orphan in a dual sense: an orphan whose mother dies in a white smock in the "purgatory" of St. Francis Hospital, an institution as desensitized to the human aspect of the war as the vast state bureaucracy, and an orphan of the state which, under the leadership of the National Party, deprived black South Africans of the status of legal citizens of the country, appropriating them instead to ten "self-governing" homelands, or *bantustans*, "Bantu" meaning "people" in the Bantu language group and "-stan" meaning "land of."

If one applies this scenario to Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Sacer*, K. may be interpreted as the at once exempted and conveniently targetable "homo sacer," or sacred man, who, though Roman law no longer authorized his status as a citizen, nonetheless prevailed "under the spell of law," prone to be killed at any time with impunity: "human

life...included in the juridical order solely in the form of its exclusion (that is, of its capacity to be killed).” Indeed, K. undergoes multiple near-death encounters with law enforcement in the text, suggesting his vulnerability as a man outside the state at the same time as this exception from society enables him to live a bare, survivalist existence the likes of which his agrarian forebears enjoyed. At the “resettlement” camp, for instance, the otherwise complaisant guard threatens to shoot K. dead if he attempts to cross the barrier: “You climb the fence and I'll shoot you, I swear to God I won't think twice” (85). On this and various other occasions, such as the police captain’s injunction that anyone spotted outside the walls of Jakkalsdrif will be “[shot], no questions asked,” Michael K. exemplifies the paradoxical political situation in which a man’s political identity is defined in terms of an exclusion, which constitutes a simultaneous inclusion, of *zoe* (bare life) and *bios* (political life); this state of affairs enables the stateless man, identifiable as the *homer sacer*, to “be killed and yet not sacrificed,” (Agamben 12). Agamben’s argument bears resonance in the case of the approximately 8 million black South Africans whom apartheid legislation stripped of national citizenship, compelling them instead to become citizens of the so-called “independent” homelands that corresponded to their ethnic group, regardless of whether or not they’d resided there formerly (Simon 200). The underlying contradiction surfaces in the fact that, though deprived of South African citizenship, administrative officials held residents of *bantustans* accountable to the legislation of the Nationalist party on pain of imprisonment or execution, a quandary reminiscent of the status of the *homo sacer* under Roman law as “the person whom

anyone could kill with impunity,” despite the inability to be ritually sacrificed or participate in national politics (Agamben 47).

In point of fact, the “homelands” appointed by the Nationalist Party subsisted on sub-par living standards and lacked official autonomy; though the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei (“TBVC States”) were declared “independent,” the government never granted these states independence. The “homelands” suffered from poverty, disease, soaring illiteracy rates and offered few local employment opportunities. Due to the corruption of the local governments, little wealth trickled down to the local populations, compelling them to seek employment as “guest workers” in South Africa proper; sixty-five percent of Bophuthatswana's population, for instance, worked outside the designated “homeland.” Millions labored in unsanitary conditions and lived away from home for months on end; workers, moreover, were permitted to remain within a “prescribed” white urban area no longer than the time specified in their work contract; upon expiration, they were obliged to return to their “homelands” (Sharp 149-150). The family structure of relocated peoples suffered grievous breakdowns as a result of long-term separation of viable male workers from wives and children, as the Black Urban Areas Consolidation Act (1945) forbade workers from bringing dependents to their site of employment, even in the case of “year-long contracts renewable annually” (150). This mass exploitation of politically and economically disenfranchised local labor sources by the South African government recollects the exploitation of the cheap labor force of the “resettlement” camp at Jakkalsdrif: “So I hear you ask who is in favor of the camp? . . .

First, the Railways. The Railways would like to have a Jakkalsdrif every ten miles along the line. Second, the farmers. Because from a gang from Jakkalsdrif a farmer gets a day's work blood cheap and at the end of the day the truck fetches them and they are gone and he doesn't have to worry about them or their families, they can starve, they can be cold, he knows nothing, it's none of his business" (Coetzee 75). Here, the "railways" refers to the South African Railways; not only were railway stations a site of enforced racial segregation between black and white passengers during the 1960s and 1970s (and informal segregation which dated back to the turn of the century), but railways depended predominantly on black migrant labor, in response to the demand for a "large, continually replenished and low-cost workforce" (Pirie 713). Michael K.'s status as an orphan of the state figures prominently in the fact that, despite his disenfranchisement from social, economic or political security (i.e. his strictly manual labor education at Huis Norenius, limited employment by the Department of Parks & Gardens, propertylessness), K. nonetheless remains subject to arbitrary round-up by labor gangs, as in the period of intense forced labor after his initial arrest, when "K found himself assigned to a gang working on the track" late into the night under the watch of an overseer who prods him with a stick when his strength "flags," and in light of the ease with which the Railway Administration commands an influx of dirt-cheap labor: "[The Administration] had first call on the men from Jakkalsdrif followed by Prince Albert Divisional Council, followed by the local farmers" (Coetzee 20). Thus, K.'s status as an orphan of the state renders him susceptible to the government's collective exploitation of cheap labor sources, at the same

time as the “resettlement” camps, subject to capricious incursions by the government-run police force who “[turn] the camp to chaos” after a fire in Prince Albert, coincides with the mass relocation of black South Africans to homelands, where 75 % of the population was appropriated 13 % of the land; these lands, moreover, constituted the least fertile the country had to offer, while overpopulation led to ecological decline and overgrazing (Durning 3).

The resettlement camps in *Life and Times*, like the “homelands” of apartheid era South Africa, constitute little more than a series of cages, both physically in that residents were confined within “three-metre fences surmounted with a strand of barbed wire” and permitted to leave only on “labour calls,” and mentally in that vast populations of potential students, intellectuals and professionals were deprived of the resources requisite for basic education, a form of mental control so pervasive that even external observers, including researchers of the apartheid state, remain subject to “iron cages to understanding” (Wellings and McCarthy 342). As K. notes, his is the “story of a live lived in cages” (181). The corporeal cages through which K. passes include Huis Norenius, a state school for “variously afflicted and unfortunate children,” the civil war torn Cape Town, the hospital at Stellenbosch (a hierarchical state-run institution akin to the military or bureaucracy), the Visagie farm where the deserter grandson fancies him a body-servant, the internment camp in Jakkalsdrif, the “retraining camp” in Kenilworth under the psychoneurotic supervision of a white medical officer, and, finally, the ruins of Sea Point, where he loses himself amidst vagrants who, like the medical officer, treat him

as an “object of charity” (181). These various cages, or “camps,” through which K. passes like a “wraith,” imprison him physically, whereas the pervasive condescension and well-meaning, yet demeaning beneficence of the white officials, doctors and, later, fellow vagrants, haunt K. to the end: “Perhaps the truth is that it is enough to be out of the camps, out of all the camps at the same time . . . I have escaped the camps; perhaps, if I lie low, I will escape the charity too” (182). Along with the misguided benevolence of strangers (“it was better when one did not have to rely on other people”), K. suffers imprisonment by his ceaseless dedication to his mother; “You should have got away at an early age from that mother of yours, who sounds like a real killer . . . You made a great mistake, Michaels, when you tied her on your back . . . when I think of you carrying her, panting under her weight . . . performing all the other feats of filial piety you no doubt performed, I also think of her sitting on your shoulders, eating out your brains . . . the very embodiment of great Mother Death” (150). In this admittedly melodramatic account of K.'s filial devotion to the mother figure who charges K. with the duty of returning her, whether in life or death, to her “natal earth” in Prince Albert, Coetzee demonstrates the degree to which K. sacrifices his own prerogatives (education, fatherhood, independence) in his quest to shelter and tend to his dropsy-afflicted mother in life and reunite her ashes with the earth in death: “She makes the plants grow.” K.'s mother escapes the cages of the substantial world only through death, as her ashes are “washed clean, blown about, and drawn up into the leaves of grass” (Coetzee 111).

K.'s existence, however, remains contingent upon the arbitrary laws of the

apartheid state, even as he flees its confines both tangibly and spiritually in his search for a life defined by raw survivalist instincts and communion with the earth in the exercise of gardening: “It is because I am a gardener, he thought, because that is my nature . . . The impulse to plant had been reawoken in him . . . he found his waking life bound tightly to the patch of earth he had begun to cultivate and the seeds he had planted there” (59). K.'s self-classification as a gardener exceeds a mere exultation in the creative act of replenishing the crusted-over earth and watching the “deserted farm bloom”; his choice to identify as a gardener, who cultivates as a means of subsistence, rather than a farmer, who fences off acres of land and stockpiles, assumes political significance as K.'s conscious aversion to the farm as a colonial apparatus. Unlike the British and Dutch colonists who appropriated land for white settlement, harvested large quantities of crops and raised livestock, K. eludes colonial power structures and cultivates the minimum to derive sustenance: “What a pity that to live in times like these a man must be ready to live like a beast. A man who wants to live cannot live in a house with lights in the windows . . . A man must live so that he leaves no trace of his living” (Coetzee 48). K.'s desire to live so as to be past discovery and past recollection influences his choice to become a gardener rather than a farmer, in that his modest harvest leaves no remnants behind: “There was no trace of the pumpkins and mealies he had sown” (60). Thus, K. foils the colonial enterprise's initiative to appropriate and categorize its subjects not only in terms of language (silence in face of the medical officer's questioning), but in the physical manifestation of silence, in which he renders himself invisible by living

austerely to the point of atrophy to a skeletal state: “The arm felt like something alien, a stick protruding from his body” (121).

