

# Nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation: the geographies of a lively commodity

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This paper maps into geographies of 'lively commodities', commodities whose value derives from their status as living beings. In an era where life itself has become a locus of capitalist accumulation, picking apart the category of 'liveliness' underpinning commodification has important analytical and geographical stakes. To this end, by tracking historical geographies of commodifying lions in political economies of ecotourism in India, this paper shows how more-than-human labour and lively potentials affect commodification and influence accumulation, not simply through recalcitrance, but as active participants within political economic organization. The paper advances and develops a triad of relational concepts – nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation – through which the political economic potency of lively commodities might be articulated and grasped. It concludes by discussing the analytical potential of this approach and its future purchase for rethinking commodity geographies.

**Key words** labour; value; commodity; more-than-human geography; political economy; animals

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## Lively commodities

This paper is concerned with the geographies of 'lively commodities': counters of circulation, exchange and consumption whose 'value derives from their *status as living beings*' (Collard & Dempsey, 2013; p.2684). If contemporary capitalism is marked by the onset of an economic era in which 'life itself' has become a locus of accumulation (Haraway, 2008), then picking apart the category of 'liveliness' underpinning commodification has important analytical and geographical stakes. The paper focuses on Asiatic lions: a creature with varied histories of extirpation and commodification that provides a compelling entry point for tracking specific moments in which liveliness appears and is rendered for sale. Regal emblem and desired trophy, tourism spectacle and conservation icon, lions enact a swath of more-than-human energies that recast understandings of commodity biographies

and geographical lives. Mutable mobiles generating dynamic effects, they complicate political economies of accumulation and the violences attending them.

Assaying the commodification of nature, and the nature of commodification, is nothing new in geography. Whilst academic tendencies shift and calibrate, it remains one of the discipline's most enduring of concerns (Castree, 2003). Over a decade ago, geographers Gavin Bridge and Adrian Smith pertinently remarked that commodities had made a 'striking resurgence' after the cultural turn, 'relieved of their traditional role as the 'dead world' of economic cargoes' (Bridge & Smith, 2003; p.258). Four currents characterized this resurgence. Firstly, recognizing *the social and material lives of things*, that commodities have biographies, whose meanings emerge out of polyvalent, mutable social contexts (Dwyer & Jackson, 2003 ; Cook, 2004). Secondly, attending to the *geographical circulation of commodities*:

how ‘moments’ of commodity production, exchange and consumption are spatialized, mapping myriad functions they perform as ‘things in motion’ (Bakker & Bridge, 2006). A third intervention involved ‘*commodity surfaces*’: points of encounter between people and things, either to unveil hidden geographies of exploitation masked by commodity fetishism, or to assay social settings and spatial itineraries established through their use (Bridge & Smith, 2003 ; Leslie & Reimer, 2003). Finally, recognizing the simultaneous ‘*economic*’ and ‘*cultural*’ dimensions of encountering and consuming commodities, which provided ‘valuable correctives to uncritically partial and overly economic perspectives of the past’ (Bridge & Smith, 2003; p.263).

A critical, but neglected aspect of Bridge and Smith’s argument was that much more investment was needed in ‘recovering a role for the nonhuman’ by ‘suspending received notions that things are objects (products of dead labor) in order to consider how they might instead be subjects (active participants)’ within political economic organization (Bridge & Smith, 2003; p.258). Heralded by Whatmore’s (2002; p.118) prescient intervention, that ‘lively currents in this inter-corporeal commotion amount to more than simply a ‘traffic in things’ set in motion by exclusively human subjects’, initial moves in this regard sought to map ‘interactive’ commodities: embodied relations with animal bodies in contexts of neoliberal ecotourism (Duffy, 2014); ‘sentient’ commodities: commodities aware of their surroundings, corporeal sensations and relations with others (Wilkie, 2005); and in a relevant, but not political economic vein, ‘charismatics’: properties of organisms that impel particular constituencies to take an interest in them (Lorimer, 2007).

Picking up on these leads, a more recent body of work on ‘lively commodities’, takes nonhumans’ fabrication of political economic activity as a central concern (Collard, 2013b ; Collard & Dempsey, 2013 ; Barua, 2016). A key axis of these new commodity geographies is that ‘vital or generative qualities’ of commodities are

fundamental to valorization, qualities that ‘can produce capitalist value as long as *they remain alive and/or promises future life*’ (Collard & Dempsey, 2013; p.2684). Specific interventions examine *what* characteristics of life, the qualities of the lively materials being commodified, matter in the production of the commodity (Collard & Dempsey, 2013), and assay how nonhuman potentials have differential bearings on commodity surfaces (Barua, 2016), the socio-spatial pathways of their use (Colombino & Giaccaria, 2016). Conversely, other strands focus on how commodification alters the nature of the being that becomes the commodity (Collard, 2013a), illustrating ways in which living organisms’ dual ‘wild’ and ‘commodity’ lives are produced through distinct technological assemblages and spatial ecologies (Collard, 2013b). Drawing inspiration from Haraway’s heterodox readings of the labour theory of value (Haraway, 2008), this work moves toward positing more-than-human diagnostics for understanding commodification (Collard & Dempsey, 2013), circulation (Colombino & Giaccaria, 2016), and the production of surplus value (Barua, 2016).

This paper is a contribution to this nascent body of work. Focusing on lions as lively, encounterable commodities within political economies of ecotourism in India, its objectives are threefold. Firstly, the paper disentangles specific sites and histories of the emergence and production of value-generating life. Scholarship has focused on the quiddity of lively commodities, moving toward ‘achieving greater precision about the category ‘life’ (Collard & Dempsey, 2013; p.2695), to develop appreciations of ‘diverse animal ethologies and bodies ... lumped under the appellative ‘lively commodity’ and subsumed by the term ‘encounter’ (Barua, 2016; p.727). Questions on *where* and *when* – historical geographies marking the capture of living labour (Chakrabarty, 2007) – have received relatively less attention. The second thrust of the paper is to map into geographical *lives* of animal

commodities, examining their bodily labours and lived experiences under commodification. Its impetus is to extend work on lively commodity biographies (Collard, 2013b), by unveiling value relations in ethological and phenomenological terms, thereby getting at Haraway's provocative question: 'how can animal labor ... become ... vital, value-making practice' (Potts & Haraway, 2010; p.322)? Thirdly, the paper turns to the mobilization of commodities as 'lively capital'. It scrutinizes how corporeal, ecological and political dimensions of liveliness enable or constrain animal commodity flows, and the bearings they have on processes of valorization. These strands are brought together to develop a triad of relational analytics – nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation – that advance understandings of nonhumans as active participants in political economic processes and organization.

The sections that follow first track histories of lion extirpation and conservation to examine antecedents enabling capital's capture of lions' living labours. It then attends to practices of commodifying lion encounters in postcolonial India, before turning to the heterogeneous geographies of circulation of lions as lively capital. The paper then summarizes the critical import and potential of concepts developed, before concluding with the wider contributions it makes to understanding lively forces within political economy.

