



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

COPYRIGHT AND USE OF THIS THESIS

This thesis must be used in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Reproduction of material protected by copyright may be an infringement of copyright and copyright owners may be entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.

Section 51 (2) of the Copyright Act permits an authorized officer of a university library or archives to provide a copy (by communication or otherwise) of an unpublished thesis kept in the library or archives, to a person who satisfies the authorized officer that he or she requires the reproduction for the purposes of research or study.

The Copyright Act grants the creator of a work a number of moral rights, specifically the right of attribution, the right against false attribution and the right of integrity.

You may infringe the author's moral rights if you:

- fail to acknowledge the author of this thesis if you quote sections from the work
- attribute this thesis to another author
- subject this thesis to derogatory treatment which may prejudice the author's reputation

For further information contact the University's Director of Copyright Services

sydney.edu.au/copyright

Global Modernity, the Labouring Subject and the Contemporary Indian Novel

Julia Broom

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of the Master
of Arts (Research)

Department of Gender and Cultural Studies, School of Philosophical and
Historical Inquiry, The University of Sydney

2014

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney for the social and intellectual space made available throughout the course of my candidature. This thesis would certainly not have reached completion without the support and patience of my supervisor, Fiona Probyn-Rapsey, who gave her time and advice with utmost generosity, pushing me to keep working and revising at points when I would easily have left the thesis as it was. Thanks are also due to my associate supervisor, Jane Park, for her very helpful thoughts and insights on the chapter drafts at various stages of completion.

I would also like to thank Sharone, George and Jenni for their time and scrupulous attention to detail in reading the manuscript. And many thanks to Sophia, whose generosity with her time and expertise made the final manuscript inordinately tidier than it would otherwise have been.

To my parents I have enormous gratitude, for their constant support and belief in me.

And, finally, to Ben I owe immeasurable thanks – for his unwavering support and love, not to mention the time and energy invested in reading, thinking and talking about this thesis. Without him it would not be what it is.

Statement of Originality

I declare that this thesis is entirely my work and that no other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement.

Julia Broom, 28 March 2014

Abstract

This thesis analyses three contemporary novels written in English by Indian national authors, all of which have achieved considerable commercial success: *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry; *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga; and *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai. These texts engage with the contexts of globalisation that facilitate the international literary market within which they are enmeshed, through their shared focus on the inequalities intrinsic to global capitalism and modernisation. Such inequalities are presented in the novels through narratives illustrating the global and local interconnectedness of people and place across differences of class, caste and ethnicity. This thesis examines these inequalities by focusing on the narratives of the labouring subaltern subjects represented within the novels.

To facilitate my discussion I unravel the power relations illustrated within the novels, analysing the modes of governmentality that they depict. Each of the novels show privilege and marginality to be integral to global modernity, and the dissociation of privileged individuals from the suffering of others a precondition for the perpetuated exclusion of the dehumanised Other from collective regimes of responsibility (Butler 2004, p. 33). I tease out these dimensions in a series of close readings of the three texts. However, enduring questions remain; in particular, those relating to the entanglement of the novels within the power relations that they critique, and the complicity of the reader within such structures. These questions highlight the delicate balance continually held in play between the globalised novel that circulates through privileged networks of mobility and the risk of the perpetuation of power relations between privileged consumers of the texts and the marginalised subjects that they depict. I do not attempt to present a solution to these questions, but rather to recognise their on-going and unresolvable presence and its implications.

Contents

	Introduction	1
Chapter One	An Economy of Broken Bodies: Making Live and Letting Die in <i>A Fine Balance</i>	22
Chapter Two	'We Entrepreneurs': Territorial Distribution and <i>The White Tiger</i>	47
Chapter Three	'The green card, the green card...': Imagining Other Lives; Deterritoriality and Deportability in <i>The Inheritance of Loss</i>	73
	Conclusion: The Precariousness of Reading	97
	References	107

Introduction

This thesis analyses three contemporary novels written in English by Indian national authors, all of which have achieved considerable commercial and critical success: *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry; *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga; and *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai. As English-language literature has become an increasingly global commodity, there has been a rise in the publication and global popularity of the Indian novel in English. Literary critic, Priyamvada Gopal, writes that ‘novelists from the Indian subcontinent have dominated the international scene in unprecedented numbers’ (2009, p. 1). She continues:

This is manifest partly in their repeated appearances on shortlists for the Booker and the Commonwealth Prize as well as increasing, indeed, guaranteed, attention from reviewers in prestigious literary institutions, including the *New York Review of Books* and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

While the three novels I discuss have achieved such attention, the novels themselves engage with the contexts of globalisation that facilitate this international literary market. Through this thesis I show this engagement to be focused on the inequalities intrinsic to global capitalism and modernisation. This is presented in the novels through narratives illustrating the global and local interconnectedness of people and place across differences of class, caste and ethnicity. In particular, the ‘success’ of some subjects is shown to be dependent on the labouring capacities and perpetuated marginalisation and poverty of others. This thesis examines these inequalities, focusing on the narratives of the labouring subaltern subjects represented within the novels.

As a student of literature, I was drawn to read contemporary Indian novels through their inclusion in various undergraduate courses taken while living in my home country of New Zealand. While reading these novels I was continually confronted by images of suffering and hardship, and I noted that a shared characteristic or agenda of the novels seemed to be an attempt at

representation of the inequities of processes of globalisation. As a method of drawing the reader's attention to the structural injustices of a constantly evolving and interconnected globe, the novels were in this sense successful for me. I was moved by the plights of various characters as they sought to forge better lives for themselves and their families, and indignant at the barriers that unrelentingly thwarted these attempts. The novels seemed, at many levels, a compelling medium by which to cultivate awareness of the distant suffering of others: those who would otherwise remain, for me, largely invisible and unrecognised.

At the same time, I was left unsettled and uncomfortable by the experience of reading these novels as a middle class white woman, where reading was both a leisure time activity taken up for enjoyment, and part of my training in literary critique, with the prospect of an academic degree to follow. It was clear that my level of complicity within the structures of privilege and marginalisation represented in the novels was high, and that the activity of reading in this context was emblematic of the power relations depicted within the texts. This unsettling quality of the reading experience both motivated and complicated my interest in exploring the power relations and structural marginalisation of the subaltern subjects represented within Mistry, Adiga and Desai's texts.

The focus of my thesis is the labouring subaltern subject, as the three novels that I read set out to speak for the marginalised and exploited, highlighting the injustices and inequalities of a modernity that seeks progress at all costs. I explore the conditions and experiences of labour and subalternity across a global/local axis, looking at transnational¹ experiences of subalternity and migration as well as the subaltern experience of being stuck to a locality. Through the thesis I unravel the power relations illustrated within the novels as I analyse the modes of governmentality that they depict; these analyses make up the bulk of the three main chapters. Each of the novels show privilege and

¹ Stephen Vertovec describes the term 'transnationalism' as broadly referring to 'multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of

marginality to be integral to global modernity (a notion that I unpack later in this Introduction), and the dissociation of privileged individuals from the suffering of others a precondition for the perpetuated exclusion of the dehumanised Other from collective regimes of responsibility (Butler 2004, p. 33). After I have conducted these analyses, however, the enduring questions remain those relating to the entanglement of the novels within the power relations that they critique, and the complicity of the reader within such structures. These questions highlight the delicate balance continually held in play between the globalised novel that circulates through privileged networks of mobility and the risk of the perpetuation of power relations between privileged consumers of the texts and the marginalised subjects that they depict. I do not attempt to find a solution to these questions, but to acknowledge their on-going and unresolvable presence².

In this Introduction I firstly outline the contexts of globalisation and global modernity within which the novels are situated. Here I draw on the work of Arif Dirlik (2003) to locate both the novel and the reader within processes of globalisation and modernisation. This discussion both frames the novels' engagements with global modernity, and positions them as objects generated within the contexts that they critique. In the second section I introduce the work of Graham Huggan (2001) and his notion of 'the exotic' within postcolonial literature. This discussion of exoticism serves to highlight the ambivalence of the novels as they present a strategy for drawing attention to marginality and suffering (Boltanski 1999; Butler 2004), and simultaneously risk reproducing the power relations inherent in that suffering through their representation of the subaltern/Other (Said 1978; Prakash 1994). In the following section I outline the three main chapters of the thesis and the ways in which they examine the novels' representations of global modernity. Here I introduce the theoretical tools that I use in the chapters as optics by which to examine these representations; principally those of biopolitics and neoliberalism.

Global Modernity, the Reader and the Contemporary Novel

² See Fiona Probyn-Rapsey on 'complicity as a starting point for engagement with Others, with the world, readers, and histories that energize them' (2007, p. 65).

In working to define what is at stake in the term globalisation, Arif Dirlik writes: 'If globalisation means anything, it is the incorporation of societies globally into a capitalist modernity, with all the implications of the latter – economic, social, political, and cultural' (2003, p. 275). As processes of globalisation engender intensified transnational networks of communication (Harvey 1989), an increasingly complex global economic system and increased possibilities of mobility for many people (Appadurai 1996), the contemporary novel has also become a cultural commodity to be globally marketed and distributed (Huggan 2001). As such, it simultaneously builds a transnational imagined community of readers (Anderson 1983) while drawing this readership into proximity with the imagined others that the novel represents, cutting across and drawing together various localities, cultures and experiences. Distances are therefore shrunk and solidarities built through the global reach and diversity of a successful novel's readership and the individuals and cultural groups that it seeks to represent. Novels thus come to both articulate (in part as critique) and participate within the globalised capitalist modernity described by Dirlik.

As the novels show how globalisation compresses distance through media flows, communication technologies and migratory patterns, they also show how what is distant comes to be dissociated from daily life practices, and how privileged individuals divest themselves of responsibility for the predicaments of precarious others. Through the chapters of this thesis I discuss ways in which the novels show people and populations to be hailed into various subject positions through regimes of governmentality. The additional question that remains throughout the thesis is one of how the novels and their readers are also implicated in processes of subjectification that help to mould shared imaginaries of the distant others represented within the novels, while perpetuating experiences of privilege and processes of marginalisation.

As Mistry, Adiga and Desai seek to illustrate the inequities and injustices of global capitalism, the novels themselves become caught up in the contradictions inherent in this system. As they relay stories of suffering and poverty, the novels are ascribed value within a highly commodified marketing

regime, and as Huggan has argued, come to circulate within a global literary market as fetishised objects of consumption (2001, p. 19). The novels, perhaps knowingly on the part of the authors, come to encapsulate both the opportunities and exploitations occurring simultaneously within global capitalism. This issue of the novel's position in relation to that which it critiques becomes entwined with questions of responsibility and complicity of reader and writer. The novels are also subject to questions of representation as they purport to speak for India's poor, with the authors implicitly positioning themselves, and being positioned as, intermediaries between this precarious mass and the middle class (both Western and Indian) contingent of the novels' readership. As the authors enjoy huge international success and its incumbent cultural and financial rewards, they inhabit a position of proximity to the processes of exploitation that they critique, as do the readers and institutions that endorse and ascribe value to the novels. In suggesting this, I do not seek to condemn but rather to account for the cultural currency of the novels and the worlds they depict. I unravel the connections between readers, writers and characters in my discussions of the consumption of subalternity and distant suffering in the Conclusion of the thesis, drawing on the work of Luc Boltanski (1999) and Judith Butler (2004).

There is a tension in the three novels between the unyielding forward momentum of a modernity that has become global, and the traditional and cultural legacies that are strengthened through their opposition to that globality, and are therefore conversely integral to modernity. Dirlik writes:

While dynamised by the homogenising and integrative forces and urges of capital, and its attendant organisational and cultural demands, globalisation has complicated further contradictions between and within societies, including a fundamental contradiction between a seemingly irresistible modernity, and past legacies that not only refuse to go away, but draw renewed vitality from the very globalising process (2003, pp. 275–276).

Mistry, Adiga and Desai all inhabit positions that straddle both Dirlik's 'irresistible modernity', through their education and social and physical mobility, and the traditions and practices of postcolonial India, with its legacies of anti-

colonialism. They then become emblematic of those contradictions highlighted by Dirlik as they draw on and seek to represent those legacies particular to India, while making them available for consumption by the Western readership that they also inhabit. Huggan's notion of the postcolonial exotic is useful to look at the ways in which the spaces inhabited by these authors further positions them strategically within a literary market eager for representations of the exotic.

The Postcolonial Exotic, Representation and Political Engagement

The three novels in discussion have all had enormous global success, their authors enjoying star-studded careers and international celebrity status. Particularly noteworthy has been their successes within the Booker (now the Man Booker) literary competition, with Adiga's *The White Tiger* winning the Prize in 2008, Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2006, and Mistry's *A Fine Balance* making the shortlist in 1996. *A Fine Balance* also won the L.A. Times Book Award for Fiction, the Commonwealth Writer's Prize, and Canada's prestigious Giller Prize. It was also chosen by Oprah Winfrey to feature in her book club (said to have launched the careers of many authors (Sherlock 2012)), and named by Winfrey as one of her top ten novels of the last decade. In 2007 *The Inheritance of Loss* won the American National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award, and the Indian Vodafone Crossword Book Award. *The White Tiger's* publisher, HarperCollins, won the 'Excellence Award' of the Asian Book Publishing Awards in 2009, within the category titled, 'Best use of multimedia marketing by a book publisher'.

In *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (2001), Huggan describes a recent moment of capitalist globalisation in which the literary market has become embedded within transnational processes of commodification and commercial demands. For Huggan, postcolonial novels are deeply enmeshed within a literary industry 'centred on, and largely catering to, the West', within which English is the almost exclusive language (p. 4)³. He

³ Ronit Frenkel argues that the Booker Prize is 'mediated by a politics of loss in terms of assessing post-colonial fiction from India and South Africa, where texts must fulfill

discusses the 'global commodification of cultural difference' that he terms the 'postcolonial exotic' (p. vii): ways in which postcolonial texts and scholarship are enmeshed within codes of value and cultural capital attached to notions of the *exotic* or cultural otherness. For Huggan, postcolonial authors capitalise on such systems of value and legitimation through the incorporation of exoticism, yet also often manipulate and ironise such techniques in ways that serve to repoliticise the exotic, unsettling 'metropolitan expectations of cultural otherness' and effecting 'a grounded critique of differential relations of power' (pp. ix-x). Exoticism for Huggan works by rendering 'people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them', familiarising them to make them comprehensible to the consumer, yet simultaneously keeping them at arm's length so as to maintain an aura of mystery. As the beholder of the exotic looks on, whether in wonder or in sympathy, the exoticised object does not have the power to return the gaze (pp. 13-14). For this reason, Huggan contends, the 'exoticist rhetoric of fetishized otherness and sympathetic identification masks the inequality of the power relations without which the discourse could not function' (p. 14).

As the three main chapters of this thesis analyse processes of marginalisation surrounding the suffering illustrated by Mistry, Adiga and Desai, they also demonstrate the exoticising tendencies described by Huggan as they seek to locate the Other within Western theories of governmentality. The novels' circulation and the discourses both surrounding them and fuelling their narratives can only function due to the power relations within which they are inscribed, and this is true also of the discourses running through this thesis. The ambivalence of the novels as political tools is evident in comments made by some of their critics, which show the novels to simultaneously demonstrate exoticism *and* critical engagement with that exoticism. For instance, Oprah Winfrey stated that it was important to include *A Fine Balance* in her book club because it would 'expose us to a whole other world out there going on beyond our backyards' (Harpo, 2014), a statement that could be seen to imply an

Western stereotypes of... "post-colonial pathos" in order to contend seriously for this award' (2008, p. 77).

essentialised and unvaried Other captured within Mistry's text. A critic of *The Inheritance of Loss* aligns the lush, exoticising qualities of Desai's writing with a knowledge and exposure of truth, writing:

Desai is a gorgeous writer, capable of pulling us along on a raft of sensuous images that are often beautiful, not because what they describe are inherently so, but because she has shown their naked truth (Halpern 2007, p. 20).

And another critic writes:

Unflinchingly stark, *The Inheritance of Loss* scrutinises the current preoccupations of society and literature – globalisation, nationhood, migration, poverty and political violence... this serious novel is an antidote to the simplistic suppositions of our age (Sawhney 2006, p. 22).

Sneharika Roy, on the other hand, sees *The White Tiger* as demonstrating a 'forceful anti-exotic strain' in Adiga's repeated references to a fetid, poisonous Ganges, and his use of 'animal allegory' throughout the novel (2009, p. 63). Adiga's self-consciously anti-exotic devices still, however, work to make the Other 'strange' (and repulsive even) as Huggan puts it, keeping him (referring to the novel's narrator, Balram) at a distance while simultaneously familiarising that Other as he is made comprehensible to the consumer through the use of first-person narrative. This device, for Roy, enables the reader to 'see things through the narrator's perspective' and identify with him (p. 65). This perspective, however, is conveyed in a language (English) that is familiar to the reader rather than the novel's narrator, enacting another form of domination.

Comments made by the authors demonstrate both their desires to convey knowledge, thus educating their readers, and their knowing complicity within structures of exploitation. In an interview on 'Oprah's Book Club' Mistry commented:

Perhaps my main intention in writing this novel was to look at history from the bottom up, from the point of view of people like Ishvar and Om.

The dispossessed. The hungry. The homeless. [I wanted to] see what it meant to them to live during this time of The Emergency (Harpo 2014).

Here Mistry assumes a viewpoint that accurately conveys the experience of dispossession and marginalisation, therefore educating the unknowing reader. Desai, on the other hand, expresses surprise at finding herself subject to questions of political engagement beyond the text of the novel:

It's a shock to come out of that and to realise that other people are looking at it from the other way: How did you portray these people? How are you portraying a movement? What does it mean for globalisation? So you really fall into the same debate but from a different angle (Rao 2007, 'Block B', para. 6).

Desai articulates the problematic nature of her own location within these processes, and also in relation to the subjects that she portrays, implying her own complicity and entanglement in the processes of exploitation that she sees her novel as debating. Adiga, like Mistry, is more intentional in his political engagement, stating in an interview:

It is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society... That's what I'm trying to do – it's not an attack on the country, it's about the greater process of self-examination (Jeffries 2008, para. 5).

The description of 'self-examination' suggests Adiga's knowing complicity within the processes by which India's subaltern subjects are subordinated, while he also implies a knowledge of those subjects that dominates them in its very articulation.

The notion of the postcolonial exotic bridges the tension between the novel as a medium for generating positive knowledge and recognition of otherness, and the constant risk of that novel's reproduction of power dynamics by fixing the Other within a subjectivity imagined by the reader. In the context of the novels I discuss, written by Indian authors who have successfully honed their writing and subjects for the global literary marketplace, the question becomes whether those subjects (or objects of the exoticising gaze) are structurally

denied a voice, as their authors speak for them. Gayatri Spivak has spoken of ‘an impulse among literary critics and other kinds of intellectuals to save the masses, speak for the masses, describe the masses’ (1990, p. 56). Her view on a more productive approach to the ‘texts of the oppressed’ is that the intellectual ‘represent them and analyse them, disclosing one’s own positionality for other communities in power’ (p. 56). While the project of analysing texts of the oppressed does not quite map on to that of novelistic representation of the oppressed, Spivak’s view on the importance of analysing one’s own positionality within the power structures surrounding the text is significant to my argument. This is so both in questions of the authors’ knowing complicity within the power structures that they illustrate, and questions of modes of engagement with the texts potentially open to their readers.

As conveyors of modern India to a predominantly Western audience, these novels occupy space in a long lineage of engagement with and representation of the ‘East’, by the ‘West’ and for the ‘West’⁴. Edward Said’s (1978) critique of the legacy of Western domination over the Orient is useful as it shows the production of knowledge of the cultural Other to be entangled with relations of domination and subordination. This is so in his description of European engagement with the Orient that sought to mould and discipline the Oriental subject (and the Orient as a subject of knowledge/power) into a subordinate entity that could be known and therefore dominated by European powers.

The Subaltern Studies scholars took up Said’s concerns with power and knowledge within a South Asian context, debating the problematic of speaking for the subaltern classes. This debate led to Spivak’s famous challenge, ‘Can the subaltern speak?’ (1998, pp. 271–316) In Gyan Prakash’s words:

The term “subaltern,” drawn from Antonio Gramsci’s writings, refers to subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language, and culture and was used to signify the centrality of dominant/dominated relationships in history (1994, p. 1477).

⁴ I use inverted quotations here to signal the artifice of notions of ‘East’ and ‘West’.

The Subaltern Studies group grappled with issues of representation and representability, asking whether the historian or scholar can represent subaltern classes without inhabiting a position of authority and dominance over subaltern consciousness, and thereby stripping the subaltern of agency. These questions were enmeshed in broader critiques both of history as a Eurocentric discipline, and of the reliance of a nationalistic anti-colonial Indian elite on Eurocentric models of thought. In his article, 'Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism', Prakash (1994) outlines how, in both colonial and post-independence nationalist discourses, subalternity was present only within and through the power relations that constituted these dominant discourses, and did not figure as an autonomous subject possessing a will. He describes how the Subaltern Studies group sought therefore to locate subalternity in the silences and fissures within these discourses and histories, or in the lack of voice given to the actual subaltern subject:

Subalternity thus emerges in the paradoxes of the functioning of power, in the functioning of the dominant discourse as it represents and domesticates peasant agency as a spontaneous and "pre-political" response to colonial violence. No longer does it appear outside the elite discourse as a separate domain, embodied in a figure endowed with a will that the dominant suppress and overpower but do not constitute. Instead, it refers to that impossible thought, figure, or action without which the dominant discourse cannot exist and which is acknowledged in its subterfuges and stereotypes (p. 1483).

The subaltern subject, to follow Prakash, emerges through these three novels as a condition for the functioning of power; this time, however, that power operates within the global modernity described by Dirlik (rather than British imperialism), with its intensified and accelerated social and financial interactions within which these novels and their characters are caught up. I suggest that these subjects, within the fictional representations that my chapters trace, perform a continual oscillation; on one side embodying the subterfuge and stereotypes that Prakash describes, as their authors pursue the impossible task of representing the other side of that oscillation, which is the 'impossible thought, figure, or action' without which the dominant discourse (which is here

located within the text of the novel) cannot exist. As the subaltern characters of the novels are depicted through stereotypes symptomatic of the authors' essentialised notions of subalternity, they are thereby dominated by the authors as well as through the political and economic regimes of power represented in the novels.

The work of both Said and the Subaltern Studies scholars treat the imagination with a degree of caution, as a part of the mechanisms by which power relations are both established and perpetuated. In this understanding, as exotic, oriental or subaltern subjects are represented, they are products of the author's imagination, fulfilling the desires of both author and reader. In this imagined representation they simultaneously feed the imagination of the extended readership, transforming that imagined reality into an actuality for the Western or middle class consumer of the text.

For Boltanski, too, this aspect of representation functions as a mechanism through which imagined realities take on material significance, shaping people's understandings of, and actions towards, distant others. For Boltanski, however, the imagination has a different significance, playing an instrumental role within what he calls, following Hannah Arendt (1990), a 'politics of pity' (Boltanski 1999, ch. 1). A politics of pity refers to feelings of sympathy for a person who suffers by another who does not share in the misfortune. It is centred on 'observation of the *unfortunate* by those who do not share their suffering, who do not experience it directly and who, as such, may be regarded as fortunate or *lucky* people (p. 3). This description captures the predicament of many readers of postcolonial novels as sympathy is generated for the texts' subaltern subjects, through the use of literary and narrative devices. For Huggan and Said, the observation of distant others by a more fortunate Western middle class audience is deeply enmeshed with the commodification and exploitation of cultural difference. For Boltanski, however, the generating of sympathy for the distant Other is a necessary condition for engendering the commitment and action vital to alleviating that suffering. The role of the imagination here is crucial.

In the Conclusion to this thesis I discuss Boltanski's argument on distant suffering, which I suggest points to the ambivalence of the novelists' positions as representatives of marginality. To complement this discussion I also draw on Butler's (2004) work on precarious life, and her view of the importance of representation to engender recognition of the Other and accordingly motivate political and social change.

