

**Using J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* to Teach
and Learn about Gender and Racial
Violence in a South African Language
Classroom**

By

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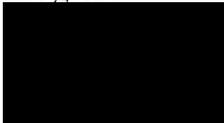
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Special Dedication

I dedicate this study to my mother, Mam' B. Nzimakwe. She always told me as a little girl that I was destined for great things. When things got hard, her words resonated in my ears like sweet poetry, reminding me of who I am and where I am going. Thank you mama! I pray you live long enough to see me in my red gown.

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Abstract

South Africa has taken strides towards a democratic education system, however, gender and racial violence attributed to past inequalities and racial segregation persists in schools. The education system has seemingly failed in protecting learners and preventing the prevalence of violence in schools. To eradicate such violence, traces of the past need to be explored in contemporary South Africa. This includes the exploration of the Bantu Education which governed and controlled the type of education black people had access to. A novel like *Disgrace* (Coetzee,1999) is perfect in exploring past and present South African language classrooms, while also ensuring that learners are equipped with the right skills to identify the violence both in schools and societies through the incorporation of critical race theory and critical pedagogy. Analysing *Disgrace* (1999) in language classrooms with the aim of identifying examples of gender and racial violence can ensure that learners are well equipped to protect themselves and those around them, while also learning valuable skills attainable from creative writing through class discussions.

Key Words: Apartheid, Bantu Education, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, Current Curriculum, Education System, Gender-based Violence, Inequality, Language Classrooms, Post-apartheid Education, Racial Violence, Racism, School Violence

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

This study is an analysis of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), focusing on examples of gender and racial violence present in the novel with the aim of exploring gender-based violence and racism in South African language classrooms. This literary text won Coetzee the Booker prize and was later awarded the Nobel prize in literature four years after its publication. Written in post-apartheid South Africa, Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) deals with gender inequality and racial segregation, and clearly portrays South Africa as a country that has not fully recovered from past injustices. In his novel, the marginalisation of women is marked by how the male characters triumph at the expense of women. Moreover, racism as one of the central themes explored in the book prevails, especially when rape is no longer categorised as crime, but as behaviour driven by racialized revenge.

While it may be noted that Coetzee demonstrates issues of gender-based violence and racism which are embedded in our history, and that the same issues are still prevalent in contemporary South Africa, the purpose of this study is to explore these issues in language classrooms with the aim of changing the education system by empowering the marginalised. This study also acknowledges that to uproot the past from the present, one has to relive some of the moments from the past. In this case, it requires understanding the former education system; the Bantu education, which is the same system that depicted gender-based violence and racism.

South Africa is rich in political and social injustices due to past antiquities. The Bantu education that was available to majority of the South African black population from 1953 to 1992 came with many challenges that seem to have been carried through to contemporary South Africa as black children continue to face extreme hurdles towards academic success (Seattle Times, 2020). The system of education that was specifically designed for the black South African population marginalised and suppressed its full existence. Hendrick Verwoerd who was then the Minister of Native Affairs in 1953 (as cited in Thobejane, 2013) stated that he would rather see South Africa white and poor than rich and mixed. The Bantu Act ensured that the majority of black population had no access to an education system that would later give them skills to compete with white supremacy. Phillips (1999) maintains that "as long as blacks received a lower quality education than whites", it was nearly impossible to hope that they would become the "political or social equals of whites" (p. 21).

According to Thobejane (2013), “Bantu education meant an inferior type of education that was designed to maintain the subordinate and marginal status of the majority racial group of the country” (p. 2). Bauer (2020) adds that it was “part of the government’s system of apartheid, which sanctioned racial segregation and discrimination against non-whites in the country” (p. 1). This education system perpetuated the idea of an equal South Africa while putting the black population at the bottom of the hierarchy ladder, giving the impression that they were inferior. Msila (2007) argues that education is always about identity formation. In this regard, it is safe to say that the black population under the Bantu education system amongst other challenges, also faced the problem of identity creation as the very same education that was supposedly designed for them was ruled and existed under the hand of white authorities.

This study recognises the importance of exploring Bantu education as it originated based on racial inequality, where a black child only had access to the inferior type of education. Recognising that South African schools are still guilty of perpetuating racism, subordinating black children to the same inferior type of treatment in 2020 could arguably raise questions of whether the system still elevates the white child. The link between the Bantu education and this study lies in the treatment of the black child and further illustrates the privileges of the white child as predestined by apartheid. To address racism in schools, it is therefore important to understand the former education system. Chisholm (2012) states that the past for many black South Africans is far more “complex and rich”, that “the irony about nostalgia” is how the past is essentially about the present, and these present anxieties are “refracted through the prism of the past” (p. 82).

South Africa’s education system has come a long way from what it was before. As Msila (2007) notes, transitioning from apartheid education to the present education system has neither been easy nor without glitches. However, Msila (2007) asserts that education can be a weapon of transformation (p. 146). Adding that, “Democracy, social justice, non-racism, equality and reconciliation are among the fundamental values of the South African education system” (p. 146). Ndimande(2013) argues that education reform in post-apartheid South Africa has made significant changes during its transition, however, inequality persists. Thobejane (2013) further notes that the education model that can best suit the current democratic era remains a mystery. These scholars advocate for the need to re-examine the current education system and are in agreement that even though education reform in post-apartheid South Africa has taken important strides towards adjusting and transitioning, inequality still plays out in schools through racism as argued in this study.

During apartheid education, schools were divided according to race, and the division was further enhanced in societies hence education was a political act more than a neutral one (Msila, 2007). According to Msila (2007), “it is a critical commonplace that classrooms cannot be divorced from the society in which they are situated” (p. 147). She further adds that schools have a role to either enhance or challenge socialisation into equality. Rightist movements have employed education as part of a larger radical reconstruction of the priorities of society (Apple, 2006). In this regard, Francois (2015) views education as a reflection of a society and Idris et al. (2012) agree that education is the foundation of any society, while Domina et al. (2019) argue that schools organise societies, and societies organise schools. Shor (as cited in Msila, 2007) views schools as an “arena of contention where critical educators can challenge inequality using a critical curriculum in a democratic learning process” (p.147). Scholars have identified a pattern that exists between schools and the society. Thus, educators need to understand that classroom learning shapes societal learning and if one or the other fails, the whole pattern collapses.

Likewise, the coloration between schools and society as noted by scholars is visible in the selected text. Coetzee, in his novel *Disgrace* (1999), highlights the importance of educators being able to identify classroom learning as a phenomenon that shapes societal learning when the character Lurie fails to protect Melanie, his student, from himself. As a result, not only is Melanie’s academic journey disturbed, but her social standings are compromised. She finds herself making headlines in newspapers read by the society that she resides in. Education in this case is no longer part of a larger radical reconstruction of the priorities of society, instead, it becomes a place where racism and inequality are reconstructed, away from discourses that seek to create a balance in societies. The purpose of including *Disgrace* (1999) in literature lessons thus lies in its ability not only to demonstrate gender and racial violence in the contemporary South Africa, but also its ability to recognise these themes as indicators that cripple the education sector and further the society that relies on education for change. *Disgrace* (1999) highlights the possibilities that come with inconsistencies in the education sector, including division, which was also noticeable during apartheid.

The division created by apartheid was worse for black women. It was an era of collaborated racism and sexism. Hutson (2007) notes that, “the gender discrimination in South Africa is deeply rooted in the ethnic traditions of the multi-cultural communities, as well as by compliance of women themselves” (p.83). Society is guilty of imposing cultural values that marginalise women and man is seen as superior. Discrimination and oppression of women

stems from South Africa's history; mainly the Bantu education. In as much as women were allowed this type of inferior education, Moore (2015) notes that the only classes offered to them were dress-making and cooking. Instruction, Bauer (2020) further states, was mandated in needlework for girls. This illustrates how gender roles have always played a part in the marginalisation of women, and how the same roles now enhance gender-based violence in our societies. A woman in *Disgrace* (1999) is raped because she owns land and is blatantly told that the only way to ensure her safety is to marry. During apartheid in South Africa, a woman's access to land depended entirely on her relationship to a man (Hutson, 2007).

Hutson (2007) draws from the example of polygamy. Boys and girls grow up knowing the existence of this truth, and they grow up knowing their different roles as clearly outlined by society. Coetzee links this view to polygamy in his novel when the character Petrus claims he will take Lucy as his second wife. Boys grow up knowing they must be strong and wise so they will be able to provide and take care of their wives and families. Likewise, girls are expected to preserve themselves, be 'pure', hardworking, and submissive in order to fit the description of a 'perfect wife'. These are non-negotiable norms. Bwakali (2001) further affirms that women were victims of injustice, not because of what society did to them, but because of what society did not do to them. The understanding in this is women have always been victims because society has never protected them and if it continues to be quiet, as well as act deaf, then the continuous violation of women will never be eradicated. Moreover, women have a role towards themselves. They need to stop conforming to societal norms so society can be confronted with the truth; one that produces change. Hutson (2007) summarises this process of confronting the truth and moving towards a changed society quite nicely by claiming that, "without individual aspirations or any want to change, no change will ever occur" (p.84).

The history of apartheid and Bantu education as basis for racial segregation and gender inequality is explored in *Disgrace* (1999). This text is the epitome of all that has been discussed above; Apartheid as a system persisting in contemporary South Africa. J.M. Coetzee has indeed authored a novel in the new South Africa that exists both in the past and present. It explores the issues of racism, the education system and ill-treatment of women by both society and their male counterparts, and how much life has changed, yet remained the same. This study attempts to unfold the above mentioned arguments, past issues infused in the present and the need to move towards a better South Africa for all.

One cannot discuss racism and not refer to gender inequality. This study views racism as an idea of division between black and white, while gender inequality is the division of male and female. Both these ideas are constructed upon binary positions. They both exist in the society and they are both for the idea of ‘apartness’. Armstrong (1994) describes violence (rape) as an abuse of power (p.37). Racism could easily assume the same connotations. When you look down upon someone else’s race, you deem yourself superior (empowered, powerful) and thus you are clothed with power, and when you act upon that superiority by violating the other based on their skin colour, that is abuse of power. Unfortunately, power dynamics are still visible in South African education sectors years after apartheid, hence there is need to collapse these by teaching learners through texts such as *Disgrace* (1999).

1.2 Problem Statement

Apartheid, along with Bantu education forms the basis for racial segregation and gender inequality. This is where racial, cultural stereotypes and ignorance stems from and is further enhanced in the new South Africa, resulting in gender-based violence and racism in both societies and schools. Unfortunately, victims never speak out for fear of being judged. Moreover, society is guilty of protecting perpetrators while victims grieve and suffer in silence. Their rights continue to be violated daily resulting in premature deaths of school children. Teachers need to find ways in which these issues can be addressed in classrooms to help those affected, and to further prevent such from finding their way into the societies. Scholars, educators and community members have a responsibility to protect and shield children from harm. Likewise, learners have a responsibility towards themselves and their peers to act in a manner that does not degrade or violate. The teaching and learning of *Disgrace* (1999) in South African language classrooms can help combat gender and racial violence in schools, and further help learners identify and deal with gender-based violence and racism in their respective societies, creating a fair and just society for all.

1.3 Personal Motivation

Rural and city living are two contrasting ideas that seek to confuse any teenager trying to create an identity for their self. One is caught between two different worlds and seem to never entirely construct an identity. This is the reality for most learners, where parents try to give them a better education by sending them to schools in town, not knowing that going back to the rural living in the afternoons brings about confusion. In black homes; which according to Statistics (2011) comprises of the Zulu, Xhosa, Bapedi, Tswana, South Ndebele, Basotho, Venda, Tsonga and Swazi people, a girl is taught her roles and confined in rules

that are to create a woman out of her. At school, girls are taught to be vocal, not knowing that between the afternoons and evenings, these girls are different people, forced to silence because society reprimands such behaviour. “You have to be a lady”, they say. Girls joke about being independent ladies knowing that society would never approve. They joke about having options; to marry or not to marry, but deep down they know that decision was long made for them. They are women. They cannot be wives, mothers, and career women all at once. They must choose. “You can’t have it all”, society says. As if fighting for equal treatment is not enough, girls are further forced along with their brothers to fight for belonging in white dominated schools, constantly reminded of who they are and where they come from.

These personal encounters have made me question the new South Africa, if we are not ignorant in thinking we are free; both as women and as black South Africans. I understand masculinity imposed as culture, as well as racism being viewed as a joke. So, it is no coincidence that this study incorporates the two. The study explores joint worlds that have been part of my life for an exceedingly long time; contrasting ideas that may as well be the same. I believe that a lot of bad stems from cultural values as individuals and as a society. Because of cultural values, a lot of wickedness goes unpunished. Society using culture as a scapegoat has managed to normalise certain acts that should never be normal. People would say, “It is a black culture to rape” (Business Insider, 2016), or “it is a white culture to be racist” (Wing et al, 2017).

Young girls are neglected because of culture. Manabe (2001) asserts that abusive behaviour is passed from generation to generation through learnt culture. From a very tender age, the idea of a ‘good wife’ is instilled in young girls, exposing them to abuse through negligence (Lyness, 2013). Young men boast about having multiple partners because of culture. This culture would reprimand a girl for speaking her mind, but let a boy run loose with words. These are the societal norms that we are confronted with as women, and as a society. It has become a norm for girls to be raped by family members (Ahmad, 2018). It is a norm to protect perpetrators in family homes. We protect our racist friends on the basis that it was a joke. This is a saddening reality for a South Africa that should be liberated from all gender and racial stereotypes. Yet, the headlines are filled with such issues in contemporary South Africa. I am glad to research and confront issues that really matter personally and to the rest of South Africa. I also value the opportunity to discuss gender-based and racial violence in schools and analyse my all-time favourite text, *Disgrace* (1999).

Disgrace (1999) by J.M. Coetzee explores issues of gender-based and racial violence. The story shifts between the characters: Melanie's rape; a student raped by her Professor, and Lucy's rape; a white lesbian raped by black men, and the attacks of David and Lucy by black men. South Africa is saddled with the same issues of gender-based and racial violence, especially in schools. According to Daily Maverick (2020), gender-based violence in South Africa is an ongoing and visible epidemic. Additionally, Mashaba (2020) notes that gender-based violence and femicide are persistent, widespread problem in South Africa and excessively impacting on women and children. In the month of June alone, just over 50 women and young girls were brutally murdered (SA News, 2020). Currently, the #Black Lives Matter movement has hit South African Instagram with hundreds of private school learners sending their encounters of alleged racism at their private and Model C schools to an Instagram account which is amplifying their messages (Daily Maverick, 2020). Choosing *Disgrace* (1999) as the foundation of my study is also based on its depiction of current truths: unwarranted rapes and brutal killings.

Human Rights Watch Report (2001) states that South African girls continue to be raped, sexually abused, sexually harassed, and assaulted at schools by male classmates and teachers. Furthermore, it states that even though girls in South Africa have better access to education than many of their neighbouring countries in sub-Saharan Africa, they are confronted with high levels of sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools that hinder their access to education on equal terms with male students. What is also highlighted in the report is that girls who encountered sexual violence at school were raped in school toilets, in empty classrooms and hallways, and in hostels and dormitories by both male students and teachers. Girls were also fondled, subjected to aggressive sexual advances, and verbally degraded at school. These attacks affect girls from all levels of society and ethnic groups.

It is crucial that the themes of gender-based violence and racism be explored further in South African schools. Twenty-five years into democracy, South Africa still faces issues of gender and race. It is saddening that girls do not feel safe at school, and even more worrying that in a post-apartheid South Africa, such issues of race are still dealt with. The problem has gone as far as finding roots in primary schools. If educators can separate young children according to race (Daily Maverick, 2019), what future is there for South Africa? One cannot 'teach' a young child to be racist and expect them to turn out better. If such behaviour can take place in primary schools, we may as well be grooming racists. The system can teach young ones to be better people, who will later go out to respective communities and be better occupants. *Disgrace*

(1999) can be used to explore these issues. It is hoped that this research will contribute towards fighting for young girls and equal treatment in schools irrespective of skin colour, and thereby creating a South Africa for all.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research questions of this study are:

- 1.4.1 How can J.M. Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace* (1999) be used to teach and learn about gender-based violence in a South African language classroom?
- 1.4.2 How is racial violence represented in the novel?

1.5 Aim of the Study

The main objective of this study is to carry out an in-depth analysis of *Disgrace* (1999), identifying examples of gender-based and racial violence in the novel with the aim to use the former as a platform to teach a grade 10-12 language classes in South Africa when exploring gender-based violence and racism in schools.

1.6 Research Design and Methodology

This study's focus is to analyse the text *Disgrace* (1999) by J.M. Coetzee based on the research questions and objectives. Before the analysis, it was imperative that a comparison be made between past and post-apartheid school curriculum to establish the changes made in the South African education system. Furthermore, in order for this study to answer the main research questions, it was important that an exploration of gender and racial violence in schools be undertaken, including definitions of gender-based violence and racism. This textual analysis is concerned with gender and race issues that affect the education system (learners and teachers alike). Therefore, understanding the past and post-apartheid education required that this study examine how teachers have adapted to the new curriculum. To answer the main research questions, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of the prescribed text, identified examples of gender-based violence and racism present in the text guided by definitions of gender-based violence and racism as highlighted in the sections to come. The examples extracted from the text are discussed critically using two theories, namely: critical race theory and critical pedagogy as proposed in this study through creative writing focusing on class discussions and/or story-telling and written activities in the South African language classrooms. Because this is a qualitative and desktop-based study, secondary data was collected using the internet

(different research site engines such as Google Scholar, Sabinet). Key words used included ‘gender-based violence’, ‘racism’, ‘Bantu Education’, ‘current curriculum’, ‘school violence’ and ‘teachers in post-apartheid education’. Materials on gender-based violence and racism in South Africa and globally were researched. The search includes a desk review of relevant documents, reports, related policies, newspaper articles and previous studies. These sources of data further provide insight on what causes these issues and what has been done in the past to eradicate the matters in schools. That is an effective way of spotting the gaps in literature, to see what has been done and what can further be done in the future. The extensive review of the literature will make it possible to understand what common definitions are prevalent across scholars to analyse the text with the purpose of teaching and learning about the issues underlined in this study.

Textual analysis is particularly important in understanding the meaning of texts which in this case works very well in understanding *Disgrace* (1999) and the issues raised in the text for teaching and learning purposes. Therefore, the extensive review of this literature can also be viewed as enquiring explanations as it explores issues of gender and race. Smith (2007) concludes that “explorative investigations aim to provide new insights into a field of thought or knowledge” (p.53), where descriptive research is used to reveal accurate information or data about a certain issue/s being investigated. It is fitting that as an empirical research, this paper examines both exploratory and descriptive questions to “provide new insights” of what gender-based and racial violence is in the context of South African schools using textual analysis. Newspapers are also useful sources of information especially when dealing with issues concerning schools; hence, they are an important source of data for this study in providing current, additional information. Besides the provision of up-to-date information, Kufa (2000) as cited in Smith (2007) states that “newspapers also supply in-valuable primary source material concerning aspects of society, the economy, and culture about which other sources may say nothing” (p.53).

1.7 Organisation of the Dissertation

This study is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter one provides the background of the study, focusing on racial segregation and gender inequality under the apartheid government. It traces back to the Bantu education and gives an overview of what it was like to be a black South African between 1953 and 1992. It highlights how classrooms cannot be divorced from society in which they are situated by emphasising

that schools have a role to either enhance or challenge socialisation into equality. It includes a problem statement which motivates that this is an ongoing problem that needs to be addressed, personal motivation, proposed key questions and what it aims to achieve as well as the design and research methodology that guides this study.

Chapter two gives an overview of previous studies related to literature, gender-based violence and racism. It examines gender-based violence and the education system in post-apartheid South Africa to establish changes made in contemporary South Africa in an attempt to curb issues of gender. The chapter also gives an overview of racism, racial violence and the education system in post-apartheid South Africa to trace race issues prevalent in contemporary South Africa that can be attributed to past inequalities. In identifying gaps in the teaching of ‘violence’ in language classrooms, chapter two compares the Bantu Education and the new curriculum, concluding with gaps evident in the teaching of gender and racial violence.

Chapter three addresses theories selected in analysing the novel *Disgrace* (1999), for the purpose of empowering learners in the classrooms to help them manage everyday challenges inside and outside the classroom.

Chapter four is an analysis of the chosen text, particularly focusing on the themes presented by this study. It firstly gives a brief synopsis of the novel, and further looks at examples of gender-based violence and racism within the text. It examines gender roles, exploring the uneven distribution of power between men and women and how different races are treated.

