



**Film Adaptation of the Post-Apartheid South African Novel:
Re-examining the Aesthetics of Creation of *Disgrace*.**

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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

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Dedication

To my lovely twin sister, Poko Denise.

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Abstract

While many scholarships of the film adaptation of *Disgrace* have championed the fidelity rhetoric of the film with respect to J.M. Coetzee's novel, and in so doing, have advocated the axiomatic hierarchy of literature over cinema, this dissertation challenges the fidelity discourse about the film and proposes new tropes for adaptation criticism beyond the classical paradigm. Central to the thesis is the argument that a re-examination of Steve Jacobs's feature film *Disgrace* unveils the inconsistency and inadequacy of the fidelity rhetoric as a language for adaptation criticism, positions the film as an independent genre with its specificity and poeticity, and allows for an intertextual dialogue with other post-apartheid South African and postcolonial African cinematic productions as a means of promoting adaptation criticism beyond the fidelity model. While cementing the film's independent status vis-à-vis the novel, the intertextual critique also allows for a rewriting of Jacobs's *Disgrace* that addresses its shortcomings and controversies. Hence, drawing upon structural narratologists such as Gerard Genette, postcolonial scholars such as Gayatri Spivak and Frantz Fanon, and adaptation critics including Linda Hutcheon, Robert Stam, Alexie Tcheuyap, and Lindiwe Dovey, the dissertation explores at a time formal and thematic aesthetics of the film adaptation to diversify its critical avenues not only but also to bridge epistemological gaps left by previous studies which are limited to thematic hermeneutics.

Keywords: Disgrace, film adaptation, aesthetics of creation, post-apartheid, South Africa.

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Chapter 1: Introduction:

Overview of Film Adaptation of Post-Apartheid South African Novel.

1. Problem and Thesis Statements

Film adaptation of South African novels began during the apartheid era with the release of *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1951) directed by Zoltán Korda and based on Alan Paton's novel. Thereafter, many other non-South African film directors adapted South African novels including Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983)¹, Marion Hänsel's *Dust* (1985)², and Euzhan Palcy's *A Dry White Season* (1989)³. The first film adaptation of a South African novel by a South African filmmaker was Katinka Heyns' *Fiela se Kind*⁴, an Afrikaans drama movie that tackles issues of racism, sexism, and class segregation trending in the apartheid context. South African film adaptation of literature starts to flourish in the 1990s through the post-apartheid period according to Lindiwe Dovey. This booming period of South African film adaptation corresponds to the third periodical trend in African film identified by Imrah Bakari⁵. Yet filmmakers⁶ continue to adapt South African literature written during apartheid with the objective of screening narratives that foster nation-building (Dovey, 2009:5). Thus, Darrell Roodt's *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1995), provides a more hopeful future of South Africa in the aftermath of apartheid by showing the path of tolerance and compassion between the two protagonists, the black pastor Stephen Kumalo, and the white landowner James Jarvis. Non-South African filmmakers also contributed to the field with Jason Xenopoulos' *Promised Land* (2002)⁷, and Ciro Guerra's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (2019)⁸. Although some filmmakers in the post-apartheid period still adapt novels written in the

¹ Based on Laurens van der Post's *The Seed and the Sower* (1963)

² Based on J. M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* (1977)

³ Based on André Brink's novel (1979)

⁴ Based on Dalene Matthee's 1985 novel *Fiela's Child*.

⁵ Imrah Bakari has identified two major historical trends in post-colonial African film and film adaptation. The first trend from 1955 to 1995 and the second trend from 1995 to date corresponds in South Africa with the post-apartheid period.

⁶ Darrell Roodt's *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1995), Timothy Greene's *Boy Called Twist* (2004), David Lister's *The Story of an African Farm* (2004), Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi* (2005).

⁷ Based on the 1978 English translation of Karel Schoeman's award-winning Afrikaans novel, *Na die Geliefde Land* (1972).

⁸ Based on J.M. Coetzee's novel (1980).

apartheid era, several of them show interest in the adaptation of post-apartheid novels. Non-South Africans set the stage with Tom Hooper's *Red Dust* (2004)⁹ and Steve Jacobs's *Disgrace* (2008) before making way to a wave of South African film adaptations of novels comprising Donovan Marsh's *Spud* (2010)¹⁰, Henk Pretorius' *Fanie Fourie's Lobola* (2013)¹¹, Thabang Moleya's *Happiness is a Four Letter-Word* (2016)¹², Oliver Schmitz's *Shepherds and Butchers* (2016)¹³, Christiaan Olwagen's *Poppie Nongena* (2020)¹⁴, etc. Screening narratives about nation-building remain predominant in the practice of adaptation of the early years of post-apartheid South Africa, but other themes are concomitantly explored namely the recovery of the African past, the fight against colonialism, the anti-apartheid struggle (Gugler, 2003:vi-vii).

However, while adapted films of novels are flourishing generally in Africa, and in South Africa particularly, scholarship on film adaptation still appears embryonic. Consequently, Alexie Tcheuyap invites African critics of film adaptation to carry the responsibility of confronting the filmic and the literary texts to display the process of rewriting from one medium to another and the resulting aesthetic and ideological transformation (2011:261), hence my interest in the research field. In this regard, my dissertation explores the creative process of a film based on a post-apartheid South African novel. To do so, I will focus on a corpus involving Steve Jacobs's film *Disgrace*¹⁵ (2008) and J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*¹⁶ (1999); hence my research topic: "Film Adaptation of Post-Apartheid South African Novel: Re-examining the Aesthetics of Creation of *Disgrace*". To this effect, my dissertation re-examines the aesthetical features of Jacobs's feature film inspired by Coetzee's novel to underline how the film relates to the novel and how the novel is re-read through the film. I also explore the film as a specific and autonomous genre that engages with other cinematic texts in an intertextual dialogue. I argue that a reconsideration of Jacobs's *Disgrace* unveils the inconsistency and inadequacy of the fidelity rhetoric attached to it, positions the film as an independent genre with its specificity and poeticity, and allow for an intertextual dialogue with other cinematic productions as a means of promoting adaptation criticism beyond the fidelity discourse. While cementing the film's independent status vis-à-vis the novel, the approach to

⁹ Based on Gillian Slovo's novel (2000).

¹⁰ Based on John van de Ruit's novel (2005).

¹¹ Based on Nape 'a Motana's novel (2007).

¹² Based on Nozizwe Cynthia Jele's novel (2010).

¹³ Based on Chris Marnewick's novel (2008).

¹⁴ Elsa Joubert's English translation novel *The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena* (2002).

¹⁵ Steve Jacobs' *Disgrace*, which remains to date the only adaptation of Coetzee's novel, also earned international acclaim by winning the International Critics Prize at the Toronto International Film Festival.

¹⁶ Coetzee's *Disgrace* is an award-winning novel and one of the best in the South African post-apartheid era.

the intertextual aesthetics of creation also allows for a rewriting of Jacobs's *Disgrace* that addresses its shortcomings and controversies. But what is the rationale of my research project? And what are its guiding questions?

2. Rationale and Research Questions

The adaptation criticism of *Disgrace* has been so far limited to the fidelity model with many scholarships claiming that the film emulates its source novel thereby presupposing the precedence of literature over film. However, it appears that the fidelity rhetoric that champions the axiomatic hierarchy subordinating Jacobs's *Disgrace* to Coetzee's *Disgrace* constitutes, as Linda Hutcheon maintains, an inadequate trope for adaptation critique. I think it is because Jacobs's *Disgrace* can be analysed as an autonomous genre with its specifics and poetics. Besides, the film and the novel bear equal status and value and entertain "a dialogue offering mutual benefit and cross-fertilization" (Stam 2005:4). Consequently, unlike previous scholarships on Jacobs's *Disgrace*, I will challenge the fidelity rhetoric of the film adaptation and explore the film aesthetics as a specific medium independent from the novel. I will also research how the adaptation practice is a source of enrichment of the novel's narrative based on the film's idiosyncratic aesthetics and poetics. From this perspective, my dissertation will furthermore explore the intertextual aesthetics of Jacobs's *Disgrace* with other film adaptations of novels as an alternative approach to adaptation criticism beyond the fidelity discourse. In this respect, I will also propose a rewriting of the film narrative that transcends the fidelity rhetoric to address the film's shortcomings and controversies. As a result, the following questions will guide my research: how does the adapted film further engage narratively with the novel within and beyond the fidelity theory of adaptation? What is the specificity of the film *Disgrace* as a genre, and what does it entail in its creative process that the novel cannot because of the media differences? And how does the film engage in an intertextual dialogue with other contemporary film narratives as a genre with its own aesthetics of creation? Going forward, I now explore the existing literature of my research topic.

3. Literature Review

This section includes a brief survey of scholarship on African and South African film adaptations and a scholarship on the adapted film *Disgrace*.

3.1. Scholarship on African and South African Film Adaptation

Scholarship on film adaptation in South Africa forms part of the adaptation criticism in Africa which is still developing. Alexie Tcheuyap is the precursor of African adaptation criticism. His *De l'écrit à l'écran: Les Réécritures Filmiques du Cinéma Africain Francophone* (2005) constitutes the first-ever book¹⁷ on adaptation study by an African critic (Dovey, 2009:11). Henceforth, he is a reference to other adaptation critics whom he invites to engage with the filmic and the literary texts to display the process of rewriting from one medium to another and the resulting aesthetic and ideological transformation (2014:261). Tcheuyap challenges the traditional and western-based approach of film adaptation revolving around the fidelity-theory which interprets adaptation as a work that respects or betrays the original text in this case the source novel. By contrast, Tcheuyap grants literature and film equal value and status and makes film adaptation an autonomous genre just like literature. The concern, he argues, “is not the subjugation of a medium or a text, but that of the various creative, poetic and ideological processes implied in the repetition that brings change to any rewriting” (2001:3). Thus, his critical theory of rewriting or poetics of repetition challenges the conventional adaptation theory. One major issue, however, with his approach was to minimize the question of authorship essential to African film directors, which has led South African critics such as Lindiwe Dovey to further theorize adaptation study.

Lindiwe Dovey, in *African Film and Literature: Adapting Violence to the Screen*, addresses mainly the question of violence in African film adaptations. She focuses her work both on West African francophone and South African adapted films. Dovey agrees with Tcheuyap on the equivalence of status between literature and film, but whereas Tcheuyap is concerned with the adaptation of African literature to film, Dovey deals with the adaptation of African literature to African film (2009:11). Tcheuyap's work, she claims, targets general film aesthetics whereas she is interested “in teasing out the aesthetics of African cinema” (2009:11) using not only the performative approach that puts the African filmmaker in relation with the African film spectator, both performing in the art of adaptation, the former at a creative level and the latter at a receptive level; but also the mimetic approach understood as a rational mode of being as opposed to the embodied mode of performative theoreticians. Therefore, Lindiwe Dovey demarcates from both the fidelity-theory of adaptation and Tcheuyap's poetics of repetition to explore the aesthetics of an African form of film adaptation.

¹⁷ The book can be translated as follows *From the Page to the Screen: Filmic Rewritings of Francophone African Cinema*.

Her work constitutes an important contribution to adaptation criticism in Africa because her theorization of film adaptation represents the first attempt by African critics to conceptualize African aesthetics of film adaptation. Previous and subsequent South African film scholars have either considered the traditional fidelity-betrayal paradigm of adaptation such as Ian Gleen in “Betraying and Delivering: Filming *Disgrace*” (2011) or focused on thematic criticism of adapted films. Others such as Litheko Modisane, in *South Africa’s Renegade Reels: The Making and Public Lives of Black-Centered Films*, have broadly discussed South African films without specifically targeting adaptation, but rather the public reception and criticism of black-centered South African films in relation to themes of black identity, gender, sexuality, and violence (2013:2). Dovey's work, however, deals broadly with film adaptation of literature and focuses exclusively on adapted films by African and South African film directors thereby excluding adapted films of South African novels by non-African filmmakers. Therefore, drawing on both Tcheuyap and Dovey remains crucial to analyze the aesthetics of creation of *Disgrace* film adaptation which has recorded a few scholarly critiques.

3.2. Scholarship on *Disgrace* and Critical Trends

A survey of *Disgrace* mainly reveals three critical trends including its controversial reception, the question of its textual fidelity, and its thematic appraisal. Firstly, Steve Jacobs' *Disgrace* was affected by the contentious aura of the novel which has elicited much controversy in South Africa. Costaguta Mattos observes that the novel received adverse criticism due to its explosive storyline and its handling of the racial predicament (2012:12). The African National Congress (ANC), she reported, condemned the book for an alleged racist portrayal of the black characters. Besides, Nadine Gordimer argues that *Disgrace* does not contain “one black person who is a real human being” (2012:12) while Rachel Donadio and Chris van Wyk’s also criticize the novel as racist with the latter affirming that “the white characters are fleshed out, the black evildoers are not” (Donadio, 2007). In this context, Steve Jacob believed that his adapted film would reflect the book in creating a degree of controversy “in a productive way, not sensationalist. It will press some buttons that are deep in all of us” (O’Hara, 2013:13). Steve Jacobs, as Nahar reveals, admitted that the aim was to reproduce faithfully the novel’s intrigue, and if controversy is found in the novel, then it will be found as well in the film (Nahar, 2015:38). Yet, Steve Jacobs himself adopts a neutral position with regards to Coetzee’s explosive plot since he explains that “it was a surgical examination of a situation, not an argument for or against the situation. It is like you are a witness rather than a participant” (Tait,

2009). Nonetheless, as Glenn observes, local black actors refused to incarnate the black characters of the novel including Petrus given his awkward role in endorsing rape (2009:81). Thus, many critics felt that *Disgrace*'s intrigue tends to inflame interracial tension and hatred instead of promoting nation-building in the post-apartheid era.

Secondly, several critics maintain that the film *Disgrace* constitutes a loyal reproduction of the novel. Fidelity in adaptation, as Marguerite O'Hara argues, consists of "being true to the tone and intention of the original text" (O'Hara, 2013:5). It requires compliance with "the question of essences" (Rushdie, 2009). In this respect, Marguerite O'Hara discloses Jacobs's intention to make the film truthful to Coetzee's masterpiece by "portraying South Africa as a complex society wrestling with the aftermath of Apartheid" (O'Hara, 2013:12). Thus, Steve Jacobs was concerned with fidelity right from the beginning of his adaptation project. Besides, the screenplay by Anna-Maria Monticelli was submitted to Coetzee for approval, to ensure that the film reflects the novel. Consequently, for O'Hara, the film is a faithful adaptation of the novel (2013:2). However, other critics adopt a rather mitigated position. Ian Gleen argues that Steve Jacobs's film "betrays" the source novel while rendering accurately its tenseness and conflicts (2011:269). Yet, Gleen's meaning of betrayal is not one of disloyalty but refers to the hidden problems underpinning the novel that the film brings to light (2011:270). Hence, while the film reflects the original narrative of the novel, Gleen claims, it tends at the same time to expose its dramatic limitations (2011:270). Moreover, Steve Jacobs asserts in an interview with Anders Watzke (2009) that the film's merit remains its universality rather than its confinement to South Africa thereby fueling some viewers' claim that the film betrays the novel as a purely national production that embodies fully the South African landscape and sociocultural identity. Besides, Watzke holds that the film *Disgrace* is undeniably Australian albeit its grounding in South Africa. Echoing such opinion, Ian-Malcolm Rijdsdijk also states that the film aimed at translating South African predicaments and specificities into univocal and morally accessible utterances for an international audience (2014:28). Therefore, while the novel thoroughly concerns South Africa, "its history, places, subjugations, and displacements" (2014:27), the film, by contrast, carries a "universal appeal" (Watzke, 2009). As a result, Rijdsdijk notes, the director's stake in universality affects the film's grounding on a specified place associated with South African socio-political situations. Thus, he assents to say that "despite being a book about South Africa, *Disgrace* the film is Australian, at least more so than it is South African" (2014:27-28). Yet, it does not refrain some scholars such as Derilene Marco to number *Disgrace* among South African films in *Films About South*

Africa 1987–2014: Representations of 'The Rainbow (2016). Still, this leaves critics divided about the textual fidelity of *Disgrace* because of the hiatus between the complete grounding of the novel in South Africa, and the opening of the film to an international framework.

Thirdly, most scholarships on *Disgrace* have examined major themes of the film narrative. In this regard, disgrace and guilt constitute for critics a preeminent subject in the film's plot. Derilene Marco argues that post-apartheid white masculinity must take responsibility for shame and guilt. She claims that films such as *Disgrace* stress bold and unusual representations of whiteness including the disintegration of white power and a vain resistance, that is, the reluctance to embrace a new social order which comes with a vulgar and violent auto-defense (2016:180). Focusing on the protagonist David Lurie, she considers "white bodies in ways that make the bodies shameful, display guilt and problematizes whiteness in general" (2016:181). She asserts that "the film brings to light the discomfort with viewing the white body" (2016:181) given the continuous struggles of Lurie in the grip of sexual addictions leading to his downfall and shameful fate. Yet Lurie tends to defend himself from shame through his stubbornness not to show remorse and apologize for his sexual abuse over his student. Nonetheless, as Derilene Marco maintains, "this intransigence, this shamelessness, speaks not of his lack of shame, but its fullness, its opacity" (qtd. in Bewes, 2010:163). Besides, she also argues that Lurie faces an overwhelming issue of guilt which he admitted before the disciplinary committee investigating his sexual affairs. Hence, for Derilene Marco, shame and guilt represent in the film, existential markers of the downfall of Lurie and the decline of white supremacy in the post-apartheid world. Nonetheless, disgrace and guilt in the film are echoes of the novel because Lurie's disgrace runs throughout the book. Thuy Anh identifies different stages of Lurie's disgrace in Coetzee's narrative: his abandonment by the sex-worker Soraya, his sexual malversation with his student, his suffering from the rape of his daughter Lucy by three black men (2020:191;193). It further corroborates the view that the film reflects the novel wherein Lurie's disgrace evokes a disgraceful state of South Africans' collective guilt in the post-apartheid era.

