From Race to Grace: The Other J M Coetzee

By

BARBARA JANARI (HLRBAR001)

A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfillment* of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in English

Department of English

Faculty of the Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

2005

Declaration:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Date: 07.09.05

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the contribution by the following people to the completion of this minor dissertation:

My supervisor, Professor Stephen Watson, whose insight and guidance deepened my reading and understanding of the topic significantly.

Professor Grant Farred, to whom I am deeply appreciative for his unstinting help, advice and encouragement.

My husband, Spencer, for his unwavering support and love and steadfast belief in me. He has been my foundation throughout my studies.

Finally, to my beloved son, Noah, just ten days old, for being one of the key reasons that I was motivated to complete this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I: Introduction

One of the notable features of JM Coetzee's work is the portrayal in his novels, particularly in his 1999 Booker Prize-winning novel, *Disgrace*, of worlds that often seem bleak and bereft of redemption. In this dissertation I will argue that there is a resonance in Coetzee's writing that goes beyond the political and historical and that adds another dimension to his work. The focus of my dissertation will be an attempt to account for this other 'dimension' within the broader socio-political-historical nexus that informs much of his work. I will argue that this other dimension represents an ongoing concern with the questions of redemption and salvation, particularly as they are manifested in his later works, *Disgrace* and *Elizabeth Costello*. These concerns, however, are not just a consequence of Coetzee's evolving thought. As I will show, they are present in his earlier texts as well. To this end, I will consider the ways in which the themes of redemption and salvation, in the specifically religious and Christian sense of these words, also resonate in *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) and *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983).

JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* has generated a great deal of controversy and criticism, particularly for its undeniably bleak, pessimistic view of the new South Africa and for its perceived racism. In this novel, a white woman, Lucy Lurie, is attacked and raped by three black men, who also kill all the dogs that she cares for. It is this particular incident in the novel, the depiction of black-on-white violence, that has drawn the most criticism, being viewed, on the one hand, as something which plays on white fears of black retaliation for apartheid, and on the other hand, as something which supports racist stereotypes about black violence.

On 5 April 2000, Coetzee's *Disgrace* was referred to in the ANC's submission to the Human Rights Commission's Inquiry into Racism in the Media (Attwell: 2002:332). The then Minister of Public Enterprises, Jeff Radebe, concluded the submission by saying that:

> JM Coetzee makes the point that five years after liberation white South African society continues to believe in a particular stereotype of the African which defines the latter as immoral and amoral, a savage, violent, disrespectful of private property, incapable of

> refinement through education and driven by … dark satanic impulses (quoted in Attwell, 2002:334).

According to Shane Moran:

> Coetzee, in his destruction, gives a fiercely one-dimensional indictment of the inhumanity of post-apartheid South Africa that inevitably feeds into the trough of gleeful pessimism that nourishes opponents of black governance (2001:226).

Mitchell and Gordin (2003) refer to a review in *The Economist* which takes the view that the thesis of many post-liberation South African novels such as *Disgrace* is that "South Africa run by Africans is going to hell in a handbasket" (p1). Georgina Horrell (2000) sees the debate surrounding *Disgrace* as centring on what Coetzee's intentions in this novel are – whether they endorse the acceptance of whites' subordination in post-1994 South Africa, or whether it is "… a reactionary expression of white liberal disaffection and complaint" (p26). Michiel Heyns quotes Anna Christensen in the *Financial Mail* as referring to *Disgrace* as "… a dark, nihilistic *tour de force* that clashes with the reality and the intent of what I have come to believe South Africa represents", and that its likely effect on white South Africans will be to send them "… hobbling off to the Australian embassy for immigration forms" (p57). According to Michael Kochin, *Disgrace* is a highly disturbing novel "… because it seems to present a world dying without hope" (2004:4). Jason Cowley calls the worldview of *Disgrace* "extraordinarily despairing" (1999:19), arguing that Lucy's comment about being prepared to live like a dog, "with no cards, no weapons, no property rights, no dignity", constitutes a pivotal moment in the text, one that offers a clue to Coetzee's vision of the future of South Africa. For Grant Farred, "The condition of abjection, of fallenness, of social and political failure … dominates Coetzee's 1999 Booker Prize-winning novel" (2002), and for Rita Barnard, "A crisis of definitions, relationships, and responsibilities lies at the heart of Coetzee's troubling new novel …" (2002: 385). However, Gareth Cornwell points out that the novel is also uplifting in the sense that David Lurie's acceptance of disgrace as his state of being "… is the first step towards salvation, the recovery of grace" (1999:248). Derek Attridge (2002) sums up the controversy that surrounds this text:

> Coetzee is either praised (implicitly or explicitly) for unblinkingly depicting the lack of progress South Africa has made towards its declared goal of a non-racial, non-sexist democracy … or condemned for painting a one-sidedly negative picture of post-apartheid South Africa, representing blacks as rapists and thieves, and implying that whites have no option but to submit to their assaults. (p317)

Coetzee himself, however, is not insensible to these concerns. In an essay on Breytenbach's *Dog Heart,* which features attacks on whites in the countryside of the new South Africa, Coetzee shows himself to be fully aware of the ramifications of depicting post-apartheid black-on-white violence:

> These stories make disturbing reading not only because of the psychopathic violence of the attacks themselves, but because they are being repeated at all. For the circulation of horror stories is the very mechanism that drives white paranoia about being chased off the land and ultimately into the sea. Why does Breytenbach lend himself to the process? (2001:312)

Coetzee's tone and comments in the above extract are not commensurate with an attitude that would uncritically endorse the fuelling of white paranoia or contribute to a discourse of right-wing racism, as the accusation alleges in the ANC's submission to the Human Rights Commission on Racism in the Media. Furthermore, as David Attwell points out in his article, "Race in Disgrace", the way in which race is dealt with in the novel is far less one-dimensional than the criticism of the novel would imply. Attwell argues, for example, that Manas Mathabane, the Professor of Religious Studies and part of the committee set up to deal with the sexual harassment charge against David Lurie, is the one most dedicated to fairness and procedure and that his general attitude is one of forgiveness, reminiscent of the presence of the clergy at the TRC (2002:335). As for the theft of Lurie's car and various other items, it is not the racial character of the thieves that Lurie reflects on, but the question of the redistribution of material goods that is pondered (p336). Also, in his attempts to console Lucy, it is history, rather than race, that produces the conditions for violence and ultimately the attack on his daughter (p337).

Nevertheless, this horrifying attack, as well as the brutal killing of the dogs and the attempt to set fire to Lurie, contribute to the overall pessimistic, bleak character of the

novel. When one adds to this the events leading up to Lurie's forced resignation from the university, the picture becomes ever more disheartening. Lucy Graham (2002), argues that the world that is presented in *Disgrace* is one that is characterised by "the absence of grace" (p4), a position that I will argue for in this dissertation. I would argue further that it is this very characteristic that foregrounds the need for a measure of redemption in the society depicted in Coetzee's novel.

The notions of redemption and salvation are most often linked with the Christian teaching that man may be delivered from sin or saved from evil by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to Georg Simmel (1997), each person contains within him/herself the seed of his/her own regeneration. The soul's salvation entails discovering the 'divine' in ourselves, the part of ourselves that will satisfy all our ultimate longings "in terms of its yearning for transcendence and fulfilment, stature and strength" (p29). This fulfilment of our inner being is, according to Simmel, what constitutes the essence of the soul's salvation. Revealing this inner core is the task of each individual. Simmel argues that inherent in the Christian concept of salvation is the idea that "… each person should make the most of *his own talent"* (1997:34). Thus, the salvation of the soul "… depends on each and every person's wresting from himself the most personal and unique elements of his being" (1997:35).

In Coetzee's texts there is no simple recourse to salvation. His characters do not speak the language of Christianity and Christ's love; they do, however, often demonstrate the need for a life that contains the presence of something spiritual, or a world that is in need of something beyond the material and corporeal and the historical and political. Furthermore, Coetzee's characters inhabit complex worlds weighted by socio-political concerns. His characters thus have to negotiate their personal needs within a context that is often fraught with difficulties and complications. Derek Attridge comments that the value that most deeply informs *Disgrace* is "a profound need to preserve the integrity of the self" (2000:109). Sue Kossew views events in *Disgrace* as a complex interaction between private and public worlds, in particular, public disgrace versus individual grace or salvation (2003:155). Elizabeth Costello says of her vegetarianism that "It comes out of a desire to save my soul" (Coetzee, 2003:89) and Magda, in the early part of *In the Heart of the Country*, asks: "How shall I be saved?" (*HC:* 16). In short, Coetzee's

characters frequently demonstrate the need for salvation in some form or other, although they do not necessarily phrase their needs in overt religious terms.

The spiritual impulse in Coetzee's characters is manifested in varied ways, in some ways obviously Christian, in other ways denoting what I would call a generic spirituality. I would argue that these characters often have particular ways of being in the world that are, at root, religious, or that denote a spiritual condition or orientation. While Blanche (Sister Bridget) in *Elizabeth Costello* demonstrates the Christian ethic of love and sacrifice for others by devoting her life to God and caring for the sick and dying at Marianhill hospital, Michael K's reverence for the land and the pumpkins that he grows turns the cliché of being close to nature into something akin to a profound state of grace. The Magistrate's washing of the barbarian girl's feet in *Waiting for the Barbarians* also evokes an obvious comparison with the biblical story in which Jesus washes his disciples' feet during the last supper in order to teach them humility and service. The disciples do not understand why Jesus has washed their feet until he explains to them: "Do you know what I have done to you? [13]You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. [14]If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15]For I have given you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you" (John, 13:12-15). Humility and service can be seen as fundamental virtues in Christian life, and in *Waiting for the Barbarians,* the Magistrate's washing of the Barbarian girl's feet can be seen, at one level, as demonstrating his need to distance himself from the Empire and Colonel Joll's atrocities towards the barbarians, however much it might otherwise smack of fetishism and even perverse sexual practices.

Defining religion or the modally religious man or woman is not a straightforward task because religions, as well as religious feelings, experiences and opinions, vary so widely. Both the South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary (1994) and the Collins Paperback English Dictionary (1995) define religion as: *the belief in a supernatural power or powers which are considered to be divine or stemming from God,* or as *a particular system of faith and worship.* Similarly, the Penguin English Dictionary (2003) defines religion as: *the organised service and worship of a god, gods, or the supernatural; personal commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance, and a cause, principle or system of beliefs held to with ardour and faith; something considered to be of supreme importance.* A somewhat different interpretation of religion is that given by C. Daniel

Batson *et al*, who offer a definition of religion that focuses on existential questions. According to them, religion is:

> Whatever we as individuals do to come to grips personally with the questions that confront us because we are aware that we and others like us are alive and that we will die (1993:8).

Religion from this perspective can be described as something whose character is metaphysical, relating to our need to understand questions bound up with our existential awareness. Thus, according to Batson *et al* (and germane to this study), a lack of interest in formal, institutional religion does not mean a lack of interest in religious questions; on the contrary, while someone may not conform to the stereotyped notion of what constitutes a religious person, they may nonetheless have an intense interest in religious concerns (1993:156).

One aspect of religion that is stressed by Batson *et al* as being an intrinsic part of religion is that of moral thinking, which can be better understood within a framework of Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development. According to Kohlberg's theory, there are essentially three levels of moral development – preconventional morality, conventional morality and postconventional morality, with each level consisting of two stages. The preconventional level involves mostly young children, and is the level at which moral judgments are made solely on the basis of whatever brings pain or pleasure. The latter is ajudged good; the former bad. At the conventional level, moral decisions are made on the basis of what others or society expect, and so involves upholding the rules and laws of society, just because they are society's rules and laws. At the final level, that of postconventional morality (stages 5 and 6), moral judgments are made on the basis of the underlying principles of justice, equality and rights, regardless of whether or not those principles are endorsed by society. In terms of our moral development, Kohlberg argues that, while we all begin at Stage 1, most of us only progress as far as Stage 4 in our lifetime. For him, "Stage 5 is unusual, Stage 6 extremely rare" (Batson *et al*, 1993: 62).

Insofar as Coetzee's characters are often estranged from or at odds with their social environments, it is frequently because their behaviour and actions do not conform to what is expected. They often display behaviour that corresponds to Kohlberg's conception of

postconventional morality in that they act in terms of their own ideas of right and wrong. Michael K's rejection of the camps; Magda's increasingly desperate attempts to break down the master-servant relationship between herself and the servants on the farm; the Magistrate's decision to help the barbarians after they have been tortured and to return the barbarian girl to her people after her torture; David Lurie's intervention after the dogs have been killed to save the honour of their corpses by acting to ensure that they are not further brutalised; and the intensity of Elizabeth Costello's feelings about animals – all mark them as standing outside the boundaries of what is considered appropriate behaviour within their particular contexts. As for the Magistrate's decision to help the barbarians despite the danger to himself, to "choose the side of justice when it is not in [his] material interest to do so" (*Doubling the Point,* p 394), this is because the Magistrate acts out of the conviction (according to Coetzee), that "… we are born with the idea of justice" (Coetzee, 1997: 395).

The way in which Coetzee's characters respond to the conditions of their existence corresponds closely to Gordon W. Allport's conception of a mature religion. According to him, all that qualify as such comprise three parts: firstly, they deal with complex problems like ethical responsibility and evil; secondly, they involve a readiness to doubt and be critical; and, thirdly, they are open-ended in that they are tentative and incomplete and so incorporate an on-going search for answers (Batson, *et al,* 1997: 166). According to Allport, "We may then say that the mature religious sentiment is ordinarily fashioned in the workshop of doubt" (1950:83). Ethical concerns are a prominent feature of Coetzee's texts and his characters frequently display a great deal of self-doubt and tentativeness about what they do. The agony and trauma that Elizabeth undergoes as a result of her feelings of compassion for animals are testimony to her stance outside and beyond the conventional categories of morality to the extent that she feels herself entirely alienated even from the people she loves, turning to her son, John, in despair, and asking him why it is that she cannot come to terms with a situation that everyone else seems to have accepted. Her anguish is such that she wonders whether it is not perhaps she herself who is deluded: "Is it possible, I ask myself, that all of them are participants in a crime of stupefying proportions? Am I fantasizing it all? I must be mad!" (*Elizabeth Costello*, p114). Allport argues further that when religion comprises these three characteristics they are related to "increased compassion, decreased intolerance and increased sensitivity to the needs of others (Batson, *et al,* 1997:370).

In the texts that I consider in this dissertation, it will be argued that, while Coetzee's novels obviously deal to a large extent with postcolonial issues – the quandaries created by characters who perforce must live in time, in history – embedded in them also is an impulse toward religion or spirituality that moves his work towards transhistorical terms, and that these spiritual flickerings become ever stronger in later texts.

II

The theme of salvation is a recurrent one in earlier Coetzee works like *In the Heart of the Country*. Magda's yearning throughout this novel is to live in community with others, and her condition of alienation from those around her creates a life from which she wants to be redeemed.

In his book *To have or to be?* Erich Fromm argues that the desire to experience connectedness with others is one of the strongest motivators of human behaviour (1976:107). In Catholic theology, the definition of 'Hell' is a mode of existence characterized by the absence of such connection, by an estrangement from others (Fromm, 1976:124). Magda's existence in *In the Heart of the Country* is characterized by just such an absence of connection with others, hence her desperate attempts to befriend Hendrik and Klein-Anna and to communicate with the sky-gods.

Magda in *In the Heart of the Country* yearns to live in a state of reciprocity with others and her environment, but is unable to do so because she is a settler-colonial, and this marks all her relations with others and the world around her, relations that are based essentially on exploiting the labour of others and exploiting the land and animals on the farm. All of Magda's transgressions are aimed at disrupting this status quo, thereby changing the relations that exist into ones that are more equitable and humane. In *In the Heart of the Country,* the relation between self and other is characterised by struggle and antagonism and can be understood within the framework of Sartre's notion of Being-for-others. For Sartre, the foundation of the relation of the self to the other is that the *I* is always an object for the other, and that when the other looks at me, "… suddenly I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities, which are now associated with objects of the world, far from me, in the midst of the world" (Warnock, 1965:76). According to Warnock, for Sartre there are two consequences of being objectified by the other in this way. Firstly, it is that 'I' become a thing, and, secondly, the other's judgment of me enslaves me because it detracts from my mastery of the situation. The only way in which I can defend myself is by trying to destroy the freedom of the other by making a thing of him (1965:78-9). For Sartre, conflict and struggle are the defining characteristics of our relationship with others. Yet, it is this that Magda resists. She has intimations of a different way of being.

Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (1970) gives deeper insight into the urgency and intensity of Magda's quest and helps explain why she is so determined to not just accept and continue with her life.

In Martin Buber's *I and Thou* he establishes a relation of oneness between *I* and *You* that goes back to what he calls the 'basic' word. According to him, basic words do not stand on their own; rather, they always form a word pair, one of which is *I-You*, the other *I-It* (1970:53). The *I* never stands on its own, but is always part of either of the basic word pairs *I-You* or *I-It*. The difference between the two basic word pairs is that when one speaks the basic word *I-You*, one speaks with one's whole being, whereas the basic word *I-It* does not constitute the same type of wholeness (Buber, 1970:54).

The *I* on its own, just as the *You* on its own, cannot produce a whole being; what is needed for the *I* to become is a *You*, so that "becoming I, I say You" (p62). The essence, then, of the *I-You* relation is one of reciprocity. It is through the *You* that the *I* becomes possible. When the *You* is spoken to another human being using the basic word *I-You*, a relation of reciprocity is established that makes the objectification of the other, or a turning of the other into a thing, impossible. Walter Kaufmann, in the introduction to *I and Thou,* argues that there is a religious connotation in Buber's definition of *You*, in that to merely use or experience another being is to deny God, but that in encountering rather than turning away from *You* is to encounter God (p28). According to Buber, it is by grace, not seeking, that the *You* is encountered by me (p62). This lends the *I-You* relation a feeling of sacredness, of that which brings one closer to God. Hence, according to Buber, "… the longing for relation is primary" ((p78).

In an analysis of 'Ballad van de Gasfitter', Coetzee elucidates the problem of reciprocity:

> … the existential incompleteness of the *I* is at the root of Martin Buber's myth of a primal *I – Thou* relation. The "primary word", says Buber, is not *I,* but *I – Thou*, the word of natural combination denoting a relation between *I* and *You* antedating the objectification of *You* into *It* and the isolation of the *I*. …Intimations of the lost relation … inspire our efforts to reconstitute again and again the 'between' of the primal *I – Thou* (1992:72).

The search for reciprocity can be seen as an attempt to redress in some measure the alienation of the self by engaging in relations that will undercut the objectification of the 'other'. According to Strauss (1994:384), the scientific pursuit of knowledge in Western civilization has entailed an "objectification of the world in order to know it (and hence to control it)", so that relations of reciprocity with the world are severed. The will to know, understand, and hence to master the world, has resulted in an inevitable alienation from it. Similarly, the subjugation of people that goes with colonialism has entailed a severing of relations of reciprocity between human beings. The creation of master-servant relationships subverts relationships between people and creates its own pathology. In South Africa, as in many other colonised countries, colonialism has been inextricably linked with race, culminating eventually in the institutionalisation of apartheid as official state policy by the Nationalist government in 1948. It is this history, both pre- and post-1948, that Coetzee's protagonists attempt to transcend in their quest for reciprocity. However, their positions of marginality and alienation from their environments point to a recognition of the inherent chasm between the self and other; hence the elusiveness of their quests.

The sense of being displaced is one of the resonant themes of Coetzee's work; it is the way in which he registers the lack of reciprocity that underpins South African society and that, post-1994, continues to exert a compelling force that undercuts the ideals of transformation and equality. The sense of desolation and emptiness that characterises this novelist's work can be linked to the failure of reciprocity – both social and historical – that informs his texts. Coetzee also, however, offers glimpses of a different history, a way of re-imagining the future that circumvents the impasses created by history.

In his Jerusalem Prize 'Acceptance Speech', JM Coetzee commented: "In a society of masters and slaves, no one is free" (*Doubling the Point,* p97). *In the Heart of the Country* explores this lack of freedom by locating its core in the alienation between the Self and Other that results from colonialism. The novel's protagonist, Magda, struggles to resist the colonial structures of patriarchy and master-servant relations within which she lives to assert a narrative of equality *and* a lived experiential equality. Her historical and social conditions, however, negate this. She is alienated from both her father and the servants by the historically specific subject positions that they each occupy. Her position

as master/mistress of the house is made possible only by the subject-position of the servants, because, as Canepari-Labib, (invoking Hegel), comments: "… the Master always needs a Servant in order to be recognised as Master …" (2000:113). The pathological underside of this position, however, is elucidated by Magda, who sees the damaging consequences to her own humanity – subjugating others is to diminish yourself as well: "I, who living among the downcast have never beheld myself in the equal regard of another's eye, have never held another in the equal regard of mine" (*HC*: 8). This is what Magda means when she says to Klein-Anna that: "I have never learned to talk with another person… I have never known words of true exchange, Anna. The words I give you you cannot give back. They are words without value" (*HC*: 101). It is this debased condition in which Magda lives that she rebels against. Her recognition that "It is not speech that makes man man but the speech of others" (*HC*: 126) reveals the necessity, to humanness, of exchange with others. Where this exchange is compromised, part of what makes us human is, consequently, damaged. Both Magda and her father inhabit a space that is, in this sense, corrupted. Magda, however, recognises and *refuses* to inhabit such a space. She becomes a figure of anomaly because of her refusal to comply with the accepted codes and conventions of her environment.

JM Coetzee situates *In the Heart of the Country* within a tradition of pastoral literature in South Africa. In an analysis of the role of pastoral art in South Africa, Coetzee argues that, to the West, the pastoral fulfils two functions: it personifies the virtues of civilization, the "garden in bloom against the garden in decay, the garden degenerating into wilderness" (1988:3), but must also justify colonialism and retreat from the city. In order to do these, it must portray white labour, with the result that the presence of the black man becomes "embarrassing and difficult" and "the black man becomes a shadowy presence flitting across the stage now and then" (1988:5). Albeit only in part, Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* undermines this conception of the pastoral in South Africa by creating an environment that subverts the pastoral genre. The farm on which Magda lives is a desert-like wilderness, a landscape impenetrable to her attempts to speak it. This conception of the landscape conforms to one of the dream topographies that Coetzee identifies as belonging to South Africa, one in which the "landscape remains alien, impenetrable, until a language is found in which to win it, speak it, represent it" (1988:7). The central question in this conception of the landscape is whether Africa is amenable in any way to being spoken to by people of European identity. Coetzee argues that the

historical failure to find such a language is a result of the failure to imagine Africa as a place that is peopled, and hence to engage with the landscape in its social and historical complexity. Instead, the pastoral isolates "a territory 'outside' history where the disturbing realities of land and labour can be bracketed off …" (1988:9).

According to Coetzee, white South Africans' love for South Africa "… has consistently been directed toward *the land*, that is, toward what is least likely to respond to love: mountains and deserts, birds and animals and flowers" (1992:97). *In the Heart of the Country* exposes the emptiness of this love by foregrounding love in its narrative. In reflecting on Magda's need to engage in relations of reciprocity with those around her, in particular the servants, Coetzee argues that:

> … her passion is … the love for South Africa (not just South Africa the rocks and bushes and mountains and plains but the country and its people), of which there has not been enough on the part of the European colonists and their descendants – not enough in intensity, not enough in all-embracingness. (1992:61)

In opposition to the traditional pastoral narrative, she posits a counter-narrative of reciprocity when she recollects that:

> At the feet of an old man I have drunk in a myth of a past when beast and man and master lived a common life as innocent as the stars in the sky, and I am far from laughing (*HC:* 6).

In contrast to this lost history is the reality of colonial settlement, where animals "provide the economic base for the presence of my father and myself" and the servants become the "hewers of wood and drawers of water and shepherds and body-servants in perpetuity" (*HC:* 19). It is in this rupture of the ties of community and reciprocity that Magda's self is fragmented. According to David Attwell, "The drama of this novel lies in Magda's attempts to find and speak a life for herself under such conditions, a life in which usual forms of exchange or relationship … seem either unauthentic or simply unavailable" (1993:58). As Martin Buber says, in terms of the basic word-pair, the *I* needs a *You* to become whole. Hence, Magda's identity is contingent upon that of others. Because the people with whom she lives are dehumanised, her humanity is also compromised. The

servant becomes an implacable enemy because every aspect of one's relationship with him is corrupted by his debased condition of unfreedom, as Magda recognises when she comments that: "Slaves lose everything in their chains … even joy in escaping from them" (*HC:* 119). There is, moreover, a disturbing, pathological interdependence that develops between master and servant that sustains these perverted relations:

> … the pitiful warrior in the hills was never as formidable as the enemy who walked in our shadow and said *Yes baas.* To the slave who would only say *Yes* my father could only say *No,* and I after him, and that was the start of all my woe (*HC:* 129).

Magda's transgressions against her father and her attempts to construct a different relationship with Klein-Anna and Hendrik illustrate her desire to transcend her alienation from them. Early in the text, Magda articulates her need to engage in relations other than those served by the norms of patriarchy and colonialism, where she is useful "as a tool to bring the house to order, to regiment the servants" (*HC*: 41). This type of usefulness is as empty and arid as her desert surroundings, because "She needs to be needed. With no one to need her she is baffled and bewildered. Does that not explain everything?" (*HC:* 5). Later in the text she reiterates this theme: "I am a black widow in mourning for the uses I was never put to" (*HC*: 41). What Magda wants is to restore the relation of oneness between the *I* and *You* that has been sundered by the ethos of domination and subjugation of the colonial enterprise. This yearning for fraternity and equality with others is what motivates her repeatedly transgressive, albeit futile, acts of violence toward her father. It is the absence of these relationships that marks her and that accounts in part for her rage and violence. As she puts it: "…I cannot believe that fraternal intercourse would not have left its mark on me, the mark that has been left upon me instead is the mark of intercourse with the wilds, with solitude and vacancy" (*HC*: 47), and later: "… perhaps what has been wrong all these years is simply that I have had no one to play with" (*HC*: 76).

David Attwell (1993) also argues that the imaginary killing of her father and his new bride in their bed is a rebellion against what her father and his history represent to her (p62). In addition to the norms of patriarchy that define her existence, there are the constraints of colonial life that determine her relationship with others. Magda rebels against these social structures because, in their denial of reciprocity, they create an

emptiness within her that comes to define her being. Thus her lament that she is "a hole with a body draped around it" and "a hole crying to be whole" (*HC:* 41).

According to Coetzee, however, both Jacobus (*Dusklands*) and Magda "lack the stature to transform [the] 'It' into a 'You,' to, so to speak, create a society in which reciprocity exists; and therefore condemn themselves to desperate gestures towards establishing intimacy" (quoted in Attwell, 1993: 67). According to Brody, the root of Magda's "obsessive monologue" lies in her estrangement from the blacks around her: "All attempts to break out of monologue and into real interchange with black people are defeated by the very language she speaks" (Moses, 1994:169). Magda's attempts to befriend Klein-Anna and Hendrik and to change the nature of her relationship with them are doomed from the start by the pathologies of the master-servant relationship. The only language that Magda has recourse to in her communication with Klein-Anna and Hendrik is that which she knows, one based on her superiority over them, so that when Hendrik angers her she screams at him: "You damned *hotnot,* it's all your fault …" (*HC:* 91). The servants, however, are just as bound by their language of subservience. When Magda asks Klein-Anna to call her by her name, she is unable to do so: "No, miss, I can't" (p102).

According to JM Coetzee, "I am not a herald of community or anything else … I am someone who has intimations of freedom (as every chained prisoner has) and constructs representations … of people slipping their chains and turning their faces to the light" (1992:341). Magda comments that: "In the heart of nowhere, in this dead place, I am making a start; or, if not that, making a gesture" (*HC:*110). In her quest to transcend the objectification of the 'other' and in her constructions of a community, Magda represents just such a turning towards the light. She does not know how to relate to the servants in a more equitable way and her attempts to befriend Hendrik and Klein-Anna eventually fail, culminating in Hendrik raping her, thereby merely repeating the patriarchal norm of male dominance. However, her determination to establish a different type of relationship with the servants, one that is based more on equality, signals her turning towards the light. Of Klein-Anna she says that: "I would like to be her little sister" (*HC*: 87). These words fill her with joy, and she imagines that the feeling of happiness that comes from thinking this way is due to the fact that these words come from her heart. When she invites Hendrik and Klein-Anna into the house, at first they sleep on the floor in the kitchen, but later they

"… make up two beds in the guestroom, decently, with sheets and blankets …" (*HC*: 110). Her plea throughout this novel is to be spoken to "… in the true language of the heart" as "Neither master nor slave, neither parent nor child" (*HC:* 133). Her failure to achieve this communication leads her, in despair, to attempt to communicate with the sky-gods, a sign that she has gone mad. But even this turning away from the human environment around her does not indicate that she has given up on her quest. Though her quest for reciprocity clearly fails, her thirst for it cannot be assuaged and her descent into madness is perhaps the sign of the extremity of her desire, prefiguring that same intensity of longing in Coetzee's other, subsequent works.

III

In *Life and Times of Michael K* the theme of salvation is developed through K's insistence in living on his own terms, that is, in living in freedom at a time when this right was severely curtailed to people like Michael K, who owned no property and had no job. K's determination to stay out of the camps and live according to his own desires can be better understood within a framework of Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of human freedom. In *The Republic of Silence,* Sartre outlines why the German occupation produced a situation in which the French Resistance, from 1940 – 1945, registered its most acute resistance in the form of freedom:

> We were never more free than during the German occupation. We had lost all our rights, beginning with the right to talk. Every day we were insulted to our faces and had to take it in silence. Under one pretext or another, as workers, Jews, or political prisoners, we were deported *en masse.* Everywhere, on billboards, in the newspapers, on the screen, we encountered the revolting and insipid picture of ourselves that our suppressors wanted us to accept. And because of all this we were free. Because the Nazi venom seeped into our thoughts, every accurate thought was a conquest. Because an all-powerful police tried to force us to hold our tongues, every word took on the value of a declaration of principles. Because we were hunted down, every one of our gestures had the weight of a solemn commitment … (as quoted in Barret, 1958:213).

According to William Barret, the basic premise in Sartre's view of human freedom is the ability to say No; this is "The essential freedom, the ultimate and final freedom that cannot be taken from a man …" (1958:215). Michael K exhibits this freedom by consistently refusing to be contained within the camps. It is this refusal to allow himself to be determined by others that marks K's identity and that gives meaning to his existence.

Erich Fromm's *To have or to be?* offers pertinent insight into understanding how the type of freedom evinced by K can function as a mode of salvation. In this study, Fromm's central argument is that society must change its mode of existence in terms of the values and attitudes that govern human behaviour. Essentially, it must change from a focus on greed, profit, ownership and possession, i.e. from a 'having' mode of existence,

to one that is centred on 'being', where the focus is on relatedness to oneself and the world, and experiencing life in its authenticity and aliveness. *Michael K* resonates with the 'being' mode of existence in his insistence on living in freedom, on living life according to his own terms. When he is faced with authority and submitting to the rules of others he becomes a lesser person: he feels stupidity descending on him and is unable to communicate. However, when he is able to live in harmony with nature and the world around him, he is lifted to a state resembling bliss.

In *To have or to be?* Erich Fromm argues that modern society's mode of existence is unhealthy because it creates a society that alienates people from one another and produces economic and ecological dangers. The 'having' mode of existence is centred on a greed and craving for things that conforms to the concept of 'wanting', a fundamental concept in Buddhist thought that results in human suffering rather than enjoyment (1976:66). One consequence of the *having* mode of existence is that it "transforms everybody and everything into something dead and subject to another's power" (p82); it also "makes *things* of both object and subject. The relationship is one of deadness, not aliveness" (p83). Fromm argues that the "condition for love and for productive being", in other words, to achieve full being (according to Eckhart), is to be free from the need and desire to crave and hold on to things (p69).