Chapter five concludes by restating the primary concerns the study explored by reviewing engagement with the selected text to identify and analyse issues of gender and race for teaching and learning purposes in South African language classrooms. It further states how the study has used Critical Race Theory and Critical Pedagogy to empower learners. The chapter concludes with the researcher’s recommendations on new teaching approaches and establishing new literature to be taught in language classrooms.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review for this study aims at providing a systematic understanding of gender and racial violence in South Africa, particularly in the education system in post-apartheid South Africa. The literature is thematic, focusing on two major themes namely: gender-based violence and racism. Many scholars maintain the notion that gender inequality is one of the biggest concerns especially in a country like South Africa where patriarchy is major and fuelled by cultural norms (Sathiparsad, 2008; Noge, 2014; Wood, 2019). Females still find themselves prohibited from occupying spaces that are generally created for men, and worse, when they finally accommodate those spaces, they experience the worst treatment from their male counterparts (Martin & Barnard, 2013). This kind of behaviour has sadly escalated to the point that it is rampant in school grounds extending to societies at large where women and girls find themselves in danger of being assaulted, raped and/or murdered by males, both acquaintances and strangers. Gender inequality can be attributed to historical systems of exclusion and discrimination. The high level of violence is thus marked by deep social inequalities and race classifications tracing back to apartheid and further enhanced in contemporary South Africa (Vally *et al.*, 1999; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Segalo, 2015).

The literature begins by looking at gender and racial violence in South Africa as a phenomenon attributed to apartheid. Arguments by different scholars on how gender inequality and racial segregation has contributed in fuelling gender and racial violence are critically analysed to understand how these issues link and are explored in the education system post-apartheid South Africa. The study determines to specifically analyse the existing data on gender-based violence and racism in post-apartheid South Africa, while providing definitions of the former to be used in the analysis of Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) when teaching these issues in language classrooms.

2.2 Gender-Based Violence and the Education System in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Gender-based violence is a severe problem in all countries. It is especially prevalent in rural, poor communities. According to Dobbert (1975), gender-based violence is a global problem limiting the full potential of education as it causes poor health and psychological trauma.

Simister (2012) estimates that there may be over a billion women in the world who have experienced domestic violence within their relationships. Daily Sun (2017) further notes that an estimation of 35% of women worldwide have experienced some sort of violence in their lifetime. The violence prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa, according to Rwebangira (2013), is evidently linked to old patterns tracing back to apartheid. The scholar further argues that the only chance South Africa has in getting rid of this violence is to dismantle structural arrangements of apartheid.

The chosen novel analysed in this study highlights incidents pertaining to both gender and racial violence. Therefore, *Disgrace* (1999) is the perfect novel to be used in South African language classrooms. It is written in post-apartheid South Africa, but still depicts issues that existed during apartheid. As noted above, scholars argue that a lot of violence prevalent in contemporary South Africa is attributed to historical structures. As a result, attempting to eradicate this violence requires a dismantlement of structural arrangements of apartheid. This paper thus argues that challenging dominant discourses using a book written in post-apartheid South Africa is an effective approach to dismantling violence. The book is a reflection of both the past and the present, and advocates for the arguments presented by scholars in this study, that indeed present violence can be traced back to old patterns.

It is clear that violent crimes in South Africa, more especially in schools, are a reflection of a broader society (Taole, 2013; John, 2016). According to News24 (2019), violence is learned behaviour, modelled, and normalised by those involved. John (2016) further notes that there is no society untouched by the problem of violence as it is so rooted in long histories of violent conquest, domination, and struggle. Schools are part of the society. They exist in juxtaposition with the societies in which they are situated in. The violence therefore experienced in schools becomes a societal problem. Moreover, it becomes a societal problem tracing back to the history of apartheid. Apartheid is particularly known as the history of race domination and gender inequality (Marx, 1997). Dunkle *et al.* (2010) thus recognises the need for intervention strategies that lie at the heart of gender equality to prevent violence against women, claiming that:

The evidence on motivations for rape clearly places the problem at the foot of our accentuated gender hierarchy and highlights the importance of interventions and policies that start in childhood and seek to change the way in which boys are socialised into men (p. 30).

Dunkle *et al.*'s (2010) findings on motivations for rape confirms and demonstrates that the high

prevalence of rape in South Africa is attributed to young men who rape, normally starting in their teenage years. Building a more gender equitable society is crucial, and it is imperative that it starts early in childhood or teenage years. The minute girls walk into the school environment, Mail and Guardian (2019) confirms, is when they face numerous difficulties, including discrimination on the basis of sex. This study would like to see more teenagers, especially teenage boys, taking up space and engaging in intervention policies that will help protect young girls and women. This is especially because majority of violence experienced by women and children is at the hands of men known to them (Daily Sun, 2016). The aim is to create classrooms that explore gender- based violence and racism with a clear mandate that seeks to educate teenagers on the violence that exists within their schools and societies.

Scholars argue that young people view their education and social relationships away from organisations of civil society, community, or forms of the state. The relationships are mediated through families (Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Lara & Saracostti, 2019). Consequently, the positioning of schooling and the family as mirrored by young people is seen as transformative spaces. Families send children to school with the hope that they will become learners with the tools they need to succeed in life. Likewise, schools take children and send them back to their families with the assumption that families will provide the support children need to grow and learn.

The relationship between classroom learning and social standings is a crucial one in establishing ways to curb violent behaviour in schools and societies. The Citizen (2019) establishes that the government must provide the leadership by effecting changes to the curriculum to ensure young boys are taught that they have no naturally endowed entitlement to women's bodies. Moreover, Epstein and Salinas (2004) position "schooling and parental support as the means through which the hardships of young people's daily experiences of race, class and gender division will be overcome" (p. 67). This study recognises that classroom teaching and learning cannot be detached from family and societal learning. In fact, this study is concerned with the teaching and learning of gender-based violence and racism in conjunction with social standings. Hence, the analysis of the novel incorporates two theoretical frameworks that are particularly embedded in social standings as demonstrated in the following chapters. Epstein and Salinas (2004) conclude that young children in this generation fall under working-class children, and these working-class children are not interested in becoming 'comrades in struggle', or victims. They want to be learned people who can think about going forward. A part of going forward requires challenging dominant discourses such as gender inequality and

patriarchy.

Socially constructed stereotypes in both schools and communities seem to promote patriarchy. These constructed stereotypes, as stated by Olmsted (2003) are built upon a “system where men dominate women, primarily through the enforcement of strict gender-role ideologies” (Cited in Simister, 2012, p. 3). Mail and Guardian (2019) points out that boys often have more leeway to be rough and so they start to exercise their superiority on females. Girls are confronted by gender inequality and patriarchal practices in their societies, and these are further enhanced in schools. Rarieya *et al.* (2014) agrees that indeed such issues that perpetuate gender inequality filter into the classroom in various and unified ways impacting on the learner’s career aspirations, achievements, and sense of agency. Simister (2012) builds on Rarieya *et al.*’s argument that “the experience of violence and the silent acceptance of violence by women undermines attempts to empower women and will continue to be a barrier to the achievement of demographic, health, and socioeconomic development goals” (p. 3).

Additionally, Wolpe *et al.* (1997) as cited in Mlamleli *et al.* (2001) recognises these common traits, noting that:

Gendered or sex-based violence, in the broader context of discrimination, constrains the freedom of movement, choices and activities of its victims. It frequently results in: intimidation; poor levels of participation in learning activities; forced isolation; low self-esteem or self-confidence; dropping out of education or from particular subjects; or other physical, sexual and/ or psychological damage. It erodes the basis of equal opportunity realised through equal access to education”. (p. 262)

Segalo (2015) maintains the notion that current social and economic concerns are a result of historical systems of exclusion and discrimination. The history of apartheid as previously mentioned, is a history of race domination and gender inequality. Furthermore, it is a history of exclusion and discrimination, as well as one that affects current social and economic concerns. To acknowledge that girls and women are still excluded and discriminated is important in moving towards gender equity and dismantlement of violence experienced by girls and women.

Rarieya *et al.* (2014), as seen above argues that violence against women has been silently accepted. One of the major concerns noted in Coetzee’s *Disgrace* (1999) is the silence of women in their suffering, hence this paper is in agreement with Segalo (2015) in her statement advocating for a need to create a scholarly stage that will allow counter-stories and voices to be heard in the hope of creating a just and democratic South Africa. If this is not done, then

girls as noted by Wolpe *et al.*, (1997), will be starved of the equal opportunity to education access. It is true that the new dispensation has not been kind to women, but it is also true that the current predicament is causally linked to the past. The remnants of apartheid can still be felt and seen (Verwey & Quayle, 2012; Segalo, 2015; Venter, 2020).

Exploring issues of violence is also about exploring past injustices. Analysing *Disgrace* (1999) goes beyond gender and race issues, and into the roots of attribution. South African classrooms are in dire need of discourses that are rooted in real attributions. Learners need to understand the reasoning behind the prevailing violence to understand reasons why it is so important to learn about these issues. Revisiting injustices of the past which are evidently still maintained in contemporary South Africa is paramount in creating spaces that will allow uncomfortable conversations for a free and democratic society (Segalo, 2015).

This paper thus argues that the very much needed spaces can be created in language classrooms, and the very much needed uncomfortable conversations can be held using a novel like *Disgrace*, which depicts both the past and the present. Accessing education should not be an extreme sport for girls; if anything, education should be liberating because it is the most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, protecting children from sexual exploitation, while also promoting human rights and democracy (Wilson, 2006). Wilson (2006) also notes the dangers of leaving violence in schools unchecked, stating that sexual violence in schools has a negative impact on the educational and emotional needs of girls. Moreover, violence acts as a barrier to attaining education. When girls are raped or experience any other kind of sexual violence, they are at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS (and many other diseases), which has in turn taken its toll on the educational system and disrupted education, especially for the girl child (Burton & Leoschut, 2012; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013; Lloyd, 2018).

Education can be regarded as a weapon for empowerment, freedom, and peace, and for collapsing dominant discourses that lead to violence. When girls are denied equal access to the very same education, they are denied liberation and a chance to exist in spaces that are constructed for them. Additionally, if girls in the contemporary South Africa are denied education, then how different are they from girls who existed during apartheid? Such unequal distribution and sharing of power compromises what freedom fighters fought for and puts the country in a position where freedom is nothing more than a nice speech that sounds and looks good on paper.

Harber (2004) thus argues that education improves society, but it also reproduces it exactly as it is, which imposes certain dangers. As stated above, education can be used as a weapon to

impose positive changes within a society badly harmed by past social imbalances. Mail and Guardian (2019) sees schools as frameworks for change. However, if the very same weapon is not channelled in the right manner, society appears exactly as it was 25 years ago, where apartheid-era experiences may resurface. Such existing traits of the past magnified in the present through education imposes a worse kind of education. Repeating past practices in the modern society does not show any sign of transformation expected in the present day, only that people still live through oppression even in the supposedly 'liberated' era.

Furthermore, Harber (2004) notes that as much as education and learning as manifested in formal schooling has always been, or at least, should be taken as consistently good for learners, "the sad truth is that formal, mass education – schooling – cannot automatically be linked with enlightenment, progress and liberty" (p. 1). Often, it is linked to pain and suffering. Building on this argument, Modiba (2018) argues that girls also lack mentors to help them balance school and household work (which is often a lot more compared to boys' chores). Moreover, girls face this entrenched belief that they are not as competent academically as boys. Modiba further adds that in order for change to transpire, for schooling to be an escape route out of poverty and oppressive gender stereotypes, schools need to be completely "divested of any form of gender violence and harassment" (p. 187).

Generally, girls are dealing with a lot outside school premises. Creating spaces where they can talk about some of their lives' challenging issues will personally help enhance their self-esteem. Before society can begin to understand gender-based violence, they need to understand violence inflicted by patriarchal practices and oppressive gender stereotypes. The real violence starts there and escalates to a much bigger problem. Fortunately, *Disgrace* (1999) introduces patriarchal practices and gender stereotypes in alignment with violence suffered by women. Identifying examples of gender-based violence in the novel will allow understanding and imbed a kind of comprehension in learners that goes beyond just violence, but what constitutes gender stereotypes.

To identify examples of gender-based violence in *Disgrace* (1999), this paper explores some of the prevalent definitions of violence offered by different scholars. These definitions are used in the analysis section when analysing *Disgrace* (1999), with the aim of identifying examples of gender-based violence present in the novel. Simister (2012) focuses on domestic violence against women suffered in the hands of their husbands or cohabiting partners, giving a definition that it is "violence by a man against his female partner" (p. 3).

Simister categorises the types of violence into three namely: physical violence, which he

describes as punching and kicking of women; sexual violence, which is rape; and emotional violence, any public humiliation suffered by a woman, inflicted by her husband or partner. This paper explores all three types of violence as depicted by the selected text. Furthermore, this paper uses Wilson's (2006) definitions of gender-based violence which is classified into two overlapping categories: explicit gender (sexual) violence, which includes sexual harassment, intimidation, abuse, assault and rape; and implicit gender violence, which includes bullying, verbal and psychological abuse (p. 3). It should be noted that gender-based violence definitions are not just limited to the above mentioned. Simister (2012) and Wilson (2006) were chosen to be used in the study as depicted by the selected text.

A lot of the violence explored in the novel is a result of one thing or another. Likewise, that is how violence in real life plays out. There are generally reasons behind gender-based violence. This paper outlines some of the reasons that can be read in *Disgrace* (1999). Outlining these reasons will help classroom teaching and learning in identifying examples of gender-based violence in juxtaposition with causes outlined below. This will help learners understand their own experiences from a broader perspective. Therefore, some of the causes of gender-based violence include, but not limited to, societal norms granting men control over female behaviour; accepting violence as a way of resolving conflict; notion of masculinity linked to dominance, honour and aggression (Ejakait, 2014); rigid gender roles (Van Jaarsveld, 2008; Ejakait, 2014); poverty, low socioeconomic status, unemployment (Ejakait, 2014; Bhana, 2015); associating with peers who condone violence, isolation of women and family, marital conflict, males controlling wealth and decision-making in the family (Ejakait, 2014); witnessing marital violence as a child, absent fathers or experiencing rejection from father, being abused as a child and alcohol use (Zulu et al., 2004; Simister, 2012; Ejakait, 2014).

2.3 Racism, Racial Violence, and the Education System in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Violence in South Africa persists despite the end of apartheid. This is attributed to race and ethnic tensions that remain at the centre of much of the violence in post-apartheid South Africa (Olzak, 1998; Steyn, 2004). Structural racism and white privilege remains real concerns in South Africa (Spotlight.africa, 2020). Scholars are of the view that racial inequality in schools is not a result of anomaly or misunderstandings, rather, it is a phenomenon structurally linked to wider social relations (Leathwood, 2004; Unterhalter et al., 2004; Bécares & Priest, 2015). Allen (2018) classifies it as a culture of violence, which is firmly established by both racist and classist historical institutions. Therefore, reading racism and violence in education in South Africa requires an understanding referencing history and disadvantageous patterns of inequality

in respective societies.

Schooling, according to Tsui (2003); Sunker (2004) and Harber and Mncube (2011) has an essential part to play in the reproduction of socio-economic inequality, and unfortunately, in the reproduction of racist attitudes. Scholars note that even though there has been changes in racial categories, racism and other issues relating to racial segregation still manifest in societies, and as a result, impact on the lives and identities of South Africans. In an attempt to eradicate the remains of racial stereotypes in South Africa, more specifically, in South African schools, this study proposes that content on gender-based violence and racism be taught and learnt in South African language classrooms.

The study's argument rests on the grounds advocated by scholars that very little progress has been made towards ensuring that racial discrimination and prejudice comes to an end in schools (Harber & Mncube, 2011). Schools continue to be categorised based on racial separation and discrimination in contemporary South Africa. Harber and Mncube (2011) proceed to say that the little progress made towards attempting to dismantle racism has not achieved the desired results. This is because "learners approach school with the prejudices imbued in their home environments" and because "the schools have no mechanisms to challenge and stimulate the unlearning of ingrained prejudices, as well as transform the minds of learners" (p. 237), racism thus remains.

Additionally, a study conducted by Vally and Dolombisa (1999) 'does the school have a policy/ programme to eliminate racism?' showed that almost 60% of learners revealed that their schools either did not have a policy/ programme put in place to eliminate racism, or that it was unsuccessful (p. 3). Vally and Dolombisa (1999) thus argue that because the wider context in which racism is generated is so important, it is also imperative to understand that "even if sound anti-racist educational policies for the classroom, corridor and playground" can be developed, it will never be enough to eradicate racism from society (p. 4). The scholars are of the belief that the school cannot control what happens outside the school gates, which will ultimately impact on the gains made in schools.

However, this study argues that classroom learning is intertwined with social standings. Learners spend a lot of time at school, therefore, are in a better position to adopt classroom learning into their respective societies. What is taught in class will ultimately impact on how learners behave outside the school gates. Scholars support the above notion on the basis that since learners spend so much time at school, it thus becomes a place where learners can develop their identities. Moreover, scholars believe that schools have a better chance of supporting the

learner's identity development because teachers are able to help them explore the identity implications of the new ideas, activities, and expose them to a range of possibilities (Flum & Kaplan, 2006; Coll & Falsafi, 2010; Schachter & Rich, 2011; Silseth & Arnseth, 2011; Verhoeven *et al.*, 2018).

Without dwelling much on identity development, schools and teachers have not established how they can foster learners' identity development (Verhoeven *et al.*, 2018). Even so, Sutcliffe (1996); Peters (2014); Verhoeven *et al.* (2018) and Verhoven (2019) maintain the notion that educational processes implemented by schools, teachers and peers through teaching strategies can help significantly in ensuring identity development in learners. This study therefore builds on the same argument that indeed identity development is a complicated, complex phenomenon but a crucial one, nonetheless. If learners can explore identity development in classrooms, they can be exposed to possibilities that place them away from racially created stereotypes.

Placing education and teaching strategies at the centre of identity development therefore places a lot of emphasis in classroom learning as a bridge to understanding both individual and collective experiences. Learning about racism in language classrooms through exploration of *Disgrace* (1999) will provide learners with a chance to know themselves better and those around them. Most racial incidents as Vally and Dolombisa (1999) maintain, are through racial name calling which can be derogatory. It is imagined that a group of learners that have knowledge of who they are through the teaching and learning of their experiences, and have a better understanding of their peers' experiences stand a far better chance of being well behaved, tolerant and sensitive to belittling statements and actions.

To identify examples of racism as represented in *Disgrace* (1999) for the purpose of teaching and learning, it is important to first understand what racism is. According to Wijesighe *et al.* (1996), racism refers to the system of reducing members of certain racial groups who have extraordinarily little social power. This reduction is usually imposed by members of the agent racial group who are usually relatively socially powerful, supported by actions of individuals, certain cultural norms and values as well as the institutional structures and practices of society. Meko (2011) agrees with this, stating that racism is a belief that the primary determination of human traits is race, and that ultimately produces an integral superiority of a specific race. It is therefore an ideology of racial dominance (Wilson, 1999).

While obvious racist behaviour characterised apartheid, Puttick (2011) argues that in contemporary South Africa, overt acts of racism have become socially acceptable. This is

because overt progressive racism has adopted a more sophisticated, subtle form. For the purpose of this study, two types of racism are explored in the analysis of *Disgrace* (1999), namely: symbolic racism and aversive racism. Symbolic racism is defined as a form of racism “which creates the illusion that the racist is indeed a liberal who espouses racial equality and tolerance” (Puttick, 2011, p. 22). Racists guilty of perpetrating symbolic racism are of the belief that the white supremacist holds some type of value, and black people as an inferior race violate that cherished value by demanding equal treatment in the racial status quo.

On the other hand, aversive racists are defined as people possessing low explicit prejudice, while they are high in implicit prejudice (Hall, 2008). These people represent a subtle, and often unintentional form of prejudice (Puttick, 2011). Even though they might have strong egalitarian values, aversive racists possess negative racist feelings and/ beliefs of which they are mostly unaware of and often detach themselves by trying to rationalise such beliefs (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Hall, 2008; Puttick, 2011). In the analysis of *Disgrace* (1999) this study identifies examples of racism using the two forms of racism as mentioned above. It should however be noted that racism definitions are not just limited to the above mentioned. This study has chosen to use symbolic and aversive racism as depicted by the selected text for the purpose of teaching and learning about racism in South African language classrooms.

Democracy should not be lost in the blurred lines created by past issues that still dominate the present. Individually and as a country, we should be able to enjoy the fruits of freedom that was fought for so many years ago. Therefore, this study has established that it is however not that simple as the country keeps going back and forth trying to find common ground to re-surfacing historical issues of gender and race. It is evident that a lot of violence in schools is attributed to past inequalities, thus, attempting to eradicate these issues in post-apartheid South Africa requires that the country go back and retrace the history of race and gender as implemented by apartheid.