### **Trophy life: charismatics, histories, territorializations**

Asiatic lions' encounters with British sportsmen and Indian princely elites in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were disastrous. Once widespread across northern and central India, hunting had reduced the animal to a single population in the forests of Gir in Kathiawar, Gujarat by the 1880s (Rice,

1884). By then, the pomp of colonialism had gained ascendancy, with hunting regularized, hedged with codes and rules, and rationalized as a means of asserting Britons' manliness and fitness to rule over 'natives'. Lions were desirable game in the eyes of hunters partly because of their ecological and aesthetic charismas (Lorimer, 2007). 'Reputed to afford better sport than the tiger' on grounds of their 'more open and certain' attack, and inhabiting a country 'less favourable for retreat' (Mundy, 1832; p.330), lions were prime quarry for colonial cults of meeting dangerous beasts on foot. The ethologies of the creature *afforded* an embodied assertion of masculinity. Furthermore, casting ethologies in aesthetic terms – 'the noble nature of the jungle king' (Mundy, 1832; p.330) – rendered them worthy of pursuit, enabling colonial notions of 'chivalry' and 'character' to be performed. Lions' charismas heightened their value as game, contributing to escalating trophy hunting that ultimately extirpated the creature from most parts of India.

Efforts to protect lions emerged against the backdrop of this persecution. The sixth Nawab of Junagadh, Mahbatkhan II, in whose jurisdiction the last lions survived, initiated a series of territorializations – the ordering of bodies in assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) – that formed crucial antecedents to later capitalist logics of commodifying the animal. The first pertained to protection, enacted through legislations enclosing lions' bodies and rendering them property of the state. The second mode involved fencing forests and regulating lions' mobilities. Its logics rested on seizing lions' ethologies and reorganizing them such that they worked for the purpose of a territory. Territorializations, as antecedents to the production of lively commodities, however, were not posited by capitalist relations. (Post)colonial histories of accumulation played out through difference, involving a multitude of human-lion encounters and capture of living labour, that only later became part of capital's self-reproduction

(Chakrabarty, 2007). It is these other genealogies and historical geographies of territorialization, fabricating particular modes of lion-human cohabitation, which this section spells out.

Enclosure of lions' bodies was initiated in the form of '*diktat*' that prevented indiscriminate hunting and ensured Junagadh's ownership of lions. In 1880, the Nawab issued a notification banning all *shikar* and trapping of animals within its territory. Controls over game hunting were a space where otherwise curtailed Indian princes could exercise power in colonial India. A subsequent nawab, Rasulkhan, even set new *shikar* rules in 1896, involving heavy fines for offenders (Divyabhanusinh, 2006). However, as commentators noted, 'at no time had the preservation of lions been very strictly carried out. The Darbar was always liberal in giving both local officers and others permission to shoot one' (Fenton, 1924; p.7). Although not commodities, lions were lively gifts Junagadh harnessed to generate political purchase and reciprocal favours. Dignitaries, including Viceroys and Governors of Bombay, were 'offered' animals during their visits, occasions when state resources were marshaled to the fullest extent.

To ensure a successful shoot lions, particularly males with prominent manes, were habituated months in advance through live buffalo baits. Baiting localized lion movements and 'anchored' quarry to a particular site (Divyabhanusinh, 2005). In other instances, *pagis* (expert trackers) would 'follow [a lion] about all night preventing it from either eating or killing' (Kincaid, 2008 [1935]; p.70). The exhausted felid would be driven past awaiting dignitaries the next morning, enabling shots from their *machans*. As lion hunts were a matter of prestige, failure to bag an animal was a source of embarrassment for the hosts. In certain instances, the Nawab even offered additional animals if dignitaries only managed to shoot a lioness (Kincaid, 2008 [1935]).

Gift-exchange relations and concomitant practices of hunting configured lions' lifeworlds or *umwelts* (von Uexküll, 1957), a life of lions I term *trophy life*. Lively readings of archival accounts enables contemplating what trophy life might have meant for lions. Major-General William Rice, hunting Gir lions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, describes how, after sending a shell into a baited animal's flank, it 'instantly, with a terrific roar ... bounded forward full stretch, and clearing quite thirty yards in three long bounds'. The lion 'rolled over under a small bush, when a choking "gurgle-gurgle" noise in his throat, very pleasant to hear, told me it was all right' (Rice, 1884; p.137) (Figure 1). On another occasion, having shot and skinned a lion, Rice recounts how the lioness was 'heard quite close moaning all night in a sorrowful manner ... at times changed for a low angry roar'. Remaining there all night, 'at daybreak she went off back to the forest roaring at every five minutes' space'. This did not deter Rice from tracking the lioness: 'she was soon found and shot' (Rice, 1884; p.141). Ethologists studying lions in the context of trophy hunting have shown how behaviours undergo major changes, particularly in terms of social interactions and movements (Davidson et al., 2011). Individuals adjust ranging patterns to negotiate threats, both spatially and temporally. The Gir lions had indeed sensed they were being persecuted and began to avoid humans. Sportsmen observed that 'from being so constantly hunted, lions have left the open plains almost, and betaken themselves chiefly to forests' (Rice, 1884; p.142). The creature became one that 'travels at night leaving his resting-place about sunset', '[avoiding] man more than the tiger or panther' (Watson, 1884; p.101).

Enclosure of lions' bodies was paralleled by spatial territorializations regulating their mobilities. By 1908-1909, large tracts of Gir had come under the control of a newly-established Forest Department, of which a portion was reserved as a sanctuary for lions (Divyabhanusinh, 2006). The Nawab

in fact claimed ownership over all lions, no matter in whose territory they were living. Junagadh's monopoly over lions met with disapproval from neighbouring princely states. With requests for shoots being frequently declined, animals were enticed out of the Junagadh jurisdiction through 'a succession of tie-ups' or baits (Cadell, 1935; p.165). Repeated instances of lured lions being shot in adjoining territory led to appeals to the British Administration. The Nawab threatened inter-state relations, and even destroying the forest itself. The imperial government did not oblige. Various princes continued to hunt outside Junagadh, with at least eighty-nine incidents reported between 1920 and 1943 (Divyabhanusinh, 2006).

