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CHAOS, SOCIAL RECONFIGURATION AND CONFLICTS: A POST-MODERNIST READING OF COETZEE'S NOVEL DISGRACE

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the aftermath of apartheid and its impact on characters in Coetzee's Disgrace*, focusing on post-apartheid social unrest and the shift from white imperial grand narratives to local mini-narratives. It highlights the rising female consciousness, the scrutiny of white hegemony and patriarchy, and the fragile social cohesion between black and white characters. The study analyzes the novel's causes of chaos, fragmentation, and conflict, mainly through the downfall of the anti-hero David Lurie, symbolizing the collapse of white supremacy and Eurocentric values. The research uses a postmodern framework to examine how these conflicts reflect psychological anguish and shifting subjectivity. The findings underscore the complexities of multiculturalism and peaceful coexistence in post-apartheid South Africa, offering new insights into the cultural and political tensions that continue to shape the nation's identity.*

Keywords: *Apartheid, Chaos, Postmodernism and Patriarchy.*

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Postmodernism, which emerged in the 1980s, can be understood by first exploring modernity and modernism, which trace their origins to Renaissance ideas (Sarup, 1993, p. 130). Modernity developed through changes such as industrialization, the rise of rational thought, and shifts in social and economic systems, all of which helped shape modern society and the modern state (Sarup, 1993). Influenced by Enlightenment ideals, modernity laid the foundation for the development of modernism, which focused on aesthetics and cultural expressions (Klages, 2006).

Postmodernism can be seen as a continuation of modernism's feelings of alienation and the use of disorienting techniques while simultaneously rejecting its pursuit of artistic unity in a fragmented world (Baldick, 2001, p. 201). Often referred to as "historiographic metafiction," postmodernism challenges traditional authority, norms, and values by promoting skepticism and re-evaluating established ideas (Sim, 2001, p. 3). Unlike modernism, postmodernism rejects the idea of absolute truths, focusing instead on contextual and contingent truths. It also critiques the connection between reason and power, using critical analysis to question their influence (Hicks, 2000).

Modernity viewed traditions and belief systems with skepticism and distrust, promoting a rational approach to addressing life's challenges through human reason. René Descartes's famous statement, "I think, therefore I am. I have intentions,

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purposes, and goals; therefore I am the sole and free agent of my thoughts," perfectly captures this rational perspective (Sarup, 1993, p. 76). Western rationality encouraged individualism, humanism, and progress, creating binaries that elevated Western culture while labeling non-Western traditions as irrational and inferior (McLeod, 2010). In Disgrace, Coetzee portrays the turmoil of post-apartheid South Africa through David Lurie's fall from academic respectability, his failures, struggles with guilt, and Lucy's traumatic experiences. The novel reflects the shifting social landscape in a fragmented world (Coetzee, 1999, p. 194). Lurie remains near Lucy's farm as she refuses to leave, trusting Petrus's protection. The story ends ambiguously, symbolizing the uncertainty of post-apartheid South Africa and Lurie's transformation.

A key postmodern feature in Disgrace is obsession, where characters exhibit irrational fears, excessive suspicions, and distrust of others. This "white paranoia" is evident in Lurie's mistrust of Petrus, whom he suspects of being involved in the attack on Lucy's farm. Lurie expresses his unease to Bev, stating that he is "itching for Lucy to pull out" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 140), citing the brutal attack in which he was burned and Lucy was raped as evidence. Similarly, Ettinger, another character of European descent, exemplifies paranoia by carrying a pistol due to his fear of his Black neighbours. After the attack, he tells Lucy, "I never go anywhere without my Beretta," reflecting his belief that the police are no longer reliable (Coetzee, 1999, p. 100).

A notable postmodern feature in Disgrace is social fragmentation, which is evident in the post-apartheid society of South Africa. The university has adjusted its curriculum to reflect societal changes, emphasizing communication more. Post-apartheid South Africa is portrayed as a place no longer suitable for Western cultural practices, where Black South Africans are pushing their former colonial oppressors to the margins of society. Lucy, after the attack, lives with a constant fear of a recurring "Black peril." She tells her father that "the rapists will revisit her because they have marked her as she lives in their territory" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 158).

A key postmodern element in the novel is the unreliable narrator, told from David Lurie's limited perspective. His biased views, particularly against Black people and women, shape the narrative, making it hard for readers to discern whose point of view is being presented. For example, Melanie's words to the committee and the attackers' perspectives remain unknown. The other postmodern feature of Disgrace is foreshadowing, whereby the author introduces something that signals what is expected to happen in the coming chapters. The narrator says that Lurie is happy with his relationship with Soraya, but 'he has not forgotten the last chorus of Oedipus' (Coetzee, 1999,p.2), creates suspense in a reader's mind to read further. Lurie says to Melanie that 'Byron went to Italy to escape a scandal' (Coetzee, 1999, p.15) which hints at his escape to Eastern Cape.

