

Power and Representation:

An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

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1. Introduction

In *Disgrace*, Coetzee explores the changing power structures in South African society, and how these changes affect the different characters. Set a few years after the end of apartheid, the book investigates how David Lurie, a white man who historically speaking has been at the top of the food chain, eventually ends up in a world where he has no power anymore. He loses his job as a university professor because of an inappropriate affair with a student, and leaves Cape Town to spend time with his daughter Lucy. She runs a small farm with the help of Petrus, a black man who lives on her land. Shortly after Lurie's arrival, three black men attack them and rape Lucy. The rest of the novel deals with the aftermath of the attack and Lurie's gradual acceptance of the fact that he is not in charge anymore.

Disgrace is an ambiguous novel containing multiple conflicts varying in scale and intensity that are deeply rooted in issues related to race, gender and sexuality. In addition to the aforementioned rape of Lucy, Lurie's problematic pursuit of his student, Melanie, is further complicated because she is most likely not white. There are many aspects of the novel that seem to use racist and sexist tropes without truly subverting them, such as the way in which Lucy's rape is used mostly as a plot device for Lurie's character development. Further, the African National Congress (ANC) criticised *Disgrace* for its perpetuation of the racist stereotype of the dangerous black men attacking a white woman. However, Coetzee does explore the limitations faced by a white male author attempting to comprehend and accurately represent other perspectives. Further, Lianne Barnard argues that "the plot (especially the way rape as a theme is explored in many different variations and narrative situations) makes it possible to read the novel as a feminist critique of male desire, power and willful self-ignorance" (19).

The truth about *Disgrace* is somewhere in the middle; the novel has too many problematic elements for it to be considered feminist, but it would be short-sighted to simply dismiss it altogether. In order to understand to what extent *Disgrace* can be considered either feminist or racist and sexist, it is important to analyse the novel from as inclusive a perspective as possible. Intersectional feminism, which aims to take into account all forms of oppression and the ways these interact, provides a framework through which this question can be answered. In short, the ways in which David Lurie falls from grace and gradually accepts his new, less powerful position in society shows how South African society could be gradually moving towards more equality, although this process is by no means nearing completion. On the other hand, the novel's use of two women's rapes, one of which is a variation on the racist idea of dangerous black men out to rape white women, to further the male protagonist's character development takes away from the progressive message in other aspects of the novel.

2. Intersectional Feminism and Literary Analysis

The term intersectional feminism is mainly used by social justice activists and in research in the social sciences, such as anthropology and sociology. When it comes to literary analysis, intersectional feminism seems to be mostly situated in the overlap between feminist and postcolonial literary criticism. One of the aims of feminist literary criticism is to “examine power relations which obtain in texts and in life, with a view to breaking them down, seeing reading as a political act and showing the extent of patriarchy” (Barry 128). Postcolonial criticism concerns itself, among other things, with “questions of cultural difference and diversity and ... their treatment in relevant literary works” (Barry 192). The combination of these two approaches could also be called postcolonial feminism, especially since *Disgrace* is a postcolonial novel. However, the term intersectional feminism is broader, and also explicitly includes for instance sexuality and disability as categories of analysis.

When speaking about feminism, it is easy to think of *women* as a homogenous, one-dimensional group, all facing the same challenges and all fighting for the same advancements. Of course there are numerous issues that affect women everywhere, but even then not all women are affected in similar ways. In short, intersectionality is concerned with looking at all the ways in which women's lives and experiences are shaped not just by gender, but also by race, sexuality, disability and any other possible areas of oppression. Kathy Davis gives a clear, concise summary of what *intersectionality* means and where it comes from.

‘Intersectionality’ refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power.

Originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality was intended to address the fact that the experiences and struggles of women of colour fell between the

cracks of both feminist and anti-racist discourse. Crenshaw argued that theorists need to take both gender and race on board and show how they interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's experiences. (Davis 68)

A simple but striking example of how necessary intersectionality is, is the wage gap. Usually news reports focus on the statistic that - a worldwide average - women make about 16% less than what a man makes for the same job (Chubb et al. 10). Of course this is an unacceptable state of affairs that needs to be rectified as soon as possible, but looking at just this number is much too simplistic. More specific statistics show that the wage gap does not exist along gender lines only. In 2010, the median income of white women in the United States¹ was higher than that of anyone except white men. White women made about 80% of what white men made, whereas black and Hispanic men only made 65-75%. It is hardly surprising that the median income of black and Hispanic women is the lowest at only 60-70% of the median income for white men ("The Wage Gap"). Clearly, the wage gap is an issue of race as well as gender, and it would be short-sighted and incomplete to look at the influence of only one of these categories.

An intersectional outlook requires people to acknowledge that even though they might be oppressed in certain ways, they might be privileged - and contributing to others' oppression - in other areas. For example, as a woman, I have experienced gender-based problems ranging from anger not being taken seriously because "it must be the hormones talking" to being groped in a bar. However, I am white and therefore have privilege in that area. This *privilege* does not mean that my life has to be perfect, but it simply means that I will never have to deal with racism and that in many ways my life will be easier because I am white. This also means that I need to be very careful and critical of myself when talking about race. As Deirdre

¹ Such differences are most likely not exclusive to the United States, but data on the wage gap separated by both race and gender proved much harder to find for other countries.

Keenan argues, an analysis and interpretation of anything will always be "limited by [one's] own cultural and historical location" (111).

Keenan states "feminist theory has replaced the fallacy of a global sisterhood with greater attention to relationships of power among and between women" (110). In this sense, intersectional feminism takes a step away from the modern, mainstream feminism that mainly tries to appeal to young white women, often by putting down other women. Nowadays many women, understandably, want to do away with the stereotype that all feminists are short-haired lesbians with hairy armpits, but in their insistence that they are not *that* kind of feminist they throw all the women who do happen to be lesbians and/or have short hair and hairy armpits under the bus. Just because it is possible to be a feminist while wearing high heels, dresses and lipstick does not mean that there is anything feminist about distancing oneself from women who do not conform to a prescribed idea of femininity.

In addition to race and gender, intersectional feminism aims to consider all the other categories that can contribute to oppression. The two most common categories outside of race and gender, are sexuality and disability. Women who fall under the LGBTQIA+² umbrella face various forms of prejudice and discrimination. Lesbian and bisexual women encounter homophobia, and trans women are confronted with transphobia on a regular basis. Women with disabilities of any kind also deal with issues that arise specifically out of their disabilities and that other women will never experience. For instance, much of the popular feminist discourse centres on empowerment and independence, but fails to take into account that there are plenty of people - whose life is just as right and worthy - who will never be independent.

