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in the novel and its film adaptation“

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1. Introduction

In this diploma thesis, J.M. Coetzee's 1999 novel *Disgrace* and its 2008 film adaptation will be analysed and compared. The next chapter begins by providing a theoretical background on film adaptation. Subsequently, these theories will be used to analyse the film *Disgrace* and compare it to its source novel. In the third chapter, a brief overview of the end of apartheid and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Committee will be given. Chapter four discusses all the main characters in both works except Lucy Lurie. As her character was chosen as the main topic for this thesis, Lucy's portrayals will be analysed and compared in detail in the subsequent chapter. Before the conclusion, the last chapter on the term 'corrective rape' and its relevance within *Disgrace* is presented.

2. Film Adaptation

2.1. Theories on film adaptation

In the introduction to his extensive collection of texts on film and literature, Timothy Corrigan observes an "increased mixing of different media in both literary and film practices" and claims that "film and literature clash against and invigorate each other in more and more complicated fashions" (1). The author further states that "at least 30 percent [sic] of the movies today derive from novels and [...] 80 percent [sic] of the books classified as best sellers have been adapted to the cinema" (Corrigan 2).

Corrigan further claims that clear distinctions have to be made historically and culturally within the field of film adaptation (2). As an example, he compares "French surrealist poetry and experimental silent film of the late 1920s" to "Broadway adaptations by Hollywood in the next decade" (Corrigan 2). It appears that he is implying a lack of quality in the latter, which is a rather subjective notion that can hardly be proven. He goes on to list several issues concerning the relationship of literature and cinema. These include "the ideological underpinnings that inform an adaptation of a particular work", "the different ways readers and spectators make sense of their experience before

a page or screen” and “the impact of new media and the internet on adaptation studies” (Corrigan 2-3).

Thomas Leitch claims that “adaptation studies have had little influence on either film studies generally [...] or discussions of contemporary film adaptations by literary scholars” and this is “largely because of a rupture between the theory and the practice of adaptation studies” (1). According to the author, this lack of influence can be further explained by the fact that “adaptation study has stood apart from the main currents in film theory” (Leitch 3). It “traces its descent more directly from literary studies” and therefore adaptation studies “tend to privilege literature over film” (Leitch 3). This tendency can be examined in several texts about film adaptations. Dudley Andrew, for example, claims that only a text can be a standard whole, while film adaptations are always versions of this whole (29). In comparison, Robert B. Ray suggests that film adaptations could be seen as “citation[s] grafted into a new context” rather than “faded imitation[s] of [...] superior original[s]” (45).

Cited as the “founding text in adaptation study”, Robert Leitch introduces George Bluestone’s *Novels into Film* (qtd. in Leitch 3). Bluestone claims that “changes are inevitable the moment one abandons the linguistic for the visual medium”, further stating that film and novel cannot be directly compared to one another (qtd. in Leitch 3). This was already suggested by André Bazin in 1948, who states that novels and films are “two different artistic forms” (20). While being openly critical about film adaptation, Bazin argues that movies may not have any other objective than taking the idea of a novel and creating something new of it (25). According to James Naremore, Bazin’s text is “relatively little-known” but has a great deal to contribute to adaptation studies (1).

Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo further developed the idea of adaptations as separate art forms, stating that these films “‘adapt to’ changing environments and changing tastes, as well as to a new medium, with its distinct industrial demands, commercial pressures, censorship taboos, and aesthetic norms” (3). Listing examples of the “profoundly moralistic” language of conventional adaptation criticism, they remark that films are mostly

discredited for “what has been ‘lost’” compared to the source novel, while “what has been ‘gained’” on screen is often ignored (Stam and Raengo 3). Stam and Raengo aim to shift the focus away from “the quality of adaptations” to their “theoretical status” and “analytical interest” (4). They suggest that the often claimed inferiority of film to literature derives from “the assumption [...] that older arts are necessarily better arts” (Stam and Raengo 4). However, Thomas Leitch criticises their volume *Literature to Film* for continuing a tradition of “analysing and evaluating [...] films [...] as if they were literary works themselves” (4). Both categorical and analogical approaches to adaptation, he claims, have a “shared assumption that adaptation study is and should be essentially aesthetic” and should therefore focus on “what makes works of art successful” (Leitch 5). This is a highly valuable approach. Nevertheless, what makes a movie successful is a matter of opinion. Since film adaptations usually require a bigger budget than the novels they are based on (Stam 56), their success is often attributed to financial earnings rather than critical acclaim. Regarding the artistic success of a film, Boozer claims that “the quality of many adapted films have been rooted in a strong writer-director team approach” (Boozer 10). Furthermore, a “strong personal devotion to rendering a literal source” is said to have a positive effect on adaptations (Boozer 10). Nevertheless, criteria for the quality of film adaptations are hard to define and often rely on personal taste.

In his volume *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, Jack Boozer takes into account the “central role of the screenplay” in film adaptations (1). The editor argues that “the adapted screenplay as it exists just before production starts is the most prescriptive guide to the film in the mind’s eye of writer and director” (Boozer 4). According to Boozer, this essential part of transforming pieces of literature into films has been “generally overlooked” by studies in the field (1). Corrigan also discusses the “literary art of scriptwriting versus story writing” in his book (2). The issue of screenwriter authorship in film adaptation raises interesting questions concerning copyright and fidelity. Boozer claims that the screenplay has been disregarded in film adaptation studies due to its lack of interest to the audience as well as a low regard for screenwriters in the film industry (2). Nevertheless, the author states that there is a “growing interest”

in the field, which in his opinion “supports the need for a closer look at the screenplay/screenwriter and writer-director collaboration in the genesis of adaptation” (Boozer 3). Since a screenplay is essential for the process of filmmaking, I strongly share this opinion.

A crucial part of adapting a novel to a screenplay is shortening (Boozer 7). According to an experienced screenwriter, even dialogues are often cut down as far as one-fourth (Boozer 7). However, sometimes also the cast plays a significant role in changing significant parts of a film adaptation (Boozer 8). Since scripts are often hard to come by, Boozer suggests listening to “interviews with or commentaries from the principal figures of adaptation for a film - producers, writers, directors, and actors” in order to understand the process of adaptation (4). In this paper, interviews with the screenwriter, director and several actors of *Disgrace* are mentioned.

An interesting concept to bear in mind when talking about adaptation is transformation. According to Frus and Williams (3), “a transformation is a text that reworks an older story or stories, making [it] very much like an adaptation”. However, it is argued that among all works that have been called adaptations “there are some that move beyond mere adaptation and transform the source text into something new that works independently of its source” (Frus and Williams 3). While the essays collected in the volume *Beyond Adaptation* are all claimed to be about transformations of texts (Frus and Williams 3), it seems difficult to define when an adaptation becomes a transformation. Taking into account the question of fidelity appears inevitable at this point.

Concerning the “issue of authorial intent” of fidelity in an adaptation, Boozer states that there are “three levels of a film’s distance from its source” (9). Hierarchically, they can be structured in “a literal or close reading”, “a general correspondence” and “a distant referencing” (Boozer 9). More than 30 years earlier, Wagner (qtd. in Leitch 93) also defined three types of adaptations:

transposition, ‘in which a novel is given directly on the screen, with a minimum of apparent interference’; *commentary* [...], ‘in which an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect’; and *analogy*, ‘a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art’.

Overall, there appear to be many different ways of approaching the theory of adapting novels to films. Also, opinions on the quality of these adaptations vary considerably. As in all spheres of art, it is clear that there can be no definite criteria for artistic success. To me, the concept of fidelity of film adaptations seems most measurable in this context. Moreover, I agree with several authors mentioned above when claiming that adaptations should not in general be seen as inferior to their original sources. By applying ideas to another medium, films become separate works of art and often cannot be directly compared to the literature they were influenced by.

In the following chapter, this theoretical background is applied to Coetzee's *Disgrace* and its film adaptation.

2.2. *Disgrace* as an adaptation

Considering the highly interesting concept of fidelity, the question arises if *Disgrace* can be described as a transposition, a commentary or an analogy (Wagner, qtd. in Leitch 93). As a first step of this analysis, the plot of both works is compared.

2.2.1. Comparing the plot

Both novel and film begin with one of the main character David's frequent visits to a prostitute called Soraya. Their meetings end rather abruptly, for which no apparent reason is given in the film. In the book, he tries to contact her afterwards and is dismissed rather harshly, which is also omitted in the film.

In both works, David invites Melanie, one of his students, into his flat for a drink. They talk for a while and he asks her to stay, but she says she has to leave. He extracts her contact details from the department office at his university, calls her and asks her out to lunch. Afterwards, he has sex with her in his flat, during which she appears extremely passive in the film and is described likewise in the novel.

To avoid further detailed description, which would exceed the capacity of this chapter, it can be said that the plot of the film does not differ widely from the novel. However, some parts of the book are omitted in the movie. In one of

those passages, Lucy talks to two policemen about the incident while walking through the scene of the crime. Here, it becomes clear that she wants to cover up her having been raped, since the house has also been cleaned up before the police arrives.

Furthermore, the end of the film differs from the book's last pages. This does not alter the story, but it could be said that the film ends on a more positive note than the novel. In the last paragraph of the book, David gives up a dog he has grown fond of. This is also included at the end of the film, but the very last scene shows David visiting Lucy, where he is invited in for some tea. This alternate ending, where David and Lucy appear happy and reunited, creates a rather hopeful atmosphere. The last sentence of the book, however, is "Yes, I am giving him up" (Coetzee 220). This can be interpreted as David giving up hope or giving up on himself, which makes the novel end on a more negative note than its film adaptation.

Screenwriter Anna Maria Monticelli states in an interview that she had to "show [J.M. Coetzee] the script, and there was discussion". She goes on to say that "he was very generous – he allowed [her] to end the film differently from the book" and also "understood why [she] wanted to do it" (Monticelli).

As a second step of analysing fidelity, dialogues in both works are compared.

2.2.2. Comparing the dialogues

Even though the first dialogue in the film is not exactly the same as in the novel, the first spoken words of the book "[h]ave you missed me?" and "I miss you all the time" are included in the first scene (Coetzee 1). To introduce the character of David, a few lines about his private and professional life are added in the film.

When David meets Melanie, most of the dialogue in the film is taken directly from the novel. A few utterances are left out and some lines added. For example, in the film David asks her "are you alright" after she falls down, which is not mentioned in the book (*Disgrace*). On the other hand, sentences like "[d]o you live around here" and "[a]cross the line, I share a flat" are exactly the same as in the novel (Coetzee 12).

In David's first meeting with Lucy, the dialogues are similar as well. He asks her about Helen, her previous partner, and Lucy tells him that she has been back in Johannesburg since April. Poetic statements like David calling Lucy an "armed philosopher" (Coetzee 60) are also taken directly from the novel.

Overall, it can be said that, as is often the case in adaptations (Boozer 7), some of the book's dialogue is omitted in the film. Nevertheless, lots of utterances in the film are taken from the novel word by word. In addition, some details that are described in the novel are conveyed through spoken word in the film. This may be due to the absence of a narrator. In a *New York Times* review of the film, Nicolas Rapold addresses this issue:

The novel's overbearing and sometimes unpleasant narrator proved [...] a challenge. Rather than rely on a voice-over, the character of David, played by John Malkovich, assumes the role. Beyond his knack for impatient, cultured entitlement, Mr. Malkovich's air evokes David's incessant and judgmental parsing of his world.

As a third step, the settings and atmospheres in the book and the film are compared.

2.2.3. Comparing the settings and atmospheres

When David accompanies Lucy to the market for the first time, the setting is described in detail in the novel. There is mention of "a smell of burning meat", the stall is stated to be in the "produce quarter" of the market (Coetzee 71). To their left there are "three African women with milk, *masa*, butter to sell", to their right "an old Afrikaner couple" who like Lucy "have potatoes and onions to sell, but also bottled jams, preserves, dried fruit, packets of buchu tea" and so on (Coetzee 71). In the film, the popular African song "Skokiaan" is playing in the background (IMDb) and a number of stalls are shown. Some sell kitchen products, clothes, accessories and shoes, others groceries. Overall, the setting is adapted from the description in the novel.

In another scene, Petrus reappears for the first time after the incident with his new wife. In the novel, he is said to arrive in an "old lorry" from which he and the driver "unload cartons, creosoted poles, sheets of galvanized iron" and other things as well as "two halfgrown sheep" (Coetzee 113). In the film, Petrus and his wife only unload a few bags and what appear to be long strips

of wood. However, in the next scene, David tells Lucy that “Petrus is back with a load of building material and a woman” (Disgrace), which relates more directly to the description in the novel.

In a review of the film published in *The Guardian*, author Peter Bradshaw remarks a detail missing in the film, which is adding to the often brutal atmosphere in the novel:

The almost masochistic horror of Lurie's descent is well managed in the movie, though I was sorry to see one detail lost. He now has the demeaning new job of preparing unwanted dogs for cremation, and, in the book, this involves beating the rigor-mortis-affected corpses into shape with a shovel so they can be disposed of. This exquisitely horrible touch has been omitted.

However, Bradshaw seems to not have read the novel in close detail. In the book it is not David Lurie who beats the dogs' corpses but the workmen at the incinerator. In fact, he takes over their job because he cannot stand watching the dead dogs being treated like regular waste.