In addition, rape and racial tensions are also preponderant in the film scholarship and intertwine since rape occurs in the context of interracial tensions and violations. Derilene Marco interprets rape in the film as a metaphor for power and defeat. It is not only an instrument of force and domination but also of a setback in the case of Lurie. She argues that through rape film characters in *Disgrace* exercise the power that they are unable to perform ordinarily (2016:205). Thus, rape becomes both a transposition of the declining power of white

masculinity incarnated by Lurie over vulnerable subjects and the expression of the rising power of black masculinity characterized by Petrus and the black rapists. Anyhow, rape and racial tensions in the film are depicted as serious plagues that hit the new South Africa. Besides, Ian Gleen observes that the climax of the film remains the violent attack of blacks on whites resulting in Lucy's rape (2011:275). Similarly, themes of rape and race that are developed by the film critics resonate with the critics of the novel which adds to the argument of textual fidelity. In this sense, Costaguta Mattos explains Lucy's rape by black men's gang as an act of vengeance perpetrated in response to the racial segregation and tensions enforced by the old apartheid regime (2012:29). Meanwhile, Assefa D.T. describes rape as concomitant to the turnaround of power struggle in the post-apartheid era characterized by blacks' majority rule and the disintegration of whites' minority supremacy (2019:1). Moreover, Carine Mardorossian revisits the controversy about *Disgrace's* "dark and pessimistic assessment of post-apartheid race relations" (2011:72) and insists that it is the victimization of the white woman and the perverse characterization of blacks that fan white paranoia and promote violent clichés about South Africa (2011:73). However, the thematic appraisal of the film narrative leaves a gap that my consideration of structural narratology will address. Likewise, anterior studies on the film *Disgrace* are limited to the scope of the fidelity rhetoric, and hence, the requirement for new critical tropes beyond the fidelity model. At this juncture, I now introduce the main theoretical framework of my research.

4. Theoretical Framework

Theorizing film adaptation of South African novels involves primarily a definition of adaptation which I consider with Linda Hutcheon in *A Theory of Adaptation* as both a product and a process: a product, that is, a formal entity involving a shift of medium – novel to film –; and a twofold process, first of creation involving re-interpretation and re-creation; and then of reception destined to a certain audience (2006:7-8). Thereafter, it requires that one bears in mind that adaptation criticism, as Robert Stam argues in *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*, “has tended to emphasize the cinema's impairments and disabilities vis-à-vis the novel” (2005:20), and detractors of adaptation label it with pejorative qualifiers such as “infidelity”, “deformation”, “violation” and “desecration” (2005:3). This, I declare, discredits the notion of adaptation which pejorative connotation implies for Tcheuyap an “aesthetic of representation” (2005:30), and hence, he replaces film adaptation with the concept of “film rewriting” that allows for autonomy and alterity based on

the repetition of an act of creation (2005:30). In this context, I must say that film adaptation remains a battlefield for scholarly theories concerning the relationship between film and literature, and several arguments, as Robert Stam mentions, give precedence to literature over film. Indeed, the argument from historical precedence that holds senior arts as essentially superior, as well as the beliefs in iconophobia and logophilia (2005:4-6) all champion the hierarchical debate between literature and cinema in which critics often tend to value more the literary source than the adapted film. However, if the logic of seniority were true, literature itself should be considered as a lesser art compared to orature given the anteriority of the spoken word over the written word. Besides, I wonder with Linda Hutcheon why adaptations are omnipresent and keep increasing in numbers worldwide if they are such inferior and auxiliary creations (2006:4). Henceforth, I argue that adapted films are as important as their source novels. In the process, my study of film adaptation considers the creative features that define its medium specificity as opposed to the novelistic art or what Stam names the “automatic difference” (2005:16). In other words, I buttress my analysis with Stam's view that adaptation entails a “shift (...) from a single-track, uniquely verbal medium such as the novel to a multitrack medium like film, which can play not only with words but also with music, sound effect, and moving photographic images” (2005:17). Therefore, examining the aesthetics of creation of adaptation also engages in my view the question of media specificity and the generic difference between the adapted film and the source novel *Disgrace*. Hence, critics such as Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon, Alexie Tcheuyap, Lindiwe Dovey principally will help to buttress my critique of *Disgrace* at the level of adaptation theory.

Furthermore, considering that Coetzee is a postcolonial writer and his novel *Disgrace* (1999) that inspired Steve Jacobs's film adaptation *Disgrace* (2008) is foregrounded in the backdrop of post-apartheid South Africa, my adaptation criticism draws as well on the postcolonial theory. Postcolonialism does not just apply, as Ania Loomba explains, to a period “coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly [to] the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism [which] incorporate the history of anti-colonial resistance with contemporary resistances to imperialism and dominant western culture” (1998:12). But because colonialism itself was nowhere monolithic according to Pal Ahluwalia, so the postcolonial theory “embodies the effects of colonialism, whilst recognizing the specificity of each case in which it is deployed” (2001:4). In South Africa precisely, the colonial period incorporates the apartheid era, and the postcolonial phase likewise correlates with the post-apartheid period. In “What do we call Post-apartheid”, Judith

Hayem alleges that post-apartheid evokes a political rupture and a change of social order that began after the end of apartheid (2017:3). Apartheid – "apartness" in Afrikaans – was created in 1944 referring to South Africa's official legislation of racial segregation between white and non-white peoples and was implemented by the National Party government from 1948 to 1994. In 1994, the election of Nelson Mandela officially marked the abolition of apartheid and inaugurates the democratic and post-apartheid era. The end of apartheid and the colonial history of settlers please John Coetzee, having himself opposed the racial segregation, and the novel *Disgrace*, which Steve Jacobs adapted into a film, constitutes a postcolonial writing that demands a postcolonial reading fitting the South African transition-era. Therefore, postcolonial scholars including Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon among others will serve to explore *Disgrace* thematization and its grounding in post-apartheid South Africa as an integral part of its aesthetics of creation.

In this connection, aesthetics of creation as a concept constitutes "a vast scholarly system" (2010:47) as Gao Xingjian claims, which involves philosophers' attempts to explain the world and artistic creation. And to create is to engender a novel reality that needs for it to be aesthetically valuable to embody, as Michael Matias mentions, "certain qualities which appeal not only to the sensibility but also to the imagination" (1982:100). In this context, my perception of aesthetics deals closely with works of fiction whereby the aesthetics of creation refers to the literary and filmic works and concerns the creative knowledge, or what Rancière, calls "the ways of doing and making" (2004:22) of arts by the adaptation filmmaker and the novelist who inspires his work. Henceforth, my understanding of aesthetics of creation of *Disgrace* refers to the aesthetical features emerging from the adaptation of the novel into film and its anchoring into post-apartheid South Africa. After defining the theoretical framework, I now outline the chapters of my dissertation and the inherent methodological delineations.

5. Chapters Outline and Methodological Delineations

My dissertation is composed of five (5) chapters. In the introductory chapter, I provide an overview of film adaptation of post-apartheid South African novel. This section initially comprises the problem and thesis statements of my research, then its rationale and guiding questions. It also presents the literature review of my research field, followed by its theoretical framework, and finally the chapters' outline and methodological delineations.

In the second chapter, I challenge the fidelity rhetoric of the film adaptation of *Disgrace* from the perspective of structural narratology not only but based also on thematic

considerations while foregrounding the critical lenses in adaptation and postcolonial theories. I also unveil the film narrative shortcomings. My approach to structural narratology aligns with Genette's narratological framework on which film narratologists have drawn substantial principles – order, voice, focalization, etc. – for adaptation criticism (Stam, 2005:32). Thus, these narrative devices will help to account for "the shift, in adaptation, from a single-track, uniquely verbal medium such as the novel to a multitrack medium like film, which can play not only with words but also with music, sound effects, and moving photographic images" (2005:17) that convey film aesthetics.

The third chapter explores the aesthetics of Jacobs's *Disgrace* as a specific medium different from the novel and with its poetics of creation. In this section, I use the medium-specificity thesis along with Alexie Tcheuyap's theory of poetics of rewriting to explore the film aesthetics. I further problematize the fidelity model of adaptation by underlining narrative alterations that contrast the novel and the film *Disgrace*. Thus, it is a comparative analysis that takes the differences in cinematic and literary forms into account to underline especially the film features and creativeness.

The fourth chapter deals with the intertextual critique of Jacobs's *Disgrace* whereby I analyse the textual dialogue between the film *Disgrace* and other contemporary films to explore the acquaintances across cinematic aesthetics as a critical approach to adaptation that transcends the fidelity rhetoric. Intertextuality like the other critical theories is embedded not only in the adaptation framework that questions the fidelity model but also in the postcolonial reading of the film narrative fitting the post-apartheid South African context.

The fifth chapter is a general conclusion wherein I assess the aesthetics of creation of the film adaptation of *Disgrace* based on the different critical theories. Besides, I briefly underline how the film enhances the novel narrative and envision areas for further research in the film adaptation criticism.

Chapter 2: Critique of *Disgrace* Film Adaptation within and beyond Narrative Fidelity.

Introduction

Film adaptation constitutes a battleground for scholars concerning the relationship between film and literature. Accordingly, Robert Stam argues that adaptation criticism has stressed the film's deficiencies compared to the novel (2005:20) thereby problematizing the hierarchical debate between literature and cinema wherein critics often favour the former over the latter. As a result, "fidelity criticism", as Linda Hutcheon affirms, "was the critical orthodoxy in adaptation studies" (2006:6-7) to the extent that previous criticisms of Jacobs's *Disgrace* uphold the fidelity approach. However, this chapter seeks to challenge the fidelity thesis of the film adaptation of *Disgrace* and the critical tendency of giving precedence to literature over film. Consequently, I argue that the comparative reappraisal of *Disgrace* film adaptation shows that narrative confluence of Jacobs's *Disgrace* with Coetzee's *Disgrace* speaks less of coherence of the fidelity discourse than its inconsistency not only, but also magnify problematic aspects of the novel which anathematize fidelity as a theory of adaptation. To scrutinize *Disgrace* narrative, I will draw on the one hand, on the structural theories of Todorov and Genette. Tsvetan Todorov's underlying structure of narration includes a state of equilibrium and then disequilibrium, a recognition of the disequilibrium, and a reinstatement of the equilibrium (Lacey, 2000:101-102). And Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* constitutes "one of the central achievements of (...) structuralism" (Culler, 1980:7) and provides "the most thorough attempt we have to identify, name and illustrate the basic constituents and techniques of narrative" (1980:7). Genette's analytic categories of narrative not only accommodate Todorov's sequential partition of the text but also comprise other aspects such as order, voice, focalization, etc. which are key to the structural study of *Disgrace* narrative discourse. On the other hand, I will concomitantly engage with both the adaptation and postcolonial theories to explore *Disgrace* narrative. While adaptation critics such as Robert Stam and Linda Hutcheon will help in challenging the rhetoric of fidelity about *Disgrace*, postcolonial scholars including Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, and others will serve to address the film's thematization and its contextualization in post-apartheid South Africa.

1. The Narrative Structure in *Disgrace*

I must start by noting that the film adaptation mimics the novel's title "Disgrace" which suggests the filmmaker's choice to emulate the novelist by shaping its narrative structure around the leitmotiv of Lurie's dishonour. Hence, the title "Disgrace", as a paratextual element, indicates the idea of opprobrium, that is, a condition of shame, and is significant in both the novel and the film since both the reader and the viewer of *Disgrace*, as they journey with Lurie, become accustomed to the linearity of his fall from grace that characterizes the narrative structure. In that regard, narrative structure or order refers to the sequencing of the story in terms of temporal linearity or temporal anachrony. In temporal linearity, the story unfolds in chronological order following "the normal sequentiality of the putatively 'real' events proceeding from beginning through middle to end" (Stam, 2005:32) whereas temporal anachrony scrambles the ordinary sequentiality of events. From the above, proponents of adaptation fidelity argue that Jacobs's *Disgrace* emulates the narrative linearity of Coetzee's *Disgrace* owing to what Stam calls the argument from "historical anteriority and seniority" (2005:4) of the novel over the film. Indeed, Coetzee's *Disgrace* follows a regular order leading Lurie to gradual stages of losing grace successively with Soraya, Melanie, and alongside his daughter Lucy. I agree with Nicola Moffat to consider Lurie's disgraces as the first half of the novel to which the title refers (2018:406). The second half deals more with the aftermath of Lurie's violent assault by three black men who raped Lucy. It also adheres, in my view, to narrative linearity. Such a narrative schema relates to the disgraces of apartheid insofar as Lurie's downfall and his subsequent quest for redemption echo the disintegration of white power in the transition from apartheid to the post-apartheid era.

Likewise, Jacobs's *Disgrace* follows the sequential linearity. In my view, the opening scene correlates with the opening pages in what I consider as a narrative state of equilibrium wherein Lurie indulges in his erotic moments with the sex-worker Soraya. The film's narrative disequilibrium, as in the novel, occurs to my mind when Lurie sexually abuses his student, Melanie Isaacs (Jacobs 00:09:00) thereby triggering his downfall and engendering a series of narrative conflicts that echo the novel's tensions and culminate in his daughter's rape (00:40:40) which ends the first part of the film. The second part begins with the aftermath of the attack on Lucy's farm that corresponds to the film's climax whereby Lurie's suffering from his daughter's rape by three black men and the ensuing breakdown of their relationship reminds him of his sexual abuse of Melanie Isaacs. It corresponds as well to the novel's peak. Henceforth, he undertakes a "long walk to freedom", that is, to forgiveness and reconciliation

with the Isaacs thereby bringing the film narrative to its resolution which mirrors the falling action of Coetzee's intrigue. The film ends with a new equilibrium: after admitting his sexual abuse of Melanie and asking for forgiveness, Lurie returns to Salem to settle alongside his daughter and start afresh, a denouement that echoes the political period of the TRC and the relation between forgiveness and retrieving "grace" during this epoch of South Africa's postcolonial history. Consequently, critics champion adaptation fidelity by relying on the structural concordance between Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Jacobs's *Disgrace* and assuming, as Stam asserts, that the novel's linear structure belongs to "an original core, a kernel of meaning and events which can be 'delivered' by an adaptation" (2005:15). Such core is a result of critical construction that renders possible the fidelity discourse of narrative from novel to film.

However, I argue that the fidelity discourse applied to *Disgrace* narrative structure is not without question. Indeed, the novel's structural field consists of written narration of twenty-four chapters of two-hundred-and-twenty pages that follow Lurie's travels from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape. Conversely, the film linearity that depicts Lurie's journeys from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape uses the continuity editing of twelve sequences of seventy-three scenes which "works to create a coherent and stable visual space in which the viewer feels securely engaged and able to move easily from one mise-en-scene to another without any disorienting breaks in the diegesis" (Fulton, 2005:119). From this perspective, it is noteworthy that the narrative linearity from the novel to the film differs in their constructional components making the fidelity thesis somewhat inconsistent. Moreover, the ending of Jacobs's *Disgrace* scrambles in my view the new equilibrium of its linear narration not in the sense of temporal anachrony – analepsis or prolepsis – but in the sense of precedence of events in the narrative structure. It inverts the scene of Lurie's euthanasia of his favourite dog with the closing scene of his ultimate visit to his daughter. Coetzee's *Disgrace* rather proceeds the other way round and ends with Lurie giving up his dog for euthanasia. Thus, I consider this rearrangement in the film to be significant because it generates in my opinion a nonuniformity of linear narration from novel to film that challenges the idea of adaptation fidelity. In this respect, I assert that Jacobs's *Disgrace* is not a replication of Coetzee's *Disgrace* but a recreation; and adaptation, as Linda Hutcheon claims, is precisely "a process of creation [that] always involves both re-interpretation and then re-creation" (2006:8). In other words, film adaptation, to underpin Hutcheon's view, constitutes a derived work no less creative endowed with its own palimpsest. Therefore, I maintain that the historicity or anteriority of Coetzee's *Disgrace* does not make of Jacobs's *Disgrace* an adjunct work which legitimacy is determined by an alleged accuracy to

a senior work. Moving forward with the comparative analysis of the novel and the film, the next section further challenges the adaptation fidelity model through the problematization in *Disgrace* of Lurie's narrative voice and focalization.

2. Adapting Lurie's Narrative Voice and Focalization

If Coetzee's bleak picture of the post-apartheid South Africa has caused so much controversy that had earned the novel the ANC's and President Mbeki's censure (Lucy Graham, 2003:434-435), it is largely because "the novel's vision of the new South Africa", as Anne Longmuir pointed out, "is really the vision of its protagonist, the white middle-aged academic David Lurie" (2007:1) with all his prejudices and without "the counterbalance of an authoritative third-person narrator who can judge him [and] provide a moral compass" (Roy, 2012:700). This is to say that there is a problematic overreliance of *Disgrace* narrative on Lurie's voice and perspective which is carried over into the adaptation.

2.1. The Voice of Narration

Gerard Genette uses "the narrating instance" (1980:212) to refer to the person who tells the story and the situation in which the story is told. In this sense, the narrative voice refers to the narrator's voice; the narrator being the intradiegetic agent that recounts the story and conveys it to the receiver. Coetzee's *Disgrace* employs a third-person narrator's voice which is predominantly mediated by third-person narration. The narrative voice emerges from the starting phrase that introduces the protagonist, "For a man of his age, fifty-two, divorced, he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well" (1999:1), and runs throughout the novel. In cinema, as Fulton observes, it is the camera that incarnates the narrative instance (2005:74). Therefore, in Jacobs's *Disgrace*, the camera serves essentially as the invisible extradiegetic narrator and performs the role of the third-person voice. In the opening scene of Jacobs's *Disgrace*, for instance, the camera stages David Lurie, a middle-aged man, sharing intimate moments with Soraya. Thus, one may argue that Steve Jacobs uses the camera in a manner to emulate the narrative voice of Coetzee's novel which he adapts.