The affective responses discussed by Boltanski and Butler serve to attune the reader to distant suffering and her location relative to it, while consolidating her own sense of subjectivity within her position of power as a first world reader. While power is reproduced through these affective mechanisms (as argued by Said and Prakash), possibilities for transformation of power are also present as, in Ben Anderson's words, 'affective life is the non-representational 'outside' that opens up the chance of something new', creating possibilities for 'a world in which new relations, subjectivities and commonalities may be created and organised' (2012, p. 34). In my Conclusion I suggest that the key to such possibilities is the ability of the novelist and reader (in their different ways as producers and consumers of cultural objects) to locate themselves in relation to the suffering depicted by the novels; as the novels I discuss portray the interconnections of global modernity with its inequities, both novelist and reader are positioned somewhere within those processes portrayed. I suggest that the success of the novels depends on their ability to point to the complicity of the reader within the global processes of exploitation that they depict, and on the ability of the reader to employ such a reading. To contextualise this discussion I draw on Kimberly Chabot Davis's (2004) analysis of the role of empathy for the distant/racial Other amongst the readers in Winfrey's book club, in which *A Fine Balance* was included.

The Novels and Global Modernity

This thesis is comprised of three chapters and a Conclusion; the chapters are each devoted to one novel. Within the chapters I discuss the narrative of one or two characters from the novel, all shown by the authors to be marginalised and subaltern in relation to the theme of globalisation. In my discussions of these

characters I read the ways in which each novel demonstrates the dependence of global capitalist agendas of modernisation and development on the subordinated labouring capacities of a transnational class of marginalised workers, of which these characters are fictional representations. From each novel I take a particular representation of processes by which India's subaltern labourers come to be marginalised and exploited, and interrogate those processes. Significantly, the characters that are the focus of my chapters are all male. While I do not take up lengthy discussions of questions relating to gender, this suggests a differentiation of gender roles within labour practices in India. As I interrogate themes of labour running through the novels, the characters most often represented as contributing to, or contained within, a broader labour force tend to be male.

Present throughout all three novels is a theme of the desire for modernisation and 'progress'. This takes place at two levels: that of the state, illustrated in the relentless implementation of development projects; and that of the individual, seen in the immersion of the middle and elite classes in consumer cultures, and the desires of subaltern subjects to participate in practices of consumption from which they are excluded.

I examine processes of global modernity by looking at modes of governmentality that seek to subjectify individuals and regulate populations, and work to normalise the regimes of inequality integral to the plots of all three novels. These processes of normalisation are connected to those that Huggan describes as embedded within exoticism, masking power relations hidden from the reader 'beneath layers of mystification' (2001, p. 14). While Huggan's formulation addresses the relationship between readers and texts, throughout the chapters I examine broader processes of normalisation regarding the social inequalities represented in the novels. These representations, I suggest, serve to inform readers about the power relations and processes of normalisation within which they also are implicated.

Michel Foucault defined government as the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault 1982, p. 790), implying a calculated rationale by which subjects are led to conduct themselves in ways deemed desirable by various governmental apparatuses (see Dean 2010, p. 18). Through the three chapters I respond to the novels' portrayals of governmentality, looking at those practices that seek to shape the needs, desires and aspirations of individuals and communities. Government in this Foucauldian sense includes practices associated with state apparatuses, but also includes techniques and technologies targeting the conduct of conduct that are at some distance from the state. These strategies work to optimise health and wealth, yet also serve as dividing practices that either intensify the policing of conduct of individuals and populations, or see them slip beneath the threshold of care.

In Chapter One I deal with questions of governmentality through a biopolitical lens, discussing Mistry's portrayal within *A Fine Balance* of the regulation and management of population during Indira Gandhi's leadership and the Emergency period of 1975–1977. In Foucault's formulation of biopolitical governmentality the social body is targeted through regulatory mechanisms that seek to improve the overall well-being of the population (Foucault 1997, pp. 239–263). Within *A Fine Balance* biopower works alongside disciplinary regimes, as is starkly evident in Mistry's portrayal of the sterilisation programmes that escalated to their most brutal excesses during the Emergency.

Through this chapter I refer to a biopolitical rationality in which biological processes are targeted through regulation of the population, governmental apparatuses acting on citizens and the population to mould responsible, self-regulating citizens (Foucault 1976, p. 105). Within these regulatory modes of governance, information is gathered about the population (in this case information relevant to the crisis of overpopulation and poverty such as birth rates and economic productivity), diagnoses are made, and tactics adopted which 'can range from calculations at the level of the state down to hints and guides as to how an individual should act, within several domains' (Legg 2005, p. 139). Citizens are encouraged to act and think in certain ways, and to

make responsible decisions around issues such as reproduction that will improve the overall health and wealth of the population. In the sterilisation campaigns at the heart of *A Fine Balance's* narrative, such aspects of regulation are evident within the techniques of persuasion whereby citizens are encouraged to choose to be sterilised. Sterilisation is portrayed not only as the responsible choice to make for both the population and family unit, but also as a lifestyle choice which brings its own rewards and benefits, as seen in the use of incentives that I discuss in this chapter.

My discussion of formal biopolitical mechanisms of managing the population through sterilisation programmes leads to a discussion of an informal biopolitical economy present throughout *A Fine Balance*: that of the regulation of bodies of the begging poor. This is part of a broader discussion running through the thesis that looks at India's poor as outcast from the rewards of the circulation of capital, yet still subject to exploitation in its service. This predicament is captured in Zygmunt Bauman's work on 'human waste' (that I discuss in Chapter Two) as 'the 'excessive' and 'redundant', that is the population of those who either could not or were not wished to be recognised or allowed to stay', and are both 'an inevitable outcome of modernisation, and an inseparable accompaniment of modernity' (2004, p. 5).

Throughout Mistry's narrative there is an element of chance, bad timing and bad luck that besieges his characters. Yet the events that lead to Ishwar and Om's social and physical degradation are presented as ultimately inevitable within the historical circumstances described in the novel. The novel's seemingly chance and random events work to disrupt prescriptive or definitive interpretations of causality, as Eli Park Sorensen argues (2008, p. 348), yet also demonstrate the diffused and dispersed nature of political powers which cannot be pinned down to a single agent. By operating in 'dispersed forms' and 'seeping through relations at all levels of society' (p. 347), power is strengthened and made ubiquitous.

In Chapter Two I move to a more recent moment in India's globalisation, following Adiga's story in *The White Tiger* of Balram Halwai, a poor villager from a sweet-making caste who, by exercising entrepreneurial acumen and cunning, escapes his lower class fate and sets up a taxi service for Bangalore's call centres. Through the novel Adiga depicts a world in the process of transformation, with a middle class intoxicated by the possibilities for consumerism surrounding them and a labouring under-class who watch this world from the margins with envy and desire. The lives of a mobile global elite are intricately entwined with the poor and destitute who serve them, inhabiting shared space yet with multiple borders controlling and governing this space. The inequities of global modernity, such as varied access to the technologies and modes of communication emblematic of the modern, are shown to coincide with local and traditional regimes of inequality, in particular India's caste structure. *The White Tiger* shows the co-existence of worlds vastly disparate in the freedoms and possibilities that they confer on the subjects that inhabit them: a world of technology, communications and consumption, vastly sped up and shrunken in terms of possibilities of mobility for some; and a world of entrapment, poverty and limitation for others.

In this chapter I discuss neoliberal modes of governmentality, which, for Aihwa Ong, are the most recent development of biopolitical technologies (2006, p. 13). For Ong, neoliberalism 'furnishes the concepts that inform the government of free individuals who are then induced to self-manage according to market principles of discipline, efficiency, and competitiveness' (p. 4). I discuss the competitive individualism described by Ong through Adiga's portrayal of the neoliberal entrepreneurial citizen (questions of neoliberal entrepreneurship are also present through my third chapter on *The Inheritance of Loss*). Through my discussion of Adiga's illustration of entrepreneurialism I draw on the scholarship of Ong, Ben Anderson (2012), Wendy Brown (2006), and that of Rohit Chopra (2003) to situate these discussions of neoliberalism within an Indian context. Brown writes of the neoliberal citizen: 'neoliberalism produces the citizen on the model of entrepreneur and consumer, simultaneously making citizens available to extensive governance and heavy

administrative authority' (2006, p. 705). This formulation is evident throughout the novel, particularly in Adiga's representation of the call centre workers who are entrepreneurs of themselves to the extent that they have invested in their futures as human capital through education, and accordingly achieved elements of freedom experienced in their assumed consumer subjectivities. In this chapter I discuss ways in which such notions of freedom are, however, subject to market-oriented forms of governance, as market based rationalities are extended within neoliberalism to encompass political and social structures. Drawing on Bauman's (1998) notion of 'consumer society', I discuss the capacity for consumption as a gauge for the subject's value within a market economy.

In this chapter I look at ways in which *The White Tiger* shows subjects coming to identify with and assume subject positions steeped in privilege or marginality and the ensuing relations of power and vulnerability they enter. Such processes of subjectification are particularly evident in the ways in which Adiga illustrates space and territory as organised to keep rich and poor distinct from one another. Here I draw on the work of Gabriel Giorgi and Karen Pinkus to discuss ways in which the social boundaries produced under neoliberalism come to be inscribed and reproduced at the level of life and subjectivity, rather than merely physical space (2006, p. 104). The chapter comes to focus on the political subjectivities that emerge around the spaces of the call centre and the mall, as patterns of work and citizenry claims are negotiated by those that this urban geography both privileges and marginalises.

Brown's formulation of neoliberal citizenship is important to the argument of this thesis as its underpinning is the recognition of the impossibility that all citizens will achieve entrepreneurial success, and therefore of the necessary presence of both winners and losers within global and local economic playing fields. The possibilities for consumption experienced as freedom by India's middle classes are unavailable to citizens lacking such capital, like the servant classes and those living in slums. The discussions running through this chapter on neoliberalism and consumerism again serve to inform readers about the market economy in which we are implicated, while also referring back to the

regimes of commodification and marketization within which postcolonial novels circulate. The consumer subjectivity of the reader as a marker of value gained through education is evident in the activity of reading the commoditised novel itself.

Chapter Three, on Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, looks at this novel's illustration of the fluidity of transnational networks characteristic of global modernity. Alternating between a village in the Indian Himalayas and the metropolis of New York City in the 1980s, the novel shows its characters to be enmeshed in transnational flows of media, communications and migration, all of which are transforming the local Indian political and material landscape, while informing knowledge and fantasies of possibilities of better lives elsewhere. Here I draw on Arjun Appadurai's (1996) work on the 'scapes' to conceptualise the complex and interconnected global flows that inform Desai's narrative, as well as the imaginative capacities that result from widespread exposure to images and stories of other places. The global flows discussed in this chapter also point to the global networks within which novels circulate. Appadurai's work on the imagination and ways in which it is nourished through the circulation of images and stories via various mediums of communication also connects to Boltanski's (1999) notion of the nourishment of the reader's imagination, through the consumption of the novel.

As *The Inheritance of Loss* traces the narrative of undocumented worker, Biju, in New York, it shows the multiple borders that govern inclusionary and exclusionary social and political structures, both within nation-states and across transnational spaces. The nation-state is shown to no longer define 'citizenship' identity nor to be the sole arbiter of citizenry rights, as mobility and desirability of individuals are dictated by other conditions such as the accrual of cultural capital. Here I engage with the scholarship of Anne McNevin (2009, 2011) and Nicholas De Genova (2002) to discuss issues of political belonging in relationship to neoliberalism and labour subordination. Both of these scholars discuss global capitalism's reliance on the continued supply of legally vulnerable, disposable labour, illustrated by Desai through Biju's narrative.

Brown also describes this underclass as she writes of neoliberal society:

A permanent underclass, and even a permanent criminal class, along with a class of aliens or non-citizens are produced and accepted as an inevitable cost of such a society, thereby undermining a formal commitment to universalism (2006, p. 695).

While *The Inheritance of Loss* illustrates the transnational flows vital to global modernity, with its increased fluidity of information and migratory patterns, it also contrasts the weightlessness of some individuals – those who travel uninhibited by border controls and have the freedom to come and go from wherever they choose to call home (Bauman 1998, ch. 1) – with the permanent underclass described by Brown. As neoliberal government operates on a business-like profit oriented model, and citizenship is reduced to self care (Brown 2006, p. 695), those who are unable to invest in their futures through education or capital inevitably fall through the cracks to become, or remain, Bauman's (2004) 'wasted lives': the price of a growth society. As the above passage by Brown suggests, this subaltern class is produced as a necessary condition of a neoliberal society; impediments to entrepreneurialism exist so as to ensure only a privileged segment of the population will flourish in an individualistic political environment.

Through this Introduction I have outlined the contexts of global modernity and technologies of governmentality that inform the narratives of Mistry, Adiga and Desai's novels, and within which the novels themselves are enmeshed as commodities that circulate globally. Present throughout these discussions has been the predicament of the novel's ambivalence as an informative tool to convey knowledge to a broader global public. On the one hand, as Huggan and Said argue, the construction of knowledge reproduces power relations (Foucault, 1972) as the object of knowledge (or distant Other) becomes fixed in the imaginations of the novel's readership, and as dominant discourses are the privileged mode of engagement with that Other. On the other hand, as Boltanski

and Butler point out, the dissemination of such knowledge through the medium of the novel brings the Other into the orbit and recognition of a broader public, thus providing opportunity for political engagement and social change. Perhaps more importantly, though, the medium of the literary novel provides opportunity for that Other to disrupt dominant discourses and expectations of otherness, thereby transforming conditions for the production and circulation of knowledge. Through the following chapters I treat the novels partly as informative, reading their representations of those processes of globalisation and governmentality that the novels and myself, the reader, are also implicated within. Through these readings, however, disruptions to the theoretical tools that I employ emerge, as characters and narratives do not always conform to the models by which I have chosen to read them. Expectations of otherness, subalternity, and indeed, the exotic are regularly unsettled, while these descriptive categories often refuse to be contained within theoretical models such as those of biopolitics and neoliberalism. In the Conclusion to this thesis I examine the possibilities for transformation of power presented by the novels, counterposing the risk present in their consumption as objects conveying knowledge with the possibilities of their transformative effects.

Chapter One
An Economy of Broken Bodies:
Making Live and Letting Die in *A Fine Balance*

Introduction

‘People sleeping on pavements gives industry a bad name. My friend was saying last week – he’s the director of a multi-national, mind you, not some small, two-paisa business – he was saying that at least two hundred million people are surplus to requirements, they should be eliminated’.

‘Eliminated?’

‘Yes. You know – got rid of. Counting them as unemployment statistics year after year gets us nowhere, just makes the numbers look bad. What kind of lives do they have anyway? They sit in the gutter and look like corpses. Death would be a mercy’ (Mistry 1995, pp. 372–373).

Spoken by Dina Dalal’s businessman brother, Nusswan, this passage from Rohinton Mistry’s (1995) novel, *A Fine Balance* (AFB), captures a predicament central to the novel – one in which a social elite, intoxicated by the pursuit of modernisation, view the masses of India’s poor as an impediment to this goal. Harboured within this view, as indicated by Nusswan, is embedded a discourse of ‘elimination’, which can be traced to India’s 1970s Emergency. This was a period in which, through a campaign of modernisation, the Indian Government sought to radically intervene in the reproductive life of India’s poor so as to curb population growth. In this chapter I mobilise notions of the biopolitical to read Mistry’s representation of the space between the Indian elite’s pursuit of modernisation and the elimination of poverty.

A Fine Balance illustrates the underside to India’s modernisation programme through its focus on the government’s sterilisation campaigns, and the begging economy with its own practice of mutilation. Mistry draws these two sites together through the trajectory of the novel’s central protagonists, Ishvar and Omprakash, both of whom end up part of the begging industry as a result of mutilation caused by botched forced sterilisations. Mistry’s account of this economy is thus a representation of the lives of those inhabiting bodies broken and discarded by the state through its brief but devastating ‘care’. Focusing

principally on the body and how it is acted upon by the modern Indian state, this chapter examines how the novel maps the characters' trajectories through formal regimes of biopower within sterilisation programmes, and their informal counterpoint – the begging industry – with its economy of bodily disfigurement.

While I do not wish to impose a strict Foucauldian reading onto the novel, Nusswan's project of elimination evokes Foucault's 'make live and let die' formulation, where:

In the biopower system, killing or the imperative to kill is acceptable only if it results not in a victory over political adversaries, but in the elimination of the biological threat to and the improvement of the species or race (Foucault 1997, p. 256).

Foucault goes on to clarify:

When I say "killing", I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on (p. 256).

Through this chapter I chart ways in which *A Fine Balance* shows India's poor, and their bodies, to be seen as a direct biological threat to the improvement of the overall population, due in particular to their fertility. The solutions that Mistry depicts as being implemented in response to this perceived threat, including forced sterilisations, serve to condemn many of those lives to the political death referred to by Foucault. This form of 'rejection' is epitomised by Mistry in the bodies of the begging poor, and it is this dramatization of exposure to death that facilitates my discussion of biopolitics.

In this chapter I firstly introduce the themes of development and modernisation that run through *A Fine Balance*, and Mistry's depiction of the destitution that accompanies such projects, particularly through Bombay's

begging economy⁵. I then show ways in which Mistry connects physical fragility to political fragility through the images of maimed and mutilated bodies that accompany his portrayal of political alienation. Here both the official site of sterilisation and unofficial site of the begging economy work to regulate bodies so as to maintain fragile political subjectivities (or to 'let die'). I then provide a historical account of modernisation and urbanisation within twentieth century India, and the problems of overcrowding within Bombay/Mumbai⁶ to which these projects led. This brings me to a discussion of the Emergency period, and Indira Gandhi's response to problems of overpopulation through sterilisation programmes as depicted within *A Fine Balance*. I then go on to examine systems of persuasion whereby biopolitical agendas of the sterilisation programmes became complicated by varying degrees of involvement and complicity from participants at all levels, and ways in which the exercising of agency in relation to sterilisation could be seen as 'responsibilisation' of individuals (Foucault 1976, p. 105). I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the ways in which the sterilisation programmes, as shown by Mistry, worked to contain those poor perceived as a threat by the middle classes, demarcating the boundaries between those seen to be deserving of life, and those seen not to be and thus let die.

This chapter articulates the themes of the thesis as it demonstrates how the structural inequalities of global modernity are entangled with deeply embedded caste structures particular to India. In doing so it highlights the contradictions inherent in notions of globalisation that Dirlik has analysed (2003, pp. 275–276). As Indian modernising agendas respond to the requirements of global capitalist economies, biopolitical regimes are instituted in various modernisation projects with the purpose of securing the health and wealth of the national population. As the novel informs the reader about regimes of biopolitical power, the dispersed and varied nature of the power relations represented within the text gestures towards the complicated networks of

⁵ Tyler Tokaryk argues that *A Fine Balance* tells 'a compelling "realist" story of development economics' as it represents 'believable human beings in a recognizable material world' (2005, p. 3).

⁶ Bombay was officially renamed Mumbai by the Shiv Sena-led government in 1995 (Prakash 2010, p.11).

power in which the reader is also subsumed. As I discuss varying levels of complicity within biopolitical regimes, this brings to mind the complicity of the reader within projects of modernisation and economic growth, as well as the novel's entanglement in such projects. As *A Fine Balance* shows, marginalised subaltern subjects are the counterpoint to the 'making live' of these regimes – without value or political voice within such projects (such as that held by many readers) they are 'let die'. The novel informs its readers about the processes of dissociation by which these subjects remain marginalised, and invites reflection about the processes of dissociation that readers are also enmeshed in.

Mistry's Reserve Army and the Trauma of Development

Within *A Fine Balance*, the promise of modernity and the ways in which that promise is scripted into the management of human lives is articulated through India's uptake of the economics of development. The promise and policies of development are inextricably tied to the individual stories of migration and labour that comprise the novel's narrative. The novel depicts a great mass of poor workers, excluded from the riches of the development projects for which their labour is vital:

Then the promised rewards began rolling up the road into the mountains. Lorries big as houses transported goods from the cities and fouled the air with their exhaust. Service stations and eating places sprouted along the routes to provide for the machines and their men. And developers began to build luxury hotels (AFB, p. 216).

The destitute encampments scratched away at the hillsides, the people drawn from every direction by stories of construction and wealth and employment. But the ranks of the jobless always exponentially outnumbered the jobs, and a hungry army sheltered permanently on the slopes (p. 217).

The image of the 'ranks of the jobless' is pervasive throughout *A Fine Balance*. Through the novel the 'hungry army', encamped on the margins of development – drawn by its promises, and whose presence underpins its realisation – becomes the target of clean-up and beautification measures aimed at eliminating that

mass⁷. For Ishvar and Omprakash ('Om'), it is the allure of the city and its imagined promise of prosperity that brings them to Bombay. Employment, however, proves elusive and they find themselves amongst the ranks of the hungry army.

Early in the novel the lives of Ishvar and Om are violently disrupted by processes both traditional and modern: their entire family is murdered in an act of caste violence, soon after which their tailoring business is over-run by the 'ready-made' clothes now sold in shops. They migrate to Bombay in the hope of a new start, and before embarking on their urban experience Mistry shares their dreams of that city:

They sat up past midnight, making plans, imagining the new future in the city by the sea, the city that was filled with big buildings, wide, wonderful roads, beautiful gardens, and millions and millions of people working hard and accumulating wealth (p. 151).

On their arrival, however, the city is altogether less hospitable:

Pavement-dwellers began emerging through the gathering dusk. Cardboard, plastic, newspaper, blankets materialised across the footpaths. Within minutes, huddled bodies had laid claim to all the concrete. Pedestrians now adapted to the new topography, picking their way carefully through the field of arms and legs and faces (p. 311).

After months of searching for employment while sheltering under an awning, the tailors find work with Dina Dalal and begin to rent a shack in a slum, only to have it demolished. They rent a piece of pavement under a shop awning on which to sleep, until they are herded into police vans with the local beggars and homeless and taken to a labour camp, despite their claims to jobs. Here they are forced to do backbreaking labour until they are rescued by a man called 'Beggarmaster'.

⁷Mistry's 'hungry army' echoes Karl Marx's 'reserve army' of labour, into whose ranks Victorian peasants gathered as they were drawn into the industrial revolution. The 'reserve army' is necessary to capitalism, as this 'relative surplus population' 'acts as a constant depression on wages', being absorbed into the work force during periods of prosperity, and providing a source of cheap labour during harder financial times (Giddens 1971, pp. 56–57).

Beggarmaster's business is protecting beggars in return for a large portion of their earnings, for which he trains them in begging techniques. The amputee beggar, Shankar, describes this relationship to his fellow inmates, Ishvar and Om:

'At last my baby face and baby size left me. I became too heavy to carry. That's when Beggarmaster sent me out on my own. I had to drag my self around. On my back.'

He wanted to demonstrate, but there was no room in the crammed truck. He described how Beggarmaster had trained him in the technique, as he trained all his beggars, with a personal touch, teaching them different styles – whatever would work best in each case.

'Beggarmaster likes to joke that he would issue diplomas if we had walls to hang them on' (p. 328).

When Beggarmaster arrives at the camp in search of viable beggars for his business, Shankar persuades him to buy Ishvar and Om from the camp.

Beggarmaster agrees on condition that the tailors repay his outlay.

The final episode of the tailors' misfortunes comes when they return to their hometown to find a wife for Om. While in the town market they are caught up in a mass abduction of villagers who are taken to a sterilisation camp and forcibly sterilised. After being insulted by Om, the head of family planning orders his castration, while Ishvar subsequently develops an infection of the groin that spreads to his legs, resulting in their amputation. The story ends, having traced the two men's struggles through various forms of labour, while negotiating the vagaries of caste and class differences, with the two returning to Bombay, this time as beggars on the street – the eunuch Omprakash pulling the legless Ishvar on a platform with wheels⁸.

Mutilated Bodies and an Economy of Begging

⁸When the depressive Maneck, the one main character with the material means to a comfortable life, is confronted by the predicament of his maimed friends at the end of the novel, he is overcome by what he perceives to be life's hopelessness, and commits suicide.