1.2 Problem Statement

The analysis of chaos, disintegration, and social conflicts in Disgrace raises several issues. While apartheid's legacy and racial tensions are central to the story, attributing all turmoil in the novel to these factors simplifies the experiences of the characters. Other factors, such as gender dynamics, economic inequalities, and individual choices, also shape the narrative. The focus on the collapse of Eurocentric myths and universal truths in post-apartheid South Africa overlooks instances where personal truths and forms of resistance persist, as seen in Lucy's decision to remain on her farm. Similarly, treating the characters' responses as uniform ignores differences, such as Petrus's ability to adapt and gain agency, which complicates the idea of universal disempowerment. Presenting the changes in post-apartheid society as a complete rejection of European civilization risks reinforcing binary oppositions between European and non-European experiences, missing the interplay of tradition and modernity. The emphasis on conflict disregards moments of negotiation and coexistence, such as Petrus's role as protector and antagonist. Finally, describing post-apartheid South Africa as entirely postmodern may ignore the continued influence of modern power structures and hierarchies on the characters and society. Addressing these issues

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could provide a more balanced view of the novel's themes.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the motivating factors, causes and elements of chaos, disintegration and conflicts in the mimesis of post-apartheid society in Disgrace?
2. How does the lingering history of apartheid affect the present of post-apartheid South African society?
3. What are the social and political implications of the traumatic experiences felt by the major characters in Disgrace?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To analyze the novel as a representation of chaos, fragmentation, and social conflicts in post-apartheid South Africa.
2. To bring out and uncover the social, political and cultural implications of these conflicts and trauma as experienced by the main characters in the novel.
3. To show the negative impact of the colonial past and European discourses on the present of South African post-apartheid society.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research explores social disintegration and reconfiguration in post-apartheid South Africa, as depicted in Disgrace. It examines the resistance to dominant narratives, the emergence of pluralism, and the voice of marginalized groups, offering a postmodern interpretation of the novel's portrayal of cultural conflicts and societal instability.

1.6 Delimitation of the Research

This research limited to the exposition of chaos, social reconfiguration and conflicts in Disgrace. It further aims to describe the knowledge claims and value systems in the mimetic world of the novel as contingent or socially constructed, making clear the moral relativism and the emerging pluralism that causes mayhem, chaos, and social fragmentation.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Ruman interprets Disgrace as depicting South Africa's transition, racial tensions, and moral shifts, symbolizing the collapse of white supremacy and the merging of races in the post-apartheid "rainbow nation." Stolarek (2013) has examined the pitfalls and difficulties of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity in South Africa in Coetzee's Disgrace. The researcher argues that post-apartheid racial tensions stem from historical injustices, with Lucy's rape symbolizing the legacy of colonial violence. The novel suggests empathy can only arise through shared suffering, highlighting South Africa's multicultural society's complex, unresolved racial dilemas.

Ogden (2012) states that Disgrace critiques the TRC's approach to reconciliation, suggesting real healing requires genuine remorse. Lucy's Christ-like acceptance symbolizes the painful, unavoidable process of post-apartheid societal integration. Joanna Stolarek (2015) has looked into the political, social, and cultural aspects of racism in post-apartheid South Africa in her research on Disgrace. Stolarek views Disgrace as a postcolonial allegory exposing Apartheid's atrocities, with Lucy's silent acceptance symbolizing the Greek Pharmakos, urging peaceful resilience and new beginnings amidst racial and gender struggles.

Mattos (2012) sees Disgrace as exploring white guilt, identity crises, and the painful adjustments in post-apartheid South Africa, where black empowerment pushes white Europeans to the margins of society. Harrington (2013) analyzes Disgrace as exploring post-apartheid violence, racial and gender stereotypes, and flawed legal systems, where characters' binary perceptions of "self" and "other" perpetuate conflict and violence in society.

Yadav (2020) has examined post-apartheid South Africa's racial tensions, where male hegemony shifts and women face continued victimization. He attributes xenophobia and violence to colonial legacies affecting social solidarity and cultural identity. Ariani (2010) analyzes the shifting power dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa, highlighting Lurie's fall from privilege, Lucy's refusal to change, and Petrus's rise as a black

patriarch in new societal structures. Neimneh (2014) explores how animals symbolize degradation and the body's desires in Disgrace, linking Lurie's lust and shame to animalistic impulses, highlighting the interconnectedness of human and animal embodiment in postmodern thought.

Ramsay (2011) explores the collapse of the personal/political and private/public binaries in post-apartheid South Africa, showing how historical racial divides affect personal lives, with Lucy's rape symbolizing the broader societal tensions and the need for redefined societal structures. Beyad and Keramatfar (2018) have investigated the unhealthy and abnormal relationships between different characters based on the pathology of their mental disorientation after the end of Apartheid in their research entitled Apartheid Lingers: Sadism and Masochism J.M. Coetzee's Disgrace. Disgrace critiques post-apartheid South Africa, showing how sadistic and masochistic social dynamics hinder personal growth, with Apartheid's legacy of hierarchical relationships preventing genuine, equal human connections and a healthy society.

Wu (2016) uses Daoism to explain Lurie's sexual instincts, emphasizing the natural interconnectedness of life, yet society punishes his instinctual expression. Crous (2005) analyzes Lurie's struggles with masculinity, homophobia, and post-apartheid black male power, emphasizing the shift in gender dynamics and societal expectations. Smit-Marais and Wenzel (2006) state the farm in Disgrace as a liminal, contested space representing violence, dispossession, and transformation, where racial conflicts and post-apartheid shifts challenge traditional pastoral ideals. Assefa and Chernet (2018) argue that post-apartheid South Africa disrupts power structures, leaving white Europeans vulnerable, with Lurie's downfall symbolizing their loss of privilege in a transformed political landscape. Kedari (2013) explores Lurie's breakdown in post-apartheid South Africa, highlighting shifting power dynamics and cultural norms, while Lucy's lesbian identity faces disruption by patriarchal forces.