Fromm cites a report by Mesarovic and Pestel that deals with global trends in technology, economics and population, which concludes that significant changes in man's way of life need to be made in order to avert catastrophe on a global scale. These changes would have to encompass a "new ethic and a new attitude towards nature" (p18).

Michael K demonstrates this 'new ethic'. According to Easton, *Life and Times of Michael K* seeks a way to rewrite the "colonial script of possession", one of the defining features of South African life, by interrogating the colonial/apartheid mythologies of land, settlement, possession and ownership (1995:3). A key concern in *Michael K* is the question of whether there is a way to re-imagine this history. In a discussion of the way in which land is figured in colonial South Africa, Coetzee identifies two "dream topographies", one of which is a "network of boundaries criss-crossing the surface of the land, marking off thousands of farms, each a separate kingdom…" (1988:7). This division of the land marks it as possessed and owned.

Michael K experiences a deep sense of contentment when he finds himself living off the land and a gradual lessening of the anxiety that he used to feel while on the road. His feelings of contentment are such that he feels he could live there "forever" or "till I die" (Coetzee, 1983:46). As K wanders through the land, he "wondered whether there were not forgotten corners and angles and corridors between the fences, land that belonged to no one yet" (*LTMK*: 47). As Magda in *In the Heart of the Country* remarks, "To the spur of desire we have only one response: to capture, to enclose, to hold..." (*HC*: 114). Michael K offers a different response. His joy in the land comes from being a part of it and experiencing its natural bounty. Throughout the text his most intense happiness comes from the land:

> His deepest pleasure came at sunset when he turned open the cock at the damn wall and watched the stream of water run... There were times... when a fit of exultation would pass through him at the thought that he, alone and unknown, was making this deserted farm bloom (p59).
>
> Every time he released the brake and the wheel spun and the water came, it seemed to him a miracle (p60).
>
> He felt at home at the dam as he had never felt in the house...I want to live here, he thought...It is as simple as that (p99).
>
> ...as he moved about his field he felt a deep joy in his physical being (p101).
>
> He breathed into his lungs the clear sweet smell of water brought up from inside the earth. It intoxicated him, he could not have enough of it (p115).

K's relationship with the land transcends the alienation of objectification that marks ownership and possession of it. Unlike the colonial spirit of taming and domesticating, K "did not explore his new world. He did not turn his cave into a home or keep a record of the passage of the days..." (p68). He does not want to leave a lasting trace of his presence on the land, hence "Even his tools should be of wood and leather and gut, materials the insects would eat when one day he no longer needed them" (p104). It is this consciousness that marks K as different and that defines his resistance – from Huis

Norenius to Jakkalsdrif to the rehabilitation camp at Kenilworth, K refuses to be enclosed by the boundaries imposed on him. Notably, K is rooted nowhere. He roams the Cape from Sea Point to Prince Albert and back, without inscribing himself on the land. The history of colonisation has been a fencing off, a partitioning of the land into parcels of possessions. Michael K tries to find a way to live on the land that is based less on ownership and more on reciprocity.

Coetzee has commented that *K* "can't hope to keep the garden because, finally, the whole surface of South Africa has been surveyed and mapped and disposed of" (Morphet, 1984:62). K's resistance to this colonisation is a defining feature of the text – his existence on the land is based on entirely different terms to those that define the coloniser/settler (Easton, 1995:7). In *Life and Times of Michael K*, there is another war that is going on, besides the civil war – it is K's war against the 'father-born' epistemologies of Western discourse – that of ownership and possession. Instead, K asserts another way to live in the world, one that entails being part of, not owning, the land. K deliberately uses materials and tools that will disintegrate when they are no longer needed. His mother's ashes are dispersed on the ground to become part of the soil. His elusiveness is a resistance to being contained by any narrative, in the same way that his physical being resists the containment of the various camps in which he finds himself, and that is his triumph: "Perhaps the truth is that it is enough to be out of the camps, out of all the camps at the same time" (*LTMK:* 182).

In contrast to the 'having' mode of existence is the 'being' mode, in which there is an absence of craving for things and which entails joyousness, aliveness and a relation to the world that is authentic (Fromm, 1976:33). According to Fromm, the etymological root of *being* "… denotes the reality of existence of who or what *is;* it states his/her/its authenticity and truth. Stating that somebody or something *is* refers to the person's or the thing's essence, not to his/her/its appearance" (1976:33). *Being* entails a way of seeing the world that is stripped of falsity and illusion, and that perceives, with deepening insight, what is real about the self, about others and about the world in which we live. In order to see with such clarity we need to be wary of being deceived by what is on the surface. Invoking various thinkers like Marx, Freud and Eckhart, Fromm concludes that "knowing begins with the awareness of the deceptiveness of our common sense perceptions … with the shattering of illusions … Knowing means to penetrate through the

surface … to 'see' reality in its nakedness … and to strive critically and actively in order to approach truth ever more closely" (p47). Magda is unable to exist in equilibrium because she sees the reality and truth of the ugliness of her and her father's way of life; hence she is perpetually engaged in creating different realities for herself. The fact that she needs to do so at all is simply an indication of how difficult it is for her to accept living in such alienation from others.

In providing a definition of what it means 'to be', Fromm invokes the ideas of the mystics – to make oneself 'empty' and 'poor' (p93). When K escapes from the Visagie grandson into the mountains, he feels all desire and craving for wanting leaving him: "Now, in front of his cave, he … emptied his mind, wanting nothing, looking forward to nothing" (*LTMK:* 69). For Marx, (as quoted in Fromm) "The less you *are* and the less you express your life – the more you *have* and the greater is your alienated life… Everything the economist takes away from you in the way of life and humanity, he restores to you in the form of money and wealth" (Fromm, 1976:155). For Schweitzer, solidarity with others in the act of giving and caring for them is the only meaningful way of life (Fromm, 1976:160). On his way to Prince Albert, Michael K meets a stranger who offers him a place to sleep for the night and a meal. When K tells him that he'd met another man who told him that they shot people they found on their land, the stranger tells him that his own belief is that people must help each other. This kindness reveals what Martin Buber in *I and Thou* calls love, which becomes a "responsibility of an I for a You" (Buber, 1970:66). It induces a change in the normally reticent Michael at the breakfast table the following morning: "At the table the urge again came over him to speak … His heart was full, he wanted to utter his thanks …" (*LTMK:* 48). Similarly, when a stranger in the hospital yard gives him money to buy them both a pie, the pie is "so delicious that tears came to his eyes" and K "listened to the birds in the trees and tried to remember when he had known such happiness" (p30). Both instances of kindness produce in K a feeling akin to rapture, because both acts of kindness are spontaneous and without expectation of anything in return. In contrast to this is his relationship with the Visagie grandson, whose introduction to him immediately sets up a relation of subjugation when he introduces himself as "boss Visagie's grandson" (p60). This kind of relation induces in him a feeling of "the old hopeless stupidity" (p60). When K brings the grandson some birds to eat that he had shot with his catapult, the grandson asks whether he can clean them quickly – this K immediately resists, with the result that the Visagie grandson becomes

rude and aggressive and threatening towards him (pp63-4). Once again, K begins to feel "stupidity creep over him like a fog" and that he "no longer knew what to do with his face" (p64). When the grandson orders him to go to Prince Albert with a list of things to buy, K buries the money at the gate of the farm and leaves, refusing to be turned into someone else's "body-servant" (p65).

When K is faced with attempts to contain or control and order him, he becomes deadened. The joy, however, that he experiences in the face of, for example, others' kindness and the bounty of the land, reveals a way of being-in-the-world that defines not only an alternative politics, but also contains within it something apolitical, a kind of spirituality, a form of love which is felt to be redemptive.

IV

In *Disgrace*, Coetzee explores the themes of redemption and salvation within the context of a country coming to terms with its past and transformed present. David Lurie, the main protagonist, embodies the way in which private and public worlds intersect in this story of post-apartheid South Africa.

In a lecture to his class in his course on the Romantic poets, David Lurie discusses a section from Book 6 of Wordsworth's *The Preludes*. In the poem, the poet, on summitting Mont Blanc, "grieved/To have a soulless image on the eye/That had usurped upon a living thought" (Coetzee, 1999:21). Lurie explains to his class that the reason the poet grieves upon seeing the peak unveiled is that there is a disjunction between the reality and the imagination; the reality is often much more mundane and mediocre in comparison to the imagination. The poet's use of the phrase "soulless image" indicates the extent to which the reality fails to compare with the imagination. While the reality is tied to the corporeal moment, the imagination is able to elevate us beyond mere physical existence into a realm infinitely higher. Lurie goes on to suggest to his class that the resolution or challenge is not in "keep[ing] the imagination pure, protected from the onslaughts of reality"; rather, that "… the question has to be, Can we find a way for the two to coexist?" (*Disgrace,* p22).

To be fully human means more than just to exist in a state of nature. If we are ever to experience one of those "revelatory, Wordsworthian moments", we must in some way be in touch with the imagination, the idea, with what enables us to experience the divine in ourselves.

The challenge that is posed in *Disgrace* is how to find a space in which the idea and the reality can coexist; in other words, how we can live fully as human beings in a particular reality.

The South Africa in which David Lurie finds himself at the beginning of the novel is an altered world from the one in which he has grown up. His position as a white, liberal, English-speaking academic has become one that is embattled in the new landscape. The rationalisation of education has resulted in the transformation of Cape Town University

College into the Cape Technical University. His position, that of professor of modern languages, has changed to that of adjunct professor of communications. He is allowed to offer a course in the Romantic poets because it is seen as being beneficial to the staff in terms of morale to offer a course of their choice. Anthony Holliday, commenting on this trend in education, calls it "the philistinism of what has become a global degradation of higher learning" (Holliday, 2003). Lurie's position as Communications lecturer is one that, with his intellectual background, he finds difficult to accommodate. The pragmatic, instrumentalist premise of his new subject foregrounds language as functionary, language as a means of communicating "our thoughts, feelings and intentions to each other" (Coetzee, 1999:4). This idea of language he finds "preposterous". When read against his discussion of the Wordsworth poem, *The Preludes,* this notion of language will rob us forever of the possibility of a way of thinking that will lift us beyond the everyday, the mundane.

Derek Attridge situates this rationalisation of education within a paradigm of global capitalism, and views events in *Disgrace* as a critique of its dehumanising effects (Attridge, 2000:3) and as reflecting an "immense distaste" for "a new global age of performance indicators and outcomes measurement, of benchmarking and quality assurance …" (Attridge, 2000:5). Lurie's contribution to this new age is negligible. His students are indifferent because he is unable to engage with the material he teaches, material for which "he has no respect" (Coetzee, 1999:4). He is alienated, removed from engagement with both his students and his subject.

On the legacy of JM Coetzee's fiction in South Africa, Anthony Holliday, in an article in *This Day*, argues that apartheid and colonialism have underpinned Coetzee's fiction, that they are "the heart of the matter". They were "virulent life forms that affected our ways of seeing the world and one another, our sense of what it is to live decently and our capacity to love anything" (Holliday, 2003). *Disgrace* registers just such a world, one in which to "live decently" has become increasingly difficult.

Published in 1999, *Disgrace* is set in contemporary, post-apartheid South Africa. Jane Poyner argues that *Disgrace* can be read as an allegory of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in which David Lurie's sense of guilt over his exploitative attitude towards women symbolises collective responsibility for a history of white abuse (2002:67).

Essentially, the context is one in which the aftermath of apartheid has to be confronted and lived through. This context evokes a number of issues, such as reconciliation, justice, forgiveness, truth, transformation and reparation. This is a space where the past has to be accounted for. On South Africa's history, Coetzee has commented in *Doubling the Point* that "The whites of South Africa participated, in various degrees, actively or passively, in an audacious and well-planned crime against South Africa … It will be a long time before they have the moral authority to withdraw that brandmark" (Coetzee, 1992:342-3).

One response to the complex and difficult issues facing post-apartheid South Africa was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a committee set up to focus on uncovering apartheid crimes and providing a forum for social healing between the perpetrators and the victims of apartheid, or, in broader terms, working towards reconciliation between blacks and whites. Amnesty was granted to the perpetrators of apartheid crimes in return for giving 'full disclosure' about politically motivated crimes. This truth was meant to lay the basis for reconciliation – the banner at every TRC hearing proclaiming that Truth is the "Road to Reconciliation" (Graham, 2003:11). However, as Boehmer (2002) points out, the TRC presented dilemmas of its own, in that it "… valued the display of truth-telling over justice" (p344), "… elevated the principle of forgiveness over that of justice" and "… rated public confession more highly than equitable material settlement" (p345). In addition to this, Graham points out that the very notion of truth became a contested one when contradictory accounts between perpetrators and victims emerged, and that:

> … when the commissioners decide that an applicant has made full disclosure and is therefore eligible for amnesty, they accept the perpetrator's version of events, even when it directly contradicts the evidence given by his victims ((2003:12).

This aspect of the TRC process thus highlighted one of the paradoxes of the committee, in that it led to conflict rather than reconciliation, pitting as it did conflicting versions of the truth between perpetrator and victim. How to make adequate reparation for the crimes of the past was and remains one of the key questions of post-apartheid discourse, with the question of justice finding an ironic echo in David Lurie's plea, in the wake of Lucy's rape, that: "I want those men to be caught and brought before the law and punished. Am I wrong? Am I wrong to want justice?" (Coetzee, 1999:119). Horrell argues that *Disgrace*

suggests that the rhetoric of confession and repentance for past crimes in South Africa is wholly inadequate: "… the spoken language of repentance, the 'sorry' exacted from men of torture and oppression, is desperately insufficient and largely unheard" (2000:31).

The end of institutionalised apartheid and the transition to a democratic social order have wrought significant changes in the social landscape, in relations between communities that had hitherto been characterised by dominance and subjugation between the races. In an effort to facilitate reconciliation and nation-building, Archbishop Desmond Tutu popularised and made powerful the discourse of the 'rainbow nation'. One of the (unintended) results of this discourse, however, has been a veiling of the immense chasm between blacks and whites. *Disgrace* registers this politically expedient strategy in the play that Melanie Isaacs acts in, where "Catharsis seems to be the presiding principle: all the coarse old prejudices brought into the light of day and washed away in gales of laughter" (*Disgrace* :23). Lurie's attitude suggests that this depiction of relations between black and white in the new South Africa is indicative of a desire to deal with the atrocities of the past in a way that avoids and obscures the depths of complexities that underpin the relationship between communities that had formerly been divided by an ideology that posited one race as inherently superior to another. The narrative of *Disgrace* critiques this facile scenario, registering a view of relations between blacks and whites that is uneasy, disturbing, constantly shifting, with relations of power inexorably and radically altering.

Magda (*In the Heart of the Country*) comments that she could have written a different story, but did not, because she thought "it was too easy" (*HC:* 139). This seems to me a core concern in *Disgrace* – that a genuine transformation of society needs a more assiduous engagement with the deeper structures that comprises it. Coetzee has argued that the liberal impulse towards fraternity with blacks has been "a yearning to have fraternity without paying for it" (Coetzee, 1992:97). *Disgrace* asks us to consider the conditions or terms under which it is possible to live with a history such as ours; or, as TS Eliot puts it: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" Coetzee's response, as articulated in *Disgrace*, suggests that there is, ultimately, no escape from history. However, it can also be argued that the religious impulse in his work is just such an attempt, at least in part.

The idea behind the 'rainbow nation' discourse and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that blacks will be forgiving and accommodating, is violently disrupted by the attack by three black men on Lurie and his daughter, Lucy. Against the discourse of reconciliation, Coetzee posits a discourse of violence and confrontation, one that questions the assumptions of forgiveness without justice, of getting on with the present, of moving forward. Hannan Hever (2002) argues that the narrative of *Disgrace* posits the recognition that, collectively, the lives of both blacks and whites in post-apartheid South Africa are saturated with past violence, and that the South African liberal "… must face up to forces far more potent than any discrete effort to repair a long historical legacy of injustice and suffering" (p42).