However, the narrator's voice in *Disgrace* aligns very closely with Lurie's stream of consciousness in ways that make it unreliable. Lurie's credibility is compromised as he is portrayed to the reader and the film viewer as a character who lacks some moral, intellectual, and social credentials. He shows no scruples during the mid-term exam in assigning a falsified

grade to Melanie *in absentia* (Coetzee, 1999:10) while later downplaying his sexual abuse on her, disclaiming any rape but admitting paradoxically that it was "undesired to the core" (Coetzee, 1999:25). The film echoes the novel in capturing scenes of his womanizing endeavours namely his sexual relationship with sex workers including Soraya (Jacobs, 00:01:55), other married women such as Bev Shaw (00:13:25), and his student Melanie (00:09:00). His academic career is no less a disaster ending with his dismissal from the university because of the sex scandal. Thus, Lurie appears to the viewer as a lunatic corroborating Prost's claim that he "lives in a secluded dream world, and as such naturally fails to comprehend the experience of others" while his "inability to control his own life radically undermine [his] self-definition as a man of the world" (2015:133). For instance, when hosting Melanie in his apartment, Lurie naively believes that a woman's beauty does not belong to her (Jacobs, 00:06:50) but constitutes some sort of public property accessible to anybody, and hence making a claim on his rights of desires over his student's body. Thus, Lurie's misleading characterization logically gives rise to an unreliable narrator given his inextricable connection with the narrative voice which agent he impersonates with fallacious lenses.

The scene of Lurie's lecture (Jacobs, 00:14:03) on Byron's life and poem epitomizes the alignment of the third-person voice narration with his voice and stream of consciousness. The visual narrative of the film mimics the novel's storytelling and similarly depicts the inadequacy between Professor Lurie's romantic philosophy of life and the real-life since romanticism, to paraphrase Prost, implies a credulity about life completely outdated in the South African post-apartheid era (2015:133). No wonder, Lucifer, the protagonist of Lord Byron's romantic poem is analogically identified with both Lurie and Byron himself whom Lurie regards as his mentor. They both incarnate in the film as in the novel this creature with "a mad heart" (Jacobs 00:15:28, Coetzee 1999:33) who "does what he feels like. He doesn't care if it's good or bad. He just does it" (Jacobs 00:14:58, Coetzee 1999:33). And to behave in a "Luciferian" or mad manner in the post-apartheid South Africa grappling with gendered and racial tensions and striving for reconciliation and peace exemplifies for me the fact that Lurie dwells in his own reclusive world wherein his life is a complete mess. At the beginning of the scene when Lurie commences his lecture, he declares that "notoriety and scandal affected (...) Byron's life [and] Lucifer doesn't act on principle but impulse and the source of his impulse is dark to him" (Jacobs 00:15:09, Coetzee 1999:31). Ironically enough, Lurie shares with his mentor a scandalous fate and unhappy ending of a professional career since they are both infamous womanizers who fall into sexual disgraces. Besides, he substitutes the narrative voice by using his own direct utterance. As a result, it occurs a concurrence between the narrator and Lucifer

via the third-person pronoun that further creates a parallelism between the narrator's indirect speech and Lurie's direct description of Lucifer whereby the narrator, Lucifer, and Lurie himself all conflate and indulge in one another. This is rendered in the film adaptation through the long-shot camera angle that captures Lurie from the audience's viewpoint while he lectures his students which implies that he impersonates at a time Byron and Lucifer. Thus, the ultimate scene of lecture becomes a highlight of Lurie's untrustworthiness that induces the disharmony of his principles and lifestyle with realities in post-apartheid South Africa.

Moreover, the unreliability of the narrator rhymes with unreliability or controversy of narrative. As a result, Coetzee's *Disgrace*, I agree with Sohinee Roy, "appears to endorse Lurie's racist views [and] speaks, therefore, with a forked tongue" (2012:701). And the racist connotation which is the triggering factor of the novel's controversy which the film aligns with is mostly conveyed through Lurie's experience and relation to other characters including Melanie, his coloured student, Petrus the black worker on Lucy's farm, and his kinsman Pollux. Thus, I argue that the loyalty of Jacobs's *Disgrace* to Lurie's unreliable voice carries over some difficult ethical and political questions about the intersectional violence of race, gender, and class exemplified not only through Lurie's objectivation of Melanie Isaacs but also through the antagonism between Lurie and Petrus which depicts the film's failure to tackle the political and volatile question of racial tensions. In *Disgrace* plot, both the novel and the film, Petrus is the black dogman and the gardener on Lucy's farm. With the social turnaround in the post-apartheid era, he has earned a social ascension as guardianship and co-owner of the farm, and hence, can afford some liberties. When, in the film, he introduces himself to Lurie as the dogman, a close-up shot captures the comical expression on his face as if ironizing the situation. In a later scene, Lurie complains to Lucy about Petrus's importune visit to the house where he assumes airs of co-ownerships (Jacobs 00:32:50), a complaint which reminisces the Separate Amenities Act under apartheid whereby black people were identified as *persona non grata* in areas occupied by whites. Besides, during the scene of his violent confrontation with Pollux, Petrus's mentally ill kinsman, Lurie calls the boy a "swine" after he found him spying on Lucy from the window in her bathroom (Jacobs 01:39:25). Hence, Lurie denies him his humanity which reminisces negative animalistic clichés with racist connotations conveyed against blacks. Thus, the film failed to address the question of racism in the book owing to its confinement to the fidelity model of adaptation.

Furthermore, the narrative conveys asymmetric ethics applied to black and whites attached to Lurie's unreliability which is mirrored in Jacobs's *Disgrace* by Lurie's ability to

overcome his immoral conduct and embrace ethical conversion. Lurie metamorphosizes in the aftermath of Lucy's rape moving away from shame and guilt he repents and embraces what Zembylas labels as "the ethics of otherness" (2009:228), that is, "the transformation from selfishness to radical alterity and the responsibility towards the Other" (2009:226). Hence, Lurie returns to Cape Town to ask for forgiveness and reconciliation. The camera shows the striking moment of Lurie's truth and reconciliation act through a medium shot that captures him with an apologetic air, kneeling in front of Melanie's mother and sister in a sign of appeal to their mercy (Jacobs 01:25:00, Coetzee 1999:173). Poyner argues that through his humbling gesture, Lurie "passes through a process of confession, namely: transgression, confession, penitence, and absolution" (2009:68), and hence, "learns to face the 'truth' about himself, finding his own private reconciliation with those involved in his life." (2009:71). Therefore, I argue that he evolves from disgrace to grace, and I agree with Boehmer to say that he embraces "the Levinasian ethic of being infinitely (responsible) for the Other" (qtd. in Zembylas, 2008:235). This, I argue, symbolically addresses the "failure of love" depicted through David Lurie and which John Coetzee identifies in his 1987 Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech as the source of South Africa's problem of unfreedom as he claims that "At the heart of the unfreedom of the hereditary masters of South Africa is a failure of love" (Coetzee, qtd. in Attwell, 1992:97). In other words, Lurie's access to retrieving grace remedies in my view the predicament of love associated with the white protagonist and generally the former white settlers of South Africa.

The problem, however, is that while the white man is redeemed, the black man, *a contrario*, remains stuck in his moral corruption and forfeiture unable, like his white counterpart, to navigate his way through the "ethical issues on shame, guilt, repentance, victimhood, responsibility [and] redemption set against the political context of South Africa's social transformation" (in Zembylas, 2008:226). Pollux remains a criminal and his last appearance in the film reinforces his status of evildoer since the camera tracks him running down Lucy's garden while uttering death threats against Lurie following their violent confrontation. Petrus though not directly involved in the gang-raping of Lucy remains a suspect and an accomplice because of his dubious absence during the violent assault. Besides, he takes delight in condoning rape since he claims, "he must protect his family" (Jacobs, 01:05:52) including Pollux the rapist. Thus, the film fails to break the seal of ethical apartness and inequality in the depiction of blacks and whites whereby ethical conversion and redemption are defined in terms of the colour line leading to weird and problematic racialization of morals

and thereby justifying why Nadine Gordimer found it difficult to believe that "there is no black person who is a real human being" (2011:72) in the book that the film replicates. Therefore, Jacobs's *Disgrace* ignites the narrative controversies in colluding negative clichés regarding post-apartheid South Africa because of its over-centeredness on white narratives and its exclusiveness of black and female perspectives.

2.2. The Narrative Focalization

As I mentioned earlier, the narrator in *Disgrace* relies on a "character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective" (Genette, 1980:186). As a third-person limited narrator, *Disgrace*'s narrator depends mostly on Lurie's point of view as an internal focalizer whose perceptions, sensations, passions, and apprehensions mainly shape and filter the narrative discourse. Indeed, the establishing shot of the film's opening scene captures a big close-up of Lurie standing inside a room and gazing at the external world through the window (Jacobs 00:01:10). From an interior perspective, the camera displays a zoom on his face when he turns his gazes inside the room before cutting to the next scene. Steve Jacobs's choice of this technique to introduce his protagonist denotes a film narrative anchored in the perspective of its protagonist. Just as Lurie gazes at the world through the window, he serves as a window for the viewer since the film showcases his narrative perspective throughout. Thus, there is an overwhelming presence of Lurie in the filmic scenes, as in the novel, giving the viewer the sense that he dictates the *raison d'être* of the film and serves as the driving force of its narrative.

In Coetzee's *Disgrace*, Lurie's focalization is manifested during his first sexual relationship with Melanie, whereby the narrator describes how he "finds the act pleasurable, so pleasurable that from its climax he stumbles into blank oblivion" (Coetzee, 1999:19), while on the contrary, nothing leaks about Melanie's moods apart from a pithy statement revealing how passive she is throughout (1999:19). Jacobs's *Disgrace* similarly portrays this focalizing instance by putting Lurie in a dominant position in the scene almost pervasive contrasting with Melanie's intermittent inconclusiveness (Jacobs 00:09:00). Moreover, Lurie's focalization occurs in Lucy's rape to which the audience has no access whatsoever because of Lurie's sequestration in the lavatory of the house that kept him away from witnessing the scene. "The reader", Marco Prost observes, "is kept in the dark about what happens because of the limited focalization through David Lurie who himself is not physically present at the scene" (2015:127). The limited third-person narrator describes the event only from the restrictive perspective of Lurie with the reader's only cognition of the farm attack coming through sensory

inputs including the hearing of voices and the barking of the dogs (Coetzee, 1999:95) or eyesight when Lurie “stands on the toilet seat and peers through the bars of the window the attackers within the limits of his visual field” (1999:95). In Jacobs’s *Disgrace*, this episode gets in shape with the use of point-of-view camera angles which imitate the narrator focalization by recording the scene from a specific character's viewpoint so much so that "the audience", as Joseph Mascelli notes, "steps into the [motion] picture so to speak and see the players and the setting from the viewpoint of a particular player" (1998:14) in this case Lurie. Hence, the film employs the intradiegetic sound effects of the gunfire and the barking dogs to provide the viewer with the sensory inputs of the attack whenever Lurie is completely cut from the external world. Likewise, it projects the viewer through Lurie's eyes with the point-of-view camera angle to offer him a glimpse of what he furtively gazes at from the tower of his window. Point-of-view camera angle "creates a stronger identity with the screen player in the action and provides the viewer with a more intimate glimpse of the event" (Mascelli, 1998:22). Thus, Lurie's gazes through the window provide the viewer with the realistic illusion of his own perceptions and apprehensions inherent to the attack. Accordingly, one may infer that the film's creativeness replicates the novel's style of narration which complies with Lurie's focalization.

However, the foreclosure of Jacobs’s *Disgrace* in Lurie's focalization and consciousness shadows the adaptation of the film as it reduced it to a monolingualism that is biased and exclusive of other narrative perspectives about the realities of post-apartheid South Africa. The film is thoroughly about Lurie and his representations of post-apartheid South Africa. Yet, post-apartheid South Africa evokes a complex reality involving aspirations for rainbow nationalism that cannot be equated with the self-centred projections and abjections which Lurie is the vehicle. Hence, Lurie's occupancy of the centre of the narrative constraints other characters including especially black women to erasing peripheries thereby unveiling a narrative weakness carried over into the film adaptation. For instance, the erasure of Melanie's account of her rape tends to minimize the issue of rape not only but also silences the victim whose absence in Lurie's request for forgiveness suggests the desposal of black women's subjectivity and identity. Thus, it can be argued that in *Disgrace*, black women are non-existent owing to the erasure of their voices and subjectivities or at best exist as victims of violence associated with race, gender, and class, and as such the narrative works as a weapon maintaining the coloniality of apartheid politics in post-apartheid South Africa.

Moreover, since the narrative focalization on Lurie both in the novel and the film occurs at the expense of other characters’ viewpoints and problematizes from a postcolonial

perspective the voice of narration, it leads to Spivak's question "can the subaltern speak?" (In Morris, 2010:48). In this regard, I would argue alongside Spivak that the subaltern cannot speak as evidence in the rape cases of Melanie and Lucy and hence generates "the problem of the muted subject of the subaltern woman" (2010:47). Melanie's subalternity arises not only from "the fact of blackness" (2006:127) as Frantz Fanon would claim but also her subjugation to her academic master whose hierarchical position surpasses her student's status while Lucy's subalternity arises from the turnaround of the post-apartheid South Africa and the consequential disintegration of white supremacy. In any case, as Spivak would claim, "these women are insufficiently represented or representable in that narration" (2010:21). They "cannot represent themselves; they must be represented (2010:30). Lucy did never report her rape to the police which besides was never shown neither in Coetzee's *Disgrace* nor Jacobs's *Disgrace*. Likewise, Melanie's appearance before the hearing committee was never captured nor was her statement read to the audience. In both cases, their voices and perspectives were silenced by the male-dominated narrative voice focalized on Lurie.

Such silencing of female voices bespeaks their subjection to what Pulma Gqola calls "hypermasculinity" (2015:154) that allows for violent masculinities to victimize women. For postcolonial black women in particular the violence they endure due to their mutism, erase their subjectivities as with Melanie, and echoes, as Modisane would argue, how the apartheid "state sought to silence black publics" (2013:60) through the censorship of black centered films and the erasure of black lives. The banning of black-centered cinematic productions such as *Mapantsula* which was "an overtly antiapartheid *engagé* film [that] openly challenged apartheid hegemony (...) in the heat of unrest in South African townships" (2013:13) expressed, as Modisane claims, the fear of the apartheid censorship authorities of the film's potential to inflame viewers' hatred and promote interracial violence (2013:105). This helps, Lindiwe Dovey claims, to understand the connections of apartheid South Africa and violence to locate debates on representations of violence in post-apartheid South Africa (2009:26) of which women are victims. From this historical context as Modisane has shown in censored, black-centered films, we know that black subalterns including black women potentially have the voice to question the *status quo* and speak for themselves.

One may consider with Nthabiseng Motsemme that "the mute always speaks" (2004:909) if we hold that "women's silences uttered at the TRC should be viewed as part of a range of 'languages of pain and grief' to narrate often hidden but troubled elements of their recent past." (2004:910). In other words, women's silence should be interpreted as a form of

language through which they express and represent themselves. If we adopt such a position, we will hold that the silencing of Melanie and Lucy speak volumes of their respective pain and trauma. However, I question this unbalance of vocal agencies between men and women whereby men vocally represent themselves while women retrieve behind silence to be heard. I think that silence was not a vocal agency that was privileged in the TRC's proceedings and hearings. This is what Doxtader, and Salazar suggest when they mention that the Commission's task consisted in giving voice to the victims of South Africa's violent past; and it allowed many testimonies, written statements, or oral avowals to be heard in public (2007:104). In other words, the commission sought to confront victims and perpetrators to hear voices that lead to truth rather than silence bespeaking grief and trauma which can be even enigmatic and subjected to false interpretations. Besides, according to the chairperson of the disciplinary committee, Ms. Isaacs appeared before the committee the day before Lurie's hearings (Jacobs 00:20:57). Yet her voice was muted in a statement that was never read during the hearings and hence undisclosed to the viewers. In that regard, one may also argue in Melanie's case, that her complaint occasioning Lurie's fall from grace and dismissal from the university was a powerful voice nonetheless that overrides Lurie's dominant position. However, I would refrain from considering Melanie's complaint as the echo of the subaltern's voice especially since Lurie again appears to insinuate a constraining force, perhaps her father, another male figure, that motivates her endeavour. Besides, if the complaint was enough to hold a disciplinary committee's hearings, her voice has been muffled and ridiculed by her perpetrator as Lurie refuses to show even the slightest remorse and guilt before the committee and even reported cynically to the media after the hearings that he was enriched by the rape (Jacobs 00:23:30). Besides, Lurie's request for forgiveness was made indirectly through Melanie's family members and in Melanie's absence whereas, as the victim, she was supposed to be the one receiving her abuser's apologies while deciding whether to forgive or not. This raises Julie McGonegal's concern that when "forgiveness takes places without the victim's consent, (...) forgiveness itself might marginalize, silence, and sacrifice the oppressed by placing on their shoulders the burden of South Africa's reconciliation efforts" (2009:22). Thus, Melanie could not represent herself; she had to be represented as Spivak would deplore. Consequently, unlike Charlene Smith¹⁸, those female voices fail to reach out and sensitize the global world, and

¹⁸ Charlene Smith is a South African journalist who was raped in her Johannesburg residence in 1999. She went public about her rape ordeal and took the world's media including *The Guardian* where she published an article "Cry Freedom, Cry Rape" to condemn the ignoble act of her rapist who was later sentenced to 30 years of imprisonment.

hence, continue to “Cry Freedom, Cry Rape” (1999:1). Therefore, I agree with Spivak that “one never encounters the testimony of the women’s voice consciousness” (In Morris, 2010:50) because “the figure of the woman disappears” (2010:61) together with her voice and perspectives. Therefore, it is worthwhile to counterfocalize, as Spivak suggests, (2010:37) because “when Lucy is resolutely denied focalization, the reader [like the viewer] is provoked, for he or she does not want to share in Lurie-the-chief-focalizer’s inability to “read” Lucy as patient and agent” (Spivak, 2002:22). And for Spivak, “this is the rhetorical signal to the active reader [and the active viewer] to counterfocalize (2002:22), that is, to counter Lurie’s dominant perspectivation and monologism with a dialogism that integrates women’s narratives, since if given the opportunity, to paraphrase Spivak, the oppressed, and in this context, the raped, “can speak and know their conditions” (in Morris, 2010:37). For unlike Nthabiseng Motsemme, I do not consider silence and mutism to be an adequate agency for women such as Melanie and Lucy to speak and represent themselves.