It may be argued that the imagery in the film conveys the unique atmosphere of the South African countryside even better than the novel. Nicolas Rapold of the *New York Times* claims that “the film, with its majestic images of the rugged citrus-growing backcountry northeast of Cape Town, underscores the pull of the land in a way not possible in the book.” In an interview, director Steven Jacobs states “[w]e needed to establish how magnificent the South African landscape is and the relationship of both black and white to the land” (Rapold). He further claims that “[i]t was very important to give the audience some reason for comprehending why Lucy would want to stay” (Rapold). Screenwriter Anna Maria Monticelli emphasises that statement by saying “once we were here, we wanted a landscape that made the audience believe [that] this girl wants to live here forever and she doesn't wanna leave”. Aside from that, the author of the novel, J.M. Coetzee, is claimed to have made only one public statement about the film, praising its success at “integrating the story into the grand landscape of South Africa” (Rapold).

In another interview, the director states that, even before the film was fully financed, he went to South Africa looking for “locations for the farm” with the help of a scout (Jacobs). They found “a terrific location” and “built the

farmhouse in such a fashion that [they] could utilise the storytelling through images” (Jacobs). For instance, “doors, windows, rooms looked onto certain aspects of the landscape”, the landscape being “incredibly important to the film [and] to the African story” (Jacobs). According to Jacobs, this “would have been more difficult in a less spectacular, less dramatic position”.

The director of photography, Steve Arnold, states that it was his goal to be “fairly naturalistic” and not to use “a large colour palette or anything very tricky [...] including wide angles, lenses and distortion”. He claims they were very “keen on keeping things fairly symmetrical and making tableaux” (Arnold). He goes on in more detail about the landscape surrounding the farm, saying that “it was great to have [...] the dryness of a desert landscape [...] as a backdrop to what was going on with [...] Petrus, Lucy and David” (Arnold).

One aspect that plays a major role in both works is music. However, since it can actually be heard in the film, it influences the atmosphere more directly. According to Jacobs, “some of the music was already decided on before [they] started shooting”. Since “David Lurie writes an opera during the book”, the director wanted to “have a piece that had a classical, operatic feel to it, which John Malkovich could play” (Jacobs). The piece “She Walks in Beauty” composed by Graeme Koehne (IMDb) was “woven into the narrative, so that one hears a theme through the film, which comes to [...] a final fruition at the very end, when it’s completed” (Jacobs).

2.2.4. Conclusion

All in all, it can be stated that the plot, dialogues, settings and atmospheres of the film are relatively similar to the novel. In Wagner’s words, therefore, *Disgrace* can be described as a “transposition” (qtd. in Leitch 93). Considering Boozer’s theory of authorial intent (9), the film qualifies as “a literal or close reading” of its reference novel.

Having said this, the question arises if such a direct comparison of a text and its adaptation is the best way to treat these sources. Linda Hutcheon states that “the morally loaded discourse of fidelity is based on the implied assumption that adapters aim simply to reproduce the adapted text” (7). Yet, she argues, there are “many different possible intentions behind the act of

adaptation” (Hutcheon 7). According to Hutcheon, “the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is just as likely as the desire to pay tribute by copying” (7).

Therefore, statements by the persons involved in the adaptation of *Disgrace* are given significant value in this paper. In an interview with the New York Times (Rapold), director Steve Jacobs shortly answered the question about his intentions in making the film:

I tried to make the film like the book. It was a surgical examination of a situation, not an argument for or against the situation. It's like you're a witness rather than a participant.

The author of the article agrees with the film being a close reading of its source text, stating that it “faithfully relates the novel’s shocking events while retaining its controlled style” (Rapold).

In another interview, Jacobs remarks that “the visual style is quite objective”. According to the director, he “kept the camera back, so that you see people in the landscape” (Jacobs). Therefore, the viewer “can make judgements on their behaviour and what they do” (Jacobs). It was deliberately chosen not to make “lots of close-ups and intercutting”, so that “the audience can make their own decisions [and] judgements of what’s happening, which the book does” (Jacobs).

Concerning the controversy of the novel and its adaptation, Jacobs states that the filmmakers’ “whole purpose was to be faithful to the intent of the novel”. Therefore, since controversy is in the novel, he thinks that “it’s in the movie as well” (Jacobs). He further hopes that “the audience will debate what’s in the film, and [...] take that with them when they leave the cinema” (Jacobs).

When asked the question which elements of the book he wanted to achieve, the director answers that he wanted to “get a believability” (Jacobs). He claims that this can be achieved by portraying “what happens realistically” and when “the performances are true and sincere” (Jacobs). The believability of “this scenario, that action, these people” was essential in the making of the film (Jacobs).

The screenwriter of the adaptation, Anna Maria Monticelli, also reveals her intentions in an interview (Siemienowicz):

It's such a beautiful book [...], a great book actually, and I didn't want to bastardise it. I didn't want to change it in any way that would reinterpret things. It has this biblical kind of proportion to it, and a language that's quite formal. I wanted to capture that.

In a filmed interview, she further states that she does not “believe in taking a great piece of work and bastardising it, and putting [her] own thoughts into it” (Monticelli). According to the writer, the novel is “very brave, it's real, and [she] hope[s] that the film has those elements” (Monticelli).

Concerning the relationship between the screenwriter and the director, Monticelli says

I trust him, and we're making the same film. There's never a moment where I think: “What's he doing with my script?” [...] I'm always just so amazed how he enriches it.

All these statements confirm the earlier claim that *Disgrace* is a very close adaptation of its reference novel. In the following chapters, both works are compared in close detail. Firstly, however, the socio-political situation in post-apartheid South Africa is analysed.

3. Post-apartheid South Africa

In order to discuss the story and characters of *Disgrace* in detail, a brief discussion of the reality of post-apartheid South Africa seems necessary. As recapitulated by Tantrigoda (2), after the end of apartheid in 1994, the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) [...] was established by an Act of Parliament for the purpose of investigating the crimes committed under the apartheid regime”. The Commission attempted to restore justice by “prioritizing reparations for ‘victims’ and granting amnesty to ‘perpetrators’” (Moon qtd. in Tantrigoda 2). According to Tantrigoda, “this model of forgiveness and reconciliation had serious limitations” (2). Attwell and Harlow argue that “[a]part from the cost of giving amnesty to torturers and assassins, the militant youth culture of the 1980s [...] left an uncomfortable legacy of seemingly apolitical crime and vigilantism” (qtd. in Tantrigoda 3). Furthermore, it is claimed that by “emphasizing individual acts of abuse, [the TRC] has

tended to obscure the systematically abusive social engineering that was apartheid” (Attwell and Harlow qtd. in Tantrigoda 3).

Derrida (qtd. in Tantrigoda 3) doubts that a “scene of forgiveness” is possible in post-apartheid South Africa considering “the absence of a shared language and the necessity of translation”. It seems problematic indeed when victims and perpetrators don’t share “an agreement on the meanings of words, their connotations, rhetoric, the aim of reference, etc.” (Derrida qtd. in Tantrigoda 3). This is also an issue in J.M. Coetzee’s writing. Tantrigoda claims that “speech/language that attempts to mediate and translate the reality of apartheid is held up to scrutiny as an inadequate instrument” (3). However, it is argued that the author of *Disgrace* “constantly draws attention to the inadequacies and limitations of language, particularly in his representations of the interactions between white and black characters” (Tantrigoda 3). For example, at one point in the novel David is more and more “convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa” (Coetzee 117). Here, he “recognizes the limits of English as a medium of self-expression for blacks” (Tantrigoda 6). This may also mirror the author’s view on the language. Tantrigoda argues that “[f]or Coetzee, English is already tainted as the oppressor’s tongue to provide a truthful representation of reality, undermining the possibility of justice and reconciliation” (6). Among other aspects, the issue of language as an inadequate instrument for translating the reality of post-apartheid South Africa will also be discussed in the following chapters.

4. Main characters in *Disgrace*

This section focuses on all the main characters in *Disgrace* apart from Lucy, who is analysed in detail in chapter 5. Here, the portrayals of David, Melanie, Petrus, Bev and Pollux in novel and film are analysed and compared.

4.1. David

At the beginning of the novel, David Lurie is described as a fifty-two year old, divorced professor at the “Cape Technical University, formerly Cape Town University College” (Coetzee 3). The first scene of the film shows actor John Malkovich’s iconic face looking out of a window through half-opened shutters.

Both film and novel start with one of David's regular visits to a prostitute called Soraya. In the first sentence of the book, "the problem of sex" is addressed (Coetzee 1), which already indicates the most prominent theme within the story. In both works, it becomes clear that David's growing affection for Soraya is not reciprocated. In the novel, however, the reader is under the impression that she feels "lucky [...] to have found him", as it is told from David's point of view (Coetzee 2). As she stops working for the agency that introduced them, he hires a private detective to find out her private address and phone number. When he calls her, she is perplexed by this harassment and commands him to "never phone [her] here again" (Coetzee 10). This part is left out in the film, but to the reader it already conveys a very clear image of David's inclination to cross the line in his sexual relationships with women. He does not appear to feel guilty for this violation of privacy, but envies "the husband he has never seen" (Coetzee 10).

It is stated in the novel that "barely a term passes when he does not fall for one or other of his charges" (Coetzee 12). After their first meeting, David "extracts Melanie Isaac's enrolment card and copies down her personal details" from the university's filing cabinet (Coetzee 18). This, again, is a clear violation of privacy, which becomes a recurring act in David's relationships with women. He takes Melanie out to dinner and has sex with her in his flat afterwards. He does not seem to care about her obvious discomfort and takes advantage of her lack of resistance. The next morning, he wakes up "in a state of profound wellbeing" (Coetzee 19), which shows his selfishness and lack of empathy. When he forces himself upon her a second time at her flat, it is described as "not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core" (Coetzee 25). Afterwards, he realises that it was "a huge mistake" and that Melanie is "trying to cleanse herself of it, of him" (Coetzee 25).

After Melanie misses the mid-term exam, a young man comes into David's office and threatens him about their affair. Later he finds his car vandalized. Melanie withdraws from his course, after which her father calls David with a request to convince her to resume her studies. This call, in which David does not dare to talk about the reason for her withdrawal, is left out in the film.

However, in both works the father soon finds out and confronts David in the university corridor. When talking about the affair with his ex-wife, David claims he is not sure about wanting to return to university and thinks about taking some time off to visit his daughter.

At his hearing, David refuses to undergo counselling and pleads “guilty to both charges” (Disgrace). In the novel, his colleagues try to convince him several times to issue a public statement in order not to be dismissed. He remains stubborn and says he accepts any verdict, but does not want to sign an official apology. After this, he leaves Cape Town and visits his daughter Lucy.

When David meets Bev Shaw, a friend of Lucy, it is stated that he “does not like women who make no effort to be attractive” (Coetzee 72). Even though he realises that this is “a prejudice that has settled in his mind” which he “ought to chase [...] out”, he “does not care enough” to do so (Coetzee 72). Later on, he tries to convince Lucy to “not lose perspective” regarding her admiration for Bev’s voluntary animal refuge (Coetzee 75). He does not approve of people sacrificing their lives for animal welfare and thinks they just “feel guilty or fear retribution” (Coetzee 75). When David agrees to help Bev at the clinic at Lucy’s request, he says he will only do it “as long as [he doesn’t] have to become a better person” (Coetzee 77). Before the attack, he seems determined not to admit to any wrongdoings in his past.

During the attack on the farm, all David thinks about is Lucy and what the three intruders might do to her. If not earlier in the story, it becomes clear at this moment that, apart from himself, Lucy is the person David cares most about. When he is too weak to get out of the bath at Bev and Bill’s house later that day, he considers it an “ignominy” to call for help (Coetzee 103). He is too proud to show signs of weakness and failure, which also mirrors his behaviour after the affair with Melanie. Thus it also troubles him that Lucy talks to him “as if to a child [...] or an old man” after the attack (Coetzee 104). When he awakes at night from a bad dream and calls for her, she puts him back into bed like a mother or a nurse. In order to satisfy his need to take care of his traumatised daughter, he sits beside her bed and watches her sleep afterwards.

Poyner argues that through Lucy's rape, David is forced "to reassess his own relationship with women" (qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 163). This can be observed at his later visit to Melanie's family, where he asks their forgiveness. However, not all readers share this optimistic change of character in David. Hayes (qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 163) claims that "it is a mistake to look to David for any supposedly redeeming change of heart", and that he is "wrongheadedly entrenched in a certain discursive construction".

The day after the attack, David thinks about whether Lucy being a lesbian had something to do with the rape. "Raping a lesbian worse than raping a virgin", he suggests (Coetzee 105). The incident changes him, he feels "tired to the bone, without hopes, without desires, indifferent to the future" (Coetzee 107). In an argument with his daughter about her not reporting her rape to the police, David's thoughts on black criminals in post-apartheid South Africa become visible. He claims that "[v]engeance is like a fire [and] [t]he more it devours, the hungrier it gets" (Coetzee 112). Here, he suggests that something like 'corrective rape' will spread through black communities if it is not addressed openly and sentenced severely. The topic will be further discussed in chapter 6.

David is upset about Lucy's neighbour Petrus "bringing the [sheep] home to acquaint them with the people that are going to eat them" and says he doesn't "like the way he does things" (Disgrace). He realises that he didn't care about animals that way before the incident, his experiences with Bev and the discussions with his daughter. Lucy reminds him that "this is the country" and he should "wake up" (Disgrace). Here, she might also refer to her rape as if it was to be expected at some point.