In short, intersectional feminism tries to be as inclusive and self-aware as possible, taking into account the different backgrounds and experiences of women everywhere. Further, to look at anything in a truly intersectional way, one needs to be conscious of one's own

² Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and any other marginalized gender identities and sexual orientations.

privileges and accompanying biases. This means that the main focus of this analysis will be on gender and sexuality rather than race although the latter cannot be ignored and will be touched upon.

3. Power & Race

3.1 David Lurie: Privileged in Every Way

On a societal level, David Lurie is by far the most privileged character in the entire novel. He is a white man with, at the start of the novel, a middle class job. Further, he is heterosexual and has no disabilities, as far as the reader can tell. In short, this means that he does not face any institutional oppression. Naturally this does not mean that his life will be perfect and easy – it surely turns out not to be – but it means that generally speaking, he has far fewer obstacles to conquer than people who are part of one or more oppressed groups. This is especially true when it comes to the fact that he is a white South African who mostly lived under apartheid. Regardless of whether Lurie would personally have supported or opposed apartheid he has profited from it at the expense of black South Africans.

One of the central themes of *Disgrace* is David Lurie's need to come to terms with the changing society he lives in. Even though the story is set a few years after the end of apartheid, white South Africans still hold far more societal power than black South Africans. However, Lurie's privilege is no longer as unchallenged and self-evident as it was before. Initially, he takes for granted that he can do almost whatever he wants, but throughout the story he experiences more and more situations in which people with arguably less power than him do not follow his wishes and expectations. Gradually, he changes from someone who has such a hard time accepting that Soraya does not want to see him anymore that he calls her in her own home, into someone who, however reluctantly, accepts that he cannot make Lucy do what he believes is best.

The changes in Lurie's life and character can be interpreted in different ways. One could argue that *Disgrace* shows the difference between institutional power, privilege, and individual success. Despite all the categories that are supposed to work in Lurie's favour, he

loses almost everything and eventually resigns himself to a new life, a life “like a dog” (*Disgrace* 204). However, it is important to remember that his initial downfall is entirely of his own making. Regardless of whether one believes that Lurie raped Melanie – which is an issue for a later chapter – he was in such a clear position of power over her, that their relationship was incredibly unequal at its best. He is held accountable for what at the very least is a clear violation of almost any school or university policy. This is hardly proof that the tables are turning in society, although it might feel like that for Lurie because of the ways in which his life unravels after he and Lucy get attacked.

Throughout the novel, almost until the very end, Lurie seems so used to being at the top of society’s ladder that he finds it difficult to deal with the fact that Lucy’s rape is her experience and not his. Almost immediately after the attack, Lurie makes Lucy’s refusal to go to the police about him, asking if she is “trying to remind [him] ... of what women undergo at the hands of men” (111). Even when Lucy explicitly tells him that it is not about him, and that she does not want to talk about what happened, he does not seem to understand. Only a short while later, he is upset that Bev dare insinuate that he cannot imagine what Lucy went through:

Do [Lucy and Bev] think he does not know what rape is? Do they think he has not suffered with his daughter? What more could he have witnessed than he is capable of imagining? Or do they think that, where rape is concerned no man can be where the woman is? Whatever the answer, he is outraged, outraged at being treated like an outsider. (140)

While it is understandable that Lurie is concerned for Lucy and believes that he can empathise with her completely, his anger at not being included shows that he expects that there is always a place for him. Towards the end of the novel, when Lurie returns to the farm and finds Lucy pregnant, Lucy comments on this as well:

“You behave as if everything I do is part of the story of your life. You are the main character. I am a minor character who doesn’t make an appearance until halfway through. Well, contrary to what you think, people are not divided into major and minor. I am not minor. 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.” (198)

Lucy’s remark is quite representative of Lurie’s behaviour throughout most the novel, and could be seen as symbolic for the way he is – definitely in his experience – slowly relegated from being society’s protagonist to someone who is no more or less powerful and important than anyone else. In addition to expressing Lucy’s frustration with Lurie’s attitude towards the world, this passage also seems to serve as an acknowledgement that it is difficult – if not impossible – for men to truly understand women’s experiences. Perhaps Coetzee believes he has no choice but to delegate Lucy to the sidelines, because he cannot accurately represent her. However, this inability to comprehend and represent women is not a recurrent issue in Coetzee’s work, judging from works such as *Elizabeth Costello* and *Foe*, which both feature women as main characters. It is difficult to move beyond speculation in this regard, but it seems that even though Coetzee has written many other female characters, his perspective is too limited to do justice to Lucy’s side of the story.

Many other events in *Disgrace* seem to symbolise Lurie’s loss of power and his eventual acceptance of his fate. For instance, when he returns to Cape Town after having been at Lucy’s farm for a while, his entire house has been ransacked and his old office is now inhabited by someone younger that he has never heard of, and who has never heard of Lurie. Further, even the chair of his former department, Elaine, whom he runs into at the supermarket, would rather not talk to him and only acknowledges him insofar as she cannot avoid it. Life in Cape Town and at the university specifically has continued without him and does not seem to be worse off for it. Lurie knows this as well. When he asks Elaine how

things are at the university, he immediately thinks, “*Very well indeed* – that would be the frankest answer: *We are getting on very well without you*. But she is too polite to say the words” (179).

One of the ways in which his acceptance of this changed order is shown, is through the shift that takes place in the opera Lurie is writing. Earlier in the novel, he is planning to write an opera about “the last years of Byron” (62), but has changed his mind about the type of music that should accompany it, from “quite lush orchestration” to “a very meagre accompaniment” (63). This shift from extravagance to a more bare-bones idea of what his opera should be foreshadows the changes that will happen in Lurie’s life. When, towards the end of the novel, Lurie actually starts working on the opera, he quickly realises that Byron should not be the main character, just as Lurie no longer feels as if he is the main character, unlike he did before. Instead, “a dumpy little widow” (181) takes centre stage. For someone like Lurie, who earlier in the narrative “does not like women who make no effort to be attractive” (72), focusing on Teresa as a middle-aged woman, years after Byron is dead and gone, would have been unthinkable at the beginning of the novel.

Initially, Lurie envisioned his opera to be “a chamber play about love and death, with a passionate young woman and a once passionate but now less than passionate older man” (180). This echoes the way he feels about Melanie and himself at the beginning of the novel, where when it comes to sex, “his temperament, though intense, has never been passionate” (2), but Melanie has a “coquettish little smile” (12). However, as mentioned before, Melanie does not reciprocate Lurie’s passions, and this leads to his downfall. By the end of the story, Lurie seems to have accepted and embraced his fate, because it is no longer “the erotic that is calling to him after all, nor the elegiac, but the comic” (184). He has moved away from erotic desires and beyond mourning the loss of this phase of his life, to a place where he might be able to find humour again.