Vanky (2008) applies Fanon's stages to Lurie's post-apartheid experience, showing his shift from assimilation to cultural nationalism, ultimately abandoning his opera to reflect South Africa's new reality. Miaomiao (2013) applies Fanon's stages to Lurie's post-apartheid experience, showing his shift from assimilation to cultural nationalism, ultimately abandoning his opera to reflect South Africa's new reality. Sharma (2020) argues that post-apartheid power shifts leave whites vulnerable, with lingering guilt and colonial animosity, while the democratic period requires repentance, atonement, and absolution for South Africa's white population. Nejt and Jamili (2014) argue that female characters in Disgrace experience double colonization, facing sexual exploitation and economic marginalization. Despite the end of Apartheid, women remain victims of patriarchal and colonial oppression, lacking agency and enduring ongoing violence.

Jansen (2013) has investigated the issues of rape and torture on gender and racial basis. Waham (2019) argues that Lurie and other male characters struggle with the loss of patriarchal authority in post-apartheid South Africa, trapped by the painful legacy of past oppression, hindering reconciliation and social solidarity. Moser (2012) explores how South Africa's gender and racial power dynamics perpetuate rape, with cognitive and cultural differences influencing women's responses to sexual assault, highlighting the inversion of traditional sexual and racial scripts in Disgrace.

Petterson (2014) examines how male characters exploit women, with Petrus gaining power and Lurie developing awareness. Kalkman (2015) argues that Lurie's loss of power reflects post-apartheid disruption, highlighting the intersectional complexities in women's experiences, which Lurie fails to fully comprehend, especially regarding rape's psychological impact on women. Lazovskiy (2015) argues that Lurie's justification of his actions through "rights of desire" parallels the destructive consequences of unrestrained desire, leading to societal instability and women's sexual exploitation. Kok (2008) explores David Lurie's crisis of masculinity, reflecting the disruption of power structures in post-apartheid South Africa,

where old identities clash with new social realities. Wright (2013) analyzes Lurie's intellectual references, drawing parallels between his actions and Byron's rebellious nature, exploring themes of power, disgrace and the loss of rationality in post-apartheid society.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This qualitative research focuses on understanding human behaviour within a specific cultural context, emphasizing subjective knowledge and holistic coherence while questioning the generalizability of findings (Nunan, 1998). This research interprets Disgrace through a postmodern lens, examining chaos, fragmentation, and conflicts in post-apartheid South Africa, using the novel's text and secondary sources to explore social, political, and cultural reconfiguration.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

This research aims to explore and critically analyze the novel Disgrace from the postmodernist perspectives of Lyotard, Derrida, and Foucault. Lyotard's definition of postmodernism as "incredulity towards metanarratives" shatters the myth of totalizing and overarching grand narratives that try to explain everything and impose a false and spurious totality on the various local and indigenous mini-narratives within the Western societies and outside in the Third World countries' societies where they have been used to justify their illegal occupation of foreign lands and exploit their resources with an express end to enhance their power, position, and control (Malpas, 2003). He sees the grand narratives themselves as having always been politically problematic. In the past, the universal ideas of reason and freedom from superstition had provided a moral basis for colonial domination through capitalist expansion and missionary terrorism in Africa and the Middle East (Lyotard, 1993). These Eurocentric narratives, he believes, do not encourage the flowering of the local mini-narratives as they will challenge the knowledge and discourse of the West, which it has created about the nations of the peripheral territories of the world to serve as an ideology for its hidden ulterior motives.

The fundamental problem with the European grand narratives is that they define and describe the local and native cultures in their terms, thus strangling the inherent differences. Cultures and civilizations are, by definition, different from one another, and one homogeneous culture and civilization cannot be imposed on the entire cultural fabric of the world's populations. Lyotard (1984) believes that knowledge in the postmodern age has become a commodity bought and sold on the market and is the basis of societal power. He adds that global competition is now fought out as a battle for knowledge, just as it used to be for resources like coal, gas, and oil in the past. He predicts a time when nations will go to war over knowledge resources just as they have done over land and raw materials (Malpas, 2003, p.19). Lyotard also maintains that the different discourses—language games—that make up a society's knowledge also structure the social bond among the subjects in a society. Different societies have diverse forms of politics, law, and legitimation, varying from place to place worldwide.

Michel Foucault debunks the relationship between power and knowledge and the different discourses that these generate. He names his conception of history as genealogy after Friedrich Nietzsche. He focuses on the areas that have been previously left unrecognized as

they represent the voices of the marginalized sections of society, like women, the mad, the sick, and the poor in general. He subjects European civilization's "universal necessities" to a thoroughgoing analysis. He brings out the inherent flaws of such thinking, such as the binaries of black and white, rational and irrational, etc.

Foucault exposes the mutual relationship between power and knowledge; he understands that power creates its peculiar knowledge, which evolves its discourses used to define and legitimize things and social practices in a society that marginalizes and otherizes certain disadvantaged groups (Butler, 2002). Foucault believes that in a situation of imbalances of power relations between groups of people or between institutions

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/states, there is a production of knowledge about the economically and ethnically marginalized people or sections of society that leads to their exploitation and subjugation.