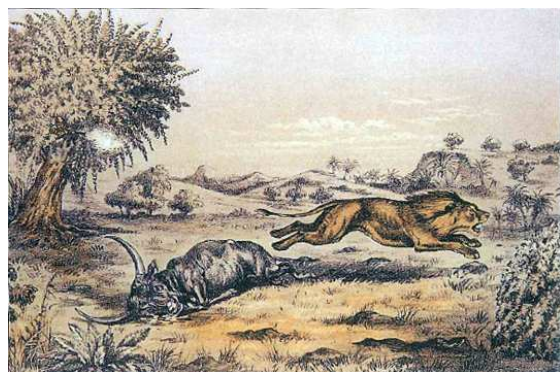
Territorializations, although durable in their life-spans, were highly uneven and generated asymmetric effects. The unevenness of territorializations forging lions' trophy lives is evidenced by events commencing in 1899 when Kathiawar witnessed a period of prolonged drought. Lieutenant O'Brien, political officer stationed in the region, observed that almost all game in the forest had died off. 'Lions at the time of writing were living on the edge of the Gir and preying solely on cattle with occasional human victims'. Contrary to their otherwise evasive nature, lions had established a 'reign of terror', killing people and becoming 'so bold that in April they had torn the roof off a hut in a village to get at the goats inside' (Wynter-Blyth & Dharmakumarsinh, 1951a; p.468). Fenton, who observed Gir lions before the famine, noted that 'during my long residence in Kathiawar I have never heard of a man-eating lion, but was told that before my arrival one was shot' (Fenton, 1924; p.30). In 1901, thirty-one people had been killed and eight mauled. Although numbers were absent for 1902 and 1903, it was 'unlikely that there was any decrease in deaths from this cause'. People were killed and mauled again in 1904, and 'the lions were once more described as becoming 'very bold'' (Wynter-Blyth & Dharmakumarsinh, 1951a; p.468). Despite

the force of territorializations, lions thus retained certain difference, an immanent potential to deterritorialize regulations.

Lions' boldness was partly fueled by state protection afforded to them, but it came at the expense of the rural poor cohabiting with the felids. People complained to the Junagadh Durbar, demanding compensation and requesting the state to 'stock their forests with goats to attract *their* beasts back to it' (Wynter-Blyth & Dharmakumarsinh, 1951a; p.467). No compensation was granted or considered. In reply Junagadh suggested villagers protect themselves and their cattle using deterrent measures. Lion conservation thus proceeded through fraught historical geographies, with costs of living with lions differentially borne by the disenfranchised. However, in years following the drought, 'habits of lions underwent a profound change, for never again are they heard of as a menace to human life' (Wynter-Blyth & Dharmakumarsinh, 1951a; p.469). Observations scattered in the archives reflect this changed behaviour. Sir Patrick Cadell, Diwan of Junagadh recounts how, in one instance, a family of lions even 'allowed the inmates of a car to get out and take cinema photographs of them without any uneasiness' (Cadell, 1935; p.164). The 'reign of terror' – lions' deterritorialization of the ordering assemblage – had receded. Territorializations were once again composed, albeit through new acts of rhythm and ecological relations. Cattle and buffalo numbers had gone up, the felids no longer driven by hunger to attack people. Although hunted, lion populations in Gir continued to rise till the late 1930s.

In summary, this unraveling of the trophy life of lions renders visible specific antecedents that enabled later commodification. The spectacular animal commodity, lying at the heart of later consumptive encounters, did not appear from nowhere as though it were 'dancing of its own free will' (Marx, 1976; p.164). Rather, territorializations of lions' bodies and their concomitant spatialities laid the ground for the emergence, growth and later

capture of value-generating life. Trophy life underwent further changes with practices commodifying lion encounters in post-colonial India, to which I will now turn to explicate the capture of life by capital, and differences liveness makes to the generation of value.



**Figure 1: Trophy life.** A baited lion fleeing after William Rice fired at it. Lions at the time avoided humans and had purportedly become night-time hunters (Source: Rice, 1884; © Public domain).

### Commodity life: labour, time, value

India's transition to independence in the late 1940s witnessed political turmoil in Junagadh. Then Nawab Mahbatkhan III opted to join Pakistan, and his princely state was ultimately annexed by India. Lion conservation had taken a backseat; concerns over their persistence were raised. However, through a turn of events, the new government continued measures to protect the animal.<sup>1</sup> In 1955, Gir was declared a Game Sanctuary, and the subsequent decade witnessed a rise in tourism. Baiting was no longer practiced to lure animals for the hunt, but to attract visitors and enable consumptive encounters. It was within this milieu that the lion emerged as a lively *commodity*.

Lions' ethologies began to change as a consequence of their *commodity life*, the *umwelten* creatures inhabit during their

course and trajectory as a living commodity where they are rendered encounterable or made available for intimate but controlled meetings (Collard, 2013b). When prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Gir in 1956, a 'lion show' was organized so that he could encounter these spectacular creatures. Lions were predominantly night-time hunters at the time (Wynter-Blyth & Dharmakumarsinh, 1951b). 'It was not possible to sight these handsome creatures' without 'using blinds or machans'. Even then, 'lions were suspicious of any unfamiliar sound or smell' (Dharmakumarsinh, 1982; p.332). A photograph of Nehru during his visit shows him dressed in a drab overcoat provided by the Forest Department as lions were 'not used to crowds or colourful clothing' (Divyabhanusinh, 2005; p.172) (Figure 2a).

By the 1960s, lion shows were institutionalized and turned into a spectacle by the Forest Department. At the heart of this move was to commodify encounters with felids, to render experiences of viewing them in the open into consumptive products (Barua, 2016). Commodified encounters were forged by speeding up intimate contact and altering lions' temporal rhythms such that sightings were guaranteed. RD Baldania, Sanctuary Superintendent at Gir during this period, provides a detailed account of such practice. In the early morning, *shikaris* (sanctuary foresters) would scout for lions. Once located, tourists and staff would arrive with a small bull buffalo, locally called *pada*, and a goat. The latter was not bait, 'but its bleating would attract the lions' from 'their hiding place' (Baldania, 1966; p.67). When absent, *shikaris* would even mimic the sounds of goats to draw felids' attention. The buffalo, on the other hand, would be tethered to a small tree or bush. Prior to the 'lion show' at 5.00 or 6.00 pm ... the kill if necessary [was] given to the pride' (Baldania, 1966; p.68). Visitors would then be taken to the spot, and even allowed to approach the kill on foot to observe or photograph the animal from close quarters (Figure 2b).

Central to the logic of commodification was the process of generating what some have termed 'encounter value' (Haraway, 2008 ; Barua, 2016), the value produced in regimes of capital where the commodity is a living, breathing thing. A relational achievement, 'fabricated through world-making entanglements of heterogeneous organisms, technologies and bodies' (Barua, 2015; p.269), encounter value helps grasp how liveliness configures political economies from the outset. In contrast to the notion of use value, realized in use or consumption by a human subject (Marx, 1976), encounter value derives from meanings of both human and nonhuman participants to produce definite value in lively capital, be the latter 'undead but always generative' commodities, or as familial co-consumers and co-workers (Haraway, 2008; p.62). Thus, encounter value is *a process* of value-generation, where bodies, ethologies and liveliness of an animal *makes a difference to, and is constitutive of*, those historical and material relations that render or transact it as a commodity (Barua, 2016). The generation of encounter value was vital for capital's capture of liveliness, capture that proceeded through habituating and anchoring lions. Valorization through commodified encounters was a process of *working with* lions, albeit in a highly asymmetric fashion. Human territorializations gave grip and durability to encounters, whilst the felids retained certain difference and, as I shall show later, exhibited capabilities to exceed that grip.