Another, perhaps even stronger, symbol of the changes in Lurie is his change in attitude towards Bev and the work she does. Initially, Lurie expresses strong resistance against the idea of helping Bev at the clinic because he expects that they will not get along and because he does not want “to have to become a better person” (77). Later on, however, he starts doing the work that no one else wants to do: taking the remains of the dogs and disposing of them in the incinerator. Eventually, after he returns and finds out about Lucy’s pregnancy and decision to marry Petrus, he ends up spending most of his time in the clinic, finally able “to concentrate all his attention on the animal they are killing, giving it what he no longer has difficulty in calling by its proper name: love” (219). The novel ends with Lurie’s decision to bring Bev the dog that he has grown attached to, even though he could have kept it alive for another week or so. The final words “I am giving him up” (220) encompass much more than simply the choice to give up the dog. Lurie has given up his previous position in society and has accepted his – and Lucy’s – life the way it is now.

3.2 Soraya and Melanie

In most ways, Soraya and Melanie are Lurie’s opposites when it comes to power. Although their exact racial backgrounds remain unclear, their descriptions show that they are most likely both women of colour. Further, they are both in a position with less power than Lurie because of their occupation as sex worker and student respectively.

Although Soraya is clearly part of multiple marginalised groups, she is eventually able to exercise some power over Lurie when she refuses to see him any longer. In *Disgrace* the racial backgrounds of the characters are never stated explicitly, but usually they are revealed through passing remarks and contextual hints. This also goes for Soraya, who is described as having a “honey-brown body, unmarked by the sun” (1). This choice of words makes it evident that she is definitely not white, but also not black. She is “on [the agency’s] books under ‘Exotic’” (7), which apparently covers women who are “Malaysian, Thai, Chinese, you

name it” (8), implying that Soraya is also East Asian. Further, she is a sex worker, an occupation that generally does not garner a lot of power or respect. Lurie feels affection towards Soraya and “[t]o some extent, he believes, this affection is reciprocated” (2), but this does not mean that he respects her desire to be left alone. Lurie seems to believe that he is somehow entitled to her time and attention, even though she has made it clear that she no longer wants him as a customer, and he even hires a private detective to be able to contact her. Only after he has invaded her privacy and she shuts him down with a “shrillness” (8) he has never heard from her before, does he accept that she is not his to contact whenever he pleases.

Melanie is both similar to and different from Soraya in many ways. They are alike in the sense that they are both women of colour who are a lot younger than Lurie and in a position where he has some form of power over them. As with Soraya, Melanie’s racial background is never explicitly stated, but becomes clear through what Lurie says about her. For instance, she is described as having “close-cropped black hair, wide almost Chinese cheekbones, [and] large, dark eyes” (11). This, combined with the fact that Lurie renames her “Meláni: the dark one” (18) leads the reader to the reasonable assumption that Melanie is not white. However, the power imbalance between Lurie and Melanie is strikingly different than that between him and Soraya. Whereas one could argue that at some level, Soraya has power over Lurie because he is a paying customer who could be, and eventually is, refused service, Melanie is one of his students. Not only is she much younger – younger than his daughter even – she is also partially dependent on his goodwill for her success. Whether or not she really wants to begin an affair with Lurie, it is clear that there are various factors that impact her ability to ever be on an equal footing with him. For instance, it would not be unreasonable to imagine that she might be afraid of possible academic consequences, were she to reject his advances.

Regardless of the power difference between Melanie and Lurie, Melanie is eventually able – like Soraya – to regain control. When she lodges a complaint with the university, Lurie loses his job and leaves Cape Town. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, it is debatable if this is a power she exercises out of her free will, or simply the execution of structures in place to protect people from such power imbalances.

3.3 Lucy

The character of Lucy is situated at rather different intersections than any of the other characters, and she seems to be most aware of her position in society. She is white, so at a societal level she is privileged in that regard, even though at an individual level this might not seem to be the case. However, as a lesbian she faces a whole different array of issues, which are only touched upon because the story is told from David Lurie's perspective.

The novel does not go in depth on the problems that Lucy faces with regards to her sexual orientation, but it becomes clear that Lurie, although he does not mention it to her directly, has some issues with the fact that Lucy is a lesbian. These are not issues in the sense that he is angry or unsupportive, but he laments and questions Lucy's orientation. Shortly after he arrives at the farm, Lurie laments that Lucy is “[a]ttractive, ... yet lost to men” (76). A while later, he considers what Lucy's relationship with Helen was like, and wonders whether they had a platonic rather than passionate relationship.

But what does he know about what women do together? Maybe women do not need to make beds creak. And what does he know about these two in particular, Lucy and Helen? Perhaps they sleep together merely as children do, cuddling, touching, giggling, reliving girlhood – sisters more than lovers. ... Sapphic love: an excuse for putting on weight. (86)

This questioning of the seriousness and validity of her relationship with Helen is surely not a sign of unconditional support. Saying that Lucy is “lost to men” implies that there is

something inherently better about being available to men, and that it should somehow be mourned when an attractive woman is not. His inability to imagine Lucy and Helen's relationship as a passionate, sexual one seems to stem from his lack of understanding of lesbian relationships rather than from an unwillingness to imagine his daughter as a sexual creature in general: "He wonders how it is for Lucy with her lovers, how it is for her lovers with her. He has never been afraid to follow a thought down its winding track, and he is not afraid now. Has he fathered a woman of passion?" (76).

Lurie never voices these comments to Lucy, which is somewhat commendable, but in reality people do make such remarks all the time. These seemingly innocent comments are extremely common and are generally called microaggressions. Kevin Nadal defines microaggressions as "subtle, unconscious, and unintentional discrimination that is experienced by people of color; women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people; religious minorities; people with disabilities; and people of other marginalized groups" (5). The biggest problem with microaggressions is that the people who commit them often do not realise that they are being discriminatory and offensive. It might seem like a harmless joke to ask a lesbian couple who the man is in their relationship, but such a remark invalidates their relationship by implying that a couple needs to consist of a man and a woman even when it clearly does not.

Further, although the novel does not address this, Lucy's sexual orientation could have been a contributing factor to the fact that she was raped. The violent rape of lesbian women, often by more than one rapist, is called "corrective rape" in the media. Rape Crisis, a non-profit organization based in Cape Town, explains that the goal of these rapists is to turn their gay victim straight, and that "in this context, rape is used as a brutal way to punish and oppress those who do not conform to societal norms for gender roles, which include sexual orientation". The threat of corrective rape is much larger for black lesbian women, of whom

86% deal with fear of sexual assault, as opposed to 44% of white lesbian women (“Rape in South Africa”), but it is by no means unheard of for white women to become victims as well. The possibility that Petrus is somehow involved in the attack, lends credibility to this reading of Lucy’s rape. Petrus has lived and worked on Lucy’s land for a long time, so he must be aware of Lucy’s relationship with Helen. It would not be impossible that the attack had the goal of “correcting” Lucy’s homosexuality in addition to allowing Petrus to take over Lucy’s farm. To a certain extent, the attackers have even succeeded in this, because Lucy eventually decides to marry Petrus.