The begging economy in which Ishvar and Om find themselves has a long history in India, exacerbated by agrarian reforms introduced by the British in the nineteenth century, then the Partition that divided India and Pakistan, and more recently the migration of people following the formation of Bangladesh, many of whom took to begging (Mukherjee 2008, pp. 280–281). The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959 (BPBA) criminalized begging in public places, including soliciting money ‘under any pretence such as singing, dancing, fortune telling, performing, or offering any article for sale’ as well as ‘exposing or exhibiting, with the object of obtaining or extorting alms, any sore, wound, injury, deformity or disease whether of a human being or animal’ (cited by Mukherjee, p. 282). As Mukherjee argues, this act was introduced without any aid to help the poor off the streets. Rather, the daily activities of Bombay’s poor were branded illegal, and many became subject to the beautification projects that sought to remove those regarded as ‘eyesores’ (beggars, homeless, slum-dwellers) without offering them viable alternatives.

A Fine Balance introduces the reader to an economy of begging in which all the mechanisms listed by Mukherjee are employed. Seen in Beggarmaster’s business is an industry of organised professional begging, recently brought to international attention through the film, *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008)⁹. Central to this economy is the practice of body modification, where children are subjected to disfiguration such as amputation or blindness and trained to use their particular deformity to draw greater profit (see Andrabi 2009; Malone 2009). The enterprising Beggarmaster capitalises on the desperate circumstances of those mutilated bodies.

Within this begging economy is a hegemonic entrepreneurial system where elements of care are employed alongside exploitative practices. This system manages the overall population of beggars through regulatory mechanisms, while simultaneously eliciting loyalty and gratitude from them. Beggarmaster explains to the tailors: ‘Usually, when I look after a beggar, I

⁹ For critical analysis of this film see Dyson 2012; Mendes (2010); Mudambi (2013); Shakuntala (2010).

charge one hundred rupees per week. That includes begging space, food, clothes, and protection. Also, special things like bandages or crutches' (AFB, p. 365). The success of this technique is evident in the provision of care that those in Beggarmaster's charge judge him to yield. Witness Shankar's response when Beggarmaster arrives at the labour camp:

Shankar paddled his platform towards the man's feet, his palms flailing the ground excitedly. 'Beggarmaster! The police took me away! I did not want to go!' Relief and anxiety merged in his sobs as he clutched the man's shins. 'Beggarmaster, please help me, I want to go home!' (p. 363).

Within this system the bodies of those beggars mutilated and then groomed for the profession function differently to those who come to it by other means. Shankar tells the tailors:

'Sometimes, normal people become beggars if they cannot find work, or if they fall sick. But they are hopeless, they stand no chance against professionals. Just think – if you have one coin to give, and you have to choose between me and another beggar with a complete body' (p. 329).

The contrasting trajectories by which Shankar and then Ishvar and Om come to inhabit the mutilated bodies of beggary – Shankar's deliberate maiming; and Ishvar and Om the unintended consequence of policy actions by a state that abandons those on whom it acts – nevertheless strands them all within a criminal economy. Here their disfigured bodies are the only means through which they are able to, not so much make a living, but stave off death.

Peter Morey makes a direct connection between the sterilisation campaigns and the begging economy through what he refers to as Mistry's 'concern with the fragility of bodies' which encompasses both these sites, and points out that 'mutilation metaphors abound' throughout the novel (2004, p. 102)¹⁰. Illustrating how these metaphors extend from bodies of the poor to the

¹⁰ Mistry's theme of mutilated bodies and physical fragility runs through the novel in more forms than the two on which this chapter focuses (for example, the mutilation of the deaths on the train tracks which frame the novel; and the mutilation suffered by

physical space of the city in which they move, Morey cites Mistry's description of a slum settlement, with its 'sordid quiltings of plastic and cardboard and paper and sackcloth, like scabs and blisters creeping in a dermatological nightmare across the rotting body of the metropolis' (AFB, p. 379). He remarks that from early on in the narrative of Ishvar and Om, the body and its fragility are established at the centre of what follows, with the reader's attention 'drawn to Ishvar's disfigured left cheek, and Om's frail spine as he is bumped and jostled by fellow passengers' (2004, p. 101).

The begging industry holds a central place within *A Fine Balance* as a potent marker of the fragility of the body outcast by a capitalist system that yet still extracts surplus from that (often mutilated) body. For Ishvar and Om, the fragility of their individual bodies is the visual marker of their frailty as political subjects, with both this physical and social vulnerability rendering equally tenuous the nature of their labouring capacities. As socially and politically marginalised citizens acting within an informal economy it is difficult for them to find and hold on to skilled labour, and once they are maimed, their viability for employment is greatly diminished. This is in a sense ironic, as Ishvar and Om's condition results from the sterilisation programmes that are ostensibly about providing healthcare and improving the health of the population. It does, however, resonate with Foucault's notion of biopolitics as they are part of the refuse, or the lives that do not count, that are therefore left to a political death. Rather than being fostered as subjects who will contribute to the overall well-being of the population, they are excluded from political recognition.

While Morey's point about the fragility of bodies is an important one, there are vast differences in the ways in which bodies are acted upon within the two economies of sterilisation and begging. The bodies of the beggars represent the human waste surplus to the circulation of capital, while still subject to exploitation by entrepreneurial agents such as Beggarmaster. The sterilisation programmes, on the other hand, act on many different kinds of bodies across

victims of torture, such as Avinash, whose body is also found tossed onto a train track).

differences of class and caste, with those subject to these regimes complicit with varying levels of agency and desire. Sterilisation also closes the possibility of future bodies: those that would have been.

Partha Chatterjee (2004) writes of ways in which population was regulated and managed in India's large cities over the 1970s and 1980s. He describes how systems of management entailed the extension of benefits and protection to various sections of the urban poor so as to integrate those populations into the life of the city. Chatterjee's argument points to the contradictory biopolitical impulses of regulation and elimination as he emphasises the need for populations of the urban poor to be:

pacified and even cared for, partly because they provided the necessary labour and services to the city's economy and partly because if they were not cared for at all, they could endanger the safety and well-being of all citizens (p. 135).

He clarifies the rationale behind these policies as being 'one of costs and benefits in terms of economic, political, or social outcomes', rather than charity for the poor. Here he makes a distinction between 'political society' and 'civil society', arguing that while groups of people who existed para-legally (squatters, hawkers etc.) were hailed into 'political society' through the state's extension of provisions to them, they were nevertheless unable to exercise citizenry rights, and so excluded from 'civil society' (p. 136).

In the sterilisation campaigns population is an object of governance instituted through healthcare regimes. Yet that population seems to function, in Sarah Hodges words, as a 'statistical abstraction ... something – analogous to contemporary thinking about the nature of markets, for example – that could grow, shrink, be strong, or be weak' (2008, p. 4). The biopolitics of the sterilisation campaigns work, in some ways, to reduce (or eliminate) those elements that imperil this statistical abstraction, and, in other ways, to foster those elements that enhance it. At the same time, there is a sense in which this statistical abstraction does not include the slum dwellers, homeless and beggars;

the state has withdrawn from many of these zones and so from practices of record keeping necessary to document their claims to citizenry rights. They are not counted, so do not count.

If the sterilisation programmes work to reduce weakness, the begging economy fosters and capitalises on it, extending provisions and protections (of a kind) to those who are precarious in the extreme. The professional begging contingent of the population are extended provisions that enhance their productivity as beggars, yet keep them contained within that fate (such as the bandages, crutches, props etc.). This level of care, which comes from an unofficial source rather than the state, keeps those subjects firmly outside civil society, yet ensures that they nevertheless contribute to the general circulation of capital.

'The City of Gold': modern dreams, urban despair

Gyan Prakash's (2010) *Mumbai Fables* provides a useful historical account of the modernisation and development agendas that impact on the lives of Mistry's characters¹¹. Prakash charts the course of Bombay/Mumbai's modernisation; a city that, in his childhood imagination, embodied all that was constituted by the idea of 'modern' life. He describes the desire for the city that he experienced living in a small town as fuelled by the glamour of that city's images circulating in films and novels. This imagined city was characterised by glittering excess and unbridled possibilities captured in symbols of modernity such as planes, trains and automobiles (pp. 3–5). Prakash maps the trajectory from this phase of industrial modernity during the time of British India into the twentieth century and post-independence period when Bombay expanded into a commercial 'hub of manufacturing, finance, trade, advertising, media, and the film industry', attracting people from all over India in search of work (p. 11). He writes: 'with

¹¹ Within the novel, Mistry never actually names the city, but implies it to be Bombay through his description of its topography. Most critics of the novel simply refer to the 'city by the sea' as Bombay, while Peter Morey points out that, by not naming the city, Mistry is allowed to 'bring together on one stage, so to speak, regional patterns of oppression' (Morey 2004, p. 12). This includes the sterilisation campaigns and slum clearances that are at the heart of Mistry's narrative, yet actually reached their greatest excesses in Delhi.

the toil and sweat of immigrant workers, the city's businessmen amassed great fortunes. Bombay became the city of gold' (p. 43).

With the steady influx of immigrant workers to the city over the course of the twentieth century, Bombay progressively became subject to acute housing shortages and vast inequality between the city's business elite and the masses of labouring poor. The city increasingly became disordered and chaotic, unable to cope with and provide for the rapidly rising population; makeshift dwellings, known as chawls, proliferated and expanding slums developed informal structures to meet a minimum of life's necessities (pp. 64–65).

In response to this crisis during the period leading to Indira Gandhi's leadership, urban planning became the focus of strategies of modernisation and development. However, politicians and urban managers officially responsible for responding to demands for physical and social space by workers (and a growing middle class) often allied themselves with business and commercial interests (Banerjee-Guha 1995, p. 103). Similarly, in Prakash's description of the period, the dream of urban order and efficiency to be achieved through planning took precedence over addressing 'social desires and needs' (2010, p. 287). He writes:

In the clean and orderly urbanism proposed for the nation, there was no place for the heterogeneous and conflict-ridden urban life, no room for chawls as spaces of community and memory, and no provision for the rich and varied life on the streets... Bombay was to be nothing more than an industrial metropolis, a cog in the wheel of the industrialising and urbanising nation (p. 285).

Demonstrating the ultimate failure of the dream of urbanisation, Prakash writes of the 'unremittingly dismal picture' for the majority of contemporary Mumbai's citizens, their lives characterised by 'malnourishment, cramped and unhygienic housing, diminishing open space, and ever more crowded suburban train travel to work' (p. 288).

This is a picture not much changed from that of the 1970s Bombay illustrated by Mistry, as he confronts the reader with the juxtaposition of the

dream of the great modern city full of possibility with the materiality of an underclass that supports and sustains that city's projects of modernisation. Prakash's description of the 'city of gold' resonates with the imagined city anticipated by Ishvar and his friend Ashraf:

'A year or two. Work hard, earn money, and come back'.

'That's true. They say you can make money very quickly in the city, there is so much work and opportunity' (AFB, p. 151).

Ishvar and Om's experience of the city, however, is one of struggle within those conditions of overcrowding and poverty described by Prakash.

The 'Emergency': the biopolitics of sterilisation

In 1966 Indira Gandhi became India's Prime Minister, and was faced with these intersecting problems of poverty and population growth. Her response was to institute a political agenda firmly embedded in socialist, disciplinary rhetoric, imposed through an extreme measure of sovereign power – the declaration of a national Emergency. As the government sought solutions to the current economic crisis, one of the major obstacles to economic progress and development was perceived to be the speed at which the already large population was growing. Regulatory mechanisms revolving around family planning were intensified, with the focus turning from birth control to sterilisation. The state of emergency, which lasted from June 1975 until January 1977, allowed democratic rights to be suspended and coercive measures to be brought into play, intensifying and brutalising existing objectives of population control (Bandarage 1997, pp. 74–78). As anthropologist, Emma Tarlo, writes (with interesting implications for a reading of Mistry's fictional account of the Emergency):

Press censorship, arrests, torture, the demolition of slums and tales of forcible sterilisation have all made the Emergency fertile food for fiction, but uncomfortable ground for historical, political or sociological analysis (2003, p. 2).

Gandhi's declaration of emergency was in response to accusations of cheating in the recently held national election through which she had come to power (see Gwatkin 1979, p. 31; Guha 2007, pp. 486–490). The national emergency created a 'state of exception', where sovereign power is effectively allowed to act outside the law. As Arjun Chowdhury glosses this Schmittian formulation, a state of exception 'is declared to preserve sovereign power. In an emergency, the sovereign suspends the law because if the law was obeyed, the state itself would be threatened' (Chowdhury 2007, p. 10; see Agamben 2005, ch. 1). In an Agambenian understanding of sovereign power, Gandhi's act of self-preservation was followed by the very direct linking of sovereignty over the lives and bodies of India's poor to the terrain of doctors (to perform sterilisations) and experts (teachers, government officials etc., obliged to recruit members of the public for sterilisation) who became instrumental to her reign over the reproductive capacities of the population. For Agamben this would amount to 'an ever more intimate symbiosis not only with the jurist but also with the doctor, the scientist, the expert, and the priest', which takes place within the state of exception (1995, p. 122). However, this characteristic of Gandhi's 'state of exception' can lead to an understanding of social control as stemming solely from Gandhi and the Congress Party as wielders of sovereign power, while diminishing the complicity of those individuals who became drawn into the varied (bio)political agendas of the time.

The Congress Party's rhetoric of socialist discipline expanded to encompass a biopolitics that was communicated in pithy slogans adorning public spaces:

**THE ONLY MAGIC TO REMOVE POVERTY IS HARD WORK!
YOU TOO HAVE A ROLE IN THE EMERGENCY!
WORK HARD! PRODUCE MORE! MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE!** (Tarlo 2003, p. 27).

The biopolitical goal to produce a healthy, productive population is implicit in this slogan, as is the need for healthcare to achieve this goal. The disciplinary imperative to produce more through hard work found its complement in the

family planning policies whose implementation and intensification amplified the imperative to reproduce less. Embedded within the sterilisation project was the political refrain that eradicating ‘the underlying causes of poverty and disease’ would enable the nation to move towards social and economic progress (Gwatkin 1979, p. 37). If population growth were curtailed, resources and wealth would not have to stretch as far for a larger proportion of the population to become healthy, able, working bodies.

The tension between the biopolitical impulses of regulation and elimination is demonstrated in a farcical scene within *A Fine Balance*, where Indira Gandhi addresses a crowd of 25,000 people who have been taken by force to a political rally in her support:

What we want is to provide houses for the people. Enough food, so no one goes hungry. Cloth at controlled prices. We want to build schools for our children and hospitals to look after the sick. Birth control will also be available to everyone. And the government will no longer tolerate a situation where people increase the population recklessly, draining the resources that belong to all. We promise that we will eliminate poverty from our cities and towns and villages (AFB, p. 265).

Here, Gandhi addresses population as an entity to be regulated and managed so as to improve the well-being of the whole – through education, improved healthcare and birth control. In the implementation of this agenda, however, disciplinary measures were taken by Gandhi, which impacted on individual bodies; this was seen in the labour camps and forced sterilisations. The undesirable bodies of the infirm, poor and weak were left to die to improve the overall health of the population by eliminating the perceived ‘sub-species’ (Foucault 1997, p. 255)¹². This is exemplified in *A Fine Balance* in the physical and psychological deterioration of the labourers at the camp, including Ishvar and Om.

¹² For an overview of the distinctions between Agamben’s and Foucault’s biopolitics, particularly in relation to questions of sovereignty and regulation, see Diken and Laustsen (2005, pp. 43–45).

There is an element within the discourse of Gandhi's speech that discriminates against those who do not add to the nation's wealth – the poor. This can be read in the accusation of recklessness associated with procreation and directed at the poor whom the sterilisation programmes targeted. This accusation is made with the agenda of eliminating the future progeny of these people seen as a drain on society. Indeed, a discourse of elimination creeps into Gandhi's wording, the promise to 'eliminate' poverty bringing to mind the city beautification programmes, with the brutal demolition of slums and removal of beggars and pavement dwellers from the streets, in which Ishvar and Om become caught up.

Persuasion and Compulsion

While Mistry's narrative of Ishvar and Om depicts the sterilisation camps as acting on people by force, the novel also alludes throughout to an ongoing campaign whereby persuasive techniques work to induce individuals, through the use of incentives and disincentives, to choose sterilisation. In this section I discuss the complexities of biopolitical power that drew Indian people into the sterilisation campaigns by recruiting them as active and willing participants; either by choosing to undergo sterilisation or persuading others to be sterilised. Here I draw on Tarlo's anthropological work on a slum settlement in Delhi twenty years after the Emergency, in which she talked to residents about their experiences of the Emergency sterilisation programmes. Tarlo's ethnography enriches and complicates Mistry's largely negative portrayal of the sterilisation programmes, portraying them as more ambivalent in their outcomes as slum dwellers created ways to capitalise on the programmes¹³.

In Mistry's depiction of the sterilisation programmes we see a system where power becomes dispersed through all levels of society as each individual acts within a structure of tactical, self-interested bargaining in pursuit of their own well-being, with no overall sense of communal gain or welfare. Commenting on *A Fine Balance*, Peter Morey writes:

¹³ See Jana Sawicki for a discussion of Foucault's biopolitics, where 'individuals and groups do not possess power but rather occupy various and shifting positions in this network of relations – positions of power and resistance' (1991, p. 80).

The Emergency breeds enforcers, like the slum landlord who accepts a job at the head of a government slum clearance programme and bulldozes the ramshackle dwellings of his own tenants; 'motivators' who prod, pester and push people into waiting sterilisation vans; 'facilitators' who offer to forge ration cards and sterilisation certificates; protection racketeers thriving in the atmosphere of paranoia and banditry; and those using the invasive new laws to settle old scores (2004, pp. 112–113).

Morey describes ways in which various citizens participated in development agendas, such as sterilisation programmes, instituted during the Emergency by taking on enforcing or official roles. Tarlo's ethnographic account adds nuance to this description of the complicity of citizens as she allows for the agency, with its ensuing complications, of those acted upon by enforcers, such as slum-dwellers.

Questions of agency and participation are complex in the context of the sterilisation programmes as incentives on offer were weighted differently in decisions made by the poor, offering inducements to which the rich were immune, insulated by their more privileged positions. As Tarlo demonstrates, the use of incentives also opened up possibilities for tactical responses, with people entering into exchanges of negotiation and bargaining with friends, family and neighbours, sometimes passing on the burden of sterilisation while still gaining the rewards.

This scheme of incentives (which ranged from pots of ghee to transistor radios to plots of land), sterilisation quotas and targets, and punishments for targets not met (such as the withholding of salaries)¹⁴, led to a system of persuasion and complicity whereby the distinction between choice and force became unclear; some citizens were effectively forced by circumstance to choose sterilisation. One of Tarlo's informants stated:

¹⁴ Matthew Connelly cites a report written by one of Gandhi's closest aides, describing the treatment of schoolteachers when they failed to meet their quota: 'Teachers, like everyone else, could be demoted, fired, or threatened with arrest. They, in turn, sometimes expelled students when their parents did not submit to sterilisation' (Connelly 2008, p. 324). See also Mohan Rao (2004, p. 48) for details of incentives and disincentives during the Emergency. As recently as July 2011, the district health board of Jhunjhunu district in Rajasthan offered raffle prizes, including a car, a handful of motorcycles, TVs and food blenders, for people who agreed to undergo sterilisation so as to meet district targets (Doherty 2011).

“It was a forcible deal on the part of the government even though people went of their own free will because of the benefits. It was not a question of fearing physical attack but a question of plots and advantages. Many thought it was good. Many thought it was bad” (Tarlo 2003, p. 123).

Another man said:

“No. I wasn’t pressurised at all. I got sterilised because I wanted the plot... [*and later*]: It was impossible to live here without getting sterilised because you would be evicted. Nobody liked the idea of sterilisation. But people didn’t have any choice” (p. 131).

As intimated in these quotations, citizens in various professional and administrative roles participated within the government’s project of population control through a system that simultaneously coerced, threatened and created opportunity.

When Mistry’s character, Rajaram, finds himself homeless after the demolition of the slum where he and the tailors were living, he is persuaded to give up his trade – hair-collecting – in order to become a family planning motivator. Relating what he initially sees as his good fortune to the tailors, he tells them of the one meal a day, place to sleep and bicycle that he has been given by the ‘government office’ as payment, plus a commission for each person he persuades to have the operation. He states:

“They will teach you the job at the Family Planning Centre. Don’t be afraid to change, it’s a great opportunity. Millions of eligible customers. Birth control is a growth industry, I’m telling you’ (AFB, p. 315).

In this quotation entrepreneurial opportunity is ironically juxtaposed against India’s millions of poor, as the negative reproductivity of these subjects turns them into ‘customers’ and thus an income opportunity for the enterprising. These citizens are positioned as both the problem, in their vast capacity for propagation deemed a threat to national prosperity, and also the solution, as they are transformed into customers invited to make ‘positive’ life choices for the good of the nation at the cost of their reproductive capacities.

Rajaram tells the tailors how, while cycling among the shacks of slums, his head would be 'overflowing with various ways of saying the same thing, formulating phrases to make sterility acceptable, even desirable' (p. 391). In both these quotations is at work a system of persuasion whereby subjects are cast as autonomous agents making life choices, and are thereby drawn into and made instruments of the very mechanisms by which their social and reproductive, biological bodies are governed. Indeed, for these 'customers' who are distinctly short of disposable cash, fertility becomes the currency with which they trade and barter, their entry into a community sold to them as one promising collective well-being and an improved quality of life. These people are acted upon by a market that works to appeal to their 'consumer' subjectivities, whether or not its promised rewards will be delivered. This market and its 'customers' are established by the state, which in a sense hails these subjects into citizenship through their consumer subjectivity. Yet, at the same time, many of these individuals are refused citizenry rights, as Chatterjee argues, in terms of welfare and formal systems of social support. Nor are they consumers in the fuller sense described in notions of 'consumer society', which I discuss in the next chapter on *The White Tiger*.

Interestingly, in both Mistry's and Tarlo's accounts of the sterilisation programmes, very little is said of the positive health and social implications of sterilisation for women. In early to mid-twentieth century India rates of death during childbirth were very high, and multiple pregnancies took a great toll on the health of women (see Manna 1998; and Guha 1996). One of the few moments that Mistry's narrative draws attention to the desirable aspects of sterilisation is when a woman, waiting her turn at the sterilisation camp, tells Ishvar and Om: 'I'm not worried. I'm looking forward to it. Five children I already have, and my husband won't let me stop. This way he has no choice – government stops it' (AFB, p. 533). This statement suggests that the negative portrayal of the sterilisation camps as spaces of inflicted mutilation and violence is not a unanimously held view or a universal experience. For this woman, her husband is the perpetrator of forced procreativity, whereas the 'forced' sterilisation enables her to obtain what she desires; hers is a tactical decision to engage the

strategy of sterilisation to gain a degree of control in relation to domestic patriarchy. This conversation highlights some of the differences between the mutilation of sterilisation, with its desired outcomes for at least some participants, and the mutilation suffered by the beggars in the novel, which have no positive outcomes except for an entrepreneur such as Beggarmaster.

While sterilisation campaigns targeted men during the Emergency, in subsequent years the focus turned to women. This was because the continuation of a focus on vasectomy was seen as 'politically costly' in the post-Emergency period, and also because improved technology made the sterilisation of women easier than before (Rao 2004, pp. 51, 56). Some of the positive outcomes of sterilisation, while bound up within the very authoritarian circumstances in which it often took place, are expressed in this conversation between Tarlo and an informant, who recounted her experience of only a few years prior to the period during which Tarlo undertook her research:

I had gone to the hospital to deliver my daughter but when the time came they wouldn't admit me unless I agreed to get sterilised first. My family members were standing outside the hospital. The hospital staff went to them and told them to sign a paper. They asked them, not me. I was not even unwilling to have the operation. I said I would come back to have it after a few days. They said: "No one comes back after a few days. Sign now!" My husband signed. We had four children and wanted to do it anyway but it should not have been done like this. They don't consider anyone's feelings or circumstances. They just make them sign. Later I saw a nurse hit a woman because she wouldn't agree to the operation - and that was inside the hospital (Tarlo 2003, p. 159).