Lucy's smallholding at first holds the promise of the peace and harmony normally associated with the pastoral, in opposition to the harshness of the city; a refuge where Lurie can go to recover and recollect himself. According to Cornwell, Lucy's smallholding represents a way in which to imagine relating to the land in South Africa that is different to both the colonial farm in *In the Heart of the Country* and the camps of *Life and Times of Michael K,* in other words, a way of relating to the land that is free of domination and dispossession (2003:48). Lucy's response to the history of greed and exploitation is to establish a modest, subsistence-based enterprise. Here too, however, Lurie finds that he is out of place. The attack on Lucy brings home to him forcefully that he is in a situation that has scant regard for the ideals that he holds so dear. The relations of power between blacks and whites have shifted. Despite the suspicions he harbours about Petrus's involvement in Lucy's rape, he is unable to do anything about it: "In the old days one could have had it out with Petrus. In the old days one could have had it out to the extent of losing one's temper and sending him packing and hiring someone in his place" (*Disgrace*: 116). Relations that had previously been characterised by dependence and subjugation now have to be negotiated with caution and deference.

Here, on the Eastern Cape border, present relations between black and white are saturated with the weight of the past. The fact that in *Disgrace*, a white woman is raped by black men further complicates the way in which we think about the intertwining of race and gender; or, as Farred puts it: "How does the white woman's violations measure up against the black man's historic disenfranchisements?" (Farred, 2000:19). Boehmer

(2002) argues that one of the debates that Coetzee sets up in *Disgrace* is that of finding a way to adequately respond to "… an experience of disgrace and bodily violation for perpetrator as well as for victim" (p344). JM Coetzee, in his Jerusalem Prize 'Acceptance Speech' (of 1987), locates the unfreedom of white South Africans as a "failure of love". The consequence of this failure has been the "shock" of discovering that "fraternity by itself is not to be had … Fraternity ineluctably comes in a package with liberty and equality".

Lucy wonders whether the desire for vengeance and reparation of past sins is not in fact the deeper reason for the attack on her: "What if … what if *that* is the price one has to pay for staying on? … They see me as owing something. … Why should I be allowed to live here without paying?" (*Disgrace*: 158). That the brutal attack on Lucy takes place in a town in the Eastern Cape is historically significant in terms of racial conflict in South Africa. In a review essay of Noel Mostert's *Frontiers,* a history of conflict between British missionaries and Xhosas on the Cape Colony's eastern border, Coetzee explains why the Eastern Cape plays such a notable role in South Africa's history. After the Napoleonic Wars, in the wake of British unemployment, 4000 volunteers left for Africa as they were offered free land on the Eastern Cape frontier. Grahamstown became the fountainhead of British culture in South Africa, providing a link between white, English-speaking South Africans and the liberal traditions of Britain. Mostert argues, however, that this link was always tenuous at best: "There was a quality of racial hatred in [Grahamstown] of a virulence that equalled, and probably surpassed, anything previously experienced in South Africa" (Coetzee, 2002:337). The reason that he advances for this is that, unlike the frontier Boers who had, to some extent, integrated with the Xhosas, the British settlers held on tightly to their culture and traditions, so that when their homes were sacked in frontier wars and their possessions, which constituted their social capital, was lost, it "… was felt as a crippling assault upon their social identity, as it was not by the Boers. Hence their rage; hence, ultimately, the hostility between white and black that characterises the Eastern Cape down to the present day" (2002:337). The frontier wars that followed were described by Mostert as "… the most tragically disastrous and tarnished involvement between Britain and a sovereign black people in Africa in the nineteenth century" (pp337-8), with the start, in 1850, of what turned out to be worst of those wars, what Mostert calls "a war of race, perhaps the first of its kind" (p338). Gareth Corwell argues that the location of Salem in the Eastern Cape evokes a history of strife

over land and Lucy's response to her violation can be seen "… as a radical intervention in the cycle of retributive violence which had … defined human relations on the frontier" (2003:46).

Situating his discussion of *Disgrace* within the framework of contemporary border theory, Grant Farred views the choice of the Eastern Cape as the site of the brutal, violent events in *Disgrace* as one that evokes the "historical frontier" of some of the most violent clashes between black and white, from the "infamous wars among the white colonists, the Afrikaner Trekkers and the indigenous black population" to the "struggles against colonial incursion, struggles over livestock, over boundaries, over control of the land" (Farred, 2000:17). It is here, he suggests, that "the burden of race weighs most heavily", where the "complications of the past demand the most assiduous engagement" (Farred, 2000:17).

In speaking of the rape, Lucy is deeply disturbed by the fact that "It was done with such personal hatred" (*Disgrace* :156). As Lucy's rapists were strangers to her, they had no particular reason to feel any personal antagonism towards her. The fact, however, that they demonstrated such personal hatred can be explained by invoking the context of the attack on her. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, an associate professor of psychology at UCT and author of *A human being died that night: a story of forgiveness,* explains one theory regarding the evolution of violence and personal evil:

> … certain individuals are predisposed toward becoming evil as a result of early childhood experiences of violence that made them suffer shame and humiliation, leaving them with unresolved anger. According to this view, the dynamics of evil that evolve from childhood psychological history often explain the roots of revenge, where anger and hatred resulting from the trauma suffered in the past are carried inside until the feelings of aggression can be enacted toward another in what becomes the individual's moment to reclaim the "honor" lost during the shaming experience (2003:55).

As Farred suggests earlier, the "complications of the past" will not simply disappear. The violence of apartheid produces its own pathologies, which can be manifested in a variety of ways. Gobodo-Madikizela's explanation of the effects of psychic trauma is one way of understanding the personal motivation behind the rapists' attack. Mike Marais offers

another explanation that also takes into account the way in which history plays a role in creating a climate of violence and fear. According to him, violence against others can be located in an inability to identify with others, and this inability is a result of relations between individuals in society that are characterised by alienation from one another (Marais, 2000:57). *Disgrace* explores this alienation of self from other and the resultant relations that ensue from this inability to identify with the other in its depiction of events in post-apartheid South Africa. This particular context provides the background against which the violence of colonialism and apartheid is seen as co-extensive with the violence currently being experienced. It posits a vision of a nation that has been deformed by its history of abnegation of the other and explores the ways in which this history informs the substance of the present. It also stages a consideration of the ways in which relations of reciprocity and exclusion of violence between the self and other can be imagined.

Disgrace shows that the rhetoric of 'unity in diversity' and reconciliation has been an inadequate response to the past. In the face of an inability to meet rising expectations in the new dispensation, where the promises of 'a better life for all' have been agonisingly slow, *Disgrace* registers a society struggling to come to grips with its ideological ambivalences and historical aporias. Lurie's response to Lucy's rape is, arguably, only moral and decent – he wants justice: the crime must be punished; he wants Lucy to leave the Eastern Cape, perhaps go to Holland, so that she will be safe.

From Lurie's perspective, Lucy's response of silence is baffling. All she will say is that the socio-historical context makes silence the only response possible for her: "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" (*Disgrace* :112).

Here, on the Eastern Cape border, notions of reconciliation and 'unity in diversity' have limited currency. Violence and menace are the presiding principles. In the attack on Lucy's small-holding, Lurie is beaten and burnt; his car is stolen; the dogs are shot and Lucy is gang-raped. Here, the disgrace of the post-apartheid nation is articulated: a society where violence is an indelible part of the nation's psyche. *Disgrace* attempts to understand this violence by situating it within its socio-historical context.

Lucy's rape can be read within the context of a history that has made all whites complicit in black dispossession and subjugation, and the need to make those responsible pay for the sins of the past, in a context where legal restitution is largely circumscribed. Lucy's reference to her rapists as "debt collectors" (*Disgrace*:158) reinforces the notion that payment for the past will be exacted. This disheartening cycle of retributive violence is disrupted, however, by Lucy's response to the rape and the change that comes over David Lurie during the course of the novel.

Insofar as *Disgrace* is a novel that deals with the socio-historical reality of South Africa's past and present, it can also be read as a text about salvation and redemption. In this text, David Lurie, the main protagonist, inhabits a space that can be defined as one of spiritual or psychic numbness. At the outset of the text we sense this emptiness when he describes his weekly sessions with Soraya, a prostitute whom he has been visiting for the past year, as an "oasis" in "the desert of the week" (*D:*1). While he has neatly solved one part of his life, the "problem of sex", other aspects are clearly problematic. His need for something more than just sex, a relationship with Soraya that transcends the boundaries of mere client and customer, results in him losing her entirely, so that he once again has to deal with the 'problem of sex'. The resolution of this problem culminates in him having to leave the university in disgrace. However, before this happens, we also discover other aspects of his life that contribute to the sense of lack of fulfilment in his life, despite the fact that he describes himself as being, "by most measurements", happy (*D:* 2). He is a scholar, but one who is "tired of criticism, tired of prose measured by the yard" (*D:* 4). At the university where he teaches, he finds himself "more out of place than ever" (*D:* 4) as a result of the rationalization at the university, where his training in modern languages is rendered superfluous in the face of current, more practical needs, so that he finds himself teaching in the field of Communication skills, a field for which he has little respect. His reference to himself and other colleagues like him as "clerks in a post-religious age" as well as the fact that "He has never been much of a teacher" (*D:* 4) reflects a sense of weariness and disenchantment with himself and the situation of his life. Moreover, in the new educational arena, he finds that his knowledge and learning are irrelevant. Commenting to his daughter of the impact he had on his students, Lurie says that "What I had to say they didn't care to hear" (*D:* 63).

Lurie inhabits a world from which he has become alienated, out of place: "His mind has become a refuge for old thoughts, idle, indigent, with nowhere else to go. He ought to chase them out, sweep the premises clean. But he does not care to do so, or does not care enough." (*Disgrace*: 72). When Lucy questions him about the sexual harassment case, his response underlines his sense of being out of place: "The case you want me to make is a case that can no longer be made, *basta*. Not in our day". Lurie's seduction of Melanie Isaacs is enabled by a Romantic tradition that privileges a discourse of ideas and beauty. Thus, Lurie is able to say that he was a servant of Eros (Greek god of love) when he acted upon his desire for Melanie. When he is called to account for his behaviour, he refuses to do so in the terms of penitence required, suggesting that he does not genuinely regret the incident – after all, he feels that he has been "enriched" by the experience. However, his invocation of Eros as defence, what Attwell refers to as his "aestheticisation of desire" (Attwell, 2001:865), belongs, as Lurie acknowledges, to another universe of discourse. Where Lurie would like to view his seduction of Melanie as an essentially private matter, he is part of a new order that no longer allows it, one that, on the contrary, is insistent upon his accountability. While Lurie is prepared to accept the punishment for his actions, he is not prepared to denounce them, refusing their insistence upon his accountability. His disgrace is thus two-fold: not only is he forced to leave the university in disgrace, his Romantic sensibilities render him both out of touch and out of place in this new age.

For much of his life, David Lurie has been accustomed to easy sexual gratification, based on his physical attractiveness – "his height, his good bones, his olive skin, his flowing hair" (*Disgrace:* 7)) and from having spent his childhood predominantly in the company of women. He calls this aspect of his life "the backbone of his life" (*D:* 7). When, suddenly, this ease with women ended:

> He existed in an anxious flurry of promiscuity. He had affairs with the wives of colleagues; he picked up tourists in bars on the waterfront or at the Club Italia; he slept with whores (*D:* 7).

Finding Soraya solved this problem of sexual gratification perfectly – his relationship with her became "just what he wanted … In a year he has not needed to go back to the

agency" (*D:* 7). When he is no longer able to see her, the week becomes "as featureless as a desert" (*D:* 11).

Feelings of emptiness and the wretchedness of existence abound in *Disgrace.* From the beginning of the text, Lurie's very existence seems mired in meaninglessness and emptiness. His professional life is uninspiring and dull, marked by indifference and lack of interest. His personal life is empty of meaningful connections with others or any other type of fulfilment. Despite leading a comfortable, middle-class life, he is, to a marked extent, empty of meaning in a deeper sense. One way in which to understand his emptiness is to view it as an existential question that requires some kind of answer.

In William Barret's *Irrational Man: A study in existentialist philosophy,* he argues that existentialist philosophy arose in part as a result of the failure of Enlightenment reason to provide man with fulfilment and meaning in life; that, on the contrary,

> … man's feeling of homelessness, of alienation has been intensified in the midst of a bureaucratised, impersonal mass society. He has come to feel himself an outsider even within his own human society (1958: 31).

For Carl Jaspers, existentialist philosophy arose:

> … as a struggle to awaken in the individual the possibilities of an authentic and genuine life, in the face of the great modern drift toward a standardised mass society (1958: 28).

According to Pascal (as quoted in Barrett), the human condition, when examined closely, is one that is, by nature, 'feeble' and 'wretched'. This state is "our ordinary mortal existence itself". There are two ways in which we can escape from thinking about this too deeply – through habit and diversion, which hide from man "… his nothingness, his forlornness, his inadequacy, his impotence and his emptiness" (1958: 99). According to Pascal, the only remedy for this is religion. No amount of logic or reason will enable man to come to terms with his situation.

David Lurie displays a similar sense of despair in his life. He says of himself that "I am sunk into a state of disgrace from which it will not be easy to lift myself" (*Disgrace:*

172). His seduction of Melanie Isaacs has alienated him and made him a figure of disgust and outrage to others. The shift in educational philosophy and practice has made him feel estranged and superfluous, so that he has nothing genuine and meaningful to offer the students. Coetzee, in depicting the psychic wretchedness of David Lurie's existence, is foregrounding, at least at first, the impossibility of salvation or redemption, in such a world, at any rate. The sexual harassment case against Lurie is part of this seemingly unredeemable world. When his meetings with Soraya end, he meets Melanie Isaacs, a student with whom he starts an affair, somewhat coercive in nature. When he is charged with sexual harassment, he is faced with the disapproval and disgust that an old man's desire for a young woman evokes, what he refers to as "inappropriate desires" (*D:* 43). In his ex-wife, Rosalind's, summary: "The whole thing is disgraceful from beginning to end" (*D:* 45). What makes the case for himself particularly unsympathetic, in Lurie's opinion, is the fact that the idea of sexual needs and desires in the old is essentially rather unattractive: "After a certain age one is simply no longer appealing, and that's that. One just has to buckle down and live out the rest of one's life. Serve one's time" (*D:* 67).

At the committee hearing before which he appears, he is censured for refusing to explain his side of the story, despite pleading guilty to all the charges brought against him. One of the women on the committee, a young woman from the Business School, asks him whether he has sought counselling from a priest or a counsellor, and whether he is in fact prepared to undergo counselling. Another woman on the committee, Dr Farodia Rassool, expresses her dissatisfaction with his refusal to explain his side of the story, accusing him of being insincere in his acceptance of the charges against him. He counters by arguing that what they want from him is to know what is truly in his heart, and this he is not prepared to do in front of a secular audience:

> Frankly, what you want from me is not a response but a confession. Well, I make no confession. I put forward a plea, as is my right. Guilty as charged. That is my plea. That is as far as I am prepared to go (*D:* 51).

Forced to make a confession, Lurie invokes Eros as his excuse, saying only that in starting the affair "I became a servant of Eros" (*D:* 52). This proves unsatisfactory, and to save his job he is requested to make a public admission, in the form of a statement, that he was wrong. Here, however, Farodia Rassool intervenes to insist that the statement on

its own will not suffice, as they will need to determine whether "… it comes from his heart", what attitude it expresses, and whether it expresses contrition and reflects his sincere feelings (*D:* 54). Lurie's response expresses his scepticism: "And you trust yourself to divine that, from the words I use – to divine whether it comes from my heart?" (*D:* 54). They want a confession from him that will demonstrate his sincerity, and to this Lurie refuses, saying that "That is beyond the scope of the law" (*D:* 55).

Essentially, Lurie refuses to express repentance in the form required by the committee on the grounds that the realm of such a confession does not belong to a secular forum. The tone of righteousness, particularly as adopted by the women on the committee, provoke in him a defiance because he senses in it something more than merely the official and legal: "They wanted a spectacle: breast-beating, remorse, tears if possible. A TV show, in fact" (*D:* 66).