Lucy is very conscious of the power relations in South Africa and of the ways in which they are gradually shifting. Before the end of apartheid, Petrus’ proposition would have been even more outrageous than it is now. First of all, there were laws in place concerning interracial marriage, and their arrangement could never have been approved. In addition, it would probably have been impossible due to legislation concerning land ownership by black South Africans. Only 10% of the land was allocated for black South Africans to own and work on, and they were not allowed to own any land outside of those allocated areas (“Land, Labour and Apartheid”). However, Lucy feels that she is now at the bottom rung of society’s ladder and has no other option than to accept Petrus’ offer of marriage and protection. She explains this to Lurie as follows:

“[T]ake a moment to consider my situation objectively. Objectively I am a woman alone. I have no brothers. I have a father, but he is far away and anyhow powerless in the terms that matter here. To whom can I turn for protection, for patronage? To Ettinger? It is just a matter of time before Ettinger is found with a bullet in his back. Practically speaking, there is only Petrus left. Petrus may not be a big man, but he is big enough for someone small like me. And at least I know Petrus. I have no illusions about him. I know what I would be letting myself in for” (204)

Objectively – according to Lucy – she has no one left who can help her because not even her father, who used to be part of the most powerful group in society, can do anything anymore. However unconventional and terrible this construction is, it seems to be the only way that Lucy can stay at her farm without being in constant danger. She resigns to her fate and her future with a child and husband that she never asked for, in exchange for the possibility to stay at home. In response to her father’s criticism she states: “Yes, I agree, it is humiliating. But perhaps that is a good point to start from again. Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level. With nothing. Not with nothing but. With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity” (205).

3.4 Petrus

Because Petrus is a black man, much has changed for him in the years preceding the novel’s action. It has been a few years – it is unclear how many exactly – since the abolition of apartheid and gradually the black citizens of South Africa are getting more rights and more power. Petrus now owns land and is able to work for Lucy on his terms rather than hers, but there is clearly still racism. Further, he seems to be the only character who truly gains something throughout the novel. In terms of individual power, he is the one who comes out on top at the end of the narrative.

Petrus has recently received a grant from the government to purchase land, which presumably is a huge improvement over his situation under apartheid. Although it is not explicitly described what Petrus’ life was like in the decades preceding the novel, it is unlikely that he would have owned land or that he would have had as much freedom in his comings and goings. This previous state of affairs is mostly alluded to in passages such as this:

In the old days one could have had it out with Petrus. In the old days one could have had it out to the extent of losing one’s temper and sending him packing and hiring

someone in his place. But though Petrus is paid a wage, Petrus is no longer, strictly speaking, hired help. It is hard to say what Petrus is, strictly speaking. The word that seems to serve best, however, is *neighbour*. Petrus is a neighbour who at present happens to sell his labour because that is what suits him. He sells his labour under contract, unwritten contract, and that contract makes no provision for dismissal on grounds of suspicion. It is a new world they live in, he and Lucy and Petrus. Petrus knows it, and he knows it, and Petrus knows that he knows it. (117)

Nowadays simply firing Petrus is no longer an option, because although he works for Lucy, she does not have the same kind of power over him that she would have had ten years earlier. This shift is also emphasized by Lurie's reply to Lucy's suggestion that he help out Petrus with some work he is doing: "Give Petrus a hand. I like that. I like the historical piquancy" (77). It used to be unthinkable that a white man helped out a black man with any form of manual labour rather than the other way around, but things have changed in South Africa.

Despite these changes in Petrus' life, and the more general shifts in power shown throughout the novel, there is definitely still racism in the "new" South Africa. There is not much emphasis on this residue of the old attitudes in *Disgrace*, except in the form of Ettinger, Lucy's neighbour. Ettinger, an older white man with German roots, is symbolic of these old – and in the world of *Disgrace* out-dated – values. For example, he is flagrantly racist when in response to Petrus' absence during the attack he "remarks darkly, 'Not one of them you can trust'" (109). Further, he says that he "will send a boy" to help them out. When Lurie remarks that "in the past he has seen Lucy fly into a rage at the use of the word *boy*" (109) because of the racist connotations, it shows that the people who do accept – however reluctantly – the changes in South African society no longer consider this term acceptable. Although the novel does not show any of Petrus' direct encounters with racism, the existence of Ettinger, and

probably many like him, shows that the position of black men is not yet equal to that of white men.

As mentioned above, Lucy is extremely conscious of the changes in South African society, and this shows especially in her attitude towards Petrus. She seems reluctant to do anything that might alienate Petrus from her, or that could be construed as her not seeing him as an equal. When Lurie asks her if she does not find it suspicious that Petrus happened to be away when they were attacked, she replies, “I can’t order Petrus about. He is his own master” (114). Although this reaction is probably at least partially the result of the trauma she endured, it shows that she is unwilling to cast blame on Petrus. Even when she encounters one of the attackers at Petrus’ party, she does not want to call the police or do anything that might ruin his celebration, saying that “it’s not Petrus’ fault” and that Lurie should “be sensible” (133). The reasoning behind this might be that without Petrus, Lucy’s farm would not have been what it is, as Bev explains: “I’m not saying she owes [Petrus] everything, but she owes him a lot” (140). As later becomes evident, it is likely that Lucy is so aware of how the social relationships have changed, that she is afraid what might happen to her if she antagonizes Petrus.

Overall, Petrus gains the most throughout the novel, both in abstract and concrete ways. Regardless of whether Petrus had a hand in the attack, although it is plausible that he did, he clearly benefits from it. To a certain extent, this echoes the way in which Lurie, and privileged people in general, benefits from racism even if he does not explicitly perpetuate it. When Petrus suggests that Lucy marry him and give him the farm in exchange for safety, Lucy believes that she has no choice but to accept, because otherwise she is “without protection, [and] fair game” (203). For Petrus, the shifts in power that began with the end of apartheid have – for now – concluded with him being in power, at least on the small scale of his direct personal surroundings.