How lions might have apprehended such uneven encounters is indexed by archival material. Paul Joslin, who studied Gir lions' behavioural ecology in the late 1960s, observed that animals 'in 'lion shows' when offered buffalo, rose and walked towards it within a minute or two after captive prey was left unattended'. They would approach to 'within 20-30m before breaking into a trot' and 'if buffalo attempted to flee, this precipitated a rush' (Joslin, 1973; p.212-213). At first, lions were apparently unable to associate motor vehicles with humans,

but with time they became aware of the latter. People dressed in black clothing were often scrutinized, 'thinking it to be the goat or *Pada*'. Lions gradually stopped paying much attention to cars, pulling down prey 'at close quarters, consuming it forthwith in full view of the excited visitors' (Baldania, 1966; p.82). Stalking prey was thus a meaningful act for the lions, *value-forming for the creatures* in that they bore significance because of relations fostered by lions' own activities.

The latter were vital to composing an economic collective around encounters, although composition was over a field of differential power relations with varying capacities to act. Corporeal and performative aspects of lions' predatory ethologies configured the animals as charismatic and desirable in the eyes of tourists, thereby adding to the spectacle and concomitant practices of selling encounters in the open. Capacities to hunt varied with individual animals' abilities: only experienced lions pounced on bait from the front and that too when buffalo were small, immobilizing and killing them by attacking the neck. Larger prey, on the other hand, 'was brought down before killing' (Joslin, 1973; p.214). However, spectacular encounters often took grip through careful orchestration of lions' movements. At times, lions' 'first few steps were sometimes slow or 'frozen' in various positions' (Joslin, 1973; p.212). *Shikaris* would then hasten attacks by making the buffalo's posterior face the lions. On other occasions this would even extend to walking behind the felids and forcing them to stand, which almost always prompted animals to attack the bait.

A multitude of living labour thus constituted the political economy of ecotourism in Gir: the generation of encounter value hinged on skills and knowledges cutting across porous bodies and human-nonhuman divides (Barua, 2016). If the wage labour of *shikaris* and trackers were part of the economic collective, so was the *nonhuman labour* of lions that went into generating



commodified encounters. Labour, in conventional Marxist political economy, is couched within humanist frameworks. Three logics render it 'an exclusively human characteristic' (Marx, 1976; p.178). Firstly, humans 'distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they produce their means of subsistence' (Marx & Engels, 1976; p.37). Animals collect, whilst humans labour to produce through 'planned action directed toward preconceived ends' (Engels, 1974; p.178). A second presupposition entails conception in advance of realization in practice, articulated by Marx in his well-known distinction between labours of the architect and bee in *Capital*. 'What distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees,' Marx argued, 'is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax' (Marx, 1976). Thirdly, Marxist political economy is prepared to animals as raw material and instruments of production but not labour on grounds that animals lack will and hence cannot enter into social relations of production (Marx, 1973).

The tenuousness of these distinctions, highlighted by Haraway and Ingold in their continuous engagements with animal labour (Haraway, 2008 ; Ingold, 2000 ; Ingold, 1988 ; Potts & Haraway, 2010), and Porcher with animal work (Porcher, 2015), becomes evident through lions' activities. Political economic analyses positing production as an exclusive human activity conceived with prior intent, tends to conflate *production* with the act of *making*. However, as lively commodities, lions, or for that matter any other animal, are not made. Rather than bestowing form upon an inert nature, production was about *setting up and dictating conditions of growth* within which lions took on their particular forms and behavioural dispositions (Ingold, 2000). Labour, as a process of growth, implies that both humans and animals submit to a productive dynamic immanent in the world, not one of converting animals into instruments with a humanist teleology. Herein lays a point of greater significance: if humans and animals mutually constitute

one another's worlds, then human production can no longer be conceived of as transformation by inhabiting a social world of their own above and external to the world of animals. Both are fellow participants in the *same* world (Porcher, 2015), whose forms emerge within the context of their mutual involvement in a single, continuous field of relationships (Haraway, 2008). Animals' working activities, as Ingold states, 'constitute labour itself rather than its instruments, and are therefore bound by social relations of production' (Ingold, 1988; p.88).

Nonhuman labour might then be understood as the productive activity of animals, performed *intransitively* through a range of carnal and ethological registers, and enacted in the presence of others whose own performances have bearings on the skill agent's activity, be it human or animal. As thick descriptions of lions hunting bait suggest, nonhuman labour is characterized by intentionality and functionality being *immanent* in the labour process. Lions' labours were indeed vital for spectacular encounters in the open, but they had their own intrinsic intentionality apart from designs that the animals were supposed to implement from the outset. Furthermore, labour itself was *porous*, enacted with more-than-lion company and within a wider political ecology: pinpointed by the diverse ways in which *Shikaris* prompted lions and channeled their tasks to choreograph encounters. Porosity of nonhuman labour implies that 'animals and people become available to each other' (Haraway, 2008; p.208). As much as lions laboured under conditions set up by people, they too had bearings on the choreography of encounters within historically and geographically specific conditions of capitalist accumulation.

Choreographing consumptive encounters had specific material and economic effects: there was a significant rise in tourist numbers and concomitant revenue. The state and federal government began publicity campaigns, and developed tourism infrastructure to attract 'valuable



currency' (Berwick, 1976; p.30). The durability and likelihood of a spectacular encounter was a vital catalyst: unlike tiger tourism 'the lion-show [was] 99% definite and no visitor goes disappointed' (Baldania, 1966; p.69). Joslin estimated that 172, 217 and 252 baits were offered in the tourist seasons of 1965-66, 1966-67 and 1967-1968 respectively. Thousands of visitors began to flock to Gir as a result, tourist numbers doubling in a span of five years (Joslin, 1970).

Two further features of nonhuman labour become evident here. The first pertains to the *emergence* of form, an emergence not predicated by some preconceived idea imposed upon a substrate, but 'emergent ways of fleshy becoming' that involve active, sensuous engagements of practitioner and material in an unfolding field of forces (Haraway, 2008; p.54), or 'body work' where labour is *incorporated*, grown into the performing body (Wacquant, 1995). Value-added encounters indeed altered lions' *umwelts*. By the late 1960s hunting behaviour took new directions. The animal had become a 'daytime hunter instead of the nocturnal predator of wildlife of earlier times' (Berwick, 1976; p.31). Lions 'changed their habits,' resting 'under any odd bit of shade, oblivious of whether they were screened from observation or otherwise'. They began to favour lying on roads, learning that if vehicles were ignored, 'approaching tourist cars would' ultimately 'turn round and go off in the other direction' (Baldania, 1966; p.83). But vital to note was the fact that commodity life was not uniform, nor did trophy life entirely wither away. Individual lions that had been hunted in the past behaved very differently from those participating in lion shows, extremely wary and capable of moving fast (Dharmakumarsinh, 1998).