2.4 South African School Curriculum - Prior and Post-Apartheid: Gaps in the Teaching of Content on ‘Violence’ in Language Classrooms

This section provides a brief overview of what constituted the Bantu Education. In recognising the key role of education especially in language classrooms, it is important to first understand the pillars of Bantu Education. It is believed that it is the only way to track the changes made in the current education system. Moreover, it has been argued that most of the violence in schools is attributed to apartheid. An emphasis is made on the old and new curriculum; how the two differ and if the changes made have had any significant impact on school learners.

Furthermore, teachers as critical agencies in education have a role towards enhancing democracy in classrooms, therefore this study further examines how teachers have adapted to the new curriculum.

2.4.1 The Bantu Education and the new curriculum

Throughout this study, it has been argued that a lot of violence in schools is attributed to past historical inequalities. These inequalities were also visible in the education sector through apartheid education which was aimed at promoting racial and ethnic segregation as well as unequal access to education and training (Davids & Waghid, 2015). As a result, black people were forced into an inferior type of education; The Bantu Education. The Bantu Education as demonstrated by Thobejane (2005) was founded under the following pillars:

2.4.1.1 De-emphasise training of Blacks in academic subjects and focus on training of skills in areas of low skills jobs and in the service sector.

2.4.1.2 Emphasise education in the mother tongue initially and then in Afrikaans. Additional stringent rules imposed by Afrikaner law made it illegal for blacks to control their own destiny (p. 12).

When South Africa moved from apartheid to democracy, it was important that the government formulate an education system for a democratic South Africa. The new democratic education was expected to “erode race, class, and gender inequalities” (Thobejane, 2005, p.12). The new education was to promote development of a national identity, while empowering individuals to participate in all aspects of society. It specifically advocated for “a people’s education for people’s power” (p.12), the “people” generally referring to those who had been previously marginalised by apartheid. This new curriculum was called curriculum 2005.

While curriculum 2005 offered some breakthroughs in terms of attempting to address the imbalances of the past, scholars argue that it had some short comings that the South African education system needed to focus on. Firstly, it was noted that curriculum 2005 did not allow the choice of choosing a lingua franca. Scholars argue that even though there are 11 official languages in South Africa, curriculum 2005 only focused on English, which was both popular in high schools and tertiary institutions (Nel, 2006; Thobejane, 2005; Scott, 2015).

Since then, the South African education system has taken further steps in improving its school curriculum, with the hope of ensuring that no learner is left behind or disadvantaged due to past historical inequalities. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) is a single, comprehensive, and concise policy document introduced by the Department of Education

(DoE) for all subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement for grades R-12. CAPS give detailed guidance for teachers on what they should teach and how to assess. This study is specifically concerned with the teaching of literature in language classrooms.

The National Curriculum Statement specifies that one of the aims of learning languages in schools is to enable learners to “express and justify, orally and in writing, their own ideas, views and emotions confidently in order to become independent and analytical thinkers” (Department of Education, 2011). This study advocates the need for teaching of gender-based violence and racism in South African language classrooms through the analysis of *Disgrace* (1999), by allowing learners to re-tell their own experiences and create new realities for themselves. Therefore, what the National Curriculum Statement aims to achieve in language classrooms allows learners to achieve this study’s main purpose.

Additionally, the National Curriculum Statement highlights that language learning will enable learners to use language along with their imagination to find out more about themselves as well as the world around them. This will help the learners express their experiences and findings about the world orally and in writing (Department of Education, 2011). Learners are encouraged to acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their lives.

While it is clear that the Bantu Education aimed at oppressing black people, this new curriculum’s fundamental purpose is the equipment of learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country. It is based on the principle of social transformation hence ensuring that the education imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal education opportunities are provided for all populations (Department of Basic Education, 2012, p. 3).

With the new curriculum in place, learners still find themselves victims of violence in schools. The next section explores the teaching of gender and racial violence in schools with the aim of identifying gaps explaining why schools have been common places of violence. The focus is on teachers, their teaching methods, and approaches to curbing violence in schools.

2.4.2 Teaching about Gender and Racial Violence: Gaps Identified

For many years, scholars have tried to understand the reasons behind the high rates of violence

prevalent in South African schools. Amongst many, Lamb and Snodgrass (2017) believe that violence in schools can be attributed to unchanging apartheid-based structures, inequality, poverty and dysfunctional family dynamics. Recently, concern has risen pertaining to adolescent and youth violence associated with gangsterism, which is further enhanced in school grounds through bullying, unruliness, and vandalism (p. 2).

While there are no clear explanations why the prevalence of violence in schools continues despite having moved to a more democratic education system, Burton and Leoschut (2012) are convinced that classrooms are the most common sites for violence; schoolmates being the most common perpetrators. It therefore becomes critical that violence be prevented in schools, especially since the foundations for youth violence are visible early in their adolescence stage (Gould, 2005). Scholars believe that violence prevention works best in adolescence (Moffitt, 1993; Cooper, 2000; Fagan, 2013), therefore, the school has a role to teach young people how to behave appropriately.

In an attempt to bring about desired behavioural changes in learners, a compulsory subject was introduced in the late 1990's. Life Orientation as a subject aimed at encouraging the development of the self in society seemed like a perfect contribution to the education system in post-apartheid South Africa. The Department of Education (2002) further asserts that LO aspires to raise learners' awareness of their constitutional rights and responsibilities, tolerance for cultural and religious diversity, and teaches learners how to make informed, morally acceptable and accountable decisions about their lives, the lives of others, their health and the environment.

Despite the efforts made through the teaching of LO as a school subject in effecting meaningful change in the lives of school learners, scholars argue that the subject has not been able to bring about the desired behavioural changes in learners. Lamb and Snodgrass (2017) highlight that the subject has been providing poor quality course material, insufficient after training support for their teachers, thus failing to assist teachers in solving practical classroom problems pertaining to everyday learner conflict and violence. Contrary to what many scholars believe, it is evident that most advocate for a subject that aims at dismantling violent behaviour in South African schools, and that subject does not have to be limited to just LO which has seemingly failed.

Wills (2016) argues that “short of a radical re-orientation of themes and topics of history which can adequately account for the multiple identities and experiences women in the past have had,” the post-apartheid South African National Curriculum Statement and Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement will unfortunately continue “to privilege masculinist interpretation of the past which contributes not only to the general marginalisation of women as subjects of history but more importantly reinforces, or ignores, oppressive gendered ideas” thus fuelling violence (p. 24). Evidently, there has not been a working teaching strategy aimed at teaching on ‘violence’ in South African language classrooms. As a result, violence persists despite all the efforts made in ensuring democracy for all. Therefore, this study suggests a new approach aimed at teaching and learning of gender and racial violence in South African language classrooms through incorporating *Disgrace* (1999).

According to the CAPS Document (2011), “language is a tool for thought and communication” (p. 8). Language is a “cultural and aesthetic means commonly shared among a people to make better sense of the world they live in” (p. 8). It is important to learn language effectively as that enables learners to acquire knowledge as well as express their identity, feelings, and ideas. Through language learning, learners can interact with others and manage their world. It should further be acknowledged that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed through language and therefore, it can only be through language that such constructions can be altered, broadened and refined.

The CAPS Document mentions a variety of teaching approaches when it comes to language teaching. This study focuses on teaching literature approach. “The main reason for reading literature in the classroom is to develop in learners a sensitivity to a special use of language that is more refined, literary, figurative, symbolic, and deeply meaningful than much of what else they may read” (2011, p.12). The Document further explains that while most literary texts are written and studied for the sake of entertainment, amusement or revelation, there are serious authors who create novels, plays and poems because they have serious ideas, thoughts, issues, and principles, ideologies and beliefs that they wholeheartedly want to share with or reveal to their potential readers.

It is apparent that Coetzee authored a novel that highlights particularly important issues of race and gender inequality. The study further demonstrates that the book is perfect for the teaching and learning of gender and racial violence in South African language classrooms as it narrates issues that are both prevalent in past and post-apartheid South Africa. Subsequently, the study

acknowledges the challenges faced by teachers in transitioning to the new curriculum, as demonstrated above that they are not given enough training or support. As a result, scholars assert that teachers exhibit very little or no commitment at all in constructing a learning environment deemed free of all discrimination and prejudice (Harber & Mncube, 2011; Alexander, 2016). Therefore, a suggestion is made that aside from teaching about ‘violence’, teachers are given training on how to deal with everyday issues commonly identified in classrooms as traits fuelling violence. That way, they will be in a better position of relating these issues to their learners, more specifically, when analysing *Disgrace* (1999) in the teaching and learning of gender and racial violence in language classrooms.

Notably, the teaching of literature is never easy, and it is impossible without personal, thoughtful, and honest interpretations and comments from the learners themselves (Department of Education, 2011). Therefore, the approach proposed by this study in the teaching of gender and racial violence is creative writing which puts an emphasis in close interaction with the prescribed text as it incorporates writing activities “that demand a close understanding of the text being read” (p. 12). Creative writing also incorporates class discussions, as noted by the Department of Education (2011), class discussions that lead to work activities serve a clearer purpose.

Choosing this approach for the analysis of *Disgrace* (1999) in the teaching about gender and racial violence is advocated by this approach’s structure in the involvement of learners. Teaching of literature gives learners a chance to understand the prescribed text on their own. Even though the lesson is guided and controlled by the teachers, they are encouraged “to restrain their own interpretations and ideas” of the prescribed text “and allow as much learner participation as is reasonable” (Department of Education, 2011, p. 12). This is especially important if we are to deconstruct apartheid structures prevalent in contemporary South Africa. Moreover, the teaching of literature allows learners to search for what is meaningful to them in the prescribed text. Interpretation is therefore not about right or wrong (Department of Education, 2011).

2.5 Conclusion

This section explored the Bantu Education and how the current school curriculum has changed since then. It was noted that even though efforts have been made in ensuring a democratic education system, apartheid structures still prevail in contemporary South Africa in the form of violence. Despite clear cut reasons behind the high rates of school violence in South Africa,

it was noted that not enough support has been given to teachers in dealing with the crisis. Furthermore, not enough efforts have been made in creating a teaching strategy specifically aimed at teaching and learning about 'violence' in South African language classrooms.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on two major themes: gender-based violence and racism. As argued in the previous chapter, South African schools continue to face issues of gender and racial violence years after it has been deemed free. The prevalence of these issues in both schools and societies is the reason for conducting this study to explore them. The fact that learners continue to be violated and face racism proves that this is a problem, and one that needs to be addressed. This study thus proposes that these two themes be explored in South African language classrooms using the novel *Disgrace* (1999). Exploring gender-based violence and racism in schools requires an understanding that education reflects society. It is therefore imperative to employ movements that view education as part of a “larger radical reconstruction of the priorities of this society” (Apple, 2006, p. 1). For many years, societies have neglected the notion that seeks to deconstruct oppressive ideologies and thus have produced harmful traits that exist in schools and societies at large, depicting apartheid. This study therefore argues that classroom education must be reconstructed to justify past inequalities by applying and adopting critical race theory and critical pedagogy in language classrooms.

Critical race theory is a theoretical and interpretive mode that examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultural modes of expression (Delgado, 1995). The main proponents of this theory include Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado. Critical race theory focuses on transforming the relationship among race, racism and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), while critical pedagogy is concerned with attempting to help students question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate (Kincheloe, 2005). Both approaches find their genesis steepened in other movements. Critical race theory began in the mid-1970s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Hartlep, 2009; Bodenheimer, 2019) and was originally embedded into two movements: critical legal studies and radical feminism (Hartlep, 2009; Martinez, 2014). It attributes its origin to proponents such as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado (Martinez, 2014; Bodenheimer, 2019; Curry 2020).

Likewise, critical pedagogy is a relatively old concept with its origin in the tradition of critical theory of the Frankfurt school and the work of the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012; Cho, 2016). Other primary proponents attributed to critical pedagogy include

Ira Shor, who was mentored by and worked closely with Freire from the 1980s, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, and Joe L. Kincheloe.

Even though both these approaches have their share of weaknesses (which will be discussed in detail in the following sections), their strengths and resilience has made both approaches evolve in such a way that they have expanded to various fields, including the field of education. This study has chosen these two approaches based on similar reasons. Critical race theory does not simply focus on race and racism, but it places this phenomenon in the centre of cultural and historical experiences, which is mostly what this paper intends to achieve; to explore racism using history as the basis, as well as demonstrating how racism was problematic and persistent.

Consequently, critical pedagogy is an approach that does “not ignore nor replace well-developed teaching methods” (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012, p.224). On the contrary, “it adds critical quality to the existing textbooks” and everyday living, attempting to “help students question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate” (p.224). In that sense, critical race theory and critical pedagogy is not based on a prescribed set of practices, but seeks to develop a social awareness of freedom for young people, away from dominant discourses, by connecting classroom learning with both history and experience.

This chapter therefore focuses on the abovementioned approaches and what they mean for a South African learner inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, it will demonstrate how these approaches link to gender-based violence, racism, and *Disgrace* (1999) as chosen themes and text. It will also show how their meanings can be further used to analyse the chosen text when exploring gender-based violence and racism in language classrooms.

3.2 Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory finds its origins in two movements: critical legal studies and radical feminism (Martinez, 2014; Hartlep, 2009). Critical Race Theory sprang up in the mid 1970's (Hartlep, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), as a movement involving a “collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic 2001, p.2). The marginalisation of people of colour built up frustration and dissatisfaction with critical legal studies, leading to the birth of critical race theory (Hartlep, 2009).

Critical Race Theory began as a movement in law and rapidly spread across disciplines (Bodenheimer, 2019; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). It has had the largest impact in the field of education (Bodenheimer, 2019) and has grown to be an “expansive and credible movement

that is both inner- and cross – disciplinary, particularly in regard to education” (Hartlep, 2009, p. 5). It continues to attempt to demystify racial stereotypes, racial inequalities, sexism, classism, and xenophobic practices, currently paying more attention to “addressing issues of curricula discrimination in a time of the No Child Left Behind Act 2001 and its fascination with ‘high-stakes testing’” (p. 6). McLaren (2003) offering a perspective of critical educational theorists states that the curriculum is a representation of more than just a program of study, texts studied in classrooms, or even a course syllabus. On the contrary, it represents “the introduction to a particular form of life” and serves “in part to prepare students for dominant or subordinate positions in the existing society” (p.86).

Curry (2020) attributes critical race theory’s development to scholars like Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado. These scholars responded to what they recognised as slow progress following Civil Rights in the 1960’s. Other prominent critical race theory scholars include Kimberlé Crenshaw, Mari Matsuda and Patricia Williams who all share an interest in identifying racism as an everyday component of American life, thus attempt to confront beliefs and practices that still allow racism to prevail (Curry, 2020; Bodenheimer, 2019; Martinez, 2014). The body of work by critical race theory scholars Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Kimberlé Crenshaw:

Addresses the liberal notion of color blindness and argues that ignoring racial difference maintains and perpetuates the ‘status quo with all its deeply institutionalised injustices to racial minorities’ and insists that ‘dismissing the importance of race is a way to guarantee that institutionalised and systemic racism continues and even prospers (Olson, as cited in Curry, 2020, p. 17).

Therefore, critical race theory assumes that racism is normal and is socially constructed, making it hard to identify racist behaviour (Bestler, 2012; Hartlep, 2009). Characters in *Disgrace* (1999) go through this very awakening where they are confronted by racist behaviour wrapped in normal ways of living and it becomes difficult to divert from these ways or even recognise as being toxic. Bestler, (2012); Solorzano et al. (2000); Crenshaw et al. (1995) thus argue that critical race theory assumes that understanding racism alone is not enough, dominant ideologies need to be challenged and changed, which is this study’s purpose, to use *Disgrace* (1999) to challenge and change dominant ideologies in South African schools.

Critical race theory assumes that challenging and changing dominant ideologies can be done through story-telling, which then puts experiential knowledge in the forefront, allowing dominated communities to use their unique voices (Bestler, 2012; Hartlep, 2009; Solorzano et al., 2000). This study therefore uses a critical race theory approach to literature, *Disgrace* (1999), in identifying racial violence present in the novel. This approach includes more than simply identifying racism and racialized discourses, but it also puts an emphasis on the importance of examining and attempting to understand the socio-cultural forces that shape people perceive, experience, and respond to racism.

This approach is important in this study because as much as the emphasis is on the marginalised, no learner, irrespective of their skin colour will be left out. Therefore, every learner will be accountable for how they perceive, experience and respond to racism through the learning and teaching of *Disgrace* (1999). In so doing, racism is seen as a collective culture that affects all members of a community regardless of their skin colour, and critical race theory seeks to demonstrate why racism is persistent by identifying the dominated and the dominant.

One of the major weaknesses is how critics felt as if story-telling only focused on stories by black people and also objected to the idea that only black people were more knowledgeable to talk about their own experiences (Bodenheimer, 2019). Understandably, one cannot challenge dominant narratives by imposing the same method, hence this study seeks to include every learner, irrespective of their skin colour, when exploring racism in South African language classrooms. Despite these critiques that can be seen as weak points of critical race theory, this approach has proven its strength by “addressing and challenging the impacts of race, class, gender, language, immigrant status, accent and sexual orientation” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.89).

Valdes, Culp and Harris (2002) state that even though there were doubts, negative comments and attacks, critical race theory has survived and flourished. Today, many teachers across all disciplines, including the field of education consider themselves critical race theorists who use Critical Race Theory’s ideas to understand issues of racism in and outside the classrooms. The main assumptions attributed to Critical Race Theory is the understanding of social situations with the aim to change the former, by collapsing hierarchies that seek to oppress those less in power, transforming society for the better.

Modiri (2011) further suggests that “the emergence of Critical Race Theory was motivated” mostly by an asserted fact that “Critical legal studies did not sufficiently recognise the

experiences of black people” (p.180). Critical race perspectives thus specialised in the understanding of people/legal subjects “as concrete beings”. This study asserts that the issue of racism stems from a history that did not necessarily recognise black people and this was further enhanced into the new South Africa. Addressing racism in schools will ensure that black people are not only recognised, but that their experiences are sufficiently understood. Transforming a society requires the same kind of understanding for people to recognise the experiences of others.

Dominant discourses on race and racism are prevailing concepts in marginalised societies. They prevent the gratification of equal rights in both societies and schools which still function under the dialogue of oppression. More specifically, South Africa has a long history with race and institutionalised white privileges that exist because of a dominant culture previously accessed through apartheid. To fight racism as a dominant and oppressive discourse, a conceptual framework has to be constructed upon defying and defining strategies that specialise in the movement of social and cultural norms that exist in and around race relations.

The chosen text thus helps in identifying the above mentioned as it highlights the history of race as an institution seeking to elevate one race while demeaning the other. Characters, both black and white are represented as frameworks either constructed to dominate or to be oppressed depending on their social standings. This is visible in the setting of the novel where the city represents white supremacy, while the Eastern Cape aims to shift power dynamics. The character Lurie who is from the city and is used to getting his way is suddenly confronted by new realities in the farm that no longer favour the white man. The themes highlighted in the text thus become important in the language classroom in identifying, analysing, and transforming structural racism away from race relations.

Tierney (1993) defines Critical Race Theory as a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyse, and transform structural racism and oppressive cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalisation of people of colour. This paper argues that the elimination of racism is strongly embedded in the idea of a transformed discourse that recognises race relations as an underlying factor contributing to social and racial inequality. Critical Race Theory is therefore a concept that this study uses to identify, analyse, and transform racial inequality through the empowerment of learners who further exist individually in their respective societies.

Modiri (2012) states that Critical Race Theory “recognises that revolutionising a culture begins with a radical assessment of apartheid” (p.405), which includes recognising history as a defining factor where race is concerned, and therefore, establishing ground for the marginalised to find and use their voice. This paper’s background highlights the history of apartheid and its role in contributing to the theme of racism. Ladson-Billings (1998) suggests that the construction of social reality is based on “the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations” (p.13). Re-writing a different story for the black people in South Africa therefore requires that individual stories be told and explored in language classrooms where individuals can be allowed to own their stories and address their situations. Delgado (1989, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998) further suggests that “the stories formulated and exchanged serve as “interpretive structures” where order is imposed on experience” (p.13). Therefore if literature such as *Disgrace* (1999) is taught in language classrooms, a platform is created where stories of South African history are told and discussed, and further interpreted according to each individual situation to restore order.

To revolutionise culture and come to a total transformation of social reality, situations and individuals need to be at the centre of the revolution and take charge of their experiences as they best know them. Education is in the frontier of societies, and the role played thereafter requires individual experiences to be treated just the same; prevailing situations told through story telling for the purpose of restoring order in contemporary South Africa. The learning and teaching of racism as proposed by this study acts as a frontier in the exploring of race relations through individual experiences.