On another respect, fidelity critics may raise the autobiographical echoes between David Lurie and J.M. Coetzee and the fact that the screenplay by Anna-Maria Monticelli was submitted to Coetzee for approval, to maintain that the film reflects the novel. While it is true that Lurie echoes in some respects biographical elements of Coetzee including being a university lecturer in Cape Town, a writer with mixed fortunes, and constantly changing places, Lurie is not Coetzee because the film character will never be the real person that it stages. Films, even inspired from true stories, usually disclaim any correspondence especially relating to intradiegetic and extra-diegetic characters as merely coincidental, and not to be taken as gospel truth, and hence, renders fidelity somehow counterintuitive. Besides, echoes between Lurie and Coetzee further problematize the centering of Jacobs's *Disgrace* on the white male perspective and the transfer of ethical issues into the film. Besides, fidelity is no less delusive even after the consultation of Coetzee to obtain his acquiescence for the screenplay, and even if the author of the book happens to be the filmmaker, because, as Stam argues, it “ignores the actual processes of making films and the important differences of production” (2005:16). Unlike Ousmane Sembène the filmmaker, Ousmane Sembène the novelist does not face, as Stam mentions, “budgetary constraints (...) issues of available talents, studio or producers, censorships in terms of performers, screenwriters [and] all this has an impact on what scenes can be filmed [thereby making] fidelity in adaptation literally impossible” (2005:16-17). From the above, I argue in short that coincidences in the narrative voice and focalization between Jacobs's *Disgrace* and Coetzee’s *Disgrace* problematize more the fidelity discourse than they

seem to certify it because of the narrative impairments and shortcomings carried over into the film adaptation. Thus, although it appears that the novel and the film embody the same plot anchored in Lurie's focalization and stream of consciousness which tend to corroborate arguments from the fidelity discourse, make no mistake because as Linda Hutcheon maintains, "the story [may be] the common denominator [or] the content persists across different media and genres [but] each of [them] deals with that story in formally different ways" (2006:10) and, I would add, through different modes of engagement which I will address more in the next chapter. Besides, in Jacobs's *Disgrace*, as I will demonstrate in the section below, even the content undergoes, during the process of adaptation, some changes and falls short of the fidelity rhetoric.

3. The Aporia of Thematic Fidelity

As I have pointed out in my literature review, thematic fidelity was also a cynosure of previous scholarly works on Jacobs's *Disgrace*. Such critical works stem from what Robert Stam calls "a grain of experiential truth" (2005:14) associated with fidelity discourse which asks critical questions about the filmic processing of the novel's themes. However, a close reading of the filmic recreation of the TRC and South African landscapes discredits the fidelity discourse as it exposes internal paradoxical tensions and further narrative shortcomings carried over into the film adaptation.

3.1. Narrating Truth and Reconciliation

Considering Coetzee's *Disgrace* as "an allegory of the troubled Truth and Reconciliation Commission within the context of a nation in transition" (Poyner, 2008:67), critics may argue that Jacobs's *Disgrace* echoes the novel's narrative resolution in addressing the question of cohabitation between blacks and whites in the post-apartheid era following a history of violations, especially since "reconciliation with, rather than recrimination of the former oppressor" (2008:67) emerges in both, the novel, and the film, as the way forward. Besides, not only Lurie's visit to Mr. Isaacs in the film seems to reproduce their face to face in the novel which he initiates to ask for pardon (Jacobs, 01:21:29, Coetzee 1999:171), but also the scene of his prostration before Melanie's mother and sister in a sign of penitence visibly shows the cinematic replica of Lurie's ceremonial kneeling to touch his forehead to the floor (Jacobs 01:25:00, Coetzee, 1999:173). However, the supposed fidelity falls short because Coetzee, as Fulton would underline, narrates the episode through diegesis whereas Jacobs

shows it through mimesis (2005:98) and this imparts distortive effects on any attempt to fidelity. In this sense, while in prostration before the two female characters, Coetzee's *Disgrace* introduces the reader to Lurie's interior – "Is that enough? he thinks. Will that do? If not, what more? [then] when he meets the mother's eyes, then the daughter's and again the current leaps, the current of desire" (1999:173) –. Conversely, Jacobs's *Disgrace* does not capture Lurie's inner thoughts and feelings since "the camera" as Bao explains, "can only show the surface" (2008:59). Hence, unlike in Jacobs's *Disgrace*, Coetzee's unveiling of Lurie's feelings, mental and psychological temperaments in this episode amplifies Lurie's sense of guilt and tells how much sincerity he attaches to his testimonial truth. Thus, it is noteworthy with Ahmed Zaini that "equivalence between page and screen, (...) is practically impossible because the novel and the film are different forms, which of necessity cannot evoke parallel responses". (2002:97).

Moreover, where Jacobs's *Disgrace* aligns with Coetzee's narrative of truth and reconciliation, it carries over into the adaptation problematic aspects of the novel that are prejudicial to the TRC's historical context and proceedings, and hence, troublesome for fidelity. During Lurie's indictment before the inquiring committee, constating his non-disclosure in answering the questions, "a member of the committee", as Poyner observes "charges him with being evasive and of mockery which is reminiscent of the charges laid against Coetzee by his critics" (2008:70) pleading guilty only to fill out paperwork, and hence the committee's requirement for a wholehearted apology (1999:54, Jacobs 00:22:33). Full disclosure and sincerity dispositions, as Poyner argues, have been required and "realized in their most abstract form at the Truth Commission hearings, where blacks and whites have even (...) made applications for amnesty for the failure to resist or take action against apartheid, in effect demanding clemency for their sense of guilt" (2008:70). Yet, Lurie decries the committee's demand of sincere apology "in the spirit of repentance" as Poyner mentions while quoting Coetzee, as being "beyond the scope of the law" (Coetzee qtd. in Poyner, 2008:70), and hence refuses to perform it, just as he opposes compliance to public abnegations on grounds that "they wanted a spectacle... A TV show in fact" (1999:66). In so doing, I think that Coetzee's *Disgrace* contravenes the TRC's *vade mecum* owing to the restriction of the narrative to Lurie's worldview. Jacobs's *Disgrace* endorses such an infringement as well in its attempt to fidelity since its confinement to Coetzee's narrative and protagonist's narrow-mindedness betrays the TRC's *modus operandi* and hence results in a misleading allegorisation of the South African process of reconciliation and transition to peace.

Later in the film, the shot-reverse-shot of the camera waving between Lurie and her victim's father sitting in the familial lounge (Jacobs, 01:21:27) sets for the oppressor's party a confessional stage that contrasts with the public and inquisitive space of the inquiring committee and hence decontextualizes in my view the TRC's setting to extend apologies, and request for forgiveness. To this effect, Lurie's act of repentance, since it occurs within closed doors in the family privacy, does not "resonate[s]", as Sue Kossew deplors, "with the national public spectacle of shame, confession, and forgiveness that was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (2003:155), considering that forgiveness or amnesty in the TRC's context was granted in an environment of mediatized public hearings and confessions. But at this moment of the film's narrative resolution, Lurie's "sense of guilt for his exploitative attitude towards women", as Jayne Poyner argues, "symbolically configures a sense of collective responsibility of oppressors for a history of abuse" (2008:67). In brief, concordance of Jacobs's *Disgrace* with Coetzee's impedes on fidelity to TRC's historical context and operating procedures and results in the film's infection by the novel's shortcomings. And even if one must consider such "novel-bounded" filmic portrayal of the South African TRC as unsuccessful, "one way to think about unsuccessful adaptations", as Linda Hutcheon argues, "is not in terms of infidelity to a prior text, but in terms of a lack of the creativity and skill to make the text one's own and thus autonomous" (2006:20). In other words, the adaptation fidelity theory remains problematic in any case as regards the depiction of the TRC. How about then the question of South African landscapes?

3.2. Politics of Space and Landscapes

The consideration of space in Jacobs's *Disgrace* also differentiates the film from the novel, a spatial borderline that attests to the film's idiosyncrasy and questions the fidelity thesis since Steve Jacobs moves away from the intradiegetic geographical constraints of Coetzee's *Disgrace* to enhance the dramatization of his film's plot. Whereas Coetzee's *Disgrace* narrative takes place in Cape Town and Salem respectively located in the Western and Eastern Capes, Jacobs's *Disgrace* is confined within the Western Cape between Cape Town and Cederberg which Steve Jacobs prefers as a substitute to the Eastern Cape. Albeit the rural Salem in the Eastern Cape plays a pivotal role in the novel's narrative as it hosts Lucy's farmhouse which she refuses to abandon despite her rape and the ongoing threats; but the producers, as Rijdsdijk claims, looked for "something epic and redemptive in the landscape" (2014:19) that would measure up Lucy's affective attachment to the land and her stubbornness to stay. The series of

extreme long shots showing the spectacular mountain view of Cederberg during Lurie's first trip to his daughter's house offers fascinating landscapes that heighten the visual aesthetics of the film while entertaining the spectacle for the viewer. Likewise, the series of long shots screening the promenade of Lurie and Lucy across the countryside before the assault (Jacobs, 00:37:50) as well as those composing the visual scene of Lurie's long walk to Lucy's house at the end of the film (Jacobs 01:44:50) display wondrous imageries from the natural environment which Thomas Caldwell testifies when he affirms that "the cinematography also captures the locations perfectly and the incredible use of natural light in this film creates an amazingly evocative sense of the South African countryside" (in Rijdsdijk, 2014:19). To this effect, Jacobs's *Disgrace* fosters the audience's comprehension of Lucy's choices and stimulate their sympathy for her because "for Lucy's decision to stay on the farm to make sense", as Rijdsdijk argues, "the hope it encourages must overcome the ominous sense that the terrible violence she and Lurie are subjected to is an unchanging South African reality" (2014:22).

Other than targeting a terrific landscape that enhances the film's visual aesthetics while intensifying its dramatization and justifying Lucy's comportment, "the physical irreality of the film" (Rijdsdijk, 2014:20), unveils the fact that Steve Jacobs is not utterly restricted to mimicking Coetzee's choices as he can enjoy much freedom in the esthetical and ideological choices that shape his film art. In that respect, his work as Tcheuyap would claim becomes an act of "recreation" (2005:28) or "rewriting" (2005:30) consisting of writing afresh what is already written, but in altering the initial work instead of copying it (2005:30-31). Accordingly, Jacobs's *Disgrace* constitutes an artistic work *sui generis* so long as the filmic landscape, as Theo Tait observes, "underscores the pull of the land in a way not possible in the book". (in Rijdsdijk, 2014:19). Besides, the "majestic (...) rugged citrus-growing backcountry northeast of Cape Town" (2014:19), as Nicolas Rapold describes Cederberg, never existed in the novel, but rather Salem in the Eastern Cape which rural surroundings John Coetzee sparsely portrays if not sternly – "poor land, poor soil (...). Exhausted. Good only for goats" (1999:64). Steve Jacobs, Rijdsdijk reveals, did not even bother to visit the land, prioritizing instead "the demand for locations within easy driving distance of Cape Town and its film services" (2014:18) that will assuage the expense and contingencies of his film production. That is why Robert Stam argues that "the demand for fidelity ignores the actual process of making films, the important differences in modes of production [for] while novels are relatively unaffected by questions of budget, films are deeply immersed in material and financial contingencies" (2005:16). Therefore, I agree with Ian Gleen that "the move of the action from the Eastern Cape in the novel to the far more picturesque Cederberg in the film no doubt betrays the original in terms

of the feel of the landscape” (2011:280). In so doing, the film fills the novel’s dramatic gaps not only but also demarcates from its literary source.

Conclusion

This chapter has challenged the rhetoric of fidelity attached to Jacobs’s *Disgrace* in relation to Coetzee’s *Disgrace*. Drawing upon adaptation, structural, and postcolonial theories, I have maintained that apparent commonality between the film and the novel as concerns their formal and thematic narrative aesthetics not only misstate the fidelity discourse but also magnify problematic aspects of the novel which also anathematize fidelity as a theory of adaptation. In so doing, the study fills in epistemological gaps left by previous studies that had upheld the fidelity oration through an exclusive narrative thematization, and on which basis many critics have argued for the axiomatic ascendancy of literature over cinema. As a result, it appears on the contrary that film adaptation cannot be regarded as an appendix subjected to the novel. In this sense, the consideration of Jacobs’s *Disgrace* specificity and poeticity, while uncovering the film aesthetics as a unique genre, will further establish the equivalence and autonomy of status between the film and the novel and challenge the fidelity discourse.

Chapter 3:

Film Aesthetics: Specificity and Poeticity of Jacobs's *Disgrace*.

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore the aesthetics of Jacobs's *Disgrace* as a creation *sui generis*, that is, different, unique, and independent from Coetzee's *Disgrace*. Hence, central to this chapter is the question of what is the film aesthetics of *Disgrace* as a specific genre, and what does it involve in its creative process that the novel cannot because of the media specificity? For this purpose, it will first establish the film medium specificity and poeticity – sporadic references to the novel only occurring – to advocate for the autonomy of the film adaptation while underlining its narrative features. Secondly, it will solely thematize the film aesthetics of violence associated with gender and race by way of illustrating the thematic criticism of the film adaptation as a self-reliant artistic creation. As such the chapter demarcates from the fidelity model of adaptation and takes a step forward in the analysis of Jacobs's *Disgrace* beyond the classical paradigm. In this respect, I argue that Jacobs's *Disgrace* is interpretable as an autonomous genre which aesthetics of creation induces unique poetics of narrative time, mise-en-scene and thematic alterations not only but also enables, regardless of its literary source, a thematic exegesis of racial and gendered violence in post-apartheid South Africa. In doing so, the focalization on the film medium specificity and poeticity further censures the axiomatic hierarchy of literature over film in adaptation criticism especially since it allows for the recognition of novel and film as two different and independent genres. But beforehand, there is a need to briefly theorize medium specificity and poeticity.

1. Theorizing Medium Specificity and Poeticity

1.1. The Question of Medium Specificity

The assertion that each art form possesses its own specific field of expression inherent to its nature is known as the medium-specificity thesis (Carroll, 1985:6). The thesis holds that the different arts, in virtue of their medium, carry unique features that define their exclusive areas of development and their artistic effects (1985:17-18). Several critics including Noël Carroll have challenged the specificity of media in the arts denouncing the theory as “a truism (...) irrelevant to art criticism or art-making” (1985:10). For him, the medium-specificity thesis

rests on two basic assumptions namely the “excellence requirement” or the idea that each art medium ought to perform what it does best in comparison to other media, and the “differentiation requirement”, that is, each art ought to do what distinguishes it from all other media forms (1985:12). Thus, the thesis suggests that “art forms should not overlap in their effects, nor should they imitate each other” insofar as “each art form should be limited to exploiting this range of effects, which the nature of the medium dictates” (1985:7). In this context, one may argue that specificity in media sounds rather problematic because it advocates a compartmentalized approach of arts that recuses cross-mediatic acquaintances while ignoring certain standards of artistic creation that require complementarity and inventiveness within a given form of art. As Carroll argues, one may intend to portray a dramatic action necessitating cross-mediatic choices of different media features – verbal, scriptural, visual, or gestural – that best suit the artistic project (1985:9). In one sense, I agree with Carroll’s criticism of medium specificity as hostile to artmaking which transcends very often the boundaries of one art to embrace and unite diverse artistic components. On the other hand, however, it is noteworthy that the medium-specificity emphatic appeal for media unique forms and features fosters the emergence of media distinctiveness and offers a plausible answer to the problem of reductionism in art criticism whereby the modes of expressions of a specific art tend to be mitigated because of overlapping techniques occurring between different media. Therefore, venturing into the terrain of medium specificity will allow me to underscore what the film *Disgrace* aesthetics is as a specific genre, and what it involves in its creative process impracticable for the novel because of the media’s uniqueness. But resorting to medium specificity concur with the poetics of re-creation of the film's narrative.