David's project after leaving university, writing an opera on Byron's time in Italy, is not developing as he had hoped. As he continues assisting Bev at the clinic, the animals' fate encumbers him more and more. He decides to put the euthanized dogs' bodies into the incinerator himself, rather than leaving it to the workmen who normally take care of it. This, in his opinion, would "inflict [...] dishonour upon" the corpses, after one time the workmen "beat the bags with the backs of their shovels" before burning them (Coetzee 144). It is ironic

that after Petrus declared he is no longer the dog-man since the dogs were killed during the attack, David becomes a kind of dog-man, “a dog-undertaker” (Coetzee 146). This exchange of roles may be symbolic for a dystopic view on post-apartheid South Africa, where the black man becomes the master and makes the white man his slave. This is also what David fears might happen to his daughter. Rijdijk (15) claims that

one can see in David [...] an ‘inability to imagine a future for himself’, at least under the conditions in which he finds himself professionally (as a teacher), creatively (as a writer), psychologically (as a husband and father) and politically (as a white male).

When he leaves the farm for a while, David pays Melanie’s father a visit. As he is greeted by her younger sister Desiree, she reminds him of Melanie, which makes him realise his desire for her is still present. At the same time, he seems to be ashamed of his feelings towards her and her much younger sister. In the novel, David leaves the house again and visits their father at school. In the film, Mr. Isaacs is shocked to find his innocent young daughter sitting beside the man whom he despised since the day he found out about the scandal. Here, it does not take long before David finds the courage to apologise for the trouble he caused Melanie and her family. In the novel, however, Mr. Isaacs invites David to dinner after he plainly presented his side of the story without a hint of an apology. It seems as though David only wanted to silence his conscience by talking about the desire he felt for Melanie. He may have even thought that her father could understand his actions and simply forgive him for being honest, which seems absurd and “outrageous”, as he himself puts it (Disgrace). It is only after the uncomfortable dinner with Melanie’s mother and daughter that David realises he must apologise for his inappropriate and selfish behaviour. Before he leaves the Isaacs’ home, he gets on his knees before Mrs. Isaacs and young Desiree and “touches his forehead to the floor” as a sign of remorse (Coetzee 173).

In the novel, David meets his ex-wife Rosalind one more time after the incident, which is left out in the film. From her, he learns about Melanie’s play, which he attends shortly afterwards. Even after his sort of redemption at her family home, he thinks about the possibility of getting back together with her.

This shows his inability to learn from his mistakes, or even more so, to accept the scandal as a mistake. As he drives away from the theatre, he picks up a young prostitute, remembering that “this is all it takes” for him to feel satisfied (Coetzee 194).

After learning about Lucy’s pregnancy, David moves into a room in Grahamstown. However, it is stated that “[t]he clinic, more than the boarding-house, becomes his home” (Coetzee 211). He plans to lead this life “[u]ntil the child is born” (Coetzee 212). He works on the opera, it “consumes him night and day”, but at the same time admits that “*Byron in Italy* is going nowhere” (Coetzee 214). In the end, he chooses to give up a dog he has grown fond of at the clinic.

4.2. Melanie

In the novel, Melanie Isaacs is introduced as “clever enough, but unengaged”, “small and thin [with] large, dark eyes”. She is portrayed by young actress Antoinette Engel, who gave her film debut in *Disgrace*. Engel fits the description of Melanie rather well, although she does not appear small. David first approaches her on campus. In the film, the element of her falling down is added as a reason for his contact, whereas he just starts talking to her in the book. She seems careful but also intrigued by the invitation to his flat. Her visit proves much shorter in the film than in the novel, where they share dinner and several drinks. In both works, it becomes clear that she is not interested in meeting him again.

When David takes her out to dinner nonetheless, Melanie has no appetite and seems sad and quiet. He reassures her that he “won’t let it go too far” (*Disgrace*). In the film, she appears trapped beneath him as they have sex, like an animal that has been hunted down and stopped fighting. She just lies on her back and seems to bear it rather than enjoy it in any way. Her eyes are closed and she appears completely passive, as if she was paralysed or sleeping. Her feet shake to his movements as if she were unconscious. Here, it appears closer to rape than in the novel. However, this may also be due to the fact that David does not see it as such, since he “finds the act [...] so pleasurable that from its climax he tumbles into blank oblivion” (Coetzee 19).

In the novel, she “frees herself, gathers her things [and] leaves the room” afterwards (Coetzee 19), which is omitted in the film.

In the following scene, he sees her standing outside the university, waiting while it’s raining. As he touches her, she seems a bit shocked and maybe even frightened. She does not resist as he offers to drive her home. In the car, she appears quiet and uncertain of what to do. When he asks her if she is alright, she just nods slowly. She avoids his questions, making excuses in order not to have to meet him again.

A while later, he rings her doorbell and invades her home as she opens. She seems blindsided and a bit disgusted as he starts kissing her. She tries to stop it and tells him “not now”, but he ignores her and forces himself upon her (Disgrace). She undresses and sits down at the bed where he lies naked. She appears unhappy, but after a few seconds lies down and lets him have her. In the film, this is their last private meeting before his hearing. In the novel, however, Melanie appears on David’s doorstep a week later and asks him if she can “sleep here tonight” (Coetzee 26). She stays with him for two nights and they have sex once again. This time, she does not appear as passive as before and talks to him casually afterwards. In the film, Melanie is portrayed more as a victim than in the novel, since there is no scene where she seems to enjoy their time together. In that sense, the film makes David appear guiltier of abusing his power than the novel.

After that, Melanie attends the lecture accompanied by the young man who already threatened David about their affair. In the film, the man grins and seems to sneer at him, while Melanie appears uncomfortable and ashamed. David then invites Melanie into his office, which makes her even more uncomfortable. He tells the young man to wait outside while he talks to Melanie. She appears fed up as she sits down. He tells her to take the test she missed and stop her friend from appearing in class. She reacts desperate and angry. After he tells her the date for the exam, she storms out.

The next time David sees Melanie is at her play in the theatre, where he is again hassled by Ryan, the young man, and walks out. She does not seem to observe any of this and plays her role rather well compared to what David

saw in the rehearsal. After Ryan tells David that “Melanie will spit in [his] eyes when she sees [him] again” and he should “stick with [his] own kind” (Disgrace), he does not see her again.

4.3. Petrus

At his first meeting with David, Petrus describes himself as “the dog-man” (Disgrace). Lucy says he is co-proprietor and “quite a fellow” (Coetzee 62). David describes him as having a “lined, weathered face” and “shrewd eyes” (Coetzee 64). In the film, he does not seem too pleased with the relationship between Petrus and his daughter. In the novel, however, he tells Lucy that “Petrus seems a good man” (Coetzee 64). Convincingly portrayed by Eriq Ebouaney, Petrus appears kind and friendly.

David is disturbed by Petrus’ intrusive behaviour. One afternoon, he awakes to Petrus watching soccer beside him on the sofa, drinking beer and talking loudly to the TV. Here, the difference between the behavioural norms of the two men becomes visible. Petrus does not appear unfriendly or disrespectful, but David disapproves of his intrusion into Lucy’s home. Even though Lucy says they “have an understanding” (Disgrace), David worries about his daughter. One reason for this might very well be that David is still heavily influenced by apartheid and does not manage to trust black, uneducated people like Petrus. When Lucy suggests to David that he should help Petrus, he seems to find the idea absurd at first, especially in the film.

When Petrus comes back after the incident with a load of building materials, he does not come by to see how Lucy and David are doing. This seems strange, since he later states to David that he heard about what happened. It can be speculated that Petrus expected them not to return, and he might even be disappointed that they did. In any case, he does not show too much compassion in his conversation with David, stating it was “a very bad thing [...] but [they] are all right now” (Coetzee 114). Instead of asking about Lucy’s condition, he wants to know if she will go to the market the next day. In the film, he does so rather harshly and without showing sympathy for her. This upsets David deeply, but Lucy does not seem to bother and just smiles when David tells her. Condescendingly, he says “like peasants everywhere – honest

toil and honest cunning” (Disgrace). In the novel, this statement is woven into a rather positive passage about Petrus. In the film, however, David seems to feel nothing but repulsion towards him, especially after the attack. He even wants to interfere with Petrus’ farming. When David asks if he could move his sheep somewhere they could graze, Petrus invites him to a party the animals will be slaughtered for.

When David and Petrus are at the market together, which is omitted in the film, Petrus does all the work. David thinks about this being “like the old days [...] [e]xcept that he does not presume to give Petrus orders” (Coetzee 116). He further suggests that it “is hard to say what Petrus is, strictly speaking” (Coetzee 116). It is also hard to say whether this just represents David’s difficulty to adapt to post-apartheid. It might be hard for both black and white South Africans to find their roles in society. Maybe even Petrus himself finds it difficult to define what he is. However, it might be suggested that people like him have a rather clear vision about what they don’t want to be, considering their discriminatory treatment in the past.

Despite his anger at Petrus’ lack of compassion, David claims that he “is even prepared, however guardedly, to like him” (Coetzee 117). He further suggests that Petrus’ story should not be “reduced to English” (Coetzee 117). In other words, David realises that he cannot really understand Petrus and his actions because he does not know his language or his past. This might also be true for the author himself, J.M. Coetzee, and the audience of *Disgrace*. Reading and watching it as a Middle European student of English, for example, I can hardly imagine what Petrus must have gone through growing up during apartheid.

When they meet at Petrus’ party, he exclaims “[n]o more dogs” and that he is “not any more the dog-man” (Coetzee 129). Lucy takes this as a joke, but it does seem a bit suspicious that he appears to be glad about what happened to the dogs. When Petrus describes Lucy as their benefactor, David contemplates on the ambiguous meaning of the word. This, again, leads him to think about the language barrier between Petrus and himself. He claims that “[b]y the time the big words come back reconstructed, purified, fit to be trusted once more, he will be long dead” (Coetzee 129). In the novel, Petrus

and his wife “are spending a lot of time with [David], making him feel at home” at their party (Coetzee 131). In the film, they seem eager to get away from him and he sits alone while Lucy mingles with the other guests.

As David helps Petrus laying new pipes during a day after the party, the latter calls Lucy “forward-looking, not backward-looking”, just like in the novel (*Disgrace*). When David asks him about the boy, Petrus tells him that he is innocent and too young to be convicted. In contrast to his daughter, however, David does not want to let go of the past and tries to convince Petrus to give up the name of the boy. Petrus stays calm and friendly while telling him firmly that everything is alright and David should not be worried because he, Petrus, will protect Lucy from now on. In the novel, Petrus’ reaction is a bit more impatient and harsh than in the novel.

Bev Shaw defends Petrus after David shares his suspicions towards him. She claims that Petrus “slaved to get the market garden going for Lucy” and that “she owes him a lot” (Coetzee 140). David replies that Petrus is “itching for Lucy to pull out” (Coetzee 140). When he asks Petrus whether he could look after Lucy’s farm if they went away for a while, he replies “it is too much” and shakes his head (Coetzee 153). David states that “he detests him”, even though he once thought “he might become friends with Petrus” (Coetzee 152).

Eric Ebouaney states that his character “doesn’t want trouble” and wants to “have a peaceful and quiet life”. Furthermore, he claims that Petrus wants to “look forward and stop looking backward” (Ebouaney). However, the actor does not consider Petrus’ alleged involvement in the attack or the questionable proposal of Lucy marrying the youngest of her attackers, Pollux. He seems to completely agree with his character’s opinions, which may be a reason for his convincing portrayal of Petrus. He further describes learning Petrus’ accent as the biggest challenge while working on the film (Ebouaney). Ebouaney also states that he sees the farm as a metaphor for South Africa. According to him, Lucy keeping her rapist’s baby and marrying Petrus is exemplary for “what’s gonna happen to this country” (Ebouaney).

Even though I agree with his statement that the South African people must “learn how to live together” (Ebouaney), the problematic aspect of ‘corrective

rape' should be addressed when talking about what happened to Lucy. This will be further discussed in chapter six. When Ebouaney states that people should stop looking backward because "it is finished now", he seems to summarise the guidelines of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. However, the point Coetzee made with *Disgrace* is that it is not finished yet. The South African people evidently cannot just forget about the past and act as if apartheid never happened. The country is still torn, and the problems of the present are heavily influenced by the past. It seems necessary for these problems to be addressed openly in order to be solved one day.

4.4. Bev

In the novel, Lucy introduces Bev Shaw to David at the market, whereas in the film he meets her at her home for the first time. She is described as "a dumpy, bustling little woman with black freckles, close-cropped, wiry hair, and no neck" (Coetzee 72). Fiona Press, the actress portraying Bev, fits the description of the novel rather well. She gives Lucy a long, warm hug when they first meet in the film. Press delivers a down-to-earth and heart-warmingly friendly performance of her character. As Lucy states proudly in the film, Bev "runs an animal clinic all voluntary" (*Disgrace*). The house she owns with her husband Bill is "just as [David] had imagined it would be: rubbishy furniture, [...] the cheeping of birds in cages, cats everywhere underfoot" (Coetzee 72-73). After their visit, Lucy confronts David by claiming he doesn't "approve of friends like Bev and Bill Shaw because they are not going to lead [her] to a higher life" (Coetzee 74). She says she tries to follow Bev's example of sharing "some of our human privilege with the beasts" (Coetzee 74).

Lucy claims that David underestimates Bev and she "is a more interesting person" than he thinks (Coetzee 79). David promises that he will help Bev but states that Bev is "a silly name to go by" and "reminds [him] of cattle" (Coetzee 79). Once again, with remarks like that, David exposes his feelings of superiority towards his daughter's friends and associates. However, when he assists Bev at the clinic for the first time, he cannot help but feel something towards her, although he claims "[i]nteresting is not the word" (Coetzee 84). When David asks her if she does not mind putting the dogs down, she replies

“I mind deeply” and “I wouldn’t want someone doing it for me who didn’t mind” (Coetzee 85). Here, it becomes clear that Bev cares about the animals with all her heart and seems to place their well being in front of her own.