The other dimension concerns temporalities of nonhuman labour, which are not sidereal and extrinsic to social relations (cf. Marx, 1976), but immanent to the labouring activities themselves, emerging from dynamic movement and

growth. This is evident in lions' activities of bringing down bait, for as much as the parameters of labour were set up by people, the labouring encounter was equally contingent on the animals' circadian rhythms, their ways of becoming 'available to events' (Haraway, 2008; p.207). Temporalities of nonhuman labour, however, were not bound and cut off from capital's demands and the conditions of growth it posited. In fact, generating encounter value through lion shows *introduced space-time compressions in the animals' ethologies*, particularly of those individuals that lived a commodity life. By the late 1960s, baits attracted at one time or another twenty percent of the total lion population. Densities of lions around Sasan where lion shows were held was significantly higher than elsewhere in the sanctuary (Joslin, 1970). Furthermore, these animals had shifted from wild prey to buffalo, the latter comprising seventy-five percent of their diet by then (Berwick, 1976). Although baiting was eventually discontinued in the late 1980s, the effects of the process continued to be felt. Hunting of wild ungulates increased, but cattle depredation continued to be higher in the western part of the sanctuary where baiting had been practiced. Furthermore, social interactions between resident female prides and male coalitions had become weak (Chellam, 1993), potentially as a result of preying on livestock where males were able to hunt and ambush ungulates without support from females.

That lions retained a particular difference, a form of 'wild life' despite processes of commodification (Collard, 2013b), is evidenced by events at the end of the 1980s. Gir once again witnessed a bout of lion attacks on cattle and people, mirroring the 'reign of terror' during the drought of 1901-1904 (Rangarajan, 2013). This too was a period of drought, and 'villagers reported an aggressiveness in lions' not witnessed before. It took the form of 'jumping compound walls to get at livestock' and 'premeditated attacks on humans ... with intentions of feeding on the

body' (Saberwal et al., 1990; p.18-21). The situation eased out again after the drought, but the events suggest that liveliness is not entirely subsumed by capital. Lions may lead a commodity life, but their potential to deterritorialize capital's capture of their living labour remains immanent in their quotidian rhythms.

In summary, this rendition of commodity life highlights some of the continuities and discontinuities at work in the generation of value from 'life'. Historical territorializations set the stage for a capitalist accumulation, but territorializations were not simply a case of dictating spaces and temporalities of consumptive experiences from without. Manipulation of lions' ethologies and bodies, their changing *umwelts* and altered labours to produce value-added encounters under commodity life, evidence that accumulation became an immanent dynamic of human-lion relations, a dynamic unfolding through uneven and differential topologies of capture. To further dissect the geographies of lively commodities, I will now attend to the politics of spectacular accumulation which dictate their contemporary circulation and consumption through space and time.



**Figure 2: Commodity life. (a) Prime Minister Nehru dressed in a drab coat as lions were not accustomed to people at the time (© Reproduced with the permission of the copyright holders from "The Story of Asia's Lions" by**

**Divyabhanusinh, Mumbai, Marg Publications, 2005);**



**(b) A lion show in the late 1960s, illustrating how commodification had altered the Gir lions' ethologies (© Paul Joslin; reproduced with permission).**

### **Spectacular life: lively capital, circulation, accumulation**

Processes of valorization through the lively commodity were to undergo further change with the advent new ecotourism imperatives in the 1990s. Erstwhile commodification of localized encounters was now expanded by setting lions in motion as *lively capital*, constituting regimes of *spectacular accumulation* that forged new geographies of encounters and spatial itineraries of consumption. Circulation and valorization through lively capital had uneven, dynamic and dispersed effects. It is these modes of circulation and value in motion, the material renditions and political conditions of liveliness enabling or constraining the flow of animal mobiles, which I will track here.

Expansion of Gujarat's tourism industry was at the heart of deploying lions as lively capital, a process of valorization marked by two important features. First, branding lions as unique denizens of the state, and second, constituting a form of accumulation even more reliant on the spectacular. 'Spectacular accumulation', following Debord, may be understood as a *process* revolving centrally around the dynamics of 'spectacles' – relations between nature and society mediated by images and discourse –

which become currencies of encounter and exchange to generate surplus, both as commodities and a means of selling other commodities (Debord, 1983 [1967]). Being the only home to wild Asiatic lions, besides specific histories and expertise in orchestrating encounters with charismatic felids, gave Gujarat a 'distinctive edge to its tourism' (Anon., 2008; no page). Private companies and public sectors harnessed this uniqueness to the fullest extent. A '*Khooshboo Gurajat Ki*<sup>2</sup> tourism campaign was initiated with lions at its heart, labeled '*Gujarat ki asmita*' or 'The Pride of Gujarat'. Bollywood celebrities were made brand ambassadors to both accentuate and endorse a spectacular mode of safari tourism. Gujarat's tourism logo was even changed to that of a lion rendering consumptive tourism synonymous with the felid.

What set this phase of spectacular accumulation apart from erstwhile valorization through encounters in the open was a shift from lived ecologies to the *appearance* of things. The specular was amplified or, as Debord puts it, in societies of the spectacle, 'what appears is good; what is good appears' (Debord, 1983 [1967]; p.9-10). Marketing campaigns carefully channeled charismatic affordances such that the lively commodity appeared even more spectacular and alluring. Websites of private ecotourism operators, forest and tourism departments, were replete with images of the creature, typically presenting animals with well-formed manes, staring directly at the viewer to orchestrate a face-to-face encounter. This was lively capital in the form of accumulated images: encounters were multiplied and had far greater velocity, consequently forging new zones of consumption.

Furthermore, an emphasis on the specular elevated and reiterated aspects of lions 'not actually real' but that which 'presents itself to the world and is superior to it' (Debord, 1983 [1967]; p.15-16). Images of African animals were often projected, as their manes are more

prominent than the Asiatic subspecies. Renditions of lions' aesthetic charismas were thus fetishistic, comprising a bricolage of distant bodies and ecologies to stage 'intense and desirable encounters' (Barua, 2016; p.736). Contrary to erstwhile, localized spectacles, elements separated in space and time were recombined here through subtle micropolitical arrangements. The success of this campaign was indexed by a record increase in visitors to Gir. International tourists rose by 139%, followed by substantial hikes in tourism revenues (Smitha, 2012).