1.2. Poetics of Film Rewriting

Drawing upon the post-structuralist adaptation theories including Alexie Tcheuyap’s “notion of rewriting and poetics of repetition” will exemplify the specific aesthetics of Jacobs’s *Disgrace*. Tcheuyap’s conception of repetition¹⁹ within his poetics of film rewriting bespeaks media’s difference” (2009:11), and hence, connects with the differentiation requirement of medium-specificity. Besides, as he argues, “the concern” of his theory “is (...) not the subjugation of a medium or a text, but that of the various creative, poetic, and ideological processes implied in the repetition that brings change to any rewriting” (2001:3). The variety

¹⁹ Tcheuyap uses the notion of ‘repetition’ to refer to “creative variation” (2005:7) in film adaptation, that is, an act of re-creation stemming from previous artistic work, but which privileges difference and alteration rather than replication and mimicry.

of the creative and poetic procedures of adaptation is precisely what makes, in Tcheuyap's approach, a statement for the film medium distinctiveness. Therefore, the narrative metamorphoses inherent to the film specifics and inventiveness are determined by a certain "poetics of rewriting"²⁰ which Tcheuyap refers to as the act of creation in film adaptation, a creation that exposes the film's idiosyncratic features. Likewise, Jacques Rancière's conception of the poeticity of arts or what he calls "the poetic regime of arts" which includes film adaptation refers to the artistic creation in the sense of representation or *mimesis* yet understood "not as the law that brings the arts under the yoke of resemblance [but as] a regime of visibility [that] renders the arts autonomous" (2004:22). Therefore, the poetics of rewriting, which I combine with the medium-specificity thesis, precisely allows, in adaptation criticism, to underscore the specific features and esthetical effects of film, but also to advocate for its singularity vis-à-vis the novel.

2. Films Specifics and Poetics across Narrative Metamorphoses

2.1. The Film Narrative Duration

Films tend to make economy of time. From a Genettian perspective, narrative duration evokes the relation between story-time, that is, "the period covered by all the events narrated" (Fulton, 2005:61), and discourse-time, the time scale of the visual narration of those events. Such distinction has led to Genette's identification of four narrative time frames namely, pause, summary, ellipsis, and scene which consideration unveils narrative metamorphoses in the film adaptation that characterizes the distinctiveness of the film medium. In this respect, pauses whereby the discourse time is longer than the story-time reduced to zero are inexistent in Jacobs's *Disgrace* because they are conflated with the visual narrative of moving images and integrated into the mise-en-scene as epitomized in Lurie's scenes of lectures at university (Jacobs 00:03:15) which present his academic profession directly to the viewer even without the supplement of a voice-over while supplying concomitantly the film's narrative. Likewise, Lurie's trip to his daughter's smallholding also merges action and descriptive images with the camera traveling with him and exhibiting extreme and long shots that display panoramic views of the landscape (Jacobs 00:24:31). By contrast, Coetzee's *Disgrace* cannot convey pauses and actions in unison for it must first neutralize the story-time with descriptive pauses, which halt

²⁰ Tcheuyap prefers the notion of rewriting over adaptation because adaptation for him implies an "aesthetic of representation" (2005:30) whereas "rewriting" allows for autonomy and alterity based on the repetition of an act of creation" (2005:30). Hence, Alexie Tcheuyap speaks of film rewriting instead of film adaptation.

therefore the intrigue, before portraying characters and places as with Lurie's character and job description (Coetzee, 1999:3-4) and the depiction of Lucy's smallholding (1999:59) presented to the reader. Therefore, the film adaptation, as Tcheuyap argues, subtracts the novel's pauses; and the same, he argues, applies to summaries (2005:88) which also discloses the film specificity and poeticity as regard the narrative time management.

In this connection, Coetzee's *Disgrace* employs a summary to narrate Lurie's love affair with Soraya, since the discourse-time of this episode covers a few weeks only and is shorter than the story-time for "he has been on her books for over a year" (Coetzee, 1999:1). The reader learns that the two usually meet on weekly basis, on Thursday afternoons. She knows about some of their inside stories including Soraya's double life as a sex worker and mother of two kids (1999:6) which Lurie discovered incidentally while crossing path one Saturday with her in town. From this incident, the novel summarizes again their end-story as it only evokes the changing relationship between the two, the Thursday after, before bouncing to the fourth Thursday during which Soraya parts company with Lurie. In between the Thursday following the incident and the fourth Thursday, the reader can only imagine their usual erotic meetings through another summary, yet again, asserting that "Soraya still keeps her appointments [with] a growing coolness" (1999:7). On the contrary, Jacobs's *Disgrace* massively compressed this episode into a single-day session without the viewer being aware of their year-long relationship, Soraya's double life, and a few other narrative gaps. This is because, the narrative "transposition to another medium", as Hutcheon claims, (...) always means change or, in the language of the new media, 'reformatting'" (2006:16), and hence the specificity of the film narrative time. Consequently, the film, unlike the novel, is driven by a different narrative velocity due to the use of many ellipses such as Soraya's private life as a single mother and hence the narrative abbreviation into a two-minutes filmic scene.

Moreover, ellipses are numerous in Jacobs's *Disgrace* and constitute a temporal instance of the narrative that operates "a radical reduction of plot time to an absolute zero, while the intervening story-time can be anything up to several millennia" (Fulton, 2005:66). Besides Soraya's single motherhood, the film also skips Melanie's overnight sojourn in Lurie's house (Coetzee, 1999:26-28), the Rape Awareness Week on Campus (1999:43), Lurie's dinner with the Isaacs (1999:167-169) among other narrative episodes. Thus, the film employs several ellipses because, as Tcheuyap argues, the film does not perform a narration in real-time for it is technically impossible not only, given its restrictive length, but also economically suicidal due to budget limitations (2005:84). But this does not demean the film as a medium,

nonetheless, because the film's recourse to ellipses allows for more filmmaking autonomy either through annihilation of the novel's weak beats that have no impact if not little on the film's dramatic drive or through ideological choices that serve the screenplay's agenda. For instance, the deliberate choice to leave out Melanie's involvement in her love affair with Lurie serves purposely for her overdramatic victimization, and hence, stinging criticism of male patriarchy and gender-based violence in post-apartheid South Africa.

Furthermore, Jacobs's *Disgrace* technically fills the gaps created by the elliptic jumps by using the continuity editing that ensures a visual cohesion, that is, "a coherent and stable visual space in which the viewer feels securely engaged and able to move easily from one mise-en-scene to another without any disorienting break in the diegesis" (Fulton, 2005:119). In this sense, the continuity editing in Jacobs's *Disgrace* juxtaposes the scenes of Lurie's sexual violation of Melanie and his falsification of her records in the mid-term exam while skipping his scrupulous interior monologue after the intercourse presented in Coetzee's novel to spur the viewer's awareness about Lurie's misdeeds that trigger his downfall. As a result, the film's dramatic drive lies in the capitalization of narrative scenes wherein the discourse time and the storytime are relatively levelled because of dialogues and actions. Ultimately, the film's elimination of narrative pauses and summaries through paramount ellipses impacts the screen time of the film which is shorter than the novel's reading time. Thus, the cinephile spends less time viewing the film than the lector reading the novel, and hence, adaptation detractors, as Stam deplores, have often argued that film reception is easier than the novel's because "it takes no brain to sit down and watch a film" (Stam, 2005:7). But I admit with Stam that just as "novels of any complexity, film [adaptation] too, bears 'rereading' precisely because so much can be missed in a single viewing" (2005:7). In brief, I assert that the narrative time unveils the specificity of Jacob's *Disgrace* as a genre *sui generis* owing to different poetic and aesthetic orchestrations conveyed through the film medium and which determine new rhetoric of comparison, not of subordination to a literary source but of self-reliance of the adapted film. This is further exemplified in the cinematic mise-en-scene of the narrative.

2.2. Cinematic Mise-en-Scene of the Narrative

In film language, mise-en-scene "refers to all the components placed in front of the camera, and includes sets, lighting, costuming, makeup, props, placement of objects, and people, and the actors' gestures and movements" (Snyder, 2011:117). These are mainstreamed into the filmic mise-en-scene which represents the central stage of visual narration and

fictionalization. The orchestration of these film constituents to generate scenes in Jacobs's *Disgrace* cinematizes the narrative with ensuing subtractive or additive metamorphoses that display the film specificity and poeticity. Firstly, the editing of scenes in a specific montage conveys a purposed ideological meaning. When Lurie has his first direct meeting with Melanie in Jacobs's *Disgrace*, the unbalance of power relations – professor/student and men/women – is already established from a cinematographical perspective. The camera angle lowers to capture Melanie on the floor following her misstep while elevating Lurie through a low angle shot directing Melanie's look toward him. Hence, the camerawork already suggests to the viewer the relation of dominancy and subjection that will occur between them in the film narrative. This opposes Jacobs's *Disgrace* account of their first encounter which does not connote any asymmetrical relation except that they recognize each other as teacher and student after Lurie "notices one of his students [Melanie] on the path ahead of him. (...) She is dawdling; he soon catches up with her. 'Hello', he says" (1999:11). Things happen ordinarily in Coetzee's *Disgrace*, whereas Jacobs's *Disgrace* creates a dramatic and spectacular scenario fitting the visual mode of storytelling: they cross path before Melanie stumbles and falls which puts her in a situation of powerlessness. Her stumble catches Lurie's attention, and he stops to help her stand up (Jacobs 00:04:39). Thus, the scene metaphorically depicts Lurie as a superhero rushing to aid a victim, only that, Lurie is rather an antihero who preys on his victims. This narrative metamorphosis in Jacobs's *Disgrace*, stems from the process of cinematization and hence the specificity and poeticity of the film medium.

Secondly, Jacobs's mise-en-scene of the lighting in Lurie's relationship with Melanie also conveys the film's specific aesthetics and poetics. The choice to stage in low-key light Lurie cherishing Melanie in his shadowy house (Jacobs 00:05:45) signifies the weird nature of their relationship. Likewise, the scene of their first lovemaking (00:08:52) is entirely shot in the penumbra with the only glimmer of light filtering from the open window above them. Meanwhile, Coetzee's *Disgrace* does not provide any report about the room lighting as it only says, "on the living-room floor, to the sound of rain pattering against the window, he makes love to her" (1999:19). Therefore, Jacobs's choice to shoot the scene in the dark house falls within the prerogatives of the film medium with the uncertainty and the negative mood conveyed through the low-key light adding a semantical and ideological value to the plot as it reinforces the indecency of their love affair, the obscenity of the female body's subjection to male power and desires as well as the murkiness of life in post-apartheid South Africa.

Thirdly, Jacobs's *Disgrace* portrayal of Lurie's power disintegration evokes an obvious social turnaround where things irrevocably fall apart around and upon him. The series of scenes comprising of Lurie's confrontations with Melanie's boyfriend (Jacobs 00:13:10), his argument with Melanie about the mid-term test (00:16:50), the student's desertion of his class because of the scandal (00:18:05), the clash with Mr. Isaacs (00:18:19), the admonition of his ex-wife (00:19:00), and the committee's hearings (00:20:20) underline an avalanche of events that portray Lurie's downward spiral and enliven the narrative tensions. Thus, the continuity editing concentrates and juxtaposes these scenes to intensify the film drama and expeditiously makes the audience aware of Lurie's downfall as if to cast him down from his high pinnacle of colonial and patriarchal power. Hence, the viewer's attention is immediately drawn to the collapse of Lurie's affective and seductive power over Melanie, his professional and academic authority, and his reputation among his students, and colleagues. At the end of the committee's hearings, Lurie walks downstairs the building captured by a long shot camera angle tracking him closely as he exits the building pressed by the media's reporters (00:23:28). His movement downstairs follows his setback before the committee and suggests Lurie's power disintegration whereas his exit from the academic building evokes the end of his career and the loss of his social and professional authority in post-apartheid South Africa.

Fourthly, this scene is slowly dissolved in the next scene where the camera pans a bookshelf of BYRON leading to Lurie's bathroom where he is shown half-naked looking dejected in his bathtub (Jacobs 00:23:58). The visual passage from the bookshelves to Lurie's bathroom is not innocuous as it evokes Lurie's pathetic metamorphosis from being to nothingness, that is, from being a professor with all related powers and privileges to losing everything which is also reflected in the metaphor of the bathtub, place of nakedness and nothingness, that contrasts with the prestigious chair of his office where he was shown seated a couple of times in the film. In passing the focus of the camera on Byron's name authored on the books (Jacobs 00:23:53) works to assimilate Lurie's fate to his mentor: their careers end with sexual scandals as much as to say like mentor like apprentice. Besides, this scene offers to gaze for the only time in the film at the male body when the camera shows Lurie in his bathroom whose (half)-nakedness suggests the dispossession of white power and privileges under the new South Africa. Unlike in other erotic scenes whereby the gazes of men and the audience are set upon the naked female body to underscore Lurie's male dominancy toward the subjected female body, roles are reversed in this scene and Lurie appears to have a taste of his own medicine, that is, to experience powerlessness in the harsh life of post-apartheid South

Africa. Interestingly, the additive scene of the bathroom together with the film semiological framework expressing the cinematic language and meaning not only enhances the film plot but also corroborates the thesis of film adaptation as a genre with its own right.

Lastly, the acting agents mediating Jacobs's *Disgrace* are true actors and living embodiment of the intradiegetic characters. David Lurie, Lucy (Jessica Haines)²¹, and Petrus (Eric Ebouaney)²² just to name a few are all incarnated by real persons, and hence, the transubstantiation of acting agents occurring in the film adaptation. This categorical distinction of acting agents also bears a beneficial consequence for Jacobs's *Disgrace*. The choice of a famous Hollywoodian actor, John Malkovich, to star as David Lurie, enhances the prestige of the film owing to his impressive acting palmares²³. Yet, critics have denounced his failure to reproduce the South African accent leading Rijdsdijk to question the film authenticity as he argues that in "films made about South Africa, the most common of these readings of (in)authenticity is the failure of non-South African actors to get the accent right." (2014:16). As much as it is true, it further challenges adaptation fidelity and proves the distinctiveness in poetics between Jacobs's *Disgrace* and Coetzee's *Disgrace*. Besides, John Malkovich's accent along with his American origin and background inferentially suggest in the film narrative an intermingling between the South African and the American socio-political and historical realities given their shared history of apartheid and the (post-apartheid) situation of ongoing interracial tensions and violence. Therefore, apart from impersonating Lurie's character, John Malkovich's presence conveys meta-discursive statements and ideologies that add to the cinematic discourse and provide an international dimension to the strictly South African narrative. Ian-Malcolm Rijdsdijk concurs when he argues that "the casting of an internationally renowned Hollywood actor makes clear that from the outset, this was a project aiming to translate South African complexities and particularities in unambiguous and morally comprehensible terms to a global audience" (2014:28). Therefore, the setting of the narrative in South Africa, the film's direction by an Australian filmmaker, and the diversification of the acting crew consisting of international and local actors suggest a trans-nationalization of the narrative that exceeds the boundaries of Coetzee's *Disgrace* and reinforces the filmic idea of

²¹ Jessica Haines is a South African actress.

²² Eric Ebouaney is a French actor best known for starring the Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in Raoul Peck's film *Lumumba* (2000).

²³ John Malkovich has performed in more than seventy films including *The Killing Fields* (1984), *Empire of the Sun* (1987), *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988), *Of Mice and Men* (1992), *In the Line of Fire* (1993), *Being John Malkovich* (1999), *Changeling* (2008), *Deepwater Horizon* (2016), etc.

rainbow-nationalism not only, but also promotes what I call a “rainbow-globalism”, that is, the transportation of the post-apartheid South African narrative to the global scene. This enriches the film’s plot with the cinematic specific and aesthetical features, which are also epitomized through Steve Jacobs’s alterations of thematic contents.

2.3.The Film Thematic Re-creation between Twists and Shifts

Jacobs’s *Disgrace* operates important thematic twists and shifts in the process of adaptation, which is a pledge, as Hutcheon claims, that "adaptation has its own aura" (2006:7). Hence the film prioritizes Soraya's alibi about her mother's sickness to break up with Lurie to deprive the viewer of the causal factor of their rupture, that is, Lurie's discovery of her "two children, two boys (...) carrying parcels" (Coetzee, 1999:6), and hence her single motherhood. In Coetzee's *Disgrace*, Soraya is a sex worker whose profession earns a living for her and her two sons whose father's absence is alluded to in the ironical portrayal of Lurie as "their father, foster-father, step-father, shadow father" (1999:6). Hence, Soraya crosses the boundaries of her female dignity to look after her progeny. But from the moment her children are at risk, as "the two little boys become presences between them, playing quiet as shadows in a corner of the room where their mother and the strange man couple" (1999:6), she parts ways with Lurie to preserve the innocence and integrity of her children as well as her own motherly decorum. However, Jacobs’s *Disgrace* completely overturned her single motherhood, eclipsed by the emphasis on Lurie’s womanizing character that monopolizes the camera’s gazes. Obviously, the film's syntagmatic language made of joint shots allows, through the montage, to skip several narrative episodes without losing the attention of the viewer. Henceforth, the eclipsing of Soraya's single motherhood serves the director's intent to keep her under Lurie's patronization despite their breakdown, and hence, the filmic belittlement of a gendered issue in post-apartheid South Africa wherein black women's position, as Gilbert Motsaathebe argues, "is precarious [as] they suffer from complex relationships with men who do not seem to think twice before abandoning them or their children" (2018:393). Yet, single motherhood surfaces as a cinematic leitmotif in several post-apartheid South African films. For instance, women such as Yesterday (Leleti) in Danny Boyle's film of the same name, Miriam (Terry Pheto) and Pumla (Nambitha MaPulana) in Gavin Hood's *Tsotsi*, and Lucky’s mother Mama Kunene (Gladys Mahlangu) in Ralph Ziman’s *Jerusalema* all share with the Soraya of the novel, the character type of “a lone mother (...) raising children singlehandedly in her husband’s absence amid a bleak environment of abject poverty and deprivation” (2018:387). Hence, the silencing

in Jacobs's *Disgrace* of Soraya's motherly backdrop alters the narrative of the couple's voluptuous frequentations. On one side, unfortunately, it reduces Soraya to a subject of gratification of Lurie's erotic fantasies which resonates with "Gramsci's post-colonial theory of ideological hegemony", that is, "the expression of negative Black images [contributing] in the justification and reinforcement of Blacks occupying the lowest strata of society as well as impede the development of class consciousness" (Beker-Kimmons qtd in Motsaathebe, 2018:382). But, on the other side, such alteration legitimizes the adaptation specificity or, to paraphrase Hutcheon, the film's own aura and its unique creation as an artistic work (2006:7).