One Sunday evening, after they finished work at the clinic, Bev and David talk about his affair and his “women friends” (Coetzee 147). At one point, he “reaches out and runs a finger over her lips”, which she seems to enjoy (Coetzee 148). In the film, she withdraws from this intimate situation, whereas he is the one who walks away in the novel. In both works, however, it is Bev who invites David to the closed clinic the next day, where they have sex. In the novel, he suggests that “she has not been down this road before” and she might think “that he makes love to many women” since “there is scandal attached to his name” (Coetzee 149).

As they lie naked on the floor of the clinic again one day, Bev suggests that David should “give [Lucy] some room” and “go back to Cape Town for a while” (Disgrace). Once more, she shows her gentle spirit by telling him that “everything will be alright” in a soft but confident voice (Disgrace).

After David has learned about Lucy’s pregnancy and left the farm, he visits the clinic and offers Bev to help out again. She tries to comfort him by stating that as long as Petrus is at the farm, Pollux won’t bother Lucy.

5. Lucy in *Disgrace*

5.1. In the novel

Before analysing the character of Lucy in the novel, it is important to make mention of the fact that the whole story is told through her father David’s perception. According to Marais, “the novel denies the reader direct access to Lucy” (qtd. in Harvey 43). Therefore, contrary to the film, no objective judgement on Lucy’s character can be made.

5.1.1. An independent daughter

Beyad and Keramatfar claim that “after having to leave Cape [Town] University as the result of the affair [...], [David] is filled with the existential need to re-relate himself to others [and to] establish some new sadistic ties”

(*Apartheid* 1511). According to Fromm, he becomes a “benevolent sadist” by seeking to establish a “benevolent domination which [...] masquerades as ‘love’” (*Man* qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1511). In this case, however, Lucy had already gone through the “process of individuation” (Fromm, *Fear* qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1511) by establishing a life away from her parents. Therefore, David “found out that extending his power over his daughter was next to impossible” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1511).

As the reader of *Disgrace* meets Lucy through David’s eyes, not much is revealed about her character. David does not recognise her at first since “she has put on weight” (Coetzee 59). She comes to greet him “[c]omfortably barefoot” and “embracing him”, which reminds David “[w]hat a nice girl” she is (Coetzee 59). Lucy was a member of a commune when she moved in. When it broke up, she stayed behind with her friend Helen. David helped her buy it since she “had fallen in love with the place” (Coetzee 60). She wears a flowered dress and the house smells of baking, which prompts David to think of her as “no longer a child playing at farming but a solid countrywoman” (Coetzee 60). When he finds out that her former partner Helen left her, he is concerned about Lucy being alone on the farm. She assures him that she feels safe with her dogs and a rifle, and David approves of her being an “armed philosopher” (Coetzee 60). According to Beyad and Keramatfar (*Subjection* 161), David wants Lucy to “return to primary ties” in order to feel powerful in his role as a father. Regarding Lucy’s doubly marginalized life “as a woman in a male-centered society and as a homosexual” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 161), it seems possible that she would seek comfort in her father’s company. This, however, turns out to be a wrong assumption as more of her character is revealed.

Barnard states that Lucy can be described as “generally leftist” according to “her refusal to play the role of boss to her servant, her gift of land to her black neighbour and her vegetarianism” (L. Barnard 27). Her former living in a commune further endorses this statement. When David talks about leaving behind some kind of legacy in life, she asks “why is it easier for a woman?” and “doesn’t being a father count?” (Coetzee 63). These utterances reveal

that she also has emancipated views on parenting and intends to challenge her father's conservative opinion on gender roles. As the reader comes to know her better, it seems highly unlikely that she would let her father regain control over her decisions. According to Beyad and Keramatfar (*Subjection* 164), Lucy is "well aware of post-apartheid conditions where a new order is in place" and "knows that [...] keeping [her] land stands between her and others". This "intensifies her sense of isolation as she cannot relate to the world around her" (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 164). I partly disagree with that statement, as Lucy does not seem completely isolated before the rape. She appears to relate rather well to the world around her as a farmer with her own land, a saleswoman with a good relationship to her customers, an employer to Petrus and a friend to people like Bev and Bill.

As Lucy and David talk about his resignation, she asks him "are you so perfect that you can't do with a little counselling" and tells him "it isn't heroic to be unbending" (Coetzee 66). She seems rather reproachful, and it becomes clear once more that she is not afraid to stand up to her father and tries to challenge his old-fashioned, backward-looking views.

When David has a rather emotional outburst about his dislike of animal-welfare people (Coetzee 73), Lucy strikes back and asks him if he thinks she ought to involve herself in more important things (Coetzee 74). He tries to deny this, but she seems confident in telling him that "there is no higher life" which her father apparently thinks she should strive for (Coetzee 74). She feels responsible for treating animals with dignity and tries to follow her friend Bev Shaw's example. He answers by stating that she should not lose perspective, and that humans are different from animals. She should not "feel guilty or fear retribution" for the way humans treat animals (Coetzee 74). She wants to answer at first, but then decides to end the argument and stays silent (Coetzee 74).

At this point, Lucy grows tired of arguing with her father about her way of life and her views on the world. Although she is a strong woman, David's obstinacy and lack of empathy gnaw away at her patience. Merkin (qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 160) describes the relationship of Lucy and her father as a "microcosm of domination". In this microcosm, David tries to

regain control over his daughter but fails to achieve it. Laing (qtd. In Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 162) further discusses this unhealthy father-daughter-relationship as David's need to leave his mark on Lucy turning into a sadistic principle. According to this theory, "to make a difference to the other is victory [and] to allow the other to make a difference to him is defeat" (Laing qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 162). Although I agree about there being a struggle for power between David and Lucy, however, I would argue that this is mostly because he cares for her safety. What is more, his doubts about her way of life turn out not to be unwarranted.

5.1.2. The horrific incident

Lucy convinces David to stay at her house for a while after he wanted to leave because "it's not working out" (Coetzee 76). She suggests that he should look after the dogs and help Petrus and Bev, which he does not find appealing. He says he doesn't want to be reformed, to which she replies

So you are determined to go on being bad. Mad, bad and dangerous to know. I promise, no one will ask you to change. (Coetzee 77)

This is one of many statements in which Lucy suggests that David is as reckless as any man. The phrase "mad, bad and dangerous to know" sounds as if she was talking to a child who wants to be like a character in an action movie. She appears to dislike a lot about her father and his way of life, but tries to challenge his views by provoking him repeatedly. This indicates that she does not want to give up on him.

As they go for a walk together, David tells Lucy about a male dog being conditioned to punish itself whenever a bitch walked by and it got aroused. He states that the dog had "begun to hate its own nature" and "at that point it would have been better to shoot it" (Coetzee 90). She replies "or to have it fixed" which once again emphasises her belief that David should do something about the behaviour that forced him to leave his job. He, however, stands by his opinion, but further adds that he sometimes thought "desire is a burden we could well do without" (Coetzee 90). Lucy agrees with him on that point. The discussion leads up to the most crucial turning point within the novel. David talks about men – including himself – as if they had no control

over their actions and must follow natural instincts. It appears to be a blind excuse for his mistakes, while at the same time partially acquitting the men who are about to attack his daughter.

As they return to the house, two men and a boy await them. They find the dogs in an uproar, the boy threatening them in their cages. Lucy calls for Petrus, but there is no sign of him. She puts her two dogs back in their cage, and the other two men ask her to use the telephone because of an accident. When David realises there is something wrong, it is too late. He gets beaten up and burnt, Lucy gets raped and several valuable items are stolen. (Coetzee 92-97)

When Lucy opens the door of the lavatory where David was locked in, she wears a bathrobe, has wet hair and is barefoot. She does not look at him. He approaches her as she tends to a wounded but still breathing dog and asks what they did to her, when she looks him in the eyes for the first time, frowning. He tries to take her in his arms, but “she wriggles loose” (Coetzee 97). It becomes clear in this situation that Lucy is in shock and is not at all ready to make physical contact with a man, not even her father.

Afterwards, Lucy is in the bathroom and orders David not to come in. When he asks her if she is alright or has been hurt, she does not answer. As she comes out, her face is “clean and entirely blank”, her hair combed back (Coetzee 98). He holds back tears, but she does not seem to notice. In his thoughts, David compares women to cars and shoes as he thinks about the dangers of worthy possessions in South Africa. He claims that everything “must go into circulation, so that everyone can have a chance to be happy for a day” (Coetzee 98). He goes on to think that “[t]here must be some niche in the system for women and what happens to them” (Coetzee 98).

Lucy demands that David only talks about what happened to himself at the incident. When he tells her she is making a mistake, she disagrees. He hugs her, but she feels like “a stiff pole, yielding nothing” (Coetzee 99). It appears as if Lucy has lost the ability to relate to others or feel empathy after the attack.

On the way to the hospital in her neighbour's car, Lucy has her hands folded across her breasts. This may be interpreted as her need to protect her own body and a sign of insecurity, which was not at all part of her character before the incident. She tells David they go to the hospital for his sake, not for hers. Furthermore, she will go to the police alone since there is nothing she can't tell them, "or is there", she remarks (Coetzee 100). With this rather provocative question, Lucy confronts her father and shows him the certainty of her plans. Especially during this difficult time directly after the rape, she seems to realise how fragile and wounded she must appear through her father's eyes. It seems that she is eager to show her independence and self-confidence, which once again displays the strength of her character.

At the hospital, she fills out David's forms and sits him down, once more appearing strong and purposeful. She seems very determined in her actions, taking care of her father rather than the other way around. This is another example of Lucy having become an independent woman, which David still refuses to accept. When he asks her "what about yourself" she shrugs, showing no sign of trembling (Coetzee 101).

5.1.3. Dealing with trauma

The two of them spend the night at the Shaws, where David dreams about Lucy calling out "come to me, save me" (Coetzee 103). He wakes up and wants to speak to her, but she assures him that she wasn't calling him and he should go back to sleep. David thinks Lucy has spoken to him "as if to a child [...] or an old man" (Coetzee 103). He is irritated about his own daughter taking care of him, especially after what happened to her. Again, he dreams of her crying "save me", after which he goes to Lucy's room and sits beside her in a chair until she falls asleep (Coetzee 103).

In this situation, he appears to fulfil his need to re-relate himself to his daughter, as it was already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. However, the circumstances have changed drastically since David first came to Lucy after his dismissal. His feelings of guilt for the failure to defend his daughter from the rapists must have an enormous impact on their

relationship. He may see her as a helpless child, but he does not know how to help her, which makes him feel useless and insecure.

When David asks Lucy about going to the doctor, she tells him “I saw my GP last night” (Coetzee 105). He wants to know if “he [is] taking care of all eventualities”, suggesting the doctor is male (Coetzee 105). She is annoyed with his masculine language and replies “she, not he” (Coetzee 105). This statement, once again, reveals the drastic difference in character between father and daughter. Even more so, Lucy seems to have a clear image of her father’s conservative and obsolete views and reads them into every word he says. She states that she will go back to the farm and carry on, even though he claims that it’s not safe. “It was never safe, [...] I’m just going back”, she remarks and confronts him with a determined look on her face (Coetzee 105).

Back at the farm, Lucy tells two policemen what happened. She only talks about what the men took and that they assaulted her father. She lies about the time span of the incident, making it appear much shorter than it actually was, presumably in order to avoid questions about rape. She looks at David steadily while speaking, as though “daring him to contradict her” (Coetzee 108). Lucy seems determined to show her father just how certain she is about the decision not to talk about the rape. David has to realise that there is no chance of convincing his daughter to report her physical and mental abuse. The mess in the kitchen has been cleaned up, there is no overturned furniture and the bed in Lucy’s room is stripped bare. Even though the policemen are very likely to know what must have happened to her, both sides avoid any mention of sexual assault.

When her white neighbour says he will “send a boy”, Lucy does not react in anger as she usually does when disparaging remarks about black Africans are made (Coetzee 109). This shows her broken spirit and an inability to stand up for her beliefs with as much effort as before the traumatising incident.

When David asks Lucy repeatedly why she does not want to report the whole crime, she tells him that it has nothing to do with him, and what happened to her is a purely private matter. “In another time, in another place it might be held to

be a public matter” she claims (Coetzee 112). As she is referring to the current situation in South Africa, she brings forward her guilt about the suffering of black Africans in the past. David disagrees and warns her about the dangers of vengeance. He thinks she is trying to work out “some kind of private salvation”, but she tells him “you keep misreading me” (Coetzee 112). She then states that this was the last time she agreed to talk about the incident. Here, another major difference of opinions between Lucy and her father can be observed. While David seems to completely reject any responsibility for the actions of the apartheid regime, his daughter actively wants to take part in restoring the society of their disrupted nation. She tries to build a brighter future and is prepared to make sacrifices for it. According to Beyad and Keramatfar (*Subjection* 164), this can be explained by a “need to be related”. However, contrary to her father, she does not do so by exerting power over someone, but by accepting the rape as a result of the suffering of black Africans during apartheid. Tantrigoda concurs with this interpretation of Lucy’s character by stating that “[t]he body becomes a cipher for Coetzee’s white protagonists’ guilt, shame, and desire for expiation” (2).