Foucault maintains that specific deep-seated regulations structure and limit the creation and circulation of discourse. He adds that though, in theory, the number of things that one can say or write about is infinite, certain factors like taboo, madness, or sanity, and institutional ratification strictly limit the number of meaningful statements (discourse) that one can make certain factors like taboo, madness, or sanity. Institutional ratification limits the number of meaningful statements (discourse) one can make. Institutions everywhere regulate knowledge production and dissemination, prioritizing and foregrounding certain statements and marginalizing or gaging opposing statements. In a social situation of power imbalance, the more powerful institutions control or regulate knowledge in its discursive manifestation; thus, making a statement from a position of power becomes discourse and circulates as actual knowledge (Mills, 2003).

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

There is a new secretary, Dawn, in Lurie's department who expresses annoyance and uneasiness in a conversation with Lurie over lunch about the changed environment after apartheid. Coetzee (1999) shows her dilemma and uncertain position in the changed social and political environment:

She complains about her sons' school. Drug-pedlars hang around the playing-fields, she says, and the police do nothing. For the past three years she and her husband have had their name on a list at the New Zealand consulate, to emigrate.' You people had it easier. I mean, whatever the rights and wrongs of the situation, at least you knew where you were.'....Now people just pick and choose which laws they want to obey. It's anarchy. How can you bring up children where there's anarchy all around? (p.8, 9).

This paragraph highlights the overall uncertain situation and mental anxiety of the white minority who are increasingly leaving the country to move to safer destinations in their bid to avoid being made victims of the chaos and anarchy that followed the democratization of South Africa. The words 'pick and choose which laws they want to obey' are important for analyzing the elements of conflicts and uncertainty. The distinguishing trait of postmodernity is that the grand Eurocentric narratives have lost their legitimacy and authorizing power. Postmodern subjects are no longer inclined to subscribe to the illusions of overarching truths. However, they are more amenable to the various locally situated 'little narratives' that provide a qualified and limited 'truth' relative to a specific cultural situation (Nicol, 2009, p. 12). That is one reason why Dawn sounds so downcast and disillusioned with the post-apartheid politics across South African society, as the local black natives and other ethnicities are now legally powerful enough to pick and choose laws by their religious creeds and political aspirations.

According to Derrida, 'truth itself is always relative to the differing standpoints and predisposing intellectual frameworks of the judging subject' (Butler, 2002, p. 16), which helps one understand the anarchy Dawn refers to. The people of South Africa can now use their intellectual frameworks to understand and judge things around independently, which was previously not possible under the apartheid regime. Derrida's concept of 'play' in the sense of free and unimpeded motion is entirely at work in the country's socio-economic structure as the tight control of apartheid is no longer there to stop the play of the system now.

Coetzee (1999) brings to the readers' attention the disconnect between the former colonial rulers and the post-apartheid citizens of South Africa. David Lurie is shown to be a man with 'no interest for the material he teaches, [and as a result] he makes no impression on his students. They look through him when he speaks and forget his name. Their indifference galls him more than he will admit (Coetzee, 1999, p.4). The students are not avid readers of the past who slavishly rote-learned everything the white Europeans taught to earn the sympathy and respect of the white man. Coetzee (1999) gives a disturbing portrait of a distraught white man who 'has long ceased to be surprised at the range of ignorance of his students'. It seems to Lurie as if all his students were born in a 'post-

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Christian, post-historical, and postliterate' age, or they might as well have been hatched from eggs yesterday (Coetzee, 1999, p. 32) who have no knowledge of the Western history and culture and civilization and are alienated from the past era of colonialism and the teachings of Christianity.

These lines capture the disinterest and detachment of the university students who know that the post-independence time is not a time to indulge in the imaginary pursuits of the English Romantic poets and waste their precious time in philosophical exercises but a time to come to terms with the new realities of the democratic nation. David Lurie's students are not interested in the tenets, beliefs, and doctrines of Christianity; for them, the role of Christianity and religion in their lives is over. Christianity was a central grand narrative of colonialism that had tried to impose a religious system that was alien to the soil of Africa. The postmodern age best describes the general 'scepticism of grand narratives, an anti-foundational bias, and an almost reflex dislike of authority' (Sim, 2005, p. 4).

The students live in a new era and know their changed outlook. They are indifferent to how Lucifer tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit that had caused their expulsion from Heaven. Europe's cultural, political, and social history is also something beyond their list of priorities, as these kinds of knowledge cannot work anymore in the ever-changing social climate of the rainbow nation. The new system has accentuated the role of communication skills because South Africa is a multiethnic, multilingual, and multicultural society, which will help bridge the intra-national linguistic and cultural fault lines. The new society does not need the outdated knowledge of classical literature and the idealistic and imaginative flights of escapism of British romantic poets.