The value of sterilisation for some women, which is articulated here in spite of the grievances about circumstance and lack of agency, was by no means generally shared. In 1999 women in Andhra Pradesh protested against the targeting of women for sterilisation so as to meet quotas under the World Bank funded Indian Population Programme (IPP), 'originally meant to provide health care to people living in slums' (Kumar 1999, p. 1251). The 'Group Against Targeted Sterilisation' (GATS) claimed that the government provided incentives to undergo sterilisation 'ranging from flats to gold chains' and that 'those who resisted were threatened with water and electricity disconnection'. Sanjay

Kumar cites a member of GATS as claiming that 'poor and working-class women are the targets of these sterilisation drives and are being herded into unhygienic camps to be operated on' (p. 1251). He continues, 'many of these women are anaemic, complications are common, and there is no post-operative care' (p. 1251). This story has immediate similarities to Mistry's depiction of the conditions under which the poor were sterilised some twenty years earlier, with the use of incentives and disincentives as well as unhygienic operative conditions and lack of post-operative care.

Questions of gender and varying responses to the prospect of sterilisation are, however, very much outweighed in both the novel and in Tarlo's conversations by the fear of emasculation attached to the idea of vasectomy. In Mistry's depiction of sterilisation campaigns in Bombay, Ishvar and Om arrive home one day to find a mobile Family Planning Clinic parked outside the hutment colony:

The staff were handing out free condoms, distributing leaflets on birth-control procedures, explaining incentives being offered in cash and kind. "Maybe I should have the operation," said Om. "Get a Bush transistor. And then the ration card would also be possible".
Ishvar whacked him. "Don't even joke about such things!"
...
"You get the operation if you don't want me to."
"Shameless. My manhood for a stupid radio?" (AFB, p. 193).

The fear of emasculation expressed here by Ishvar is reiterated repeatedly throughout the novel in relation to sterilisation. Similarly, in Tarlo's fieldwork the implications of sterilisation practices on gendered subjectivities are articulated predominantly through an anxiety about the emasculation and consequent impotence of the sterilised man. Frequently expressed is the fear that the operation would leave men unable to lift heavy loads, thus impacting on their labour capacities. One woman decided to undergo sterilisation instead of her husband, fearing he would otherwise no longer be able to provide for her and her family (Tarlo 2003, p. 164). Another woman informed Tarlo: "Women didn't want their husbands to be sterilised because they thought their husbands would be weakened and become impotent"; while a young man stated: "A man

is considered a woman after being sterilised. In fact, he becomes half-man and half-woman” (p. 172). In this economy of the gendered body, the optimal target for sterilisation is feminine, giving the woman control over the fecundity of the domestic space while preserving the labouring capacity and potentiality of her husband.

While circumstances and levels of desire are varied, through all of these accounts there is frustration with the lack of autonomy and control permitted to citizens in their decisions around sterilisation. The strategies through which India’s sterilisation programmes were conducted, with the use of incentives and disincentives, alongside a public rhetoric pronouncing social obligation and responsibility of the individual to the collective, resonates with Foucault’s formulation of a ‘socialisation of procreative behaviour’. He writes:

An economic socialisation via all the incitements and restrictions, the “social” and fiscal measures brought to bear on the fertility of couples; a political socialisation achieved through the “responsibilisation” of couples with regard to the social body as a whole (which had to be limited or on the contrary reinvigorated), and a medical socialisation carried out by attributing a pathogenic value – for the individual and the species – to birth-control practices (1976, pp. 104–105).

In the biopolitics of the Emergency we see regulatory mechanisms similar to those described by Foucault; ones that seek to ‘responsibilise’ couples so as to eliminate those elements seen as diminishing the overall health of the population. Throughout *A Fine Balance* this impulse of elimination combines with a fear of disease and moral corruption of the poor in designating those to be viewed as waste, and therefore deserving of Nusswan’s ‘merciful death’.

Political Death

Within *A Fine Balance* the biopolitical imperative of governing population through reproductive health is intimately connected to a middle class anxiety about the health practices and moralities that constitute the daily lives of the working and begging poor. Throughout their time in Bombay prior to being sterilised, Ishvar and Om occupy a marginal zone where the middle class view

them not quite as beggars, yet as subjects to be feared as harbourers of disease and moral corruption. The narrator frequently describes Dina's trepidation about the germs that Ishvar and Om might bring into her home, as well as her dislike of Maneck's burgeoning friendship with them. Warning Maneck of what she believes to be Om's lice, she says:

'All day long he scratches. And not just his head. Problems at both ends – worms at one, lice at the other. So take my advice, stay away if you know what's good for you' (AFB, p. 276).

To Maneck's suggestion that the tailors might be sick when they don't turn up to work, she retorts, 'Maybe it's the sickness that comes out of a booze bottle – I did pay them yesterday. No discipline at all, no sense of responsibility' (p. 272); and after Maneck accepts their invitation to dinner at their home she scolds:

'And have you thought of the consequences of one visit? Good manners is all very well, but what about health and hygiene? How do they prepare their food? Can they afford proper cooking oil? Or do they buy cheap adulterated vanaspati, like most poor people?' (p. 293).

After the mutilations of the forced sterilisations and Om's castration, the pair are turned away by the police to whom they complain, leading Om to say to his uncle: 'You really thought they would help? Don't you understand? We are less than animals to them' (p. 540). This line marks the transition of Ishvar and Om from the working to the begging poor, a transition to which they have been on the threshold throughout their time in Bombay. Mistry symbolically completes this transition two pages later when Ishvar's blackened and infected legs are amputated, in the framework of the novel positioning him as a replacement for Shankar, the amputee beggar, who has been killed in a traffic accident.

The tailors' trajectory, culminating in their forced sterilisations, can be considered in the light of Foucault's notion of biopolitics where, as described by Thomas Lemke, 'the new life-administering power is dedicated to inciting, reinforcing, monitoring and optimising the forces under its control' (Lemke, n.d.,

p. 1). The sterilisation camps, as represented in *A Fine Balance* and some of Tarlo's ethnographic work, appear however to be more about containment of the poor than provision of 'healthcare', and are perhaps only a step away from Nusswan's project of 'elimination' with which I began this chapter. To invoke Foucault's 'make live and let die' formulation, those who are made to live in *A Fine Balance* are India's middle class such as Nusswan and his small, two-child family, who prosper under a biopolitical regime. Ishvar and Om, on the other hand, are condemned to that sub-population left to political and actual death¹⁵.

This chapter has illustrated ways in which various characters become drawn into particular forms of subjectivity through biopolitical technologies that act on their desires, aspirations and decision making capacities. These technologies are embedded within regimes of power, sustaining relations of domination and subordination. Additionally, however, *A Fine Balance* illustrates the capacities of individuals to disrupt the power relations within which they are entangled, as their complicity also invites the exercising of agency and the construction of networks of solidarity. This was touched on in my discussion of complicity and agency within the sterilisation campaigns.

Within the novel, however, the most obvious disruption to power relations and a middle class desire to contain, or eliminate, the poor comes through in the transformation of Dina's relationship to her employees, the tailors. Despite her initial concerns to maintain physical and social boundaries, she gives the tailors shelter in her home due to her reliance on them as healthy, productive workers necessary for her own financial security. As their suffering is brought into proximity with her at this more intimate level the tailors are accordingly humanised for Dina and she forges a relationship with them resembling one of family. Indeed, the novel closes with Dina compassionately giving the tailors turned beggars a cooked meal, in secret from her brother, Nusswan, and his wife, with whom she now lives, no longer able to support herself. As Ishvar and Om leave in a fit of playfulness, the reader is told that

¹⁵ See Stephen Legg for a discussion of Foucault's silence on issues of colonialism, and his absence of analysis of colonial modes of governmentality (2007, pp. 268–269).

'those two made her laugh every day' (AFB, 614). The solidarity built between these three has endured beyond financial necessity to become one of friendship and reciprocity, demonstrated here with the shared affective dimension of humour.

There is an obvious discrepancy between the humanisation that Dina experiences in the confrontation with actual begging bodies and the clean, odourless text that mediates between the distant sufferer and the readers in 'Oprah's Book Club', speaking for the subaltern subject. It is interesting to note, however, the ways in which the novel itself works biopolitically, as a cultural object and consumer commodity. The novel is located in a regime of biopower that operates very differently to the sterilisation campaigns to which Ishvar and Om are subjected. Nevertheless, the cultural and commercial success of the novel would in part appear to be conditioned by the ways in which it is implicated in a biopolitics which targets the affective capacities of the reader within a cultural therapeutics¹⁶. This is exemplified by 'Oprah's Book Club', which I discuss in the Conclusion to this thesis.

For now I turn to Adiga's *The White Tiger*, which also presents the themes discussed in this chapter of the elimination and containment of the subaltern subject. In this novel, however, we move from the biopolitics of Gandhi's Emergency to the neoliberal regimes of the contemporary Indian city.

¹⁶ See Ben Anderson for a discussion of the ways in which biopower works through affect, and also ways in which affective dimensions of life may work politically to counter forms of biopower that work through processes of normalisation (2012, p. 28).

Chapter Two
'We Entrepreneurs':
Territorial Distribution and *The White Tiger*

... our nation, though it has no drinking water, electricity, sewage system, public transportation, sense of hygiene, discipline, courtesy, or punctuality, *does* have entrepreneurs. Thousands and thousands of them. Especially in the field of technology. And these entrepreneurs – *we* entrepreneurs – have set up all these outsourcing companies that virtually run America now (Adiga 2008, p. 4).

Introduction

Taken from the opening of Aravind Adiga's (2008) novel, *The White Tiger* (TWT), this passage captures the systemic inequalities surrounding the IT economy in contemporary India. The figure of the entrepreneur represents the ethos of individualisation central to contemporary capitalist economies. Adiga depicts this ethos as being informed by American neoliberal agendas that have colonised the Indian workforce and those excluded from it – its reserve army. India's appropriation of these agendas, however, also institutes its own regimes of domination and exclusion:

Everything in the city, it seemed, came down to one thing. Outsourcing. Which meant doing things in India for Americans over the phone. Everything flowed from it – real estate, wealth, power, sex (p. 298).

In this chapter I explore the gap between the fortunes of a booming hi-tech economy and the millions of poor excluded from the promise of modernisation and its rewards. In *The White Tiger* this promise is represented by the consumer lifestyle that beckons from the call centre's leisure time counterpart, the mall.

Communications scholar, Rohit Chopra, has written on the mechanisms by which neoliberalism has come to be naturalised as a framework encompassing various social spheres in India, establishing a general 'consensus about the positive effects of globalisation and liberalisation' as a dominant discourse across Indian social space (2003, p. 419, 433). He writes:

The actions and rhetoric of numerous Indian state and non-state agencies seem to endorse globalisation and liberalisation as desirable transformative forces that will ultimately provide not only economic rewards, such as increased global competitiveness of Indian companies and healthier foreign exchange reserves, but also significant social benefits such as more job opportunities, higher salaries, greater consumer choice and a better quality of life. Indeed, across the most visible sectors of Indian society and the state, there appears to be emerging a consensus in limiting the terms of debate about socioeconomic issues to largely those positions, which already presuppose globalisation and liberalisation as enabling frameworks for positive change in the economy and in society at large (p. 421).

In this chapter I discuss ways in which *The White Tiger* shows the neoliberal ethos of individualism and competitiveness to prevail as a widely accepted discourse across the dominant or 'visible' sectors of Indian society. With broad use of irony the novel demonstrates the possibilities for consumption and quality of living generated by this market orientation, positing them as the generally accepted and deserved rewards for entrepreneurship. The novel's central protagonist, Balram, tells us:

When you have heard the story of how I got to Bangalore and became one of its most successful (though probably least known) businessmen, you will know everything there is to know about how entrepreneurship is born, nurtured, and developed in this, the glorious twenty-first century of man (TWT, p. 6).

Adiga suggests that globalisation and liberalisation are accepted within the Indian middle and upper classes as enabling frameworks for positive change, as described by Chopra. The masses barred from such rewards form no part of this reckoning of success. They are rendered invisible and excluded from recognition as fully human:

'What are these children doing, walking about Delhi at one in the morning, with no one to look after them?'
When he had said this, his eyes lit up.
'Oh, she was one of those people'.
'Who live under the flyovers and bridges, sir. That's my guess too'.
'In that case, will anyone miss her...?'

'I don't think so, sir. You know how those people in the Darkness are: they have eight, nine, ten children – sometimes they don't know the names of their own children' (p. 165).

The derelict child, just run over and killed, does not threaten the widespread acceptance of neoliberalism as an enabling framework because, in her abjection, she does not count as human. She can play no part in the accounting of success and therefore does not challenge neoliberalism's promise of prosperity.

This episode in the novel demonstrates the continuation of the themes laid out by Mistry, and discussed in the previous chapter, of elimination and containment of the subaltern subject. Through this chapter I discuss how these mechanisms both contradict and enable neoliberalism's promise for aspirational subjects and the acquisition of cultural capital. Adiga illustrates the contradictions and complications inherent to neoliberalism's promise of freedom through his portrayal of mechanisms that shape and govern the desires of individuals and capacities for entrepreneurship. This discussion should serve to remind the reader of our own positioning as entrepreneurial subjects, benefitting from access to education and its consequent cultural capital. The rewards of such cultural capital are present in various aspects of our lives, and are demonstrated in our capacities to consume the novel as a literary text and cultural commodity.

In this chapter I examine *The White Tiger's* portrayal of the inequalities inherent in global modernity and neoliberalism with its ethos of individualisation. The chapter proceeds in three parts: in the first section, I discuss Adiga's portrayal of consumerism as the marker of value and success within Indian society. To develop this discussion I introduce Bauman's (1998, 2004) work on consumer society and the 'flawed consumer', a subject who exists on the margins of this society and is accordingly rendered superfluous. I situate this discussion of consumerism within a framework of neoliberalism, drawing on the scholarship of Ong (2006) and Anderson (2012), both of whom show Bauman's flawed consumer to be the failed exception to the neoliberal promise of well-being. I then explore the space of the call centre as simultaneously, and

perhaps paradoxically, subject to global hegemonic disciplinary technologies (Shome 2006), while serving as a site in which particular citizens and their labour are valued within neoliberal political agendas. I argue that the latter process is demonstrated through *The White Tiger's* juxtaposition of the call centre with the shopping mall. The mall figures as a space that rewards valued citizens, like call centre workers, with the promise and sating of consumer desires. At the same time it exercises control over those subjects through the imposition of a normative consumer-oriented culture, packaged in the rhetoric of freedom of choice. This echoes my discussion in the previous chapter of the ways in which sterilisation campaigns acted on consumer-based constructs of subjectivity, casting subjects in self-actualising entrepreneurial roles and presenting the possibility of sterilisation in rhetoric of freedom of consumer choice.

In the second section, I situate the call centre and the mall in relation to the devalued and uncounted citizens who make up the social strata surrounding those locations, but are excluded from them. In *The White Tiger* these people include, firstly, the slum-dwellers and homeless¹⁷ judged to be 'economically non-viable' and thus treated as 'surplus population' (Giorgi and Pinkus 2006, p. 102). Secondly they include the servants who exist on the periphery of the upper and middle class lives to which they are integral through provision of labour, but nevertheless lacking the rights and status accorded to those they serve. Central to their predicament is the lack of access to education, which is of central importance within a neoliberal inflected political system where each person is cast as author of their own success or failure. While the IT industry in India, and particularly in Bangalore, is growing at a formidable rate (Chakravartty 2008, p. 295), Adiga shows that the vast majority of India's population is already excluded from the industry's opportunities through lack of access to a formal education.

¹⁷ See Mike Davis (2004) on the global increase of slum-dwellers as the world's population becomes increasingly urbanised.

This discussion of the role of education as the key to inclusion in the Indian IT industry and its rewards, leads to an evaluation of the entrepreneurial figure represented by *The White Tiger's* central protagonist, Balram Halwai. Balram shows that the neoliberal formulation that success and fortune are equally attainable for all citizens prepared to take risks and exercise initiative is feasible only with an education in the tools and strategies by which these qualities may be engaged. Unless, that is, one disrupts those disciplinary codes dictating where, when and how initiative may be exercised through a decisive act of violence such as that exhibited by Balram in the climactic moment of his 'master's' murder. In this act Balram borrows the neoliberal ethos of enterprise and transplants it into a frame outside the market-oriented domain in which its proponents intend it to operate. This is Balram's only opportunity to move up in the world, by making the cut throat ethos of the neoliberal market literal, and indeed encapsulates his own definition of a true entrepreneur: 'whatever he had to do, he had done: he was the first entrepreneur I knew of' (TWT, p. 31).

The Call Centre Worker and the Consumer Subject

I begin my discussion with a brief summary of the novel. *The White Tiger* is written as a series of letters from Balram to the Chinese premier, Wen Jiabao. Balram has heard that Mr Jiabao is going to be visiting Bangalore because, in the words of the radio announcer, he 'wants to meet some Indian entrepreneurs and hear the story of their success from their own lips' (p. 4). Balram takes it upon himself to educate Mr Jiabao in 'matters entrepreneurial', introducing himself in his first letter as "'The White Tiger'¹⁸, A Thinking Man, And an entrepreneur" (p. 3). Over the course of the letters Balram tells his life story thus far. He began life in the small village of Laxmangarh, son of a poor rickshaw puller descended from a low caste of sweet-makers. Taken out of school at an early age to work in a tea shop, Balram eventually progresses to become driver and servant to a

¹⁸ In the novel the 'white tiger' refers to 'the rarest of animals' in any jungle; 'the creature that comes along only once in a generation' (TWT, p. 35). This name is given to Balram as a young boy by a school inspector who judges him to have an intelligence that far surpasses that of his fellow lower caste classmates. This capacity to stand out is encapsulated in his actions that turn him into a successful entrepreneur, despite the hurdles that I discuss in this chapter.

family of rich and corrupt landlords, who spend much of their time bribing politicians so as to avoid paying tax on their coal business. Balram eventually recognises the exploitative conditions in which he lives and works, and decides that the only way to escape what he calls the 'Rooster Coop' in which the lower castes and classes are trapped is by taking his and his master's fortunes into his own hands. In short, he murders his master, Mr Ashok. He then steals the large amount of money with which Mr Ashok had been about to bribe a politician and uses it to escape to Bangalore, India's 'silicon valley'. There Balram reinvents himself, with the help of his violently acquired fortune, as the owner of a successful taxi service catering to call centre girls who require transport to and from work at odd hours of the night. He has broken out of the Rooster Coop by the only means available to him – murder – becoming one of the 'enterprising' and corrupt 'big-bellied' men he has spent his previous life serving:

I have switched sides: I am now one of those who cannot be caught in India. At such moments, I look up at this chandelier, and I just want to throw my hands up and holler, so loudly that my voice would carry over the phones in the call-centre rooms all the way to the people in America: *I've made it! I've broken out of the coop!* (p. 320).

In the above passage the call centre operates as both a symbol of, and an actual, entry point into and arrival in a globalised cultural and economic system, here characterised as 'American'. The successful entrepreneur's inclusion in this all embracing network of consumption and mobility, experienced through access to technologies of time and space compression (Harvey 1990, pp. 147, 240), is further realised in the direct personal connection and interaction with the (here idealised) American subject at the other end of the phone line. The call centre worker, and by extension, Balram, is momentarily deposited in an imaginary America while simultaneously having that America brought to the space of the call centre.

Through *The White Tiger* Adiga situates the phenomenon of outsourcing, and in particular the call-centre, at the heart of a network of social and economic relations both global and local in reach. Pivoting his narrative around the much admired and sought after quality of 'entrepreneurship', the novel critiques a

neoliberal economic system whereby the enterprising, adaptive and self-inventing individual is rewarded through inclusion in a globalised system of mobility and insatiable consumer desire. To quote Balram:

I love my start-up – this chandelier, and this silver laptop, and these twenty-six Toyota Qualises – but honestly, I’ll get bored of it sooner or later (p. 319).

Balram’s self-identification in this passage as fully ensconced consumer subject is the marker of his radical transformation from servant to, in his mind’s eye, successful entrepreneur. His reference to ‘getting bored’ of the consumer goods that he can now afford, couched in his perceived entitlement to constantly search for the ‘new’, signifies his inclusion within this social category privileged by a globalising market economy. Balram’s journey from exclusion to inclusion within practices of consumption captures the stark juxtaposition between the life-worlds of both India’s elite and middle classes, and the poor and working classes (see Lakha 1999, pp. 257–263).

Balram’s reference to the ephemeral rewards sating his consumer desires resonates with Bauman’s work on ‘consumer society’, a term he uses to describe the contemporary globalised world (1998, ch. 4). For Bauman, the notion of consumer society encompasses the deep stratifications entrenched within structures of global capitalism and neoliberalism, where the capacity to consume signifies the value of the subject within a market economy. Consumer society works by continually nourishing the desires of consumer subjects; the kinds of objects desired provide instant gratification; the moment the need is sated a new desire is created, as evident in Balram’s attitude towards his ‘start-up’ (Bauman 1998, pp. 81–82). While many may wish to be consumers, and may be cast into the mode of the consumer, not everybody can be a consumer (p. 85). Bauman describes those who lack the means to consume as ‘flawed consumers’:

people lacking the money that would allow them to stretch the capacity of the consumer market, while they create another kind of demand to which the profit-oriented consumer industry cannot respond and which it cannot profitably ‘colonise’. Consumers are the prime assets of consumer

society; flawed consumers are its most irksome and costly liabilities (2004, p. 39).

The consumer society described by Bauman exists within a frame of neoliberalism, where the market driven principles that confer value on the consumer subject come to inform modes of governmentality as well as all-encompassing aspects of political life. In the previous chapter I outlined biopolitical modes of governmentality, where the social body is targeted through regulatory mechanisms that seek to improve the overall well-being of the population. Neoliberal governmentality, with which this chapter is concerned, is for Ong the most recent development of biopolitical technologies (2006, p. 13). She writes:

Neoliberal governmentality results from the infiltration of market-driven truths and calculations into the domain of politics. In contemporary times, neoliberal rationality informs action by many regimes and furnishes the concepts that inform the government of free individuals who are then induced to self-manage according to market principles of discipline, efficiency, and competitiveness (p. 4).

As individuals are granted the freedom to 'self-manage' and exercise entrepreneurial initiative, while competing in global knowledge markets, life opportunities, including opportunities for consumption, are enhanced for those who are able to compete. This simultaneously optimises conditions for economic growth as life forces are harnessed through market knowledge and calculations. Those who lack the tools to participate within such neoliberal regimes are, in Ong's description, excluded from such regimes and accordingly rendered 'excludable as citizens and subjects' (p. 16). These excluded citizens are Bauman's flawed consumers as they exist on the peripheries of the consumer lifestyles that they desire and of the market economy within which they cannot compete. As Anderson writes:

The universalization of a specific economic form – competition – means that any way of life that does not fit, or cannot be made to fit, with that form is devalued. Competition becomes both the transcendent measure for all of life (a norm) and a means of organising inter-personal affective relations around winning and losing (2012, pp. 38–39).

Much of *The White Tiger's* narrative revolves around the call centre, a space never actually entered in the novel, yet which signifies the imagined ideals of consumption and excess associated with the notion of 'America' running through the novel. The call centre encapsulates the contradictions and dichotomies of neoliberal governmentality described by Ong and Anderson, as a space that signals freedom, opportunity and consumption for those that it embraces (its workers), while highlighting the deep stratifications of the broader social environment in which it is situated. Adiga achieves this representation through his alignment of the call centre with the shopping mall, a site, in this context, of excess and exclusion:

'This building – the one they call a mall – the one with the posters of women hanging on it – it's for shopping, right?'

'Right'.

'And that' – I pointed to a shiny glass building to our left – 'is that also a mall? I don't see any posters of women hanging on it'.

'That's not a mall, Country-Mouse. That's an office building. They make calls from there to America'.

'What kind of calls?'

'I don't know. My master's daughter works in one of those buildings too. I drop her off at eight o'clock and she comes back at two in the morning. I know she makes pots and pots of money in that building, because she spends it all day in the malls' (TWT, pp. 127–128).

The call centre's proximity to America through the connection of the phone line is intimately connected to the call centre worker's proximity and access to the shopping mall. The intimation in this passage is that those allowed entry into the mall are thereby granted access to an imaginary 'America' in which they are free to shop and choose, and which they can take home and fuse into their daily lives¹⁹.