5.1.4. Returning to daily routines

David tells Lucy about Petrus’ return and wants to talk about the suspicious timing of his absence. She does not seem to share these suspicions. Back on the farm, Lucy keeps to herself and spends hours in bed reading old magazines or staring into space, while David takes care of the farm and her stall at the market. He believes her disgrace is the reason she doesn’t want to go there. In his mind, the attackers have achieved their mission to show her “what a woman was for” (Coetzee 115). Lucy’s condition does not get better, even after a while. She stays up all night and often refuses to eat. According to Tantrigoda (11), “Lucy embodies the vision of the TRC in denying the punitive force of law in favour of a reconciliatory outcome.” However, in “favouring [...] a private, individualized solution”, she “rejects the public, truth-seeking model of the TRC” (Tantrigoda 11). It seems that Lucy decides to not only sacrifice her physical but also her mental well being in order to ensure a brighter future for the racially diverse society she lives in.

David remains conspicuous about Petrus' involvement in the incident and seems disturbed about Lucy's sympathy towards him. When he asks her if she is hiding something she might have picked up "from those men" (Coetzee 124), she teases him by asking "which men" (Coetzee 125). This is the first time Lucy makes an ironic statement about the rape, which might indicate her starting to get better. On the other hand, it may be her way of telling David that she is done talking to him on the matter. She then claims that she has done "everything one can reasonably do" after the incident and that now she can only wait (Coetzee 125).

5.1.5. An unexpected meeting

When Lucy and David go to Petrus' party, Lucy is wearing a knee-long dress. This can be interpreted as another sign of her coming to terms with the abuse and regaining self-confidence. Petrus tells them he hopes his wife has a boy, because girls are very expensive. He then states that Lucy is different and she is almost as good as a boy. Lucy smiles, but is embarrassed and goes dancing, where she is soon joined by a young man. (Coetzee 130) It can be assumed that she would react differently if her father made statements like these, but she seems to tolerate Petrus' un-emancipated remarks. This may be due to their different type of relationship, but also because of his status as a black, uneducated man. It might be suggested that Lucy feels guilty for being born into a white family of higher social class and tries to redeem herself by living a simple life and connecting with people like Petrus and his family.

After having discovered that the boy involved in the incident is at Petrus' party, Lucy forbids David to call the police in order to spare Petrus the hassle on this important day. (Coetzee 133) In this situation, the difficulty of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's plans for post-apartheid South Africa becomes visible. While Lucy seems almost ready to forgive one of her rapists and does not want to talk to him, David becomes furious and wants him to admit his crime. Tantrigoda (5) suggests that in this

inversion of the TRC model, [David] Lurie's demand from the black teenager to acknowledge his crime does not produce an admission of

guilt of a resolution, but rather fuels their anger and hatred for one another.

David tries to convince her that Petrus is with the attackers and all but innocent. Lucy replies angrily by telling him it is her life and she wants to deal with it in her own way. David tells her that if she's not acting, they might as well cut their own throats. (Coetzee 133) Even though Lucy is shocked after seeing the boy, she stays true to her beliefs and wants to cope with it on her own. According to Tantrigoda (5), her reaction could be

a result of the historical violence inherent in the discourse on rape – the narratives of “black peril” in South Africa that insist on the danger posed by black male sexuality for white women.

A few days later, David urges Lucy to consider moving away from the farm and talking to him about her feelings, but she says she can't and fights back tears. (Coetzee 155) On the same day, however, she suddenly starts talking to him about the incident. She tells him that “it was done with such personal hatred”, and that she does not understand why they seemed to hate her so much, as she had never set eyes on them before (Coetzee 156). David tries to comfort her and says “it was history speaking through them” and that “it may have seemed personal, but it wasn't” (Coetzee 156). She says that the shock doesn't go away, and that she is still afraid they might come back. (Coetzee 156) At this point, Lucy finally admits to her father that she doesn't feel safe at the farm. Still, she does not want to leave.

David offers to give her money to take a break and go away for a while, but she declines. She claims she won't come back if she moves away, and that she wants to decide on her own, without being judged. She insists that he does not and cannot understand what happened to her. Trying to prove her wrong, he talks about her being raped by three men for the first time. He confesses his guilt of not having saved her. She says it is not his fault and shares her thoughts about having been marked by the men, being in their territory. Describing the rapists, Lucy states that she “meant nothing to them” (Coetzee 158). Furthermore, she emphasises that “they *do* rape”, making them “rapists first and foremost”, and “stealing is just incidental” (Coetzee 158).

Moreover, Lucy wonders if the attackers see themselves as debt collectors, and that she simply has to pay if she wants to stay. She states that “when it comes to men and sex”, nothing surprises her any more (Coetzee 158). She then asks David directly if he has similar feelings when he has sex. She compares sex to killing and “getting away with murder” (Coetzee 158). Taken out of context, this seems a rather harsh comparison. Nevertheless, since David was accused of sexual misconduct and Lucy experienced this extreme form of physical abuse, it is understandable that she confronts her father with such a statement.

He asks her more detailed questions, and she says the men spurred each other on “like dogs in a pack” (Coetzee 159). She further suggests that the young boy was there to learn from them. David claims “they want you for their slave”, but Lucy disagrees and says it was more like “subjection [and] subjugation” (Coetzee 159). He tells her once again that she has to move away, but she refuses. (Coetzee 159) In a letter, Lucy tells her father that he is not the guide she needs at this time. (Coetzee 161) However, Beyad and Keramatfar claim that “by stating that she needs a ‘guide’, Lucy [already] reveals her willingness [...] to submit herself to Petrus in exchange for protection” (*Subjection* 161).

5.1.6. The pregnancy

David moves away and stays in contact with Lucy over the telephone. She says everything is fine and he pretends to believe her. He asks Bev about Lucy, who says “there have been developments”, but she cannot tell him more (Coetzee 196). When he visits Lucy a while later, she tells him she is pregnant from the incident. In the erupting argument, Lucy once again stands up to her father and tells him “I have a life of my own, just as important to me as yours is to you, and in my life I am the one who makes the decisions” (Coetzee 197).

Against her father’s wish, Lucy says she won’t have an abortion again. She claims a child is not responsible for who their father is. (Coetzee 198) David says he will stand by her no matter what and goes for a walk. He thinks about her having had an abortion already, which he did not know. Not telling her

father about an abortion makes visible David and Lucy's rather distant father-daughter-relationship before the incident. Lucy's decision to keep the baby may be interpreted as "more than attempting to expiate for the crimes of the past" (Tantrigoda 12). According to Tantrigoda, "she is striving to create conditions of possibility to safeguard her own future in South Africa" by "nurturing the child of a black man in her own body" (12). While this seems a strangely practical reason to have a baby, it shows Lucy's determination to remain at her beloved farm.

David settles into Lucy's old room which she still avoids. She tells him the boy is back. His name is Pollux and he is the brother of Petrus' wife, so Petrus has family obligations towards him. She suspects there is something wrong with the boy and warns David not to confront him. David says her situation has become sinister, she has to move away since the troubled boy might be the father of her unborn child.

When David confronts Petrus, he says that the boy might one day marry Lucy. David is outraged, but Petrus states he will marry Lucy for her protection. He then tells David to ask his daughter to marry him. Lucy is not at all surprised by this proposal and they argue about whether she should accept his offer. She claims it is a deal worth considering, because he offers her protection while becoming owner of the farm. In this passage, it becomes clear that Petrus and David don't really understand each other. Tantrigoda (3) claims that even though

these characters share the same language, they seem to hold distinct worldviews and idioms mediated by their differential experiential realities and modes of being in a country bifurcated by apartheid.

However, as suggested before, they do not really even share the same language. Petrus talks to David in his simpler version of English in order for them to understand each other. Nevertheless, he uses phrases and words that at times seem inappropriate to David, since he translates them from his native tongue. So, even as they talk to each other, they appear to speak different languages.

David tells Lucy she cannot be marrying Petrus if she's not interested in him personally. She, in contrast, orders David to make Petrus an offer. He will get

the land and she becomes a tenant, but she keeps the house and no one can get in without permission, including Petrus. Also, he is to protect her child. When David tries to convince her once again to move away, she tells him that she is prepared to start again from scratch. “Like a dog”, he says, to which she agrees (Coetzee 205).

Taking into account Lucy’s views on heterosexual relationships and men being prone to violence against women, her actions may seem even more irrational to the reader. Barnard states that “her decisions not to report the rape, to keep the baby and to submit to being the third wife of Petrus, are [...] disturbing and against character” (L. Barnard 27). However, it may be argued that her views changed after the incident, as she tells David “I am a dead person and I do not know yet what will bring me back to life” (Coetzee 161). This change in personality can be described as “dissociation”, where “the personhood of the rape victim [is] so damaged that what she was before, is not what she is now” (Bal qtd in L. Barnard 27). Furthermore, being aware of her position as a white woman in post-apartheid South Africa may lead Lucy to believe that this is her only choice to fit into this still disrupted society. Tantrigoda (6) argues that in Lucy’s choices, Coetzee captures “the complex and dark realities of the historical legacy of apartheid impinging on post-apartheid South Africa”, which the TRC apparently chose to ignore. The author “indicates moments of rupture and ambiguity in attempts at truth and reconciliation” and “reveals the possibility of reconciliation through an alternative discourse situated in the body” (Tantrigoda 6).

5.1.7. Struggling father and daughter

One day, David catches Pollux peering in through the bathroom window at Lucy. David attacks him and calls him a “filthy swine” (Coetzee 206). Lucy comes to the scene and pushes the dog away from the boy, who shouts “I will kill you” (Coetzee 207). She tries to comfort him and tells him to come wash the wounds, but Pollux is hysterical. He runs away and shouts “we will kill you all” while trampling the potato bed (Coetzee 207).

Lucy tells David that she cannot cope with Petrus and his people if he continues to intervene. They argue over the boy, and she says “I am prepared

to do anything, make any sacrifice, for the sake of peace” (Coetzee 208). At this, David decides to leave again. With that strong statement, Lucy’s position becomes unmistakeably clear. Contrary to her father, she wants to devote herself to reuniting the divided society of her country in her own way. She intends to sacrifice her physical and mental well being for a cause she believes in, which her father cannot relate to at all.

As they meet again, David tries to encourage Lucy by suggesting that things might get better once she has had the baby. She is certain that she will grow to love the child even though she doesn’t yet. (Coetzee 216) When David visits her at the farm another day, Lucy invites him in for tea, which he takes as a good sign and “a new start” (Coetzee 218).

5.2. In the film

Contrary to the novel, the viewer of the film gets to see Lucy not only through David’s eyes. Therefore, it can be claimed that a more objective analysis of her character is possible in the film.

5.2.1. Introducing Lucy

The film starts with David talking about Lucy to Soraya, a prostitute. She asks him if Lucy is “still living with a woman”, to which he replies “yes, still a lesbian, still on the farm” (Disgrace). He goes on to say “she thinks it’s safe there”, and Soraya answers “nowhere is safe” (Disgrace).

In the scenes leading up to the viewer’s first encounter with Lucy, the “Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves” of Giuseppe Verdi’s opera “Nabucco” creates a dramatic atmosphere (IMDb). After David’s hearing, he decides to go away and visit his daughter. He neatly packs a suitcase with clothes and notes of the music he composes. When he is shown driving through the countryside, the music gets louder and more dramatic. The vast landscape of barren valleys and steep, rocky hills creates a rather harsh and bleak atmosphere. It seems as though Lucy’s farm is located in the middle of nowhere, far away from the rest of civilisation. The house looks rather small compared to its description in the novel. Coetzee describes it as “large, dark, and, even at midday, chilly, dat[ing] from the time of large families, of guests by the

wagonful" (60). In the film, it is brightly coloured and appears to be a single-family home. However, there is also no mention of a commune having lived there in the film, for which it might be too small.

In Lucy's first scene, she comes to the door looking rather suspicious about the arriving car. Her expression conveys a feeling of unease, giving the viewer a hint of the dangerous situation she put herself into by living alone in the countryside. When she realises it is her father, she puts on a smile but does not appear to be over the moon about his arrival. As David tells her that he forgot how far away she lived, Lucy greets him with the words "you are here now, nice and safe" (Disgrace). Regarding the upcoming events on the farm, this seems like an almost sarcastic and rather ridiculous statement. However, it could also be an indication for Lucy's naivety and her determination to accept the risks her way of life entails.

Lucy seems strong and confident as they talk about her living alone on the farm. She claims to be fine with her female companion having left a while ago. David is concerned about her safety, but she assures him that she is not afraid in the house. Just as in the novel, she tells her father "if there's a break-in, I don't see why two people are better than one" (Disgrace). This shows that she is not as naïve as one might initially believe. When he tells her that he wants to write an opera, Lucy does not reply. The novel's discussion on parenting at this point is omitted in the film.

When they hear Petrus come into the house, David is alarmed at once. It appears as though he expected a break-in from the moment he stepped on his daughter's porch. Lucy seems happy to see Petrus and brings him a spray he asked for. As David tells Petrus about his concerns for Lucy, he answers "yes, everything dangerous today. But here, it is alright, I think" (Disgrace). This is, as many other conversations, taken directly from the novel. Lucy tells David that she lets Petrus live in the stables and he is also co-proprietor, which David does not seem too happy about. However, her positive attitude appears to uplift his spirit as she invites him for a tour on the farm.

As they briefly talk about his resignation from university, Lucy does not ask David about the details of his affair and they change the subject quickly. In

contrast to her reaction in the book, she does not seem cynical or reproachful at all, but rather compassionate about him helping out on the farm. In the morning, they harvest flowers and vegetables together. At the market, Lucy sells flowers and talks to a black woman in a different language, possibly Xhosa. She seems to enjoy working there and has a friendly relationship with her customers.