Besides Soraya, Lurie's liaison with Melanie also exemplifies a thematic twist in Jacobs's *Disgrace* which impacts the tenor of gender relations and sexuality. Coetzee's *Disgrace* often portrays Melanie as Lurie's sexual partner who "is quick and greedy for experience" (1999:29). During their second sexual act, although Lurie initially "thrusts himself upon her (...) she does not resist. She lets him lay her out on the bed and undress her: she even helps him, raising her arms and then her hips" (1999:24-25). Likewise, during their last lovemaking, "she hooks a leg behind [Lurie's] buttock to draw him in closer" (1999:29) which proves her sexual partnership, or at least activeness and equivocates the issue of rape. But one bears in mind that Lurie is not a reliable witness which problematizes, even more, the question of textual fidelity. Anyway, Jacobs's *Disgrace*, on the contrary, leaves out all the details of Melanie's involvement while accentuating her reluctance and aversion towards Lurie. The camera high angle tracking on their first intercourse contrasts Melanie's passivity with Lurie's activeness (Jacobs 00:09:00) while the association of medium and close-ups shots on the kissing scene (00:11:55) before their last lovemaking shows Melanie fighting to repel Lurie and half-heartedly involving herself, before being finally captured in a long shot, once bare, patently hesitating to join him in bed. Besides, Jacobs's *Disgrace* excludes Melanie's overnight stay in Lurie's house (Coetzee, 1999:26) which also speaks volumes of her connivance. Thus, whereas Coetzee's *Disgrace* remains ambivalent about Melanie's role, Jacobs's *Disgrace* focuses on her victimization and vulnerability which Ian Gleen remarks when asserting that "the film flattens the complexity of the relationship and turns Melanie into startled victim rather than complex collaborator" (2011:272). Through the narrative twist, as Ian Gleen further argues, "the film seemed to want moral melodrama rather than complexity" (2011:272) or narrative equivocation that would soften the cinematic drama and mitigate the viewer's interest.

Furthermore, the ending of Jacobs's *Disgrace* privileges the bright tenor of reconciliation between father and daughter to the bleakly ending in Coetzee's *Disgrace*

wherein Lurie's decides to euthanize his beloved dog which is an allegorical sacrifice of the lamb evoking for Lurie “another sign of acceptance and renunciation” (Glenn, 2011:280) and presumably the demise of the colonial subject. In shifting the ending to Lurie’s visit to his daughter and their reconciliation, Jacobs’s *Disgrace* emphasizes Lurie’s long walk toward a new beginning captured in this final sequence with a series of long shots that show him parking the track uphill and going down a long pathway that leads to Lucy’s house where she is at work in her garden. She is introduced to the viewer through a low angle shot that captures her pregnancy and presents her as taller as the surrounding mountains at the background of the frame (Jacobs 01:45:41) to underline her magnanimity and indicate the glowing future she embodies, which opposes the bleak picture of animal euthanasia in Coetzee’s *Disgrace*. The dialogue between the two occurs with an over-the-shoulder shot and a medium shot-reverse-shot showing them facing each other to stress their reunion and walking afterward in the house upon Lucy’s invitation (01:46:37) to suggest that her choice to stay and live in the new South Africa constitutes the destiny that Lurie too must follow. And before the final scene of the film fades out to a blue screen, an extreme long shot projects the viewer into the majestic land of mountain chain which green valley hosts, side by side, the houses of Lucy and Petrus (Jacobs 01:47:38) to signify nation-building centered on interracial pacific cohabitation. Commenting on the film’s recreation of the novel’s ending, Ian Green argues that “the problem is that the original novel leaves, bleakly, no model or vision of a social future [whereas] the film’s end imposes a social vision with a sop of optimism” (2011:281). Such a dramatic recreation in Jacobs’s *Disgrace* upholds Tcheuyap's view that through adaptation, the original work is subjected to a deconstruction that allows for a reconstruction of a derived work that duplicates, enhances, and transcends the first through its difference (2005:29-30). Therefore, the ending of Jacobs’s *Disgrace* supplements the narrative and ascertains Gleen’s view that the film unveils the novel’s dramatic gaps (2011:270). In this connection, the thematic alterations in Jacobs’s *Disgrace* substantiate Tcheuyap's claim that even though an adaptation is inspired from a novel, the filmmaker has the latitude to use the narrative ingredients to re-create a new art with its own poeticity that suits the cinematic project, audience, and the market forces rather than venerating the literary source as absolute and immutable (2005:27-28). Along the same lines of thematic aesthetics, the last section will further analyse the racial and gendered violence of Jacobs's *Disgrace* as a specific film criticism.

3. The Film Aesthetics of Violence of Gender and Race

Jacobs's *Disgrace* tackles issues of gender-based violence in form of sexual abuses as well as racial tensions, and power relations. The film plot constitutes an allegory of post-apartheid South Africa and addresses in many respects some major thematic trends inherent to the post-apartheid era. The theme of sexual violence and abuse on women is developed in two key moments of the film narrative with Lurie's sexual abuse on Melanie Isaacs initiating the narrative disequilibrium while Lucy's rape by three black men brings the plot to its turning point. The film's visual narrative addresses Lurie's sexual violation of Melanie Isaacs (Jacobs 00:09:00) as well as the breakdown of their love affair and the subsequent disciplinary proceedings (00:20:30) after she complaints against him and causes his fall from grace as it became a public scandal. He refuses to see his sexual violation of Melanie Isaacs as a sexual assault, yet he recognizes she was not consenting. As regards Lucy, her rape occurs during their violent assault on her farm. The film's visual narrative captures one of the most traumatizing moments of the assault. The big close-up at the start of the attack on the second attacker's ominous face who assaults Lurie and runs into the house to catch up with his accomplice whom Lucy invited in (Jacobs 00:40:45) is associated with a long shot on Lucy's back at the end of the attack showing her in a white bathing gown seemingly traumatized (00:45:06). If the film's viewer does not see the rape itself, this scene speaks largely of the "unspeakable" (2003:432) as Lucy Graham labels Lucy's rape in *Disgrace*.

In this connection, I hold that sexual abuse results from the expression of racial tensions and power relations in vogue in the post-apartheid era. In this respect, Jacobs's *Disgrace* portrays the rapes on Melanie Isaacs and Lucy as stemming from interracial conflicts and power unbalance. Lurie admits himself using his position to violate sexually Melanie whose vulnerability and subalternity, as Spivak would claim, are evidenced through her juvenile and student profiles. The camera long shot on Melanie's inert body during the first scene of lovemaking with Lurie (Jacobs 00:09:07) captures her state of passivity and denotes the violation of her subjected body by the phallographic power of her academic master. Besides, the high angle of the camera focusing only on Lurie's dominant posture during his sexual act denotes the crushing of his intellectual and phallographic hegemonies on his subjugated young student, which is what Lucy Graham corroborates when he asserts that "Lurie's misuse of Melanie exposes power operating at the level of gender and an institutional level" (2003:437-438). Moreover, Lurie's sexual violation of Melanie Isaacs evokes, as Pamela Cooper reveals, "colonial stereotypes or privileges of rights to the body of women depicted in colonial and

postcolonial narratives” (2005:25). Lurie himself revendicates such privileges of rights when seducing Melanie at his house he affirms in the film, that “a woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone. She has a duty to share it” (Jacobs 00:06:50) which implies for him the right to desire and enjoy it. Therefore, the liaison between Lurie and Melanie expresses the ramifications in the post-apartheid era of the old apartheid structures of interracial and unbalanced power relations occurring through sexual violence.

In addition, Lucy's rape evokes, as Sue Kossew asserts, "the exercise of power by those who have it over those who do not" (2003:156). Most importantly, it expresses the long-lasting racial antagonism between whites and blacks inherited from the apartheid system that speaks through her gang-raping. The film tackles the deletion of Lucy's factual rape not only, but also Lucy's rape as a retributive act that whites must endure on account of their ill-treatment of blacks during the apartheid regime. Critics such as Costaguta Mattos share this view and explain Lucy's rape by black men's gang as an act of vengeance perpetrated in response to the racial segregation and tensions enforced by the old apartheid regime (2012:29). Besides, the visual narrative evokes Lucy’s conversation with her father when she sorely recalls her rape and sees herself as indebted to her perpetrators whom she identifies “as debt collectors” (Jacobs 01:17:30). Moreover, both rapes denote reignited colonial ideologies in the post-apartheid era associated with what Lucy Graham identifies as “black peril”²⁴ (2003:437) representations in Lucy’s case, and inversely deemed by Sol Plaatje as “white peril” (1996:203) in Melanie’s. Besides, an onomastic analysis of the pair of female names Melanie and Lucy evokes the antagonism behind the racial predicament since Melanie, as Poyner observes, means “the dark one” (2008:66) whereas Lucy refers to light (2008:68). Both contrasting symbolisms are preserved in the film which further fuel narratives about interracial perils as strongly exemplified in the two women’s rapes. In any case, in screening gender-based violence in form of women’s sexual abuse by men, the film tackles the issue of rape as articulations of interracial collisions and power asymmetric relations in post-apartheid South Africa.

However, Lurie’s patriarchal power over women is collapsing at all levels, sexual, intellectual, and parental owing to the social turnaround that characterized post-apartheid South Africa. In this sense, different scenes of the film display Lurie’s series of escalating misfortunes including Soraya’s rejection (Jacobs 00:02:35), Melanie’s disavowal (00:17:01), his

²⁴ Whereas ‘Black Peril’ evokes colonial settlers’ fear and belief that black men find white women attractive and entertain sexual liaisons with them, ‘White peril’ designates the hidden sexual exploitation of black women by white men or colonizers.

disciplinary prosecution and dismissal from the university (00:20:40), Lucy's rebuttal of his fatherly authority (01:03:13). Thus, Lurie loses authority and control over three women in a row namely Soraya, Melanie, and Lucy without mentioning his double divorce with Evelyne and Rosalind. He also loses in passing his professional career as a lecturer, his reputation, and dignity in the end. The disintegration of Lurie's patriarchal power is summed up in the final scene of the dispute with his daughter wherein he failed to avoid the marriage contract and the land transfer between Lucy and Petrus, simply serving as a deliveryman between the two and conceding after all that it is "humiliating to end like a dog" (Jacobs 01:38:34). The scene ends with the camera closing on Lurie's speechless and stupefied face before he turns to stare at Petrus building his new house from a distance as if the direction towards Petrus suggests the compass towards the future and the new owners of power in the new South Africa.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has examined Jacobs's *Disgrace* from the perspective of medium-specificity thesis and the poetics of film rewriting that impart variations in the transition from novel to film. I have argued therein that Jacobs's *Disgrace* constitutes a different medium from Coetzee's novel and embodies as such aesthetical features associated with its medium's idiosyncrasy and poetics. In this regard, the chapter has further problematized the fidelity discourse associated with the film *Disgrace* by underscoring the narrative alterations and recreations that it incorporates. In so doing, the chapter has advocated not only an aesthetics of divergence displayed through the adapted film but has also demonstrated that Jacobs's *Disgrace* is an independent genre that can be studied as a stand-alone creation rather than a mere appendix thereby questioning the view of the axiomatic supremacy of literature over cinema. As an independent genre, Jacobs's *Disgrace* creates space for conversations with other film adaptations which I now address in the next chapter dedicated to the intertextual analysis.

Chapter 4:

The Intertextual Aesthetics of Creation of the Film Adaptation of *Disgrace*.

Introduction

Intertextuality is commonly understood as the relations that a given text entertains with other texts. Accordingly, Julia Kristeva asserts that a text constitutes an integration and alteration of another text and implies at least a re-reading (1978:85). Likewise, Gerard Genette defines intertextuality as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts” or “the actual presence of one text within another” (1997:1-2). In this respect, I undertake an intertextual critique of *Disgrace* to analyse how the film aesthetics of creation converses with other contemporary film adaptations, first post-apartheid South African such as Suleman's *Fools* (1997), Hood's *Tsotsi* (2005), and Hooper's *Red Dust* (2004), and then postcolonial African film namely Sembène's *Xala* (1975). And because intertextuality stresses, as Robert Stam claims, “the endless permutation of textualities rather than the “fidelity” of a later text to an earlier model” (2005:8), it allows, in my view, an approach to film adaptation away from the hierarchical schemes of the fidelity model, and hence, further enhances the aesthetics of creation of *Disgrace* through its conversation with contemporary films. In this context, central to this chapter's inquiry are the following questions: how does Jacobs's *Disgrace* aesthetics of creation intersect with other post-apartheid South African and postcolonial African film adaptations? How can *Disgrace* complicate its narrative through its conversation with other contemporary films to address its shortcomings and controversies? In responding to these questions, I will advocate for an adaptation criticism of Jacobs's *Disgrace* beyond the rhetoric of fidelity, because, as Tcheuyap claims, an intertextual orientation of adaptation criticism frees film adaptation from the precarity of the concept of fidelity and admits the infinity of textual meanings (2005:41). As such, my intertextual analysis of *Disgrace* will tease out film aesthetics of creation trending in particular periods of post-apartheid South African and postcolonial African cinemas. Besides, concurring with Robert Stam that fidelity constitutes “an inadequate trope”, I seek to promote intertextuality as “a new language (...) to speak about adaptation” (2005:24), and hence, propose a rewriting of Jacobs's *Disgrace* beyond its fidelity model, its limitations, and controversies.

1. *Disgrace* Intertextual Aesthetics with Contemporary South African Films.

In this section, I put the film *Disgrace* in conversation with films adaptations such as *Fools*, *Tsotsi*, and *Red Dust* all set in post-apartheid South Africa to explore aesthetical relations of analogies and familiarities occurring in the “ways of making and doing” (Ranci re, 2004:22) cinematic arts. In this respect, I argue that Jacobs’s *Disgrace* narrative aesthetics intersect with its contemporaries in the way they fictionalize the intersectional violence of race, gender, and class as well as redemption and reconciliation in the transition era of South Africa.

1.1. Intersectional Violence of Race, Gender and Class

Jacobs’s *Disgrace* and Gavin Hood’s *Tsotsi* join voices in echoing the failure of the post-apartheid neoliberal system exemplified by the rampant existence of black gangsters who stir up violence across South African townships and suburbs. In this sense, I argue that the persistence of gangsterism in post-apartheid film narratives evokes the prolonged effects of apartheid in the new South Africa, and hence, echoes Lindiwe Dovey’s view that “postcolonial violence is a metonymic displacement of colonial and other kinds of violence” (2009:26). In Jacobs’s *Disgrace*, the assault on Lucy’s farm by three black men depicts the post-apartheid attacks on white farmers and echoes in my view the gangster’s attacks of Gumboot Dhlamini and Mrs. Pulma Dube in *Tsotsi* because both assaults speak to representations of black violence in post-apartheid South Africa. In *Disgrace*, the camera’s wide shot and close-ups on the three black attackers identify them with black gangsters through their run-down costuming, their defective English utterance, and most importantly their crimes since they distinguish themselves in violent robberies, rape, and murder attempt in Lucy’s farm attack (Jacobs 00:39:40). Hood’s *Tsotsi* brings the problem of black gangsters to the forefront by focusing especially on the gangsterism of the “tsotsi”²⁵. In the film, the word is polysemic insofar as it refers to the nickname of the protagonist and gang’s leader not only but also serves to designate his gang of four black criminals. They distinguish themselves in horrors involving the killing of Gumboot Dhlamini in the train (Hood 00:01:03), the hijacking of Mrs. Pulma Dube’s car which occasions the kidnapping of her baby, and the violent gunfire which she suffered while vainly attempting to rescue her new-born (00:06:52)).

²⁵ Tsotsis are defined as young black criminals or gangsters who live in the urban milieu, especially in the townships and characterized by their gaudy dressing code and vernacular language. Tsotsis were very prominent in the 1940s-50s during the apartheid era but are still rampant in post-apartheid South Africa.

From the above, I must say that rural gangs and tsotsis share tropes that are characteristic of gangsterism including mostly instigations of terrors and murders which reflect the anxieties of transition-era South Africa and generate intersecting cinematic aesthetics between *Disgrace* and *Tsotsi*. In Jacobs's film, the camera close-up on Lurie's terrified look to underscore his fear when two gangsters, one of whom Pollux, were setting him alight (Jacobs 00:43:57) echoes Gumboot Dhlamini's panic and fear which Hood also framed with a big close-up camera shot when the victim was violently surrounded in the train by Tsotsi and his accomplices (Hood 00:01:15). Besides, in both crime scenes, the two filmmakers use a similar montage of the visual space since Lurie and Dhlamini are respectively cornered in a confined space with both vainly trying to escape. Lurie is sequestered in the toilet of the house which is filmed in low-key light to match the darkroom with the gangsters' sombre act of murder attempt while Dhlamini is encircled by Tsotsi's gang in a crowded train which low lighting that facilitates his murder. Both crimes scenes also happened without interfering dialogues from the characters which Steve Jacobs and Gavin Hood substitute with silence and intriguing soundtracks to reinforce the tragic drama of the visual actions. Thus, I hold that the cinematic forms of both films intersect in their portrayal of gangsterism associated with black violent subjectivities in post-apartheid South Africa, *Disgrace* in the rural area, and *Tsotsi* in the urban milieu. Besides, I consider that both rural and urban gang's violence epitomizes, as Rodwell Makombe observes, "the rejection of the rules of the state" (2014:8), that is, engenders the violence of the marginalized groups against the colonial situation caused by the violence of apartheid and its residual effects in the post-apartheid era. This echoes in my opinion Frantz Fanon's view that "the violence of the colonial regime and the counterviolence of the colonized balance each other [for] violence among the colonized will spread in proportion to the violence exerted by the colonial regime" (1963:46-47). In other words, gang assaults in *Disgrace* and *Tsotsi* are ways of challenging neo-colonial authority in post-apartheid South Africa to reclaim their own humanity. In this context, I agree with Rodwell Makombe who asserts that "tsotsis", and I will add black gangsters in rural zones, "are not only mad dogs but also products of a mad society" (2014:22) whose living conditions are determined by extremely poor socio-economic realities configured in both films through unequal class relations across the colour line or within the same racial boundaries. And in my view, interracial and intra-racial violence exemplified through black gangs' criminality in rural and urban environments intersect in *Disgrace* and *Tsotsi* with economic violence or violence of class.