Communications theorist, Raka Shome (2006), has written on the cultural politics of the call centre as a space of transnational governmentality; a space that disciplines its Indian subjects through techniques of 'colonisation'

¹⁹ See Janaki Nair on Bangalore's new emphasis on work 'as a lifestyle whose goal is enhanced consumption' (2005, p. 87).

symptomatic of neoliberal globalisation. This occurs as minds and bodies of workers are disciplined (or colonised) to fit a mould of the 'global' worker, so as to 'maximise profit and efficiency in the global economy' (p. 110). Shome writes that the physical space of the call centres and technology parks which exhibit 'glassy futuristic buildings, open work stations, and cafeterias with television sets showing American programs ... virtually transport the agents into the space of American-ness' (p. 116). She argues that the Indian call centre operates as a space in which workers are disciplined through a gaze which intersects and collides across multiple times and spaces, acting on both bodies and minds of the workers (p. 118). As the workers enter the call centre they enter the time zone of their clientele; this constitutes a colonisation of the body as its 'biological functioning is invaded and its innermost recesses intruded upon' (p. 117). Workers undergo rigorous training in American culture, and often accent modification, so as to appear to their (largely American) clientele to be operating locally. For Shome, this manifestation of transnational governmentality produces a 'death of the subject' where the 'linguistic identity of the Indian subject has to be first erased before s/he can enter the virtual, modern, high-tech space of call centres and data entry' (p. 110). In the assumption by the Indian worker of learned 'American' mannerisms and characteristics we see the emergence of a new hybridised worker subject. Of particular significance for my argument is the effect this has of widening the socioeconomic gap and cultural divide between those who are allowed and those who are refused entry into the call centre and all that it entails.

The White Tiger's narrative never enters the call centre, but Shome's description of disciplinary technologies that operate in this space is useful, for they produce the citizens that Balram's taxi service circulates between home, work and shopping mall. Shome's analysis provides an account from which to consider exchanges involved in the shaping of contemporary Indian elite and middle class subjectivities by Western neoliberal agents, and the ambivalent appropriation of neoliberal agendas by these groups.

The call centre in *The White Tiger* enacts these exchanges as a site where multiple conflicting relations of power, domination and colonisation converge. The ostensible domination of the Indian call centre site by a global market and American culture, with which Adiga's workers are besotted, is undercut at another level by a distinct 'Indian-ness' that the nature of IT work has assumed. To return to this chapter's opening quote, it is because of the success of the Indian IT industry that Balram can proclaim that 'all these outsourcing companies' now virtually run America. Yet, as he begins this statement by reminding us ('our nation, though it has no drinking water...'), local relations of power and domination bisect global ones, with the rewards of entrepreneurial success unevenly distributed across the population. I suggest that Adiga's call centre, as a site where these varied interactions intersect, is representative of the dynamics involved at the much larger scale of India taking its place within a global capitalist order. The call centre is in a sense representative of the networks of global capital that Balram can only fetishise, and therefore whose threshold Adiga's narrative never crosses.

This intersection of the global and local is emblematic of the contradictions in modernity outlined by Dirlik:

Intensified and accelerated interactions between societies – that justify the discourse of globalisation – are surely signs of the modern. Yet these very same relationships render modernity into a site of conflict and contention, raising fundamental questions about its historical and ethical meaning (or meaninglessness) (2003, p. 276).

As processes of globalisation converge within the call centre they come into contact with historical processes specific to India that have shaped its contemporary class formations, and the traditions and practices which determine its caste structures, now also grafted onto class subjectivities (see Gupta 2000, ch. 2). Of importance to my analysis are the ways that these interactions shape the urban spaces of Bangalore and Delhi as represented in *The White Tiger*.

Alongside the call centre, the shopping mall is depicted in *The White Tiger* as a space through which hegemonic Americanising discourses are marketed. While the relatively affluent figures in the novel occupy various social strata, their shared social condition, in the eyes of the excluded Balram, is the embodiment of an imagined and desired 'American-ness'. Access to this condition, for Balram, is captured through the promise of the shopping mall, as evident in the passage cited earlier of the two servants discussing the consumer habits of call centre workers. The key distinction in the exercise of power in the two spaces is that the call centre disciplines, as demonstrated by Shome, while the mall seduces through the fantasies associated with its commodities. Indeed, the glitzy malls of Gurgaon are the means by which Mr Ashok, Balram's 'master', attempts to co-opt his (Indian) wife into staying in India, rather than returning to her longed for America where the couple met:

Now, Mr Ashok's thinking was smart. Ten years ago, they say, there was nothing in Gurgaon, just water buffaloes and fat Punjabi farmers. Today it's the *modernest* suburb of Delhi. American Express, Microsoft, all the big American companies have offices there. The main road is full of shopping malls – each mall has a cinema inside! So if Pinky Madam missed America, this was the best place to bring her (TWT, pp. 121–122).

Malcolm Voyce (2007) has written on the shopping mall, both in India and globally, as encompassing the dividing practices of neoliberalism as it constructs a consumer based citizenship for those middle class subjects allowed inside, while rendering invisible the needs of the poor who are kept outside its doors. For Voyce, malls 'inculcate the tastes and identities of global consumer culture' rather than reflecting 'the local history of their community' (p. 2057). For those excluded from global consumer culture, such as Adiga's drivers, the space of the mall embodies an imagined quality of mystery and excess. This quality is architecturally enforced through the opaque luminosity of mirrored glass surfaces (Nair 2005, p. 92), which, for those denied access to the mall serve only to reflect back their miserable self-image as flawed consumers.

As a servant, Balram on one occasion gains entry to the mall through the ruse of dressing like Mr Ashok. He describes it thus:

I was conscious of a perfume in the air, of golden light, of cool, air-conditioned air, of people in T-shirts and jeans who were eyeing me strangely. I saw a lift going up and down that seemed made of pure golden glass. I saw shops with walls of glass, and huge photos of handsome European men and women hanging on each wall. If only the other drivers could see me now! (TWT, p. 152)

The wonder of the mall's interior transforms Balram's desire, as a servant waiting outside, to 'know' or 'see', to a desire to 'have'²⁰. For Balram, the mystery of the glimmering glass walls that from outside house an unknown yet desired space becomes an overwhelming experience of a luminosity that is palpable through its ambient sensations of cool, conditioned air and the quality of light that bears no relation to the outside world. It could be said that the seeds of the consumer-citizen that Balram will eventually become, with its attendant insatiable desires, are sown in this moment – as he glimpses the consumer utopia with which workers such as those at the call centre are apparently rewarded.

'Territorial Distribution' and the Politics of Education

Throughout *The White Tiger* the spaces inhabited by rich and poor are represented as intertwined yet rigidly segregated. Adiga repeatedly juxtaposes spaces inhabited by valued citizens such as the shopping mall, with those occupied by the 'invisible' citizens on the margins of these opulent sites. Leela Fernandes has written on the 'politics of forgetting' India's poor and marginalised which takes place, she argues, through spatial practices that aid the increased visibility and dominance of the new Indian middle class who benefit from economic liberalisation, primarily through practices of consumption and lifestyle²¹. This politics of forgetting naturalises processes of exclusion as it

²⁰ Balram's depiction of the mall's interior echoes Meaghan Morris's account of literature on shopping centres, which she describes as entailing 'the vision of shoppingtown as Eden or paradise: the shopping centre becomes a mirror to a special utopian desire' (1998, p. 74).

²¹ See Nita Mathur (2010) for a discussion of the shopping mall as emblematic of the increasing emphasis on consumer culture as a marker of social status within India. Mathur also discusses ways in which global modernity and consumer cultures interact, and come into contention with, older traditions particular to India (pp. 226–227).

produces a middle-class-based definition of citizenship based on consumption (2004, p. 2416). In this section I discuss such divisive spatial practices as they mark *The White Tiger*:

Beyond the last shining shop begins the second PVR. Every big market in Delhi is two markets in one – there is always a smaller, grimmer mirror image of the real market, tucked somewhere in a by-lane.

This is the market for the servants. I crossed over to this second PVR – a line of stinking restaurants, tea stalls, and giant frying pans where bread was toasted in oil. The men who work in the cinemas, and who sweep them clean, come here to eat. The beggars have their homes here (TWT, p. 204).

This passage invokes the physical proximity and social distance that shapes the relationship between those who patronise the ‘shining shops’ of the malls and the poor and servant classes who exist on their periphery. Institutionalised boundaries clearly demarcate those who are valued and included from those who are not valued and are excluded from the privileged space of the mall, and therefore its cultural and economic trajectory. Adiga’s imaging of the ‘second PVR’ as the grimmer mirror image of its wealthier equivalent suggests that the threat posed to the rich by the physical proximity of the poor (also discussed in the previous chapter on *A Fine Balance*) is more profound than just the fear of danger or contamination. For the wealthy consumer, the poor person reflects the deeply unsettling image of the capacity borne by that consumer-subject to also be cast out by a ruthless, unforgiving system. While the desperateness of the beggars’ and servants’ surroundings serves to differentiate between rich and poor, it also reminds the rich of their own precariousness and vulnerability under neoliberal models of citizenship. In response to this unsettling potentiality, territorial distribution becomes a mechanism by which the threat of disruption to the self-image of the rich is contained. The ‘mirror image’ constituted by the urban poor is ‘tucked away’ and made invisible by the institution of boundaries and borders that hide this unsettling reflection.

Adiga plays with the idea of the ‘mirror image’ in his suggestion of the poor person’s market being the reflection of the ‘real market’. The irony of this

statement is that the sparkling, translucent and wondrous space of the mall is a simulated space. That is, while the mall nurtures in certain subjects the desire for consumption and sense of security engendered by access to material goods, this security is insubstantial and, in a sense, a marketing ploy. Balram's 'real market' is a space dominated by the interests of 'the market' rather than the interests of the subjects that it moulds by creating and catering to their consumer wants. At the same time, the poor persons' market could be seen as more 'real' than the mall, with its griminess and stench the condition of the grim reality of daily life for the majority of Indian citizens.

Gabriel Giorgi and Karen Pinkus have written of the boundaries and social maps produced under neoliberalism that differentiate between and segregate rich and poor (2006, p. 99). These boundaries, they write, are 'symptomatic of defensive reactions to an increasingly unstable economy of inclusion/exclusion and inside/outside', which they associate with the increasing global prevalence of neoliberalism. Giorgi and Pinkus outline Agamben's (1998) thesis on 'bare life' ('zōē'), where "human life" is separated from the unrecognisable, the residual, life reduced to its "merely biological" status' (Giorgi and Pinkus 2006, p. 99), so that subjects whose lives are deemed by an authority not worth living are outcast and excluded from legal structures of protection. As they elaborate, the ascription of bare life is not confined to the materiality of spatial divisions, but 'takes place within life itself, at the level of the way life is inscribed and (re)produced' (p. 104). Bare life thus comes to be inscribed onto the experience of subjectivity of individuals, and then continually reproduced through mechanisms of subjectification and governmentality such as the imposition of physical boundaries. As Agamben writes, 'bare life is no longer confined to a particular place or a definite category', but 'dwells in the biological body of every living being' (1998, p. 140). As bare life dwells within everyone, modern democracy is 'constantly trying to transform its own bare life into a way of life' (p. 9), yet, in so doing, the lives of those not deemed valuable are sacrificed for the good lives of the dominant classes.

For Giorgi and Pinkus, the structures of territorial distribution that are put in place to contain the poor and mask the shared quality of bare life borne in everyone are characteristic of neoliberalism, and act at the level of the biopolitical. They write:

Neoliberalism has not only increased the number of poor; it has also transformed the ways in which poverty as such is dealt with and inscribed in the social landscape and the public imagination. It turns poverty—or the threshold of “absolute poverty,” the limit of indigence—into a terrain where the very status of the “human” is called into question, that is, the terrain where the normative and recognisable forms of life are split from “mere life,” from the life reduced to biological survival and abandoned by both the legal and the social order... The neoliberal politics of space thus reflects this more fundamental, biopolitical division between “human” and “less than human” (2006, p. 103).

This neoliberal politics of urban space is illustrated repeatedly through *The White Tiger*, with the rich barricaded in their everyday activities against the poor:

With their tinted windows up, the cars of the rich go like dark eggs down the roads of Delhi. Every now and then an egg will crack open – a woman’s hand, dazzling with gold bangles, stretches out of an open window, flings an empty mineral water bottle onto the road – and then the window goes up, and the egg is resealed (TWT, p. 134).

The woman maintains her detachment from the immediacy of the urban poor not only by the spatial separation provided by the physical barrier of the car’s exterior, but through her consumer subjectivity experienced in the acquisition and display of commodities such as car and jewellery. This inclusion in consumer society sustains her status as ‘human’, while the rubbish that she carelessly discards joins the human refuse that exists outside her shell, and is described in the following passage²²:

²² Fernandes has described urban clean-up projects in Mumbai as part of a broad set of public discourses where ‘urchins, beggars and the residents of hutments are viewed as interchangeable with the “muck and debris” which must be “cleaned up”’ (2004, p. 2421).

I could see multitudes of small, thin, grimy people squatting, waiting for a bus to take them somewhere, or with nowhere to go and about to unfurl a mattress and sleep right there...

Hundreds of them, there seemed to be, on either side of the traffic, and their life was entirely unaffected by the jam. Were they even aware that there was a jam? We were like two separate cities – inside and outside the dark egg (p. 138).

While Balram here evokes the physical borders of the city to depict the spatial segregation of rich and poor, at other points in the novel he evokes the physical entrapment of the cage encapsulated in the image of the 'rooster coop'. The 'rooster coop' is a state of perpetual servitude and poverty in which the poor are contained by the rich. Balram repeatedly emphasises the importance of education as the only possibility for India's poor to escape this cage. A few pages from the end he tells the reader:

After three or four years in real estate, I think I might sell everything, take the money, and start a school – an English-language school – for poor children in Bangalore (p. 319).

Through the novel Adiga shows (Western style) education to be vital to participation in a neoliberal economy, and embedded in a neoliberal politics. He shows ways in which neoliberalism (articulated through repeated references to entrepreneurship) as a worldview has become broadly accepted across the dominant spheres of contemporary Indian society, thereby shaping particular practices and perceptions of individuals, while informing state apparatuses of government, such as those surrounding the education system. Dean writes:

Regimes of government do not determine forms of subjectivity. They elicit, promote, facilitate, foster and attribute various capacities, qualities and statuses to particular agents. They are successful to the extent that these agents come to experience themselves through such capacities (2010, pp. 43–44).

While the more privileged subjects in the novel, such as the call centre workers and Balram himself once he has become a 'self-made' man, come to experience themselves as entrepreneurs possessing capacities for self-management and

consumption, Adiga represents India's poor as also subjectivised within the indigence to which they have grown accustomed. Balram states:

A handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9 per cent – as strong, as talented, as intelligent in every way – to exist in perpetual servitude; a servitude so strong that you can put the key of his emancipation in a man's hands and he will throw it back at you with a curse (TWT, p. 176).

Balram's analysis of the notion of servitude, I suggest, works at two levels. Firstly, he references the obvious condition of the servitude of India's poor to the dominant middle and upper classes, while stating the pivotal role that education (or lack thereof) plays in perpetuating this condition:

Me, and thousands of others in this country like me, are half-baked, because we were never allowed to complete our schooling. Open our skulls, look in with a penlight, and you'll find an odd museum of ideas... all these ideas, half formed and half digested and half correct, mix up with other half-cooked ideas in your head, and I guess these half-formed ideas bugger one another, and make more half-formed ideas, and this is what you act on and live with (p. 11).

Working at a second level, however, Balram's analysis suggests that the unquestioning acceptance of globalisation and liberalisation as transformative and enabling forces which characterise the dominant sectors of Indian society also entails a degree of servitude to those very forces:

But pay attention, Mr Premier! Fully formed fellows, after twelve years of school and three years of university, wear nice suits, join companies, and take orders from other men for the rest of their lives.

Entrepreneurs are made from half-baked clay (p. 11).

Balram here disrupts assumptions of what constitutes a good education, subverting the neoliberal values of individualism and entrepreneurship to which he appears to subscribe, and which he suggests here to be deeply inscribed within elite Indian society. I return to this narrative ploy in the concluding section of this chapter. Now, however, I turn to the politics of education as enmeshed within India's uptake of neoliberalism.

Chopra has described the processes by which the Indian state has come to embrace neoliberalism as an assumed set of values on which to base educational and economic policy (2003, p. 433). He charts the historical conditions whereby the privileging of science and technology in both colonial and independent India delineated 'the legitimation of neoliberalism as a culturally authoritative view across Indian social space' (p. 433). In colonial India progress engineered by science was seen as vital both in terms of 'realising India's unique modernity and destiny' (p. 435), and solving problems of social inequality (p. 436). An English language scientific education came to carry cultural capital, which translated into economic capital:

Fluency in English combined with a private education provides educational capital for further educational opportunities. Capital obtained from higher education translates into economic capital. Fluency in English also translates into cultural capital and, to an extent, economic capital (pp. 436–437).

Chopra describes ways in which the uptake of neoliberalism in India has seen the continuation of established structures of economic privilege enmeshed with educational capital. The difference in globalised India, however, is that the 'socialist dimension of Nehru's investment in science and technology is abandoned, even as the rhetoric of national progress and development is preserved in the equation' (p. 438). Educational capital loses its commitment to issues of poverty and inequality and instead takes on the ethos of individualisation and competitiveness central to neoliberal doctrine.

In *The White Tiger*, Balram's account of entrepreneurialism shows India's embedded caste structure to be subject to systems of inclusion and exclusion with respect to education, while also showing neoliberalism's ethos of enterprise to privilege those possessing educational capital, as described by Chopra. However, he also disrupts notions of education itself, claiming a 'true' education to be the self-education of the true entrepreneur, a self-made figure whose drive for success transcends structures of class and caste:

To sum up – in the old days there were one thousand castes and destinies in India. These days, there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies.

And only two destinies: eat – or get eaten up (TWT, p. 64).

Balram identifies the core of the neoliberal ethos, where anyone with the will to succeed can do so, while articulating the cost of such an ethos: the subaltern class, or wasted lives, that exist as the necessary condition of the success of others.

For Paula Chakravartty, the Indian IT industry (which Balram repeatedly references as central to progress and development) promotes itself as modern, transformational and growth generating, representing an 'egalitarian vision of modernisation' which embraces any individual with sufficient entrepreneurial initiative and drive to succeed (2008, p. 294). Belying the egalitarian ethos of enterprise, social and cultural mechanisms, such as the availability of education, act to determine which individuals and sections of the population can exercise this entrepreneurial initiative and access the world of IT and its rewards.

Chakravartty writes of government policies to make education more broadly available to the lower classes and castes (such as caste reservation policies), as well as the role that caste politics continue to play in compounding class inequalities within the field of education (pp. 293–294). During the postcolonial period the middle class has expanded, with education becoming more broadly accessible to the lower classes. Government policies were introduced in the 1980s and have continued through the 1990s and 2000s whereby a certain percentage of university and civil service places are reserved for the middle and low castes. These policies have led at times to increased inter-caste tensions, while representation of the lower castes within the upper echelons of the middle classes has remained small (p. 302). For Chakravartty, access to education and employment have become key issues in 'claims for redistribution through inclusion' for the working classes (p. 294), while caste politics continues to compound these inequalities (p.302). She describes how debates around the inflection of class by traditional caste formations have

culminated in controversial caste reservation policies, whereby an allocated number of seats within particular programmes are reserved for people from lower castes.

Throughout *The White Tiger* Adiga presents education as paramount to officially sanctioned possibilities of breaking out of the rooster coop and becoming a successful citizen. Mr Ashok remarks casually to Pinky Madam on Balram's dismal social and economic prospects:

The thing is, he probably has ... what, two, three years of schooling in him? He can read and write, but he doesn't get what he's read. He's half-baked. The country is full of people like him, I'll tell you that (TWT, p. 10).

In terms of gaining access to the world of information technology education is indeed vital, with many of India's call centre workers holding post-graduate degrees (Chakravartty 2008, p. 299). However, in the absence of a university education or completed schooling, for much of India's poor, education is not what Balram refers to as the 'key of emancipation' in the passage quoted earlier in this section ('a servitude so strong that you can put the key of his emancipation in a man's hands and he will throw it back at you with a curse' (TWT, p. 176)). Rather, he refers to that which he claims is far more readily available to this sector of India's population: the refusal to play by the rules imposed by global capitalist agendas, but instead to seize various opportunities to resist domination, subverting capitalism's rules of domination and subordination so as to embody capitalism's own ethos of individualism and the objective violence it entails.

The Neoliberal Entrepreneur

As I outlined earlier in this chapter, *The White Tiger* aligns the call centre and shopping mall as spaces that both construct and (temporarily) sate desires for consumption and American-ness, while mobilising disciplinary technologies over subjects. These forms and practices are consistent with Wendy Brown's formulation of the neoliberal citizen: 'neoliberalism produces the citizen on the model of entrepreneur and consumer, simultaneously making citizens available

to extensive governance and heavy administrative authority' (2006, p. 705). Neoliberalism, as a form of political reasoning, creates subjects who are all authors of their own successes or failures, contingent on their ability to exercise entrepreneurial acumen. However, market-oriented forms of governance control the 'freedom' and choices available within which they may construct their lives, and with which they are further rewarded for their 'successes'.

The White Tiger captures, with a pointedly ironic tone, the neoliberal sentiment that financial and social success is a matter of personal choice acted upon through entrepreneurial initiative. Balram announces in the final pages:

I have told you all you need to know about entrepreneurship – how it is fostered, how it overcomes hardships, how it remains steadfast to its true goals, and how it is rewarded with the gold medal of success (TWT, p. 317).

This is a form of entrepreneurship only available to those already equipped with the means for its pursuit. Indeed, Balram has informed us a few pages earlier:

Yes, it's true: a few hundred thousand rupees of someone else's money, and a lot of hard work, can make magic happen in this country. Put together my real estate and my bank holdings, and I am worth fifteen times the sum I borrowed from Mr Ashok (p. 301).

The White Tiger can be read as aptly illustrating the disparity and disjunction between two models of entrepreneurship, each integral to neoliberal systems of governance. The first is the prevailing notion of the truly innovative entrepreneurial 'type' who finds a niche market in which to set up a business and construct a career. This is the entrepreneurial figure alluded to in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, referring to the 'thousands and thousands' of entrepreneurs in India. The second model is that of everyday citizenship whereby each individual is an entrepreneur of his or her self. This notion of citizenship is enforced by formal bureaucratic processes, to which Brown refers when she describes neoliberalism as entailing:

a host of policies that figure and produce citizens as individual entrepreneurs and consumers whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for “self-care”—their ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions, whether as welfare recipients, medical patients, consumers of pharmaceuticals, university students, or workers in ephemeral occupations (2006, p. 694).

These two models of entrepreneurship, however, do not necessarily map on to one another. There are multiple intersecting causes that condition various citizens’ capacities for ‘self-care’, as well as determining who will attain the ideal of successful entrepreneur. Access to education, as I have discussed above, is one of these conditions.

The difference between these two models of entrepreneurship is captured in *The White Tiger* by a tension between Balram’s notion of entrepreneurship, and the model of everyday citizenship articulated by Brown, represented in the novel by the call centre worker. The call centre workers discussed earlier in this chapter might be seen as ‘enterprising’ in the terms laid out by institutional policies surrounding social welfare, education and citizenry claims. Within neoliberal agendas of governance, these workers have invested in their own future as ‘human capital’, primarily through education, and therefore are rewarded with relative material comfort. Thus they have entered into a certain degree of autonomy and freedom whereby they are able to sustain the lifestyle of work and consumption discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Having had his own formal education cut off at an early age, possibilities of entrepreneurship for Balram are left to his own devices of wild risk taking. *The White Tiger* becomes a tale of Balram’s auto-didactic approach to enterprise; a self-education that he treats with utmost seriousness:

In terms of formal education, I may be somewhat lacking. I never finished school, to put it bluntly. Who cares! I haven’t read many books, but I’ve read all the ones that count. I know by heart the works of the four greatest poets of all time – Rumi, Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib, and a fourth fellow whose name I forget. I am a self-taught entrepreneur.