Molloy similarly combats the colonial impetus of the paternal, as well as the constraints of the corporeal delineated by the Cartesian body-mind struggle, achieving the status of “bare life” no less in the precious hours spent in Lousse’s garden than in epic peregrinations across the face of Europe: “There was another noise, that of my life become the life of this garden as it rode the earth of deeps and wildernesses . . . there were times when I forgot not only who I was but that I was, forgot to be, then I was no longer that sealed jar to which I owed my being so well preserved but a wall gave way and I filled with roots and tamed stems . . . the recess of night and the imminence of dawn and then the labor of the planet rolling eager into winter . . . the thaw of the snows which make no difference and all the horrors of it all over again . . . mostly I stayed in my jar which knew neither seasons nor gardens” (50). Thus, Molloy cultivates an awareness of himself as an artifact of “bare life,” or *zoe*, his life “become the life” of the garden, an extension of the intricate network of vegetation of Lousse’s garden, rather than the offspring of the Molloy clan or the equally patriarchal police state. The proverbial “sealed jar,” which signifies the hermetically sealed human consciousness, subject to no fundamental of change but its own, recalls the Cartesian split of Beckett’s Murphy, whose mind constitutes a “closed system . . . self-sufficient and impermeable to the vicissitudes of the body” (66). Taking his cue from Murphy, Molloy’s migrant lifestyle and rapport with nature actualizes the bifurcation of the substantive mind from the body

and the natal land from the police-state overshadowed by colonial legislation.

Furthermore, Michael K. and Molloy's communion with the flora and fauna of the motherland recalls the Platonic paradigm of multiple souls proportionate to the peculiar provinces of plants, animals and people, a nutritive essence of increase and metabolism shared by the three: an intuitive spirit of pleasure, pain and impulse, in which only people and mammals partake, and the capacity to reason, exclusive to human beings. Due to the Aristotelian hierarchy of their relationships, all three souls capitulate when the sentient organism perishes. This parallels Molloy's progressive deterioration the further he strays from the uncultivated, unmapped forests in his approach of the State; as he departs the realm of living organisms and nears his mother's city, he becomes increasingly debilitated and his life passes before his mind's eye: "True enough the day came when the forest ended and I saw the light . . . faintly outlined against the horizon, the towers and steeples of a town . . . The two travellers came back to my memory . . . other scenes of my life came back to me . . . I longed to go back into the forest" (85). Here, Molloy expresses nostalgia for symbiosis with nature, a bare existence independent of the contingencies of governmentality. Michael K. undergoes an analogous metamorphosis; while he thrives off the pumpkin seeds and self-drawn well water on his mother's secluded farm, he diminishes to a hollow shell in the state-sanctioned Kennilworth compound. This corroborates the Platonic archetype of the tripartite soul, in which the functions of plants, animals and humans thrive in equal proportions. The maternal landscape, moreover, serves as the site of ultimate harmony between the three parts of the

soul, which Plato perceived as the source of virtue and justice. Consequently, the colonial administration, which disrupted the perfect balance of the soul, served as the antithesis of these values.

Ultimately, K., like Molloy, achieves his flight from the exactions of the colonial enterprise by a return to the motherland: “I want to live here forever, where my mother and my grandmother lived” (64). Thus, K. flees not only the surveillance assemblages of the colonial empire (schools, hospitals, work camps, farms), but the patriarchal ideologies which sanctioned the colonial takeover of South Africa as “benign imperialism,” as reflected in British-educated Rudyard Kipling's Poem “The White Man's Burden” (1899), widely regarded as a hymn to British imperialism: “Take up the White Man's burden-- . . . / To serve your captives' need . . . / Your new-caught, sullen peoples, / Half-devil and half-child” (1). The justification of the British imperialist enterprise often drew on allusions to colonial subjects as children and the colonizers of South Africa as a benevolent paternal entity, as administrative officials “project[ed] images of paternalistic humanity and success when reporting back to their home country of Great Britain, bringing in more funds and support for their seemingly romantic conquest of South Africa” (Silver 3). Consequently, K.'s urge to return to the motherland bears underlying political implications in that he resists the paternalistic embrace of colonialism by venturing towards the motherland rather than the fatherland; indeed, he seeks not only the land of his foremothers, but the precise location of his mother's birthplace: “Was this where his mother had been born, amid a garden of prickly pear” (69). Thus, K. seeks not

only to escape the temporal cages constructed by the colonial enterprise, but the “iron cages” of paternalistic ideologies as well.

Molloy, likewise, features a protagonist fixated on the mother and the inceptive landscape of the maternal line; in his relentless pursuit of the motherland, he deteriorates to a near-paralytic state and effectively undergoes a Kafkaesque metamorphosis, in which he awakes in her bed having become her: “I am in my mother's room. It's I who live there now . . . I sleep in her bed. I piss and shit in her pot. I have taken her place. I must resemble her more and more” (3). The inversion of the plot, in which the conclusion of the journey appears at the outset, contradicts the linear structure of *Life and Times*; moreover, it sets the foundation for the novel as one of becoming, becoming the mother or, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, “becoming-animal,” “becoming-imperceptible.” Indeed, Molloy resembles more and more a beast rather than a man, as he descends from the upright “homo erectus” to one who crawls and, eventually, propels himself by his crutches on his back through the underbrush. More importantly, however, the novel features the son's enthrallment with the mother, to the extent of assuming her place, as opposed to the conventional narrative of the father-son dynamic: “We were so old, she and I, she had had me so young, that we were like a couple of old cronies, sexless, unrelated, with the same memories, the same rancours, the same expectations. She never called me son . . . but Dan. Dan was my father's name perhaps . . . she took me for my father” (13). Here, Molloy reveals that he and his mother, due to proximity in age as well as absence of a father figure, bonded so intensely that they shared like recollections, like

values, even like smells; the absence of a paternal presence, moreover, confounded the natural mother-son relationship to the extent that she mistook him for her husband. This confusion of relationships, sexes and conventional family dynamics dominates the majority of the text. Lousse, for instance, entraps Molloy in her garden and nurtures him as a pet; at the same time, she serves as an inverted mother figure, who feeds off the offspring much like the parasite eats away at the host; this sciential metaphor also figures in *Life and Times*, in which the medical officer refers to K.'s overbearing mother as the "mother host" (150). In the room in which he wiles away the days and nights of his imprisonment to Lousse, Molloy meditates on how his mother would be abashed to see him reduced to such an ignominious condition: "If only your poor mother could see you now . . . She seemed far away, my mother, far away from me" (34). Thus, even in the most opprobrious circumstances, his thoughts return to the mother.

Molloy's enchantment with the mother and maternal landscape at times verges on the ribald and vengeful; for instance, he entertains homicidal fantasies and confounds vaguely incestuous past love affairs with his intimate relationship with the domineering mother figure: "Another who might have been my mother, even perhaps my grandmother. . . it was she made me acquainted with love . . . she had a hole between her legs . . . and in this I put, or rather she put, my so called virile member, not without difficulty. Whether all my life has been devoid of love or whether I really met with it . . . I am quite willing to go on thinking of her as an old woman, widowed . . . and Lousse as another . . . and there are days like this evening when my memory confuses them and I

am tempted to think of them as one and the same old hag, flattened and crazed by life...my mother's image sometimes mingles with theirs, which is literally unendurable, like being crucified" (59). Molloy's conflation of his former lovers with his mother conveys not only the universal Oedipal desire of the son for the mother, but also challenges the conventional Proustian narrative of the nurturing mother figure who endows her son's life with its "only purpose, its only sweetness, its only love, its only consolation," in that the mother Beckett presents in *Molloy* suffers the selfsame corporeal impotence and decrepitude as the son, and remains communicable with only through a series of knocks: "I got into communication with her by knocking on her skull. One knock meant yes, two no, three I don't know, four money, five goodbye" (14). This macabre gesture, which constitutes the sole means of interaction between mother and son in the late stages of her life, serves as a means of "profaning . . . and parodying Proust's nurturing mother" (Reid 84). Proust wrote of the idealized, compassionate mother figure he recognized from his own childhood, as in *Remembrance of Things Past* where he describes a youth who awaits his mother's goodnight kiss: ". . . as I used to receive, in her kiss, the heart of my mother, complete, without scruple or reservation . . ." (Proust 122). Molloy, on the other hand, derides the mother as a "deaf blind impotent mad old woman," dispels the familiarity of the term "Ma" by appending a "g" to the end, and mulls sardonically over the nature of her demise: "Look at Mammy. What rid me of her, in end? . . . Perhaps they buried her alive, it wouldn't surprise me. Ah the old bitch, a nice dose she gave me, she and her lousy unconquerable genes" (75). Molloy's fatalism

darkens his outlook on the mother figure and women as a whole, though his mother, whom he indicts for his impotence and physical handicaps, acts as the target of the most vehement linguistic barrages.