In an essay on autobiography and confession, Coetzee argues that there are always limits to how far one can divine one's own motives in confession, in that the revelation of one motive inevitably leads to the questioning of whether that is the real and true motive, or whether there lurks yet another, deeper and truer motive. One's ability to reach the truth of confession is therefore always stymied by the idea that the self invariably creates fictions in order to satisfy some need, and that the ability to be truthful is therefore compromised. In confession, the central question is "The problem of how to know the truth about the self without being self-deceived" (Coetzee, 1992:252). The end of confession requires something beyond perpetual scepticism and self-doubt about one's ability to tell the truth about oneself. Hence, Coetzee argues that the ability of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky to reveal deeper truths about the self is superior to that of a purely secular thinker, like Freud (*DP:* 244). Dostoevsky, in particular, provides an account of confession that demonstrates that what is needed is something more than one is capable of providing:

> Against the endlessness of scepticism Dostoevsky poses the closure not of confession but of absolution and therefore of the intervention of grace in the world. (*DP:* 249)

According to Coetzee, Dostoevsky poses the problem in *The Possessed* of whether secular confession can ever lead to absolution, which is the goal of confession (*DP:* 253).

The confession of the Underground man demonstrates the self's inability to control its desire to construct its own truth (*DP:* 279). Dostoevsky shows therefore the impossibility of the self to reveal the truth:

> Because of the nature of consciousness, Dostoevsky indicates, the self cannot tell the truth of itself to itself and come to rest without the possibility of self-deception. True confession does not come from the sterile monologue of the self or from the dialogue of the self with its own self-doubt, but … from faith and grace. (*DP:* 291)

Getting to the heart of truthfulness thus requires something beyond oneself. In Tolstoy's *A Confession*, truthfulness is related to a reaching out towards God, being attentive and responsive to an inner impulse toward God (*DP:* 261).

Coetzee's essay on autobiography and confession relates to *Disgrace* in that it accounts in part for David Lurie's refusal to accede to the committee's request that he bare his soul so that they can discern the degree of truth and sincerity in it. In Lurie's opinion, these are matters beyond the scope of the committee. The committee's requirements are fundamentally flawed in that what they require is his confession so that they can decide whether or not he is deserving of forgiveness. As a secular body, these are terms that they are not empowered to use, as it is not within their jurisdiction to dispense with forgiveness.

In a famous sermon entitled 'To whom much is forgiven', the theologian Paul Tillich shows how forgiveness creates love. Quoting the parable about a woman who is considered to be a great sinner and who comes to see Jesus and is forgiven by him, Tillich argues that forgiveness creates love in that the woman whom Jesus forgives has a "greater love than the righteous ones because more is forgiven [her]" (Tillich, 1963: 7). When the woman comes to see Jesus, he is having supper with Simon, one of the Pharisees, a righteous man who is shocked by Jesus' attitude. Jesus, however, responds by telling him that the person who is forgiven more is loved more. Tillich explains the meaning of this parable on forgiveness:

> And nothing greater can happen to a human being than that he is forgiven. For forgiveness means reconciliation in spite of estrangement; it means reunion in spite of

> hostility; it means acceptance of those who are unacceptable, and it means reception of those who are rejected. (1963: 7)

According to Tillich, forgiveness is not something that can be bargained for by penance and good deeds, or by our own sense of remorse. God's forgiveness is independent of anything that we do. It is being forgiven that creates repentance (p8). Tillich goes on to state, however, that while there is no condition we can set for forgiveness, we must in some way have been seeking it. Forgiveness is the answer and "An answer is answer only for him who has asked, who is aware of the question" (p8). This awareness of the need for forgiveness thus creates the condition necessary for forgiveness to take place.

Righteousness rather than forgiveness is what the committee is able to dispense. Their demand that he explain himself and his motives and publicly confess to wrongdoing has overtones of a religious confession, in which penance will need to be done in order for absolution to be achieved. This Lurie resists. While he is prepared to accept the consequences of his actions, he is not prepared to express an insincere regret about it. The Rector is prepared to accept a statement from him in mitigation as long as it is in the spirit of "repentance" (*D:* 58). Lurie objects to this on the grounds that it is not within the realm of the law to decide on notions of repentance: "Repentance belongs to another world, to another universe of discourse" (*D:* 58).

According to Lurie, his crime is essentially one of "inappropriate desires". When he gets to Lucy's smallholding and is taking a stroll, he is suddenly reminded of Melanie and experiences a strong feeling of desire for her, an indication that he, in a sense, cannot help himself. When trying to explain to Lucy about the case, he is reminded of a dog that used to live next door to them when Lucy was still young, and that used to get beaten regularly by its owners for becoming excited and unmanageable whenever there was a bitch in the vicinity. As a result, the dog learned to control its desires, but in a way that made it behave in a piteous manner, so that "it would chase around the garden with its ears flat and its tail between its legs, whining, trying to hide" (*D:* 90). What Lurie finds distressing is the spectacle of the dog learning to hate its own instincts so that it no longer needed to be beaten in order to restrain itself. In his opinion, "At that point it would have been better to shoot it" (*D:* 90). The pathos of this case is that the dog was being punished for a quality inherent in its nature, and that in order to avoid being punished, it

would have to deny its nature. Lurie suggests that there is something similar in his own case, that he is being punished for having desires that are deemed inappropriate, and that in this there is an element of pathos as well.

The rights of his desire, however, are sharply contrasted with the effect it has on Melanie, for whom the experience is described as: "Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core. As though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration …" (*D:* 25), and whose "… arms flop like the arms of a dead person" (*D:* 89). The life-giving energy of desire on Lurie's part becomes inverted in the effect it has on Melanie, in that it becomes associated with death – there is an especial emphasis on this aspect of Lurie's desire in the effect it has on Melanie. So depicted here are the two sides of the coin of desire and the pitiful irony of the situation.

When Lurie leaves the university, it is in a state of disgrace, aptly captured by the student newspaper, which prints a picture of him in a particularly ridiculous pose (his eyes are cast up to the sky and he is groping towards the camera with one hand, while a waste basket in inverted and held over his head), with the caption: "Who's the Dunce Now?" (*D:* 56).

If Lurie leaves Cape Town in a state of disgrace, he comes to find that there are barely any limits to the depths of disgrace that can be experienced, and that misery and suffering can be compounded in infinite ways. Instead of finding the tranquillity and peace of a rural retreat, Lurie comes face to face with his own impotence and the horrors of a world in which violence and brutality create an existence of wretchedness and shame. In the Eastern Cape, Lurie encounters a nightmare world that leaves him feeling deadened and defeated. His shame at being unable to protect Lucy from being raped and his subsequent alienation from her only adds to the horror of the attack. He is haunted by being unable to save Lucy, and experiences a vision the night after the attack in which Lucy beseeches him to save her. Trying to get back to sleep after checking on Lucy, he is still unable to get the vision out of his mind:

> Nevertheless, the figure of the woman in the field of light stays before him. 'Save me!' cries his daughter, her words clear, ringing, immediate. Is it possible that Lucy's soul did

> indeed leave her body and come to him? May people who do not believe in souls yet have them, and may their souls lead an independent life? (*Disgrace:* 104)

As for the effect of the attack on himself, Lurie is left with despair and defeat: "… he feels his interest in the world draining from him drop by drop" (*D:* 107). He likens his feelings to that of an old man, "tired to the bone, without hopes, without desires, indifferent to the future", one whose "pleasure in living has been snuffed out" (*D:* 107). That Lucy decides not to tell the police about her rape simply serves to increase his pain: "Lucy's secret; his disgrace" (*D:* 109).

His sense of being out of place is reinforced by the encounter with the three men who attack him and Lucy. As a white South African academic, his European history and heritage make him wholly unprepared for the encounter:

> He speaks Italian, he speaks French, but Italian and French will not save him here in darkest Africa. He is helpless, an Aunt Sally, a figure from a cartoon, a missionary in cassock and topi waiting with clasped hands and upcast eyes while the savages jaw away in their own lingo preparatory to plunging him into their boiling cauldron. (*D:* 95)

Thus, in addition to the horror of the attack is the sense Lurie has of also being an entirely ridiculous figure, one who is left bewildered and uncomprehending by a situation for which he is unprepared.

Lurie is baffled by Lucy's determined silence over the rape. The only reason that she will give is that what happened to her is a purely private matter, happening as it did within a particular historical context – that of post-apartheid South Africa. Lurie's attempts to ascribe certain motives to her silence, such as that she feels constrained to act given the historically complicit position of white South Africans, is dealt with shortly: "You keep misreading me. Guilt and salvation are abstractions. I don't act in terms of abstractions. Until you make an effort to see that, I can't help you" (*D:* 112).

When Lurie and Lucy encounter one of the rapists at Petrus's party and Lucy is still unwilling to go to the police, Lurie is beside himself with anger and bewilderment. His arguments are entirely rational as he points out to her the folly of allowing the men to get

away with the rape. She, however, is entirely insensible to his rationality, arguing only that he doesn't know what happened and that he cannot even begin to know. Lurie's inability to understand his daughter and her unwillingness to provide him with a coherent, plausible explanation for her actions shake him considerably and leave them both estranged from each other. As for Lucy, she "keeps to herself, expresses no feelings, shows no interest in anything around her" (*D:* 114). She is clearly deeply affected by the rape but unwilling to act to bring the rapists to justice. In the face of Lurie's persistent pleading that she acts, she simply reiterates that she will not.

The text draws a clear parallel between Lurie's seduction of Melanie and the more overtly violent gang-rape of Lucy. The objectification of woman as body to be used is part of a history of sexual violence, and in situations of conflict, women's bodies are frequently the casualties, as Horrell (2000) points out in her quotation of one of the testimonies of the TRC's "special women's hearings" held in Gauteng (as quoted in Antjie Krog's *Country of my skull)*:

> Because always, always in anger and frustration men use women's bodies as a terrain of struggle – as a battleground… behind every woman's encounter with the Security Branch and the police lurked the possibility of sexual abuse and rape (p29).

Despite the way in which he is able to justify his relationship with Melanie, Lurie is aware of the violence that is being done to her. His words of seduction are "heavy as clubs" (*Disgrace*: 24); despite her resistance, "nothing will stop him" (*D*: 25); her only response is to "avert herself". After her rape, Lucy says that: "I am a dead person and I do not know yet what will bring me back to life" (*D*: 161).

In an interview in *Doubling the Point,* Coetzee comments on the power or force of the suffering body: "If I look back over my own fiction, I see a simple standard erected. That standard is the body… in South Africa it is not possible to deny the authority of suffering and therefore of the body" (1992:248). Coetzee's refusal to represent Lucy's rape and her dogged silence over it inscribe her body as the site of suffering in a way that makes it impenetrable to explanation, thereby heightening its force. The significance of the body as a site of suffering can be better understood by considering the way in which the body's suffering has been historically constituted.

The body, according to Nietzsche, is the basis on which social relations of justice are founded. Nietzsche locates the [mythical] origins of culture on a contractual system of equivalences which function to regulate social relations. This system of equivalences is based on the relation that exists between individuals who are involved in any type of contractual relation in which one party is the debtor, and the other the creditor. This relation, according to Nietzsche, is grounded on the ability to make promises, on the one hand, and the ability on the other hand to enforce the promises made. The body, says Nietzsche, functions as the root of the ability to make promises. It is the ultimate collateral on which contractual relations are grounded (Grosz 1994:133) because it is at the level of the body that payment can finally and always be extracted. The materiality of the body is the guarantee that forms the basis of the relations between promises.

Promises, according to Nietzsche, depend on the will to remember (Grosz 1994:131). The body is the key to counterforgetfulness because the body can be made to remember – by pain. Pain is the key term in instituting memory: "if something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory" (Grosz 1994:131). The site on which memory is reactivated is the body because the body can be made to feel pain. Promises can therefore always be kept, and thus are contractual relations enabled. The formula of the social contract is based on an equivalence between what is owed and the pain that can be inflicted as payment. The degree of suffering becomes commensurate with the degree of pleasure in causing suffering: "the pleasure of being allowed to vent power freely upon one who is powerless" (Grosz 1994:133). Punishment is the means justice uses to bind individuals in relations of reciprocity, which in turn forms the cornerstone of justice.

Kafka's punishment machine in *In the Penal Colony* is an example of how power is enacted on the body. It situates the body as the direct object on which justice is enacted. The body is the target of correlation between the crime committed and the punishment exacted: "Whatever commandment the prisoner has disobeyed is written upon his body by the Harrow" (Kafka 1995:144). It is on the body that the force of the legal system is focused. According to Foucault, systems of punishment can be situated within a 'political economy' of the body, wherein "power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to

emit signs" (Foucault 1979:25). The machine in Kafka's penal colony is the instrument wherein these power relations are embedded; its creator, the Commandant, the emblem of the varied authorised positions of knowledge on which the judiciary depends: he is "soldier, judge, mechanic, chemist and draughtsman" (Kafka 1995:144). By etching the sentence directly onto the prisoner's body, the body becomes the literal site on which power is inscribed, and the punishment machine the embodiment of the entire legal system. Horrell argues that Lucy's body is the terrain on which white South Africa's future 'remembering' is ultimately inscribed, in that Lucy's body "… has been inscribed with the guilt of history" and that she "… carries the burden of the hate and its inscriptions of shame" (2000:29).

Within the context of post-apartheid South Africa, Lucy's pregnancy functions as a marker of the changing power relations of the country and the way in which punishment for past crimes will be exacted. Her body is the site of vengeance and her pregnancy the visible sign of vengeance exacted. Lucy's response to her pregnancy, however, can be read as an intervention in the cycle of retributive violence in that, despite the conditions of its conception, she prepares, against all odds, to love the child.

Cornwell (2002) argues that there are two ways in which one could interpret Lucy's response to the rape. One could either view it as realist or as allegorical. The realist way is represented in the novel by Lurie's view of her silence, that she is attempting to make reparation for past sins, but that, in doing so, is simply renewing "… the cycle of domination and exploitation that has defined the history of South Africa for centuries past" (p316). The other way of understanding Lucy's behaviour is to view it as allegorical in the sense that it serves as a parable about what it would take to assuage white guilt in post-apartheid South Africa (p317). As Cornwell comments: "It is not impossible that we are being asked to ponder the wages of white historical sin and contemplate the costs of genuine nation healing and reconciliation" (p318).

One way in which to situate Lucy's response to the violence against her is to consider it against Coetzee's own comments on the topic of violence:

> Violence, as soon as I sense its presence within me, becomes introverted as violence against myself … Or, to explain myself in another way: I understand the Crucifixion as a

> refusal and an introversion of retributive violence, a refusal so deliberate, so conscious, and so powerful that it overwhelms any reinterpretation, Freudian, Marxian, or whatever, that we can give to it. (Coetzee, 1992: 337)

Magda in *In the Heart of the Country,* asks "Where, unless compassion intervenes, does the round of vindictiveness end?" (*HC:* 130). Lucy's refusal to hold her rapists accountable for their violence and to seek retributive justice cannot genuinely be seen as a solution to the question of reparation for past sins, as this would simply fuel the notion that vengeance is an adequate response to injustice and that those who have been the victims in the past now have the right to become the new oppressors. Yet, this, nevertheless, is what Lucy's response seems to suggest, that white South Africans need to resign themselves to being punished for past sins and should simply seek an accommodation, however humbling, to their changed situation. Lucy's absolute refusal to explain herself, however, means that she remains impenetrable to any final interpretation, so that what is left is simply the figure of Lucy, whose pregnant body bears irrefutable witness to the violence done to her. I would therefore suggest that Lucy functions as a Christ-like figure whose meaning can be understood as the embodiment of unconditional love and forgiveness in the face of immense suffering.

Lurie considers the impact of the rape and the way in which it has reduced his daughter: "… the story is spreading across the district. Not her story to spread but theirs: they are its owners. How they put her in her place, how they showed her what a woman was for" (*Disgrace*: 115). Of her rapists, Lucy says that she thinks that "they are rapists first and foremost. Stealing things is just incidental. A side-line. I think they *do* rape" (*Disgrace*: 158). The men who rape Lucy are shown to be possessed of the same type of violent, rapacious mentality that underpinned the spirit of colonialism. Woman's body is there to be taken and used, in much the same way that land was appropriated.