That’s the best kind there is, trust me (TWT, p. 6).

Through this self-education Balram disrupts institutionalised agendas of inclusion to formal education such as quota systems and reservation policies. Balram himself is a case in point that these policies do not reach the vast majority of citizens. In so doing he circumvents the necessity of being granted access to a globalised education system that trains subjects in a particular ethos of enterprise. This is one that conforms to the goals and values of global capitalism, along with its enforced boundaries and modes of exclusion. Adiga's irony is, however, that as Balram fights back against (or fights to get a foothold in) a capitalist system from which he has been marginalised, he actually embodies the recklessness and lawlessness of capitalism and the entrepreneurial spirit itself. He transgresses capitalism's codes of social hierarchy and inclusion to become the epitome of the enterprising subject. In so doing, he makes capitalism's objective violence subjective, with his personal journey to entrepreneurship requiring the decisive act of murder.

Balram's exclusion from participation in a socially legitimated world of possibility and opportunity sees him engage in a parody of that world in his desire to reform his opportunities. Balram is, I suggest, a grotesque parody of the enterprising self-made man. *The White Tiger's* irony is that this parody is a representation of the exploitative violence inherent in India's experience of global capitalism, and to the making of the new Bangalore as a neoliberal city. In Balram's words:

But isn't it likely that everyone who counts in this world, including our prime minister (including *you*, Mr Jiabao), has killed someone or other on their way to the top? (p. 318).

Through this chapter I have discussed ways in which *The White Tiger* shows neoliberal mechanisms of governmentality to be entwined with processes of globalisation. Such processes include the global flows of communication and finance that connect the Indian middle class worker, as well as the subaltern subjects peripheral to the lives of the Indian middle class, to the Western

consumer. These processes of globalisation are perhaps what binds us as readers to those subaltern subjects represented by Adiga (and Mistry and Desai).

In the introduction to this thesis I referred to Adiga's self-conscious ambition to write about the injustices experienced by India's poor, exposing them to a global audience (Jeffries 2008). An unsettling irony of *The White Tiger* is that, while the novel comments on the relationship between illiteracy and poverty, the poor are nevertheless represented in a form that in practice most would not be able to engage with themselves, and in a language that many do not speak. We are never told in the novel when Balram learns to speak and write in English. This brings to mind Spivak's observation mentioned in the Introduction:

There is an impulse among literary critics and other kinds of intellectuals to save the masses, speak for the masses, describe the masses. On the other hand, how about attempting to learn to speak in such a way that the masses will not regard as bullshit (1990, p. 56).

It would be interesting to know how the novel's representation of Balram (prior to his entrepreneurial transformation) would be read by the auto-rickshaw drivers and members of the servant classes engaged by Adiga during his research for the novel (Jeffries 2008, para. 10) – that is, if they were able to read the novel.

While subject to the Subaltern Studies scholars' charge of attempting to speak for the (unrepresentable) subaltern, Adiga also shows ways in which subalternity refuses to conform to the mechanisms of exoticism described by Huggan and Said. Said describes the act of writing about the Orient as amounting to: 'deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf' (1978, p. 20). Through his self-conscious anti-exoticism (Roy 2009) Adiga, somewhat crudely, draws attention to the points at which Orientalism's smooth seamlessness, in its narrativising and compartmentalising of the Oriental Other, fractures as it comes into contact with points of cultural difference. To return to Dirlik's positing of the contradictions of global modernity, Orientalism is brought into a site of contention as it comes up

against those voices marginalised within discourses of modernity and questions of ethical meaning surrounding the exclusion of subaltern voices. Subaltern voices are, quite literally, excluded from the site of the call centre where the middle class voice is embraced, even while that privileged voice is colonised and co-opted by mechanisms of global capital. Yet, *The White Tiger* shows subalternity to be present within the social layers surrounding the interactions between Western consumer and Indian entrepreneurial subject, and accordingly, as Prakash writes, 'woven into the fabric of dominant structures' and 'manifesting itself in the very operation of power' (1994, p. 1482).

In the following chapter I continue the exploration of these global flows connecting the Western consumer to the subaltern subject. This discussion is facilitated by Desai's portrayal of flows of people and migration within *The Inheritance of Loss*, and the violence this entails as they move between the poverty of the rural Indian village and the promise of New York City.

Chapter Three

'The green card, the green card...':

Imagining Other Lives; Deterritoriality and Deportability in *The Inheritance of Loss*

Introduction

His papers, his papers. The green card, green card, the *machoot sala oloo ka patha chaar sau bees* green card that was not even green. It roosted heavily, clumsily, pinkishly on his brain day and night; he could think of nothing else, and he threw up sometimes, embracing the toilet, emptying his gullet into its gullet, lying over it like a drunk. The post brought more letters from his father, and as he picked them up, he cried. Then he read them and he grew violently angry (Desai 2006, p. 190).

In Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (TIOL), the green card and all that it entails, such as citizenry rights, belonging and political voice, come to dominate the imagination of various characters. In the above passage, the notion of the green card takes on an obsessive, mantra-like quality for the novel's protagonist, Biju, fuelled by the stream of letters from his father in India. The conditions of possibility for this narrative derive from a community driven by economic desperation to invest all hope in an imaginary elsewhere: a utopian space carried by the signifier, 'America'. This structures the pleas of Biju's father's letters and creates the turbulence in his physical constitution, living as an undocumented worker in New York City.

The Inheritance of Loss brings together many of the themes of this thesis, illustrating a global modernity that envelops both rich and poor. While an ethos of 'progress' privileges some and excludes others, the mantle of modernisation informs the dreams and desires of them all. In the northeast Indian town, Kalimpong, where much of the novel is set, levels of accumulation of wealth and consumption mark those who have, with varying degrees of success, realised their potential as consumer citizens in contrast with those who remain Bauman's 'flawed consumers' (2004, p. 14), such as Biju. The consumer subjectivity of the relatively wealthy translates into ease of mobility and freedom to travel

transnationally. Those marginalised by global modernising processes, on the other hand, remain trapped, unable to legally move across borders in search of better prospects, yet immersed in a seductive modernity that permits free rein to the subaltern imagination to yearn for that which remains out of reach.

Desai's focus on mobility continues a thread that runs through all three novels: that of class aspirations expressed through a desire to emigrate. Despite the hopes, held in common by all of the novels' protagonists, that a better life exists elsewhere, each of the three novels show varying levels of privilege and destitution to co-exist within shared spaces and across borders, rather than being separated by clear 'first world'/'third world' demarcations.

In this chapter I take Biju's narrative as a point of departure to explore aspects of global capitalism central to experiences of Indian migration. In the first section of the chapter I provide a brief account of the novel's trajectory. In the following section I discuss the increasingly intensified networks of communication in which consumerist images of the 'good life' abolish social and physical distance, nourishing desires for better lives in other locations. Here I take Appadurai's (1996) notion of the 'scapes' to describe the global flows central to the intersecting narratives of *The Inheritance of Loss*, and the role of the imagination that comes into play as various characters in the novel dream of and seek better lives through migration. In the third section I discuss the starkly contrasting experiences portrayed in *The Inheritance of Loss* as integral to patterns of migration. Here I use the work of political theorist, Anne McNevin (2009, 2011), and anthropologist, Nicholas De Genova (2002, 2009), to discuss global capitalism's reliance on a continuous source of legally vulnerable, disposable labour, which Desai illustrates through the New York based narrative of the novel. A discussion of Bauman's (1998) notions of weightlessness and exterritoriality further shows that modernity's possibilities, celebrated by Appadurai, are unequally distributed.

In the previous chapter I discussed the social divisions formed in response to neoliberal state agendas of participation within global capitalism.

These are illustrated in various locations, both Indian and American, throughout *The Inheritance of Loss*. Pertinent here is Ong's contention that:

citizenship elements such as entitlements and benefits are increasingly associated with neoliberal criteria, so that mobile individuals who possess human capital or expertise are highly valued and can exercise citizenship-like claims in diverse locations. Meanwhile, citizens who are judged not to have such tradable competence or potential become devalued and thus vulnerable to exclusionary practices (2006, pp. 6–7).

Desai repeatedly shows that citizenry rights are no longer accorded due to territorial citizenship but due to the possession of skills of marketable value. In the airport scene later in the novel she writes:

All the NRIs [non-resident Indians] holding their green cards and passports, looked complacent and civilised. That's just how it was, wasn't it? Fortune piled on more good fortune. They had more money and because they had more money, they would get more money' (TIOL, p. 298).

Wealth and privilege exist as a series of cascading and self-generating events; money buys cultural capital, which in turn renders the fortunate citizen valuable, conferring political rights and belonging in transnational locations. In response to his lack of citizenry rights, Biju's focus turns to the green card and legalisation; he believes this to be the sole possibility for gaining such rights. This belief, I suggest, overlooks possibilities that fall outside the usual terms invoked by formal notions of citizenship. Rather than suggesting that formal citizenship be extended to include more people, I am interested here to think about ways of belonging that contest the conceptual language by which formal citizenship is framed.

In the concluding section of this chapter, I argue that Desai's critique of the marginalisation of undocumented workers in the US risks reproducing the discriminatory frames that she critiques, as her novel represents formal residency as the most desirable form of inclusion. This problematic aspect of Desai's representation is tied to her attempt to speak for the subaltern subject; in

so doing she imagines him into being in terms and language familiar to her, and writes him as a subject desiring the world and privilege that she herself inhabits.

The Inheritance of Loss is made up of intersecting narratives that cut across different locations (predominantly Kalimpong in northeast India and New York City), and move between the novel's present (1985–86) and past²³. In the course of the novel the history of Jemubhai, the old anglicised judge, is revealed, including his time studying law in Cambridge as a racially marginalised figure. In the novel's present, Jemubhai's granddaughter, Sai, is living with him following the death of her parents in Russia, where her father worked as a space pilot. Sai's sense of middle class entitlement is shaken as her Nepali maths tutor and love, Gyan, becomes involved in the local Gorkha insurgency, a political agitation of Nepali Indians against domination by the Bengali majority. As Rajat Ganguly writes, 'the GNLF [Gorkha National Liberation Front] argued that it had become imperative to establish a separate state in order to prevent Gorkhas from being treated as foreigners or domiciled Nepali citizens as well as ensuring their rapid social, cultural and economic development' (2005, p. 478). Through the novel Desai interweaves the issues of citizenship, belonging and political marginalisation pertinent to this local context, and central to my discussion, with those of the broader context of global capitalism within which Biju seeks economic security. This local context of the novel is symptomatic of what Dirlik describes as the contradictions inherent to global modernity as it comes into contact with 'past legacies that not only refuse to go away, but draw renewed vitality from the very globalising process' (2003, pp. 275–276). The historical marginalisation against which the Gorkha movement protests becomes interwoven with power relations inherent in processes of globalisation, as discussed in both this and the previous chapter. The Gorkha movement is simultaneously invigorated by the possibilities made accessible to the imagination by global flows. Such possibilities for political change are evident in the disruption experienced by Bengali sisters, Lola and Noni, their comfortable lives destroyed as Gorkha insurgents take over their property:

²³ See Masterton on the 'snapshot' or 'sound bite' quality to Desai's writing style (2012, p. 422).

It *did* matter to fly to London and return with chocolates filled with kirsch; it did matter that others could not. They had pretended it didn't, or had nothing to do with them, and suddenly it had everything to do with them. The wealth that seemed to protect them like a blanket was the very thing that left them exposed. They, amid extreme poverty, were baldly richer, and the statistics of difference were being broadcast over loudspeakers, written loudly across the walls (TIOL, p. 242).

The relative luxury in which Lola and Noni have lived, including sending Lola's daughter, Pixie, to England to work as a BBC radio presenter, contrasts with Biju's struggle. Biju's father, 'the cook', has lived in poverty for years as Jemubhai's servant. Desperate to elevate Biju above his working class fate in India, the cook endeavours to send him to the US, certain that America will alleviate their struggles: "Stay there as long as you can," the cook had said. "Stay there. Make money. Don't come back here" (p. 191). This echoes Om and Ishvar's dreams of Bombay in *A Fine Balance*, where the dream of the metropolis also symbolises good fortune.

After overstaying a tourist visa obtained at great expense, Biju resides 'illegally' in New York. Here he is part of a highly exploited labour force comprised largely of deportable immigrants. When Biju's employer suggests that his restaurant staff live in the kitchen, the reader is informed:

By offering a reprieve from NYC rents, they could cut the pay to a quarter of the minimum wage, reclaim the tips for the establishment, keep an eye on the workers, and drive them to work fifteen-, sixteen-, seventeen-hour donkey days. Saran, Jeev, Rishi, Mr. Lalkaka, and now Biju. All illegal. "We are a happy family here," she said, energetically slapping vegetable oil on her arms and face, "no need for lotions-potions, *baba*, this works just as well" (p. 146).

This passage shows Biju's vulnerability, as he is obliged to accept these conditions, and highlights some of the nuances of immigrant narratives in the US. Biju's employers are also Indian immigrants, and although they are 'legalised' and possess power over their employees, they too are far from realising the comforts and security Biju has imagined to be synonymous with the US. Here, American ideals of freedom and prosperity, available to all through hard work,

regardless of social class, combine with the individualism and competitiveness of a neoliberal ethos. This is representative of an internal hierarchy formed within the diasporic community that reproduces the neoliberal mechanisms of the American Dream.

As it becomes clear to Biju that his dream of success in America is unrealisable, he is increasingly worried about the political unrest at home. He returns to Kalimpong, taking cheap gadgets and tokens of American 'modernity' with him. Upon arrival in India he is robbed of everything he owns and is wearing by Gorkha insurgents, and the novel ends with the tragic scene of his empty-handed reunion with his father.

There are many aspects of the novel that could be discussed in relation to the themes of this chapter: the ways in which Biju's journey to the US mirrors aspects of Jemubhai's journey to England, particularly in their shared experiences of racial alienation and marginalisation, and despite their differences of class and circumstance; stereotypical Indian notions of Britishness and Americanness and differences between aspirations toward the two different Western cultures; and the political unrest and border dispute in Kalimpong. For the purposes of my chapter, however, I focus primarily on Biju's narrative, and thus on Desai's representation of the contrast between the postcolonial fantasy of the American Dream and conditions of the undocumented worker in the US.

The Imagined Lives of Others

The Inheritance of Loss represents the global intensification of communication networks as feeding the collective imaginations of communities in India with notions of the West, both in colonial imaginings of England as infallible empire and consumerist notions of the 'American dream'. These imaginaries motivate increased migration flows from India to England and America across various class groups. Ease of movement is, however, unevenly distributed across these groups, as certain lives are judged to be productive and are therefore valued (such as the NRIs described by Desai in the airport scene), and others are

deemed unable to contribute to economic growth and are therefore devalued and subject to exclusionary regimes of border control.

Prior to Biju's departure for the US, he devotes much time and energy to the work of gaining a visa. Biju must convincingly relate an invented story about his personal circumstances and the purpose of his travel as well as display a fake bank statement in order to procure a tourist visa. Maryse Jayasuriya describes the strategizing and scheming of this scene as a form of labour, relating it to Appadurai's notion of the imagination as 'a form of work (in the sense of both labour and culturally organised practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility' (Appadurai 1996, p. 31, cited in Jayasuriya 2009, p. 72). This strategizing takes on an entrepreneurial dimension as Indian subjects like Biju seek to enter into such fields of possibility, responding to the individualising neoliberal ethos of such global structures (as outlined in the previous chapter) in the limited ways available to them. The enterprise displayed in the process of selling oneself to the visa officer, and Biju's 'success' in having reached the US is imagined by friends and family in India as sufficient to engender a comfortable life:

"My son works in New York," the cook boasted to everyone he met. "He is the manager of a restaurant business.

"New York. Very big city," he explained. "The cars and buildings are nothing like here. In that country, there is enough food for everybody."

"When are you going, Babaji?"

"One day," he laughed. "One day soon my son will take me."

....

"When you go to America, take me along also," said Tashi after he had sold the tourist a trip to Sikkim.

"Yes, yes. I will take us all. Why not? That country has lots of room. It's this country that is so crowded" (TIOL, pp. 84–85).

The cook's fantasy of Biju's life and possibilities in New York jars sharply with its actuality of which the reader has already been informed. Biju's accommodation is a cramped basement rented to 'illegal' immigrants:

a shifting population of men camping out near the fuse box, behind the boiler, in the cubby holes, and in odd-shaped corners that once were pantries, maids' rooms, laundry rooms, and storage rooms at the bottom of what had been a single-family home (p. 51).

Biju's work involves a string of temporary, poorly paid jobs in restaurant kitchens, takeaway joints and a dirty bakery. For Biju, living in these conditions of squalor, the imagined prosperity that, for his community in India, is attached to the notion of America, shifts to hinge on the idea of the green card which encompasses notions of autonomy and freedom of movement:

The green card the green card. The...

Without it he couldn't leave. To leave he wanted a green card. This was the absurdity. How he desired the triumphant After The Green Card Return Home, thirsted for it – to be able to buy a ticket with the air of someone who could return if he wished, or not, if he didn't wish.... He watched the legalised foreigners with envy as they shopped at discount baggage stores for the miraculous, expandable third-world suitcase, accordion-pleated, filled with pockets and zippers to unhook further crannies, the whole structure unfolding into a giant space that could fit in enough to set up an entire life in another country.

Then, of course, there were those who lived and died illegal in America and never saw their families, not for ten years, twenty, thirty, never again (p. 99).

The 'expandable third-world suitcase' shows that the superfluity of space imagined by the cook to be synonymous with America, is, rather, entwined with a particular mode of being in the world in which fluidity, both in terms of physical mobility and financial flows, is a foremost characteristic. Migratory flows, in which legalised foreigners move with ease, are tied to financial flows that facilitate the consumption of goods (such as the suitcase) that have been produced through global networks of production and labour, while the political space of America is transformed by the ethnic landscape resulting from migration, both 'legal' and 'illegal'. The space of the suitcase thus symbolises freedom and possibility for some, in contrast to the experience of imprisonment habitual to the undocumented worker. That subject's existence, however, is still open to the play of the imagination as he is exposed to and desires the life possibilities withheld from him. The global flows captured in this passage, as

well as the role of fantasy in imagining other lives, are central to Appadurai's (1996) formulation of the 'scapes'.

Appadurai proposes five scapes (*ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, and *ideoscapes*) as a way of succinctly describing and holding in play the disjunctive transnational flows of a late twentieth century globalised world (1996, pp. 27–47). The scapes describe various global flows that are interconnected yet independent, impacting on and influencing one another in different ways in various locations. The movement of people facilitates the movement of images, ideas, technology and capital, while these flows accordingly encourage and enable increased levels of human migration. The effects of these flows have been the expansion of trans-local and transnational networks, resulting in affiliations, communities and solidarities formed across and beyond contained spaces of nation-states.

Importantly for my reading of *The Inheritance of Loss*, Appadurai describes the ethnoscape as: 'the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals'. These persons 'constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree' (p. 33). For Appadurai, writing in the nineties, fantasy and imagination play an unprecedented role as motivating forces for migration within various ethnic communities around the world. The ability to dream and imagine a better elsewhere is intimately tied to the ubiquity of 'mediascapes', which convey images of more attractive places and lifestyles while relating stories of the possibilities of migration. Of the role of fantasy in a contemporary globalised world, Appadurai writes:

In the past two decades, as the deterritorialisation of persons, images, and ideas has taken on new force.... More persons throughout the world see their lives through the prisms of the possible lives offered by mass media in all their forms. That is, fantasy is now a social practice; it enters, in a host of ways, into the fabrication of social lives for many people in many societies (p. 54).

It is instructive to read Appadurai's work alongside *The Inheritance of Loss* as Desai began to write the novel soon after the publication of his influential book, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, and both texts grapple with similar themes of globalisation and migration. The imagination is central to the ways in which Desai's characters seek both to validate and improve their life circumstances, from Noni and Lola's (old-fashioned) desire for British-ness, to the cook's obsession with America (a somewhat simplistic representation of the late twentieth century phase of globalisation as 'Americanisation'), to the Gorkha insurgency, where young men collectively imagine political autonomy in nationalist terms:

"We must fight, brothers and sisters, to manage our own affairs. We must unite under the banner of the GNLF, Gorkha National Liberation Front. We will build hospitals and schools. We will provide jobs for our sons. We will give dignity to our daughters carrying heavy loads, breaking stone on the roads. We will defend our own homeland..." (TIOL, p. 159).

While the cook and Biju hope for a better life through possibilities of mobility in an increasingly deterritorialised world, the Gorkha agitation responds to, and seeks to overtake, efforts by nation-states to consolidate and assert power locally. This illustrates the complex ways in which transnationalism and deterritorialism both threaten and feed into actions of state powers, and interact with local histories. Desai shows the complexities that surround questions of ethnicity and belonging as her characters form connections across various locations, or struggle with a sense of disconnection from solid community structure (such as the experiences of Biju in New York and the Judge both in England and India). These concerns surrounding issues of deterritorialisation, ethnicity and belonging are shared by Desai and Appadurai, with Appadurai's work providing theoretical context for the disjunctive and chaotic global flows which Desai struggles to contain within the novel²⁴. I do not wish to read *The Inheritance of Loss* as if it were a fictional illustration of Appadurai's theoretical propositions, but rather to hold Appadurai's work in play as a point of reference

²⁴ Desai has spoken in an interview of her struggle to contain all the 'bits and pieces' going on in the narrative of *The Inheritance of Loss*, stating that 'the story itself forced the structure' (*Guardian Book Club with John Mullan* 2009).

for the transnational social, political and economic contexts in which the novel is positioned.

Literary critic, Paul Jay, argues that *The Inheritance of Loss* implicitly questions Appadurai's 'generally happy, upbeat, liberatory take on globalisation', emphasising instead 'the debilitating effects of economic globalisation on underclasses' (2010, p. 120). While the novel does complicate this aspect of Appadurai's notion of globalisation, I suggest that Jay's position overlooks the ambivalence of Appadurai's argument with respect to global capital's antagonisms. While Appadurai celebrates the liberatory potential of contemporary globalisation, his writing on the work of the imagination also allows for an analysis of the inequalities inherent to global capitalism:

I should be quick to note that this is not a cheerful observation, intended to imply that the world is now a happier place with more choices (in the utilitarian sense) for more people, and with more mobility and more happy endings. Instead, what is implied is that even the meanest and most hopeless of lives, the most brutal and dehumanising of circumstances, the harshest of lived inequalities are now open to the play of the imagination (Appadurai 1996, p. 54).

For Appadurai, the imagination and mechanisms of global modernity that feed it are enabling, liberating tools whereby individuals may work towards reconstructing lives for themselves in antagonism to structural regimes of inequity, such as those outlined throughout this thesis. These lived inequalities, as I discuss in my Conclusion, are also open to the play of the imagination for the diasporic author and cosmopolitan reader, both in ways that work to bring the distant Other into the orbit of a global, comparatively privileged readership, and in ways that, whether unwittingly or knowingly, inhabit a position of authority over subaltern consciousness, thereby stripping that subject of agency.

In Desai's representation of the cook, she depicts a desire for what seems to be an essentialised notion of Western modernity, thus dominating the cook's subjectivity through her authorial knowledge of both these desires and the modernity that is their object:

This the cook had done for Biju, but also for himself, since the cook's desire was for modernity: toaster ovens, electric shavers, watches, cameras, cartoon colours. He dreamed at night not in the Freudian symbols that still enmeshed others but in modern codes, the digits of a telephone flying away before he could dial them, a garbled television (TIOL, p. 55).