At the same time, characters plagued by futility and feebleness of mind and body are hardly an anomaly in Beckett's fiction; as Beckett attests: "My characters have nothing. I'm working with impotence, ignorance . . . that whole zone of being that has always been set aside by artists as something unusable—something by definition incompatible with art" (Beckett at the Aula). In this way, Molloy's expedition to return to the mother fits within the framework of a revenge narrative; the woman who bore him and whose genetic imperfections he inherited becomes his prey, whom he hunts pertinaciously to settle some undisclosed score: "I gradually lost interest in knowing . . . what town I was in and if I should soon find my mother and settle the matter between us . . . All my life, I think, I had been bent on it . . . on settling this matter between my mother and me . . ." (59). The settling of this "score," as unspecified as Molloy's surroundings, urges him onward like a huntsman on the trail his target: "For sleep, if it excites the lust to capture, seems to appease the lust to kill, there and then and bloodily, any hunter will tell you that" (60). Though Molloy ostensibly refers to the beasts of the forest in this passage, it also parallels his dogged pursuit of his mother, against whom he seems to entertain murderous designs, interspersed with suicidal ideations: ". . . My mother, to settle with her, and if I would not do better, at least just as well, to hang myself from a bough, with a liane" (73). Here, Molloy deems suicide by hanging with a liane, or woody

vine found in tropical forests, to be as satisfying as “settling” with his mother, which connotes an act of proportionate violence, so that the term “settle” likely signifies “kill.” Accordingly, to end his own life would imply the death of his mother, in that he has not only assumed residency in her house, where he slumbers in her bed and releases excrement in the same pot she once crouched over, but claims her identity as his own: “I have taken her place. I must resemble her more and more. All I need now is a son. Perhaps I have one somewhere. But I think not. He would be old now, nearly as old as myself” (3). Here, in the classic Beckettian avowal and disavowal of characters’ convictions, Molloy questions whether he may have a son and, in effect, adopts the role of the mother, the son “nearly as old as [himself]” apparently seeking him out as he once sought his mother; in this way, one might perceive Moran as the son of Molloy. Moran, who receives orders from Youdi to locate Molloy, descends into a state of debilitation, so that, like Molloy, he relies on crutches, and resumes the quest forsaken by Molloy to find the mother: “I am clearing out. Perhaps I shall meet Molloy” (169). Elsewhere, Moran concretizes the relationship between the trio: “Mother Molloy . . . was not completely foreign to me either . . . She was much less alive than her son . . . After all perhaps I knew nothing of mother Molloy . . . save in so far as such a son might bear, like a scurf of placenta, her stamp” (107). Here, Moran pieces together the fragments of a memory, presumably instilled in him by none other than the author, to form the indistinct outlines of a family history in which Molloy still bears the remnants of the mother’s afterbirth. Thus, in seeking out his mother, Molloy resembles a man less and less, instead acquiring

the attributes of an infant. Subsequently, his ambulatory capacities degenerate to the point that he regresses to the source of momentum typically reserved for infants or animals: “. . . I would have abandoned erect motion, that of man. And I still remember the day when, flat on my face by way of rest, in defiance of the rules, I suddenly cried, striking my brow, Christ, there's crawling . . .” (83). The disjuncture between the “erect” posture of man and the act of crawling, notably “in defiance of the rules” of human behavior, highlights Molloy's devolution from *homo sapiens*, characterized by an erect body carriage that frees the hands for manipulation of objects, to an animal state in which he “crawl[s] on [his] back, plunging [his] crutches blindly behind [him] into the thickets” (84). Likewise, in Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the “becoming-animal,” they describe the process as a disruption of the signifying process: “To become animal is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold . . .” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*). Molloy becomes animal by simulating the movement of the animal kingdom; crawling on his back like larvae, he seeks the “path of escape,” or flight from self that enables him to cross the threshold into the sacred, the space beyond consciousness where sunshine seeps through the trees of the forest and “scenes of [his] life [come] back to [him]” on the edge of his demise or rebirth into the world. Beckett explores the concept of the “becoming-animal” elsewhere in his texts, as in *The Unnameable*, where the protagonist describes himself as a caged beast born of generations of the same:

. . . that I seek, like a caged beast born of caged beasts born of

caged beasts born of caged beasts born in a cage and dead in a cage, born and then dead, born in a cage and then dead in a cage, in a word like a beast, in one of their words, like such a beast, and that I seek, like such a beast, with my little strength, such a beast, with nothing of its species left but fear and fury, no, the fury is past, nothing but fear, nothing of all its due but fear centupled . . . (Beckett 380).

Here, Beckett not only delineates the phenomenon of the “becoming-animal” in which the human, after the face is “effaced,” enters “zones . . . where subterranean becomings-animal occur,” but accentuates the sense of hunted-ness of his characters: Molloy, who flees the police-run state where officers demand his “papers,” Moran who “clears out” of civilization and the manmade abode, and Jacques who flees the tyranny of the father. Structurally, the lengthy run-on sentence and circular repetition of words and phrases reflects a descent into the irrational, sub-human consciousness. Moreover, the concept of generations passed in cages recollects the imprisonment of Michael K., and his ancestors who likewise lived under British colonialism, in a series of ideological and actual cages. In his attempts to escape these diverse cages, through silence and “hunger strikes,” K. finds himself debased to leading an animal existence, as he sleeps “out in the veld under a bush like an animal” and survives off roots without fear of poisoning as if he “had once been an animal and the knowledge of good and bad plants had not died in his soul” (92). While the concept of subsisting on the open plain like a beast, of “skulking in the open where no one dreamed of looking,” is critiqued as counteractive to human

nature, certain animal sensibilities, such as the instinct to distinguish hale plants from poisonous, are upheld for their spiritual and survival benefits. Coetzee censures the apartheid state for rendering its subjects sub-human, in that it consigns them to highly-regimented labor gangs and work camps where inmates contract deadly diseases from “being shut up like animals in a cage” (68). Even schools, as in the case of Huis Norenius, “turned [pupils] into animals who stole from one another's plates and . . . rifl[ed] the garbage cans for bones and peelings” (36). Thus, the structures and ideological justifications of apartheid constitute the “cages” through which K. and his ancestors have passed, with “nothing but fear” to spur the flight out of the camps to areas free of colonial conquest and land appropriation: “certain mountaintops . . . certain islands in the middle of swamps, certain arid strips where human beings may not . . . live. I am looking for such a place in order to settle there, perhaps only till things improve, perhaps forever” (180).

Both Michael K. and Molloy, as refugees in search of the motherland, act as Diasporic figures in that they have both been expelled from their homelands by outside forces and consequently exist within an interstitial space, neither within nor outside the state. The Bantu Homelands Citizens Act (1970) not only deprived black South Africans such as Michael K. of national citizenship, but enforced relocation to “tribal” homelands, regardless of whether or not refugees dwelt there previously. Moreover, based on Shepperson's definition of diasporas, Michael K.'s case constitutes an “intra-African” diaspora in that K.'s flight from Cape Town to Prince Albert is accompanied by a

collective myth of an ideal ancestral home. Additionally, K. holds a distinct “ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time” (5). The collective myth of the ancestral home presents itself in K.'s steadfast identification with Prince Albert as his home, despite having never resided there: “I am going home to Prince Albert” (23). Furthermore, Anna K. preserves the myth of the ancestral home as a site of placidity and curative potential: “Once settled in Prince Albert she would quickly recover her health” (31). Additionally, on sight of the motherland, K.'s anticipation culminates in a highly symbolic and mythological vision of the countryside: “. . . He was squatting on a hill watching the sun come up over what he knew at last to be Prince Albert. Cocks crowed; lights blinked on the windowpanes of houses, a child was driving two donkeys . . . He began to be aware of a man's voice rising up to meet him . . . Is this the voice of Prince Albert? . . . I thought Prince Albert was dead” (53). Hence, the scene of the first encounter with the motherland assumes mythic significance; as the diasporic figure of the orphaned son discovers his mother's birthplace, the mundane events of the cock crowing at first light and children driving donkeys down the main road are suspended in the protagonist's vision like artifacts of a past long forgotten. The mythological voice of Prince Albert, ironically a male voice despite being that of the motherland, rises above the landscape and encircles the narrator like the whispers of his ancestors. The encounter with the motherland is invested with folkloric import as he glimpses the historical sites his mother illustrated in her recollections: “Behind the house was a rockery garden in which nothing was growing. Here was no old wagonhouse . . . but a wood-and-iron shed, and against it an empty

chicken-run with streamers of yellow plastic . . . On the rise behind the house stood a pump whose head was missing . . .” (57). Here, K. pinpoints the various features of the farm, which his mother enumerated in her construction of a collective myth of an ideal ancestral home. Thus, despite the fact that long-standing patterns of mobility and integration have characterized South Africa from pre-colonial times onward, K.'s dislocation from his birthplace constitutes a Diaspora in that it entails forced dispersal from an original homeland and a collective myth of a quintessential ancestral home.

Moreover, K.'s dislocation from his homeland embodies a diaspora in that he demonstrates a “strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time,” based on shared history, culture and religion. K. exhibits a sense of shared history and culture with his ancestors primarily in his dedication to the lifestyle of a gardener and pastoralist. In a war-torn country, K. envisions it as his duty to his ancestors and the land of his foremothers to preserve the practice of gardening: “. . . Enough men had gone off to war saying the time for gardening was when the war was over; whereas there must be men to stay behind and keep gardening alive, or at least the idea of gardening . . . once that cord was broken, the earth would grow hard and forget her children” (70). Here, K. argues that the link to his ancestors consists of the cultivation of the earth and, just as soldiers consider the defense of their countrymen their foremost obligation, K. imagines his duty to be the conservation of the ties between the living and the dead. K. succeeds in prompting the “earth yield to his ministrations” and bears the continuation of the bond between the living and the deceased to its ultimate conclusion by fathering the “seed”

which his ancestors bestowed upon him as his patrimony (43). In the act of cultivating, K. disseminates the seeds of his ancestors: “It was no longer a matter of growing a fat crop, only of growing enough for the seed not to die out” (154). Thus, K. desires not only to subsist, but to cultivate the minimum amount so that the “seed,” or the lineage, does not diminish. Coetzee elevates the act of metaphorically perpetuating the ancestral line in the form of the garden to a religious significance: “[K.] scraped their seeds together and spread them to dry. From one seed a whole handful: that was what it meant to say *the bounty of the earth*” (162). Here, the spreading of the seeds recalls Genesis 1:28, in which man is commanded: “Be fruitful and increase in number” (NIV Bible). Accordingly, K.'s cultivation of the “natal earth” assumes religious proportions and answers the Christian imperative to populate the earth with one's offspring. Therefore, K. acts as the surrogate father of the fruits of the earth: “. . . He lay thinking of these poor second children of his beginning their struggle upward through the dark earth toward the sun” (66). Later, after the soldiers raid and trample his garden, K. continues the metaphor from the perspective of a mother: “I am like a woman whose children have left the house . . . all that remains is to tidy up and listen to the silence” (94). Thus, K. comprises the roles of both mother and father, an androgynous entity devoted to the perpetuation of the ancestral line. The concept of the “bounty of the earth” also recollects the New Testament emphasis on munificence and thanksgiving: “For, 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it” (1 Cor. 10:26). The passage is likewise reminiscent of K.'s early forays on the road to Prince Albert, in which he finds himself reduced to eating half-raw vegetables from