As they talk about his relationships with women, Lucy tells David he should get married again. She seems disturbed by her father quoting William Blake: "Sooner murder an infant in the cradle than nurse un-acted desires" (Disgrace). When Lucy asks him rather aggressively why he mentioned this to her, he calms her down by saying "every woman I've been close to has taught me something about myself - to that extend, they have made me a better person" (Disgrace). In the novel, Lucy makes a snappy remark at this statement, which is left out in the film. She just carries on working and smiles at him softly. This reaction makes her appear more indifferent towards her father's views than it does in the novel.

In the car, Lucy tells David about Bev. She seems to admire her and calls her "one of my best friends" (Disgrace). As David seems uncomfortable with Bev's husband Bill inviting him to sit down in their kitchen, Lucy jumps in and tells him they don't have much time. She appears to know her father very well and does not want him to feel uneasy. She smiles understandingly at him as he looks at her. It seems as if she wants to tell him that she likes this way of life, but does not expect him to agree with her. The novel's conversation about animal rights, her friends and guilt is left out at this point in the film.

5.2.2. Life on the farm

David confronts Lucy with Petrus' intrusive behaviour after the latter disturbed his afternoon nap by watching TV, but she seems all right with it. She tells him he could help Petrus build his home, which seems like a silly idea to David. Furthermore, she says that he could help Bev at the clinic, which he also refuses at first. However, Lucy's positive words about Bev convince David to pay her a visit.

A while later, Lucy happily watches geese in the pond near the farm. She tells David she feels “lucky to be visited, the one chosen” (*Disgrace*). As he damps her enthusiasm by stating “animals are creatures of habit,” she just sighs (*Disgrace*). At this point, Lucy appears fed up with her father’s negativity and his seeming inability to enjoy life. The musical score underlying the conversation adds to the tense atmosphere. As they take a walk, David tells Lucy about a dog who was conditioned to punish himself for his desires. She questions his statements and asks if he thinks “males should be allowed to follow their instincts unchecked” (*Disgrace*). Once again, it becomes clear that, contrary to her father, she has very feminist views. Unlike in the novel, Lucy does not respond to David’s statement about desire as a “burden we could well do without” (*Disgrace*). The dramatic music and visual impressions of dry, harsh land create a rather uncomfortable mood, preparing the viewer for what is about to happen.

Back at the farm, Lucy confronts the three boys who stirred up her caged dogs. She calls for Petrus, who does not answer. She seems confident, but also worried. At first, she is not sure whether to believe their story of an accident as a reason to use her telephone. The barking dogs emphasise the possible threat of the situation. However, she then lets one of the boys into the house and leaves her troubled-looking father with the other two. Accompanied by beating drums, one of the attackers suddenly runs after her, pushes David to the ground and closes the door. David sets the dog on the third boy and pushes the door open, but is knocked unconscious once inside.

When he wakes up, he is hurt and locked in the lavatory. He looks outside and sees one of the boys coming at him with a gun. David fears for his life, but then hears and sees the intruders shooting the dogs. Smiling and laughing as if it all were just a funny game, the boys come back to pour liquid over him. Then, with a serious expression on his face, one of them sets him on fire. As the burning match flies through the air, the picture changes to slow-motion. This effect is rarely used in *Disgrace*, therefore causing an even greater effect. Simultaneously, a harsh African voice is singing or almost screaming in the background, followed by fast beating drums. Luckily, David can use the toilet water to extinguish the flames. A few moments after the car has pulled

away, Lucy opens the door to the toilet. She scuffles away without looking at her father, wearing a bathrobe. She pours herself some water and drinks it. They don't say a word to each other, both still in shock.

A few moments later, Lucy sits in the garden, stroking a wounded dog. As she turns around, her facial expression is empty and sad. Her eyes are red and her face is swollen. She is shocked by his burnt appearance, but her expression does not change. As he tries to hug her, she walks away. Supporting the traumatic atmosphere, strings are playing a delicate, sad melody in the background.

5.2.3. The aftermath

Lucy tells David the boys stole his car and smashed the phone. She requests each of them tell their story to the police, implying that she does not want to tell him exactly what happened. She still has the same vacant expression on her face and walks away to her neighbour fast and decisively. While in the novel he tells Lucy she is making a mistake, David seems too shocked to answer her in the film and watches her leave.

Lucy's neighbour Ettinger drives them to the city and talks about how she could have prevented the attack. She looks out the car window and does not seem to listen. She takes her father's hand as they walk into the hospital. It appears as though she is taking care of him, letting him sit down while she talks to the nurse. Lucy tells David to wait in line while she goes to the police. When he asks her if he should also talk to them, she argues that there is nothing she cannot tell them. She appears strong and purposeful.

In the night after the incident, Lucy attends to David as he wakes up and calls for her. She puts him back to bed and tells him to try sleeping. Afterwards, she lies in bed awake and her eyes look sore from crying. David comes in and sits beside her bed. They don't talk to each other even though both of them are awake.

Lucy lies in bed the following day, staring at the ceiling. Her eyes look tired and wet. When David asks her if the doctor took care of all eventualities, she first replies by correcting the doctor's gender. "She, she not he," Lucy tells

him, annoyed by the fact that he assumed the doctor was male (Disgrace). She seems angry with any of his remarks, making it clear to him that she wants to deal with her problems alone. When David tells her it's not a good idea to go back to the farm, she faces him and tells him that she is determined to do so. For the first time after the incident, her strength seems to come back. He tells her angrily that they are "not going back" (Disgrace), which is not mentioned in the novel.

When they come back to the house despite David's efforts not to return, Lucy goes to her room immediately and closes the door. The policemen, the telephone repairmen and the visit by Ettinger are omitted in the film. David buries the dogs and watches Petrus and his new wife return to the farm.

As David and Lucy are having dinner at the cleaned up farm, she appears to be in a better mood and even smiles shortly as she mentions Petrus' wife. When he wants to talk about the incident, she starts getting angry and asks if he would like to remind her of "what women undergo at the hands of men" (Disgrace). This seems to be the first time she openly criticises David for his actions towards women. Furthermore, she claims that what happened to her is a "private matter" (Disgrace). She then goes on to refer to South Africa as "this place being what it is" and walks away from him (Disgrace). On the following day, David suspiciously watches Petrus work and then looks compassionately over his daughter sleeping on a small bed in the storage room.

A while later, Lucy is in the house stroking her wounded dog. She appears to be happy by its side. When David comes in and tells her angrily about his first conversation with Petrus since his return, she just smiles. While reading a magazine and stroking her dog, Lucy asks David to be nice to Petrus and bring him a present at the party. She seems indifferent to David's suspicions and is eager to keep the peace between herself, David and Petrus.

David and Lucy go to Petrus' party together, holding hands. Their closeness symbolises a special bond as it appears they are prepared to be outsiders at the event. This seems to bring father and daughter closer together again. Their mutual support gives them strength and confidence. Lucy smiles as they

hand a present to Petrus' new wife, but her expression still conveys a kind of deep-rooted sadness.

After having danced rather happily for a while, Lucy comes running back to David, apparently shocked to her core. She tells him "they are here" and wants to leave at once in order not to disturb the party (Disgrace). David finds the youngest of the three attackers by the fireside and confronts him. At this, the happy South African music stops and the atmosphere changes immediately. Contrary to his smooth reaction in the novel, the boy appears startled and frightened at first. Then, however, he regains his confidence and denies David's accusations. Petrus, who reacts more calmly than described in the book, seems to believe him.

Lucy prevents David from calling the police so he does not "destroy the evening for Petrus" (Disgrace). When he confronts her again as to why she does not do more against the attackers, she starts shouting at him: "This is my life! I'm the one who has to live here! [...] You don't know what happened. [...] You don't begin to know" (Disgrace). Here, Lucy once again makes it clear to her father that she does not want to include him into her decisions. She is convinced that she wants to deal with the situation alone and walks into her room. David does not call the police but makes one more appearance at the party, showing the boy and Petrus' other guests that he is not afraid of them.

5.2.4. Drifting apart

Lucy lies on the sofa, not looking very healthy. She tells David that the police called and found his car. She does not appear as excited about the news as he is and looks troubled. However, his cheerfulness seems to lift her spirits and she comes with him. While David is at the police station, she rests on the steering wheel of her car. When he bangs on the window, she is startled and looks exhausted. As he talks to her and grabs her by the arm, she has a terrified and desperate look on her face. Then she tells him "I can't talk anymore, David, I just can't" and starts to cry (Disgrace).

While driving the car, David urges Lucy to lock up the farm, leave it with Petrus for a while and visit her mother. Still in tears, she says that if she goes

away, she won't come back. When he asks her if that would be such a bad thing, she states "some things you just don't understand" (Disgrace). When he talks about her being raped, she bursts into tears again. She tells him the attackers must have done it before, and that stealing is only a side-line for them. She thinks they have marked her and might come back, which urges David once more to tell her to leave. She says that they may see her as "owing something" and themselves as "debt collectors" (Disgrace). Clearly, she tries to understand what living in post-colonial South Africa can mean for young black men. She then goes on to talk about rape and suggests that "maybe hating a woman for a man makes sex more exciting" (Disgrace). She seems to address David directly when suggesting that raping must be a bit like killing. As she asks him "you're a man, you should know", he answers "perhaps, sometimes, for some men" (Disgrace).

After having left the farm for a while, David talks to Lucy on the phone and tells her to ring him anytime, and that he misses her. She just asks if he is all right and does not respond to his remarks. Later, he visits Lucy under the pretence that he wants to go to Durban. After he confesses that it was a lie and he just wanted to see if she was okay, she tells him that she is pregnant, which shocks him instantly. When asking her why she did not take care of it, she replies with conviction "I'm not having an abortion" (Disgrace). The fact that she already had an abortion which David knew nothing about is omitted in the film. She is in tears again, but does not seem as desperate as before. At his question why she wants to have a child from one of those men, she answers: "I'm a woman, David. Do you think I hate children? Must I choose against a child because of who the father is?" (Disgrace). He asks her again if her mind is made up, which she affirms in a slightly trembling and more quiet voice. He tells her that he will stand by her "no matter what" (Disgrace), and then goes outside to cry alone.

In the evening Lucy and David are having dinner. She tells him that one of the boys who attacked them, Pollux, is back with Petrus and helps him out. It turns out he is the brother of Petrus' wife. Lucy tells David she wants him to stay clear of Pollux, and that it is not in her power to order him off the

property. When David asks her if that is particularly because he may be the father of her unborn child, she starts crying again.

The following day, David confronts Petrus with lying to him about the boy. Petrus tells David that Pollux will one day marry Lucy, but he is still too young, so Petrus himself must marry her. As David indignantly confronts Lucy with this proposal, she defends the marriage and says it is an alliance between the two, not a church wedding. The deal she makes with Petrus allows him to use her land, while she gets protection from him by “creeping in under his wing” (Disgrace). She does not think Petrus wants to sleep with her, neither does she with him. In the novel, she appears less certain about Petrus’ intentions, stating that she is “not sure that Petrus would want to sleep with [her]” (Coetzee 203). When David says he will refuse Petrus’ offer on her behalf and starts walking away, she shouts “wait” in a very strong and confident voice (Disgrace). In the novel, she tries to convince him that this is a good decision, whereas in the film Lucy does not bother trying to explain. She orders him to tell Petrus that she accepts his protection. “If he wants me to be known as his wife, so be it. But then the child becomes his, too. Part of his family”, she demands (Disgrace). She says that she will sign the land over to him, but the house remains hers, and no one is to enter it without her permission, including Petrus. She also wants to keep the kennels. When David objects, she tells him in a very serious, convincing tone “I’m not leaving, David. Go and tell Petrus what I have said” (Disgrace). He tells her it is humiliating, to which she agrees indifferently.

Shortly afterwards, David sees Pollux watching Lucy take a shower through the bathroom window and attacks him together with a dog. The drums in the background sound the same as they did when the two other attackers entered the farm on the day of the incident. This suggests that now David takes over the role of the dangerous, angry man. He kicks the boy several times and shouts “animal, filthy swine” while the dog bites his leg. Lucy comes to Pollux’ rescue, calms the dog and shouts “David, stop it!” (Disgrace). She asks Pollux if he is all right, but the boy just pushes her arm away. She tells him to come and wash up, when her bathrobe opens and she stands naked in front of the boy and her father. The boy stops crying and looks at her stunningly. When

she realises this, she looks at her father and walks away, closing her robe. The boy then runs through her vegetable garden, kicking the lettuce and shouting “we will kill you!” (Disgrace). Lucy reproachfully tells David that “this can’t go on” (Disgrace). Even after what he did to her and despite David’s remarks that he should be in an institution, she defends Pollux and says he is only a disturbed child. “He is here, and he’s a fact of life”, she goes on to shout (Disgrace). She tells him that before he came to here, everything had settled down. “Then I better pack my bags”, he replies and walks away (Disgrace).

A while later, David watches Lucy at the market. She seems to enjoy selling her products to customers at her stall. He does not approach her and just walks away again, whereas in the novel he helps her at the stall and takes her out to lunch afterwards. Their conversation about whether she can love a child who is the product of such a traumatic incident is, unfortunately, also left out in the film.

When he visits her some time after that, he parks the car on a hill near the farm and climbs down by foot. Female voices sing a dramatic melody in the background, accompanied by a violin. This walk suggests a change in David’s relationship with Lucy. It appears as though he finally accepts the distance between them and tries to give his daughter more space. Moreover, walking through the countryside might signify David’s effort to connect with the rough land and further understand the harsh reality of South Africa.