In this connection, the attack on Lucy's farm raises the thorny issue of land ownership in farm context that divides white and black and increases the economic gap between their social classes in post-apartheid South Africa. As Adeoye Akinola mentions, despite the post-1994 land reform programmes, black South Africans still face impoverishment due to the land inequality following the land dispossession and disempowerment by white people during apartheid (2020:65). To this effect, black South Africans in rural areas mostly farm dwellers, labour, or tenants still claim land ownerships leading to farm conflicts and attacks against white landowners. Hence, Steve Jacobs's mise-en-scene of the attack on Lucy's farm, I believe, reproduces the land conflict whereby white owners, in this case, Lucy and David Lurie, are gang-attacked and targeted for murder, rape, robberies. If the visual montage of Lucy's rape escaped the viewer, the horrific film sequence of Lurie's immolation in the lavatory, the gang robbery, and the killing of the dogs (Jacobs 00:43:12) are all part of the cinematic mise-en-scene that offers the viewer the terrifying drama of the farm assault. Besides, all indications seem to corroborate Petrus' conspiracy of the attack to coerce Lucy into renouncing the land ownership: he is absent during the attack, yet being aware of the insecurity around farm areas which he admits when he was introduced to Lurie (00:27:15); one of the gangsters, Pollux, whom he protects is his kinship (01:35:52); and he proposes a marriage deal with Lucy in the aftermath of the attack in exchange of his protection and the land ownership (01:36:29).

However, I maintain that the question of land ownership and conflict associated with the attack of Lucy's farm is ultimately attributable to poverty in rural areas and shows, as Makombe argues, that "most criminals see themselves as fighting for economic liberation. Theirs is a struggle for survival" (2014:27). This violence of class in *Disgrace* exemplified through the gangs' attack of the middle-class bourgeois in rural areas intersects with *Tsotsi's* urban gangsterism in the way both foreground gang's activities in unequal classes struggles and anxieties during the transition-era South Africa. The antagonism between the three black men and the Lurie's family in Jacobs's *Disgrace* unveils economic power struggles operating at a class level across the colour bar with David and Lucy Lurie on the middle-class bourgeois side of the neoliberal social architecture and the three black gangsters on the poor and marginal side and represent not only, as Makombe argues, "passive victims of a cruel system but also active agents fighting to transform their material conditions" (2014:27). The point-of-view camera angle that shows the two gangsters loading their loot in Lurie's car (Jacobs, 00:42:25) intersects with the crosscut of the camera shooting the robbery in the Dube's house orchestrated by Tsotsi, Butcher, and Die Aap (Hood, 00:57:57). And hence, In Hood's *Tsotsi* likewise, the looting of

the Dube's house opposes two classes whereby Tsotsi's gangsters seek to procure essentials to sustain their livelihood. The two classes dividing the antagonists in *Tsotsi* exist within the same racial sphere and portray, on one side, the middle-class Dube family as the newly rich black South African whose social ascension results from the post-apartheid social turnaround, and, on the other side, the poor and marginal class of tsotsis representing the excluded groups who are hostages of the economic apartness and neoliberal bureaucracies in the post-apartheid era. In this sense, gang violence in *Disgrace* and *Tsotsi* denotes the continuum of apartheid violence into the post-apartheid era whereby it mutates into new forms mostly accentuated in the country's poorest milieus namely the townships and rural farm zones.

In addition to the violence of race and class, *Disgrace* intertextual aesthetics with *Tsotsi* also pertain to gender-based violence operating mostly at a sexual level. Indeed, both films convey scenes of violence against women whose bodies are presented as objects of male gazes or what Braidotti calls "self-legitimation" (qtd. in Mngadi, 2015:25) thereby making both films a critique of male voyeurism and patriarchal power. In Jacobs's *Disgrace*, women such as Soraya, Melanie, and Lucy are all depicted as objects of male desires and gazes, the first two during their sexual relationships and subordination to Lurie and the third when she inadvertently dropped her towel in front of Lurie and Pollux who could not withhold from staring at her bare chest (Jacobs, 01:40:03). Likewise, in *Tsotsi*, Miriam polarizes the male voyeuristic attention when she was forced by Tsotsi to breastfeed at gunpoint the kidnapped baby whom he struggles to look after. The scene occurs with the camera undressing Miriam through medium close-up and close-up shots to express the male protagonist's intent to violate her body with lascivious gazes (Hood 00:29:21). Besides, Tsotsi establishes his authoritative and aggressive male selfhood over Miriam's when he chooses to sit nose to nose with her while she fearfully undresses and nurses the unfortunate infant thereby surrendering to the hegemonic and violent masculinity. Thus, "the 'voice' of the female" as Ritu Birla asserts, "is constructed as instrument, either for indigenous male authority or colonial patriarchy. The subjectivity of the woman here is not only read as the violent and unstable effect of an agency not her own but she is revealed to us as an instrument of that agency" (in Morris, 2010:89). Hence, I think that the film's narration of sexual violation against Miriam and the silencing of her voice resulting in her erased subjectivity partakes in what Glaser labels as "a discursive economy in which violence against her is normalized and her humanity as a rights-bearing citizen is erased" (2000:4). Thus, *Disgrace* intertextual aesthetics of creation with *Tsotsi* as regards gender

violence, portrays women's bodies as objects of male desires and gazes thereby establishing a relation of subordination of men over women whose subjectivities tend to be erased.

In the same scenario of gender and sexual violence, I estimate that *Disgrace* also intersects with Ramadan Suleman's film *Fools* which also portrays narratives of female bodily objectivation and erotization that satisfies men's voluptuous appetites. The striking similarity between *Disgrace* and *Fools* lies in the fact that the protagonists of both films Lurie and Zamani, although belonging to different racial groups, are both middle-aged teachers who have raped their young female students, Melanie, and Mimi. As a result, they have been dismissed from their academic institutions. Hence, both films belong to what Lindiwe Dovey categorizes as "the few post-1994 South African films that break the silence on the horrific reality of rape in South Africa" (2009:89). Thus, rape serves as an instrument for the male patriarchal subjection of women and represents a strong intertextual connection between the two films in their depiction of male violence against women in the post-apartheid era. This "weapon against women" as Pumla Gqola argues, "is both widespread and not taken seriously" (2015:53) as exemplified by both protagonists, Lurie and Zamani, who somehow get away with their abuse since were not targeted by the law.

Moreover, the screening of women's sexual violations in *Fools* extends to the lovemaking scene of Zani and Ntozakhe. According to Litheko Modisane, "Ntozakhe's agency is only confined to her sexuality" (2013:150) in the scene that reveals her naked torso which Sikhumbuzo Mngadi considers to be a scarce moment in the film whereby she dramatically captivates the viewers' attention through a visual pleasure that evokes voyeurism and aesthetics (2015:26). And because the camera does not dwell on Zani's bare chest to attract the viewer's interest as much as with Ntozakhe's case whose breasts are repeatedly shown allowing the film to conserve "the convention of the nude female pin-up and its associations with the consuming and fetishizing masculine gaze" (2015:26) which is also depicted in *Disgrace* through Lurie's lustful scenes with Soraya and Melanie. Soraya is shown in the first scene through a camera long shot getting out of bed all naked and gazed at by Lurie who remains all covered (Jacobs, 00:02:22). Likewise, Melanie is later captured through a medium shot standing naked in front of a gazing Lurie again covered in the bed and awaiting to sleep with her (Jacobs, 00:12:12). These female bodies represent, therefore, a site of operation of men's hegemonic power and voyeuristic gazes which are guided, as Maryam Beyad argues, by "colonial 'patterns of thought' that presupposed superiority of Whites over Blacks and men over women" (2018:61). In other words, women's bodies are subjected to men's wilful sexual orgies and domination.

Similarly, in *Tsotsi*, Myriam is repeatedly a spectacle of Tsotsi's voyeuristic gazes whenever the camera furtively shows subjective angles of her breasts when she feeds the highjacked baby (Hood, 00:29:28). Subjective camera shots of her bare torso directly project both the intradiegetic and extradiegetic viewers' attention on her nakedness, and hence make of young township women, as Glaser claims, "objects of subcultural prestige, [and] trophies of masculinity subjected to astonishing levels of sexual violence" (2000:4). Therefore, all three filmic narratives state an argument of female misogynization whereby women's bodies paradoxically do not belong to them but rather serve as public properties and resources destined for common usage and enjoyment. Such a bleak portrayal of female characters, I agree with Mule, denotes the films' "failure to imagine a gender-sensitive, decolonial narrative of de-marginalization through which African subjects, and especially women, can find agency within the structures and institutions of modern democracy" (2021:39) in post-apartheid South Africa.

In brief, I consider the intersectional violence of race, class, and gender in the post-apartheid era as metamorphosed and residual forms of apartheid violations which echoes Dovey's point, that "postcolonial violence is a metonymic displacement of colonial and other kinds of violence" (2009:26). And the portrayal of violence in Jacobs's *Disgrace* generates aesthetical relationships and analogies with other film adaptations such as *Tsotsi* and *Fools*. However, the intersectional aesthetics of creation of Jacobs's *Disgrace* with contemporary adapted films also address forgiveness and reconciliation in the new South Africa.

1.2. Intersecting Aesthetics of Redemption and Reconciliation

In the aftermath of apartheid, South Africa commits to ensuring a peaceful transition from its repressive past and cycles of violence towards reconciliation and national unity. To this effect, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu between 1995 and 2002 was mandated to promote national unity through forgiveness and reconciliation between victims and perpetrators of apartheid crimes. In this respect, I assert that *Disgrace* fictionalization of Lurie's quest for grace echoes the national interest for peace and intersects with the thematization of redemption and reconciliation in *Tsotsi* and *Red Dust*.

Jacobs's *Disgrace* intertextual dialogue with *Tsotsi* materializes their respective protagonist's quest for redemption from their violent subjectivities after they find themselves literally in phase offset with the post-apartheid world. But Lurie and Tsotsi metaphorize the collective quest of redemption of white and black groups in transition-era South Africa. Indeed,

Lurie crumbles due to the disintegration of white supremacy resulting from the social turnaround, and he impersonates the white collective shame and guilt resulting from the memories of apartheid atrocities. Likewise, Tsotsi grapples to survive the ruthless class struggles or what Daniel Lehman calls the "growing economic gulf between newly liberated black South Africans" (2011:97), and hence, embodies collective gangsterism associated with black violent masculinities that entertain white paranoia and inflame the wounds of apartheid. Amid their struggles, both Lurie and Tsotsi achieve redemption through encountering vulnerable agents, Lurie growing sympathetic for euthanized dogs alongside his rape victim and traumatized daughter, and Tsotsi with the kidnapped middle-class baby who symbolizes the Fanonian "new humanism", that is, the new black South African liberated from racial and economic apartness. The aesthetical choices of both filmmakers to fictionalize redemption correlates to the extent that Jacobs's mise-en-scene of Lurie's encounter with the Isaacs family relates with Tsotsi's meeting with the Dube family. The camera shot-reverse-shot waving between Lurie and Mr. Isaacs during the scene of Lurie's admission of guilt and repentance (Jacobs, 01:22:10) intersects with Hood's use of similar camera's waving shots between Tsotsi and Mr. Dube during the restitution of the baby that bespeaks Tsotsi's repentance (Hood, 01:20:15). Besides the camera footage of Tsotsi giving back the baby to its parents in the final scene (Hood, 01:21:55) echoes Lurie's giving up his favorite dog for euthanasia (Jacobs, 01:43:28) because both gestures symbolically depict these protagonists' liberation from their "mad heart", that is, their addiction to violence, and hence, their readiness to let go of their violent subjectivities. And as I argued above, their subjective redemption alludes to black and white collective liberation from cycles of violence and legacies of hatred indispensable for "rainbowism", that is, national unity and reconciliation.

In this scenario, redemption in *Disgrace* and *Tsotsi* comes with some form of reconciliation both in the sense of pacification and reunion. In Jacobs's *Disgrace*, Lurie makes peace with the Isaacs whom he asked for forgiveness for raping Melanie. The camera long shots in the subsequent scene on Lurie's ceremonial kneeling before Melanie's mother and sister to ask for forgiveness reveal to the viewers his deep compunction and his apologetic vow to reconciliation (Jacobs, 01:25:00). He also reunites with her daughter in the film closing scene whereby the camera extreme long shot which shows Lucy ushering him into her house for tea (Jacobs, 01:47:00) suggests not only Lurie's pacification with her daughter but also the commitment of white people, whom they impersonate, to live and embrace together the new South Africa in need for *ubuntu*. In this regard, Jacobs's *Disgrace* is aesthetically in

conversation with Hood's *Tsotsi* in portraying reconciliation as subjective and collective interests. And it can be said, as Mule argues, that the kidnapped "baby becomes a mirror into [Tsotsi's] own life and the impetus for the recovery of his memory and humanity" (2021:29) which amounts to reconciliation with himself. But Tsotsi's restitution of the baby occasions his reunion with the Dube's couple. In a shot-verse shot on Tsotsi and Mr. John Dube both standing on each side of the security gate and surrounded by the police, the metamorphosed Tsotsi hands the baby over to its father after he "opens the barrier that separates the guarded retreat of the new elite black South Africans from the world of the black South African tsotsi, one who has not been dealt into the nation's new economic empowerment" (Lehman, 2011:92). In this moving scene, I feel like Lindiwe Dovey that "the low angle shot of Tsotsi looking lovingly into the baby's eyes confirms for viewers that he has fully redeemed himself from violence" (2007:157). Thereafter, Tsotsi takes responsibility for his crime by surrendering to the police in a scene that magnifies the post-apartheid order and its ability to neutralize violence. This reunion between Tsotsi and the Dube denotes in my view the reconciliation between blacks torn apart by post-apartheid class struggles whereby Tsotsi's enfranchisement from violence further substantiates Dovey's view that "by historicizing violence through the adaptation process, African filmmakers are problematizing representations of Africa[ns] as inherently violent" (2009:31). And the camera tracking Tsotsi's nightly long walk to the Dube's residence (Hood, 01:12:37) where their meeting occurs aesthetically intersects to my mind with the camera's track on Lurie's diurnal long walk to Lucy's house (Jacobs, 01:44:30). Both scenes of walking leading to reconciliation suggest that the road to South Africa's national unity and reconciliation is a long marathon that requires constant commitment from the protagonists.

In addition to *Tsotsi*, the filming of reconciliation in *Disgrace* can be further put into conversation with Tom Hooper's *Red Dust*. Indeed, Jacobs's *Disgrace* enactment of Lurie's hearings about his sexual violation of Melanie and his subsequent quest for forgiveness and reconciliation represents an allegorical attempt, although distorted by Lurie's over-focalization, to portray "the troubled TRC within the context of a nation in transition" (Poyner, 2008:67). In this respect, it intersects with the fictionalization in Hooper's *Red Dust* of the TRC's hearings concerning the former policeman Dirk Hendrick's (Jamie Bartlett) brutal torture of Alex Mpondo (Chiwetel Ejiofor) and Steve Sizela (Loyiso Gxwala) during the apartheid era and his application for amnesty. In both hearings, the two films coincide in problematizing the issue of full disclosure and sincere repentance of the perpetrators of crimes. Lurie arrogantly takes the committee members in circle during the interrogation while "invoking the god Eros in

defiance of their expectations of an apology” (Kucala, 2014:143). The close-up camera angles crosscutting on Lurie and the committee’s members during the questioning raise doubts about Lurie’s sense of disclosure (Jacobs, 00:21:46). Likewise, Mr. Hendrick’s disguised contrition before the TRC not only masks further threats against Alex Mpondo and his emergent political career but also covers Piet Müller (Ian Roberts) the chief police who ordered the torturing. Similar big close-ups angles of the camera on Mr. Hendrick’s face make the viewers aware of his lies about the place of identification and torture of Steve Sizela (Hooper, 01:11:15). Yet "truth" as Fanon claims "is what hastens the dislocation of the colonial regime, what fosters the emergence of the nation." (1963:14). Thus, the two films intersect in their aestheticization of the perpetrators’ lack of disclosure. However, a notable contrast exists between the two cinematic mise-en-scene of the TRC’s hearings. In *Red Dust*, the hearings involve the presence of the victims of crimes and their family members as well as lawyers, audiences, and the broadcasting of the hearing on national TV. Hooper's choice to stage an audience and a mediatic covering of the hearings provides his film with a visual narrative that is more realistic of the national atmosphere that has characterized the TRC's hearings during the transition-era South Africa. Conversely, Jacobs's *Disgrace* restricts the hearings to the unique focalization on Lurie and the members of the hearing committee. But as both films draw to the end, the viewers learn about the redemption of the two criminals. Lurie eventually comes to repent and apologize to Mr./Mrs. Isaacs (Jacobs, 01:22:52). Similarly, Mr. Hendrick finally obtains amnesty after disclosing the truth about the imprisonment and torture of Alex Mpondo and his friend Steve Sizela who succumbs to his wounds and was buried on a farm (Hooper, 01:13:05). The close-up shot of the camera on Lurie's prostration before Melanie's mother and sister to show his repentance and ask forgiveness hence converges with the close-up shot on Mr. Hendrick's who bows to Alex Mpondo in a sign of deference after receiving the amnesty. As a result, I must say that *Disgrace* aesthetics of creation is in conversation with *Red Dust* in the manner both films portray redemption and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.