strangers' gardens: "He emerged from the shelter of the trees into the downpour and on hands and knees began to pull yellow half-grown carrots out of the soft earth. It is God's earth, he thought, I am not a thief" (22). Here, K. defines the earth in collective terms as God's domain and thereby facilitative of the needs of mankind, not merely those who profess ownership of the land. This bears particular significance as the land the white colonists lay claim to by "erecting fences, dividing up the land," and, under the Natives Land Act (1913), declared illegal for blacks to purchase or lease from whites; this legislation ultimately restricted black South Africans to less than eight percent of land in South Africa (Landis 3). Critic Anthony Vital likewise notes that Coetzee constructs *Life and Times* around an opposition between the "camps" of the colonizer (i.e. school, mechanized military, fences marking properties, bureaucracies) and the minimalist "gardening" of the rural districts, so that K.'s self-contained agrarianism affords a sense of dwelling "outside civilization's temporal rhythms and patterns of self-assertion" (91.92). This demarcation between the temporal and the self-sufficient agrarian enterprise corresponds with K.'s disavowal of the "civilized gentleman" Noel's interpretation of the fruits of labor as objects of possession, as he perceives his crop as the yield of divine grace: "[The vegetables] weren't mine. They came from the earth . . . What grows is for all of us. We are all the children of the earth" (139).

K., furthermore, demonstrates group consciousness based on shared religion with his ancestors in his emphasis on the afterlife of his mother; her ashes and their reunion with her "natal earth" constitute the paramount objective of his quest. Indeed, in

accordance with the religious cosmology of his foremothers, K. believes that her spirit will not rest until it is wedded with the earth from whence it came: “He hoped that his mother . . . being released, a spirit released into the air, was more at peace now that she was nearer her natal earth” (60). Even in confinement at Kenilworth, K. maintains silence in face of the interrogations and Coetzee likens him to a spiritualist: “He gazed up at the ceiling for a long while, like an old man consulting the spirits” (140). Though, the medical official critiques K. for isolating himself from society: “Did you think you were a spirit invisible . . . a creature beyond the reach of the laws of nations . . .” (143). Nonetheless, K. champions his role as executive of the land, culture and religion of his ancestors, a stance that necessitates living in “bare life” (*zoe*), as he has “nothing to do but live” (51). Thus, K. represents a diasporic figure in that he cherishes a substantial “ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time” in shared history, culture and religion with his ancestors. Molloy also acts as a diasporic figure based on Bakewell's criteria, in that he experiences movement from an original homeland, in this case through expansion (voluntary) in response to a personal quest, a collective myth of an ideal ancestral home, and a strong ethnic consciousness maintained over a long time. Ironically, Molloy's diasporic identity reflects that of Beckett, a native of the Dublin suburb of Foxrock who traveled widely, beginning in London in the early 1930s where he received treatment from a psychoanalyst, followed by brief stints in Ireland and Paris between 1935 and 1938, and, finally, a post as courier in the French Resistance after the 1940 occupation by Germany (Knowlson 23-27).

Molloy likewise leads a diasporic existence in several key aspects, including a voluntary dispersal from the original homeland in response to a personal search. His quest to find his mother, however, is halted at the walls of the town by a police officer who subjects him to an antagonistic interrogation: “Is it your mother's name? said the sergeant . . . Molloy, I cried, my name is Molloy. Is that your mother's name? . . . What? I said . . . And your mother? said the sergeant . . . Is your mother's name Molloy, too? . . . Your mother, said the sergeant, is your mother's—Let me think! I cried . . . Was mother's name Molloy? Very likely” (18-19). Here, the heated examination by the police officer evinces the paternalistic sway of the police state from which Molloy seeks refuge. The ambiguity of the origin of the narrator's name, moreover, underscores his existence outside the boundaries of the state. Indeed, the vast majority of the narrative consists of Molloy wandering the countryside, from the anonymous forests reminiscent of mid-twentieth century northwestern Europe, to the seaside where he replenishes his supply of sucking stones, and back to the forest where he collapses in a ditch on the edge of town, his first glimpse of civilization since his flight from the walls of the city: “The forest ended in a ditch . . . I fancied I saw, faintly outlined against the horizon, the towers and steeples of a town . . . whether it was my town or not, whether somewhere under that faint haze my mother panted on or whether she poisoned the air a hundred miles away, were ludicrously idle questions . . . ” (85). Here, Molloy's original homeland has become estranged to the point that his recognition of its towers and steeples strikes him as insignificant, while his alternate avowal and disavowal of the mother figure reappears in

his sardonic commentary on his mother's whereabouts. In this sense, Molloy's quest to locate his mother acts as the precipitating force behind his voluntary expansion from the homeland. The fact that Molloy presumably circles back to his birthplace suggests the enduring ties of the diasporic individual to his homeland: "I am in my town, after all, I have been there all the time" (55). Elsewhere, the narrator asserts: "Molloy, your region is vast, you have never left it and you never shall. And wheresoever you wander, within its distant limits, things will always be the same, precisely . . . And the cycle continues, joltingly, of flight and bivouac, in an Egypt without bounds, without infant, without mother" (60-61). This insistence on Molloy's containment within the parameters of his nationhood despite his stateless, refugee existence demonstrates the notion of diaspora as a "social form" in which "the emphasis remains upon an identified group characterized by their relationship-despite-dispersal" (Bakewell 3). The allusion to Egypt, moreover, recollects the Israelite Diaspora, in which, beginning in 597 BCE, the captive population of the Northern Kingdom, with its capital in Samaria, was banished to distant regions of the Assyrian Empire, to the region of the Harbur River, the region surrounding Nineveh and to the newly-conquered municipalities of ancient Media (Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 97). Beckett, by likening the exile of Molloy from the motherland to the Jewish exodus from ancient Egypt, evinces the ancient roots of the anonymous Irishman's diasporic struggle.

In like manner, Molloy embodies the characteristics of a diasporic subject in that he embraces a collective myth of an idyllic ancestral home. For example, Molloy

construes emotions of joy and sadness in terms of a united ancestral home in Ireland: “Tears and laughter, they are so much Gaelic to me” (32). This passage evokes both the Celtic mythology on which Irish fairy tales and hero tales are based and a sustained, though subtle ethnic group consciousness on the protagonist's part. Moreover, Molloy illustrates the thrill of travel and mobility, despite his physical impairments: “There is rapture . . . in the motion crutches give. It is a series of little flights . . . You take off, you land, through the thronging sound in wind and limb” (59). Molloy's ecstasy in the motions of his crutches reveals the subject's transnational migrations, however limited in scope, to be of paramount significance in the process of his identity formation, invested as it is in a sense of foreignness and migrancy: “. . . Even my sense of identity was wrapped in a namelessness . . . there could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names” (27). Hence, the anonymity of the protagonist, his surroundings, and his place of origin suggest not only the breakdown of conventional plot and narrative which characterizes much of Beckett's postmodernist fiction, but reveals the diasporic subject's dislocation from the integration of the nation state: “Migrants' transnational practices have been understood to dissolve fixed assumptions about identity, place and community” (Nyberg-Sorenson 7).

Furthermore, Molloy's migratory lifestyle acts an allegory of the large-scale Irish Diaspora which, following the Great Famine of Ireland, witnessed the mass emigration of approximately five million people to the United States alone between 1830 and 1914. By 1890, one of every five natives of Ireland lived abroad and with the advent of the twenty-

first century, at least 80 million people claim Irish descent in countries ranging from the UK to the US, Canada Australia and South Africa, to name a few. Though, the rise in the number of emigrants following the 1840 famine constitutes a factor in the mass emigration, as the so-called “flight from famine” in which 1.5 million perished and over a million fled between 1845 and 1851. However, the famine represents only one in a number of factors in the emigrants' decision-making, along with discrimination based on religion and increasing rents and evictions (McCaffrey 176-178). Beckett himself represents a figure of the Irish Diaspora, as a twentieth century Irish intellectual who resided in several countries across continental Europe, including France, England and Germany, and became a courier for the French Resistance (Kennedy 50). Beckett's texts reflect the tribulations of embodying a diasporic identity based on dislocation, dispossession and alienation; in *Murphy*, for instance, the “self-exiled” protagonist leaves posthumous instructions for his ashes to be deposited in Dublin's Abbey Theatre, a site for the “redefinition of Ireland” and focal point of Irish nationalism which championed Celtic folklore. According to critic Patrick Bixby, Murphy's final request indicates an ironic “cliché of the Irish diaspora” (89). Beckett accompanies his literary representations of the Irish Diaspora with his nostalgic reference to Ireland as the site of his “unsuccessful abortion,” a land from which he experienced both literal and metaphorical exile in the form of language as his later works assume French as their foundational language. Thus, Molloy's wanderings may be contextualized as allusions to the emigrants of the Irish Diaspora, removed both from the Gaelic of their homeland and the “towers

and steeples” of Dublin. Though the “dark forest” in which the story is set remains unnamed, clues suggest that the forest could represent either the enchanted forests of traditional Irish folklore or those of France, Beckett's adopted country. The prominence of both Irish and French surnames in the text highlights the tension between the homeland (Dublin, Ireland) and the adopted country (France); Molloy, an Anglicized version of a number of distinct Irish names, also reflects on the influence of England in the author's work, while Moran, depending on pronunciation, could represent a modern Irish surname, pronounced “more-in,” or a derivative of the French surname Morant, anglicized as “more-anne” (Molloy Family History). Thus, Molloy's migrant existence as well as his determination to return to the motherland, where “[his] mother had waited so long and perhaps was waiting still,” represents an allegory of the Irish Diaspora, in which Beckett, Joyce and some 80 million Irish-born emigrants or Irish descendants cherish the hope of returning to the motherland whose “image, blunted for some time past,” nonetheless harrows its subjects.