As he arrives at the farm, Lucy is in advancing pregnancy and plants fresh lettuce in her garden. The earth looks fertile and damp. She looks a lot healthier compared to their last meeting. After exchanging a few words and looking at each other for a while, she asks him in for some tea. This seems like a peace offering, after which they both appear content. As they enter the house, the camera zooms out, showing more and more of the land surrounding the farm. Petrus’ house is finished and his wife hangs out the laundry. There is a fence between the two buildings. However, the female voice and strings in the background convey a feeling of heaviness and uncertainty rather than suggesting a happy ending. As the credits appear, the song David wrote for his opera is played.

5.3. Comparing portrayals

Beyad and Keramatfar claim that Lucy is “troubled by a deep sense of insecurity” and the “need to be related” (*Apartheid* 1514). This leads to the assumption that she has masochistic tendencies since she “cannot relate herself [to others] in a productive way” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1514). Even though she succeeded in refusing to be “lured back into a symbiotic relation with her father, she proved unable to establish a healthy, productive relation with Petrus” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1514). According to Beyad and Keramatfar, the fact that she submits herself to Petrus “indicates her desire for social existence in post-apartheid society” (*Apartheid* 1514). However, I strongly disagree with the authors’ statement that Lucy “achieves [her] own social adjustment only by taking pleasure in obedience and subordination” (Adorno qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1515). It seems to me that Lucy does what is necessary to survive as a female farm-owner in the South African countryside. She only accepts Petrus’ proposal under the condition that the house remains her property. However, she does not take pleasure in subordinating to a man. She simply appears to realise that this marriage might provide peace for her and her unborn child. Nevertheless, I can relate to the interpretation that

Lucy’s desire for social existence and her urge to satisfy her existential need of relating herself combined with social realities of South African society give rise to her masochism, resulting in ‘eventual exchange of positions between Lucy and Petrus’ (Graham qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1515)

In my opinion, selflessness is a more fitting interpretation of Lucy’s behaviour than masochism. As a matter of fact, I believe that a country torn apart by racism and violence might be in desperate need of characters like Lucy in order to heal.

Spivak claims that Lucy “makes visible the rational kernel of the institution of marriage-rape, social security, property, human continuity” (qtd in L. Barnard 26). This can be seen in Lucy’s relationship with Petrus, which, according to Lianne Barnard, “it is not difficult to read terrorism and protection into” (26). The author further claims that Lucy’s decision to marry Petrus can be compared to prostitution. It is argued that “she will submit to unwanted sex

because she needs [...] protection” (L. Barnard 27). I partly disagree with this statement, since Lucy demands that “no one enters [her] house without [her] permission” as part of her acceptance to Petrus’ proposal (Coetzee 204). However, in the novel, she remarks that Petrus may want to sleep with her “to drive home his message” (Coetzee 203). Ikas claims that Lucy’s decision to keep the baby, marry Petrus and assign her farmland to him can be explained by “abjection as well as [...] tactical spatial lesbian resilience in a South African scene” (1).

Barnard states that “Lucy is like Soraya, the prostitute, in accepting rape as part of the price of survival” (L. Barnard 28), which is an interesting comparison. I don’t fully agree with this statement, since Lucy is driven by a conviction that goes beyond her own survival. However hard it must be for a prostitute like Soraya to sacrifice her body to please white, older men like David, I cannot imagine that her intentions are as selfless and well-considered as those of Lucy. In my opinion, the latter chooses her path deliberately in order to repair the damage ‘her people’ caused. Furthermore, Lucy very probably does not enjoy sleeping with any men as a lesbian, which cannot be said about Soraya.

Nevertheless, it is worth considering that “white women stood as ‘signs’ of that which cannot be exchanged between men of different racial groups” in an “economy of exchange of black bodies” during apartheid (Driver qtd. in Tantrigoda 11). As Tantrigoda states, “this symbolic value attributed to white women and their bodies as sites that perpetuate racial purity and privilege is challenged and subverted” in *Disgrace* (11). It is argued that Lucy “regards [her rape] as a form of exchange – a price a female white settler has to pay for being able to live in rural South Africa” (Tantrigoda 12). I agree with this statement, as Lucy herself asks David why she should “be allowed to live her without paying” (Coetzee 158).

Certainly, the portrayal of Lucy in the film depends largely on the person playing her, South African actress Jessica Haines. According to screenwriter Anna Maria Monticelli, the casting of the actors was “a very important area” where she and director Steven Jacobs “got quite immersed in”. They wanted to “get people that suited the role and were believable in the role” (Monticelli).

Haines remembers the long process of casting as “probably one of the toughest auditions [she’s] ever been to”.

According to Rapold, “the 30-year-old Ms. Haines, who recalled reading ‘Disgrace’ when it first caused a stir, brings out a forbearing stubbornness in Lucy that subtly echoes that of her character’s father”. “When I first read it, I thought this woman was crazy,” Haines is quoted (Rapold). “You kind of want to shake her. But she’s very brave”, the actress stated in an interview (Rapold).

Haines describes her character as “extremely complex” and “her whole struggle [being] internal”. She goes on to say that “one thing [she] really wanted to get across is that it’s not about a country struggle – it’s about her own struggle” (Haines). Talking about the character’s personal features, she states that

she’s a wonderful person [and] her friends love her. She’s easy, she’s a farm-girl, she’s practical, down to earth [...], she’s quiet [and] she lives on her own in the middle of nowhere. (Haines)

When David comes to live with her, the actress claims that Lucy “finds it a bit invasive” (Haines). “She loves her father, but she’s very private [and] loves her own space”, Haines states, whereas “David has no idea how to fit” into Lucy’s world.

Jessica Haines further mentions that after the incident, Lucy’s “perfect world has [...] been tarnished, so she goes through this whole [...] metamorphosis and [...] takes on a lot of responsibility”. This changes her, but “what’s so interesting about her is the decision she makes” and that “she makes choices that are just so radical” (Haines). Haines thinks that Lucy “knows that it’s not gonna help and it’s not gonna make it any better” to report her rape and therefore she deals with it on her own. She also doesn’t “want [the film] to be a social statement” but “about people, about the mind, about hurdles that you get through and how you overcome them” (Haines).

Talking about the female protagonist, screenwriter Anna Maria Monticelli states that “there is an element of hope through Lucy, in the sense that she believes that [...] one day things will get better”. In an interview, she admires

Coetzee's prose by calling it "clear, unapologetic, honest" (Rapold). However, as quoted in Rapold, Monticelli "chose to open up the character of Lucy" by stating

I made a bit of a Joan of Arc in Jessica. I couldn't help but understand her position, and having had a child myself, I understood why she does what she does very well. I embellished her actions in a way that made her heroic.

In my opinion, Lucy's character is very similar in the film and the novel. In both works, she is portrayed as a brave woman that makes difficult choices and sticks to them. Often, these choices are hard to understand, especially for a young Austrian male student like the author of this thesis. Even though the crimes of the apartheid regime and the problems of post-apartheid society can be studied, it is unimaginable for me to grow up in a country as divided and violent as South Africa.

As briefly mentioned above, one of the main differences between novel and film is that the reader encounters Lucy through David's eyes, whereas the viewer gets to see her rather objectively. As a matter of course, most of David's thoughts and speculations about Lucy are omitted in the film. This might be one aspect of what screenwriter Monticelli meant by "open[ing] up the character of Lucy". Since the audience of the film are not biased by David's thoughts about his daughter, they are challenged to make their own assumptions about her choices and actions.

One picture that comes to mind when thinking about Lucy as a Joan of Arc is her portrayal in the last scene. When David visits her at the end, she is shown in full pregnancy, watering the plants in her garden (Fig. 1). The frame is shot from an upward angle, so that she appears large and strong in front of the majestic mountains in the background. This is a rather unusual portrayal in the film, as most of the other scenes are shot from a straightforward angle. The only other time an angle like this is used, is when the attackers set David on fire. This may be interpreted as a person being in control, which might suggest that Lucy is in control of her life at the end of the film. She may have made choices that make life harder for her, but she is a strong, purposeful

woman. This last impression of Lucy in the film gives the viewer a sense of hope after having watched her seemingly desperate situation since the attack.

At the end of the previous chapter, the issue of the inadequacy of language as an instrument was mentioned. In the film, this topic is not discussed directly, as opposed to several times in the novel. Even though the language barrier between black and white characters is omnipresent in the film, it is not reflected upon. This may be due to necessary substantial reductions from novel to film. In my opinion, however, a topic that important to the story and the reality of South Africa could have been addressed openly at least once in the film.



Fig. 1: Lucy in her garden (Disgrace)

6. 'Corrective rape'

6.1. 'Corrective rape' in South Africa

According to Whisnant, rape is “generally understood to involve sexual penetration of a person by force and/or without that person’s consent” (qtd. in L. Barnard 20). This might be the first definition that comes to mind, but the word *rape* can also be used in other contexts. Lianne Barnard, for example, claims that “rape has long been a metaphor for colonisation” (28). Therefore, it can be stated that during apartheid the black South African community was ‘raped’ by the white ruling class. As a reaction, the “post-apartheid era,

despite TRC's objectives, was not only the time of 'political reform', but also 'of revenge'" (R. Barnard qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1507). This desire for retribution can also be found in what might be called 'corrective rape'. Beyad and Keramatfar quote Fromm in stating that the lingering memories of apartheid can lead to the rationalization that people who have been hurt by others and wish to hurt them as well see this as "nothing but retaliation" (*Subjection* 166-167).

The authors further claim that "'pathological attachments' or 'deformed' relationality and absence of love [...] are the legacy of apartheid era" (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1507). Regarding the former ruling class, Kossew states that in post-apartheid South Africa, "power is changing hands and the erstwhile possessors of that power, the white population, are having to adapt to survive" (qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Subjection* 165).

6.2. 'Corrective rape' in *Disgrace*

In 1999, the year of *Disgrace*' publication, it had been 5 years since apartheid ended. Considering this short period since this institutional racial discrimination had stopped, one can imagine the on-going struggle of the South African people at that time. This becomes evident in the novel's reception after its release within the country.

Beyad and Keramatfar state that the "African National Congress regarded the novel as an example of racism in the media through perpetuating the stereotype of black men as natural rapists", being "concerned with the adverse implications of the novel for post-apartheid society" (*Apartheid* 1506). The authors, however, suggest that the depiction of black men raping a white woman in *Disgrace* is "not an inherently negative or racist image" (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1506). They claim in their paper that

it is rather an attack on the workings of apartheid structure that long manipulated and distorted the existential needs of South African people and gave rise to antagonistic relationality, the result of which is the continuing interpersonal and interracial violence in democratic South Africa. (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1506-7)

Similarly, Attwell argues that "post-apartheid is not a sudden and complete rupture with apartheid" and *Disgrace* depicts the "'social and psychic toxicity'

that existed in the new South Africa” (qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1507). It can be claimed that the African National Congress did not want the inconvenient picture of a disrupted and disturbed nation to be presented to the public. In his genuine style, however, J. M. Coetzee depicted some of the everyday struggles in post-apartheid South Africa. Apart from Lucy’s rape, David’s abusive relationships with black women depict the prevalent white male dominance in the country.

Fanon states that “in a racist society, [...] the individual was ‘deprived of being a man’”, “robbed of ‘all worth, all individuality’ and was told to be ‘a parasite on earth’” (qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1510). Therefore, according to Beyad and Keramatfar, “apartheid encourage[d] dependency and a parasitic life in the form of symbiosis or pathological attachments” (*Apartheid* 1510). The authors further claim that “the dehumanizing structure of apartheid” resulted in a society sanctioning only “vertical intercourse”, which “implies hierarchical relationality, power struggle, and ignoring [the] full humanity of others” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1516). The world depicted in *Disgrace* is therefore an “insane society where love is almost impossible and where individuals [...] become subjected to the authority of others” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1516). While this paints a rather frustrating picture, one could see it as “Coetzee’s warning against the utopian belief in a smooth unproblematic transition from apartheid [...] to a democratic society” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1516). According to Beyad and Keramatfar, *Disgrace* reveals that “in absence of love and prevalence of sadistic and masochistic symbiosis, [...] the prospect of a sane society based on mutual understanding and equality diminishes and apartheid lingers” (*Apartheid* 1516).

As an example for this lack of mutual understanding and equality, a scene at Petrus’ party can be analysed. When David confronts Pollux, the boy “appears to have been waiting for this moment” (Coetzee 131). Tantrigoda describes this as “a moment in which the power of white South Africans can be undermined without visible repercussions for blacks” (6). In response, David “summons the power of the masters’ tongue and its discursive representations of blacks, claiming to ‘know him’” (Tantrigoda 6). Regarding

this statement, it can be argued that “the label of rapist” is imposed immediately on the boy, “drawing on racist assumptions on black male sexuality” (Tantrigoda 6). In this case, however, I find David’s reaction and the anger he feels towards Pollux understandable, since he knows that the boy was one of the intruders. It would seem rather peculiar for a father not to be furious with a person that allegedly raped his daughter. As the boy asks “[w]ho are you?”, David interprets this as meaning “[b]y what right are you here?” (Coetzee 131). According to Tantrigoda (6), Lucy’s rape and her father’s “attempt at eliciting the truth surrounding [it] is overshadowed by a layered context of historical prejudices and injustices that taint the unveiling of such a ‘truth’”. It may be argued, therefore, that there cannot be an objectively ‘true’ version of the attack. David, Lucy and Pollux might have very different, historically, socially and emotionally biased notions of what happened. Furthermore, as mentioned several times in this paper, the issue of the English language as an unfit medium for Pollux’ version of the truth comes to mind.