Delgado (1989) argues that people belonging to minority groups have the tendency to internalise stereotypic images constructed by certain elements of society and these are often constructed to maintain power. Joorst (2019) suggests that the reason racism persists in schools long after the country was deemed free, is because Model C schools do not deal with each learner as an individual. Instead, black learners are expected to think, look, and speak like their white friends so that they do not somehow stand out. This is just another way of getting black learners as a minority to internalise stereotypical images constructed and given to them by the white society to maintain their power over them. Applying Critical Race Theory in language classrooms will ensure that how the white society organises itself along racial lines and hierarchies does not affect a black child.

Historically, as noted by Ladson-Billings (1998), storytelling was the kind of medicine used to heal “the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression”. Further adding that “the story of one’s condition leads to the realisation of how one came to be oppressed and subjugated”, therefore “allowing one to stop inflicting mental violence on oneself” (p.14). Exploring *Disgrace* (1999) will enable a discussion that a black child so desperately needs as part of a marginalised group and allowing other races to come to a total realisation of racial oppression as a condition that should no longer have space in contemporary South Africa. This kind of storytelling has the potential to heal societies and restore much needed order in schools.

To a deeper depiction of situation realisation, this is a powerful awakening when one can understand their situation better. Storytelling is not just concerned about healing wounds caused by racial oppression; on the contrary, it allows an understanding that fits perfectly to unspoken truths, a sense of freedom unleashed, and self-acceptance born through empowerment. When one internalises unfiltered truths, there is no room for self-condemnation because they get to understand themselves as victims. This is a powerful phenomenon when trying to awaken a generation that will speak transformation into societies. Critical Race Theory is about transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. Storytelling in language classrooms will allow black learners to speak their truths – which is something they have never been allowed to do, and by speaking their truths, they will be taking their power back, while also allowing other races to be a part of their truth.

Addressing racism is also about addressing untold truths. There is so much power invested in finally grasping what it was, and that process allows room for what it is and what it should be. South Africa is wrestling with past injustices due to untold truths that never make it to classroom teachings, and yet, understanding the educational system requires the voice of black learners. The voice component of Critical Race Theory as Ladson-Billings (1998) asserts is “a way to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed”, which is the “first step in understanding the complexities of racism” and possibly “beginning a process of judicial redress” (p.14). The purpose of this study, amongst other things, is to indeed communicate the experiences of the oppressed using a novel that so explicitly addresses similar experiences. Once these experiences are communicated in language classrooms, this study believes that more room will be created to further communicate the realities of the oppressed. Using a novel like *Disgrace* (1999) will ensure that learners go back and understand the complexities of racism before attempting to understand it in the new reality.

By proposing that racism be explored in language classrooms all across schools and races, this study is hoping to collapse the justifications of dominant groups whose stories are constructed in ways that still maintain their privileges. Lawrence (1987, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998) states that “most oppression does not seem like oppression to the perpetrator” (p.14), in that regard, oppression is seen as a rationalised concept where every and/or no self-examination is done by the oppressor. Bringing this concept in classrooms allows even unconscious racism to be explored and uprooted accordingly.

Delpit (1988, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998) raises several particularly important questions:

How can such complete communication blocks exist when both parties (Black and White) truly believe they have the same aims? How can the bitterness and resentment expressed by educators of color be drained so that all sores can heal? What can be done? (p.14).

Storytelling is one of the major strategies adapted in strengthening the choice of this theory and should therefore be presented as a platform that could be used in classrooms during the text analysis. To address racism, one also needs to understand what people are thinking, both black and white. From Delpit’s questions, a conclusion can be drawn that neither of the parties are willing to take responsibility for the racism experienced by the learners and this only fuels black teachers to be more bitter and resentful. It is not just to say that racism affects learners, but it also affects educators, which puts an emphasis on this study’s purpose that indeed it is a crisis that needs to be addressed.

3.3 Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy has a goal beyond just critical thinking, its major emphasis being transformation (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Therefore, the aspect of this theory that this study seeks to apply is transformative education. Learners through the teaching and learning of *Disgrace* (1999) will create a transformed education that lets them create their own realities by reflecting on their individual cultures or lived experiences. Critical pedagogy’s main concern is to create a more just society (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p.77), and that requires transformation that can only be attained if individual experiences are explored, in this case in classroom learning through literature and the incorporation of critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy can thus be attributed to the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (Abraham, 2014). Freire contributed to both its theoretical and practical development (p.4). Other primary proponents of critical pedagogy include Ira Shor, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, and Joe

Kincheloe. This approach, according to Riasati and Mollaei (2012) is relatively old and stems from Paulo Freire's book "The pedagogy of the oppressed" in the 1960's and 70's (p. 223). It shares some considerable historical and contextual territory with critical theory (Keesing-Styles, 2003). According to Keesing-Styles (2003), critical theory is concerned with issues relating to the socialisation of people and their existence in societies, usually a society known to exist under dominant discourses, which is where critical pedagogy stems.

Cho (2016) further states that Freire "offered the elements of hope and possibility" rather than "viewing schools as a mechanism of social control and reproduction" (p. 3), arguing that liberation could be found in education even if circumstances were limiting. Critical theorists such as Giroux, McLaren, Delpit, Ladson-Billings, Dillard, Hooks, and others as stated by Riasati and Mollaei (2012) have provided the main assumptions of critical pedagogy. These include; a) reflection upon the individual's culture or lived experience, b) Development of voice through a critical look at one's world and society, which takes place in dialogue with others and, c) transforming the society toward equality for all citizens through active participation in democratic imperatives (2012, p.224).

While the approach may seem appetising on paper, it however poses some serious weaknesses identified by some of the scholars including Keesing-Styles. Keesing-Styles (2003) argues that critical pedagogy is much more complex than it is being perceived. The scholar's argument lies on a wide range of educational practices and philosophies that form aims of critical pedagogy. The scholar claims it to be an enormous task for a critical pedagogue to involve this approach in teaching; a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation state as proposed by McLaren (1993-1994).

Understanding how complex this approach is, which appears as its weakness, and overcoming it requires a simple plan. Pedagogists will be encouraged to challenge themselves in order to deal with the task presented above; that is, adapting and adjusting to not only thinking critically and challenging social structures, but also adopting a mind-set that by getting one trait right, it is getting the rest right. When classroom learning is successful, that success will translate back to respective societies. So, the plan is to focus on classroom learning, get that right by changing classroom dynamics, presenting alternative views, changing assessments, and encouraging

activism. If power dynamics can be transformed in classrooms, they are more likely to change even in societies.

According to Kincheloe (2005), critical pedagogy is concerned with transforming relations of power which are oppressive, and which lead to the oppression of people. On the other hand, Mckernan (2013) describes it as a movement involving relationships of teaching and learning so that students gain critical self-consciousness and social awareness and take appropriate action against oppressive forces.

From the above definitions, it is evident that critical pedagogy is mostly concerned with shifting power dynamics, which is this study's purpose; that in the end, after analysing the proposed novel and exploring themes of gender based violence and racism, learners will be able to question and challenge domination and the beliefs and practices that dominate. This conceptualised idea of an unjust society stems from historical traits that still exist in post-apartheid South Africa. A need for a just society requires a transformation in the school context that is further imparted in social context. Classroom teaching as argued previously, is not just concerned with imparting in learners special skills or preparing them for the workplace. consequently, it stresses the need to align classroom learning with social learning, understanding that material taught in the classroom is further enhanced in societies. The enhanced version of learning aims to collapse power relations that might exist in respective societies, exposing unfair social standings experienced by learners. This elimination is concerned with empowering learners "to think and act critically with the aim of transforming their life conditions" (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p.77). Critical pedagogy is therefore concerned with the idea of a just society where people are free to be politically, economically, and culturally in control of their own lives.

Zhao, Lu and Wang (2013) claim that with critical pedagogy, we learn, relearn, and unlearn. In this study, we learn about past injustices that still linger in the present, relearn what makes a just South Africa and unlearn the idea that the current South Africa is as it should be. South Africa's history is sadly one that is based on violence and the transition to democracy seems to be accompanied by the same violence. New ideologies away from violent behaviour needs to be learned and relearned while unlearning oppressive cultures imposed by history. Additionally, Wink (2005) claims that "critical pedagogy challenges our long-held assumptions" and further "leads us to ask new questions, and the questions we ask will determine the answers we get". In that regard, it gives voice to the voiceless and power to the

powerless. Education as the mirror of society is responsible for changing “coercive to collaborative”; transmission to transformative; inert to catalytic and passive to active (Wink, 2005, p.165).

Applying critical pedagogy in everyday learning is about allowing collaborated ideas that actively demolish forced societal lifestyles enforced by social injustices. Learners will be able to identify characters in the chosen text that have been forced into societal lifestyles such as Lucy, having to marry for protection. Learners will then be able to see themselves through Lucy, and be able to advocate for a different lifestyle, away from social injustices. Education therefore becomes a mirror where everyday living is reflected and amended through advocacy “and activism on behalf of those who are the most vulnerable in classrooms and in society” (Wink, 2005, p. 165).

Like most social problems, racism and gender violence is in the centre of those most marginalised and most vulnerable. For example, what happens to the character Melanie is purely a reflection of imposed superiority. Likewise, Lucy is raped because she falls under the marginalised group and is thus prone to fall victim to social problems. Teaching in the 21st century hence requires a caring heart, courage, patience, and a critical eye. Being able to recognise and respond to the most vulnerable is a skill that teachers using critical pedagogy should aim to acquire and implement accordingly. The teaching and learning of the two themes; gender-based violence and racism, will also equip teachers with essential skills to help them implement the critical pedagogy approach accordingly.

With all the changes and contradictions expected to surface when this approach is implemented in classrooms, it is important to note that Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) stress the need of a just society that must transfigure; therefore, the goal should always be satisfied through “emancipating oppressed people which empower them and enables them to transform their life conditions” (p.77). However, emancipatory education according to Aliakbari and Faraji is best achieved if students “act in a way that enables them to transform their societies” (p.77). Teachers have a responsibility to introduce a liberated education system, but that liberation is best implemented if students take their role of acting accordingly by responding to this transformation in a way that will change their societies. As proposed by this study, teachers have a responsibility to introduce *Disgrace* (1999) to students, but ultimately, the end goal, which is to empower learners is mostly dependent on the learners themselves and their response to the proposed novel and approach. The students should be more willing to allow this

transformation and see the end goal of transforming their societies through transformed education.

Responding accordingly means posing questions that relay problematic issues in learner's lives, and that as Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) note, will equip students with critical thinking skills and help develop a critical cognizance which will help them improve their lives' conditions by taking necessary steps in building a just and equitable society. Unless learners are taught how to ask the right questions, they will never confront unjust situations, their lives would never change, and forbidding necessary change will only lead to much bigger social problems unexposed in societies. Therefore, this is not just an educational response to inequalities and oppressive power relations existing in educational institutions, but a response to overlapping problems that exist in societies because they stem from educational institutions and vice versa. More work must be done within the educational institutions to ensure that transformation takes place within social institutions. Otherwise a lack in the educational sectors guarantees a lack in constituted societies.

Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) propose a guide for a curriculum and authentic materials that teachers can model to ensure a successful implementation of critical pedagogy in teaching. This study then proposes that *Disgrace* (1999) forms part of the materials that teachers can model in language classrooms. Degener (2001, as cited in Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011) states that "curriculum in critical pedagogy is based on the idea that there is no one methodology that can work for all populations" (p.79). However, *Disgrace* (1999) was chosen for its authenticity to successfully cater for all populations. The novel does not only explore white supremacy, but it also examines black supremacy in a new South Africa going through reversed power relations. South Africa, as diverse as it is, cannot be expected to follow one methodology when addressing a population that varies so much in cultural, economic, social, and political standings. Teaching and learning about gender-based and racial violence will require a kind of understanding that acknowledges and responds to diversity, and *Disgrace* (1999) does just that. It responds to diversity and it also responds to the past and present. It allows each school and each teacher to acknowledge and respond to individual and collective needs as they best understand the schools they are situated in and in conjunction with the society in which the school exists in.

Therefore, it is only right that Giroux (1997) and Shor (1992) agree with Bartolome (2004) who also maintains that "there is no set curriculum or program because all decisions related to

curricular and material to be studied are based” on the needs of students and their interests (p. 100). It should therefore be noted that exploring gender-based and racial violence was based on the needs and interests of South African learners. Stats SA (2018) showed a great need for the former to be explored as girls and women continued to be violated in the hands of men, while gruesome racial violent acts prevailed in schools. Degener (2002) confirms that indeed curricular should be “framed through the use of student experiences and realities of their lives” (p.32). This is unfortunately what South African students are experiencing, and this mirrors their everyday reality. Framing a curricular that reflects these realities for majority of learners in South Africa is fitting.

What this study proposes is a revolutionised approach to reality that seeks to question and confront social ills by allowing students to be their own social critics who are able to take informed decisions based on what is deemed best for them. Confronting uncomfortable truths draws teaching and learning away from oppressive discourses and into a new acquired type of learning that covers understanding of unjust realities, exposing learners to a much equitable type of living. Analysing *Disgrace* (1999) in language classrooms will help confront the uncomfortable truths of gender-based and racial violence, and teaching these very same truths will expose unjust realities, allowing students to discover a new type of living away from oppressive discourses. Consequently, Ohara, Saft, and Crookes (2001) suggests that “critical pedagogy lesson plan should be based on authentic materials such as TV, commercials, video movie, etc.,” because these are “representative of the culture that is to be examined by students” and moreover, “they serve as the basis for discussion and critical reflection of the culture” (p. 80).

This study is in full agreement with the scholars’ suggestion. Gender-based and racial violence would be examined best if stories learnt and taught in classrooms were recent, relevant realities that learners could draw from using a novel like *Disgrace* (1999), which exists both in the past and present. Okazaki (2005) also agrees with this notion, maintaining that the context should be immediate and meaningful to students. However, incorporation of critical pedagogy would also have to be maintained with texts as Kincheloe (2005) points out “that texts and their themes should be provided by both teachers and students” who would then be allowed to “bring their experiences for study and place that knowledge with the context in which it was taken from” (p.3).

These proposed approaches impose a kind of role on teachers and students that will help align critical pedagogy with classroom learning. Teachers have a role to act like problem posers. This approach, according to its pioneer Dewey (1963, as cited in Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011) is of the belief that “learning through problem solving and practical application” encourages learners to engage in a more active role in determining “their experiences and positions within society” (p.80). Teachers posing gender-based violence and racism as problematic allow learners to learn through problem solving by applying practical issues that exist within schools and societies, to encourage the learning and teaching of these problems with the aim of positioning the learners to confront and rewrite their experiences.

So, teachers according to Giroux’s (2004) terms become *Transformative Intellectuals* “who have the knowledge and skill to critique and transform existing inequalities in society” (p.44). The scholar adds that the role of the transformative intellectual “is to learn from students, appreciate their viewpoints and to take part in the dialogical process” (p.44). For students to engage fully with *Disgrace* (1999), they will be the ones analysing the text, while teachers listen and acknowledge their viewpoints. This study is more concerned with what the learners have to say; their experiences, hence it proposes an analysis; a process of examining in detail, giving students a chance to re-interpret their experiences as cultural producers. Giroux (2004) asserts that when teachers create appropriate conditions, they give students a chance to “become cultural producers who can rewrite their experiences and perceptions” (p.44).

The role of teachers in applying critical pedagogy in everyday learning is demonstrated by Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) as dependent on students’ experiences. This paper presents the argument that it goes beyond just teachers teaching vulnerable and marginalised students, but teachers as learners. The learning process is inflicted in the societies that students reside in. To fully understand individual experiences as factors embedded in societies, teachers need to be accustomed by cultures practiced in respective societies.

The issues of gender-based violence and racism that this study proposes should be explored are not about teachers but students. The CAPS Document (2011) highlights that teaching of literature as asserted by the Department of Education focuses on students’ views about the prescribed texts. Likewise, critical pedagogy is about appreciating the views of students, where teachers are seen as steering the problem in the direction where questions are evoked and explored by students, allowing them to rewrite their realities as masters of their own stories.

Knowledge is not so much imparted but is awakened through the materials explored that confront existing problems in society. This awakening produces a kind of understanding that demands action to be taken for the improvement of life. This transformation process projects the lives of students as oppressed beings and allows them to recognise themselves as such with the aim of working towards collapsing oppressive conditions in society (Ares, 2006, as cited in Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). “It is stressed that the aim of transformative practice is social transformation” (p.79).

This transformation is produced when teachers in critical pedagogy “communicate with students about the society and culture to help them reflect critically on various aspects of the culture they are studying about and preparing to enter into” (p.79). This is important especially if that very same society and/ or culture harbours violence. Students need to be aware of the kind of factors contributing to their everyday living. If it is violence, they need to be prepared with transformative solutions. This study is not just proposing the teaching and learning of concerning issues, but it intends to expose learners to issues that exist within their societies, by analysing a text that explores those issues which are gender-based and racial violence. It also allows students to interpret these issues according to their own experiences, learning how to better deal with them, with the hope that they will use that knowledge to safe guard themselves.

This is a process that requires selflessness from teachers who are expected to reject long standing cultural expectations by giving up their power which is given to them through their titles (Foley, 2007). Additionally, Freire (1970) proposed that in doing so, a fluid relationship is created between teachers and students, where teachers become learners and learners become teachers. This reversal of power relations is aimed at returning to the marginalised groups their identities through the reappearance of their lost voices, and thus resisting unjust reproduction and becoming active agents for social change.

3.4 Conclusion

Critical race theory and critical pedagogy were applied in this study in exploring gender-based violence and racism through the textual analysis of Coetzee’s *Disgrace* novel. Racism which has been previously described as an endemic is disassembled using Critical Race Theory approach in line with proposed teaching approaches outlined in this paper. Observations done on the prevailing discourse do show a need for a type of commitment away from social ills and injustices by redressing past inequalities that will possibly lead to a radical transformation that seeks to address Delpit’s concerns when it comes to black and white societies. Exploring

racism in the language classroom using Critical Race Theory will ensure not only the empowerment of learners, but also teachers who have been previously oppressed. By collapsing all bitterness and resentment expressed by teachers, a new approach can be applied with a changed perspective that recognises power relations as narrated by history, as well as introduce a revolution that invites whites to conduct an introspection of their own lives away from self-acclaimed privileges. Teachers and learners alike, both black and white have a chance of challenging the dominant discourse and transforming those structural and cultural aspects of society that still depict racist behaviour in post-apartheid South Africa.

As demonstrated above, critical race theory and critical pedagogy if applied correctly have the power to collapse racism and sexism especially in marginalised societies. With no doubt, the most marginalised in South Africa suffer the most violence as they are in the frontier of oppressive discourses. Poverty and other overlapping factors away from history do play a role in fuelling violence in schools and societies at large. Shifting power dynamics requires a shift in cultural practices that are also self-inflicted. Patriarchy has put women at the centre of gender inequality, exposing them to violent behaviour imposed by masculinity. Learning and teaching about these violent behaviours is the beginning of a revolutionised South Africa that recognises people as equals. Furthermore, applying these approaches in classroom learning will ensure that this transformation is both educational and social, as well as about the learning of teachers as it is about the learning of students. This is an important relationship for teachers and students who seek to reverse power roles, returning students' voices and allowing them to be the change that the future needs.

Chapter 4: Exploring *Disgrace* (Coetzee, 1999)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the debasement and marginalisation of both black and white women, men as oppressors, and skin colour as the decision maker in the treatment of characters in Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* (1999). The study in its alignment of underlined issues correlates with the history of South Africa (apartheid), which is emphasized throughout this paper. In examining gender-based violence and racism, a thin line is drawn in understanding apartheid, and thus comprehending that these issues are fundamental traits that epitomised our history.

Rape, race, and gender are the epitome of the idea behind apartness. Racism is one of the significant issues that fuelled apartheid, the division between white and black, which resulted in the most unthinkable crimes including the violation of women and black men. This study thus argues that South Africa's history gave birth to apartness, which was not only based on skin colour but also what was visible in the treatment of women, whether black or white, as inferior and subjected to slavery.

Coetzee embodies and confronts the same ideas in his novel *Disgrace* (1999) on the grounds of unfair redistribution of power in post-apartheid South Africa. The novel has been largely criticized for feeding national paranoia and tarnishing the image of a black man, while epitomising crime as a phenomenon mostly influenced by race classifications, implying that a white man is incapable of wrong doing and a black man is always a suspect (Harrington, 2003). Coetzee seems to depict women as a marginalised gender existing in a patriarchal society highly influenced by oppressive gender roles.

Coetzee outlines the connection between conventional practices and masculinity resulting in the violation of women and the binary oppositions which seek to make distinct classifications between people and spaces in contemporary South Africa. This section is concerned with binary opposing matters presently evident throughout the narrative in the uneven distribution of power between men and women, whether black or white. Gqola (2015) asserts that "part of the violent gender power is in celebrating attributes associated with the masculine, and ordering the world in terms of opposites, or binaries" (p.39). The scholar further states that if the masculine is celebrated, the feminine as its opposite is bound to be debased. This is true in the exploration of *Disgrace* (1999). No woman in the book triumphs in the hands of man. While man is elevated, woman is demeaned.