The analogy that Lucy uses to describe the sexual act is that of violence and death: "… isn't it a bit like killing? Pushing the knife in; exiting afterwards, leaving the body behind covered in blood – doesn't it feel like murder, like getting away with murder?" (*Disgrace*: 158). The violation of a woman's body is linked thematically to that of death, indicative of the ways in which women's bodies have become thing-like. If the post-apartheid state is in a state of disgrace, then surely it is also the silence around the ways in

which women's bodies have been refigured in the post-apartheid terrain that is at issue here, so that: "… over the body of the woman silence is being drawn like a blanket" (*Disgrace*: 110). Lurie is also implicated in this legacy of violence. As Farodia Rasool comments at the sexual harassment case against him, he does not seem to accept his behaviour towards Melanie Isaacs as one of abuse, nor does he make any mention of "… the long history of exploitation of which this is part" (*D:* 53). Her comment can be seen as a reference to a particular aspect of South Africa's history – that of white men seducing women of colour with few consequences for them. The fact that both Melanie and Soraya appear to be coloured (Soraya's name indicates that she is Muslim; Lurie refers to Melanie as 'the dark one') adds to the notion that Lurie's behaviour is doubly oppressive.

Lurie's seduction of Melanie compromises and makes him complicit in creating a world that perpetrates violence against others. In the face of what has happened to Lucy and her ensuing silence, he is left defeated:

> Again the feeling washes over him: listlessness, indifference, but also weightlessness, as if he has been eaten away from inside and only the eroded shell of his heart remains. How, he thinks to himself, can a man in this state find words, find music that will bring back the dead? (*Disgrace*: 156).

Lurie articulates here the desolation and emptiness of living in a world that seems to be bereft of the values that make us human: kindness, caring, compassion for others. It is this state of disgrace that is articulated in the novel: the disgrace of living as less than full human beings.

Lurie's Romantic heritage has aided his abuse of one of his charges, the student Melanie Isaacs. If Lurie is not an active participant in overt violence, he has nevertheless helped create the world in which he lives. The South Africa in which he lives is suffering from a malaise that is pervasive and that permeates many aspects of social life. Crime is rampant and brutal violence a commonplace. As a father, Lurie has been unable to protect his daughter from being raped, and even though she points out the illogic of his guilt over this, he nevertheless feels that he has not fulfilled his duty as a father to her: "'And I did nothing. I did not save you.' That is his own confession" (*Disgrace*: 157).

If the redistribution of property is not inscribed by law, it will be gained by other means. The most salient consequence of Lucy's rape is the acquisition of land, by Petrus, who in all likelihood orchestrated the rape. The seduction of Melanie Isaacs too is enabled by David Lurie's position of power. It is the ensuing violence that is made possible by relations of power that is at issue here. If Lurie is to reclaim any position of humanity, it will have to be in a way that negates self-interest, where notions of power are noticeably absent.

The first sign of Lurie's journey towards redemption is the chamber opera which he plans to write on Byron, imagined initially as "a meditation on love between the sexes" (*D*: 4).

Lurie's desire to write this chamber opera can be read as an effect of the spiritual and psychic emptiness of his life. In explaining his motives to his daughter, Lucy, he indicates that there is a need in him to produce something meaningful: "One wants to leave something behind" (*D:* 63). The need to write music can be seen as a need to create joy and beauty in an otherwise bleak existence. The chamber opera that he proposes to write, however, changes in scope from its inception, so that by the time he gets to Lucy, it has gone from being a work that called for "quite lush orchestration" to one that moves towards "a very meagre accompaniment – violin, cello, oboe or maybe bassoon" (*D:* 63). The story about the grand themes of love and jealousy, passion and death, changes from his stay on Lucy's farm because there is something about it "… that does not come from the heart". Imagined initially as a lush chamber opera, about the passion between Byron and a "young, greedy, wilful, petulant" (*D:* 181) Teresa, Lurie's work on Byron changes scope and direction after he returns to Cape Town from the Eastern Cape. Lurie is simply unable to write this story any longer. His attention now turns to Teresa as he imagines her in middle age, grown unattractive with the passage of time and loss of Byron, "a woman past her prime, without prospects, living out her days in a dull provincial town, … massaging her father's legs when they give him pain, sleeping alone" (*D:* 182).

When Lurie returns from the Eastern Cape, the young, beautiful and passionate Teresa no longer captures his imagination – it is the forgotten and neglected, middle-aged and lonely Teresa, who now "… looks more like a peasant, a *contadina,* than an aristocrat" (*D:* 181), that engages his attention. Lurie is at first uncertain about whether he has it in him to love this drab, ordinary woman, recognizing that responsibility and care for the

neglected and discarded have become important to him, because, "If he cannot, what is left for him?" (*D:* 182). It is this story, the one that no one else would care to write, that becomes his responsibility. At first, he thinks that he will be able to find music for them from amongst the masters, but as he becomes more involved with the middle-aged Teresa and the dead Byron, it becomes clear that it will not be sufficient to simply borrow music for them, that they are his responsibility. However, once he realizes this, "… astonishingly, in dribs and drabs, the music comes" (*D:* 183). When the music comes, however, it is not the way he had imagined it. He finds the sound of the piano too rich, and ends up using a toy banjo that he had bought Lucy when she was a child. To his surprise, this seven-stringed banjo fits the mournful Teresa so well that the sound soon becomes inseparable from her.

When Lurie reflects on the way in which the chamber opera has changed, he realises that he too has become something different to what he had imagined himself to be. His responsiveness to the voices of anguish mark this change in him, so that he becomes consumed by the plaintive yearnings of Teresa and tries to give her, through his music, the fulfilment that she longs for and that the dead Byron is no longer able to provide for her. Teresa's pathos is that she is still full of love and passion for Byron, but he is dead and no longer responsive to her, and this is the source of her anguish – "… complex proteins swirling in the blood … as the soul hurls its longings to the sky" (*D:* 185). Lurie reflects that this is what Soraya and the others were for, to relieve him of his yearning and desire, so that he could be left "… clear-headed and dry" (*D:* 185). Teresa, on the other hand, suffers because she has no way of relieving her longings. When she calls out to the dead Bryon, his only response is: "*Leave me, leave me, leave me be!*" (*D:* 185). Yet, Byron's seduction of the young, 18-year old Teresa ignited a passion "… that kept Teresa howling to the moon for the rest of her natural life in a fever that has set him howling too, after his manner" (*D:* 186). Into this pitiful situation Byron's young daughter, Allegra, neglected and unloved by him, also enters, beseeching him to come and fetch her. Thus, in the aftermath of the horror of the attack on him and Lucy, David Lurie finds himself open and receptive to the voices of the injured and violated.

Lurie's care of the dogs is another way in which this receptiveness to the violated is illuminated and that enables him to begin to develop a space for himself that will, in some measure, restore a sense of grace to an existence that has become irredeemable. The post-

apartheid state, the background against which *Disgrace* unfolds, heralds an historical moment of fragmentation and disintegration of both self and other in its pervasive violence, and Lurie's care and responsibility for dogs – a radical alterity – is an attempt to imagine a space in which humanity can be restored.

David Lurie's journey to his daughter's smallholding in the Eastern Cape can be seen as the beginning of his journey of psychic renewal, but it involves progression through a despair and bleakness hitherto unparalleled in his life. Bev Shaw, a friend of Lucy's who, along with a few volunteers, runs an animal refuge clinic from the premises of the Animal Welfare League, a charity organisation that has since closed down, develops a significance for Lurie that becomes part of the change that envelops him. She is described as being physically unattractive to him, a "dumpy, bustling little woman with black freckles, close-cropped, wiry hair, and no neck" (*D:* 72), someone who does not appeal to him because "He does not like women who make no effort to be attractive" (*D:* 72). Further acquaintance with her only reinforces his initially negative impression of her – her house smells of animals, there are cats everywhere, and the furniture and ornaments are tacky. This is not the kind of woman with whom Lurie would ordinarily even consider having a sexual relationship, seduced as he is by physical beauty, so that: "Never did he dream he would sleep with a Bev" (*D:* 149). That he finds Bev Shaw undesirable is clear – when she is lying under the blanket ready for him to make love to her, he reflects that, "Even in the dimness there is nothing charming in the sight" (*D:*149). Yet, his relationship with Bev is part of the process in which he comes to acknowledge those who would conventionally be considered unattractive and undesirable. As he comes to adjust to a life and values very different to those of his past, so too he comes to inhabit and understand the world of those pushed to its margins.

It is the development of this consciousness of the other that constitutes the beginning of Lurie's redemption. The theme of the self's relation to the other is a constant one in Coetzee's work, but it is particularly the development of feelings of sympathy and caring for the other that marks Coetzee's protagonists. This is clearly reflected in other works (as we have seen), and also in *Elizabeth Costello* (2003) and Coetzee's memoir, *Boyhood* (1998). When she is asked to account for her beliefs, Elizabeth Costello, in Lesson 8 (At the gate), replies that she is a secretary of the invisible, a phrase borrowed from the poet, Czeslaw Milosz. Her role as a writer is simply to write down what she is told, testing the

words to ensure that she has written them correctly. What she does, essentially, is make visible those who had previously been invisible – the downtrodden and ignored, the murdered and violated. However, she cautions her listeners that she will write for whoever calls to her, be it the murdered or the murderer, because, as she puts it, the guilty suffer too, crying out: "*Do not forget me!*" (Coetzee, 2003:204).

In *Boyhood,* the young John finds the responsibility of caring for those whom others consider irrelevant and inconsequential falling on his shoulders. Aunt Annie, his great-aunt and godmother, is taken to hospital with a broken hip after she falls on the steps of her flat in Rosebank. Aunt Annie lives alone and is described in terms that evoke pity and sadness – the nursing sister comments that when she was brought in to the hospital, her toenails were "… as long and black as birdclaws" (Coetzee, 1998:115). To the young John she is a figure of disgust – old, wrinkled, ugly, nearly blind. When they visit her in the hospital all he want is "… to be gone, to be out of this place and never to come back" (*Boyhood:* 116). He finds her flat, where they go to spend the night, equally repulsive – there is no fridge, her larder is sparsely stocked with old, mouldy food, the toilet is discoloured with dirt, and the light is dim because Aunt Annie uses only 40-watt bulbs in order to save on electricity. He is, however, fascinated by the storeroom, which contains shelves full of the same book, written by Aunt Annie's father, Balthazar du Biel, called 'Deur 'n gevaarlike krankheid to ewige genesing'. The book, an account of his boyhood in Germany, was a complete commercial failure, frequently lapsing into a narrative of madness, with "… lights in the sky and voices speaking to him out of the heavens" (*Boyhood:* 118). Aunt Annie, however, has devoted much of her life and money in trying to get the book sold, going from door to door herself when the bookshops refused to sell it. When she dies, there are only five mourners at her funeral. As for the fate of the books, his mother is unable to tell him when he enquires about it. Despite the child-like repugnance that he feels for the pitiful Aunt Annie, he acknowledges a responsibility towards her that recognises her significance in the face of society's turning away. Where no one else will do so, he feels the burden of making her life something that matters:

> … and now Aunt Annie is lying in the rain waiting for someone to find the time to bury her. He alone is left to do the thinking. How will he keep them all in his head, all the books, all the people, all the stories? And if he does not remember them, who will? (*Boyhood:* 166).

Lurie's project with the dogs at the welfare clinic is largely free of the self-interest that colours conventional 'good' deeds. As for the work that Bev does, Lurie is unmoved – "I just find it hard to whip up an interest in the subject" – and somewhat sardonic: "… to me animal-welfare people are a bit like Christians of a certain kind. Everyone is so cheerful and well-intentioned that after a while you itch to go off and do some raping and pillaging. Or to kick a cat" (*Disgrace:* 73). His attitude suggests a scepticism and irony towards this type of sentimentality. He later hints that one of the reasons for his scepticism is the suspicion that people who engage in acts of charity and kindness do so out of guilt or the fear of retribution, whereas he would rather that, "… if we are going to be kind, let it be out of simple generosity …" (*D:* 74). When Lucy suggests that he volunteers to help Bev at the clinic, he is sceptical because such acts of charity have overtones of doing penance for past sins. He concedes to doing it on the condition that it is done without ulterior motives, because he is not interested in doing penance: "I am not prepared to be reformed" (*D:* 77).

From the outset he is resistant to working at the Animal Welfare League as "reparation for past deeds". He will do it on condition that he doesn't have to "become a better person" (*Disgrace*: 77). If Lurie achieves a form of grace through his involvement with dogs, it is precisely because he has not sought it, because he has resigned himself to living in a state of disgrace. Ironically, it becomes increasingly evident throughout the novel that Lurie does change, albeit against his will and without his understanding.

Lurie's care of the dogs signals what Michael Marais refers to as the beginnings of "self-substituting responsibility", a "form of responsibility that … involves a sacrifice of self, a substitution of self for the Other" (Marais, 2001:10). What enables violence to be done to others is the inability to imagine the 'other', to identify with the other. In *Disgrace*, post-apartheid South Africa is defined as a space where identification with the 'other' is notably absent – hence the abuse of Melanie and the rape of Lucy. According to Marais, "relations at all levels of South African society lack respect for the otherness of the other" (Marais, 2000:58). *Disgrace* examines the consequences of this lack of identification with the other and posits violence as its principal result. Marais (2002) argues that this absence enables both Lurie's violation of Melanie and the more violent gang-rape of

Lucy, and that post-apartheid changes have not changed this aspect of social relations in any fundamental way (p59).

It is in the light of this notion that Lurie's care of the dogs must be read. If certain groups have been rendered historically 'other', then non-humans inhabit a space that is radically 'other'; dead ones even more so. If Lurie comes to accept responsibility for maintaining the dignity and honour of dogs that are already dead, it is because he has learned to love and care for the 'invisible' – the least and most insignificant of all.

In a society where dogs have, in certain instances, been trained to attack black people, what purchase do they have to be treated humanely? References about dogs are disdainful throughout the text: "They are part of the furniture, part of the alarm system" (*Disgrace*: 78); the building that houses the Animal Welfare League "is a place not of healing … but of last resort" (*D:* 84). The dogs in Lucy's kennels are all shot during the attack on her. If Lurie gains redemption through his relationship with animals in the novel, then it is because they represent the limits of empathic imagination. In the face of utter negation and emptiness, Coetzee finds a position from which to begin to re-imagine a space where living is possible, where the idea and reality can be combined.

In the attack on Lurie and his daughter, the dogs are treated with indifference and contempt, shot with a seeming lack of feeling – one is left to die slowly with a gaping throat-wound, the remaining three are as casually dealt with: "Taking his time between shots, the man picks them off" (*D:* 96).

Lurie's turn to dogs can be read as a turn to that which is least important, which others have discarded: "On the list of the nation's priorities, animals come nowhere" (*D:* 73). Without understanding how or why, he develops a feeling of responsibility for these creatures that defy rational explanation: "… suddenly and without reason, their lot has become important to him" (*D:* 126). The two sheep that Petrus brings home for the party are left to graze on a bare patch of ground, and Lurie becomes so annoyed at this that he moves them to where the grass is more abundant. Lurie's reflections on the sheep evoke the horror of the lives of animals, where the sheep "exist to be used, every last ounce of them, their flesh to be eaten, their bones to be crushed and fed to poultry" (*D:* 123). He reflects further that perhaps their souls reside in their gall bladder, the only part

of them that probably doesn't get eaten because no one will eat it. When he complains to Lucy about the propriety of bringing the sheep to mingle with the very people who will eat them later, she admonishes him for his inappropriate sensitivity, sharply reminding him that they are now in the country. He, however, is not convinced that it is just a matter of practicality: "indifference, hardheartedness" (*D:* 125) – that is his opinion. He even contemplates buying the sheep from Petrus in order to save them from being eaten, but is defeated by the logistics of what to do with the sheep afterwards and the sure knowledge that they will simply be replaced by two more sheep. He would like to save the sheep that Petrus has bought to slaughter for his party, but recognises that, ultimately, it will not matter, that the violence done to the sheep are so deeply embedded in society's relations to animals that saving them would be a lost cause.