Overall, both Michael K. and Molloy function as orphans in a dual sense of the word, both literally and figuratively as modern-day archetypes of the *homo sacer* who exist both within and without the rule of law. Each functions autonomously, evading “sacrifice” to the paternalistic codes of the police state and, paradoxically, represent the law's most susceptible subjects in the “unpunishability of [their] killing” (73). Though Michael K. subsists in a “pocket outside time,” beyond the reach of apartheid legislation, the National Party authorizes soldiers to “shoot on sight” anyone found wandering

without documentation. Likewise, Molloy, who ostensibly constitute the ultimate apolitical figure, finds himself accosted by the agents of the totalitarian regime before he reaches the walls of the town: “There are not two laws . . . one for the healthy, another for the sick, but one only to which all must bow, rich and poor, young and old, happy and sad” (16). Thus, both Michael K. and Molloy act as fugitives and orphans of the state, yet remain subject to arbitrary enforcement of the law. Beckett's positioning of his characters within a “zone of being . . . set aside by artists as something unusable” assimilates a zone both in- and outside the political and social realms. Coetzee also crafts a character who, through spiritualism and passive resistance, strives to venture “beyond the reach of the laws of nations” (151). As both *Molloy* and *Life and Times* suggest, escape of the police-state, and the various socio-political, military and religious encampments it fosters, entails disavowal of the mother, or “mother host,” whose hold on the son even in death constitutes a parasitical relationship. Furthermore, as refugees in search of the motherland, both act as Diasporic figures in their exposure to either forced or voluntary withdrawal from the homeland, collective myth of an ideal ancestral home, and pervasive ethnic group consciousness. Michael K., who flees Cape Town in search of an idealized ancestral habitation, encapsulates the ultimate lineal myth and ethnic awareness in his consciously apolitical resolution to become a gardener rather than a farmer and feels himself “[bound] to this spot of earth as if to a home [he] cannot leave” (54). Molloy, correspondingly, acts as a diasporic figure in his voluntary expansion from the town in pursuit of the maternal landscape and allegorizes the Irish Diaspora in which the author

engages.

Part Two: Evolution of Homo Sacer

The figure of *homo sacer*, that most paradoxical of political subjects whose expulsion from society leaves him at the mercy of every man, yet excludes him from sacrifice at ancient Roman religious rituals, reveals how Beckett and Coetzee probe the limits of the human sphere corporeally, psychologically, spiritually, legally and politically. However, while Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* operates in an allegorical land- and time-scape, authors such as Athol Fugard, in *Boesman and Lena*, and K. Sello Duiker, in *Thirteen Cents*, operate in a more particularized, apartheid-specific setting that speaks to intense internal displacement and being on the periphery of personhood and humanity. Both Duiker's piece and Coetzee's *Life and Times*, moreover, craft a circular mini-odyssey in search of selfhood, belonging, and rootedness in a state of being.

Both the "tramps" of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and the apartheid-era evictees of Fugard's *Boesman and Lena* illustrate characters who subsist on the fringes of personhood and humanity and thus embody the essence of the *homo sacer*, excluded in that his citizenship and civil rights have been revoked, yet included in the juridical order solely in the form of his exclusion: his capacity to be killed. While Beckett's characters function in an exceedingly allegorical atmosphere, dominated by absurdist mannerisms and existentialist dialogue, Fugard's couple, whose life of hardship and dissipation "obscures their ages," operate in an acutely concrete and realist setting, preferring politically-charged, historically apartheid era dialogue to the moral and spiritual

philosophizing of Gogo and Didi. The realism of Fugard's text owes partly to its sensitive political context, as it was published in 1965 in the midst of apartheid legislation, and partly to the concrete basis of inspiration behind the personage of Lena. In early 1965, Fugard, while traversing the rural districts of South Africa, happened upon an elderly woman trudging along the road in the middle of nowhere in sweltering heat; upon offering her a ride, she disclosed to Fugard that her husband had just passed on and she was traveling to another farm (Fugard viii-ix). In apartheid South Africa, farmers commonly evicted worker's families when the laborers died. The small-cast play similarly features a "coloured" man and woman who traipse aimlessly from one shanty town to another, irrespective of their final destination, and, in tribute to the *homo sacer*, necessarily an individualized being, focuses on the microcosmic effect of the apartheid on a select few individuals. Boesman, a displaced day-laborer, and his spouse Lena, archetypal of the disheartened yet spiritually undefeated wife of apartheid era migrant workers, approximate the *homo sacer* in their paradoxical stance as simultaneously *excluded* from the State, in that they have been divested of citizenship and reduced to four discrete racial groups ("native," "white," "coloured," Indian) following the general election of 1948, and included in their subjection to the laws of the National Party. For instance, as the action of the play reveals, every "coloured" man and woman of South Africa was obliged to carry a passbook with endorsements which dictate where he or she may live, travel and seek work, any violation of which constitutes a statutory offense to be tried in a Native Commissioner's Court (viii). Moreover, especially pertinent to the

South African playwright, novelist and director's politicized plays, apartheid legislation segregated white and black actors and audiences (i.e. the performance of major plays by Pinter and Bolt for exclusively white theater-goers), while Fugard's theater troupe, the Serpent Players, were denied the opportunity to perform publicly for white audiences in Port Elizabeth and forced to cope with the arbitrary imprisonment of various members based on trumped up political charges (xi-xiii). Ironically, Boesman and Lena's corresponding socio-political disenfranchisement precipitates their epitomization of the "homo sacer," alternately translated as "sacred man" and "accursed man," in that they manifest the condition of bare life (*zoe*, as opposed to *bios*: qualified life), separated from other men in a sphere beyond both divine and human law. Wandering through the bleak mudflats of the Swartkops River near Port Elizabeth, Boesman and Lena, like GoGo and Didi, shoulder only those possessions necessary to survival, and leave the sphere of *bios* behind in the rubble of the razed workers' huts:

Whiteman was doing us a favour. You should have helped him. He wasn't just burning *pondoks*. . . . They alone can't stink like that. Or burn like that. There was something else in that fire, something rotten. Us! Our sad stories, our smells, our world! And it burnt, *boeta*. It burnt . . . I went back to the place where our *pondok* had been. It was gone! . . . There where we crawled in and out like baboons, where we used to sit like them and eat, our head between our knees, our fingers in the pot . . . I could stand there! . . . You know what that is? . . . Freedom! *Ja*, I've heard

them talk it. Freedom! That's what the whiteman gave us . . . When we picked up our things and started to walk I wanted to sing. It was freedom.
(Fugard 275)

Hence, Boesman ironically conveys gratitude towards the National Party, whose forced resettlement policy of the 1960s, '70s and early '80s uprooted labor tenants on white-owned farms and workers' families living in townships nearby the homelands, in that they facilitated his transcendence of bio-political life, which assumed dependence on the makeshift pondoks and various instruments of daily life (i.e. pots, pans, utensils). Boesman defines this survival on the outskirts of the State and society as "freedom," though the fact that this state is achievable only once they leave behind the wreckage of the shanties and "start to walk" identifies it specifically in the register of bare life. His allusion to the burning of the "coloured" families' stories, smells, and their very world, also suggests a sense of irretrievable loss, the species of loss alluded to in *Molloy*, where Moran returns from his expedition to discover the once grand house forsaken and the honey bees diminished to a "little dust of anulets and wings," which suggests a forfeiture of lineage and patrimony with which Fugard's childless couple undoubtedly identifies. At the same time, Boesman carries the legacy of *bios* in the articles that he "picked up" and lugged with him on the road: "A coloured man--Boesman--walks on. Heavily burdened. On his back an old mattress and blanket, a blackened paraffin tin, an apple box" (239). Thus, like the sacred man, Boesman remains subject to the state via the commodities and paraphernalia of the colonialist government, which he carries with him despite his

existence as a non-state citizen who belongs neither in the white man's camps nor the shanties of the "coloureds." Lena subsequently censures Boesman for his acquisitiveness and continued existence within *bios*, or political/qualified life: "What's your big word? Freedom! Tonight it's Freedom for Lena. Whiteman gave you yours this morning, but you lost it. Must I tell you how? When you put all that on your back. There wasn't room for it as well . . . You should have thrown it on the bonfire . . . You should have walked away *kaal*" (291). Hence, Boesman sacrificed the same freedom he attained through the destruction of his earthly abode by hauling the remnants of his possessions along with him on the road; Lena suggests that he would have been better advised to walk away empty-handed, or naked (*kaal*). Later, she expounds upon the colonial legacy of possessions as artifacts with which to retain control even over stateless subjects as well as the repercussions of life as a refugee, doomed to wander the veld indefinitely: "It's so heavy now . . . Am I crooked? it feels that way when we stop and the bundles come down. What's so heavy? I walk and think . . . A blanket, a few things in a bucket . . . And even when you're down . . . and you rest your legs, something stays heavy . . . Once you've put your life on your head and walked you never get light again. We've been walking a long time . . . Those little paths on the veld, Boesman and Lena helped write them. I meet the memory of myself on the old roads. Sometimes young. Sometimes old. Is she coming or going? From where to where? . . . The right time on the wrong road, the right road leading to the wrong place"(1.1.264-265). Hence, Lena, at her most uninhibited in her discourse with Outa, laments her identity as a citizen (*bios*) despite the