The study will therefore look at the narrative and provide conspicuous evidence why some of the incidents in the novel fall under gender-based violence, including the two rapes and lack of justice for the women involved. This is done by conducting an analysis of *Disgrace* (1999) and identifying examples of gender-based violence. Additionally, this chapter demonstrates how these examples can be taught in a South African language classroom by applying the two theoretical frameworks mentioned in the previous chapter.

In defining gender-based violence, a lot of scholars are in agreement that it is violence experienced in the hands of people whether male or female. For this study's purpose, the focus will be on violence experienced by females in the hands of their male counterparts. Therefore, in exploring *Disgrace* (1999) and analysing incidents in the novel that can be classified as violence against women, this study adapts five types of definitions which were not only common with most scholars, but which also provide overlapping ideas across different scholars.

Simister (2012) thus introduces three types of gender-based violence, namely: physical violence, which he classifies as punching and kicking of women; sexual violence, which is known as rape; and emotional violence, which includes any public humiliation suffered by a woman in the hands of men. These three definitions are incorporated with two other definitions by Wilson (2006) which are more school related and are classified into two overlapping categories: explicit gender (sexual) violence, which looks at sexual harassment, intimidation, abuse, assault and rape; and implicit gender violence, which is concerned with bullying, verbal and psychological abuse (p.3).

The scrutiny of evident gender roles discussed is significant in exploring the oppression of women in the novel. Gqola (2015) asserts that "if you want to understand how power works in any society, watch who is carrying the shame and who is doing the shaming" (p.38). Indeed, shame is "a function of oppression; it has everything to do with who is valued and who is invisibilised in any society" (p.38). This paper argues that *Disgrace* (1999) is teeming with women carrying shame because of the violation they have suffered and men doing the shaming because of the power given to them by society.

Secondly, the novel embodies ideologies of racist behaviour as David Lurie; the book's protagonist sees himself better than the black men who raped his daughter – even though he himself is facing charges of harassment. Through close reading and analysis, both these issues are discussed thoroughly in this chapter, making reference to the definitions of gender-based

violence provided by Simister (2012) and Wilson (2006), and examples of racist behaviour present in the novel by drawing on two types of racism, namely: symbolic racism and aversive racism (Puttick, 2011). Therefore, this chapter will firstly explore the depiction of gender-based violence in the novel using the prescribed definitions provided in this paper; the representation of racial violence to prove that the novel is indeed teeming with examples of gender-based and racial violence which can be used in a language classroom for teaching and learning purposes of the emphasised issues.

4.2 Synopsis

Coetzee in his novel *Disgrace* (1999), highlights two significant aspects: men as carriers of power, and women as slaves governed by the power invested in men. Coetzee won the Booker Prize for this text and further got awarded The Nobel Prize in Literature four years after its publication by the Vintage Books, London. The novel is set in post-apartheid South Africa and deals with three major characters: David Lurie, a fifty-two year old professor at the Cape Technical University, formerly known as Cape Town University College; Lucy Lurie, his lesbian daughter who lives on the farm in the Eastern Cape, Grahamstown; and Lucy's neighbour and dog-keeper, Petrus. Coetzee, in this text, emphasizes how a man in power has the ability not only to destroy himself, but also those around him. Both David and Petrus use women to gain their power and while they seek to triumph, the women in question experience the opposite. The story is both a personal and national battle as the characters fight for their survival in the hands of power-hungry individuals, while also confronting issues faced by post-apartheid South Africa.

The novel reflects a country that has not fully moved from its past, and characters who are aware of their roles as assigned by respective societies and history. The name of the book, *Disgrace*, carries a lot of weight and meaning, but one thing that can be taken from it is the disgrace suffered by the women in the book by society and sometimes self-inflicted, even though they are victims. Coetzee's aim, as demonstrated, is to establish history as a phenomenon occupying the present and baring issues in the present that need to be explored. The novel narrates a series of events where the past is seen dominating the present and thus questions whether South Africa has really moved on from its past. This provides a gap for the underlined issues to be taught and learned by this generation and the next to ensure complete detachment from life as it was known by our forefathers. This novel is one that potentially

exists in two different eras for two different reasons: to retell history as it was, and as it should not be.

4.3 Depiction of Gender-Based Violence in *Disgrace* (1999)

Coetzee's depiction of gender-based violence is understood through the character of Lucy when she asserts that:

“The reason is that, as far as I am concerned, what happened to me is purely a private matter. In another time, in another place it might be held to be a public matter. But in this place, at this time, it is not. It is my business, mine alone [. . .] This place being South Africa.”

(Coetzee, 1999, p. 112)

The above citation are the words of Lucy uttered after she had been raped by the three black men. This citation is particularly important in this study as it implies firstly that the new democracy does not accommodate white people, and secondly, that the violation of any woman, will always fall on deaf ears. Both these observations deal with racial segregation and gender inequality which this study sought to explore.

Part of recognising racial segregation and gender inequality is acknowledging racism and gender-based violence as prevailing factors in a new South Africa. This study therefore seeks to use literature such as *Disgrace*, in a South African language classroom to explore racism and gender-based violence. The aim is to enrich students by encouraging them to reflect on their personal experiences, feelings, and opinions. This method according to Pinar and Jover (2012), is an excellent stimulus for group work. Once students have successfully identified examples of gender-based violence, they can work in groups to interact more with the literature, incorporating the two theoretical frameworks mentioned in this study, while also working on their social skills. This will ensure that critical pedagogy is incorporated in their learning as the learners will be empowered to think and act critically, with the aim of transforming their life conditions (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

The text, *Disgrace* (1999) is concerned with violation of women through forced silence and the emphasis on space and time in a South Africa that still depicts apartheid years after it is deemed free. All the women violated in the book never entirely find their voices to tell their stories. Furthermore, the two contrasting settings: the city and the Eastern Cape represent two different spaces existing in two different times. Lurie is all powerful in the city, but when he visits his daughter in the Eastern Cape, he is suddenly confronted with the sad truth that this new territory belongs to a different race. The text explicitly confronts South Africa as a state and as a society;

one governed by rules where confessions and apologies are enough for abasement from men who are not even sorry (p.56) and a society where a woman's downfall is simply replaced by another to show their insignificance and how easily they can be substituted (p.7). This is evident when Lurie is asked to 'apologise' to save his job. But he is not even sorry. Instead, he moves on to his next victim, Bev Shaw, to replace Melanie.

This study argues that gender roles still affect women even in the new South Africa. Lucy is forced to sell her land to a man, so she can gain protection. Additionally, men as seen many years ago, are still portrayed as superior to women and thus use that power to advance themselves at the expense of a woman. Petrus's lifestyle changes because a woman has had to give up a part of herself for him. This given power is further enhanced and misused by white supremacists who are still governed by rules that were initially meant to elevate the white man while degrading the black man. The same elevation is noticed when Melanie stops attending classes while Lurie, the white man, carries on with his life.

In *Disgrace* (1999), the depiction of white supremacy as demonstrated above traces back to the Bantu Education as mentioned in previous chapters, where to debase black South Africans, the apartheid government had to impose an inferior type of education specifically designed for black South Africans. The same gap is evident in the chosen text as Lurie is well learned and is a university professor, while Petrus is only good for manual labour. Part of the main aspects of the Bantu education was to train the black children for manual labour and menial jobs, and *Disgrace* captures that idea explicitly well in the two characters. Critical pedagogy therefore seeks to collapse oppressive culture, by trying to humanize and empower learners as it is concerned with the idea of a just society for all (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

Moreover, *Disgrace* (1999) is teeming with oppressive men whose oppressive nature has led to the degradation of women. Kincheloe (2005) argues that critical pedagogy is concerned with transforming relations of power which are oppressive, and which lead to the oppression of people. Incorporating critical pedagogy in the analysis of *Disgrace* (1999) will transform power relations. Many female students will see and recognise themselves in Melanie and Lucy, as well as use the power given to them to transform their life conditions. Likewise, interacting with characters like Lurie and Petrus will instil a kind of awakening in male students that will seek to do better, to be better for a just society for all, where every single person has control over their own lives.

From the very beginning of the novel, we get a sense that David Lurie, the book's protagonist is a womaniser as Coetzee narrates his sex life in a rather crude manner. Lurie's character is a

representation of entitlement as he presents himself as someone who is in control, exuding confidence in who he is. Soraya on the other hand, is described as a sex object; “tall and slim, with long black hair and dark, liquid eyes” (Coetzee, 1999, p.1) emphasizing the misconceptions that a woman can only be good for sex, as attributed by society. Cultural and societal norms are recognised as major contributors in the fuelling of violent behaviour as women and girls continue to be violated and experience the worst kind of treatment in the hands of men. These ongoing practices that recognize men as being superior, and women inferior, stem from cultural observations that both women and men have to adhere to, such as men ‘paying’ for women and women losing their power to men because they have been paid for. Their identity automatically belongs to and is recognised under the authority of a man. Coetzee’s narration of women, men, and their relations is one strongly linked to conventional practices that seek to oppress women. Again, David is seen sleeping with a woman to satisfy his sexual needs as a man placed in a society where a role of a woman is to please the man; “he is old enough to be her father” (p.1).

According to McLaren (1998), “critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching” (p.45). The scholar further states that it is “the production of knowledge, the institutional structure of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation state” (p.45). Men have been conditioned to act and think a certain way due to conventional practices dating back as far as their forefathers. Men like Lurie exist because society has allowed them. Transforming the relationship among classroom teaching is another way of imparting in learners new ways of understanding themselves and those around them, away from patriarchal practices and demeaning institutional structures. This new knowledge is then enhanced in the wider community to not only bridge generational gaps, but also collapse gender roles that seek to oppress the marginalised.

Part of doing away with Bantu education included creating a curriculum that focused on the needs of people and their aspirations (Thobejane, 2005). This curriculum was to promote the development of a national identity. Cross-examining a novel like *Disgrace* (1999) in language classrooms and how it represents women is also important in acknowledging the new curriculum in the new South Africa that recognises them as existing beings; an education that advocates for people’s power. This collaboration of the new curriculum and critical pedagogy in language teaching thus unifies the idea of a just society for all, and the idea of an empowered generation.

Azoulay (2006) argues that Lurie's relations with Soraya is "impregnated with the generational problem and Lurie's unstable position on the generational map" (2006, p.33). Lurie's ignorance and arrogance are both his strong and weakest point as his uncertainties outweigh his certainties. He is arrogant in his entitlements as a man with desires, but ignorant and oblivious to shared responsibility that comes with desire. This oblivion results in him not wanting to acknowledge his part in the affair. Instead, he blames it on desire. Stretched between two generations, he is forced to accept both the gaps that evidently exist between the women in his generation, and the younger women in the new generation. He is not quite sure if the new generation and what it has to offer is something he would be willing to accept (Coetzee, 1999, p.2). He wants Melanie, but it must be on his terms; and now that it is no longer on his terms, he thinks Melanie has been influenced by external forces, such as her parents and boyfriend. Lurie struggles to adjust between the two generations, and his struggling is both self-abasing and self-destructive.

Lurie's struggle to accept Melanie's stance as a victim also stems from society's ignorance. It is rare to find young girls in our societies who are willing to stand for their truths. One of the aims of critical pedagogy involves self-consciousness and social awareness. Students are empowered to gain critical self-consciousness and social awareness for them to take appropriate action against oppressive forces (McKernan, 2013). Currently, a young woman standing up for herself is foreign to our boys, hence there is a need for renewed mind-sets through teaching and learning of literature to collapse all masculine behaviour in South African classrooms and societies. Consequently, that is what moving away from apartheid education should be about, addressing imbalances of the past. Failure to recognise women on equal terms stems from past social standings that viewed women as inferior to men. The same idea is thus explored in *Disgrace* (1999) and it is a shock for Lurie to see a woman take up space and stand up for herself because this kind of power has never been available to women, certainly not in the past.

The first problem associated with masculine behaviour is the belief that a man is entitled and because of that entitlement, he feels spaces and people owe him and therefore are indebted to satisfying his needs. This is evident in Lurie's behaviour both personally and in relation with people around him; hence, when he is confronted with realities that force him to accept various boundaries, he retaliates because "the boundary he finds most difficult to accept is the one posited by others – mainly women" (p.33). That is the nature of masculinity, refusing subjectivity for the fear of conforming to the one not worthy of conformity as predestined by history and society. This is the kind of 'culture' that this study hopes students will reflect on.

Moreover, this study hopes that learners will recognise critical pedagogy as not a prescriptive set of practices, but a continuous moral project that enables young people to develop a social awareness of freedom by connecting classroom learning with the experiences, histories, and resources that every student brings to their school. That is important in acknowledging the past as an influence of the present and as an attribution to historical systems of exclusion and discrimination, but also accepting the new curriculum as an opportunity to start over and reclaim freedom by challenging long standing cultural expectations.

As teachers engaging with students in South African language classrooms, challenging this structure represented by Lurie is important to reject long standing cultural expectations. Freire (1970) is of the notion that the aim of critical pedagogy is to return to marginalised groups their lost voices and identities. This study believes that by challenging power relations and collapsing long standing cultural expectations, students will be able to gain their lost voices and resist unjust reproduction, becoming active agents for social change.

Power and boundaries are two intertwined elements. Humans stretch their boundaries because of the power either given to them or self-proclaimed. Likewise, timidity is birthed by lack of power resulting in restricted boundaries. Lurie's relationship with Soraya is one that is based on self-proclaimed power understanding that history gave Lurie that power over her. Therefore, Lurie's first instinct after he accidentally runs into Soraya and her two boys in St George's Street one Saturday morning is regret (Coetzee, 1999, p. 6). He is filled with regret because he is aware that after the incident, power dynamics are bound to change. He has been given a window into Soraya's life, involuntarily. This power is no longer self-proclaimed since it has been given to him by coincidence. He can no longer dictate how deep he can go with Soraya. The shift in boundaries is sure to bring a shift in power dynamics because Lurie is not the one to accept change. He does the shifting and not the other way around; hence, when change happens, he would rather lose everything than reason with it.

This incident with Soraya is one of the first where Lurie unofficially, unaware, and ignorantly commits violence by harassing Soraya in her house. Wilson (2006) in his definition of gender-based violence also mentions harassment, intimidation and bullying as examples of gender-based violence falling under his two overlapping categories. After the incident, Soraya leaves her job and Lurie is asked by the agency to choose another 'exotic' to occupy his Thursday afternoons now that Soraya has left (Coetzee, 1999, p.7). His sense of entitlement does not let him close the Soraya chapter, instead, "he pays a detective agency to track her down" (p.9).

Entitlement has a lot to do with exercising power boundaries and demanding a known presence. This demand also presents itself in ways that would force a sane man to pay a detective to find a woman that certainly does not want to be found. When power is unlocked, it demands to be exercised:

“I don’t know who you are,” she says. “You are harassing me in my own house. I demand you will never phone me here again, never.”

Demand. She means *command*. Her shrillness surprises him: there has been no intimation of it before (Coetzee, 1999, p.10).

Demand and command have authoritative similarities. When one commands something; it is an authoritative order proclaimed by someone who is self-assured that they have control over that thing. However, Soraya knows very well that she has no control over Lurie, his actions or intentions, but demanding this of him is self-given control that demonstrates the nature of having no control over individuals, other than self; therefore, having the power to decide who she lets in her life and who she does not. This kind of authority is not concerned about other people’s actions, rather it is concerned about self: controlling self and what affects self.

Segalo (2015) asserts that most of the struggles suffered by women in their past can be perceived to be directly linked to their current predicament. For instance, Soraya and Lurie’s relationship, in which Soraya as a Muslim woman has never been entitled to any kind of power; hence, it is easier for Lurie to inflict dominion over her. However, what Segalo (2015) mentions is when women “reject dominant western oppositional hierarchies of silence and speech” and choose to “adopt frameworks where words, silence, dreams, gestures, tears all exist interdependently and within the same interpretive field,” then it is found that those deemed mute always speak (p.78). Soraya speaks, and in her speaking, shifts power dynamics as she stands up to a bully and for herself.

Although it should be noted that incorporating critical pedagogy in everyday learning is more concerned with public education that seeks to equip students with skills to enter the workplace, it should also be noted that educating students using critical pedagogy is also about educating them to contest workplace inequalities. Soraya here is seen identifying and challenging injustices that “contradict and undercut the most fundamental principles of freedom, equality, and respect” (Giroux, 2006, p.29). These should be the kind of skills that students leave with at the end of their school careers; to acknowledge and act upon invasive behaviour, as well as command and demand for equal treatment.

Invasion, command, demand – Azoulay (2006, p.34) argues that these “are all privileges of the white male,” but I argue that these privileges are prevalent across all males of all races. Azoulay further contends that these privileges are then “revoked not by dint of law but by dint of a brown woman demanding them for herself” and further “demanding a reallocation of the authority to determine boundaries” (p.34). Lurie is more shocked than surprised at Soraya’s words. It is not the words so much that shock him, but the tone of it all, because he realises that he has been stripped off the male authority. He can correct, fix, and replace her words, but her tone is final, and that shocks him. This is an important moment in the novel because as Segalo (2015) notes, spaces for uncomfortable conversations are needed if South Africa is to imagine a free and truly democratic society. Critical theory is seen at play here when Soraya is able to take her power back, and as a result, transform her life conditions by detaching herself from an oppressive relationship.

This incident deals with harassment, so clear, that Soraya says the words out loud, “You are harassing me in my own house” (p.10). The fear of her own personal space being invaded is evident in her “long silence before she speaks” (p.9). When she finally speaks, it is with intent, denying ever knowing Lurie and demanding that he never calls her again, then “a shadow of envy passes over him for the husband he has never seen” (p.10). Gqola (2015) asserts that our history epitomised women as slaves, property, owned and subjected to sexual violence because of how exposed and vulnerable they were under the ruling government. Lurie’s envy is attributed to his belief that Soraya’s husband gets to own her because he does not believe that a woman belongs to herself, or that her body is self-owned: “she does not own herself” (p.16).

Morrison (1973) refers to a woman’s ‘goodness’ and ‘righteousness’ as classically defined through sexual faithfulness, self-abnegation and the idealization of marriage and motherhood; sex not meant for desire, but part of social institutions. The issue of not owning oneself introduces the next example of gender-based violence present in *Disgrace* (Coetzee, 1999), when examining Lurie and Melanie Isaacs’ relationship. The beginning of their relationship is narrated as follows: “Without the Thursday interludes the week is as featureless as a desert” (p.11). Already there is a sense that Lurie is looking for something or rather someone to fill the gap created by the absence of the Thursday interludes, especially since “there are days when he does not know what to do with himself” (p.11). It is therefore no surprise when Lurie meets Melanie and immediately takes interest in her, “mildly smitten with her” (p.11).

Armstrong (1994) describes rape as violence and abuse of power. Abuse of power is in many ways associated with self-inflicted and/ or culturally assumed power whereby the person abusing the power is usually in a position culturally attained and self-inflicted because of cultural privileges. The person is usually aware of these privileges and so often acts on them, which is the case with Lurie. By history, culture and society, he is clothed in authority that he is very much aware of and is not scared to exercise it over his minors, presumed subjects and those less empowered.

Meeting Melanie could be considered a coincidence, even though Lurie is clearly on the lookout. But the events that take place after that are not coincidental. They are a series of planned, though arguably, impulsive events, which are a true reflection of power abuse. Coetzee describes Melanie as being “small and thin” (p.11), “her hips are as slim as a twelve-year-old’s” (p.19), clearly the total opposite of Lurie, who is more than one way, her senior. Lurie’s stalking behaviour is once again visible when one Sunday morning he decides to drive “to the empty campus” to extract Melanie’s enrolment card so he could copy down her personal information (p.18).

Entitlement plays a significant role in masculinity. There are numerous times in the novel where Lurie reprimands himself to stop the affair with Melanie, but he would not. A lot of power abusing is also associated with birth right behaviour. This behaviour is bestowed in men from birth, where a boy is taught how to be a man. These teachings are passed down from generation to generation, hence they never really lose their essence. It is so well cemented in them that they usually use it to oppress women. Society has created foregrounding rules that will excuse any masculine behaviour in the name of ‘he is a man’.

Recognising masculine behaviour is important in addressing gender inequalities in the new South Africa. Critical pedagogy gives teachers a chance to communicate with their students about the society and culture to help them reflect critically on various aspects of the culture they are exploring in language classrooms and preparing to enter into (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). The culture of old men preying on young girls is one of the dominant discourses that can be taken from Lurie and Melanie’s relationship and reflected to students. Through reflection, students are given a chance to take their own stance by determining the necessary type of action needed to improve their life conditions. Likewise, Melanie’s rape is a chance to reflect critically on a society that still perpetrates school violence in the name of protecting the teacher and the ideas inflicted by society on how rape should look like.