Why the welfare of the sheep should matter to him is something he does not understand:

> A bond seems to have come into existence between himself and the two Persians, he does not know how. The bond is not one of affection. It is not even a bond with these two in particular, whom he could not pick out from a mob in a field. Nevertheless, suddenly and without reason, their lot has become important to him. (*D:* 127)

When he tries to explain his feelings to Lucy, he is unable to do so coherently: "Nevertheless, in this case, I am disturbed. I can't say why … I never imagined I would end up talking this way" (*D:* 127). When he is handed a plate at Petrus's party with two mutton chops, he has to eat it for the sake of courtesy, but tells himself that he will ask for forgiveness afterward.

What motive Lurie offers for his work with the animals, particularly once they are dead, is that he does so for his idea of the world. This attitude or philosophy reflects Lurie's need to act with integrity and decency in the face of a negation of values of caring and compassion, a need to find redemption from the wretchedness of the situation. Lurie recognises the practical uselessness of what he does – there is no valid reason he can think of to justify what he does, yet he finds himself compelled to act in a way that will honour the dogs' corpses. Theodor Adorno indirectly provides some insight into Lurie's behaviour. According to him (as quoted in Graham),

> The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in [the] face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption … (2000:10)

Therefore, despite the fact that what he does has no discernible benefit, his need nevertheless to do so reflects his desire for redemption. When Lurie visits Melanie's father, George Isaacs, he tells him that he is not a believer, but that he accepts disgrace as his state of being as punishment for what happened between himself and Melanie. When he asks whether living in disgrace without term is enough of a punishment, George Isaacs responds by telling him that because he does not pray, he has no way of asking God, so "… God must find his own means of telling you" (*Disgrace:* 172).

The Penguin English Dictionary defines 'grace' as: *unmerited divine assistance given to human beings for their regeneration or sanctification.* According to Derek Attridge (2005), "Lurie's phrase 'state of disgrace' clearly evokes the theological notion of a 'state of grace', the name for a condition of receptiveness to the divine" (p182). According to Juan Luis Segundo (1980), the word 'grace' came to designate the reality of Christianity as a result of Paul's conversion, in that it was the name that he used most to describe the reality of his life after his conversion (p4). The word 'grace' thus has its roots in attempts to express a new reality, this new reality being that of Christianity. In terms of its etymology, 'grace', according to Segundo, comes from the Latin *gratia* and is a translation of the Greek term *charis*, which connotes benevolence and also has the meaning of gratitude in its Greek usage. An equivalent of the Greek word *charis* is found in the Old Testament in the Hebrew word *Qèn*, which refers to the benevolence of a superior toward an inferior. In the Book of Wisdom, this benevolence is shown toward the lowly and wretched; thus "we see an equivalence being established between grace and *mercy*" (Segundo, 1980: 5).

When Paul uses the word 'grace' in his letters, he means essentially "the new reality that Christ brought into the world (Segundo, 1980:8). In providing a definition of what precisely this new reality is, Segundo quotes from Rousselot, who says:

> Saint Paul seems to see grace, above all, as a divine aid which heaven grants out of pure mercy. It heals our wounded will, changes it, and draws it away from evil to good … (1980:8)

Segundo argues that Paul chose the term *grace* to depict the new reality of Christianity because of this particular meaning attached to it, that it was assistance or help granted "out of pure mercy". It was thus Paul's insight that his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus that led to his conversion was a gift from God and had nothing to do with anything he had done.

It can be argued, therefore, that the inexplicable feelings of care and concern for animals that Lurie develops can be seen as an answer to his (unarticulated) desire for 'regeneration or sanctification'. The change that comes over him points us also, however, in the direction of a type of love typified by Jesus Christ. Dostoyevsky's writings in his notebook, as quoted by Judith Gunn, demonstrate this:

> 'To love your neighbour as yourself, according to Christ's commandment, is impossible. The law of personality on earth prevents it. The *I* prevents it. [And yet] Christ alone was able to do it, but Christ is eternal, an eternal ideal toward which man aspires and is bound to aspire according to nature's law. And yet after Christ's appearance *as an ideal man in the flesh* it became clear as daylight that the highest and last development of personality must (at the very end of its development, at the very point of achieving its goal) reach the point at which men will find out, realize and become convinced, utterly convinced, that the greatest use a man can make of his personality, of the fullest development of his I, is in one way or another to destroy this I, to give himself up wholly to all and everyone, selflessly and wholeheartedly. And that is the greatest happiness' (1990:92).

Lurie does not achieve a state like that described above. However, it can be argued that, during the course of the novel, he moves ever closer towards a state in which he begins to give himself up to others, to put their needs above his own. Lurie's redemption is that he develops feelings of love and empathy for those who are regarded as insignificant and unimportant – the middle-aged, widowed Teresa, the two sheep that Petrus brings home for the slaughter, the abandoned Katy, the dead animals. It is clear that Lurie is not interested in penance, that he has no intention of helping Bev with the dogs as expiation for his sins. However, during the course of the novel he does begin to change,

unexpectedly and inexplicably. The catalyst for this change can be seen in the work that he embarks upon with Bev at the animal refuge clinic, a place described as one "… not of healing … but of last resort". He soon discovers that one of the tasks Bev has set for herself is that of helping the animals to die with gentleness and care when there is no longer any hope for them.

The first day he is there a woman brings in a goat that is horribly injured (one half of its scrotum is swollen and discoloured, the other half is caked with blood and dirt; when Bev tries to clean it the wound is swarming with white grubs), can barely walk and is beyond saving. Despite entreating the woman to leave the goat with her so that she can ease it into death with drugs, the woman takes the goat with her when she leaves. Bev is deeply affected, hiding her face from Lurie and blowing her nose. She is clearly disturbed at the prospect of the further suffering that the animal will have to endure. When Lurie asks her whether she minds being the one who has to put the animals down, her response is sharp: "I do mind. I mind deeply. I wouldn't want someone doing it for me who didn't mind. Would you?" (*D:* 85).

Despite the fact that Lurie had generally considered himself somewhat indifferent to animals, the killings that he and Bev Shaw have to perform leave him deeply disturbed – one Sunday he is so overwhelmed by the sadness that he has to stop driving and pull over to the side of the road while "Tears flow down his face that he cannot stop; [and] his hands shake" (*D:* 143).

Lurie does not understand what is happening to him, but he recognises that part of his distress stems from the sheer horror of the situation. The dogs that he and Bev Shaw put to death are killed simply because they are unwanted – "*too menny*" (*D:* 146). Coetzee's use of this phrase deepens the horror, evoking as it does the note written by little Jude in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure,* in which the boy kills himself and his two younger siblings by hanging, leaving a note that reads, simply, "*Done because we are too menny"* (1998:336). The boy had committed this appalling act because of their desperately poverty-stricken situation, when he was moved to uttering:

> I think that whenever children be born that are not wanted they should be killed directly, before their souls come to 'em, and not allowed to grow big and walk about! (1998:336).

However, it is not the fact that Lurie helps put the dogs to death in a merciful way that lifts his actions above the ordinary; it is the fact that he intervenes once they are dead, beyond caring for. Lurie deliberately does not take the dogs' corpses to the incinerator immediately after they have been killed (on a Sunday), because they would stay there for the rest of the weekend with all the refuse from the hospital, and "He is not prepared to inflict such dishonour upon them" (*D:* 144). Even there, he does not simply leave the corpses to be incinerated; he takes on this responsibility himself because the dogs would often not be disposed of properly because their legs, because of their stiffening due to rigor mortis, would get caught in the bars of the trolley, and they would come riding back on the trolley. As a result of this, the workmen would resort to beating the bags with the backs of their shovels to break the limbs and make them easier to dispose of. Lurie has no rational explanation for why he does this, but it is precisely this lack that makes his actions redemptive; he does it "For his idea of the world, a world in which men do not use shovels to beat corpses into a more convenient shape for processing" (*D:* 146).

Disgrace suggests that it will take an extraordinarily radical act to redeem the 'disgrace' of the dishonourable space that Lurie inhabits. It is only "… once they are unable, utterly unable, to take care of themselves," that Lurie takes over. He does what no one else is prepared to do: in ensuring that the dogs' corpses are disposed of in as dignified a way as possible, Lurie shows an imaginative identification with the 'other' that represents the extreme of the limits of empathic imagination: the radical alterity of the dogs' corpses is transfigured by his act from Other into Self. It is by learning to love that which does not matter, the least little thing, that Lurie gains a measure of redemption for himself. According to Boehmer, in an essay on Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk,* Coetzee implies that "… it is through a 'great love' alone, an unstintinting, self-emptying love, that the recognition of the other's pain is achieved (2000:343). Michiel Heyns argues that the closing of the novel signals a form of redemption in that, in Lurie's relationship with dogs, he discovers what it is to love and be loved, and yet, also, what it is to sacrifice the loved object (2002:64).

V

The change that Lurie undergoes is what Boehmer refers to as: "The surrender of self through empathy" (2002:346). Gareth Cornwell argues that, in *Disgrace,* it is the failure to empathise, to identify with the other and the "refusal to acknowledge the self's necessary passage through the other" (2002:315) that is the novel's key concern. This imaginative identification with the other is the focus of Lesson 3, entitled 'The lives of animals' in *Elizabeth Costello.* Attwell (1999) argues that, in this text, the key concern is moral salvation, "... saving ourselves from our own cruelty" (p1). In this section of the novel, Elizabeth is invited to deliver a speech at Appleton College and chooses as her topic the subject of animals. One of the themes that she discusses is the ability to empathise. She uses the context of the Holocaust death camps to illustrate the point that evil results through an inability to empathise, arguing that: "The horror is that the killers refused to think themselves into the place of their victims ..." and that human beings possess the ability to imagine what others feel, through "The heart [which] is the seat of a faculty, *sympathy,* that allows us to share at times the being of another" (Coetzee, 2003:79). This sensitivity to otherness is, according to Attwell, a "... hallmark of all Coetzee's writing", and it is only through a confrontation with the "... ordinary, pitiful alterity of a living being ... that we can begin to understand what it means to be responsible" (1999:2).

Elizabeth Costello's fame as a novelist rests largely on her book, *The House on Eccles Street.* In this book, she writes about a fictional character, Marion Bloom, created by another writer, James Joyce. She argues that the fact that she was able to think her way into the existence of someone who never in fact existed proves the point that "... there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another" (*EC:* 80).

The faculty of sympathy, however, is founded upon feeling, rather than rational knowledge, which, Elizabeth argues, is inherently disrespectful to the other, because "It implies that a living being that does not do what we call thinking is somehow second-class" (*Elizabeth Costello:* 78). According to this view, it is the privileging of instrumental reason that allows violence to be done to others. Because animals lack rational thought, it is assumed that they are lesser beings, yet Elizabeth contends that all animals, including ourselves, are full of being, which she describes as the feeling of 'joy'.

Thus, she says that: "To thinking, cogitation, I oppose fullness, embodiedness, the sensation of being … a heavily affective sensation … of being alive to the world" (*EC:* 78). It is writers and poets, she argues, who are able to think themselves into the being of the other, who can provide us with a different kind of insight into the other's being. As an example she quotes a poem about a jaguar, by Ted Hughes. She argues that the jaguar's consciousness is qualitatively different to ours, that it is kinetic rather than abstract. Hughes is able to penetrate the jaguar's consciousness because he is prepared to imagine a way of being-in-the-world different to the one we would normally inhabit, one in which it is not the mind, but rather the body, that produces consciousness. Elizabeth Costello argues that what a poet like Ted Hughes does is to "… show us how to bring the living body into being within ourselves" (*EC:* 98), and that this enables us to imagine ourselves, albeit for a short while, as the jaguar.

Ultimately, however, there is little agreement or consensus between her and her audience, and the talk she delivers in the second part of Lesson 4, 'The poets and the animals', ends unpleasantly, with her estranged from the reasoning of those justifying the killing and eating of animals, so that "That is the note on which Dean Arendt has to bring the proceedings to a close: acrimony, hostility, bitterness" (*EC*: 112). At the end of Lesson 4, Elizabeth is left alienated and defeated. Her views on the ethics of using animals for practical purposes leave her increasingly marginalized, and her pain and anguish contribute to the overall tone of desolation that this section of the novel embodies. Her sense of horror at what is done to animals and, in particular, the casualness with which it is done, sets her apart from those around her, so that her alienation seems to mirror the gulf that separates humans from animals. In this way, Elizabeth comes to embody the animals whose rights she defends. The pathos of her plea to her son, John, that she simply cannot come to terms with what happens to animals and the anguish this produces in the face of others' indifference is heartrending and, although she is left feeling estranged and bewildered, she nevertheless leaves behind a sense of the horror of the situation.

In Lesson 5 of *Elizabeth Costello,* entitled 'The Humanities in Africa', Elizabeth's sister, Blanche, or Sister Bridget, as she is now called, argues that the study in humanities entered the university via textual scholarship, which was centred on the Bible. The aim of these studies was on uncovering the true teachings of Jesus, in particular, rebirth and

resurrection. The whole constellation of studies that now constitutes the humanities, from linguistics and literary studies to cultural and historical studies, thus had their origin in coming to understand the true teachings of Jesus, in general, and the meaning of redemption, in particular. According to Sister Bridget, the purpose of the studies in humanities was that of "finding the True Word, by which they [the founding fathers] understood then, and I understand now, the redemptive word" (*EC:* 122).

Sister Bridget goes on to argue that contemporary studies in humanities have lost their way from this ideal and have therefore lost their *raison d'etre,* making them superfluous. She argues with Elizabeth that what now stands as meaning in the humanities is a secular vision of salvation: "Rebirth without the intervention of Christ" (*EC:* 133). Her response to this is that it is not possible: "… it cannot be done" (p133).

In a conversation with the Goodwins, a couple at the dinner following her speech, Blanche argues that the writers who interested her and her fellow students the most were those who, like DH Lawrence, promised some form of salvation; that, "… in our truest reading, as students, we searched the page for guidance, guidance in perplexity" (*EC:* 127) and that it is that craving, essentially "… a quest for salvation" (p127), that the humanities must respond to if it is to remain viable.

The most haunting and evocative figure in *Lesson 5,* however, is that of Joseph, who used to be employed at Marianhill to do carvings and other odd jobs, but who was now retired due to arthritis in his hands. He shows Elizabeth the carvings he used to do in his workshop, all of them of Jesus on the cross. All the carvings are the same, that of the suffering Jesus on the cross, differing only in size, and there are a great many of them in the workshop – hundreds, all identical. Elizabeth is somewhat surprised that Joseph carves only this. To her question of why he carves, his response is simply: "For Jesus … Yes. For Our Saviour" (136). When Elizabeth expresses her misgivings to her sister about the sensibility of someone carving only one thing, and that a man in agony over and over again, and that it represented such a waste of his talents not to expose him to other art forms, Blanche responds that Joseph had essentially dedicated his life to representing Jesus in his suffering on the Cross, that his dedication had been absolute and true, and that this faithfulness was surely more noteworthy than the ways in which other people spent their lives.

In this story, Joseph, with his ruined hands and excess of crucifixions, in the ceaseless and faithful toil of his carvings, represents the true meaning of dedication to Christ. This image of Joseph is such a powerful one because it evokes the image of Christ, suffering in his quest for the salvation of mankind. And it is this suffering that Jesus underwent that makes him such an icon, because his suffering echoes the suffering of people the world over, the reality of life in which suffering occurs daily and unremittingly. Blanche argues that this is what makes the force of Jesus so potent, why he is chosen as the one in whose footsteps others must follow. This, according to Blanche, " ... is why African people come to church to kneel before Jesus on the cross, African women above all, who have to bear the brunt of reality. Because they suffer and he suffers with them" (*EC:* 141).

To the extent that Elizabeth contests this notion of Christ's suffering as man's salvation in favour of a reading that emphasises the joy and beauty represented in the Greek ideals and myths, it is noteworthy that she comes to the conclusion that in order to understand true compassion and love in the face of suffering and pain one would have to turn to the Christians.