4. Power & Gender

4.1 Rape as a Plot Device

The use of rape as a plot device or as an excuse for character development occurs quite often in movies and tv-shows, but classic literature is not exempt. For instance, in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* Lavinia gets brutally raped, and it serves no real purpose other than giving Titus Andronicus a reason to exact bloody revenge. In her analysis of rape as a plot device in popular culture, Caity Goerke describes this trope as follows:

Taken, I Saw the Devil, Death Wish, and Django Unchained are just a few examples of films where violence against women is used as a fundamental motivator for the story's protagonist. Like *Titus Andronicus*, these films aren't about the women who have been kidnapped, beaten, abused and raped. Both the women and the violence against them are merely important to move the plot of the story forward (Goerke).

It would be too simplistic to argue that the rapes in *Disgrace* are used in exactly this manner, because the novel definitely concerns itself with the bigger personal and societal implications of rape. However, since the story is focalised through David Lurie, it inevitably focuses on how the rapes affect him rather than the women who have actually been raped, although this does not necessarily mean that their rapes are only used as a vehicle for male character development.

The moment Lucy and Lurie are attacked, but specifically the fact that Lucy is raped, is the pivotal incident in the novel. Only from this moment onwards, does Lurie really begin to change. Before, he firmly holds on to his old attitude: “[h]is mind has become a refuge for old thoughts ... He ought to chase them out ... But he does not care to do so, or does not care enough” (72). He seems unaccustomed to the notion of doing anything simply for the sake of doing something good. For instance, he says to Lucy that “[animal-welfare people are] so

cheerful and well-intentioned that after a while you itch to go off and do some raping and pillaging. Or to kick a cat” (73). It seems that he is only able to change his ways – directly or indirectly – because he is attacked, but mostly because his daughter is raped. However, the way in which Lucy’s rape and Lurie’s inability to understand what she went through are handled, makes *Disgrace* more than simply another story using rape as a tired cliché.

The main problem with many stories that use rape as a plot device, is that this hinges on the idea that rape is the only truly terrible thing that can happen to a woman, whereas men are afforded a multitude of experiences and tragedies. In an article about her disappointment that many books she read featured unnecessary rape scenes, young-adult author Maggie Stiefvater says:

I’m talking about novels where the rape scene could just as easily be any other sort of violent scene and it only becomes about sex because there’s a woman involved. If the genders were swapped, a rape scene wouldn’t have happened. The author would’ve come up with a different sort of scenario/ backstory/ defining moment for a male character. ... Need to establish some stakes? Grab a secondary character and rape her.

Whenever a story features the rape of a female character as an important event or as an explanation for anyone’s character or behaviour, it is important to question whether anything else could have happened to her, and whether the same thing would have happened to a male character.

Although it is unlikely that the attackers would have raped a hypothetical son of Lurie, it is clear that within the context of *Disgrace* nothing else could have happened to Lucy. A simple robbery would not have alienated Lurie and Lucy from each other in the same way, and any form of attack would likely not have forced Lucy into marrying Petrus. The biggest problem that Lurie encounters in his attempts to help Lucy, is that she and Bev believe that he cannot understand Lucy’s experience because he, as a man, will never be in her shoes.

Although men do get raped, albeit at a significantly lower rate than women, it makes sense that this experience would be so foreign to Lurie that he cannot imagine it. Despite his anger at being excluded, he eventually acknowledges that it is easier for him to identify with the attackers: “he can, if he concentrates, if he loses himself, be there, be the men, inhabit them, fill them with the ghost of himself. The question is, does he have it in him to be the woman?” (160). The answer to Lurie’s question seems to be “no”. As mentioned earlier, in addition to exploring Lurie’s loss of power and privilege, Coetzee also seems to comment on the impossibility of accurately representing female victims when writing from an inescapably male perspective. As a result of this, perhaps the only thing he can do is present an imperfect, incomplete image as seen by someone he can fully identify with: a man. Throughout the novel, Coetzee acknowledges the flaws in and limitations of Lurie’s point of view, but never seems to truly subvert them. It remains unsure whether Lurie – or perhaps Coetzee himself – is unable or unwilling to truly empathise with Lucy’s and Melanie’s experiences.

Further, the parallels and contrasts between Lucy’s rape and Lurie’s “affair” with Melanie influence Lurie’s development. On the one hand, the fact that Lucy is raped so violently makes it even easier for Lurie to not consider what he did to Melanie rape. He contemplates that some of “the legions of countesses and kitchenmaids Byron pushed himself into ... called it rape” (160), insinuating that they had not really been raped because “none surely had cause to fear that the session would end with her throat being slit” (160). Although he does not mention Melanie here explicitly, this echoes his idea that what he did to her was not rape in the “real” sense of the word.

On the other hand, it is doubtful that he would have returned to Melanie’s parents if the attack had not taken place. In between the committee hearings, where Lurie claims that he “became a servant of Eros” (52), a student reporter asks him if he regrets his actions, but he replies that he “was enriched by the experience” (56). When the committee is willing to not

impose a severe penalty on him if he issues a formal apology, he chooses to lose his job completely, rather than apologise. Even in Mr Isaac's office, Lurie still decides to explain his actions by saying that it was a "sudden little adventure" (166), but that Melanie "struck up a fire in [him]" (166), although this is probably the last thing a father would want to hear from the middle-aged professor who slept with his daughter. Only after they sit through an awkward dinner at the Isaacs' home, does Lurie finally say it: "I am sorry for what I took your daughter through. ... I apologize for the grief I have caused you and Mrs Isaacs. I ask for your pardon" (171). However, Lurie's apology does not appear sincere; he still does not acknowledge that he should not have pursued Melanie in the first place. Instead he says that "[i]t could have turned out differently ... between the two of us, despite our ages" (171).

Although Lurie finally apologises, his regret does not seem sincere to Mr Isaacs, who replies that "we are all sorry when we are found out. Then we are very sorry. The question is not, are we sorry? The question is, what lesson have we learned? The question is, what are we going to do now that we are sorry?" (172). This relates back to the overall idea of privilege and loss thereof echoed throughout the novel. When someone realises that they are privileged in one way or another, a common reaction is to apologise for it, whereas it would be much more productive to put one's privilege to good use by using it to help those without it. Lurie, however, speaks in terms of being punished rather than of truly making amends, asking Mr Isaacs if it is "enough for God, do you think, that [he] live in disgrace without term" (172).

4.2 Melanie & Lurie: Rape or an Affair Gone Sour?

As mentioned in chapter two, there is a clear power difference between Lurie and Melanie. The most important aspect of this power imbalance is the fact that Lurie is Melanie's university professor. There are rules in place against relationships between teachers and students practically everywhere, because of the inherent inequality between them. Regardless of any other issues in the relationship between Lurie and Melanie, he holds a power over her –

for instance by being able to make her pass or fail his course – that makes it impossible for them to be on equal footing. However, this is by far not the worst aspect of Lurie’s involvement with Melanie, because in at least one of the three sexual encounters described in the novel, he rapes her.