forced resettlement policies, in that she bears not only the meager utilitarian objects of her past life, but the legacy of colonialism, as she trails Boesman from Redhouse, to Swartkops, Veeplaas and Korsten under the familiar load until she feels its weight even in its absence. Ironically, the chronicle of Lena's burdens, as well as the reminisces of roving the same timeworn path, encountering herself along the way, recollect Molloy's catalogue of possessions (his vegetable knife, silver, horn & bicycle), albeit a futile one in that he simply discards most items, as well as the vagabond's lugubrious, circular journeys through an unidentified forest in Western Europe: "The forest was all about me and the boughs . . . Some days I advanced no more than thirty or forty paces . . . turning then methodically to face the radiating paths in turn . . . I described a complete circle" (77). Additionally, the stage directions to Act One highlight the circularity and futility of Lena's own journey, which draws her to boundary between the *bios* of the human sphere and the *zoe* of the animal: "[Lena] has been reduced to a dumb, animal-like submission by the weight of her burden and the long walk behind them" (239). This recalls the animalization of the political subject under twentieth century political regimes, as reflected in Agamben's *The Open: Man and Animal*: "The totalitarianisms of the twentieth century truly constitute the other face of the Hegelo-Kojeviaan idea of the end of history . . . for a humanity that has become animal again, there is nothing left but the depoliticization of human societies by means of . . . taking on of biological life itself as the supreme political . . . task" (76). Thus, Boesman and Lena represent the restoration of "bare," biological life as an alternate political framework, having been depoliticized by

loss of citizenship and non-white political representation starting in 1970. This ability to negotiate between qualified and bare life also attests to the couple's status as figures simultaneously in- and outside the perimeters of the State, if one interprets bare life as that which must be transformed into the "good life," excluded from the higher aims of the state, yet included precisely so that it may be transformed into this "good life".

Moreover, the couple's use of Afrikaans, the tongue of the Dutch settlers and thus an accessory of colonial power and oppression, suggests a concomitant inclusion and exclusion in the socio-political sphere of influence of the colonial empire. The couple also reveal their twofold identity, which forces them to exist on the periphery of personhood, in their bilingual dialogue; throughout the play, they "codeswitch" between *Kaapse taal*, a creolized dialect of Afrikaans, and *suiwer Afrikaans*, school-taught Afrikaans, and English: "That's better. Now you're talking like a *Hotnot*. *Weg wereld, kom brandewyn*"(1.1.239). On the other hand, Outa, the subdued "black" African man who stumbles across the mudflats to join the couple at the bonfire, constitutes the sole purely apolitical character in the play, and thus the only figure to subsist in an unadulterated phase of "bare life." The old man emulates Michael K. in his desire to lead an untraceable existence, from dressing in the most austere rags, his slight frame lost in the "folds of a shabby old overcoat," to the extremity of conserving his speech and energy by remaining as immobile and laconic as possible, aside from intermittent murmurs in Xhosa: "Lena is waiting for a word from the old man with growing desperation and irritation" (258). In addition to embodying the ideal of *zoe* to an extent

that neither Lena nor Boesman ever achieve, the old man serves as proponent of the native languages of the Eastern Cape (i.e. Xhosa, Sotho) and conventional family values, as he declines to laugh at her bruises when she presents them for ridicule, in silent repudiation of the specter of domestic violence that accompanied the large-scale violence of colonialism: “Why didn’t you laugh? They laughed this morning. They laugh every time” (1.1.260). Correspondingly, critic Margaret Munro contends that, despite the fact that the play thematically constitutes a romance, no trace of verbal or physical affection passes between the couple, while the tertiary character, Outa, disrupts the “equilibrium of hostility” to explore the nature of long-standing monogamous relationships (23). The old man, whom Boesman slurs as a “kaffer” and “hotnot,” constitutes the exemplar of the “homo sacer,” reduced to “bare life,” and consequently deprived of any rights, even among fellow refugees, though Boesman evokes the underlying racist policies imposed upon the populace by apartheid legislation in his declaration: “He’s not brown people, he’s black people” (1.1.258). This distinction stems from the history of racial segregation and labeling in apartheid era South Africa, which promoted racial disparity not only between the white and non-white populaces but minority groups as well. Critic David Simon, for instance, asserts that in the white-dominated constitution of the apartheid city, the conditions of subjugated races reflected their socio-political positions, and subsequent class status, to reflect and reinforce the social formation imposed by white urban planners, particularly in overcrowded African townships established under Natives (Urban Areas) Acts (191). Simon, furthermore, cites the increasing social differentiation

between “Africans and blacks in general” in response to heightened skilled labor requirements (199). Consequently, Boesman, as a member of the “coloured” race, ostracizes the old man as a “Black,” and necessarily distinguishes him as “sacer,” or “set apart” from common society. Ultimately, he dehumanizes the outcast as animalistic in nature (i.e. references to Xhosa as “baboon language”), reflecting the significance of the *homo sacer* as an implement of the monopolization of sovereign political power by virtue of an exception with life, reminiscent of the actual definition of apartheid as the “status of being apart,” as well as Afrikaner minority government’s tendency to delimit its subjects as inaccessible to divine right and the laws of nature. Like the *homo sacer*, moreover, Outa meets an arbitrary, sanction-less demise; when the man succumbs to exposure, Boesman flees the scene, citing the man’s status of *homo sacer* (“he’s got nothing to do with me”), while Lena maintains that they will elude punishment, as the old man is stateless, cast out even by the “homelands” as the “white man’s rubbish,” his death not even worthy of eliciting questions: “They’re going to ask questions . . . About him? About rubbish”(2.1.287). This directly parallels the concept of the *homo sacer* as one whom society can expunge of civil liberties or murder, though not sacrifice, with impunity (72).

In “Waiting for Godot,” Estragon (Gogo) and Vladimir (Didi) likewise exist on the fringes of personhood and humanity; however, their atmosphere is one of allegorical and Absurdist theatre, rather than the racially and politically charged backdrop of the apartheid state. The play, for instance, evokes an allegory of Christian theology. Much of

the play, steeped as it is in scriptural allusion, probes the philosophical, spiritual and ideological doctrines of Christianity. The entirety of the play transpires atop a hill, in close proximity to heaven, which suggests the play occasions a religious parable. Pozzo, moreover, alludes to the concept of the heavenly body: “You are human beings none the less . . . As far as one can see . . . Of the same species as myself . . . Made in God’s image” (1.3.4). Here, Pozzo comically inverts scripture: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). Similarly, Godot maintains a flock of sheep and goats, and invokes the concept of mankind awaiting Christ’s Second Coming in the infinite deferral of his appointments with Gogo and Didi, so that he “has [their] future in his hands,” which amounts to having all mankind in his hands since “all mankind is in [Gogo and Didi]” (1.2.34). Yet, he departs from the quintessential representation of the omnipotent God in that he deploys a human messenger (the boy) to postpone his meeting and, moreover, he pronounces no doctrine but the inevitability of waiting: “We are no longer alone, waiting for the night, waiting for Godot, waiting for . . . waiting” (1.3.56). Ultimately, Gogo and Didi are trapped. There’s nothing to force them to stay but there’s no incentive to depart. The sole escape mechanism is death and the only relief is night. They frequently contemplate suicide, as they toy with the idea of hanging themselves, but they lack the proper tools; indeed, even if they were possessed of the requisite tools, one senses they are incapable of taking action or even of truly desiring to take action. This recalls Murphy’s yearning for release from the Cartesian mind-body dilemma in the sway of the rocking chair, as

well as Molloy's desire to merge with his mother and, in so doing, transcend his own corporeal attachments (to impotent genes, degenerating body, the written word): "What I'd like now is to speak of the things that are left, say my goodbyes, finish dying" (3). In effect, waiting for Godot is waiting for one's life to be over, waiting for night to fall, for the play to end. From an Agamben perspective, however, the unlikely pair embody the *homo sacer*, whose very existence is predicated on the notion of concurrent inclusion and exclusion from the action of the socio-political sphere and their legitimate "killability" despite proscription from ritual sacrifice: "What defines the status of the *homo sacer* is therefore not the originary ambivalence of the sacredness that is assumed to belong to him, but rather both the particular character of the double exclusion into which he is taken and the violence to which he finds himself exposed . . . the unsanctionable killing . . . classifiable neither as sacrifice nor as homicide . . . this violence opens a sphere of human action that is neither the sphere of *sacrum facere* nor that of profane action" (82-83). Hence, the violence to which Gogo and Didi are vulnerable, though infinitely deferred, can neither be sanctioned as suicide or homicide, nor can it be upheld as ritual sacrifice, so that they exist in a liminal territory outside both the sphere of *sacrum facere* (sacred in the form of a sacrifice) and the sphere of the sacrilegious.