The experience of a human being in different social positions is called subjectivity (Nicol, 2009, p. 19). Michel Foucault subverts the old understanding of subjectivity and contends that individuals in society owe their identity to the power relations existing at a particular time. Foucault believes that power is the final arbiter of social reality. He relates this idea to the close connection between power and knowledge. He argues that knowledge is best described as a power over others as it gives one the authority to determine and define the essential qualities of others (Butler, 2002, p.44). It thus becomes a tool for controlling people rather than a mode to liberate them from oppression. Foucault maintains that human subjects are "effects of power" (Sarup, 1993, p.74) formed by discourse and power-knowledge relations in a society. His understanding is that the complex differential power relations place human beings into all kinds of 'subject positions' that force them to internalize the social milieu's normative values and cultural traditions.

Lurie's domineering sexual liaison with Soraya also makes clear the imbalance of power in the relationship between the two. Coetzee (1999) portrays an ironic picture of Lurie's sexual affair with Soraya and writes that Lurie' has solved the problem of sex rather well' (Coetzee, 1999, p.1). He visits her on Thursday, which has become an oasis of luxe et volupté (well-being and luxury) for him in the week's desert. Coetzee (1999) draws a picture of Soraya's relationship with Lurie that recalls minding the stereotypical representation of women outside the European centre. Coetzee (1999) writes that 'Soraya is tall and slim, with long black hair and dark, liquid eyes' [and]… in bed, Soraya is not effusive. Her temperament is, in fact, rather quiet, quiet and docile (Coetzee, 1999, p. 1). These lines clearly show Lurie's understanding of non-European women that is based on mere false assumptions which do not reflect the genuine reality of women and their individuality belonging to different cultures. Coetzee (1999) further writes that 'the first time Soraya received [David], she wore vermilion lipstick and heavy eye shadow. Not liking the stickiness of the makeup, he asked her to wipe it off. She obeyed and has never worn it since. A ready learner, compliant, and pliant (Coetzee, 1999, p.5).

The phrases like 'honey-brown body',' long black hair and dark, liquid eyes, and 'an oasis of luxe et volupté' (Coetzee, 1999, p.1) bring to mind the old colonial representations of non-European alien women in the Western psyche. Lurie's ninety minutes in Soraya's company make him think about the ecstatic sexual pleasures of Gustave

Flaubert's heroine, Emma Bovary, which sheds light on the romantic ethos Lurie's imagination firmly ties to. The sentence that he is 'at home amid a flux of bodies where Eros stalks and glances flash like arrows' (Coetzee, 1999, p.6) recalls to mind the quiver of Cupid filled with love-causing arrows that Cupid is said to shoot at gods and goddesses. The line' I demand you will never phone me here again, never (Coetzee, 1999, p.10) takes on the meaning of a harsh command for Lurie. The 'shrillness' in her otherwise quiet and docile speaking comes like a bolt from the blue for him.

Foucault maintains that resistance is power's defining difference, and where there is power, there is resistance against it (Belsey, 2002), which explains Soraya's refusal to accommodate Lurie's possessive behaviour towards her body. It also clearly proves that the grand narratives of colonialism and patriarchy are history now, and women are increasingly inclined to fight the false assumptions that have been attributed to them by the patriarchal power structures of capitalist societies. This also shows that resistance is always part of power relations in a society and gets revealed in 'micro-revolts' of the sort that Soraya's final assertiveness shows to the readers.

Lucy can be said to be a brave woman who lives life against the rigid patriarchal representations of femininity and subverts the traditional understanding of women that relegates them to a subjugated position of financial dependence on men. One of the significant ideological bases of patriarchy is heteronormativity—a grand narrative--that posits that the norm of heterosexuality is the ordinary and inherently natural way of expressing human sexuality. It calls homosexuality an aberration from the normative values of morality and naturally acceptable standards of sexual behavior (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, p.76).

Foucault (1978) believes that sexuality is not a natural reality but the product of a system of discourses and practices which form part of the intensifying surveillance and control of the individual (Sarup, 1993, p.72). Lucy moved to Eastern Cape as part of a tribe of young people who used to sell leather-made goods and pottery and grow maize and hemp plants. She settled down here with her friend Helen after the break-up of the commune and, with Lurie's help, bought the smallholding to farm it, and thus, she became a 'solid countrywoman, a borrow' (Coetzee,1999,p.60), a farmer woman.

Foucault (1978) says that when there are imbalances in power relations between groups of people, knowledge will be produced. Men have always tried to determine women's lives and marked certain behaviors as proper and moral and others as immoral and improper. Lurie does not like her lesbian way of life with the somewhat obese, sad-looking Helen, who has a deep voice and bad skin besides being older than Lucy. Women in Lurie's thinking still exist on the negative side of the binary opposition of 'man vs woman'. He does not understand her preference for Helen and wishes someone better to find Lucy. On first seeing her, Lurie is somewhat shocked by the weight she has gained, and her 'ample' hips and breasts, and 'comfortably barefoot' (Coetzee,1999,p.59) walking strike him as features not becoming a young woman of her age. She is living alone now with her dogs, which she claims still means deterrence on the alien frontier of the Eastern Cape. Lurie calls her "an armed philosopher" (Coetzee, 1999,p.60) and is amazed at her difference from her parents. She is a throwback to the past frontier settlers and a "sturdy young settler" (Coetzee,1999, p.61). These observations make it unmistakably clear that Lurie expects women to be "pliant", "coquettish", and obediently "docile", which are mere figments of patriarchal imagination. He sees women through the lens of old ideas, which present women as slim, beautiful, supple-bodied, soft-speaking, and with beautiful hair. He is in the habit of first seeing the body of women, not the total unique characteristics which form their individuality. Men are inclined to divide women into parts and focus on their bodies separately from their feelings, emotions, their inner psychic world and overall characteristics.