As the cook dreams of what he understands to be the emblems of modernity (which in his mind equals America) this representation of subaltern desire perhaps mirrors Desai's own essentialised notions of subaltern consciousness and the possibility of an ongoing desire of many of the novel's readers for a one-dimensional subaltern subject. As Desai seeks to speak for the cook she exerts authorial control over him, entering his dreams and psyche in a way that assumes knowledge of him, while rendering his imagination an object to be consumed by the reader. As the cook fantasises about the gadgets that presumably adorn the lives of both author and many of the novel's readers, consumer modernity remains elusive to him. Desai defines his subjectivity through his inability to participate within consumer culture, and through what she represents as his ensuing lack of agency and capacity for processes of critical thought. In Huggan's notion of the exotic, these essentialising mechanisms serve to familiarise subaltern subjects by casting them in terms recognisable to the reader, while simultaneously keeping them at arm's length, in this case through the cook's exclusion from full participation in the lifestyle described by those terms. This returns us to the issues of representative authority brought to light through Said's work and, in Leela Gandhi's words, 'the complicated relationship between the knowing investigator and the (un)knowing subject of subaltern histories' (1998, p. 2).

Throughout *The Inheritance of Loss*, the resistive possibilities of the imagination described by Appadurai are evident in the work undertaken by Biju and his community to create new lives. In the next section I look more closely at the inequalities that are nevertheless inherent in experiences of migration within conditions of global modernity, as illustrated in the novel.

Political Belonging, Deterritorialisation and Deportability

Having reached the US, Biju finds himself without rights, lacking freedom and mobility as an undocumented worker, and unable to leave and return to the US without a green card. His place as a worker within that territory is over-determined by a discourse of illegality as he finds himself folded into the masses subordinated to the demands of capital, while surrounded by regulatory mechanisms governing the gap between that labour-power and its legal recognition:

“Without us living like pigs,” said Biju, “what business would you have? This is how you make your money, paying us nothing because you know we can’t do anything, making us work day and night because we are illegal. Why don’t you sponsor us for our green cards?” (TIOL, p. 188).

De Genova writes that it is the distinct status of migrant workers in the US as ‘legally vulnerable labour-power that renders them indispensable to capital’ (2009, p. 461). For Biju, his illegality is experienced as a condition of being less than human; unaccounted for and peripheral to formal structures of recognition, and therefore trapped within the physical location from which he is excluded as a political subject. In this section I examine this condition through a discussion of political belonging and privilege as enmeshed within constructions of citizenship and legalisation.

In their respective scholarship, McNevin and De Genova examine irregular migration and labour subordination within processes of global capitalism²⁵. Both look at the conditions of migrant workers and political belonging as shaped by dynamics more complex than status of citizenship determined in relation to the state. McNevin discusses ways in which forms of ‘political belonging’ as determined by citizenship and the nation-state have become naturalised and entrenched within Western democratic political

²⁵ McNevin uses the term *irregular migrant* rather than the more commonly used label *undocumented migrant* so as to more accurately capture a broader spectrum of migration than that of the worker who literally possesses no documents. For her, ‘irregular migrants are noncitizens who have crossed state borders or remain in state territory without the host state’s explicit and ongoing sanction’ (McNevin 2011, p. 18–19).

systems, and ways in which such structures have mutated within the current neoliberal era. In the Westphalian state system²⁶ 'belonging has been linked to a fixed relationship between state, citizen and territory' (McNevin 2009, p. 137). This has had deep implications for the notion of irregular migration, the border crossing by non-citizens without the sanction of that state, and to understandings of notions of citizen and outsider. McNevin discusses newer formations of belonging and political community that have emerged in response to neoliberal state agendas. These formations are geared towards aiding the state's participation within a global economy and are no longer determined exclusively by territorially defined notions of entitlement. Thus people who possess cultural capital and technical expertise are able to move more freely across borders and between nation states, exercising political rights as they do so.

For the state to maintain a desired level of inclusion within the global economy there is a need for a constant source of 'cheap, flexible and compliant labour' (p. 143)²⁷. A pool of less privileged citizens and/or irregular migrants must therefore be sustained so as to facilitate transnational capital accumulation. (This recalls Mistry's 'hungry army', discussed in Chapter One, encamped on the margins of development projects). As McNevin writes, 'Irregular migrants meet this demand in the most efficient manner as they are usually impervious to wage and condition regulations, highly mobile and easily expendable/deportable according to market fluctuation'²⁸. Undocumented workers thus become

²⁶ At the treaty of Westphalia in 1648 major European countries recognized an interstate system that gave states autonomy within, and control over, all internal affairs within their territory. This is commonly seen as the founding moment of the modern sovereign state (see Peter J. Taylor 2003, p. 103).

²⁷ Xiang Biao (2007) has written on the flexible labour management system of the transnational IT industry, specifically where Indian workers are farmed out to work in Australia by businesses known as 'body shops'. Biao writes: 'individualisation individualises risks – that is, it disperses risk to individual workers to the benefit (profit) of body-shop operators – even as it individualises opportunities for upward mobility, enabling the body-shopping scheme to continue expanding' (p. 10).

²⁸ Farmers across the US have recently expressed concern at the prospect of increased deportations of illegal immigrants. They report that the agricultural industry has come to rely on these workers for harvesting of fruit and vegetables, work that Americans are no longer prepared to do. When the United Farm Workers Union launched a

incorporated into the economic structures of cities while still being subject to policing on account of political status. While such workers are necessary to support a global economy that provides mobility and privilege to some, mechanisms pertaining to protection of the nation-state and belonging defined by citizenship are reinforced in relation to these workers. McNevin writes:

Neoliberal subjects emerge at one extreme as hypermobile cosmopolitans imbued with all the privilege and access that new civic travellers of entrepreneurship and investment can afford. Other kinds of travellers who respond in different ways to the same neoliberal imperatives are rendered “illegal” and therefore amenable to extreme forms of exploitation (2011, p. 6).

Desai has spoken of the differences between ways of travelling as central to the narrative of *The Inheritance of Loss*. In this quotation from an interview transcript she describes what she sees as two very different styles of journeying experienced by Indians travelling abroad:

Some people were travelling really in the name of having more space, more freedom – you know, there’s that sort of Citibank way of travelling where you’re having champagne and crab in some board room. And then there were other people who were travelling in a very different way and that was, in a way, the larger story – that travel [driven by the need for work or money] symbolised a sort of trap (Gee 2010, p. 34).

Desai again associates the notion of space, signalled earlier by the suitcase, with freedom and travel; the space that the ‘Citibank’ traveller or ‘hypermobile cosmopolitan’ carries with her translates into more space and increased possibilities at every point along the journey and after the arrival. This caricature is present in various figures throughout *The Inheritance of Loss* and is most obviously drawn in contrast to Biju’s narrative in references to the daughters of Lola and Mrs Sen, who work respectively for the BBC and CNN:

campaign to connect unemployed Americans to farm work in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis, only three people accepted out of thousands of inquiries (Baragona 2010).

Lola purred with pride and heard nothing but the sanitised elegance of her daughter's voice, triumphant over any horrors the world might thrust upon others. "Better leave sooner rather than later," she had advised Pixie long ago, "India is a sinking ship. Don't want to be pushy, darling, sweetie, thinking of your happiness only, but *the doors won't stay open forever....*" (TIOL, p. 47).

The ease with which Pixie can choose to travel abroad to study and work, doors of possibility wide open, is demonstrative of a markedly different relationship to the neoliberal market than is available to Biju. While Biju responds to the same neoliberal ethos of working to create one's own success, the global labour market to which he has access is one highly policed and regulated at territorial points of entry, border crossings, airports and so on. The liberalisation of borders for some creates a need to reinforce notions of territorial belonging and identity by increased securitisation against others²⁹. The perpetuation of a discourse of 'illegality' serves to reinforce and justify the need for heightened mechanisms of securitisation, despite the actual failures of what McNevin describes as 'performative but disingenuous displays of sovereign territorial integrity' in measures taken (2011, p. 119).

The hypermobile cosmopolitan described above ties in with Bauman's notion of weightlessness, which he uses to critique and complicate a particular cosmopolitan experience of being at home in the world; this is an experience that resonates with that celebrated by Appadurai. For Bauman weightlessness refers to the experience of 'non-terrestriality' and 'dephysicalisation' of power for a global, mobile elite (1998, p. 19). This power is manifested in communication and financial flows that travel instantaneously across distance, so that for this elite, social and financial ties are no longer determined by physical proximity. For this 'unanchored power', weightlessness and comfort comes from ensuring the security of their isolation from local community or 'local interference' (p. 20) and in their ability to travel in space more easily and faster than ever before (p.

²⁹ The term 'securitisation' refers to the plethora of mechanisms by which risk to populations are managed. For a discussion of securitisation in relation to questions of citizenship see Peter Nyers (2009). See Bulent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen for a discussion of mechanisms of securitisation at the airport as a mobile form of discipline (2005, p. 64).

19). They are not tied to locality or encumbered by the weight of the rest of the population, which ‘finds itself cut off and forced to pay the heavy cultural, psychological and political price of their new isolation’ (p. 21). Bauman writes: ‘if the new exterritoriality of the elite feels like intoxicating freedom, the territoriality of the rest feels less like home ground, and ever more like prison – all the more humiliating for the obtrusive sight of the others’ freedom to move’ (p. 23).

The Inheritance of Loss shows the weightiness of territoriality, experienced by Biju in contrast to the exterritoriality of an elite such as Pixie, to be marked not only by ties to a particular location, but by a condition of being in the world that precludes mobility and freedom. For Biju, part of the class of global poor living in the US, the dephysicalisation of power of which Bauman writes works to tie him to that locality in ways similar to his previous ‘trapped’ condition in India; Biju is unable to participate within the networks of knowledge and financial flows through which this power operates. Biju’s experience of territoriality and ‘imprisonment’ is, however, entwined with the ever-present risk of being discharged and further cast off, as he exists in a state that De Genova terms ‘deportability’. This condition is captured in the following passage:

At the bakery, they called the immigration hotline as soon as the clock struck 8:30 and took turns holding the receiver for what might be an all-day activity of line holding.

“What is your status now, sir? I can’t help you unless I know your current status.”

They put down the phone hurriedly then, worried that immigration had a superduper zing bing beep peeping high-alert electronic supersonic space speed machine that could

transfer

connect

dial

read

trace the number through to their –

Illegality.

Oh the green card, the green, the – (TIOL, p. 81).

The over-determining status of ‘illegality’ here signals the ultimate repression of political identity and place, becoming symptomatic of invisibility or non-existence as the undocumented worker hides at the end of the phone line. ‘Help’ is not available without the disclosure of legal status, yet the (non)-status of ‘illegality’ traps the bakery employees in positions of extreme vulnerability as their existences are governed by the ever-present threat of deportation. The bureaucrat at the other end of the phone line represents the myriad networks of surveillance regulating the movements of people and migrants, while technologies integral to Bauman’s notion of exterritoriality (here, somewhat patronisingly, signalled in the imagined ‘space speed machine’) with their consequent limitations on the marginalised, are imagined as all encompassing and inescapable mediums for that surveillance.

De Genova has written extensively on the conditions of undocumented workers in the US, and on the historical production of their ‘illegality’. This argument works to counter discourses that tend to naturalise the notion of ‘illegality’. He writes:

Migrant “illegality” is never simply intended to achieve the putative goal of deportation. It is deportability and not deportation per se, that has historically rendered undocumented migrant labour a distinctly disposable commodity.... The very existence of the enforcement branches of the INS [Immigration and Naturalisation Service] (and the Border Patrol, in particular) is premised upon the continued presence of migrants whose un-documented legal status has long been equated with the disposable (deportable), ultimately “temporary” character of the commodity that is their labour-power (2002, p. 438).

The deportation of relatively small numbers of ‘illegal’ migrants takes place in order that more may remain in precarious and tractable conditions, sustaining an easily exploitable class of migrant labour (p. 439). As Desai shows in the

bakery scene, disposable workers are excluded from political life and contained by the threat of deportation.

While Desai's Indian 'travellers' are subjected to varying levels of inclusion and privilege, depending on marketable value and cultural capital, racial divisions cut across such class stratifications within the metropolis of the global north. De Genova continues:

the spatialised condition of "illegality" reproduces the physical borders of nation-states in the everyday life of innumerable places throughout the interiors of the migrant-receiving states. Thus, the legal production of "illegality" as a distinctly spatialised and typically racialised social condition for undocumented migrants provides an apparatus for sustaining their vulnerability and tractability as workers (p. 439).

New York's labouring classes are racially segmented and Biju's experience of that city is marked by the continued encounter with ostensible borders between 'first world' and 'third world':

"***!!!!" said the Frenchman.

It sounded to their ears like an angry dandelion puff, but what he said was that they were a troublesome pair. The sound of their fight had travelled up the flight of steps and struck a clunky note, and they might upset the balance, perfectly first-world on top, perfectly third-world twenty-two steps below. Mix it up in a heap and then who would patronise his restaurant, *hm?* (TIOL, p. 23).

The 'balance' between 'first-world' and 'third-world' is here shown to be fragile and artificial, the constant threat of rupture requiring containment. A discourse of 'illegality' works to protract this relationship and sustain the vulnerability of the third world worker, naturalising the status of 'illegality' through the demarcation of racial otherness and the invocation of borders between nation-states, which these workers have clearly crossed. Those boundaries pertaining to the edges of the nation-state therefore come to be reproduced within the territory of the metropolis, protracting the illegal migrant's condition of alienage (Bosniak 2006, p. 5). Through the novel Biju's focus obsessively turns to the

notion of the green card as the only means by which to escape such structures of racial demarcation and social and political exclusion.

I now briefly discuss Desai's depiction of Biju's 'illegality' and the limits inherent in this portrayal of the possibilities for resistance and action on the part of marginalised subaltern workers.

'Fuel for Action': contesting citizenship

Desai's focus on Biju's experience of his 'illegality' solely as politically debilitating and alienating is, I suggest, a missed opportunity to explore possibilities for belonging and political engagement outside the usual terrain marked by citizenship (or formal residency), and nation-state. Her illustration of neoliberal state agendas that privilege certain consumer-citizens and marginalise others, alongside Biju's focus on the green card as conveyer of belonging, risks naturalising discourses of 'illegality', while suggesting a rather limited scope through which irregular migrants might form solidarities and enact alternative modes of political inclusion.

David Wallace Spielman argues that Desai represents successes and failures of her characters as dependent on their capacities for flexibility and adaptability. Biju's failure to succeed, he argues, results from a decision to hold on to his Indian cultural identity and refuse assimilation, rather than embracing his own ambivalence and accepting change (Spielman 2009, p. 88). Spielman's argument resonates with a neoliberal ethos, suggesting that success or failure is largely determined by every individual's capacity for self-adaptation and determination. Spielman makes this explicit in his comparison of Biju with his friend and fellow undocumented worker from Zanzibar, Saeed Saeed, who over the course of the novel more successfully forges a life in New York.

Desai's representation of Saeed Saeed as the successful irregular migrant (indeed, she has claimed him to be the most successful character in the novel (*Guardian Book Club with John Mullan* 2009)) is dependent on his absorption into a neoliberal framework that privileges entrepreneurship, flexibility and

adaptability. Saeed is prepared to 'sabotage the system', to sell himself as a model citizen in a way that plays into nationalistic values surrounding citizenship: 'Saeed, he relished the whole game, the way the country flexed his wits and rewarded him; he charmed it, cajoled it, cheated it, felt great tenderness and loyalty toward it' (p. 79). Saeed's reward, through a sham marriage to a US citizen, will be, the reader presumes, the longed for green card. In Desai's representation, Saeed has acquired the key to a life of political belonging in the US, although this is entirely within the terms dictated by existing formal structures of legalisation.

Desai's representation of Biju's failure, on the other hand, to form any lasting social connections in New York within which political subjectivity might be cultivated, has the effect of depoliticizing him, and further disabling him within this environment. She portrays the acquisition of the green card as the only, though near impossible, solution to Biju's predicament. In this, I would suggest Desai overlooks alternative modes by which irregular migrants have been collectively making their presence felt and asserting political rights within the US. By doing so she risks reproducing an individualising neoliberal frame of citizenship that relies on mechanisms of legalisation and securitisation, merely implying that such a frame should extend to include more people³⁰.

McNevin argues that the incorporation of irregular migrant labour into economic and social structures in the US and elsewhere works to open up possibilities for migrant activism and claims making, as well as the imagining of alternative modes of citizenship and belonging to that of the legally recognized citizen (McNevin 2011, 2012). She writes of the demonstrations in 2006 where millions of irregular migrants mobilised in rallies across the United States, coming together to assert legitimate presence by demanding 'recognition of their

³⁰ Barry Hindess provides an account of ways in which 'progressive' aspects of citizenship (improved conditions for more people) are historically bound up in elitist and civilising views of humanity, necessitating citizenship's 'exclusive and divisive character' (2009, p. 198). He argues that it is 'far from clear' that the 'Western idiom of citizenship' is the best way to pursue concerns for the 'welfare of humanity' (p. 199).

social and economic contribution to the communities in which they live and work' (2011, p. 128)³¹. She also describes ways in which irregular migrants have contested on smaller scales what it means to have legitimate presence, and importantly, ways in which they have been formally recognised in various locations across the US that move outside a discourse of legality/illegality (p. 133–139). The political gains of which McNevin writes by no means cancel out the far greater obstacles and discriminatory political and legal frameworks that confront irregular migrants in their everyday lives. They do, however, point to various forms of, and possibilities for, political engagement, activism and community building that have been present across the vast population of undocumented migrants within the US.

For Appadurai, too, the imaginative possibilities allowed by global modernity suggest an expanding domain for the contestation and resistance of structures of inequality:

the imagination, especially when collective, can become the fuel for action. It is the imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighbourhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labour prospects. The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape (1996, p. 7).

In Desai's representation, not only is Biju without political and labour rights in New York, but he is further isolated from the diasporic community where he may have hoped to find solidarity. To return to the passage with which this chapter began, while Biju struggles to survive in New York he is besieged by letters from his father, asking him to help other young men from their community in Kalimpong, also migrating without documents. Early on in the novel the cook has advised Biju in a letter: 'Before you make any decisions talk them over with Nandu' (TIOL, p. 18), naively imagining Biju to be enfolded in a diasporic

³¹ De Genova contextualizes the 2006 migrant demonstrations, as well as the earlier demonstration of 2003, within the post September 11 climate, which saw intensified securitisation mechanisms against migrants. In 2005 efforts were made by the Federal Government to pass a legislation criminalising undocumented workers. This was passed by the House of Representatives, but then revised after the 2006 protests (see De Genova 2009).

community of support. While Biju is helpless to respond to the endless pleas from his community back home, he remembers his own arrival in New York:

at the airport with a few dollar bills bought on the Kathmandu black market in his pocket and an address for his father's friend, Nandu, who lived with twenty-two taxi drivers in Queens. Nandu had also not answered the phone and had tried to hide when Biju arrived on his doorstep, and then when he thought Biju had left, had opened the door and to his distress found Biju still standing there two hours later (p. 98).

The individualising effects of the neoliberal frame of citizenship in which these undocumented workers find themselves not only reproduces borders between rich and poor and various ethnic groups that are effective across transnational spaces, but it also produces new borders within existing social relations. As the cook imagines Biju across the vast distance bridged by his letters, rather than exposing the shaky and uninformed foundations of the cook's hope, perhaps Desai might have seized the opportunity to imagine the 'fuel for action' that, for Appadurai at least, the collective imagination can be.

Implicit in my discussions, through this chapter, of communication flows and weightlessness is the positionality of both the novel and the reader within such global networks. As my discussion of Appadurai's 'scapes' informs my reading of Desai's portrayal of the collective imagination of India's subaltern subjects who dream of better lives, the novel also exists within global networks that inform bodies of knowledge about distant others through the nourishment of the reader's imagination. Indeed, as I discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, literature is one of the mediums of mass media by which knowledge of other lives is distributed, and through which communities of readers come to hold collective fantasies of those lives. The reader also exists within the notion of weightlessness discussed in this chapter, both in the freedom and privilege she experiences in contrast to the suffering depicted in the novel, and also in the weightlessness that she may or may not attach to that suffering which is packaged within the bound paperback consumed for pleasure. Indeed, Elleke Boehmer (1995) poses the condition of 'weightlessness' as being central to the

popularity of migrant literature in the West. This is so as Western readers are 'entertained' while 'morally absolved' through confrontation with 'neo-colonial devastation' (p. 239). In my Conclusion, I take up these questions surrounding distant suffering and empathy to consider how readers are positioned in relation to the novel as an object of consumption.

Conclusion

The Precariousness of Reading

In my readings of Mistry, Adiga and Desai's novels I have examined modes of governmentality whereby social inequities and marginalities become structural and normalised within both local and global networks and communities. The enduring problem running through my readings is the question of the novels' entanglement in discourses and language integral to global power structures and histories of colonialism.

Stephen Legg writes of the bias in Foucault's work, which casts non-European histories within the 'historicist logic of the colonial core' (2007, p. 268). He suggests that the task of undoing this process 'is not just a task of re-writing history, but of pursuing discourses, and disciplines, that though complicit with colonial states in the past, preserve the potential to mobilise counter-discourses of modernity' (p. 268). My discussions through the previous three chapters have shown the ambivalence of these novels in that, while they risk a complicity in the hegemony described by Legg, they also open up for discussion counter-hegemonic positions as they describe and critique aspects of the intolerable and the unjust that are symptomatic of the legacies of Western modernity in which they are complicit.

For Said and the Subaltern Studies scholars, the imperial imagination functions as a mechanism to contain the Oriental or subaltern Other through the construction of a disciplining knowledge. To conclude my thesis I draw on the work of Boltanski and of Butler to discuss ways in which the imagination can also rupture this Orientalist containment to operate for readers as a productive tool, mobilising the counter-discourses referred to by Legg and opening up possibilities for political engagement and transformation.

Distant Suffering and Humanising the Other

In *Distant Suffering* Boltanski argues that the novel is a powerful tool by which to bring the suffering of distant others into proximity with those more fortunate, a

step he suggests is necessary to engender sympathy for and commitment to those who suffer (1999, p. 5). For Boltanski, the novel is a medium that can bring about a coordination of imaginations, or the community of sympathetic observers/readers that he claims is required to stimulate action for change. This echoes Appadurai's argument that the stimulation of the imagination through information flows can be a catalyst for action and political change. For Boltanski, 'suffering and wretched bodies must be conveyed in such a way as to affect the sensibility of those more fortunate' (p. 11). A coordination is then required between the emotional reactions of distinct spectators³², and between the 'modes of emotional concern and commitment' necessary to bring about action to alleviate the suffering (p. 49). In order for this coordination to be carried out Boltanski suggests that the imagination plays an essential role:

How can we imagine distinct persons being able to converge through reliance on their imagination? Imaginative capabilities are not produced fully fledged as a result of some kind of spontaneous generation. Imagination, as we say, must be *nourished* (pp. 49–50).

Bringing to mind Prakash's 'impossible thought' figure of the subaltern subject, Boltanski borrows from Adrian Piper (1991), for whom the ability to imagine what is impossible, rather than only what has been directly experienced, is necessary to generate pity in relation to the suffering of another person. Novels are one form of expression in which this nourishment of the imagination takes place, describing the 'internal states of other people to which we can have no direct access' (Boltanski 1999, p. 51).

Boltanski's argument complicates Huggan's notion of the postcolonial exotic, where 'sympathetic identification masks the inequality of the power relations' without which the discourse of exoticism could not function (2001, p. 14). For Boltanski, in the productive generation of sympathy, spectators do not identify with the distant sufferer or imagine themselves in the same situation, but rather represent to themselves the 'sentiments and sensations' of the

³² Boltanski borrows the figure of the spectator from Adam Smith, the innovator of the 'internalised spectator' (Boltanski 1999, p. 35).

sufferer (1999, p. 38). 'Beings and events which nourish the imagination' are 'set at a distance from the spectator', and can then be 're-employed to draw out the meaning and consequences of actual circumstances' (p. 52). This description of the functioning of the imagination is, on many levels, a demonstration of Orientalism, as what is imagined is then explicitly transferred to an understanding of reality for the reader. However, I suggest that the crucial point to take from Boltanski is that to enable the transformative potential of reader sympathies, readers must recognise the distance between themselves and the objects of their sympathy, reading in ways that allow for the recognition of difference without its fetishisation and that guard against tendencies to familiarise and homogenise Others.