When Lurie “makes love” to Melanie for the first time, the act is “pleasurable” even though Melanie is “passive throughout” and has “a slight frown on her face” afterwards (p.19). Primarily, there is a problem with singularly focalising such an event that is meant to be enjoyed by two people. And secondly, there is a problem with a man that finds pleasure in ‘making love’ to a woman that is “passive throughout”. Melanie understands that she is overpowered in this situation and that is dangerous because it triggers warning signs and alertness in her. Submission seems like her only way out and she gives in, unresisting. At what point does rape unfold? one would ask. At a point where domination decides if a man gets it or not? Or at a point where a man only gets it simply because a woman has given up her will power to fight and decides to succumb to her powerless body?

Gqola (2015) affirms that “we have to think unrelentingly about what we are taught in patriarchal society – and all of us are brought up in such society,” where we are made to believe that “rape only looks a certain way,” and therefore should be classified as rape only “when it fits into that very narrow idea” (p.6). What about the second encounter in Melanie’s flat, where she says “no”? The novel clearly states that she says “no, not now” and these words are uttered while she is struggling (Coetzee, p. 25). In this passage, it is explained how Lurie carries Melanie to the bedroom and how the act is “undesirable to the core” (p. 25). Even though these little details represent rape, the passage further takes through Lurie’s thoughts where he convinces himself that it is “not rape, not quite that” (p. 25).

In this act between Lurie and Melanie, as Mardorossian (2011) explains, “there is a stark contrast between the utter repulsion and resistance his student’s body expresses” and Lurie’s reassuring “assertion that this is not rape”. Lurie is more interested in her “lack of maturity, her lack of desire” and even comments on consent, therefore, “he is conscious of the fact that she is repulsed”, but he still refuses to acknowledge his act as “rape” (p.78-79). Problematically as Gqola (2015) asserts, human minds have been trained to believe that there are ‘mild’ and brutal rapes and, each person gets to decide which. Unfortunately, once society has ruled a rape as being ‘mild’, it never makes the spectrum and women exposed to such rapes are better off silent. Melanie, a black young woman, understands her role in the society fuelled by past antiquities and what it means for her and the man in question. She knows her skin colour disqualifies her from taking up a man like Lurie who is backed by both his skin colour and profession.

Likewise, Coetzee is aware of that role, hence he never allows the readers insight to Melanie’s thoughts. As Graham (2003) notes, “the experience of the violated body is absent, hidden from

the reader” (p.433). We are thus forced to read rape in its absence, to correctly read sexual violence by “listening not only to who speaks and in what circumstances, but who does not speak and why” (p.433). By doing so, it gives a chance to teachers as “citizen scholars” to “take critical positions and to relate their work with major social issues in the society for the purpose of creating hope for pupils/ students to transform society to be better” (Giroux, 2006, p.5). Sexual violence is thus read in silence, in between all the passiveness and frowns, as well as all the excuses supplied by rapists. Society is therefore urged to listen tentatively and observe silent actions. In this instant, Melanie’s actions speak volumes as she realises she has been overpowered, and that society will not stand up for her; she surrenders her body to Lurie to do as he pleases, subjecting herself to sexual slavery because she may be afraid and ashamed. Afraid that a tiny body like hers could never defeat a man like Lurie, her senior, but also ashamed that she let it go so far and society will blame her.

As Armstrong (1994) notes:

When we started investigating, we discovered that rape, particularly of black women, was so prolific in South Africa that it was just accepted by everybody. . . even the victim herself. A black woman’s life was considered valueless, and what happened to her unimportant (p.36).

What Armstrong highlights is important in relation to both rapes in the book. Both Melanie and Lucy succumb to the rapes, even though they are victims. The setting of the novel and where the rapes occur put the two women in juxtaposition since they are both violated away from familiar territories, and in that regard, subjected to silence. A black woman is raped by a white man in his territory, and a white woman is raped by black men in their territory. Part of accepting rape is also subjected to who did the raping and where.

The high level of violence in schools as this paper argues, reflects “a complicated combination of past history and recent stresses – on individual, school, and community levels – in a society marked by deep inequalities and massive uncertainty and change within school operations” (Vally *et al.*, 2002, p.80). The argument brought forth by *Vally et al.* is a direct reflection of Melanie’s unfortunate dilemma and the juxtaposition of the two rapes explored in the novel. The ‘who’ and ‘where’ as demonstrated above answers directly to the complications of history. Both these women find themselves existing in foreign territories, exposing themselves to marked inequalities in a new South Africa that has not quite been accepted as part of the changing dynamics of history. As a result, the two women in question fall victim to social injustices, and are violated in contemporary South Africa.

Coetzee (1999) refers to social injustices and gender inequality linked to South African history. This does not imply it should be regarded as rape because it highlights past injustices. However, an emphasis is drawn to the present as the representation of the past, which is the main argument in this paper. It demonstrates that past issues are still prevalent in the present and their lingering presence shows a need for studying and learning of the former. Too many girls and women are suffering silently because they have accepted themselves as victims, while the perpetrator walks around freely. It therefore comes as no shock when the following day, Melanie is not in class. In fact, “she stays away the whole of the next week” (p.26).

The next ‘decent’ conversation that takes place between Melanie and Lurie is a series of questions from Melanie, enquiring about Lurie’s relationships. Melanie asks about Lurie’s divorce, to which to her surprise is informed that Lurie has been divorced twice already and married twice (Coetzee, p. 29). Lurie’s details of the two divorces are very scratchy, to the point that there are not even pictures to account for it. To this, Melanie is curious whether he collects pictures of her, and his response is brief and straightforward; “I don’t collect pictures. I don’t collect women” (Coetzee, p. 29).

Something striking about this conversation makes one connect the dots to the next incident. It is as if it seeks to clarify and finalise what Melanie already knows so she could give reason for her next steps. Sure enough, she gets her assurance. Women to Lurie are nothing more than ‘things’ to amuse his boredom and toss aside when he is done, hence, he does not even bother collecting pictures. This conversation puts things into perspective for Melanie, and maybe for the first time since her affair with Lurie, she fully understands where she stands and her role in the affair. She has been used by a man who has done so to many other women and gotten away with it. She is just another victim awaiting society’s judgements.

It is evident that Lurie is surprised when he receives a memorandum from the office of the Vice-Rector (Student affairs) “notifying him that a complaint has been lodged against him under article 3.1 of the university’s Code of Conduct” (p.38). Article 3.1 deals with victimization or harassment of students by teachers. This shock comes with disbelief that Melanie could do such a thing. In fact, he is convinced that it was not Melanie’s idea, “she is too innocent for that, too ignorant of her power” (p.39). Lurie’s behaviour at this point shows just how aware he is of his power over Melanie. It further demonstrates that Lurie is aware of what he has done and acknowledges that all his actions are fuelled by his understanding that nothing would happen to him because his victim was incapable of fighting him.

Disgrace (1999) throughout indirectly explores issues of uneven power dynamics between the

men and women in the book. Leading up to this point, Coetzee chooses to be discreet about this and let the reader decide what certain incidents mean for partaking individuals. The memorandum comes with shock that for the first time in the novel, Lurie confesses the indirect truths about his relationships and how they exist because one party has had to give up their power. Unintentionally, he confesses his abuse of power and role in fuelling gender violence which is often birthed by masculinity seeking to demean women while elevating the man.

Rapes reported in campus life never really amount to anything especially because the procedure taken is designed to protect the perpetrator more than the victim as it is in the case of Lurie. He is asked by the university to subscribe to a statement to help “cool down what has become a very heated situation” (Coetzee, p. 53-54). He is told that the preferred solution would be to resolve the case away from the attention of media, while ensuring that Lurie keeps his job.

The university committee is more concerned with saving Lurie’s job, than serving justice where clearly needed. Lurie’s main concern is to get the case out of the way, take whatever punishment given to him so he can move on with his life like nothing happened. But what about Melanie who has been violated? whose life would never be the same after being publicly humiliated by Lurie? Simister (2012) calls this type of gender-based violence emotional violence, which is when a woman suffers public humiliation inflicted by her partner. In the text, the relationship between Melanie and Lurie is not exclusive, but Lurie does see her as his own, “claiming her achievements as his own” as seen when he watches her in a play; “when they laugh at Melanie’s lines he cannot resist a flush of pride. Mine! He would like to say . . .” (Coetzee, 1999 as cited in Graham, 2003, p.438).

Not only is this rape an act of sexual violence, but the whole relationship is depicted as a betrayal of “ethical responsibility” (Graham, 2003, p.438). Lurie violates Melanie and refuses to take responsibility. The act for Melanie is “undesired” (Coetzee, 1999, p.25). The question is not whether Lurie committed the crime or not, the question is whether he understands the crime he has committed. The issue with this whole scenario is it involves overlapping subjects that underline other related issues that are not quite rape, which include the matter of superiority and the question of race. Firstly, it seems an act has been committed by a man in power to an innocent young woman; secondly, the act is committed by a man who is aware of his racial privileges as a white man bestowed to him by both history and society. Before rape is even identified, already the former is a problem. Now rape must be identified away from the two underlining ideologies and that alone proves to be more complicated.

It is not just to say that Lurie has raped a woman, but a young woman; controversially, his

ignorance is questioning even the very essence of superiority and racism. Is he acting this way because Melanie is a minor? and one not belonging to his racial group. Again, it is visible that gender inequality has such a distinct link to racial stereotypes. The two are intertwined ideologies that when explored, reflect overlapping similarities. Armstrong (1999) records that during apartheid, it became clear to activists who were concerned with gender issues that rape statistics were escalating, yet no one was commenting on them (p. 35). Armstrong further notes that rape was unquestionable intertwined with racial injustice attributed to the apartheid system. It is therefore no surprise that Armstrong additionally notes that no white man had been executed for rape, whereas the majority of the perpetrators were hanged in the account of white women rapes. If, according to Armstrong, “the victim was black, it wasn’t really seen as quite serious as if she had been a white woman” (p. 35).

The very same way Melanie’s case is handled by the university accolades Armstrong’s argument. Rape at this point is unquestionable, however, the rape itself has somewhat taken the back seat so Lurie can be given a chance to save himself and his job. This clearly demonstrates that they are not so much interested in the rape, but rather interested on who did the raping and how best he can be helped. The question thus rises whether the actions taken are not based on racial injustice. Is Melanie’s stance not taken seriously because she is black?

Lurie does not seem to understand the case stated against him. His comprehension of what has happened is to reply for conviction without necessarily acknowledging his wrongs. He is more concerned with what must be done to protect himself, and not what must be done to correct his wrongs. This is because the rape to him is not serious. He claims that what goes on in his mind is his business and he is not willing to confess anything other than pleading guilty to the crime stated against him – even though it is not clear whether he even understands the crime at all (Coetzee, p. 51).

From Lurie’s reaction, the study argues that entitlement is also characterized and exists through pride. Pride is therefore focalised and read in Lurie’s actions as he refuses to take responsibility for his actions. At this point in the novel, his comprehension of the situation is placed and reverted in simpler terms, where clarity is given to the severity of the act so Lurie can make wiser decisions, but even that is not good enough to save himself from the dangers of entitlement. Lurie fails to comprehend the case stated against him as a matter of collective stigma as his pride would not let it be viewed in that manner. The committee dealing with his case is aware of the detachment from his side that seeks to analyse the case away from proper justification and into the very narrow idea of individualism, Lurie at the centre. Lurie is caught

fighting for clarity that is clearly visible to everybody else except the perpetrator himself, as he so desperately tries to isolate the collective so the self can triumph. Lurie fights his lack of comprehension in such a situation where self should be forsaken for the good of collective understanding, claiming that what goes on in his mind is his business.

“Frankly, what you want from me is not a response but a confession” (Coetzee, 1999, p.51) highlights the misunderstanding of the matter as viewed by Lurie. His inability to understand the case as so simply presented to him disables his understanding that a response and a confession in a sexual harassment case are two similar ideas that allow perpetrators to ‘respond’ with the intention of ‘confessing’ to their crimes, and any other response away from the much anticipated confession would be ill fitting. Lurie, however, wants to respond with no intention of confessing to the crime stated against him. His response is merely an act deliberate to save self.

Lurie’s attitude and choice of action is undermining to Melanie who has been wronged and deserves justice, and to the committee handling Lurie’s hearing. By refusing to accept the case stated against him, Lurie is implying Melanie is not worthy of his truth and undermines her efforts to seek justice for herself. This alone is a form of violence; psychological abuse as demonstrated by Wilson (2006) that to be violated and to be further refused your truth and the truth you deserve is both damaging emotionally and psychologically. Power is again an underlying matter that seeks to validate intentions of an unsympathetic man driven by entitlement. Lurie shows no sympathy in his response, and further shows no remorse for the damage done to Melanie; thus, unsympathetic towards her and undeserving of her truth. Pettersson (2014) further suggests that Lurie’s unsympathetic character is built upon his “seduction” of women that is enhanced through male power and silent women (p.3). Longman (2009) as cited in Pettersson (2014) describes this power as “the ability or right to control people or events” and “the ability to influence people or give them strong feelings” (p.4). Stepien (2012) as cited in Pettersson (2014) concludes that the novel is constantly silencing the female voice.

The words “. . . let me confess” (Coetzee, 1999, p. 52) are loaded with expectations. It is at this very moment that readers may think that perhaps Lurie’s senses might come to the party, and that maybe, the long-awaited confession might finally come and justice served for Melanie. On the contrary, the ‘confession’ is not anything close to what is expected from Lurie. The words are twisted and manipulated to protect himself. He is suddenly guilty of being enslaved by desire he could not control, as well as the servant of poetry and words that govern and protect men like himself from responsibility. Interestingly, he recognises that Melanie and he are from

two different generations, asking if intimacy should be banned across generations. This perception is misguided because it still exempts him from generational gaps that seek to be understood. For Lurie to be able to apprehend the different generations in question, he would also need to allow himself to understand the generational attributes that neither existed nor gave women of colour privileges in his time, and he fails to do that. He is consumed by power privileges that no longer exist for him and misguided by generational misperceptions that may be beyond his comprehension in the new South Africa.

In critical race theory, Delgado (1987) argues that the dominant group justifies its power with stories, stock explanations that construct reality in ways that maintain their privilege. In that regard, oppression is rationalised, causing little self-examination by the oppressor, which is clearly the case with Lurie. All his excuses are based on white privilege and less on actual self-examination. He is blaming everything and anything, but himself. Lurie is desperately holding on to the past, unaware, or perhaps ignorant to the changes imposed by the new South Africa. Understandably, it is a complex process that requires one to lose themselves. Adapting to a new South Africa proves to be challenging for Lurie because Coetzee has created a noncompliant character. Accepting South Africa's history for Lurie will mean exploring "the pain involved both in accommodating the past and surviving the present" (Cooper, 2005, p. 23). That is something he is clearly not willing to do at this point, hence the suggestion is made to "take his plea at face value and recommend accordingly" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 53).

Lurie's failure, or rather unwillingness to see himself as perpetuating relations of domination, oppression and injustice emphasize Modiri's (2012) argument that indeed critical race theory is concerned with the type of revolution that needs radical assessment of self and the past. Therefore, when the narrative's climax comes, readers are hopeful that prevailing ideologies will be dismantled, and social justice recognised because now the tables have turned. The incident with Lucy and the three black men provides an interesting turn in both the exploration of critical race theory and critical pedagogy. As a reader, one cannot help but wonder how David Lurie will react amid this horrific event, while he himself is clouded by charges of sexual harassment and arguably rape.

David and Lucy are out walking the dogs when they meet three strangers on the way: two men and a boy (Coetzee, 1999, p. 91). A nod and a greeting are exchanged between them – though Lucy does not recall ever seeing them before. As Lucy and David near the house, they are disturbed by the uproar barking of the caged dogs and Lucy quickens her steps, only to get there to find the three men waiting for them. Two of the men stand at a remove, while the boy

hisses at the dogs inside the cages, making sudden, threatening gestures (p.92).

While this happens, Lucy tries to call Petrus, her neighbour, but there is no sign of him. The boy moves to join his companions. He is said to have “a flat, expressionless face and piggish eyes; he wears a flowered shirt, baggy trousers, a little yellow sunhat” (p.92). The other two men are both in overalls. The taller of them is described as being strikingly handsome, with a high forehead, sculpted cheekbones and flaring nostrils (p.92). What follows is a nightmare that leaves David’s and Lucy’s lives changed forever. The three strangers come up with a convincing story about how they need to use the telephone because one of the men’s sister is having an “accident”, that is to say a baby (p.92). While Lucy leads the “tall, handsome man” into the house, “the second man pushes past him and enters the house too” (p.93). David is locked outside. There is silence in the house. Furious and scared, David calls for Petrus, but Petrus seems to have mysteriously disappeared.

Seeing David’s panic, the boy “turns and sprints, heading for the front door” (p.93). David lets the bulldog’s leash go and orders the dog to get the boy. While the dog is busy with the boy, David abandons them, rushes back to the kitchen door. To his surprise, the bottom leaf is not bolted, so he kicks it a few times and it swings open. He creeps into the kitchen and is immediately met by a blow on the crown of the head. He then becomes aware of what is happening as he is being dragged across the kitchen floor, then he blacks out (p.93). He is set on fire, but luckily only his hair is burnt, while Lucy gets raped. The men kill the dogs, steal David’s car, Lucy’s rifle and some of their personal belongings and flee, leaving David and Lucy to deal with the aftermath.

Coetzee in his description of the rapists has also responded to Gqola’s argument that anyone can be a rapist regardless of how “strikingly handsome” one is, as the tall man in Lucy’s house was described. Again, a coloration is drawn between history and the mistreatment of women. Petrus has to disappear for Coetzee to not only draw our attention to the gender inequality as an issue that exists due to historical conflicts, but also to introduce racial classifications as denominators existing in contemporary South Africa. Petrus, a black man, cannot be a suspect if he is around, so he must disappear in the midst of this horrific incident for racial stereotypes to prevail in the novel. Another interesting point to note is how Coetzee almost contradicts himself along the narrative.

The three rapists take on a description of a dog; the same description used in the novel by Lurie to explain his side of the story to Lucy, claiming there is no point in beating and taming an unmanageable dog that gets excited at the sight of a “bitch”, that it is okay for beating a dog for

chewing a slipper, but desire is another story, “no animal will accept the justice of being punished for following its instincts” (p.90).

David claims he cannot control his desires and therefore should not be punished for that, and in so doing, unintentionally, responds to racial stereotypes associated with white dominancy and/ or privileges. He insists that the three rapists be punished for raping Lucy. One may then wonder why the same drive does not apply in Melanie’s case. Modiri (2012) hence maintains the notion that the emergence of critical race theory was motivated by the fact that critical legal studies did not sufficiently recognise the experiences of black people.

From the above observations, one can conclude that Melanie’s experiences are not recognised, hence Lurie does not share the same sentiments when it comes to her rape. On the contrary, he insists that Lucy’s experiences be recognised, and justice be served. The contrast in the dog metaphor is therefore introduced later in the novel when Lucy is raped. The same desire that a dog cannot be punished for is contrasted with the same people that Lurie claims should be punished for raping his daughter. Tables turn and the metaphor used in the narrative to protect Lurie no longer serves the same purpose when Lucy is raped. Nonetheless, it is a claim that has unintentionally labelled both Lurie and the intruders ‘dogs’, Lurie involuntarily resembling the rapists.

Throughout the novel, the recreation of history in the present is evident and focalises the rationale on fundamental issues mentioned in this paper as one strongly linked to past antiquities. Lucy’s silence after the rape attests to this theory as argued in this paper, that gender and racial issues stem from the past. In fact, Marais as cited in Graham (2012) argues that:

By not reporting her rape, Lucy in *Disgrace* (1999) rejects the narrative offered to her by a certain history and by her father. Unlike the white women whose stories of rape by black men were sensationalised and exploited in South African history, the fictional white rape victim in *Disgrace* (1999) refuses to report the crime committed against her, claiming that what happened is “her business” (Graham, 2012, p.142).

Moreover, Marais adds that,

Readers may view Lucy’s silence and passivity as indicative of the impotence and abasement of whites in new South Africa, but in fact this character warns that her silence should not be read as an abstraction, and that it signifies neither a collective guilt nor personal salvation. Rather, Lucy’s refusal to publicise an account of rape “in this place, at this time” draws attention to the very real and concrete ways in which rape

narratives in South African history have justified oppressive laws that dispossessed those defined as racially other (Cited in Graham 2012, p.142).

Black men as previously mentioned in this paper were severely punished for raping white women. That gave the white women power to voice these violations without any fear, knowing that they would be avenged for. Now Marais argues that the abstraction as a widely known part of our history is found losing its power in Coetzee's narrative when Lucy refuses to publicise her rape. He asserts that her silence is due to her refusing to be part of the history offered to her by the past and by David.