Spectacular accumulation, although speeding-up and forging new contact zones for consumptive encounters, had its own territorializations. Lions were linked to Gujarati identity, playing out in the backdrop of an assertive regional nationalism that had begun to gain traction in the state (Rangarajan, 2013). In the 1990s, conservationists concerned with lions' potential extinction due to their confinement to a single population, mooted a plan to translocate a few animals to the Kuno-Palpur sanctuary in the adjoining state of Madhya Pradesh. 'The establishment of a second population in the wild' had become 'an urgent necessity' (Chellam & Johnsingh, 1993; p.409), given the scare of potential viral outbreaks that could decimate the entire population. The Gujarat government vehemently opposed the move, on grounds that fears of an epidemic were mere 'speculation' (Anon., 2010). Then Chief Minister Narendra Modi even personally chaired meetings of the Gujarat State Board of Wildlife to ensure lions were not shared with Madhya Pradesh 'under any circumstances' (Anon., 2012; no page). Couched behind such rhetoric of uniqueness was the fear of a 'tourism threat': moving lions would 'divert influx of a considerable number of lion-watcher tourists to Madhya Pradesh at Gujarat's expense' (Chandra, 2007; no page). A senior forest department official even refuted the plan's long-standing history and ecological rationale, stating it was 'a coup of sorts' for Madhya Pradesh would then

promote encounters with ‘panthers, tigers and lions – all at one place’ (Smitha, 2013; no page), a menagerie of charismatic felids unparalleled elsewhere in India.

These apparent concerns point to the immense traction spectacular animal commodities generate as lively capital. Encounters with the commodity within Gir enabled value to be produced through life, but as lively *capital* – value in motion – lions had the prospective to open up possibilities for further valorization. Lively capital, as Haraway pertinently remarks, has a ‘promissory’ character replete with ‘frontier orientations’ (Haraway, 2008; p.377). Lions were thus a force for expansion, bringing with them potential for producing surplus elsewhere, not just within the confines of Gir. The promissory nature of this capital, its economic potential to come, is further evidenced by a controversy that arose when Madhya Pradesh began to display lions on its tourism website. An image of ‘a lioness staring into the lens with a stately gaze’ was deployed by Madhya Pradesh for ‘selling Kuno’ as a site for viewing felids. Accompanying text stated ‘Kuno has been selected as an alternate home for the endangered Asiatic lion, which is now confined to the Gir National Park ... of Gujarat’ (Kaushik, 2012; no page). Officials in Gujarat, not willing to share their lions, responded by alleging the relocation plan ‘had a clear commercial angle’ – attracting more tourists to a sanctuary with an already vibrant ecotourism market (Kaushik, 2012; no page). Spectacular accumulation, by setting lively capital in motion, indeed elevated the exchange value of lions. The latter began to have greater purchase in this phase: concerns over the creature’s long-term survival were disavowed, rendered subservient to more acute market logics fostering expansion through consumptive encounters.

Circulation as lively capital was by no means even: material and political conditions enabled or constrained its movement and flow. Virtual, disembodied renditions had velocity, whilst lions’ bodies and encounters in the open were far more

viscous (Barua, 2016). Furthermore, the promissory character of lively capital generated a ‘universe of *speculation*’ (Debord, 1983 [1967]; p.11), with distributed and uneven effects in other places. The potential of receiving spectacular felids resulted in a three-fold increase in real estate prices around Kuno, just days after the Supreme Court of India gave a ruling in favour of lion translocation. Corporate interest in tourism was invigorated by anticipated encounters charismatic lions would generate. Coercive acts enabling lively capital to proliferate were indeed masked by this emphasis on the spectacular, of ‘what appears is good’ (Debord, 1983 [1967]; p.9-10). The Madhya Pradesh government resettled villages located in Kuno to create inviolate space for lions, and to minimize conflict in the form of cattle depredation and attacks on people. Mobilized by the promise of fertile land, at other times even threats, over sixteen hundred families in twenty-four villages were relocated to pave way for lions, moved from ‘resource-rich but extremely remote forests to ... a drought-prone and highly degraded landscape’ (Kabra, 2007; p.60).

Speculative movement of lively capital, in the form of animal mobiles, fostered dispossession. Compensation for relocation was plagued by bureaucratic delays, particularly for forest-dwelling communities such as the *Sahariya*, who did not hold official land records. Rise in land prices around Kuno, escalating after the promise of receiving spectacular commodities, potentially further compounded the poor’s ability to buy better land. There was significant rise in wage-labour, with many people migrating to other parts of the country in search of work. ‘The largely self-sufficient forest-based livelihoods of the *Sahariya*’ thus gave ‘way to precarious, mainly wage-based, food insecure and vulnerable livelihoods’ (Kabra, 2007; p.60). The discontent and misery generated by spectacular accumulation is best summarized by the words of a displaced villager: ‘*Our forefathers stayed with tigers and other wildlife in the same*

*Kuno sanctuary. Now, for a few lions, we are being driven out of our homes'* (Kaushik, 2013; no page).

### **Nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation**

The above sections have mapped into historical geographies of a lively commodity, tracking conditions of its emergence, subsequent capture of living labour and resultant dynamic, if asymmetric, effects generated through its circulation. They emphasize the importance of specific trajectories and historical difference through which life emerges as a locus of capitalist accumulation. Although cast as three distinct modes of life, the historical geographical trajectories highlight continuities that are at work: each phase persists and relates to the other, albeit with uneven intensities and durations. The paper has tracked these trajectories in a register where *the lions' histories themselves are rendered visible* and their sentient ethologies *matter* to political economic composition. Thus, it takes up Bridge and Smith's call for recovering a role for the nonhuman as active participants in the organization of economic activity (Bridge & Smith, 2003), by developing and deploying a triad of relational concepts – nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation – emerging through world-making entanglements of a multitude of organisms and able bodies.

This penultimate section maps the analytical purchase of this triad for understanding processual-ecological dimensions of liveliness, how they configure political economies rendering life for sale. Whilst each concept – nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation – fundamentally need one another, they are parsed for heuristic purposes to tap into their critical potential and wider import. After highlighting differences and overlaps between each diagnostic, it brings them together to spell out how they operate in

the different phases of accumulation narrated above.

### ***Nonhuman labour***

Lions' labours, what Haraway provocatively terms 'the labour of paws', were integral to the composition of political economies of ecotourism. Nonhuman labour, as developed herein and in the wider, if disparate, literature (Ingold, 1988 ; Haraway, 2008 ; Porcher, 2015), is the productive activity of animals, performed *intransitively* through corporeal and ethological registers, and enacted in the presence of other skilled agents whose own performances have bearings on the labouring creature's activity. Close attention to lions' sensuous activities whilst participating in the tourism spectacle in Gir points to four features of nonhuman labour. Firstly, intentionality and functionality are *immanent* in the labour process, not the implementation of prior design upon an external nature.

The second dimension follows from this: form, or products of labour, *emerges* through practical activity akin to a process of growth or ontogenesis. Production then is not the activity of making but about a process of setting up conditions of growth within which beings taken on their particular forms or dispositions. Herein lays two points of greater significance: absolute distinctions between productive and reproductive labour become tenuous, as do the work of hands and paws. The narrowness of what counts as labour and production in classical Marxian political economic analysis is challenged, opening up scope for processes of bodily incorporation and reproduction to gain political economic validity.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, nonhuman labour is *porous* for it is not the attribute of individuals closed in upon themselves but an activity enmeshed in heterogeneous entanglements. Going back to the thick descriptions of lions' labours in Gir, it is evident that competencies and capacities, specific to the labouring context, are not intrinsic to the felids but derived from porous associations

with able-bodied *shikaris* whose own relations with the creatures were vital to staging and orchestrating spectacular encounters. Porosity implies a poly-directionality of labour: as much as humans set up conditions for animals to work, the latter too have bearings upon human economic activity and its organization.