Dissatisfied with the way in which her visit to her sister ends, she writes a letter to her in which she demonstrates the way in which images from the Greeks create a world in which humanity's beauty is revealed. In writing the letter, she relates a story of the pain and suffering of Mr Phillips, a friend of her mother's, whom she visits in the final stages of his illness. Wasting away as he is, she decides to do something for him that will bring some kind of release from the perpetual pain, and decides, while posing for him, to take off her top and expose her breasts to his gaze. This, she argues, is what it means to perform an act of humanity: "Nothing compels us to do it ... But out of the overflow, the outflow of our human hearts we do it nevertheless: drop our robes, reveal ourselves, reveal the life and beauty we are blessed with" (*EC*: 150). It is this kind of joyous beauty that we have taken from the Greeks and that is what constitutes what we can learn from the humanities that makes it superior to the endless suffering of Christ that the Christians offer.

This is the way her letter to her sister ends. Were the story to end this way, however, it would certainly prove her point that the humanities inherited from the Greeks teach us the

sublime beauty of mankind and that this makes it the more significant force. However, Elizabeth goes on to relate the rest of what happened between her and Mr Phillips – something she cannot tell her sister because it would not convey what it is she wants to prove about the Greeks and their gift to humanity. What she does not relate is that what she does for Mr Phillips is something that goes beyond merely offering beauty in the face of unrelenting suffering, and she is convinced that recourse to the Greeks is not possible if she is to explain it in its fullness:

> As for her, Elizabeth, crouched over the old bag of bones with her breasts dangling, working away on his nearly extinct organ of generation, what name would the Greeks give to such a spectacle? Not *eros,* certainly – too grotesque for that. *Agape?* Again, perhaps not. Does that mean the Greeks would have no word for it? Would one have to wait for the Christians to come along with the right word: *caritas?*
>
> For that, in the end, is what she is convinced it is. (*EC*: 154)

To explain what she does for Mr Phillips would need something beyond what the Greeks had to offer. Elizabeth finds the word to describe her actions, *caritas,* the Latin term for divine love, more appropriate even than *agape,* or Christian love, because what she did seems to transcend the boundaries of merely acting charitably or with caring towards one's fellow being. In choosing *caritas* she indicates that her actions related to or proceeded from God. At the end, then, she indicates, love originates from and is made possible only by God.

VI: Conclusion

In this dissertation I have argued for an understanding of selected JM Coetzee fiction that goes beyond the more conventional categories of postcolonial analysis to one that considers the way in which his work is also informed by a dimension that can be defined as one denoting religious or spiritual concerns, particularly those of redemption and salvation. I have focused on two earlier and two later texts in order to show that these concerns constitute an on-going theme in Coetzee's work. To this end I have considered the ways in which *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), *Disgrace* (1999) and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003) can also be considered as texts that are concerned with issues transcending those of its particular socio-historical conditions.

While Coetzee's work is largely informed by issues of colonialism and imperialism, and is therefore particularly engaged with South African concerns, there is also an element in his writing that moves beyond this toward an engagement with issues of a more metaphysical nature. The worlds that Coetzee's characters inhabit seem at times to be a kind of hell from which they desperately try, at some point, to escape. In each of the texts that I have considered, there is a longing to transcend the earthly reality that the characters experience. Magda's yearning for love and a sense of community and her desperate need to live in reciprocity with others expose the way in which certain historical conditions create relations of alienation and estrangement amongst human beings. Her refusal to accept the conditions of her existence and her repeated attempts to change the structures that govern her life is an indication of her need to transcend the boundaries of her life. However, her eventual turn toward the sky-gods can be read as a result of her failure to find redemption from her situation, so that at the end of the novel she is back to being the dutiful daughter of the colonies, looking after her father. This reading of her fate, however, would be an incomplete one. As she herself comments at the end of the novel: "I am corrupted to the bone with the beauty of this forsaken world" (*HC:* 139). While Magda's material conditions never in fact change, she has nevertheless created a world in which a different reality is imagined and thereby made possible. She is thus able to articulate a certain victory at the end, so that she is able to say that "I have uttered my life in my own voice throughout (what a consolation that is), I have chosen at every moment my own destiny …" (*HC:* 139). Her desire and longing for a different world,

while defeated at the end, has nevertheless been imagined and articulated, and in this way made to matter.

Michael K's quest to live free from the historical and political times he inhabits is a quest to live in a pocket outside of time. His resistance to living according to the social norms of the time and his determination to stay out of the camps, in addition to the harelip that marks him physically, make him a figure of anomaly. This desire to live outside of time, in as natural a way as possible, so that he lives off the bounty of the land, can be read as a desire to live in a timeless eternity, a pastoral fantasy of heaven. Rita Barnard (2002) argues that *Life and Times of Michael K* is a challenge to the family farm as understood within South Africa's settler-colonial history, in that it presents "… a vision of rural life without patriarchal or colonial domination", and that the country in this text functions as a place of refuge from the civil war that is going on (p389). Ultimately, however, K is unable to remain in the countryside and returns to Sea Point and has to endure the sordidness of city life, where he meets up with a group who befriends him and gives him alcohol and where one of the women makes love to him, despite him trying to push her away, so that when they leave he feels "… the shame of the episode with the girl waiting like a shadow at the edge of his thoughts …" (*LTMK*: 179). Coetzee does not allow Michael K to emerge as a figure of sacredness, untainted by the world around him, rooting him firmly instead in the realities of life in a city ravaged by war. Throughout the text, though, Michael K demonstrates a way of being that is somehow not of this world, that is above and beyond the cares and concerns of his world, and it is this yearning towards transcendence that lends *Life and Times of Michael K* an otherworldliness, an impulse towards what, it can be argued, represents a type of religious feeling.

The word 'grace' is embedded in the title of Coetzee's second Booker Prize-winning novel, *Disgrace,* and is a significant aspect of the novel in its evocation of the notion of grace within the tradition of Christianity. In this text, disgrace functions as a catch-all term for depicting life and events within a particular historical moment. The theological notion of 'grace', however, signals a moment of redemption from the wretchedness depicted in this novel. Despite winning Coetzee his second Booker Prize, *Disgrace* has been the subject of much bitter criticism, facing accusations ranging from racism and fuelling white paranoia to contributing to a climate of hopelessness and despair about the new South Africa. The charge of racism is suitably dealt with by David Attwell in his

article "Race in Disgrace". The sense of bleakness and despair resonates deeply, however, in this novel. This could be simply because Coetzee seems prepared to engage more assiduously than other writers with the harder issues of the 'miracle' of South Africa's transformation. Interestingly in this context, Coetzee defines *grace* elsewhere as: "a condition in which the truth can be told clearly, without blindness" (Coetzee, 1997: 392). The term 'grace' can thus be seen to function in more than one sense in this text. My focus in this dissertation has been on the way in which the notion of 'grace' can be understood in *Disgrace* as exemplifying the notions of redemption and salvation. I have argued that, in this text, Coetzee seems to be feeling his way towards a resolution that is increasingly distanced from that of the human condition towards one which suggests, albeit tentatively, that under certain conditions salvation is possible only with the intervention of the divine. The change that comes over David Lurie during the course of this novel represents the hope that humanity can always be saved. Like Paul on the road to Damascus, he recognises, however, that the change that comes over him has nothing to do with anything he has done, that it comes inexplicably and without understanding. I have argued here that the change that comes over David Lurie can be understood as the intervention of grace.

Elizabeth Costello deals more overtly than Coetzee's other texts with religious questions, particularly that of Christianity. In Lesson 5 – 'The Humanities in South Africa', she and her sister, Blanche, stage a debate about the merits of different belief systems, with her arguing passionately against Blanche's choice of Christianity as the more significant force. However, she is forced to concede, albeit to herself only, that the notion of love as understood within the tradition of Christianity, surpasses any other that she can think of. In Lesson 3, which deals with the issue of animal ethics and rights, she is a figure of inconsolable grief and anguish at living in a world that seems so far removed from her understanding. Her vegetarianism is, according to her, a quest to save her soul. Her sensibilities seem to make her world a hellish kind of place in which she is increasingly estranged from the people around her, even those whom she loves, and reveal impulses that have their deepest meaning in theological, not literary or political terms.

The metaphysical impulses that I've identified in JM Coetzee's novels have, in my opinion, not been sufficiently noted before. Yet, it is this dimension to his work that is what, in conjunction with his reading and understanding of the political and historical

milieu, makes JM Coetzee the great writer that he is. While Coetzee's work has been noted for the richness of its contributions to the field of postcolonial studies, there is a quality of elusiveness to his writing that makes it difficult to pin down and fully appreciate or understand. At least in part, this elusiveness can be accounted for by an impulse in Coetzee's characters toward transcendence of the conditions of their existence. The contradictions between Coetzee's political/historical/postcolonial concerns and the metaphysical impulses that I've identified add a complexity to his writing that leaves many questions unanswered. However, as this is a mini-dissertation, I have been constrained in how many of these possible questions I can actually address.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allport, Gordon W. 1950. *The Individual and his Religion: A Psychological Interpretation.* New York: Macmillan Publishing.

Attridge, Derek. 2005. *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading.* Scottsville: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press.

Attridge, Derek. 2002. JM Coetzee's *Disgrace:* Introduction. *Interventions.* 4(3): 315-320.

Attridge, Derek. 2000. Age of Bronze, State of Grace: Music and Dogs in Coetzee's *Disgrace. Novel: A Forum on Fiction.* Vol 34(1), Fall. 98-122.

Attwell, David. 1993. *J.M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing.* Claremont: David Phillip.

Attwell, David. 1999. The Sunday Independent. *JM Coetzee takes on animal ethics.* Published on the Web by IOL on 11/12/1999. www.iol.co.za/general/news/newsprint.php?art.id=ct19991211173720252A34067 [01/07/2004]

Attwell, David. 2001. Coetzee and post-apartheid South Africa (Review). *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 37(4), December:

Attwell, David. 2002. Race in *Disgrace. Interventions.* 4(3): 331 – 341.

Barnard, Rita. 2002. Coetzee's Country Ways. *Interventions,* 4(3): 384-394.

Barrett, William. 1958. *Irrational Man: A study in existential philosophy.* Doubleday: New York.

Batson, C. Daniel, Schoenrade, Patricia du Ventis, W. Larry. 1993. *Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective.* Oxford University Press: New York.

Boehmer, Elleke. 2002. Not saying sorry, not speaking pain: Gender implications in *Disgrace. Interventions,* 4(3): 342-351.

Brody, C. 1994. Colonial Daughter's Revolt. In *The writings of JM Coetzee,* by Moses, Michael Valdez. Durheim, NC: Duke University Press.

Buber, Martin. 1970. *I and Thou.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Canepari-Labib, Michela. 2000. Language and Identity in the Narrative of J.M. Coetzee. *English in Africa.* 27(1): 105-129.

Coetzee, J.M. 1977. *In the Heart of the Country.* London: Penguin.

Coetzee, J.M. 1983. *Life and Times of Michael K.* London: Penguin.

Coetzee, J.M. 1988. *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa.* Johannesburg: Radix (in association with Yale UP).

Coetzee, J.M. 1992. *Doubling the Point.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Coetzee, J.M. 1997. *Waiting for the Barbarians.* Minerva edition. London: Random House.

Coetzee, J.M. 1998. *Boyhood: A Memoir.* London: Vintage.

Coetzee, J.M. 1999. *Disgrace.* London: Secker & Warburg.

Coetzee, J.M. 2002. The memoirs of Breyten Breytenbach. In *Stranger Shores: Essays 1986 – 1999.* London: Vintage.

Coetzee, J.M. 2002. Noel Mostert and the Eastern Cape Frontier. In *Stranger Shores: Essays 1986 – 1999.* London: Vintage.

Coetzee, J.M. 2003. *Elizabeth Costello.* London: Secker & Warburg.

Collins Paperback English Dictionary. New Edition. 1995. Glasgow: Harper Collins.

Cornwell, Gareth. 1999. The Recovery of Grace (Review article). *English Academy Review,* Issue 16, December: 248-254.

Cornwell, Gareth. 2002. Realism, Rape and JM Coetzee's *Disgrace. Critique,* 43(4), 1 June: 307-322.

Cornwell, Gareth. 2003. *Disgrace*land: History and the Humanities in Frontier Country. *English in Africa,* 30(2), October: 43-68.

Cowley, Jason. 1999. J M Coetzee. *New Statesman,* Vol. 128 Issue 4459: 18-20.

Easton, T. 1995. Text and Hinterland: J.M. Coetzee and the South African Novel[a]. *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Vol. 21 Issue 4, December.

Farred, Grant. 2002. Back to the borderlines: thinking race *Disgrace*fully. Symposium on *Disgrace. Scrutiny 2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa,* 7(1): 16-19.

Farred, Grant. 2002. The Mundanacity of Violence: Living in a state of Disgrace. *Interventions,* 4(3): 352-362.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1979.

Fromm, Erich. 1976. *To have or to be?* London: Sphere Cox & Wyman.

Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. 2003. *A human being died that night: a story of forgiveness.* New Africa Books (David Phillip): Claremont.

Graham, Lucy. 2002. 'Yes, I am giving him up': Sacrificial responsibility and likeness with dogs in JM Coetzee's recent fiction. Symposium on *Disgrace. Scrutiny 2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa,* 7(1): 4-14.

Graham, Shane. 2003. The Truth Commission and Post-Apartheid Literature in South Africa. *Research in African Literatures,* 34(1), Spring: 11-30.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 'Nietzsche and the Choreography of Knowledge' in *Volatile Bodies.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Gunn, Judith. 1990. *Dostoyevsky: Dreamer and Prophet.* Lion Publishing: Oxford.

Hardy, Thomas. 1998. *Jude the Obscure.* London: Penguin.

Hever, Hannan. 2002. Facing *Disgrace:* Coetzee and the Israeli intellectual. Symposium on *Disgrace. Scrutiny 2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa ,* 7(1): 42-46.

Holliday, Anthony. 2003. JM Coetzee, rebel from nowhere. *This Day:* October 7.

Horrell, Georgina. 2000. J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*: One settler, one bullet and the 'new South Africa'. Symposium on *Disgrace. Scrutiny 2.*

Kafka, Frantz. 'In the Penal Colony' in *Frantz Kafka: Stories 1904 – 1924* (trans: J.A. Underwood). London: Abacus, 1995.

Kochin, Michael. 2004. Postmetaphysical Literature: Reflection on J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace. Perspectives on Political Science,* 33(1): 4-9. Winter.

Kossew, Sue. 2003. The Politics of Shame and Redemption in JM Coetzee's *Disgrace. Research in African Literatures,* 34(2): 155-162. Summer.

Marais, Michael. 2000. The possibility of ethical action: JM Coetzee's *Disgrace. Scrutiny 2,* 5(1): 57-63.

Marais, Michael. 2001. Impossible Possibilities: Ethics and choice in JM Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* and *Disgrace. The English Academy Review,* 18: 1-20.

Mitchell, J & Gordon, J. 2003. *A diploma and dosh dilemma for JM Coetzee?* The Star. Published on the Web by IOL on 03/10/2003. www.iol.co.za/general/news/newsprint.php?art.id=vn20031003040427949C444 [01/07/2004]

Moran, Shane. 2001. To criticise the critic: *Disgrace* (Review article). *Alternation.* 8(2): 216 – 228.

Morphet, Tony. 1984. Stranger Fictions: Trajectories in the Liberal Novel. *World Literature Today.* 53 – 59.

Poyner, Jane. 2002. Truth and reconciliation in JM Coetzee's *Disgrace.* Symposium on *Disgrace. Scrutiny 2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa,* 7(1): 67-77.

Segundo, Juan Luis. 1980. *Grace and the Human Condition.* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Simmel, Georg. 1997. *Essays on Religion.* Edited and translated by Horst Jürgen Helle in collaboration with Ludwig Nieder. Yale University Press: New Haven.

Strauss, Peter. 1992. J.M. Coetzee. In *Perspectives on South African English Literature.* Eds. Michael Chapman, Colin Gardner and Es'kia Mphahlele. Parklands: AD. Donker Publishers.

The Holy Bible. Containing the Old and New Testaments. Revised Standard Version. 1952. New York: W. M. Collins Sons.

The Penguin English Dictionary. 2nd Edition. 2003. Consultant Editor: Robert Allen. London: Penguin.

The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English. 2nd Edition. 1994. Edited by: William Branford. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Tillich, Paul. 1963. *The New Being.* London: SCM Press.

Warnock, Mary. 1965. *The Philosophy of Sartre.* London: Hutchinson & Co.