“David, when people ask, would you mind keeping to your own story, to what happened to you?”

He does not understand.

“You tell what happened to you, I tell what happened to me,” she repeats.

“You're making a mistake,” he says in a voice that is fast descending to a croak.

“No, I'm not,” she says (Coetzee, 1999, p.99).

Moreover, Marais as cited in Graham (2012) makes a claim that readers should not view Lucy's silence as one based on the ineffectiveness and degradation of whites in the new South Africa. Instead, Lucy's rape should be viewed as Lucy views it, an abstraction not based on either collective guilt or personal salvation. This abstraction seeks to draw “attention to the very real and concrete ways in which rape narratives in South African history have justified oppressive laws that dispossessed those defined as racially other” (p.142).

This paper does not agree with neither Lucy nor Marais' argument. To say a woman should accept rape because she is white is rather absurd and to imply that readers should accept the same imposed idea is more ludicrous. This South Africa that Coetzee has created does not exist and to trick readers into believing that “black man is out to revenge himself” only fuels the idea that indeed gender and racial issues go hand in hand with past injustices (Easton, 2006, p.188). Athol Fugard, the South African playwright quoted in Mardorossian (2011) further agrees that “this is a morbid phenomenon” (p.73). The novel has thus created an illusion that the story is about a black revengeful man, and we ought to sympathise with the innocent white man. Moreover, it has been noted to be “colluding with and perpetuating the worst nightmares and clichés about South Africa as a violent society” (Mardorossian, 2011, p.73). Understanding the consequences of this recreation requires an understanding that history never protected women

and if we are to deviate from the actual issue of violation to racial dispossessions, neither Lucy, nor Melanie would be avenged for the violation done to them both. As aware as we are of history, rape should be read away from connotations of racial stereotypes and each crime punishable as deemed fitting.

However, when Lucy refuses to report the rape, racial stereotypes play out. She claims that the crime done to her is purely a private matter, and that if it had happened in another time, somewhere else, then she might report it. But not in this time, in this South Africa (Coetzee, p. 111-112). Lucy, according to Mardorossian (2011), “accepts her fate as a symbol of the redistribution of power in post-apartheid South Africa” and so do her rapists as people gathering apartheid debts (p.74). Indeed, by refusing to report a crime done to her, Lucy instils in readers the idea that the new South Africa does not accommodate white people and is immune to their sufferings.

Not that there is no awareness of the justified oppressive laws that ejected those defined as racially other in the South African history, but to handle the matter in its full sensitivity, one needs to acknowledge that whatever is decided individually and collectively, outside collective guilt or personal salvation, should not by any means evoke feelings of inequality on either sides of the racial spectrum. Part of adopting critical pedagogy, is to create a more just society for all and by choosing which crimes to report, done to who, by who, and which crimes to accept or reject, would not be serving the purpose of critical pedagogy.

O'Connor (2006) suggests that “gender is a repressed but crucially important framework” (p. 107) in any young person trying to construct an identity. *Disgrace* (1999) prohibits women from creating their own identities by silencing them. Their stories are told through a male’s perspective. They are never truly their own, therefore, readers never truly get to understand who the women are. For example, with Soraya and Melanie, both the detailed events are focalised from Lurie’s perspective. Apart from the narration which so often resembles a man’s voice, there is no clear idea of who Soraya and Melanie are. Even though Lurie would never willingly and openly confess, he is bothered by Lucy’s sexuality. Lucy’s rape is seen as a reflection of a patriarchal society that still views women as properties of men and self-created identities therefore forbidden. Lucy is raped and her identity as a lesbian is silenced. In fact, she takes on a different identity as a mother and a wife.

This study therefore proposes that an analysis of *Disgrace* (1999) be accompanied by an incorporation of critical pedagogy and critical race theory in language classrooms. As demonstrated above, the novel is teeming with examples of gender-based violence which is

largely embedded in South African history; one that is so profoundly founded by racial segregation and gender inequality. Teachers thus become a mirror of society in education. By exploring *Disgrace* (1999) and identifying examples of gender-based violence using the two theoretical frameworks mentioned, not only do they get to challenge long-held assumptions, but also ask new questions, and change the narrative for the students. Coetzee has introduced silent women, oppressed women, women with no real identities, and by identifying and engaging with the stories of these women in language classrooms, this paper hopes to give a voice to the voiceless and power to the powerless.

Once an analysis of *Disgrace* (1999) has been carried through in language classrooms and the examples of gender-based violence have been identified, as demonstrated above, then students can get into groups and engage with the text more. It is important that this task is carried out individually before it becomes a group activity for personal enrichment. That way, students can reflect on their own personal experiences, feelings, and opinions before engaging with other students. It is important that individuals recognise themselves in the characters and events narrated in the story as this curricular is “framed through the use of students’ experiences and realities of their lives” (Degener, 2001, p.79). The role of teachers is quite simple; that is to appreciate students’ “viewpoints and to take part in the dialogical process” (Sadeghi, 2008, p. 80) as this will enable students “to become cultural producers who can rewrite their experiences and perceptions” (Giroux, 1997, p.80). Therefore, teachers should be willing to learn as they teach. Hence, Darder (2003) argues that the relationship of learning and teaching more than anything considers the teacher and the students’ relationship. This relationship should thus be based on compassion, mutual understanding, and common goals (Darder, 2003; Zembylas, 2013).

Therefore, gender roles as foregrounding factors contributing to gender-based violence need to collapse. History, as demonstrated in this section has successfully managed to invade the present through masculine behaviour and patriarchal societies which still enforce and practice oppressive laws through conventional practices aimed at enslaving women while elevating the men. This section has highlighted the importance of recognising these oppressive gender roles that so often result in the violation of women. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* (1999) has provided significant examples that speak directly to the girl child and women. These incidents as seen above are a demonstration of lessons to be imposed in the learning of literature to curb and/or eradicate the issue of violence in schools.

Three types of gender-based violence are distinctly highlighted above: harassment, emotional

violence, and sexual violence in the form of rape. Soraya is harassed by Lurie in her home after she leaves her job. Both Melanie and Lucy suffer emotional violence when they are publicly humiliated by the perpetrators. They both struggle to face the public and are thus forced to put their lives on hold while the perpetrators continue to roam the streets freely. They are both forced to publicly live the nightmare as their stories become a public fiasco. However, both these victims never get to entirely own their stories in public which makes the humiliation even more penetrating. The humiliation not only comes with assumed tales, but it also comes with incomplete and omitted feelings as both victims are silenced by the book's author. The humiliation is publicly owned, but never made entirely personal as Coetzee so cleverly detach the women from their stories by either creating a voice for them that is not theirs, or forcing reasons that are historically based than personal.

Coetzee has written a novel that sparks debates around issues of gender violence and focalises the prominence of looking at rape as the end result of other overlapping occurrences of violence. Women are urged to read violence away from sexual conflicts that often result in rape, but put it in the very narrow approach of life where stalking could also mean violence as seen with Soraya. Often, the issue is in the misconceptions provided by societies, that conflict must take place for violence to occur. On the contrary, violence can be silent, yet brutal. Once one understands the dynamics of power, it is easier to understand the complexity of violence. Power relations do play a pivotal role in the treatment of women and/ or girls as demonstrated above. Often, women are violated because they are unable to defend themselves as seen in the case of Melanie and Lucy. They are powerless and the perpetrators understand that. Therefore, exploring *Disgrace* (1999) and incorporating critical pedagogy and critical race theory will help students place themselves in a better position to understand oppressive roles. Understanding who is imposing the power and who is forced to conform is important to fully understand gender roles.

Power relations have the capacity to lead to violence as the one party is often marginalised and overpowered by the other. This chapter has successfully identified examples of gender-based violence using Simister (2012) and Wilson's (2006) definitions in the attempt of providing a break down analysis for language classrooms of what could and can be regarded as violence. In the exploration of *Disgrace* (1999), critical pedagogy and critical race theory were also incorporated to empower students. It was demonstrated that exploring a book like *Disgrace* (1999) would require teachers to equip students with the capacity to transform their society. It was also noted that in order for students to take critical positions, they would need to engage

with the text individually; find themselves in the created characters, respond to the events in the book before engaging in group activities to further analyse the book incorporating critical pedagogy and critical race theory. By doing so, they can challenge any form of domination, oppression, and subordination.

4.4 Representation of Racial Violence

The argument presented in this study has maintained the notion that understanding racism in contemporary South Africa entails comprehending the notions of apartheid that epitomised racism as a system originally created to elevate the white man while demeaning the black man. This section is an analysis of the book, highlighting incidents in the novel that deal with race relations as a system that stems from apartheid using the two types of racism as mentioned by Puttick (2011) namely: symbolic and aversive racism. Moreover, this section will illustrate how the examples of racism found in *Disgrace* (1999) will be taught and learned in South African language classrooms incorporating critical race theory.

Consequently, emphasis will be made on reversed race relations birthed by the new system which introduces new roles for white people in contemporary South Africa. Moreover, this also advocates for the need to trace back history as an existing part of South Africa to locate past issues and displace present issues. Therefore, the border (Eastern Cape border which is the site of the wars between white colonists, Afrikaner Trekkers and the indigenous black people) in the novel marks a significant part of history (Farred, 2002, p.16). This border represents South Africa's past; the Eastern Cape as the frontier where the battle over land between the British and the Xhosa took place back in the nineteenth century (Yitah, 2008, p.27). The border also plays host to "struggles against colonial incursion, over boundaries, livestock and control of the land" (Farred, 2002, p.17). The farm's location as asserted by Marais and Wenzel (2006) serves as a focal representation of an "inescapable" past, where it is positioned as a threatening and "potentially dangerous *liminal* space" with the possibility of "self" meeting the "other" and potentially "establishing a state of transition, submission" and possibly, transformation (2006, p.27).

The border thus plays a pivotal role in understanding racism when exploring *Disgrace* (1999) as it is a crucial place where a lot of racial violation takes place. Moreover, this violation is now reversed. It is no longer a place of gloating for the whites, but rather a place of suffering and a place of new possibilities, where a lot of power relation has shifted and transformation required. This is where readers get to understand the changes imposed by the new South Africa and how still, the shift in race relations depicts racism. The representation of the border also

illustrates the importance of incorporating critical race theory when exploring racism as this critical engagement especially in South Africa is “justified by a long history of institutionalised white supremacy and white racial privilege which today coexists with ongoing (and lingering) forms of anti-black racism and racial exclusion” (Modiri, 2012, p.405).

Marais (2003) argues that by depicting labour and race relations “in the contemporary rural context”, Coetzee has placed *Disgrace* (1999) in a georgic nature, meaning he has chosen not to withdraw from “history by eliding the relations which have fashioned South African history”. On the contrary, Coetzee uses the pastoral which foregrounds these relations (Marais, 2003, p.247). The relations that have fashioned South African history are crucial aspects that have occupied both the past and present, “the past, not as in those events that have occurred never to be reclaimed”, but occurrences “whose inscription, whose writing and whose encoding are vital to the new society’s understanding of itself” (Farred, 2002, p.16). This places the past in a crucial position when seeking to understand the present, as argued in this paper. The past therefore does not refer to incidents that no longer serve any purpose in the present, however, the past relates to incidents that are present in the now; incidents such as racism that stem from the past, but still exist in the present.

Disgrace (1999), as noted by Farred (2002), situates readers in the very front row of history, where “race, racism and relations are most deeply embedded, most resistant to being reconstructed” (p.17). This paper argues that it is no coincidence such an important part of history is centralised in *Disgrace* (1999). The Eastern Cape plays two significant roles in this paper’s argument; firstly, being the centre of action where history was birthed and secondly, being the transporter that brings change. The underlined implications relay the theory of past meeting the present in the new South Africa, and highlights as per this paper’s argument, the importance of history as a significant bestowment to be explored in the understanding of the new system as presented in *Disgrace* (1999).

“For a man of his age, fifty-two” are the opening words in *Disgrace* (1999). The age of the book’s protagonist, David Lurie, is important in understanding both generational gap and new race relations Lurie is confronted with in contemporary South Africa. The theme of history meeting the present and vice versa is relayed through Lurie who unfortunately is forced to adapt to the new system that threatens race reversals for white supremacy.

The first racist symbolism is in the names of Melanie and Lucy. Graham (2012) notes that in *Disgrace* (1999), David translates Melanie’s name as “the dark one,” while Lucy’s name has associations with light (p.143). The symbolic meaning of light and darkness plays a significant

role in the novel *Disgrace* (1999) as darkness refers to dark, illiteracy, ignorance and inability, aspects applied symbolically in relation to the black characters in the novel. Soraya the prostitute is “surprisingly moralistic” (Coetzee, 1999, p.1) “though by occupation she is a loose woman” (p.3), clearly ranking her in the lowest of human dignities. Melanie Isaacs is “not the best student”, she is “unengaged” (p.11), symbolising her inabilities as a student entrusted with academic material. Even though Lucy tries to introduce Petrus as an equal; “co-proprietor”, Lurie constantly comments on his inabilities to construct English sentences, exposing his lack of literacy. It should be noted that all three of these characters are black, and Coetzee’s descriptions of them are both undermining and degrading.

Coetzee has recreated a place where history is deposited and “layer upon layer of the past reveals itself, sometimes in unexpected moments or modes” (Farred, 2002,p.17). Lurie’s relationships with Soraya and Melanie relates issues of power relations embedded in white men in the old South Africa. Both these relationships are based on power relations that exposes white men as abusers not brought to justice due to their social roles and standings. Part of incorporating critical race theory in language classrooms is challenging dominant discourses on race and racism. These relationships between Lurie, Soraya and Melanie are a typical example of subordination. In incorporating critical race theory in the exploration of *Disgrace* (1999), students will understand that no race and ethnic group is superior to the other, therefore no person should ever conform to subordination. This is part of a larger goal to eliminate all forms of subordination, starting from the classrooms.

Another distinct representation of racism in *Disgrace* (1999) has to be when Lurie constantly calls Petrus “kaffir”, a disparaging and offensive term which evolved during the pre-colonial and Apartheid period and was used by the white people to insult black people. This offensive term is present in the novel and is used with spite and disgust at Petrus for assuming he could take care of Lucy; the same spite and disgust that existed between black and white people before the country was deemed free. However, Coetzee has used this term in a novel written prior Apartheid.

What the past successfully did was separate people according to race. This separation was also visible in the education sector. What the post-apartheid education set to do was create a democratic education which was intended to counter the underlying principles of apartheid education, more specifically, racial and ethnic segregation and unequal access to education and training (Davids & Waghid, 2015). It thus becomes interesting that a character like Lurie who is an academic by profession should be seen perpetrating a racist name aimed at insulting a

black man. This clearly outlines just how easy racist behaviour is perpetrated in schools and societies, advocating to scholars' concerns that very little progress has been made in ensuring an end to racial discrimination and prejudice in South African schools.

In fact, Harber and Mncube (2011) argue that schools are not only places where socio-economic inequality is reproduced, but also racist attitudes as schools continue to be characterised by racial separation and discrimination, identical to that visible in *Disgrace* (1999). The novel as a text written in post-apartheid South Africa has managed to reproduce socio-economic inequalities and contributed to racial segregation through its depiction of separateness based on race and social standings. Lurie tolerates Petrus because of Lucy, not because he particularly regards him as any important

Farred (2002) notes that:

If the discourse of race is to have any substance in post-apartheid South Africa, then it will have to be taken up as a historic antagonism: as a condition when the discourse of “healing”, which we might read as reconciliation, is not privileged over the discourse of confrontation, where opposing forces must be made to examine themselves, their relations to another and their intertwined, antagonistic histories. (pp.17-18)

Racist behaviour falls on racist individuals who refuse to examine themselves, and not the victims who have been made to believe that they are the problem. The proposed teaching approach in this study is creative writing. Creative writing as previously mentioned in this paper involves class discussions that lead to written work. When teaching and learning about racial violence in a language classroom, this study further proposes that teachers adopt the naming of one's reality theme during class discussions as suggested by Ladson-Billings (1998), which can be done through storytelling. Ladson-Billings (1998) argues that the naming of one's own reality theme in critical race theory classrooms helps the marginalised groups reject self-condemnation. By doing so, it allows more room for the dominant group to examine themselves. A lot of the characters in the book, both black and white, suffer from self-condemnation, therefore the dominant groups never get to examine themselves.

The most distinct turning point in the novel is when Lucy is raped by three black men. It is where, according to Farred (2002) “past, present and future are grappling awkwardly with one another” (p.18) as Lucy and readers alike struggle to grasp collapsed power relations bestowed in white supremacists as history deemed rightful. It is in this very moment where the discourse of race in post-apartheid South Africa challenges the very essence of gender discourse away from race relations. The history of oppression manifests itself in the rural Eastern Cape as a

phenomenon linked to new power relations, yet still existing to demean women as the past would have it.

Disgrace (1999) therefore “yokes together the most provocative issues in South African life: race, gender, history, property and violence” (Farred, 2002, p.18) and Lucy is both the donor and recipient. She is the white lesbian violated by black men, defining and defying history. It is thus not surprising that Lurie should assume that if the perpetrators had been white, Lucy would feel differently and accept the rape as an unfortunate crime done to her because she just so happened to be the next victim. However, the very nature of this rape questions even feelings because it is a rare representation of South Africa for the white supremacist Lurie.

“If they had been white you wouldn’t talk about them in this way,” he says. “If they had been white thugs from Despatch, for instance.”

“Wouldn’t I?”

“No, you wouldn’t. I am not blaming you, that is not the point. But it is something new you are talking about. Slavery. They want you for their slave.”

“Not slavery. Subjection. Subjugation.” (Coetzee, 1999, p.159).

Politically, *Disgrace* (1999) stirred up a lot of emotions associated with racism. A lot of scholars and politicians concluded that the novel was racist and should therefore be read in the same context. Judging from the above quotation, one can agree that Lurie sees himself better than the black men that raped his daughter, hence he would never conform to their level. But he is not better. He thinks he is better because of his skin colour. That alone is racist thinking; to assume that just because one is white, they are automatically exempt from certain crimes. Based on his self-acclaimed supremacy, it is rest assured that Lurie would never see his mistakes as amounting to anything close to what the black men did to Lucy. Lurie seems certain that Lucy would be feeling different if she had been raped by white men. It is evident that a black and a white “thug” in Lurie’s eyes are two different people.

Delgado and Stefancic (2001) affirm that critical race theory not only tries to understand social situations, but also seeks to change it and does not only set to ascertain how society organises itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but also to transform it for the better. The main aim of incorporating critical race theory in the exploration of *Disgrace* (1999) is therefore not only to understand characters as racist beings existing in a society fuelled by racist behaviour, but to understand racist behaviour for the transformation of the society. It would do no good to only identify these racist incidents, but the identification thus should be followed by a changed

perspective. A changed perspective can only happen if students explore these matters in language classrooms through storytelling.

Lucy talks about slavery detached from the rapists. She talks about slavery as an agency that exists outside of subjection and subjugation. She has been dominated, overpowered to the extent of helplessness and hopelessness, and defeated, as well as overthrown from her role as assigned by history, yet she does not feel enslaved. As a white woman caught up in the frontier of history, she understands that “life at the border works not because of articulation,” but it works because “of the recognition that the language of both liberation and reconciliation has failed” (Farred, 2002, p. 19) and if both these languages have failed, then Lucy has never been liberated out of slavery, nor has she been enslaved into reconciliation. In fact, the border for her represents an indifference in the past and present that serves no purpose in the liberation or reconciliation of neither black, nor white. This is to say that the border line is not concerned with just the history of race (which can be concluded to be the history of slavery), however, it represents the most “disturbing instantiation” that represent South Africa as a whole. Therefore, reading history in that manner, one would be accustomed to treat South Africa as not entirely liberated or entirely enslaved. As demonstrated above, this paper is more concerned with the racial aspect of history as a foregrounding trait used to classify race relations in contemporary South Africa, thus, the focus is on race stereotypes and how individual characters react to race relations in the novel.

Lucy claims that the history of race in her rape case is not one based on slavery, but rather it is based on domination, being subjected to control more than slavery. This is to claim that her rapists are not so much driven by slavery, but vengeance, subjecting her to dominion. One of the assumed assumptions when it comes to critical race theory is the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational (Hartlep, 2009). This study argues that in fact, racism is aberrational, and excusing black men’s actions on the basis that the crime they have committed is out of vengeance and wanting to dominate the white woman is just as abnormal. No excuse should ever be made for racist behaviour, assumed power and not vengeance. Exploring racism in language classrooms also forms part of not making excuses. It is about challenging the dominant ideology away from racist assumptions that seek to dominate the other.