Tantrigoda further claims that in *Disgrace* “Coetzee foregrounds the body as a site of justice and forgiveness” (8). The body, it is claimed, “is represented both as a discursive site of meaning in embodying race and as bare matter stripped of all cultural/political signification” (8). Lucy’s rape, therefore, can be interpreted as an act of black men seeking justice for the way they have been treated in the past. As mentioned above, even though apartheid has ended, South Africa is still a torn country with a very difficult history that greatly influences the present. By keeping the baby and agreeing to marry Petrus, Lucy’s body becomes a site of forgiveness. Just as the TRC decided to forgive the whites for their wrongdoings during apartheid, Lucy decides to forgive her attackers. This can be interpreted as a selfless act to foster the reunification of all races in South African society. Lucy is prepared to “make any sacrifice, for the sake of peace” (Coetzee 208).

In Coetzee’s fiction, the body can also be described “as a discursive site of power; for instance, power that historically has been assigned to white bodies over bodies marked as black” (Tantrigoda 8). Tantrigoda argues that Lucy’s “quest for expiation” strips “the white body of [...] politically and culturally

invested power” (8). By rejecting this “embodied power”, she experiences “a sense of loss through the denial of politically and culturally sanctioned authority accorded to white bodies” (Tantrigoda 9). In doing so, Tantrigoda claims that Lucy inserts herself “into an alternative discourse” (9). In an interview, Coetzee states that “in South Africa it is not possible to deny the authority of suffering and therefore the body” (Coetzee and Attwell qtd. in Tantrigoda 9). The author further argues that “it is not that one grants the authority of the suffering body: the suffering body takes this authority: that is its power” (Coetzee and Attwell qtd. in Tantrigoda 9). According to these statements, it can be suggested that Lucy gains power through suffering. Therefore, having survived the attack and keeping the baby, Lucy’s body becomes a symbol for her strength. After the rapists stripped her of the power accorded to the white body, she intends to rebuild an identity free of political and cultural attributes.

According to Tantrigoda (11-12), “Lucy refuses to be assimilated to the position of the victim or provide meaning to her rape”. Therefore, Lucy’s decision not to report the rape can be viewed as an act of independence and self-determination. The author further claims that “Lucy attempts to step outside the discursive meanings attributed to her body in deciding to keep her child” (Tantrigoda 12). By “privileging her motherhood over and above being a victim of hatred” (Tantrigoda 12), she tries hard to see a hopeful future after the traumatic experience of rape. Tantrigoda suggests that Lucy creates “a future where the possibility of racial harmony reigns” by bearing an interracial child (12). This is not only a selfless act, but also a chance for a new beginning. According to McGonegal, “*Disgrace* composes a vision of forgiveness and reconciliation as the fragile horizon of ethical relations” (qtd. in Tantrigoda 12). Bringing a child into the world gives Lucy purpose and a sense of relatedness. Even though it is the product and reminder of her rape, she is convicted to accept the child as her own. “Love will grow – one can trust Mother Nature for that”, she assures her father (Coetzee 216). Above all, she wants to be “[a] good mother and a good person” (Coetzee 216). After all that has happened to her, she remains a brave and compassionate woman, striving towards a brighter future. This is perhaps the most astounding and

admirable element of Lucy's character in *Disgrace*. She becomes a symbol of hope for unification in her divided home country. Lucy's white female body "becomes a central motif for expiation and restitution of interracial peace" (Tantrigoda 11).

Having said that, it is important to emphasize the problematic aspect of the suffering female body in *Disgrace*. However selfless or admirable Lucy's decisions may seem, it is very troubling to imagine many similar sexual crimes happening on a daily basis in South Africa. According to a police report, "an average of 114 rapes were recorded [...] each day" from April 2018 to March 2019 (Africa Check). This amounts to a staggering 41,583 reported rapes in one year. What is more, since only an unknown percentage of sexual offences are reported to the police, the statistics should not be viewed as an „accurate measure of either the extent or trend of this crime“ (Africa Check). Lucy's rape is representative for many cases in which women, for whatever reason, decide not speak out about their traumatic experiences.

According to Lianne Barnard, "Lucy's thoughts on sex and men hating women also bring into play the radical feminist idea that all heterosexual sex is rape" (20). The author further claims that "one way to interpret the connection of heterosexual sex with violence is to see rape as a method by which men as a class subordinate women as a class in a patriarchal society" (L. Barnard 26). I partly agree with this statement, in that male rapists make use of their physical superiority in order to subjugate women. However, I strongly disagree with the idea that all heterosexual sex is rape. This would imply that women never voluntarily initiate or willingly consent to sex with men, which is an absurd notion. Furthermore, I genuinely doubt that heterosexual sex is always motivated by men seeking to subordinate women. Nonetheless, I cannot speak for men or women growing up in a country with as much sexual violence as South Africa. Also, there is no doubt that in some parts of the world, heterosexual sex is more closely linked to rape than in others.

In *Disgrace*, Lucy talks to David about the possibility that "for men, hating the woman makes sex more exciting" and even goes as far as asking him "isn't [sex] a bit like killing?" (Coetzee 158). According to Barnard, this comparison of sex and killing was explored by Susan Brownmiller, "one of the first

feminists to write about rape” (L. Barnard 25). Brownmiller believes that “from pre-historic times to the present, [...] rape has played a critical function” in male-female relationships (qtd in L. Barnard 25). She further claims that rape is “a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear” (Brownmiller, qtd in L. Barnard 25). However harsh and generalising this may sound, it might actually be true for Lucy’s rapists, since she talks about them as “debt collectors” and about herself as “owing something” (Coetzee 158).

Attridge further supports this idea by claiming that in post-apartheid, “the distribution of power is no longer underwritten by racial difference” which results in “a new fluidity in human relations, [and] a sense that the governing terms and conditions can, and must, be rewritten from scratch” (qtd. In Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1515). For Lucy, these new terms and conditions result in her being subjugated by the rapists and, finally, Petrus. His plan is “to reduce Lucy to a condition of dependency” which she partly accepts in the end (Attridge qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1515). This “eventual exchange of positions between Lucy and Petrus” (Graham qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1515) might further be facilitated by her “urge to satisfy her existential need of relating herself combine[d] with social realities of South Africa” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1515).

Regarding Lucy’s co-proprietor, Beyad and Keramatfar claim that “the lingering spirit of apartheid manifests itself in the sadistic tendencies of Petrus” (*Apartheid* 1515). Fromm states that these tendencies are rationalised by thinking “I have been hurt by others and my wish to hurt them is nothing but retaliation” (*Fear* qtd. in Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1515-1516). It might be suggested that he, as many other black South Africans, is “still haunted and troubled by the injustices of the preceding period and [sees] the new society [as] a time for revenge” (Beyad and Keramatfar, *Apartheid* 1516). Similarly, Tantrigoda (11) suggests that he might be “demanding retributive justice for the violence that was inflicted upon [his people] during apartheid.” Even though I don’t believe that Petrus’ intentions are as cruel as those of the attackers, it is likely that he has thought about overpowering Lucy and taking over the farm as a form of retaliation.

Lianne Barnard (28) compares Lucy's "sacrifice" to the Sabine women, who "managed to ensure that peace was established between the Romans and the Sabine and that their children became Roman citizens". In this analogy, post-apartheid South Africa is compared to the founding of Rome. In both stories, "it is the woman who feels she has to sacrifice herself for peace" (L. Barnard 28). According to Barnard, "Lucy's body becomes the site of the settlement of scores" and the "cycle of domination and counter-domination cannot end" (L. Barnard 28). This, once again, is a rather pessimistic view on the problems South Africans have yet to solve. It could be argued that the TRC tried its best to end this cycle by not passing the harshest sentences on the white population. Whatever judgements may be made on the Committee's policies, its spirit gives hope for a society prepared to compromise in order to regain peace and stability.

7. Conclusion

To conclude this paper, several prominent findings are summarised. Moreover, issues that could not be answered successfully and need further examination will be addressed.

Firstly, the question arises in what ways the film and the novel differ mostly from each other. Rijdsdijk, among other critics, argues that *Disgrace* has "not been successfully adapted to the screen or, at least, adapted in a way that takes [Coetzee's] own views on film and writing into account" (13). I partly disagree, as in my opinion director Jacobs and the actors, especially Malkovich and Haines, created a haunting piece of film that, in its harshness, is worthy of its source novel. Moreover, I strongly agree with Bazin's earlier mentioned claim that film and literature should be seen as "two different artistic forms" (20). However, some of the major differences between both works should be mentioned.

The absence of David's inner monologue denies the audience of the film access to his often abysmal thoughts. These imprudent comments give the reader of the novel an insight into his unrestricted drive for sexual relationships with young, beautiful women. The fact that the viewers can only guess these improper thoughts makes him appear rather harmless in some

scenes of the film. Furthermore, his conservative ideas on post-apartheid society are mostly omitted in the film.

In the novel, Petrus often appears harsher and less friendly than in the film. On the one hand, this might be due to Eriq Ebouaney's docile and ever smiling portrayal of his character. On the other hand, as with Lucy, the novel's portrayal of the character is strongly influenced by David's accounts of his actions. Since, again, most of David's thoughts are omitted in the film, the viewer tends to get a more objective impression of the characters in *Disgrace*.

Melanie, in comparison, appears more like an innocent victim in the film than in the novel. Her appearance at David's flat resulting in their consensual sexual encounter makes her character rather ambiguous in the book. As this part is left out in the film, it seems like David always initiates their meetings and is completely in charge of the relationship. Even though this makes the abuse of his power as a university professor more visible in the film, Melanie's partial accordance leaves a certain scope for interpretation of their relationship in the novel. I suggest that Coetzee did not want to paint a black and white picture of David as the undisputed abuser of a student too weak to oppose him. In my opinion, however, the film conveys this message unequivocally.

It may be suggested that of all main characters, Lucy appears most similar in both works. As listed in the detailed analysis in chapter 5, there are a few discussions with her father in the film where she seems less snappy and more indulgent than in the novel. This, again, may be due to her character not being clouded by David's thoughts. However, contrary to my initial suggestion, Lucy's behaviour in the film does not differ greatly from her father's impression in the novel. It can therefore be claimed that, at least regarding his own daughter, David is a rather good judge of character. Alternatively, one has to keep in mind that Jessica Haines' character is based on the description in the novel. Even though screenwriter Anna Maria Monticelli claims to have "open[ed] up the character of Lucy" (Rapold), it seems that she stuck very closely to the source novel while writing the script.

As the actress portraying Lucy stated in an interview, she “thought this woman was crazy” when first reading the story (Rapold). This may be a notion that many readers and viewers of *Disgrace* can relate to while following Lucy’s path. She does not report the rape, decides to keep the baby the attackers forced into her, stays on the farm despite Pollux’ return and in fear of another attack, and even agrees to marry Petrus in the end. Although this might seem masochistic and self-destructive, I am inclined to see Lucy as a hero. She cares deeply about her country and is “prepared to do anything, make any sacrifice, for the sake of peace” (Coetzee 208).

One question that arises when considering Lucy’s behaviour after the rape is why she does not go into therapy. For an Austrian student like myself, it seems absurd not to be treated mentally after such a traumatic experience. There may be many reasons for this, apart from Lucy’s determination to deal with the trauma herself. For one, the nearest possibility for therapy might be far away from her home, which she does not want to leave. Secondly, the health care system in South Africa is most certainly less advanced than in countries like Austria. The fact that her educated father urge Lucy to just take care of her physical but not mental well being seems like an indication of the lack of awareness for trauma management in their country. Additionally, it has to be taken into account that the novel was published 20 years ago, when mental health may have been considered less important than it is today.

To conclude, it seems appropriate to discuss the impact *Disgrace* has on its audience. The impression both works convey is that of a torn country healing slowly from its violent and discriminatory crimes of the past. Analysing the actions of white and black characters, one major difference comes to mind. Between David and Petrus, the older generation, it seems to be Petrus who wants to look forward and forgive David’s people for the crimes of the past. It appears as though Petrus realises that vengeance will only lead to more violence, so he needs to keep the peace. Although his alleged involvement in the attack is never resolved, he seems to genuinely intend to protect Lucy.

Between Lucy and her attackers, the younger generation, however, it is the other way around. Whereas she wants to build a brighter future without any kind of racial segregation, Pollux and his friends seek to exact revenge for the

crimes against their people through 'corrective rape'. As Lucy describes it, "they see themselves as debt collectors" (Coetzee 158). More than that, she even seems prepared not "to live here without paying" (Coetzee 158). As disturbing as this might sound, it reflects a very worrying possible development South Africa after apartheid. Addressing this topic so drastically, while at the same time refraining from harsh judgement, is what makes both J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and its film adaptation highly valuable pieces of art.

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9. Abstract

Diese Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit dem Roman *Disgrace* von J.M. Coetzee, sowie mit dessen Verfilmung von Regisseur Steve Jacobs. Buch und Film werden analysiert und miteinander verglichen. Dabei wird besonders auf die Darstellung der weiblichen Hauptfigur Lucy eingegangen. Darüber hinaus wird über den Begriff „corrective rape“, also „ausgleichende Vergewaltigung“, im Kontext dieser in Südafrika stattfindenden Geschichte diskutiert. Zum Abschluss der Arbeit werden die relevantesten Erkenntnisse über die beiden Werke zusammengefasst. Außerdem wird die mögliche Wirkung dieser voller tragischer Ereignisse steckenden Erzählung auf ihr Publikum analysiert und hinterfragt, welches Bild von Südafrika nach dem Ende der Apartheid diese vermittelt.