The first time Lurie has sex with Melanie is arguably not rape, although all signs seem to indicate that Melanie is not into it. The description says that “he makes love to her” (19), but love does not seem to have much to do with it. She is clearly not enthusiastic about the sex, because “she is passive throughout” (19) and afterwards she has “a slight frown on her face” (19), averts herself from him and leaves as soon as she can. This is not a description of passionate, enthusiastic love making, but the novel does not indicate that she does not want to have sex with him at all. However, if Lurie was as concerned about her and about not letting things “go to far” (19) as he claims, he should have noticed her lack of response and taken that as an indication that things might not have been right. At the very least, he should have talked to her, making sure she was all right, like he did earlier in the restaurant. Although it might be too harsh to describe this encounter as rape, the fact that Melanie is absent from class the next day seems to indicate that she is not comfortable with what happened between them.

The uncomfortable aspects of Lurie’s intentions with their relationship become even more evident towards the end of the novel. When Lurie goes back to visit Melanie’s parents, he reminisces about how Melanie “sitting beside him on the sofa drinking the coffee with the shot-glass of whiskey in it that was intended to – the word comes up reluctantly – *lubricate* her” (168). Here the word “lubricate” evokes an troubling picture of him intentionally – though with her knowledge – giving Melanie alcohol to lower her inhibitions and increase the chances of her accepting his advances. This situation comes across as rather coercive, with

Lurie's intentions behind the whiskey in the coffee and his suggestion that Melanie "has a duty to share [her beauty]" (16).

At their first private encounter, Lurie takes no for an answer, but when he goes to Melanie's apartment a few days later, he does rape her. Although the events may not conform to the general idea of violent rapes committed by a stranger in a dark alley, her verbal and non-verbal resistance make it clear that she is not consenting to sex. When Lurie first enters her house, "she is too surprised to resist the intruder who thrusts himself upon her" (24). Immediately thereafter: "'No, not now!' she says, struggling" (25). There is no way in which this can be read as anything other than an indication that she does not want to have sex with him, but "nothing will stop him" and "[h]e carries her to the bedroom" (25). At this point, she has stopped resisting. "All she does is avert herself: avert her lips, avert her eyes" (25). However, her lack of resistance at this point does by no means show that she is now consenting to sex with Lurie. The fact that she is not kicking and screaming does not mean that what Lurie is doing to her is no longer rape. She has clearly indicated that she does not want this, but he has chosen to ignore that and to just continue with what he wants. Lurie realises that what he has done is "a huge mistake" (25), but fails to see that he has raped her. Perhaps he tries to reassure himself with the thought that it was "[n]ot rape, not quite that, but undesired nonetheless, undesired to the core" (25), but his acknowledgement that it was clear to him that she did not want to have sex with him, makes it impossible to see this as anything but rape. If Lurie can consider his actions "not quite" rape when she initially clearly refuses him and thereafter, when her "no" is ignored, averts herself from him and "had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration", then he adheres to a very narrow and incorrect definition of rape or somehow is unable to accept that what he has done, an educated man who is merely a "servant of Eros" (52) might actually be rape.

It is unclear why Melanie still returns to Lurie, and why this time she does seem to want sex with him, because we do not get any insight into her thoughts. Melanie is clearly upset when she arrives at Lurie's house and asks if she can stay the night. The next morning she bursts into tears, but refuses to tell Lurie what is bothering her. Perhaps she feels as if she has nowhere else to go because getting comfort from other people would mean confiding in them, but this is merely speculation. However, Lurie's idea that she is playing a game because "she is in his house, trailing complications behind her" (27) does not seem plausible, especially considering the negative consequences for Melanie of their involvement. Despite the fact that she is upset, they have sex once more. This time the description shows that she is involved in the act, because "she hooks a leg behind his buttocks to draw him in closer" (29). It is somewhat understandable that the fact that she has sex with him again, voluntarily as far as the reader can tell, makes Lurie and perhaps others less inclined to think about their previous encounter as rape. However, one or more instances of consensual sex, even within a long-term relationship, do not negate the instance in which everything shows that she does not wish to sleep with him.

Everything described above makes it unsurprising that her involvement with Lurie has clear negative consequences for Melanie. She stops coming to class, and wants to quit her studies altogether. After Melanie has reported Lurie for harassment, Lurie's ex-wife mentions rumours that Melanie has attempted suicide by taking sleeping pills (45). Regardless of whether this specifically is true, it is clear that Melanie suffers as a result of Lurie's pursuit of her, which lends support to a reading of their relationship as at least partially non-consensual. Lurie, however, still seems unable to put himself in Melanie's position. He is surprised that "Melanie-Meláni ... takes things to heart. He would not have guessed it" (37). This shows remarkable insensitivity on Lurie's part because despite his earlier awareness that the sex he

had with her was “undesired to the core” (25), he can somehow not guess or understand why she would be affected.

The racial dimension of Lurie’s relationship with Melanie has been touched upon earlier, but warrants further exploration because it is rooted in centuries of inequality. As Ferodia Rassool points out during the committee hearing, it is impossible to truly understand the nuances of this situation without “mention of the long history of exploitation of which this is part” (53). There are many stereotypes about the sexuality of women of colour. Black and Latina women are often portrayed as much more sexual and available than white women, whereas Asian women are seen as meek and submissive. Throughout history – especially during the era of colonisation and slavery – white men have used the power they had over women of colour to pursue sexual relations that these women could not refuse. Although this is no longer legally the case in South Africa, these persistent stereotypes probably subconsciously added to Lurie’s inability to see what he did to Melanie as rape.

Lurie knows that Melanie is harmed by what happened, but he still believes that she cannot possibly be the one who decides to report him. Other people, such as her father, cousin, or boyfriend must have made her do it because “Melanie would not have taken such a step by herself, he is convinced. She is too innocent for that, too ignorant of her power” (39). This, combined with his surprise at the fact that Melanie suffers from what happened, gives the impression that Lurie does not view her as a whole person with thoughts, opinions and agency. Despite her father’s phone call and the fact that she stops attending class, Lurie still does not expect that he will be reported at all, and when it happens he shifts the blame away from himself and the power of choosing to report him away from Melanie: “There was a battle of some kind going on that I wasn’t privy to. There was a jealous boyfriend. There were indignant parents. She must have crumpled in the end” (45).