Coetzee’s depiction of sexual violence is thus condemned as racist because of the clear uneven treatment of the two violations. Moreover, “Lucy’s silence and apparent passivity” has been read and interpreted “as representing white’s acceptance of their marginality in the ‘new’ South Africa” (Yitah, 2008, pp.28-29). It is disturbing that Coetzee should suggest white South Africans “to take responsibility for the evils of apartheid by accepting humiliation by black

South Africans” (p.29), and that Lucy through her body, should pay for the wrongs done by white South Africans during apartheid as noted by Yitah; “as white liberals, both Lurie and his daughter express guilt regarding apartheid atrocities” and choose to “rationalise the attack” as a representation of “reparation for past wrongs, as retribution for the abuses perpetrated against the black Other” (p.30). This paper argues that this rape should be read as it is, rape. Incorporating critical race theory is committing to social justice, which is fair, and that is the message that all students should adhere to regardless of their race; that social justice platforms and practices as Bestler (2012) argues, are the only way of eliminating racism, including all forms of oppression and injustice.

Yitah (2008) argues that Lucy’s refusal to conform to society’s expectations of marrying and having children should not be interpreted as a refusal to obey white society’s definition of proper, or her resignation to marginality. However, her refusal should be accepted as her assertion of her difference. She further argues that Lucy fails to realise that when she is attacked, the rapists ignore her individuality, or even her difference as a lesbian, and recognise her as a representation of the dominant group, forcing them to respond to the history of suffering and racial injustices that have been imposed on them by white people, whom they must now counter dominate.

Lucy’s attack is thus read metaphorically. Lucy’s role in the novel which is not understood by her, or readers, forces her to refuse the interpretations otherwise deemed appropriate by the white society to fulfil her duty as the advocate for the society at large away from misconceptions associated with representing one racial spectrum. Her failure to recognise her role as predestined by the future has her seeking for individuality in a process of collective redemption for all. It is thus fitting that Coetzee focuses on the character’s response “rather than on the attack itself,” which dramatizes “just how radical a transformation South Africans may be required to undergo” on both individual and societal grounds, “in order to recover a sense of the ‘grace’ that has been absent in South African reality for such a long time” (Marais & Wenzel, 2006, p.25). What Marais and Wenzel advocate for is the need for transformation which has been absent in South Africa for so long, a transformation that this study argues can only be brought about if issues of race are explored in language classrooms incorporating critical race theory.

This radical transformation, as noted by Marais and Wenzel, requires Coetzee’s characters to conform, more especially Lurie, and accept Petrus as part of the pre-chosen individuals to deliver the change. This requires a kind of revolution that not only recognises dominant

discourses, but that also responds to people as equal beings. However, Lurie refuses to see Petrus as his equal even when Bev Shaw tells him that he is a good guy and he ought to “depend on him” (Coetzee, p. 140). In fact, he is so determined to see him as his inferior that he starts calling him an “old-style kaffir” who is itching to see Lucy leave the farm, even claiming that the attack might have been his fault because “he certainly turned a blind eye”, he did not warn them, and made sure “not to be in the vicinity” (p. 140).

The above serves as proof of how Lurie really feels about Petrus and his position in fuelling racism. First, he constantly puts an emphasis on the term “kaffir” which this paper has previously argued that it is an offensive, apartheid term; secondly, Lurie feels as though Petrus does not deserve to be recognised for his hard labour in getting the market going for Lucy, which is a remarkably interesting observation when read in terms of apartheid education. Some aspects that Thobejane (2005) refers to as pillars of Bantu Education is how black people were not allowed to be trained in academic subjects. Their training was strictly in areas of low skill jobs and in the service sector. Petrus is therefore seen as the result of Bantu education. He is focused on his job profile which entails manual labour, but even that is not enough for Lurie to recognise him. The mere fact that a black man is better at something is a tormenting reality and a hard truth to swallow. This comes across as, the prospect of thanking a black man would be demeaning for him, so much so, that he tries to turn the conversation around, implying that Petrus should be the one indebted to Lucy.

The feeling of indebtedness could be read in two ways to emphasise racism in the book. Firstly, Lurie feels Petrus should be the one owing Lucy because of power relations bestowed in white people; the same power that recognises white people as being better. Secondly, Lurie also feels that it is Petrus’s fault that they were attacked. He even implies that Petrus was aware of the attack, hence he decided to be away, and therefore feels that he should have warned them. In that regard, Coetzee has responded to race stereotypes that always place a black man as a suspect, and he has also responded to reversed power relations present in the novel that no longer project the white man as superior.

Part of the main aspects by critical race theory is the notion that racism is normal, ordinary, and ingrained into society, making it difficult to recognise (Bestler, 2012). As a result, Bestler further notes that the only way racism can be eliminated is through social justice platforms and practices. It is therefore crucial that history and historical contexts are taken into consideration when teaching and learning about racial violence in language classrooms. The history is that Lurie is not sure how to react to the new South Africa, and he needs to be taught. The history

is also that Petrus has owned his right in the new South Africa as an affirmed citizen and he should be taught how to own that space, recognise oppressive name calling and challenge oppressive nature. This is what the new curriculum is about; creating a people's education that focuses on people's power. Therefore, characters like Lucy should recognise themselves in this curriculum away from the rapists, as well as the history that seeks to oppress and treat people with hatred.

Consequently, Yitah (2008) notes that:

The history that has produced this “young settler” is a history that has spawned the oppositional relations that exist between the rapist and the raped, the colonizer and the colonized, the oppressor and the oppressed, master and servant, and it is fraught with struggles for domination and counter domination. It is the history that causes the rapists to treat Lucy with the hatred that she complains about. (p.32)

Both Yitah (2008) and Bev Shaw highlight distinctly similar ideas; one being that oppositional relations have been produced, and these contrasting relations share mutual feelings towards each other. Bev feels that Lucy owes Petrus “a lot”, similar to how Lurie feels Petrus is indebted to Lucy because of the attack and how “he certainly turned a blind eye”, how “he certainly didn't warn” them and “took care not to be in the vicinity” (Coetzee, 1999, p.140). Oppositional relations come with expectations. As established, Lurie and Lucy feel guilty because of the past embedded in them as white supremacies, and in turn expect Petrus to feel guilty because of the present and future that is to spawn from him and his people. When that collective guilt is not reciprocated, the idea of moving to a better future becomes even more strained.

The conversation between Bev and Lurie is also an indicator of the future that Lurie should start adapting and adjusting to in the new South Africa. It reflects Yitah's statement and argues for oppositional relations as those that exist in the new South African era (Yitah, 2008, p.32). Bev relates the story of Lucy, emphasizing that “without Petrus, Lucy wouldn't be where she is now” (Coetzee, 1999, p.140). There are two ways of reading this statement away from the obvious intentions: to get Lurie to accept binaries in the history that no longer serve the white man, firstly, the past as it used to be and secondly, the present as it is introduced. “Petrus slaved to get the market going for Lucy” (p.140), a quite common relationship between master and servant in the history of South Africa. However, it becomes a fraught reality when Bev also awakens Lurie to the new South Africa; one that demands him to accept that because of past slaving, Lucy owes Petrus. This is now away from collective guilt and debt shared by all white people, it becomes personal, and it speaks directly to Lucy.

The personal 'calling' faced by Lucy comes from a higher being, call it destiny, but it forces her to keep the child of a rapist, exposing her to questions that not even herself has answers to; "What kind of child can seed like that give life to, seed driven into the woman not in love but in hatred, mixed chaotically, meant to soil her, to mark her, like a dog's urine?" (p.199). The racial violence suffered by Lucy, Lurie believes "was meant to soil her" because of the nature of how it was done. The child Lucy is carrying is therefore a result of "hatred, mixed chaotically" hence it comes as a shock for Lurie and readers that she wants to keep it. Marais and Wenzel (2006) thus argue that the novel "implies that old patriarchal structures have remained intact"; only "the roles within it have" been "reassigned along racial lines" (p. 35). Women are still expected to carry children as assigned by society, but in this case, the role has changed. The role is no longer imposed on black women only but has been reassigned to white women like Lucy who are no longer given a chance to choose what they want for themselves.

Indeed, Marais and Wenzel's (2006) statement proves to be true when Petrus offers to marry Lucy. Not only is Lucy forced to adjust to power relations as positioned combatively, but also has to conform to patriarchal structures by deviating from the life she had planned to create for herself; a life that does not include marrying a man. According to Farred (2002), Coetzee in his novel also confronts the dilemma of 1960's identity politics where one finds themselves asking very complicated questions pertaining the negotiation between the demands of race and gender. Moreover, Farred (2002) concludes that,

Lucy's rape does not guarantee her future immunity, but it buys her time; it allows Petrus to assume his role as boarder patriarch, family provider and frontier ombudsman. He can protect his extended family with her silence, but he can give her no real assurances. She must live, as all subjects at the border do, with a permanent indeterminacy, always alert, always wary, cognizant of how close she is to violence of racial encounter (pp. 18-19).

The above citation confirms the shift noted in power relations, and forces readers to also read the racism illustrated by Coetzee. Coetzee maintains the notion that even though power relations have shifted; that is, a white woman seeking protection from a black man, Lucy's safety is still not guaranteed. Petrus, as Coetzee notes, can protect his own extended family, but certainly cannot assure the protection of the white woman not belonging to his own. Therefore, Coetzee suggests that Lucy as a white woman must always be vigilant, live knowing that at any time, she is prone to racial violence.

This is particularly true when the rape incident is put in juxtaposition with Petrus's offer. If Petrus as demonstrated by Coetzee can protect the rapist, what makes Lucy think she is safe under his protection? What makes her think he would ever choose her above 'his people' if it ever came to that?

However, Nobel Laureate Nadine Gordimer as quoted in Mardorossian (2011) argues that in the novel:

There is not one black person who is a real human being . . . I find it difficult to believe, indeed more than difficult, having lived here all my life and being part of everything that has happened here, that the black family protects the rapist because he's one of them . . . if that's the only truth he could find in the post-apartheid South Africa, I regretted this very much for him. (p.72)

Nadine's argument is almost silenced by Lurie's confrontation when he confronts Petrus about the boy that attacked Lucy. Petrus tells Lurie that just "because of this thing that happened", he cannot be expected to tell the boy to go away because he is his relative (Coetzee, p. 201). Petrus explains that as Lurie goes and comes back even though he has no work in Eastern Cape, he comes back to look after his child, so he must do the same. He further explains that the boy is his child, his family, his *people*. "So that is it. No more lies. *My people*. As naked an answer as he could wish. Well, Lucy is *his people*" (p. 201).

Coetzee up until this point has silently portrayed racism. It is at this point, during this conversation between the past and the future that racism is read as loudly as it is depicted. The distinct race classifications are present throughout, and the difference between *Self* and *Other* clearly marked. Lurie does not understand why Petrus would accommodate a boy that raped his daughter, of which he gets an answer that the boy is Petrus's relative and he cannot "tell him to go away because of this thing that happened" (p. 201). This thing being the attack, the rape, clearly implies that *Self* is not bothered by the *Other's* suffering, because "this thing that happened" is not a direct call for *Self* to react.

Understandably, Nadine as quoted in Mardorossian (2011) argues against this concept of harbouring perpetrators, claiming it is an unreal representation of post-apartheid South Africa. However, the history of race should be noted as one of selfish behaviour that was initially created to elevate *Self* while demeaning *Other*. It should also be noted that representation of the past is still depicted in the new South Africa, hence, even the conceptualised idea of detaching South Africa from the past is strongly embedded in the past itself.

Petrus understands the selfishness that race relations embodies, claiming that Lurie goes away and comes back again, as stated, “you have no work here. You come to look after your child. I also look after my child” (p. 202). Not to say racial violence should be accepted on the grounds of family; the demonstration is in the understanding of “my family, my people” putting an emphasis on racial roles designed specifically for binary oppositions, and how the history of race has responded to such roles by admitting naked truths to categorize family according to race; “well, Lucy is *his people*” (p.202). Coetzee has highlighted how strong of a discourse this race classification is, and how critical race theory is truthful in its claim that dismantling race relations requires a radical assessment. For the longest time, South Africans have classified family based on skin colour, and to deviate from that created truth would surely require drastic changes.

The introduction of the new system, the new government and the new South Africa is thus born to collapse racially categorized families. It is an introduction to reversed racial roles where “the changing dispensation” is “Petrus’s new beginning: the slow dying and recasting of liberal virtues, the birth of the black land-owning class” (Farred, 2002, p.18). In addition, Lucy tries to explain this new conceptualised style of living to Lurie, stating that:

“I don’t believe you get the point, David. Petrus is not offering me a church wedding followed by a honeymoon on the Wild Coast. He is offering an alliance, a deal. I contribute the land, in return for which I am allowed to creep in under his wing. Otherwise, he wants to remind me, I am without protection, I am fair game.” (Coetzee, 1999, p.203).

A glimpse of the future, where mixed race associations are not frowned upon proves to be very costly, especially for Lucy who in the end has “to buy from Petrus her right to stay on the farm” and having had to pay with “her freedom and dignity” (Yitah, 2008, p. 28), one cannot help but construct the dangers as mentioned metaphorically, also suggesting dangers of staying on in an old South Africa.

4.5 Conclusion

In this section, it was noted that to understand racism, it is imperative to first understand apartheid; a framework where racism stems from. *Disgrace* (1999) deals with race relations and an emphasis is made on reversed race relations birthed by the new system in contemporary South Africa.

The border in the book marks a significant part of history representing South Africa’s past and

the Eastern Cape as the frontier where the battle over land between the British and the Xhosa people back in the nineteenth century took place. Therefore, the farm's location serves as a focal representation of an inescapable past; a meeting of the *Self* and *Other*, which are concepts designed to make distinct classifications between people.

The book begins with an introductory statement with David Lurie placed at the centre of generational gap and new race relations as explored by Coetzee. It is noted that this introduction is fitting in a book where struggles are made between closing the gap created by past binaries, and adapting to reversed race relations as a result of a new constituted system. This book treats characters unfairly and unevenly based on their sex and/or skin colour.

The novel narrates racism in different forms: one being the translation of names, Melanie "the dark one", and Lucy, "the light". Melanie's name is thus symbolically read as dark, illiterate, ignorant, and incapable, while Lucy's is a representation of purity, knowledge, brightness, and perfection. This symbolises imperfection associated with being black as predestined by history, a sense of unworthiness. Therefore, Lurie's relationships expose power relations, illuminating white men as abusers not brought to justice because of social roles and standings. Petrus has to mysteriously disappear when Lucy and David are attacked so the book could fulfil its duty as a narration of racism, and likewise, Petrus accolades race stereotypes underlining a black man as a suspect. The same black man is called 'kaffir' by the book's protagonist; a racist, offensive term which evolved during the pre-colonial and apartheid period. Yet the book's white supremacist uses the same term in post-apartheid South Africa to address a black man.

The unfair and uneven treatment of the two violations also exposes racism present in the novel. Lurie sees himself better than Lucy's rapists and arrogantly resigns from his work, refusing to accept his role in the affair with his student, Melanie. Being white exempts him from any criminal activities and he would rather lose his job than conform to situations that strip him off that given privilege. However, things change when Lucy is raped and she must pay for history as asserted in the novel.

Having explored examples of racism evident in Coetzee's novel, this paper thus argues that Lucy's rape should be read metaphorically than Lucy paying for white people's past sins. A white woman has been put in the frontier of history as the pathway from the past to the present. She represents race history, gender history and the complexities of South African history. It is the past wrestling with the present and future to collapse power relations and possibly introduce a new South Africa that no longer sees colour, but people. Even so, the confrontation between Lurie and Petrus about Pollux clearly outlines family relatives as classically categorised by skin

colour, and whether a mixed child will be able to collapse even those concrete categories still remains a mystery.

Chapter 5: Summary of the study

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to carry out an in-depth analysis of Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), identifying examples of gender-based and racial violence in the novel with the aim to use the former as a platform to teach a grade 10-12 language class in South Africa when exploring gender-based violence and racism in schools.

It was noted that even though South Africa has moved from an oppressive education into a democratic education, violence in schools is still prevalent. It was also noted that a lot of school violence is attributed to past inequalities that still play out in our schools in the form of apartheid structures. A gap was identified in teaching about 'violence' in schools. A conclusion was drawn that not much has been done to support teachers in teaching about 'violence' and no successful teaching approaches have been implemented in an attempt to curb the violence prevalent in schools.

Moreover, a strong relationship between classroom teaching and society was identified as classroom learning is further enhanced in societies. Society is fuming with issues that need to be addressed in classroom learning. Literature as a tool used to explore concerning matters was deemed pivotal in addressing these issues, as one of the major purposes of teaching literature highlighted by the CAPS document revealed that teaching and learning of literature is about learners. In the teaching of literature, it was noted that learners are encouraged to engage and interpret texts based on their own understanding using their own personal and social experiences.

Therefore, an analysis of *Disgrace* (1999) was deemed appropriate in teaching and learning about gender-based violence and racism in South African language classrooms. Examples of gender-based violence and racism were identified, and it was proposed that these further be explored incorporating critical race theory and critical pedagogy along with the proposed teaching approach; creative writing, which also includes class discussions leading to written work. Furthermore, it was concluded that the teaching of racism through creative writing will focus on storytelling, related to learners' experiences.

Application of critical race theory will ensure the empowerment of both learners and teachers who were previously oppressed, by allowing a new approach with a changed perspective that recognises power relations as narrated by history, and introduce a revolution that seeks to

collapse all power discourses related to oppression. Teachers and learners alike, black and white, have a chance of challenging dominant discourses and transforming those structural and cultural aspects of society that still depict racist behaviour in post-apartheid South Africa.

Likewise, applying critical pedagogy in everyday learning can ensure a transformation in both educational and social institutions. This theory, as noted, is about the learning of teachers as it is about the learning of students. It was concluded that such a relationship is important when seeking to reverse power roles on the basis of returning students' voices and allowing them to rewrite their own realities by rejecting long standing cultural expectations to create a just society.

5.2 Addressing the Research Questions

5.2.1 How Can J.M. Coetzee's Novel, Disgrace (1999) be Used to Teach and Learn about Gender-Based Violence in a South African Language Classroom?

The study concluded that *Disgrace* (1999) as a literary text fits perfectly in language classrooms. Moreover, it was noted that the book is teeming with examples of gender-based violence, which included emotional violence, sexual violence in the form of rape, explicit gender violence defined as intimidation and bullying. These types of violence will then be taught and learnt using the proposed teaching approach, creative writing, which includes class discussions and written activities. The proposed teaching approach will be incorporated in juxtaposition with critical pedagogy which is about the learning of teachers as it is about the learning of students aiming to transform and rewrite their realities by empowering them to create a just society.

5.2.2 How is Racial Violence Represented in the Novel?

It was noted that most of the racial violence represented in the book stems from racist behaviour attributed to past inequalities, hence exploring this representation will also require the application of critical race theory in everyday learning. Examples of racism present in the prescribed text were identified and discussed critically using critical race theory. This study further proposes that in the teaching about racism in the South African language classroom, a creative writing teaching approach be incorporated. This approach includes class discussions which this study proposes should be implemented through storytelling in relation to the experiences of learners.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This study recognises that there is not enough evidence to prove whether any of the other subjects have incorporated the teaching about ‘violence’ in schools and how successful that has been. However, judging from the prevalence of violence in schools, this study has concluded that no other teaching approaches have been successful. This study also recognises that it will be extremely difficult to identify other texts that deal with gender and race issues in both past and contemporary South Africa to be used in the teaching and learning of the former.

5.4 Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to the field of education and the body of knowledge on teaching of literature in language classrooms. As an exploration, it allows for an in-depth understanding of gender-based and racial violence in South Africa.

The study extends the existing literature by proposing teaching and learning about gender-based violence and racism in South African language classrooms through creative writing, incorporating critical race theory and critical pedagogy. A further contribution of this study may be seen in the textual analysis of *Disgrace* (1999).

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Research

This study recommends that more research be conducted on gender-based violence and racism in schools. The following further research is recommended:

- Literary texts that can be used in teaching and learning about ‘violence’ in schools.
- How power relations fuel racism in schools for both teachers and learners.
- How learners from patriarchal societies react to texts that aim to collapse gender roles.

5.5.2 Literature

This study emphasises the need for authors to write books, plays, poetry, etc. that bring South African issues to the attention of the people. These will help tremendously in the exploration of issues that concern learners and societies at large.

5.6 Closing remarks

South Africa has taken strides to get to where it is today, and it is a shame that even so, apartheid is still depicted in contemporary South Africa. The older generation fought the good fight; now

is the time for the younger generation to make the necessary changes towards a transformed South Africa for all.

Schools play a pivotal role in the grooming of learners. This is the one place where safety should be enforced for both girls and boys. If the education system fails, that would mean there is no hope for our societies. As the researcher of this study, I hope that I have contributed positively to identifying major factors hindering South Africa from moving towards a better future. Gender roles that oppress women and power relations that favour one race at the expense of the other should be collapsed.

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