Lurie calls Pauline, Melanie's cousin, a woman with "chunky legs" (Coetzee,1999, p.25), not slender or attractive in a graceful way. He thinks "ample" is a moderate adjective describing Lucy's body. She will grow into a definitely "heavy" woman after some time as she has withdrawn

from the domain of love, where women deliberately try to spruce up to attract men. Lucy is an independent woman who owns her land and operates a stall at the Grahamstown market, where she sells her flowers and fresh vegetables on Saturday mornings. The old way of life has indeed shifted its former position, as can be seen by Petrus, who now has land adjacent to Lucy's smallholding and is free to work for Lucy on his conditions. When asked by Lurie, he replies that he works as a gardener and dog man for Lucy (Coetzee, 1999, p.64). Lucy says that she cannot order [him] around as [he] is his own master now (Coetzee, 1999, p.114).

In the past, black South Africans were not permitted to own legally and tend their piece of land outside the allocated areas, which was a meagre 10%. Moreover secondly, the banks are also now visibly biased in favour of the blacks by giving them grants to grab land from the whites. The biggest problem with Lucy is that she does not know that the past Boer settlers were paterfamilias with large extended families and not lonely lesbians. Her life as a lonely homosexual woman amid the black majority and the traditional conception of a frontier settler do not dovetail. In short, she, as a lesbian, is setting the stage for bad practices on South African soil. In the market, "many of Lucy's customers know her by her name, [and] middle-aged women meet her with a touch of the proprietary in their attitude to her, and look upon her success as their own (Coetzee, 1999,p.72). Thus, it is clear that most of her customers are women, and the local black community cannot overlook this.

Petrus must have intimated the local black people about Lucy's unnatural sexuality as the community is founded on rigid patriarchal principles, as is evident from Petrus's way of life with his domineering attitude toward his pregnant wife. The text does not explicitly say anything about Petrus insinuating to black people about Lucy's peculiar way of life. However, one cannot help suspecting Petrus's hand in Lucy's rape as he goes missing from the farm without telling Lucy anything about his journey or business engagement. Petrus has dwelt with Lucy for quite some time now to be aware of her bizarre relationship with Helen, and it is probably with two different but related goals that he either had Lucy raped by the black men or facilitated their crime by his unannounced absence from the scene of the crime. There is a history of apartheid, too, that involves her rape. The racial dimensions are there and cannot be downplayed by focusing on Lucy's lesbian way of life in the black community. However, her rape is also related to her independent way of life, and the black rapists visit her to assert their dominance and bring her into the fold of their way of life, where women live life under the iron hand of men's control.

Lyotard (1984) says there is no longer any single metanarrative or unifying identity for the subject or society after the destruction of grand narratives. However, individuals are the sites where conflicting moral and political codes intersect, and the social bond is fragmented (Malpas, 2003, p.29). Coetzee (1999) gives a shocking and disturbing picture of the postapartheid racial relations and power-sharing, which can be seen in the socio-political engagement of tensions of distrust and violence among the different races in South Africa.

Disgrace draws an unsettling social landscape in the sense that the black man is now a visible presence on the social scene, and the white man is being pushed to a position of obscurity from its former place of centrality a decade ago. Petrus introduces himself to Lurie as 'the gardener and the dogman' (Coetzee,1999, p. 64) and gradually grows into 'a man of substance' (Coetzee,1999,p. 77) at the cost of diminishing white privilege. Petrus's character represents the disintegration of white supremacy. It indicates the country-wide upheaval that has resulted in the collapse of white patriarchal power and the empowerment of the black majority.

Petrus is a force that cannot be eliminated without dire consequences for Lucy and her farm. He has the advantage of the abolition of apartheid and has got a Land Affairs grant that has enabled him to buy his land, which under apartheid was next to impossible. He goes missing without bothering to tell Lucy, and it is in his absence that Lucy is raped, and the dogs in her kennels are brutally shot dead. Her father, Lurie, also receives wounds on his head in the attack as his scalp is burnt with methylated spirits, but he survives the attack.

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After returning to the farm with building materials, he does not bother to visit Lucy and ask about the state of affairs in his absence. However, on being asked if he has heard about the robbery on Lucy's farm, he does answer Lurie that he knows about it and says that 'it is awful, a terrible thing, [but] they [Lucy and Lurie] are all right now' (Coetzee,1999,p. 114). The last words are significant as they suggest Petrus is behind the attack. However, he must have told the perpetrators to spare their lives and put them in their proper place following the end of the colonial power.

Lurie expects Petrus to ask about Lucy's health, but he instead asks if Lucy will go to the market the following day. This hints at his involvement in the shameful episode. Earlier in their first conversation, Petrus had told Lurie that 'it is dangerous: everything is dangerous today' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 64), which can be read as a forewarning to white people in the Eastern Cape. It proves that he knows that the black people around are not favorably disposed to the presence of white Europeans in their midst. He does not even bother to offer some plausible explanation for his unexpected absence as he knows that he is now a free citizen of the country and he is entitled to maintain his silence because he knows that 'it is a new world they live in' (Coetzee,1999,p. 117). He could not have played truant like that in the past apartheid era. All these facts force Lurie to acknowledge that 'Petrus is no longer, strictly speaking, a hired help' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 116), but the word 'neighbour' accurately describes his present situation.