4.3 The Aftermath of Lucy's Rape

Before delving into the way in which Lucy and Lurie deal with the attack and its aftermath, it is important to address the criticism *Disgrace* received for its portrayal of the rape of a white woman by a group of black men. As Gertrude Makhaya explains, for some readers the attack seemed to prove the thinking behind apartheid in the first place: “once the ‘savages’ are in power, chaos reigns, and under the cover of lawlessness they exact revenge, stealing white property and raping white women”. This is not to say that this was the intended reading of the attack, but it does play into the old, yet prevalent, stereotypes of black men as violent and dangerous. In a world, and more specifically a society, that still faces huge issues of racism and where black men face real problems because of their perceived violence, such a depiction is not isolated and harmless.

What happens to Lucy is clearly juxtaposed with what happens to Melanie. Whereas Lurie, and others, may not view what he did to Melanie as rape, there is no doubt in anyone's mind that Lucy was raped. One often hears various arguments that blame rape victims for what happened to them because they were dressed provocatively; because they willingly went home with someone; because they did not fight their attacker forcefully enough, or many other nonsensical arguments. These attitudes contribute to the idea that Lurie did not actually rape Melanie, even though – as explained above – it is evident that he does on at least one of their encounters. With Lucy, on the other hand, there cannot be anyone who does not view what happens to her as rape. The attack on Lucy conforms to the general idea of ‘real’ rape: rape committed by strangers against someone who appears modest and not seductive.

Because Lurie is more invested in Lucy's than in Melanie's well-being, the reader gets more insight into Lucy's thoughts and development than Melanie's, but only insofar as she is willing to share them with Lurie. This makes it somewhat difficult to get a clear view of Lucy's motivation behind her actions, because the only information available is what

eventually ends up with Lurie, either because Lucy tells him directly, or because others tell him. Combined with Lurie's thoughts about Lucy's choices, there is a fair amount of information to analyse concerning Lucy, but it is necessary to make assumptions about her exact thoughts, since they are not always made explicit.

Understanding Lucy's feelings and motivations is complicated further by the fact that she is unwilling to tell Lurie exactly what happened to her, although he clearly knows that she was raped, presumably because she believes he cannot understand. Additionally, she urges Lurie to only tell people what happened to him, and to leave it up to her to whom she tells her story, if she decides to tell it at all (99). Lucy does tell her friend Bev what happened to her in more detail, probably because Lucy believes that Bev, being a woman, can better comprehend what she went through than a man could. When Lurie first speaks to her about Lucy, Bev is unwilling to give him any details, stating that he should ask Lucy rather than her (107). Later, when Lurie insists to Bev that he does understand what Lucy went through because he was in the house when it happened she retorts, "[b]ut you weren't there, David. She told me. You weren't" (140). This shows that Bev, and probably also Lucy, indeed believe that Lurie cannot fully empathise with Lucy.

The main points of debate and analysis concerning Lucy centre on the ways in which she deals with the attack. Firstly, she is unwilling to report her rape to the police, insisting that they only report a robbery. Secondly, she decides to stay at her farm, even though the only way to do so somewhat safely is to marry Petrus and sign her land over to him. Lastly, she decides to keep the child conceived from the rape. Lurie seems unable to comprehend why Lucy makes the choices she does, but she has solid, understandable reasons behind her actions although not all of those are made explicit in the novel.

With regards to Lucy's choice to report only the robbery and attack on Lurie, and to leave out the fact that she was raped, one can wonder in how far she really has a choice. She

insists to Lurie that the only reason they reported any crime at all was because otherwise they would not get any reimbursement from the insurance (134), and even that does not lead anywhere quickly. Additionally, the chances of the perpetrators being caught are slim at best, regardless of whether they are wanted for robbery or rape, because as Lurie believes “[i]t happens every day, every hour, every minute, ... in every quarter of the country” (98). It is clear that all Lucy wants to do is move on, to try to get beyond what happened and be able to continue living her life. Already the morning after the attack she wants to go back, clean up and “go on as before”, although Lurie is adamant that she should not “because it’s not a good idea. Because it’s not safe” (105). However, Lucy is unwilling to listen to him: “It was never safe, and it’s not an idea, good or bad. I’m not going back for the sake of an idea. I’m just going back” (105). Reporting the rape would mean giving a detailed account of what happened first to police officers, and later possibly to a judge or jury. Being forced to relive her attack in this way would interfere with Lucy’s desire to leave all this behind as quickly as possible.

Lurie believes that Lucy does not want to report her rape because she is ashamed. In an attempt to convince Lucy to go to the police, he says, “It was a crime. There is no shame in being the object of a crime. You did not choose to be the object. You are an innocent party” (111). Further, when Lucy does not want to go to the market the weekend after, Lurie believes that this is “[b]ecause of the disgrace. Because of the shame. ... Not her story to spread but theirs: they are its owners. How they put her in her place, how they showed her what a woman was for” (115). However, it is not evident that this is in fact Lucy’s reasoning. Considering that only Lurie, Bev and possibly Petrus know that she was raped, it seems unlikely that the people at the market would be anything but supportive and sympathetic. The explanation that Lucy gives could be read as one of shame, but it is not necessarily so. She says, “The reason is that, as far as I am concerned, what happened to me is a purely private matter. In another

time, in another place it might be held to be a public matter. But in this place, in this time, it is not. It is my business, mine alone” (112). One could argue that she considers it a private matter because of shame, but considering the rest of the story it seems more plausible that she feels that making it into anything other than a strictly personal matter will not do her – or anyone else – any good.

Despite Lucy’s insights into the workings of South African society and its changes, she initially does not see how those social relationships might have factored into her attack. When she finally speaks to Lurie about what happened, she explains: “It was so personal. ... It was done with such personal hatred. That was what stunned me more than anything. The rest was ... expected. But why did they hate me so? I had never laid eyes on them” (156). Lurie’s explanation is as follows: “[i]t was history speaking through them,” he offers at last. ‘A history of wrong. Think of it that way, if it helps. It may have seemed personal, but it wasn’t. It came down from the ancestors’” (156). Regardless of whether Lurie’s reasoning is factually correct, it makes sense on a certain level. After years of legalised, institutional oppression that has not yet been eliminated from society, it is understandable that people feel enormous anger against anyone who participates in or benefits from their oppression. Later, Lucy does accept that perhaps these social structures are simply the way they are, and that there is nothing she can do about it:

What if... what if that is the price one has to pay for staying on? Perhaps that is how they look at it; perhaps that is how I should look at it too. They see me as owing something. They see themselves as debt collectors, tax collectors. Why should I be allowed to live here without paying? Perhaps that is what they tell themselves. (158)

This later understanding that this is simply what South Africa is like nowadays seems to be the main reason she decides to try to continue her life like she did before, and to marry Petrus to ensure her safety.