Fourthly, *temporalities* of nonhuman labour emerge from the labouring activities themselves, rather than being dictated by sidereal and chronological divisions of the working day into work and leisure (cf. Marx, 1976). They are contingent upon 'sensuous multi-temporal' rhythms of nonhuman participants (Barua, 2016; p.735), but the porosity of labour implies that their meter and speed may be accelerated or compressed when humans alter conditions of growth or modalities through which animals become available to events. This relational understanding of the temporalities of labour chimes with political ecological analyses positing capitalist productions of nature to be an outcome of techno-scientific practices, economic demands and an organism's on biological rhythms (Boyd & Watts, 1997). Scholarship on the production of industrial chicken posits a strong contrast to the empirics generated in this paper (Boyd, 2001), for capital's manipulation of biological rhythms is far more acute in such sites and processes. Nonetheless the difference is of degree rather than kind.

Nonhuman labour has wider ontological import, for it spells out differential productive capacities of nature itself, both within and outside the ambit of capitalist accumulation. It opens up possibilities for thinking about nature not simply as 'raw material' filtered through past human labour, but as a varied and heterogeneous force that has other histories and geographies whose antecedents are not necessarily posited by capital. The production of use values for others is not a qualifier of nonhuman labour, and in this sense, the concept differs from certain positions on animal 'work' (Porcher, 2015). Furthermore, nonhuman labour can have its

own genealogies of production that capital presupposes but does not itself produce. As the above sections make evident, attending to these genealogies has the potential to render visible in historical geographical terms, ecological and material lives of living commodities themselves, thereby opening up the scope to story capitalist production in ways other than standard narratives of expropriating global nature in new rounds of primitive accumulation and capitalist measure. At stake here are different geographies of capture and exploitation of invisible labour that emerges through promiscuous relations and trans-species encounters.

### ***Encounter Value***

The political economy of ecotourism in Gir suggests nonhuman labour is a vital, value-making practice. However, to resist reducing the latter to a humanist straightjacket, the analyst here needs to consider a tripartite structure: encounter value in addition to the couplet of use and exchange (Haraway, 2008 ; Barua, 2016). If value is a name for relationships (cf. Marx, 1976), then those relations have to be opened up to an entourage of more-than-human companions and kin. Encounter value, as suggested by Haraway (2008; p.46) and developed herein, is a 'trans-species relation', where encounters are constituted by '*subjects* of different biological species'. It is a process of value-generation where lively potentials and nonhuman labours of an organism constitute and make a difference to those very historical material relations that render or transact it as a commodity (Barua, 2016).

Encounter value is derived from meanings of both human and nonhuman participants. The orchestration of lion shows in Gir suggest that commodified encounters took grip partly because they were value-forming for the animals as well, value not along a humanist axis of calibration, but in registers where a thing has significance for a creature by virtue of it being drawn into relations fostered by its

own activities and perceptive *umwelts* (von Uexküll, 1982). It is in this vein one begins to see the difference between encounter and use value. The latter is always indexed by human measure, what a thing affords to a human subject (Marx, 1976). Encounter value on the other hand accounts for the ethological, phenomenological and corporeal potentials of nonhuman participants that can make meaning of the relation, as well as pose opportunities and constraints. Similarly, whilst exchange value is a quantitative relation involving transactions of a commodity embodying human labour, encounter value shifts the emphasis to *trans-actions* between human and nonhuman labour enmeshed in the commodity and forming part of a porous exchange (Barua, 2016). It is however important to bear in mind that encounters do not take place over even terrain: asymmetries and uneven power relations are constantly at work in how participants come together in composition, made evident by lion-human entanglements in Gir.

The wider critical potential of encounter value is that it provides an analytic into understanding how natures come to matter in capitalist commodification. As the above sections have shown, mapping into encounters opens up pathways for attending to the material practices and ecological relations through which capital harnesses value from living nonhuman bodies. The corporeal push of a felid, its charismatic ethologies, differentially enables or hinders generation of surplus value. Encounter value gives a vital impetus to the long-standing geographical craft of dissecting working logics of capitalist commodification and how they 'might operate rather *differently* depending on which particular natures are being commodified' (Castree, 2003; p.275).

### ***Spectacular accumulation***

Spectacular accumulation is a process of valorization involving 'spectacles': a mediation of nature-society relations through fantastic images that monopolize

production and intensify banal consumption. The spectacle becomes a 'visual reflection of the ruling economic order'; affirming particular appearances that materially invade living labour (Debord, 1983 [1967]; p.10), but also realign ecological worlds (Brockington et al., 2008). Most articulations of spectacular accumulation gravitate toward its representational tropes (Brockington et al., 2008), but this analysis emphasizes how the spectacle is contingent on particular lively affordances of the animals themselves. Ethological and corporeal potentials of lions contribute to the creature's allure, rendering encounters in the open spectacular. The latter would in fact have been very different if the lively commodity were a subterranean or aquatic creature, or if modes of engagement were haptic as in the case of commodified encounters with cuddly animals in captivity (Barua, 2016).

Spectacular accumulation is inherently contingent upon the generation of encounter value. However, there is an emphasis on *appearances*: visually and semiotically distilling nonhuman labours performed by animals to give rise to a specular economy of encounters often reinforced through branding, marketing campaigns and celebrity endorsement. Furthermore, the spectacle is *recombinant*, involving a bricolage of bodies and ecologies separated in space and time to render the commodity even more appealing. The usage of African lion images to promote ecotourism in Gujarat is a case in point. A third feature of the spectacle is *amplification*: careful micropolitical arrangements intensifying particular aesthetic affordances that give encounters fantastic charge and impetus. For instance, projections of forward-facing images of lions staring at the viewer are a familiar trope for selling commodities and fostering consumption. Spectacular accumulation thus proceeds through a *proliferation* of encounters: their repeated presentation, acceleration and circulation regenerate spectacles, giving encounters economic currency of their own.



In regimes of spectacular accumulation commodities function as *lively capital*. Commodities are set in motion to multiply encounters for further valorization and production of surplus value. As this paper has shown, spectacles elevate the exchange value of lively commodities, sometimes at the cost of the creatures' very survival. Furthermore, there are 'promissory' and 'speculative' dimensions to the circulation of lively capital. Expansion can occur through the promise of potential encounters, yet to come, with asymmetric effects furthering dispossession and displacement. Tracking the circulation of lively capital has important analytical purchase, for it enables understanding dispersed and dynamic effects animal mobiles can generate.