In Lurie's mind, Petrus is a good 'plotter and a schemer and no doubt a liar' (Coetzee, 1999, p.117), as later on, one of the attackers, Pollux, comes to live with him, but he denies his involvement in the crime. It cannot be possible that Pollux does not know the other two perpetrators who raped Lucy and took away Lurie's car and other things. Petrus must have asked Pollux about all the details and particulars of the attack and the other two rapists. As a man with 'shrewd eyes', he knows the lay of the land and has kept a vigilant eye on the surrounding world unfolding before his eyes. He knows that '[a] good peasant takes care to have lots of sons' (Coetzee,1999, p.118) but is also not oblivious that Lucy has no sons and even Ettinger's son has fled the country.

In Petrus's vision of the country, there is no place for the wild and unrealistic dreams of people like Lucy. David presses him hard about the suspicious nature of the attack and about bringing the culprits to justice, but he has nothing valuable to say. He evades his questions by saying that David is not wrong to want justice. Petrus does not play the eager guest at his housewarming party and does not even offer them a drink, but he announces,' No more dogs. I am no longer the dogman's (Coetzee, 1999, p. 129) as if he were eagerly waiting for this day. Again his words' no more dogs' can be read as a veiled message to his white neighbors that the time of dogs used against black people as deterrence is over, and they cannot be 'bred anymore to snarl at the mere smell of a black man' (Coetzee,1999,p. 110).

As a patriarch of the family, he is praying for a boy. He says that 'it is best if the first one is a boy as he can then show his sisters how to behave' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 130), and in his opinion, a girl is very expensive and reduces women to the phrase 'always money, money, money' (Coetzee, 1999,p. 130). Later, when Lucy sees Pollux, one of the culprits, she is surprised by his calm and poised response. He 'does not appear to be startled but, on the contrary, appears to have been waiting for this moment, storing himself up for it' (Coetzee,1999,p. 131), which indicates he has been trained and prepared by someone whom to respond to the white man. Petrus defends the boy against Lurie's accusations by believing the lies of the boy and does not subject the boy to any questioning, which sums up that 'Petrus is not an innocent party, [and] he is with the [rapists] of Lucy' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 133).

The 'mood of quiet satisfaction among the young and old during a speech in the party by a man of middle age with a gold chain and a murmur of agreement from his audience' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 135) tells that the black South Africans are uniting and grouping against the outsiders of European descent. The old grand narratives of colonialism and Western civilization give way to the local little narratives of the South African multicultural and multiethnic society. Derrida (1967) says that

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all systems fall on a continuum between infinite play and eternal stability (Klages., 2006, p. 61). The postapartheid society of South Africa is a decentred universe where the white Western norms of behavior and intellectual outlook don't provide anymore a firm centre but a play has started where the binary opposites do not stay neatly on their proper side. However, a free play of signifiers has begun where they do not refer to fixed reference points.

The symbolic significance of the 'flashlight' that Lucy carries to Petrus's party to light the way is important as it stands for the light of European civilization. On coming back from the party to the farmhouse, she forgets the flashlight. As a result, father and daughter lose their way in the dark, which forces Lucy to 'take off her shoes' (Coetzee,1999,p. 132), and they blunder through the potato beds before reaching the safety and stability of the 'farmhouse'. Shoes and farmhouses are also symbols of the civilized European way of life by which Coetzee indirectly gives the message that the white Europeans may lose the flashlight of Western civilization if they mix up with the black people in postapartheid South Africa. David Lurie understands that Pollux's question 'Who are you?' can be unambiguously read as 'By what right are you here?' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 132) in South Africa, that belongs to the black people, not white outsiders. All these elements of chaos and conflicts indicate that a new social reconfiguration is taking place across South Africa that leaves no place in the future of the country for the likes of Lucy, Ettinger and white Europeans in general.

Postapartheid society does not have the power imbalances of the colonial period, where the blacks and other ethnic groups were on the receiving end of the white man's hegemony. However, a new post-1994 social reconfiguration has occurred where 'the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define….. the limits and forms of the sayable' (Foucault,1991) have drastically changed. A power imbalance situation restricts the weaker groups' ability and capacity to generate statements acknowledged as meaningful discourse as they do not have the ratification of the different state institutions at their back (Malpas, 2003, p. 69).

The identities of black and white characters in Disgrace undergo significant changes due to changed power relations after the end of apartheid. After the rape, Lurie tries to persuade Lucy that she cannot go on living on the farm because things in the country have changed. It is not sensible anymore to live in perpetual fear of rape and robberies, but Lucy confronts him with glittering eyes and stiff neck that she is not prepared to leave the place and move to a safer place. He is flabbergasted by Lucy's decision not to tell the police the whole story. It pains him to think that the intruders will know through newspapers and gossip that the police are seeking them for robbery and assault, and no rape case has been lodged against them, which means that 'silence is being drawn like a blanket over the body of the woman' (Coetzee,1999,p. 110).