5. Conclusion

Although Lurie is part of the most privileged groups in society – white, male, heterosexual – he loses almost everything and finds himself without any power. He is gradually demoted from society's protagonist to nothing but a minor character without any influence. This loss of power can be seen as symbolic for the overall upheaval of the power structures in post-apartheid South Africa. Lurie's eventual acceptance of this new status quo, which is further emphasised through the changes in his opera, seems to show that the world has indeed changed. In this sense, perhaps the overall theme is compatible with feminism, because any moves towards equality will necessarily involve men and white women having to give up their privilege in society.

The bigger implication hereof seems to be that true equality is impossible. Although it is not explicitly shown that this new world order will indeed have Petrus at the head of it, there seem to be only two options: a racist environment where white people hold power over black people, and a world where the white people – Lucy and Lurie – are powerless in the hands of their black neighbours. Although a move towards equality will always include loss of privilege for the groups in power, the idea that there needs to be a complete reversal of power seems unnecessarily fearful.

However, *Disgrace*'s treatment of female characters and the way in which everything that happens to the women mainly serves the development of Lurie, takes away from any feminism that might be present in the novel. It is understandable that the reader does not get much insight into the female characters' thoughts and motivations, because the story is told from Lurie's limited perspective, but this means that none of the women in *Disgrace* are allowed a depth of emotion and development remotely equivalent to that of Lurie. One could argue that the novel is largely a comment on this exact issue, where Coetzee constantly

explores just how narrow the male point of view can be. However, this self-awareness does not completely negate the problematic elements in the novel. By itself telling a story about a man with women on the margins is not necessarily a fault, but considering how, in literature and media in general, this is the rule rather than the exception, *Disgrace* does not do enough to subvert this.

Further, the women of colour in *Disgrace*, Soraya and Melanie, are minor characters and their main purpose seems to be to further the development of David Lurie. In addition to this, the characters largely fit with the stereotypes about women of colour being more sexually available than white women. The fact that this is Lurie's opinion rather than necessarily Coetzee's, does not absolve the novel from criticism. Characters do not exist in a vacuum, and their opinions are conscious choices, regardless of whether the author shares these opinions. The idea that women of colour are available to white men forces Soraya to leave her job so Lurie can no longer contact her, and Melanie drops out of university for a while. Further, this stereotype of women of colour – especially black women – as sexually promiscuous and available adds to Lurie's inability to see that what he did to Melanie was indeed rape. Although Lurie loses his job and leaves for a self-imposed exile after he is reported to the university, his punishment mainly occurs through the suffering of another woman.

The most problematic and controversial element of *Disgrace* is the attack on Lucy and Lurie. Lucy is violently raped by three black men, who also injure Lurie, kill the dogs and steal their car. For some readers this is simply one of many racist depictions of black men as dangerous and violent. In addition to issues of racism, the violent attack on a woman is used to give us insight into how incapable the male protagonist is of understanding this suffering. Whether or not racism or sexism was in any way intended, the fact that arguably the main event in the novel hinges on such stereotypes is problematic because stories, regardless of

further quality, cannot exist in a vacuum. As long as it is extremely common to see black men depicted as dangerous criminals and where female characters are regularly raped or killed to provide motivation or development for their male counterparts, every story that does not actively subvert such tropes contributes to their continuation.

The guiding question throughout this analysis has been whether or not it is possible to consider *Disgrace* a feminist novel. It is difficult to provide a simple answer because above all *Disgrace* is a complicated and layered novel. As with any ambiguous work of art, the truth probably lies somewhere in the middle. It is too simplistic to dismiss *Disgrace* as a racist or sexist novel altogether, or to claim that Coetzee himself must be racist for writing this story. However, the way in which the plot makes use of old-fashioned tropes that are partially deconstructed but never truly subverted, leads to the conclusion that the novel as a whole cannot be described as a feminist work.

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- het overnemen van gedrukt materiaal zoals boeken, tijdschriften of encyclopedieën zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het opnemen van een vertaling van bovengenoemde teksten zonder aanhalingstekens en verwijzing;
- het parafraseren van bovengenoemde teksten zonder (deugdelijke) verwijzing: parafrasen moeten als zodanig gemarkeerd zijn (door de tekst uitdrukkelijk te verbinden met de oorspronkelijke auteur in tekst of noot), zodat niet de indruk wordt gewekt dat het gaat om eigen gedachtengoed van de student;
- het overnemen van beeld-, geluids- of testmateriaal van anderen zonder verwijzing en zodoende laten doorgaan voor eigen werk;
- het zonder bronvermelding opnieuw inleveren van eerder door de student gemaakt eigen werk en dit laten doorgaan voor in het kader van de cursus vervaardigd oorspronkelijk werk, tenzij dit in de cursus of door de docent uitdrukkelijk is toegestaan;
- het overnemen van werk van andere studenten en dit laten doorgaan voor eigen werk. Indien dit gebeurt met toestemming van de andere student is de laatste medeplichtig aan plagiaat;
- ook wanneer in een gezamenlijk werkstuk door een van de auteurs plagiaat wordt gepleegd, zijn de andere auteurs medeplichtig aan plagiaat, indien zij hadden kunnen of moeten weten dat de ander plagiaat pleegde;
- het indienen van werkstukken die verworven zijn van een commerciële instelling (zoals een internetsite met uittreksels of papers) of die al dan niet tegen betaling door iemand anders zijn geschreven.

De plagiaatregels gelden ook voor concepten van papers of (hoofdstukken van) scripties die voor feedback aan een docent worden toegezonden, voorzover de mogelijkheid voor het insturen van concepten en het krijgen van feedback in de cursushandleiding of scriptieregeling is vermeld.



In de Onderwijs- en Examenregeling (artikel 5.15) is vastgelegd wat de formele gang van zaken is als er een vermoeden van fraude/plagiaat is, en welke sancties er opgelegd kunnen worden.

Onwetendheid is geen excuus. Je bent verantwoordelijk voor je eigen gedrag. De Universiteit Utrecht gaat ervan uit dat je weet wat fraude en plagiaat zijn. Van haar kant zorgt de Universiteit Utrecht ervoor dat je zo vroeg mogelijk in je opleiding de principes van wetenschapsbeoefening bijgebracht krijgt en op de hoogte wordt gebracht van wat de instelling als fraude en plagiaat beschouwt, zodat je weet aan welke normen je je moeten houden.

Hierbij verklaar ik bovenstaande tekst gelezen en begrepen te hebben.

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Studentnummer: *3097331*

Datum en handtekening:

23 sept 2015

Sanne Kalkman

Dit formulier lever je bij je begeleider in als je start met je bacheloreindwerkstuk of je master scriptie.

Het niet indienen of ondertekenen van het formulier betekent overigens niet dat er geen sancties kunnen worden genomen als blijkt dat er sprake is van plagiaat in het werkstuk.