Thus, Beckett's text not only approximates Agamben's concept of the *homo sacer* in Gogo and Didi's existence on the periphery of personhood and humanity, but the model of the spiritual and the sacred: " "In response to Beckett's overall oeuvre, Mary Bryden observes that "the hypothesised God who emerges from Beckett's texts is one

who is both cursed for his perverse absence and cursed for his surveillant presence. He is by turns dismissed, satirised, or ignored, but he, and his tortured son, are never definitively discarded” (76). That is not to say that Beckett’s Godot is necessarily understood to be a stand-in for the Judeo-Christian God. Indeed, when British actor Sir Ralph Richardson inquired whether or not Godot represented God, Beckett replied: "If by Godot I had meant God, I would have said God, not Godot” (Knowlson 24). Authorial intent aside, Godot clearly lacks the salient features of a spiritual leader; not only does he advance no religious, spiritual or moral guidelines (in fact the play is characterized by the nihilistic absence of religious dogmatism), but the characters consciously invert the essential tenets of Christianity. Scripture (“Hope deferred maketh the something sick”) is cited not for its substance, but for the satisfaction offered by its form, musical sentience and evasive nostalgia. Similarly, when Lucky is commanded to think aloud by Pozzo, he launches into a convoluted exposition detailing philosophical doctrines from Testew and Cunard and religious testaments from Bishop Berkeley in no particular chronological or systematic order:

Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaqu with white beard quaquaquaqu outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell”

(3.4.120).

By parodying the sophistic rhetoric of conservative religious doctrines, Lucky demystifies *Logos* by interrogating and inverting the very principles with which it is presumably imbued: clarity, intelligibility, rationality, causality. Godot, moreover, resembles a secular political leader rather than a religious or philosophical one, in the bareness of his doctrine and the civil and temporal commands he issues via the messenger boy; he orders them to wait each day at an appointed hour, but does not command them to profess beliefs or abide by a religious or moral code. Like Gogo and Didi, he is subject to a double exclusion from the law and the State.

Beckett's Godot, therefore, closely approximates the figure of the Sovereign posited in Agamben's text. Agamben contends that the *homo sacer* is the precise mirror image of the sovereign (Basileus), a king, emperor, or president, who stands on the one hand within law (so he can be condemned, i.e., for treason, as a natural person) and outside the law, since as a body politic he exercises power to suspend law for an indefinite time (15). Godot, then, reflects the qualities of the sovereign in his simultaneous exclusion and inclusion in the overarching logos and narrative structure of the play; though he fails to appear and consequently creates a state of exception in which he guides the action of the play from a safe remove, able to suspend the characters' dialogue or motion, he is nonetheless as subject to condemnation as a natural person: "On the other hand, Gogo and Didi acknowledge their fundamental bond to the sovereign, in that they are still held accountable to the laws of the State despite their exclusion from it;

as Gogo suggests, they are “tied” to Godot, while Didi replies with mock incredulity: “To Godot? Tied to Godot! What an idea! No question of it . . . For the moment” (2.1.45). In the particularized racial and political atmosphere of apartheid South Africa, however, this doubling of the personhood of *homo sacer* is complicated by the sovereign (constituted by the National Party) identification with white-supremacy government and disenfranchisement of “coloured” and black constituents. How, for instance, can the sovereign be conceived as the exact likeness of the *homo sacer* in the context of the apartheid state, in which the sovereign body is necessarily racially and politically disparate from the *homo sacer*, or “coloured” and black bodies that, despite their majority status, exist on the fringes of the State and the Afrikaner-dominated National Party’s racializing notion of humanity? The conception of fundamental interchangeability despite the disjunction in power between the sovereign and the non-state personage, based on their mutual existence at the same time outside and inside the juridical order, does not attain in the apartheid era due to additional inequality based on legislation that enforces racial prejudice. Thus, the paradox of sovereignty would only legitimately apply in Agamben’s ancient Roman Republic, or modern republics, not the South African police-state, where the sovereign stands both within and outside the laws not only due to the legal power to suspend the law, but the ability to generate a state of exception by virtue of the NP’s institution of white supremacy rule under two primary judico-political camps: the chiefly Afrikaner pro-republic conservatives and the predominantly English anti-republican liberal sympathizers (Muller 430). Boesman likewise reveals the

inapplicability of the concept of the sovereign as the mirror image of the *homo sacer* in his indictment of the National Party's crimes against humanity, as he points out that a "whiteman" would never sit out on the veld like Outa does, yet the "coloured" and "black" races are expected to do so.

The protagonist of South African novelist Kabelo Sello Duiker's (April 13, 1974-January 19, 2005) Commonwealth Writers Prize winning *Thirteen Cents* (2000), similar to Beckett and Coetzee's vagabonds and Fugard's refugees, embodies the figure of *homo sacer*, while investigating the psychological, bodily and socio-political boundaries of the human. Unlike Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, however, Duiker's piece transpires in a highly particularized, apartheid-era locale that depicts internal displacement and being on the periphery of personhood and humanity. Duiker's piece, like Coetzee's *Life and Times*, moreover, maps an internal and external expedition in pursuit of individuality and belonging. Like his predecessor, much of Duiker's writing was informed by firsthand experiences with alienation and exclusion from the apparatus of governmentality and sociality. Duiker, a native of Orlando, Soweto, was raised at the peak of apartheid by university alumni parents, who sent him outside the township to attend Redhill School, an elite academy where he constituted one of a select few black South African scholars. His school years witnessed his first contact with the anti-apartheid campaign. Intimate encounters with the social struggles surrounding the liberation movement profoundly influenced Duiker, though his novels regard racial background as predominantly inconsequential. Attending an institute abroad for two years in England at Huntington

School, York, Duiker returned to South Africa to attend Rhodes University, where he earned a degree in journalism (Contemporary Authors).

Duiker's debut novel, *Thirteen Cents*, depicts the protagonist, a thirteen-year-old street child, named Azure for his unusual eye color (a tribute to Toni Morrison's *Bluest Eye*), as a figure reminiscent of the *homo sacer*. In his characterization of Azure, whose years of dwelling on the streets and victimization by pedophiles have hardened him against the trials of life in the sphere of the *bios*, Duiker simultaneously constructs and deconstructs a revelation of life as a homeless individual, excavating the internal tensions of contemporary South Africa in the process. Indeed, Sue Valentine, in the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*, asserts that the novelist portrays a "gritty and real" story that does not "gloss over the crude realities of life on the streets" (3). By the utilization of colloquial language, or "Afrikanerisms," Duiker illustrates an explicit picture of life as a refugee who subsists alternately within and outside the Apartheid State. Azure, for instance, derides the whites as "evil" and full of *kak*. Though Azure's own predispositions are ostensibly based on race, Duiker's piece nonetheless draws attention to the fact that, while racial inequities have lessened since the end of apartheid and the advent of multi-racial democratic elections in 1994, new inequalities form in their place on the basis of class structures. While the text does not directly address the issue of race, the prevalence of racial disparities in modern-day Cape Town serves as a potent undercurrent throughout the book, as Duiker exposes the enduring postcolonial effects on the underprivileged (the destitute, homeless, gangsters). Azure's status as a marginalized figure, simultaneously

“hallowed” and “accursed,” is highlighted by his dual white and black physiognomies. A boy with black skin and blue eyes in a city where authority is delegated on the basis of race, Azure exists both interior and exterior to the laws of nations and the categories of race instituted by Dutch and British colonizers in the general election of 1948, which persevere in the aftermath of apartheid. His dualistic physicality confounds racial boundaries, so that white-dominated society implicitly endorses the attacks, both physical and sexual, executed by street thugs. For instance, he barely escapes with his life after inadvertently referring to the gangster boss Gerald by the title of Sealy, a “Black” lackey. Azure also approximates *homo sacer* through the impunity with which pedophiles prostitute him as well as other street children; moreover, he finds himself equally susceptible to sanctioned murder, as any one of the various street gangs with whom he traffics drugs may kill him without facing arrest. Consequently, Azure must constantly be on the lookout. The people with whom he interacts on a daily basis are prostitutes, gangsters and assorted street rabble. Just as Beckett’s Molloy concedes that there are not two laws, “one for the poor, one for the rich,” but one to whom everyone is held equally accountable, Azure realizes that there are no safeguards for the innocent or vulnerable against the sexually and morally depraved. Adults in particular exploit the slightest hint of weakness. For instance, Vincent repeatedly reminds Azure that “this is Cape Town,” a fact which Azure can hardly forget:

[Azure]: “Grown-ups are fucked up.”

[Vincent]: “No, Cape Town is fucked up. Really.”

“You’re right, it’s Cape Town, not the people.”

“And the people. Don’t forget about the people. They’re also fucked up.” (23)

Thus, Azure subsists as a *homo sacer*, at the constant mercy of the violence of the other residents of Cape Town, principally adults. At first glance, this merely constitutes the intimidation of a child by an adult; however, supernatural elements pervade Duiker’s Cape Town, similar to Ben Okri’s magical realist piece *The Famished Road*, which likewise traces the trajectory of the Bildungsroman of a young male hero. Duiker’s *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001) similarly depicts the maturation of a young male protagonist in a position of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion from the apparatus of the post-apartheid state: Tshepo, a youth whose semi-privileged upbringing is shattered when his gangster father murders his mother, suffers a mental breakdown and resorts to drug use as a misguided means of self-preservation. Contrary to the conventional Bildungsroman, however, a spirit of distinctly animist character thrives in Duiker’s texts, reminiscent of the Deleuzian “becoming animal” which lingers under the surface of both Coetzee’s *Life and Times* and Beckett’s *Molloy*, who imagines both himself and his mother as inhabiting the same *bios* of the non-human animal. Whereas Coetzee regards the spiritual as something to be profaned with scatological humor, for Duiker “objects acquire a social and spiritual meaning . . . far in excess of their natural properties and their use value” (2). For instance, in his battle against contamination by the city of Cape Town, Azure develops an affinity with water, sun, light, fire and their affiliated hues of orange, yellow and blue. Animals also bear powerful symbolic significance. For example,

pigeons, much like people, “take you out for a few crumbs of bread” (20). Additionally, Vincent forewarns Azure that the pigeons thrive under Gerald’s control and act as his scouts. Thus, in *Thirteen Cents*, as in *Boesman and Lena* and *Molloy*, the narrator assumes the traits of the “becoming-animal” the further the text progresses, eventually devolving to a proto-human state exclusive to the *homo sacer*, who, physically, socially and legally, no longer inhabits the sphere of human civilization.