***The trinity: nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation***

The triad of nonhuman labour, encounter value and spectacular accumulation provide vital insights for understanding processual-ecological dimensions of liveliness and how they configure political economic formations. As this paper has striven to emphasize, these concepts have different propulsions and impetus, contingent on the historical geographical context in which they are advanced and operate. Under trophy life, encounters had uneven durations and meanings: lions may have been drawn to bait deployed to anchor them, but encounters with sportsmen were not desirable. Encounters thus had direct bearings upon lions' quotidian labours and experiences. The animal had begun to avoid human contact, taking to forests and hunting at night. Furthermore, lions were not commodified at this juncture, although particular antecedents in the form of territorializations set the stage for later production of surplus through life. This included ownership of lions' bodies by the Junagadh State, as well as enclosure of forests and efforts to control lions' mobilities.

Commodification of the encounter forged new geographies of human-lion relations. Baiting, now practiced to stage a tourism spectacle, altered how people and lions became available to events, sparking changes in lions' ethologies and circadian labours. Lions became daytime hunters instead of nocturnal predators of earlier times, followed by a concomitant space-time compression of their ethologies. But in no way was the commodified encounter or the felid body, central to production of surplus value, 'made' by capital from the outside. Neither were trajectories of capture of lions' nonhuman labours posited by capital as precedents (Chakrabarty, 2007). Rather, only later did they part of capital's self-reproduction. As archival material makes evident, the process was inherently uneven. Subsumption of nonhuman labour was incomplete and trophy life did not entirely wither away. Capacities to deterritorialize capitalist capture remained immanent to production. The key point here is that transition from trophy to commodity life was the product of specific historical and material geographies that could have taken other trajectories elsewhere. It indexes the important fact that nothing in nonhuman labour is automatically aligned to logics of capital: encounter value generated at a particular juncture retains the potential for being use values for other socio-ecological projects.

With spectacular accumulation, geographies of exchange and consumption took yet another turn. Whilst the spectacle was important, but not central, to the earlier phase, accumulation herein was about an intensification and amplification of lions' charismatic affordances. Spectacular accumulation rested on channeling lions' aesthetic charismas to render the lively commodity even more alluring. Changes induced in lions' quotidian labours partly enabled this spectacle to be composed, throwing into relief the question as to whether the same effects would have been possible in earlier modes of life where the animal was shy and secretive. Exchange value was elevated: lions' allure appearing

conformist and trans-historical, masking the living labours and hidden geographies of exploitation on which they were contingent. Expansion was at the heart of this mode of valorization, promissory in nature and replete with frontier orientations of generating consumption and producing surplus elsewhere, not just within Gir. Nonetheless material and political conditions had bearings upon spectacular accumulation. If virtual encounters had high velocity and gave rise to speculative investment, lions' labours and encounters in the open were far more 'viscous' (Barua, 2016), positing constraints on circulation and flow.

## Conclusion

This paper has mapped into geographies of lively commodities to disentangle specific modes, production and emergence of life that generates value, and has developed understandings of nonhumans as active participants in political economies rendering life for sale. Concepts developed in this paper advances literatures on lively commodities (Collard, 2013b ; Collard & Dempsey, 2013 ; Barua, 2016), and commodity geographies more widely (Bridge & Smith, 2003), in at least three directions. Firstly, assaying nonhuman labour enables telling commodity biographies differently, rendering visible ecological and material *lives* of commodities themselves. Enhancing extant work on 'wild' and 'commodity' lives of whole-bodied organisms (Collard, 2013b), nonhuman labour situates these lives in historical geographical terms, highlighting the fact that lively potentials are not constant or relegated to an ahistorical order of nature, but has different impulses, contingent on the juncture and mutable over time. Future work on lively commodities could well benefit from accounting for these other genealogies of production, within and outside the ambit of human activity. It would give a critical edge to exegeses of the capture of non-capitalist

life and how it crystallizes, differentially (Castree, 2003), in mobile political economic and ecological milieus.

The second direction in which contributions of this paper are evident pertain to rethinking 'commodity surfaces': the locus of encounter between people and things. Scholarship on lively commodities dissect what characteristics of life matter in commodity production, either as 'individualized, encounterable' or 'reproductive, aggregate' life (Collard & Dempsey, 2013; p.2684), and develop appreciations of diverse bodies and ethologies enabling or hindering spatio-temporal itineraries of their use (Barua, 2016). Attending to nonhuman labour enables 'examining the actual practices of extraction of value from workers' (Haraway, 2008; p.73). Specific processes and more-than-human relations through which life becomes a source of generating surplus are foregrounded. Practices of exploitation masked by, but not typically associated with, commodity fetishism, become evident, rendering commodity geographies more sensitive to questions on nature.

Thirdly, the concept of encounter value developed herein generates analytical purchase for grasping a lively commodity's 'sociopolitical palatability', contingent upon 'hierarchies of species' and how different forms of life are unevenly valued (Collard & Dempsey, 2013; p.2685). Alternate taxonomies of the nonhuman realm have been sketched by mapping organisms' nonhuman charismas, the ways in which they distinctly order strategies of biodiversity conservation (Lorimer, 2007). However, as commodity surfaces, animals' charismas can bestow consumptive experiences with a unanimous and trans-historical rationality. Encounter value provides understandings of nonhuman capacities in their historical and geographical specificity, which vary across space and place, and does not appeal to an essential human subject. It recasts understandings of commodity surfaces, whilst retaining some of the important correctives more-than-human approaches

provide for overly cultural or economic approaches of the past.

The wider scope and significance of this account of lively commodities is that it incorporates nonhuman potentials as constitutive of political economies from the outset (Braun, 2008), not just as externalities that somehow need to be accounted for or compensated through an economic calculus. World-making entanglements of heterogeneous organisms and bodies tracked here shifts debates on the simultaneously 'economic' and 'cultural' registers of interactions with commodities to ecologies as well (Bridge & Smith, 2003 ; Bakker & Bridge, 2006 ; Whatmore, 2002). This paper has focused on whole-bodied organisms, and is restricted to a particular political economic context: specifics will indeed vary if one were to look at other practices (Porcher, 2015), sites or commodities (Haraway, 2008). Nonetheless, the trio of relational concepts advanced here—nonhuman labour, encounter value, spectacular accumulation—provides vital insights into analyzing processual-ecological dimensions of commodification and accumulation. They herald new ways to explore the encounter between capital and nature, characterized by the relentless production, consumption and sale of lively commodities.

## Notes

1 For political histories of lion preservation at this juncture, see the seminal work of Divyabhanushin (2005, 2006) and Mahesh Rangarajan (2013).

2 'Aroma of Gujarat'

3 There are other tendencies in Marx, particularly in the *Grundrisse*, where he comes close to articulating this point. Labour, Marx states, is not simply an alienated commodity 'sold' by the worker and objectified in commodities, 'for the use value which [the worker] offers exists only as an ability, a capacity [*Vermögen*] of his bodily existence'.

Labour 'has no existence apart from that' (Marx, 1973; p.298).

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