Through the chapters of this thesis I have shown ways in which various lives come to be devalued within structures of global modernity, with precarious lives rendered invisible to those who are valued within capitalist regimes of economic growth and progress. Like Boltanski, Butler argues that it is only through the apprehension of the precariousness of other lives that we will be moved to count those lives as valuable; that apprehension must be engendered through an attempt at representation (2004, p. 150). In *Precarious Life* she writes of the impossibility of representation of the Other, but also the necessity of conveying that very difference which is at the core of the 'disjunction that makes representation impossible' (p. 144). Butler builds on Emmanuel Levinas' (1969) notion of the 'face', which she reads as representative of the anguished cry or non-verbalised expression of suffering of the Other; the Other's externality by which 'we' are addressed, and which demands recognition. The face signifies the ethical demand made on one by the Other, even while that demand may not be clear or immediately translatable (2004, p. 131). She writes:

To respond to the face, to understand its meaning, means to be awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself. This cannot be an awakesness, to use his word, to my own life, and then an extrapolation from an understanding of my own precariousness to an understanding of another's precarious life. It has to be an understanding of the precariousness of the Other (p. 134).

While both representation of and identification with the Other are impossible, recognition of that Other, in all its difference, is vital; to create a public sensitised to distant suffering, but also to facilitate a project of critique of the mechanisms of representation and cultural translation by which that Other makes demands upon us (p. 151).

For Butler the notion of the face does not refer exclusively to an actual face but to the 'scene of agonised vocalisation', or the bodily expression of agony and suffering (p. 133). She writes of Levinas' description of the 'face' as the 'human back, the craning of the neck, the raising of the shoulder blades like "springs"', so that these bodily parts are said to cry and to sob and to scream, as if they were a face or, rather, a face with a mouth' (p. 133). This agonised face of the Other serves to arrest the observer, summoning her to a relationship of responsibility.

In Chapter One I discussed Mistry's portrayal of bodies and physicality, with the reader's attention drawn to Ishvar's disfigured left cheek and Om's frail spine as an expression of their political vulnerability. The mutilated and fragile bodies of the begging poor with which the reader is repeatedly confronted further signify political fragility and abandonment. While this representation of physical fragility must fail to 'capture and deliver that to which it refers', simultaneously risking an element of voyeurism, in Butler's terms it is potentially productive as it attunes the reader to distant suffering through the connectivity of pain (p. 144).

For Butler the need to humanise the Other is entangled with the risk of the failure of representation. While for the Subaltern Studies group, representation of the Other is impossible, for Butler, representation must show its failure in order to convey the human:

Something altogether different happens, however, when the face operates in the service of a personification that claims to "capture" the human being in question. For Levinas, the human cannot be captured through the

representation, and we can see that some loss of the human takes place when it is “captured” by the image (pp. 144–145).

To return to Desai’s representation of the cook discussed in the previous chapter, as she ‘captures’ his thoughts, invading his psyche and casting him in a language and imagery familiar to the Westernised reader, there is no space for recognition of the impossibility of representation of the actual subaltern subject, no acknowledgement of the slipperiness of representation itself. As Butler points out, this constitutes a ‘loss of the human’ as the Other becomes merely a projection of the author’s and consumer’s desires, and thus fails to achieve the humanisation important to the novel as a political tool. In *The White Tiger*, on the other hand, Adiga more self-consciously portrays Balram as desiring Western modernity in ways that conform to reader expectations. The irony with which he depicts those desires, and his overstated ‘anti-exotic’ crass-ness, perhaps more consciously opens up a space for readers to question the validity of his representations of subalternity, as well as their own desires for an essentialised and exoticised Other.

Both Boltanski’s and Butler’s arguments highlight the ambivalence of the text as a mediator between ‘others’, as power and knowledge are inescapable products of sympathetic identification and political action. In the next section I discuss ways in which affective responses risk being co-opted by a market-driven ethos constitutive of the power relations between privileged and marginalised, while simultaneously opening up space for the humanisation of distant others and increased awareness of the reader’s complicity within structures of marginalisation. I take the spectacle of ‘Oprah’s Book Club’ to explore the tension described by Butler between possibilities for humanisation of the Other and the risk of the failure of such.

Reading the Precarious Other

In this Conclusion I have suggested that the power dynamics encompassing the postcolonial novel are tied up in the emotional and affective responses of readers. While the informative aspects of novels construct knowledge of distant others, the harnessing of the reader’s imagination and capacity for identification

generates an affective dimension to this knowledge. The reader takes on a position in relation to the represented object (the subject of the novel), whether it is one of sympathy, guilt, grief, judgement or disavowal. These affective responses place the reader in a position of power over their object (the distant Other represented in the novel), both as that object is unable to reciprocate knowledge of, and affect towards, the reader (Huggan 2001, pp. 13–14), and as he/she becomes fixed within the knowledge constructed through the imaginative capacities of the reader (Said 1978).

As the novels simultaneously construct knowledge of distant others and work on the affective capacities of readers, they perhaps condition readers to respond in certain ways in relation to those others. Such a response is a self-conscious aim for Adiga, as he claims the importance of the suffering of the people being written about by authors such as him, highlighting ‘the brutal injustices of society’ (Jeffries 2008, para. 5). The positive outcomes of such knowledge could involve the recognition of the implication or imprint of the distant Other in aspects of one’s daily life, such as the poorly paid piecework labourer involved in the construction of the clothes we wear, to which our attention is drawn in *A Fine Balance*; or the layers of exploitation surrounding the call centre to which we find ourselves connected when we seek technical support for our mobile phones, as depicted in *The White Tiger*; or the individuals, like those seen in *The Inheritance of Loss*, who may have laboured for little return for the dinner we enjoy out while holidaying in New York City. This recognition of the Other could potentially motivate changed consumer choices or modes of behaviour towards that Other, or could merely engender a sense of unease and guilt in the consumer whose actions remain unchanged.

Emotional responses of readers and the ensuing possibilities for political actions, however, risk becoming caught up within the individualising neoliberal agendas of the market economy within which the novels circulate (as discussed by Huggan (2001)). This aspect of the consumption of literature equating to cultural capital is epitomised in the phenomenon of Winfrey’s highly marketed and successful book club, in which *A Fine Balance* was included in 2001. Here,

the affective capacities of Winfrey's predominantly middle class, white, female audience are clearly drawn into a market economy, as literature and its consumption is explicitly marketed as both a way of accumulating knowledge of the racial and cultural Other, and as a site for emotional catharsis through feelings of empathy. This possibility is suggested by Winfrey's view that 'reading is a means of therapy', and her request to the prospective guests for the televised book club discussions to "tell us what you learned about yourself' by reading the novel' (Davis 2004, p. 401). 'The response narratives of the winners are', as Davis writes, 'personal testimonials, detailing how their identification with the characters led them to confront their own repressed feelings' (p. 401). Here the experience of identification and recognition of, in Winfrey's words (speaking of *A Fine Balance*), 'a whole other world out there' (Harpo, 2014), is co-opted by an individualising capitalism that captures difference and marginality and re-centres the discussions framing them onto the dominant middle class subject. The reader's appearance on the show demonstrates a middle class worldliness where recognition of the Other becomes a marker of cultural attainment in which one has competencies, demonstrated in a heightened capacity for empathy, illustrative of virtue and morality. The recognition of the Other thus becomes focused on the amelioration of the self through the display of self-reflective capacities and morality. Furthermore a neoliberal ethos of competition is introduced to the affective responses to the novels by rewarding the 'winners' – those with the most compelling personal narratives – through participation in the televised forum. This is in keeping with Anderson's view that (neoliberal) 'competition becomes both the transcendent measure for all of life (a norm) and a means of organising inter-personal affective relations around winning and losing' (2012, p. 39).

Comments made by Winfrey and her readers capture the tension between ways of reading that risk appropriating the distant Other, as described above, and those that open up space for political transformation through readers' recognition of their own complicity within the power relations surrounding the texts. This tension is outlined in Davis's discussion of the reception of fiction written by black American female writers. Davis focuses on the empathetic

responses of the book club's largely white female audience to the black women represented in many of Winfrey's chosen texts. There is an obvious gender misalignment here as the subjects of my chosen novels are male. The representation of marginality and race addressed by Davis is nevertheless significant for my discussion, particularly given that Winfrey's choice to include *A Fine Balance* suggests that she saw it as fitting with the themes common to these novels.

Davis's description of the responses of Winfrey's participants highlights compassion as the mode by which constructed knowledge of the distant Other appeals to the imagination of the middle class reader. Evident in these responses, however, is that while familiarisation of the novel's subject is perhaps a necessary component of the author's strategy for generating feelings of empathy and compassion, this strategy simultaneously risks diverting the focus of readers from the actual suffering and its causes and onto themselves. For Davis, it is the capacity for critical engagement that the reader brings to the text that counters this risk.

Davis outlines the risks inherent to the experience of empathy of reproducing power relations. These include the risk that the empathy of the white reader constitutes a form of colonial appropriation, eliding racial and cultural difference through imaginary identification. Such forms of identification potentially reflect more absorption in the reader's own suffering than that of the racial Other, suggested in Elizabeth Spelman's 'complaint about forms of sympathy wherein 'I acknowledge your suffering only to the extent to which it promises to bring attention to my own'' (1997, p. 172, quoted in Davis, p. 407). Sympathy thereby risks becoming 'self-congratulatory' and 'self-indulgent', with feeling virtuous becoming an end in itself (p. 403). Davis here quotes Spelman, who argues that 'compassion, like other forms of caring, may . . . reinforce the very patterns of economic and political subordination responsible for such suffering' (1997, p. 7, quoted in Davis, p. 400). This highlights the theme running through this thesis of the reader's complicity within the power relations that facilitate the novel's production and consumption, further suggesting that

affective responses are generated by, and so as to sustain, the market mechanisms surrounding that production.

Davis goes on to argue that, despite the individualising and appropriating risks of empathy, the personal realm of affect is intertwined with the public sphere of political praxis (p. 402). For Davis, in accordance with both Boltanski and Butler, 'empathetic experiences of seeing from the vantage point of another can lead to a recognition of that person's subjecthood and agency', leading the empathiser to become critically aware of racial and cultural hierarchies, and to 'desire to work against the structures of inequality wherein her own power resides' (p. 405). Here Davis uses examples of participants in Winfrey's book club who have demonstrated a critical awareness, gained through an encounter with a novel, of both the suffering of the racial Other, and their own distance from that suffering and complicity within the legacies of racism and inequality in which it is enmeshed. For Davis, the crucial element to transforming the reader's engagement with the novel from inhabiting merely the personal realm of affect to becoming politically engaged with the possibility of precipitating social change, is the capacity for, and commitment to, critical reflection:

These texts produce more radical reading effects when empathetic connections are accompanied by critical reflection, when thought and feeling combine to result in a critique of racism and a deeper respect for cultural difference (p. 414).

Indeed, I would hope that my reader would leave this thesis with an increased awareness of the necessity for critical reflection surrounding the ways we read the postcolonial novel, and the relationships between the representations that we consume and the conditions of that consumption. The novels I have discussed illustrate dynamics and conditions of power within global modernity, which play a significant part in establishing and perpetuating the inequities and injustices brought to light within the novels. A heightened awareness of the power of the novel to bring Otherness into a relationship of recognition, affording such processes the significance they merit, need be

accompanied by a wariness of that representation, and its troubled forms of reciprocity.

Throughout this thesis I have described the shifting and contingent nature of power relations, offering a critique of regimes of governmentality whereby structures of privilege and marginality are sustained and strengthened. The need to entrench such modalities is constitutive of the vulnerability to the Other described by Butler, where vulnerability follows from 'our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure' (2004, p. 20). Our relations of power over others are shifting and vulnerable in themselves, as the vulnerability of the Other exposes the precariousness of our own positionality, as middle class readers, within networks of power and global modernity. Perhaps, I suggest, this could be a frame for reading these novels: to engage in the ongoing challenge of negotiating the recognition of vulnerability as a shared condition of living within global modernity alongside a vigilant attention to our own privilege and lack of knowledge. As middle class Sai realises at the end of *The Inheritance of Loss*:

Never again could she think there was but one narrative and that this narrative belonged only to herself, that she might create her own tiny happiness and live safely within it (TIOL, p. 323).

Reference List

- Adiga, A 2008, *The White Tiger*, Atlantic Books, London.
- Agamben, G 2005, *State of Exception*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Agamben, G 1998, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. D Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Anderson, B 2012, 'Affect and biopower: towards a politics of life', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 28–43.
- Anderson, B 1983, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London.
- Andrabi, J 2009, 'Beggar mafia thrives on lost children', *The National*, 18 January, viewed 28 February 2014, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/south-asia/beggar-mafia-thrives-on-lost-children>
- Appadurai, A 1996, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Arendt, H 1990, *On Revolution*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth.
- Bandarage, A 1997, *Women, Population and Global Crisis: A Political-Economic Analysis*, Zed Books, London and New Jersey.
- Banerjee-Guha, S 1995, 'Urban development process in Bombay: Planning for whom?', in S Patel & A Thorner (eds.), *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Baragona, S 2010, 'US Farmers Depend on Illegal Immigrants: Undocumented workers do the jobs Americans don't want', *Voice of America*, 11 August, viewed 18 June 2012, <http://www.voanews.com/content/us-farmers-depend-on-illegal-immigrants-100541644/162082.html>
- Bauman, Z 1998, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Bauman, Z 2004, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Biao, X 2007, *Global "Body Shopping": An Indian Labour System in the Information Technology Industry*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Boehmer, E 1995, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Boltanski, L 1999, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Bosniak, L 2006, *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Brown, W 2006, 'American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-Democratization', *Political Theory*, vol. 34, no. 6, pp. 690–714.
- Butler, J 2004, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, Verso, London.
- Chakravartty, P 2008, 'Labor In or As Civil Society? Workers and Subaltern Publics in India's Information Society', in P Chakravartty & Y Zhao (ed.), *Global Communications: Toward a Transcultural Political Economy*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, INC, Lanham.
- Chatterjee, P 2004, *The Politics of the Governed*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Chopra, R 2003, 'Neoliberalism as Doxa: Bourdieu's Theory of the State and the Contemporary Indian Discourse on Globalization and Liberalization', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3–4, pp. 419–444.
- Cherneva, I 2011. 'Human Trafficking for Begging', *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review*, vol. 17, pp. 25–73.
- Chowdhury, A 2007, 'The Colony as Exception (Or, Why Do I Have to Kill You More than Once?)', *Borderlands e-journal*, vol. 6, no. 3.
- Connelly, M 2008, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Davis, KC 2004, 'Oprah's Book Club and the politics of cross-racial empathy', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 399–419.
- Davis, M 2004, 'Planet of Slums', *New Left Review*, vol. 26, March–April.
- De Genova, N 2002, 'Migrant "Illegality" and Deportability in Everyday Life', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol 31, pp. 419–447.
- De Genova, N 2004, 'The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant "Illegality"', *Latino Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 160–185.
- De Genova, N 2009, 'Conflicts of mobility, and the mobility of conflict: Rightlessness, presence, subjectivity, freedom', *Subjectivity*, vol. 29, pp. 445–466.
- De Genova, N 2010, 'The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement', *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement*, Duke University Press, Durham & London.
- Dean, M 2010, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, Sage, London.
- Desai, K 2006, *The Inheritance of Loss*. Penguin, London.

- Diken, B & Laustsen, CB 2005, *The Culture of Exception: Sociology Facing the Camp*, Routledge, Oxon.
- Dirlik, A 2003, 'Global Modernity?: Modernity in an Age of Global Capitalism', *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 6, no.3, pp. 275–292.
- Doherty, B 2011, 'Get sterilised and you might win a car', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 July, viewed 10 March 2014, <http://smh.drive.com.au/get-sterilised-and-you-might-win-a-car-20110708-1h71y.html>
- Dyson, P 2012, 'Slum Tourism: Representing and Interpreting 'Reality' in Dharavi, Mumbai', *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 254–274.
- Eisenstadt, S 2000, 'Multiple Modernities', *Daedalus*, vol. 129, no. 1, pp.1–29.
- Ezard, J 2006, 'First-timer beats the odds to take Booker prize that eluded her mother', *The Guardian*, 11 October, viewed 13 June 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/oct/11/books.bookerprize2006>
- Fernandes, L 2004, 'The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India', *Urban Studies* vol. 41, no. 12, pp. 2415–2430.
- Foucault, M 1972, *Power Knowledge*, Pantheon Books, New York.
- Foucault, M 1976, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, Penguin, London.
- Foucault, M 1982, 'The subject and power', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 777–795.
- Foucault, M 1997, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the College de France 1975–1976*, Picador, New York.
- Frenkel, R 2008, 'The politics of loss: Post-colonial pathos and current Booker Prize-nominated texts from India and South Africa', *Scrutiny2*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 77–88.
- Gandhi, L 1998, *Postcolonial Theory: A critical introduction*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards.
- Ganguly, R 2005, 'Poverty, malgovernance and ethnopolitical mobilization: Gorkha nationalism and the Gorkhaland agitation in India', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 11, pp. 467–502.
- Gee, M 2010, 'Anita and Kiran Desai in Conversation: Writing Across the Generations', *Wasafiri*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 30–37.
- Giddens, A 1971, *Capitalism and modern social theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Giorgi, G & Pinkus, K 2006, 'Zones of Exception: Biopolitical Territories in the Neoliberal Era', *Diacritics* vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 99–108.
- Gopal, P 2009, *The Indian English Novel: Nation, History, and Narration*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Guardian Book Club with John Mullan* 2009, audio podcast, The Guardian, 20 November, accessed 17 June 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/audio/2009/nov/20/book-club-podcast-kiran-desai>
- Guha, R 2007, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York.
- Guha, S 1996, 'The Unwanted Pregnancy in Colonial Bengal', *Indian Economic Social History Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 403–435.
- Gupta, D 2000, *Interrogating Caste: Understanding hierarchy & difference in Indian society*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi.
- Gwatkin, D 1979, 'Political Will and Family Planning: The Implications of India's Emergency Experience', *Population and Development Review*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 29–59.
- Halpern, S 2007, 'At the Gandhi Café', *The New York Review of Books*, February 15, pp. 18–20.
- Harpo Productions 2014, 'Oprah's Book Club', *Oprah.com*, viewed 4 March 2014, <http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/A-Fine-Balance-Discussion-Highlights>
- Harvey, D 1990, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts and Oxford.
- Hindess, B 2009, 'Citizenship for all', in P Nyers (ed.), *Securitizations of Citizenship*, Routledge, New York.
- Hodges, S 2008, *Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce: Birth Control in South India, 1920–1940*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire.
- Huggan, G 2001, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*, Routledge, London.
- Jay, P 2010, *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*, Cornell University Press, New York.
- Jayasuriya, M 2009, "'The Shadow Class': Immigration and Class in Contemporary South Asian/American Fiction', *Journeys*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 69–81.
- Jeffries, S 2008, 'Roars of Anger', *The Guardian*, 16 October, viewed 4 February 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/oct/16/booker-prize>

- Kumar, S 1999. 'Health-care camps for the poor provide mass sterilisation quota', *The Lancet*, vol. 353, pp. 1251.
- Lakha, S 1999, 'The state, globalisation and Indian middle-class identity', in M Pinches (ed.), *Culture and Privilege in Capitalist Asia*, Routledge, London and New York.
- Legg, S 2005, 'Foucault's Population Geographies: Classifications, Biopolitics and Governmental Spaces', *Population, Space and Place*, vol. 11, pp. 137–156.
- Legg, S 2007, 'Beyond the European Province: Foucault and Postcolonialism', in JW Crampton & S Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, England.
- Lemke, T n.d, *Biopolitics and beyond. On the reception of a vital Foucauldian notion*, viewed 25 March 2014, http://www.biopolitica.cl/ingles/docs/Biopolitics_and_beyond.pdf
- Levinas, E 1969, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. A Lingis, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh.
- Malone, A 2009, *Mail Online*, 24 January, viewed 10 March, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1127056/The-real-Slumdog-Millionaires-Behind-cinema-fantasy-mafia-gangs-deliberately-crippling-children-profit.html>
- Manna, M 1998, 'Approach towards birth control: Indian women in the early twentieth century', *Indian Economic Social History Review*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 35–51.
- Masterson, J 2010, 'Travel and/as Travail: Diasporic Dislocations in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 45, pp. 409–427.
- McNevin, A 2009, 'Political belonging in a Neoliberal era: The struggle of the *Sans-Papiers*', in P Nyers (ed.) *Securitizations of Citizenship*, Routledge, New York.
- McNevin, A 2011, *Contesting Citizenship: Irregular Migrants and New Frontiers of the Political*, Colombia University Press, New York.
- McNevin, A 2012, 'Undocumented citizens? Shifting grounds of citizenship in Los Angeles' in P Nyers & K Rygiel (eds.), *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement*, Routledge, New York.
- Mendes, AC 2010, 'Showcasing India Unshining: Film Tourism in Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*', *Third Text*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 471–479.
- Mistry, R 1995, *A Fine Balance*, Faber and Faber, London.
- Morey, P 2004, *Rohinton Mistry*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

- Mudambi, A 2013, 'Another Look at Orientalism: (An)Othering in *Slumdog Millionaire*', *Howard Journal of Communications*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 275–292.
- Mukherjee, D 2008, 'Laws For Beggars, Justice for Whom: A Critical Review of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959', *The International Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 279–288.
- Nair, J 2005, *The Promise of the Metropolis: Bangalore's Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Nyers, P (ed.) 2009, *Securitizations of Citizenship*, Routledge, New York.
- Ong, A 2006, *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*, Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- Piper, A 1991, 'Impartiality, Compassion, and Modal Imagination', *Ethics*, vol. 101, pp. 726–57.
- Portes, A, Guarnizo, LE & Landolt, P 1999, 'The study of transnationalism: pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 217–237.
- Prakash, G 1994, 'Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 99, no. 5, pp. 1475–1490.
- Prakash, G 2010, *Mumbai Fables*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Probyn-Rapsey, F 2007, 'Complicity, Critique, and Methodology', *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, vol. 38, no. 2–3, pp. 65–82.
- Rao, A 2007, 'Kiran Desai Talk Asia Interview', *Cable News Network*, 24 April, viewed 13 June 2013, <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/asiapcf/04/23/talkasia.desai/>
- Rao, M 2004, *From Population Control to Reproductive Health: Malthusian Arithmetic*, Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi.
- Roy, S 2009, 'The White Tiger: The Beggar's Booker', *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 57–67.
- Said, E 1978, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books Ltd, London.
- Sawhney, H 2006, 'In the Wide World', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 22 September, pp. 22.
- Sawicki, J 1991, *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, Power, and the Body*, Routledge, New York.

- Shakuntala, B 2010, 'Seduced 'outsiders' versus sceptical 'insiders'? *Slumdog Millionaire* through its re/viewers', *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 1–24.
- Sherlock, T 2012, 'From Mitchard to Dickens, Oprah's club spurred sales', *The Vancouver Sun*, November 28th, viewed 3 March 2014, <http://www.vancouversun.com/health/From+Mitchard+Dickens+Oprah+club+spurred+sales/7620220/story.html>
- Shome, R 2006, 'Thinking through the diaspora: Call centers, India, and a new politics of hybridity', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 105–124.
- Sorensen, EP 2008, 'Excess and Design in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*', *Novel*, vol. 41, no. 2–3, pp. 342–362.
- Slumdog Millionaire* 2008, motion picture, Celador Films, UK, Produced by Christian Colson; directed by Danny Boyle.
- Spelman, EV 1997, *Fruits of Sorrow: Framing Our Attention to Suffering*, Beacon Press, Boston.
- Spielman, DW 2009, "'Solid Knowledge" and Contradictions in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, vol. 51, no. 1, pp. 74–89.
- Spivak, G 1988, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in C Nelson and L Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago.
- Spivak, G 1990, S. Harasym (ed.) *The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, Routledge, New York.
- Tarlo, E 2003, *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Taylor, PJ 2003, 'The State as Container: Territoriality in the Modern World-System', in N Brenner, B Jessop, M Jones, & G MacLeod (eds.), *State/Space: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Malden.
- Tokaryk, T 2005, 'Keynes, Storytelling, and Realism: Literary and Economic Discourse in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*', *Studies in Canadian Literature*, vol. 30, no. 2.
- Vertovec, S 1999, 'Conceiving and researching transnationalism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 447–462.