Though *Thirteen Cents* departs from Beckett and Coetzee’s texts in that it operates in an acutely specific apartheid-era Cape Town rather than an allegorical place and time-scape, Duiker’s piece resembles the preceding works in that it chronicles a circular mini-odyssey in quest of individualism and belonging. Azure, much like Molloy and K. who set out in search of the motherland, roams the streets of Cape Town, a survivalist in the manner of his forebears. Unlike Molloy, however, he does not seek the mother; rather, he seeks the bare necessities of a street child’s life: food and money to pay off the gangster Gerald: “I walk further along the beach to the *moffie* part of the beach. I sit on a bench and wait for a trick. I sit a long while before I hear someone whistling . . . I know the routine . . . We go in and I begin to take off my clothes at the kitchen door” (2000:8). Not only does Azure’s victimization reveal the flagrant infringements of human rights that occur on the peripheries of Cape Town, a city with steep statistics of child abuse despite its status as a worldwide tourist destination, but emphasizes his status as *homo sacer* in that he is regarded as a “surplus inhabitant” of the city, subject to the exploitation and perversions exacted upon him with license by Gerald / T-Rex and his cronies. Critic Sam

Raditlhalo corroborates: “Stripped of its enabling mythologies of ‘nation-building,’ ‘reconciliation,’ and ‘economic revival,’ Cape Town is allegorical of what those at the fringes of a self-satisfied society undergo in this land of sun and surf” (98). Ultimately, Duiker’s piece reveals the legacy of post-apartheid society, as South Africa continues to generate pedophiles, poverty and homelessness, despite the symbolic significance of “Freedom Day,” which commemorates the termination of apartheid with the general elections of April 27, 1994 in which twenty million South Africans cast votes (Deegan 194). Additionally, it elucidates the status of an adolescent street child as reminiscent of the *homo sacer* in his banishment from the benefits and protection of contemporary Cape Town, the legislative capital of South Africa. Indeed, aside from the sporadic company of fellow street child Bafana, who fancies Azure a father figure, the boy survives in isolation and subsists by sifting food from bins. By selecting Cape Town as the setting for his novel, moreover, Duiker underscores the irony of a native barely surviving, in a society rife with economic stratifications, on the shores of the most popular international tourist destination in South Africa. The narrative’s apocalyptic ending, which implies Azure’s development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), exposes the persistent racial, social and economic disparities that haunt a society fixated on ceaseless modernity.

Conclusion

Overall, Coetzee's Michael K. and Beckett's Molloy, orphans who seek the landscape of the maternal to attain a sense of rootedness, identity and kinship with a land from whose economic and socio-political benefits they have been disenfranchised, anticipate the tramps of *Waiting for Godot*, displaced couple of *Boesman and Lena* and ostracized street child of *Thirteen Cents*. Not only do each of the protagonists function as orphans in a dual sense of the word, both literally in the sense that they are motherless and figuratively as stateless persons, but they each approximate the figure of the *homo sacer*, a man who committed a certain crime (usually oath-breaking) and consequently may be killed by anyone, yet not sacrificed in a public ritual. The crucial difference, however, lies in the fact that the protagonists of these postmodern texts have committed no crime other than inhabiting racial, social or political spheres deemed profane by the standing government. Perhaps most importantly, the texts probe what it means to be human psychologically, politically, socially and corporeally, while treating subjects who, for all intents and purposes, have been discarded as non-human, as "rubbish" of the police state. The sole aspect that the texts lack is the female perspective. Though the male protagonists of *Michael K* and *Molloy* obsessively seek the mother and the maternal landscape, the mother is absent in actual bodily form. To that end, Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* expounds upon the concept of fixation on the motherland, and serves as an extension of the model of *homo sacer* in its revelation of how the segregated, and

concomitantly sanctified, individual functions in the feminine and maternal sphere. The female heroine of Duiker's *Quiet Violence* likewise illuminates the distinctive domain of the stateless female; Mmabatho (Sotho for "Mother of the People") straddles the divide not only between genders, but also between the white and black and modern / traditional purviews of Cape Town. Duiker, in a *Mail and Guardian Online* interview with Chris Dunton, reveals Mmabatho's fundamental role as an agent of reconciliation between genders, races, the modern / ancestral spheres, and the West and Africa: "Mmabatho to me serves as a bridge between two worlds. She tries to integrate her own African culture with that of Cape Town and everything that is perceived as outside African culture. In a way, she's her own tapestry" (3). The protagonists of Coetzee's, Beckett's and Fugard's texts similarly operate within a state of exception, reflecting the sovereign's capacity to transcend the rule of law in the guise of the public good. The anonymous European administration of *Molloy*, for instance, exempts the title character from accountability to the laws of the state as the sergeant releases him as arbitrarily as he imprisoned him: "I was surprised to find myself so soon at freedom once again, if that is what it was, unpenalised. Had I, without my knowledge, a friend at court?" (20). Indeed, Molloy exceeds the status of *homo sacer* in that he transcends the authority of the author and embodies his own sovereign voice within the text: "The house where Lousse lived. Must I describe it? I don't think so" (31). Michael K. likewise parallels the sovereign's state of exception as the administrators at Kennilworth excused him from torture, for the decidedly imperialist notion that the "Black" and "coloured" refugees of the allegorical

illustration of South Africa lack any literary or socio-historical significance to the world at large: “*There is nothing there*, I’m telling you, and if you handed him over to the police they would come to the same conclusion: there is nothing there, no story of the slightest interest to rational people . . . He is not of our world. He lives in a world all his own” (142). Thus, K., like the protagonists of Beckett’s, Fugard’s and Duiker’s works, embodies the *homo sacer* in that, evoking the paradox of sovereignty, as an exile of the state, he exists concurrently outside and inside the juridical order, empowered by the originary ambiguity of the at once sacred and profane by the capacity to suspend law *in toto*. Fugard and Duiker’s heroes similarly evoke the paradoxical state of exception, whose very structure consists of the suspension of the rule of law, in their simultaneous expulsion from the protection and regulations of law, as non-citizens either by decree (i.e. Boesman and Lena) or by tacit consent (Azure), and inclusion in their susceptibility to homicide by inner society. Ironically, however, their liminal location between the religious and juridical, sacred and profane renders them autonomous figures free to rove the enigmatic forests of Western Europe, “alone in all [they] did,” or the veld of South Africa, heavily burdened by the vestiges of the State, evading duty to the laws of the State while exemplifying their own sovereign authority, a space where they are no longer vagabonds but self-governing monarchs: “Let me tell you the meaning of the sacred and alluring garden that blooms in the heart of the desert . . . [it] is nowhere and everywhere except in the camps. It is another name for the only place where you belong . . . where you do not feel homeless. It is off every map, no road leads to it that is merely a road, and

only you know the way” (166). Thus, in the mere act of wandering, of embracing the “tramp” mindset of the Gogo and Didi, the vagabonds embody the sense of belonging and rootedness they sought futilely from external forces. The vagabond of German-Swiss poet and novelist Hermann Hesse’s *Knulp* (1915) likewise evinces the sacred sovereignty of refugee subsistence and, consequently, communion with the ultimate autonomous being, the Divine Creator: “You were a wanderer in my name and wherever you went you brought the settled folk a little homesickness for freedom. In my name, you did silly things and people scoffed at you; I myself was scoffed at in you and loved in you. You are my child and my brother and a part of me. There is nothing you have enjoyed and suffered that I have not enjoyed and suffered with you” (113). This association between the sovereignty of the vagrant and that of divine omnipotence recalls the spiritual connotation of Michael K.’s partaking of the fruits of labor in the garden of his natal land: “Speaking the words he had been taught, directing them no longer upward but to the earth on which he knelt, he prayed . . .” (113). The theological import of the *homo sacer* also anticipates Nixon’s “environmentalism of the poor,” in relation to the lightness of being, reminiscent of Christian forbearance, that K aspires to: “I am more like an earthworm . . . Which is also a kind of gardener. Or a mole, also a gardener, that does not tell stories because it lives in silence” (182). This self-reference as an animal not only parallels the “becoming-animal” reflected in Molloy’s bestial crawling on his back through the underbrush, Moran’s affinity to the honey bees of his garden, and Outa’s approximation to an ape, but recollects Nixon’s approach to environmentalism, which

demonstrates the broadening fissure between rich and poor nations in terms of appropriation of environmental waste; like the *homo sacer*, regarded as a surplus member of society, the ecology of poorer nations is systematically destabilized by the West, the sacred and defiled members of an increasingly globalized world. The socio-economically disenfranchised constituents of these states, which serve as exemplars of the *homo sacer* on a global scale, subsequently strive towards as bare and survivalist an existence as conceivable to counterbalance the ecocide of native lands in *Life and Times* and the divestiture of black South Africans of their rightful lands in *Lena and Boesman* and *Thirteen Cents*. On the whole, despite divergence between the allegorical setting of Beckett and Coetzee's works and the extremely particularized, politically conscious backdrop of Fugard and Duiker's, the texts remain united by the shared premise of the struggle to be reunified with one's inheritance, which includes the natal land and all the benefits (or lack thereof in Molloy's case) this entails, and reveal the endeavor of the human psyche to reconnect with this crucial, yet severed tie that holds the promise of restoring the *homo sacer* to the society of men: "All my life, I think, I had been going to my mother, with the purpose of establishing our relationship on a less precarious footing. And when I was with her, I left her without having done anything. And when I was no longer with her I was again on my way to her, hoping to do better next time. And when I appeared to give up . . . in reality I was hatching my plans and making my way to her house" (Coetzee 69).

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