Lurie believes this approach will embolden them to think that Lucy is too ashamed to tell the real story due to the shameful Disgrace that was their primary target. He concludes his inner thoughts with the idea that the rapists wanted to put this confident, modern young woman in her proper place and show through their brutal rape what she was meant for. He tries a different tack, that she must tell the police about the fundamental nature of the attack as 'there is no shame in being the object of a crime' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 111) as it happened to her and as an innocent party she had no role in it. In other words, a crime has to be reported to the police. Lurie does believe that the crime is related to the history of apartheid, but she cannot 'expiate the crimes of the past by suffering in the present' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 112).

Coetzee (1999) highlights the differences in cultural outlooks in the various responses of the central characters. Petrus brings home two sheep to be slaughtered in the party he intends to throw for his relatives in honour of the land transfer, which he tethers on a bare patch of ground that has no grass. Lurie looks at this cruel treatment from the vantage point of his own culture and tells Lucy that 'he is not sure he likes the way [Petrus] does things—bringing the slaughter-beasts home to acquaint them with the people who are going to eat them' (Coetzee, 1999,p. 124) to which Lucy indignantly replies that he should wake up as this is not Europe but Africa. Despite it all, Lurie goes

ahead and unties the sheep and takes them to a grassy patch where they can graze and drink water. Similarly, David Lurie's mental search and effort to understand the motives of the attackers finally brings him to the core cause of the present chaos and conflicts in postapartheid South Africa, which he comes to understand is 'anthropological' in nature (Coetzee, 1999,p. 118).

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), anthropology is 'the study of the human race, especially of its origins, development, customs and beliefs' (p.55). Lurie believes that a patient anthropological study will unearth the basic causes of the conflicts and help remove the false stereotypes that breed acrimony and misunderstanding of other cultures and their members. He thinks that 'months of patient [and] unhurried conversation with dozens of people, and the offices of an interpreter [will help] get to the bottom' (Coetzee, 1999,p. 118) of the inherent differences and diversity which are causes for chaos, conflicts and the bloodshed throughout the long history of South Africa.

Lyotard's contention that the grand narratives are fundamentally problematic relates to its political misuse and exploitation as the cruel history of colonialism explicitly makes clear how the 'universal ideas of reason and freedom from superstition' were used by the European nations as a moral basis for the colonial and cultural domination of Asia, Africa, and Americas (Malpas, 2003, p.29). Thus, it becomes clear at the end of Disgrace that white Europeans like Lurie, Lucy, and Bev Shah have developed some smattering of understanding of the local native cultures, which clearly shows that the Western grand narratives will take a back seat or adapt themselves to the unique cultural, political and social environment of the South African society to help evolve an inclusive democracy for all the sections of the country.

5.0 FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Findings

1. The lingering effects of apartheid continue to shape the personal and societal dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa, affecting both individual and collective identities.
2. The clash between old power structures and new realities leads to significant conflict and disintegration as characters like Lurie struggle with their alienation and inability to adapt.
3. The traumatic experiences of the characters, particularly Lucy's assault, reflect the unresolved social and political trauma of apartheid, which influences contemporary interactions and perceptions.
4. Racial and gender dynamics remain pivotal in the novel as the characters navigate a society where old binaries are being disrupted but not entirely erased, leading to ongoing tension and conflict.
5. The shift in language use—from European languages to indigenous ones—symbolizes the broader societal transformation and the challenge of reconciling past hierarchies with the new order.

5.2 Conclusion

Disgrace explores the aftermath of apartheid, with David Lurie's inability to adapt to the new democratic, post-colonial South Africa causing conflict and alienation. He clings to outdated patriarchal values, failing to understand the shifting power dynamics and new identities emerging among women and the black community. Meanwhile, Lucy embraces change, accepting her rape and pregnancy as part of her growth. Her decision to stay with Petrus challenges Western norms, symbolizing the adaptive resilience of women in post-apartheid South Africa. The novel illustrates the chaos and division caused by the lingering psychological scars of apartheid, highlighting the complexities of cultural transition.

Disgrace highlights the shift in post-apartheid South Africa, where black characters like Petrus assert power and ownership, symbolizing the dismantling of colonial structures. Petrus's acquisition of land contrasts with the historical exploitation of black labor, marking a profound change in racial dynamics. The novel reflects the fragmentation of old norms, with the rise of indigenous "mini-narratives" replacing European metanarratives. Women of all backgrounds challenge patriarchal oppression, and Lurie's inability to adapt to these changes highlights the

decline of European dominance. The text illustrates a society in disarray, where racial and gender conflicts disrupt the old order and reshape identities.

The third research question examines the lingering impact of apartheid history on post-apartheid South Africa. The burglaries, Lurie's expulsion, and Lucy's rape highlight unresolved historical tensions. The symbolic replacement of dogs with Petrus's heifers reflects the shift in power dynamics. Lurie's belief that Lucy's suffering is a manifestation of the past underscores how colonial legacies continue to hinder societal reconciliation and the creation of an egalitarian society.

5.3 Further Recommendations

Disgrace (1999) offers rich avenues for further research. One could explore elite historiography, focusing on the elite's problems while neglecting the subaltern. Another perspective could be gender performativity, analyzing how characters like Lucy and Bev subvert traditional gender roles, engaging in a turf war with male characters. These approaches offer insightful interpretations of the novel's power dynamics and societal structures.

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