In short, intertwining aesthetical choices that Jacobs’s *Disgrace* shares with *Tsotsi* and *Red Dust* about black and white South African redemption from violence and achievement of reconciliation are cinematic intertextual conversations that characterize the aesthetics of post-apartheid South African cinema. These filmic indictments of the themes of redemption and reconciliation is a reminder to South Africans, as Lindiwe Dovey asserts, that "throwing stones or using a gun is not the only way left for us to deal with our current problems”, that is, “contemporary violence stemming from apartheid and violent masculinities but “there could

always be alternatives” (2009:87) around the table of negotiation embodied by the TRC and other democratic agencies. Moving forward, how does Jacobs’s *Disgrace* converse with African postcolonial films namely Sembène’s *Xala*.

2. Depictions of Masculinity and the Decline of the Phallocratic Power in *Disgrace* and *Xala*.

In his film adaptation *Xala* (1975), Ousmane Sembène questions the transition of Senegal from the colonial government to independence by caricaturing the development in Africa through the new black elite's betrayal of the freedom struggle. It echoes Jacobs's filming in *Disgrace* of the transition-era South Africa characterized by the collapse of white supremacy and their adjustment struggle. To this effect, Jacobs’s *Disgrace* relates with Sembène’s *Xala* in terms of their thematization of masculinity and the decline of the phallocratic power which bespeaks as well cinematic aesthetics of violence amid a context of political transitions. Both films enact the disintegration of male power in transitional states, Jacobs's *Disgrace* dealing with the impact of the changeover from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa and especially the incapacity of the white man to adapt to the social turnover and embrace the new nationhood, and Sembène’s *Xala* addressing the aftermath of postcolonial Senegal and “the failure of the post-colonial state to fulfill the ideals of anti-colonial liberation movements, ideals that transcended [Fanon's] idea of the violent overcoming of the colonizer” (Jefferess, 2008:7). The metaphorical question of sexuality as a means for a deconstruction of male hegemony lies at the core of the downfall of Lurie and El Hadj Abdou Kader Beye. Indeed, Lurie’s disintegration in Jacobs’s *Disgrace* occurs through his portrayal as a womanizer wrestling with sexual problems and female abuse that include the rape of Melanie Isaacs. In Sembène’s *Xala*, sexual potency is not the stumbling block for El Hadj but rather the *xala*, that is, the curse of sexual impotency (in *Wolof*) which he discovers while unable to consummate his wedding with Ngone, his new bride. Unlike Lurie, El Hadj is not a libertine womanizer devoted to promiscuous life, yet he is depicted as a polygamous and traditional womanizer equally greedy for young women and his third wedding proves too much as it results in his socio-professional opprobrium. Thus, both films present the female body as a battlefield of gender power relations and a ground for the two protagonists’ exercise of power. But ironically, it is also the site for their respective downfall. In this sense, the first scene of *Disgrace* seals the breakdown between Lurie and Soraya (Jacobs 00:06:27) and intersects in *Xala* with the scene of El Hadj and Ngone

in the marital bedroom (Sembène 01:05:20). For both filmmakers, the intimate room represents the ideal setting for the exertion of the phallocratic hegemony on women's bodies with the camera exposing in both scenes their naked bodies to male voyeuristic gazes and voluptuous consumerism. The long shot of Ngone lying naked in the bridal bed awaiting to be deflowered (Sembène 01:05:15) echoes the long shot of Soraya getting out of bed, naked, after the intercourse with Lurie (Jacobs 00:02:22). But surprisingly the two scenes respectively spell the end of the protagonists' phallocratic power since Soraya parts ways with Lurie while Ngone remained a virgin owing to El Hadj's *xala*. Soraya's rejection of Lurie depicts in my view his inability to continuously exercise his privileges on her and metaphorically suggests the impossibility for white to pursue the implementation of colonial power in post-apartheid South Africa. Similarly, I think that El Hadj's incapacity to consume the virgin Ngone symbolizes the new black elite's inability to govern and develop the newly independent Senegal.

In the process, the collapse of hegemonic masculinities that are portrayed through the sexual disgraces of El Hadj and Lurie – the latter worsened by the rape on Melanie – eventually led to the protagonists' dismissals from their professions. El Hadj's quest for cure occasions his bankruptcy and ultimately his expelling from the Chamber of Commerce whereas Lurie's sexual violation of Melanie similarly causes his dismissal from the university with both sackings epitomizing the demise of the phallocratic power. Moreover, both dismissals are enacted through respective scenes of disciplinary meetings, Lurie by the hearing committee following his sexual malversations (Jacobs 00:20:17), and El Hadj by the Chamber board because of his administrative malversations inherent to his sexual impotence (Sembène 01:34:47). In their hearing scenes, the two filmmakers put their respective protagonists to the stand with the camera getting a close-up on them whenever they make their cases. In addition, both filmmakers make a tracking shot of their protagonists when they respectively exit the audience hall going downstairs which suggests the downfall of their masculine power and symbolize in Jacobs's *Disgrace* the collapse of white minority power in the transition-era South Africa, and Sembène's *Xala* the incompetence and failures of the new black elite in postcolonial Senegal.

However, in the visual narrative of both filmmakers, their protagonists eventually find some sort of redemption. To this effect, El Hadj's desperate quest for cure in *Xala* also intertexts with Lurie's quest for forgiveness in *Disgrace* insofar as both quests constitute the filmic thematization of subjective redemption in post-apartheid South Africa for the white

middle-aged professor, and in postcolonial Senegal for the black middle-aged bourgeois. Redemption in this respect comes with both protagonists' sympathizing with vulnerable subjects not only but also showing humility and repentance towards their victimized subjects. Hence, Lurie's empathy for euthanized dogs and his victimized daughter fosters his repentance toward his victim Melanie while El Hadj's cure from his impotence ultimately required his humiliations amid the beggars. Besides, Lurie's humiliation before Melanie's mother and sister to repent and ask for forgiveness intersects with El Hadj's humiliation before the beggars in a sign of contrition. And Jacobs's long shot on Lurie's prostration before Melanie's relatives (Jacobs 01:25:00) echoes Sembène's long shot on El Hadj exposing his naked torso to the spitting of disabled beggars (Sembène 02:02:15) whose "bodies not only leak but cast out their bodily fluids upon El Hadji, the one who had so steadfastly disavowed their fleshy presence" (Van Dam, 2016:218) and attracted their curse. Nonetheless, I must say those individual redemptions, as Steve Jacobs and Ousmane Sembène depict, are metaphors for national unity and hence advocate for nationhood in the transition-era of South Africa and Senegal. Both films' aesthetics intersect in stressing reconciliation and union between antagonistic characters as a way of achieving national unity and enhancing nation-building. In *Disgrace*, Steve Jacobs stages the reconciliation between Lurie and the Isaacs and his reunion with his daughter to suggest that nationhood in post-apartheid South Africa requires forgiveness and reconciliation across and within racial groups after the history of human rights violations. Similarly, Ousmane Sembène privileges in his film ending the *mise-en-scène* of the reunion and reconciliation between El Hadj and the disabled beggars to signify that the development of the newly independent state of Senegal necessitates an egalitarian society without class struggles between the rich represented by the new emerging black elite, and the poor symbolized by the crowds of disabled beggars. Indeed, the first step toward nationhood in *Xala* consisted in the eviction and substitution of the former colonial masters by the new black elite which corroborates the Fanonian view that "decolonization is always a violent event [and] therefore, implies the urgent need to thoroughly challenge the colonial situation." (1963:1-2). But a further step no less important toward complete independence is required and must be rooted, as the voiceover claims, in African socialism, the only true socialism, the socialism on man's level (00:03:35), that is, a nation without class and inequalities or *ubuntu*.

From the above, I maintain therefore that the film *Disgrace* aesthetics of creation intersect with *Xala* in the way Steve Jacobs and Ousmane Sembène thematize masculinity and the decline of the phallocratic power to portray nationhood in transition-era South Africa and

Senegal. The cinematic conversation occurring between the two films which differ by their geographical anchoring enable, according to Lindiwe Dovey's project, "the comparison of cinematic experiences in various African contexts [that] is essential to the project of interrogating African cinema as a whole" [and] testing out (...) continental trends" (2000:4-5). In other words, the intertextuality operating between Jacobs's *Disgrace* and Sembène's *Xala* provides ways of acknowledging transnational and transregional cinematic aesthetic currents in the film adaptation of African novels. Besides, it shows that intertextuality constitutes a new language for adaptation criticism because it moves away from the hierarchical scheme of fidelity to consider film adaptation as a *sui generis* creation with its own aesthetics and capable of textual dialogues with other cinematic productions. Moving forward in this context, I consider that textual conversations occurring between *Disgrace* and film adaptations such as *Tsotsi* and *Fools*, which radically complicate their narratives beyond the fidelity rhetoric to speak to their contemporary moments of adaptation, provide a benchmark of a filmic rewriting of *Disgrace* beyond its narrative weaknesses and controversies.

3. Rewriting of Jacobs's *Disgrace* beyond its Narrative Controversies

3.1. Unmuting Black and Female Voices

To rewrite Jacobs's *Disgrace* beyond any fidelity rhetoric, I suggest a resuscitation of other characters' voices and perspectives buried under Lurie's monophonic voice which is not only restrictive but also biased towards black and female subjectivities. The film could embody, as in Suleman's *Fools*, an array of characters mainly female with vocal capabilities to respond and countervail Lurie's views and actions, and hence, enfranchise the visual narrative from his bleakly and unreliable stream of consciousness. The film can empower Melanie by integrating her account of her rape and the ensuing consequences, as with Mimi, Zamani's victim in Suleman's *Fools*, to challenge the colonial idea of white privileges. For instance, Suleman creates a scene in which Mimi aborts her pregnancy with the help of other women to symbolize the film abortion of "the self-authorizing act whereby Zamani not only inscribes but also describes his masculine violence on Mimi's body" (Mngadi, 2015:21). Justifying his narrative complication, Suleman expresses the need "to go a step further in the film to try to make South Africans reflect, especially at this democratic period, on their relationships with women" claiming that "the days are over where the man decides everything" (qtd. in Ukadike, 2002:293). Hence the film stages emancipatory black feminine characters that counterforce

their male counterparts as Zamani is arrayed against Mimi his victim, Nosipho, his wife, who became, as Dovey claims, "a vocal character, refusing to play the role of the martyred wife" (2009:73). In this regard, Melanie could be given more attention in the fictionalization of her rape. Besides, she could also be portrayed as the chief witness and recipient of Lurie's request of forgiveness and reconciliation to reflect the confrontational spirit of the TRC that "involves negotiation between, and healing in, both victim and abuser alike" (Coetzee, 1992:252). For it appears to me that the filmmaker's task in the post-apartheid era consists of getting South Africans to think out of the colonial scheme and engage with their current socio-political predicaments which explains the shift of *Fools* chronology to South Africa's transition-era with revisited topical issues.

In the same scenario, Lucy's role could be recast in Jacobs's *Disgrace* to involve visual and verbal accounts of her sexual assault as well as a rape report to the police to enable a criminal investigation against the gangsters and eventually their arrestation as with Tsotsi in Hood's film. This would destigmatize not only black puerile and white paranoia but also what Pulma Gqola calls "the female fear factory [or] the manufacture of female fear [that] works to silence women by reminding [them] of [their] rapability" (2015:78-79). It will also legitimize and magnify a new social order of non-violence under the post-apartheid era. With the issue of rape on exponential growth and becoming, as Gqola's claims, "such a powerful language with which to control women in South Africa" (2015:53), empowering the rape victims by unmuting their voices through emancipatory dialogues and conflicting perspectives with the male patriarchal agency would certainly upgrade the film dramatic tenor and shift the narrative away from Lurie's implausible voice and consciousness.

Alternatively, I think a film rewriting of *Disgrace* could embody a voice-over with an omniscient third-person narrator. The use of voice-over narration in Suleman's *Fools*, for instance, denotes a certain aesthetics in African cinema that guides the viewers' perspective of reception. It would contribute to counter-focalize Lurie's dominant presence and his patriarchal agency. Albeit Nthabiseng Motsemme argues that women use silence, that is, their "inability to speak a violent memory" or the "unspeakability" (2004:917) as a means "to formulate new meanings and enact agency in constrained surroundings" (2004:914). Nonetheless, she does not underestimate "the importance of giving voice to the voiceless, exposing oppressions and sexual assaults that have been exercised particularly against women" (2004:917). Besides, she underlines that "for many black feminists and womanists, breaking silences is viewed as a gesture of defiance that heals and makes a life of sanity, dignity, and full-selfhood possible to

reclaim for black women” (2004:917), especially within the male-dominated agency in which women are victimized. In this respect, the inclusion of a voice-over, while fostering and supplementing new interpretations of women’s silence during hard times as Motsemme suggests, could contribute, most importantly, to defocusing the film from the white middle-aged protagonist impersonating the colonial subject to put a multiplicity of driving forces in the spotlight and promote *ubuntu* and rainbow nationalism.

However, the voice-over narration unmutes women’s voices indirectly only since it speaks on their behalf and does not allow them to speak for themselves. Hence, it can leave women’s silence somehow enigmatically intelligible and comprehensible for some film viewers. Thus, I maintain that unmuting female voices ultimately requires vocal empowerment of women whereby they speak for themselves including speaking the “unspeakability”. In this manner, women can rid themselves of any form of censure or what Pulma Gqola labels as “the disclaimers and qualifiers that silence real debate on gender-based violence” (2015:74). Therefore, I think that in place of Lurie's subsuming narrative of disgrace, guilt, shame, and redemption, a film rewriting may fictionalize a "contest of wills, a confrontation between contending principles" (Jeyifo qtd. in Mngadi, 2015:20) or allow the camerawork to unleash many contending voices from "dialogic characters" to quote Bakhtin, that offers polyphonic perceptions of post-apartheid South Africa. This also involves tackling the ethical and political predicaments in the film narrative.

3.2. Addressing Ethical and Political Predicaments

To remediate its controversial ethical and political issues, I estimate that a film rewriting of Jacobs’s *Disgrace* could tackle the double standard and pessimistic dramatization of post-apartheid race relations. Besides being closely intertwined, such issues have fuelled so much controversy among public opinion especially because of black identification and confinement with the dark side of the post-apartheid age which has imparted racist connotations to the plot and shaken the political elite in South Africa. To ease the polemic, it would be expedient for the film to meet the local audience's expectations for more optimistic race relations in post-apartheid South Africa that reflects the vision of the Rainbow-Nation. In this regard, the film could recast the black characters to restore their dignity and humanity and Miriam's role in *Tsotsi* emerges as a blueprint for action. She shows much affection towards the unfortunate infant during the scene of its nursing at gunpoint, even requesting Tsotsi’s

authorization to bathe the baby when he wanted to take it back after the breastfeeding. The camera low angle shows Miriam talking lovingly to the baby while bathing it and revives Tsotsi's memories of his mother's love which the visual narrative reveals to the viewer through a flashback (Hood 00:33:00). Thus, Miriam is portrayed as a loving woman and although she took care of the baby as her own, she did not endorse the baby's kidnapping. She convinced Tsotsi to return the baby to its legitimate parents. As a single mother longing for a father figure for her baby, one could expect her perhaps to adopt the baby and tie the knot with Tsotsi. However, such a narrative would have stained Miriam's morals and assimilated her with her delinquent intruder. Yet by acting responsibly, she plays a key role in Tsotsi's conversion and redemption which is an ideological choice aiming at cleansing stereotypes associated with black subjectivities and identities. In this connection, a rewriting of Jacobs's *Disgrace* could reverse Petrus's endorsement of Lucy's rape and shows his disengagement from Pollux's crime regardless of their parental affiliation. Helping Pollux to take responsibility for his actions either by leading the police to the two other fugitives or, like Lurie, by repenting and asking for forgiveness for his involvement in Lucy's rape would foster black redemption rather than damnation. Hence, such a plot's alteration would appease the tensions between Lurie and Petrus and portray pacific post-apartheid race relationships which even apartheid film narratives anticipated with Donald Woods (Kevin Kline) and black activist Steve Biko (Denzel Washington) in *Cry Freedom* (1987) or with James Jarvis (Richard Harris) and Stephen Kumalo (James Jones) in *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1952).

From this perspective, a filmic rewriting could initiate in my view a project of decolonization of white and western cinematic narratives about Africa and black identity because Petrus and Pollux in Jacobs's *Disgrace* do not encapsulate black identity owing to their portrayal respectively as rapist and co-conspirator. Such black characters are precisely what Suleman's *Fools* uses to challenge the stereotyped idea of blackness. His antihero Zamani, whom he expels from the school and his township, unlike in Ndebele's novella, represents a negation of the colonial identification of blackness with criminals and other stereotypes. Therefore, I assert that redefining black identity in Jacobs's *Disgrace* by redeeming Pollux and Petrus using the dialectics of truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation that have redeemed Lurie will earn the film a more hopeful ending and a prophetic tone. It will foster the interracial pacific cohabitation which ethics and politics the post-apartheid South Africa strives to embody. Hence, with a radical complication of its narrative, Jacobs's *Disgrace* could incorporate contending representations of blackness that address the ethical and political

dilemmas and, in the process, compensate for the bleak narrative of post-apartheid South African race relations.

To this end, Jacobs's *Disgrace* could emulate contemporary South African adapted films including Hood's *Tsotsi*, Suleman's *Fools*, and Hooper's *Red Dust* in their fictionalization of hopeful ending race relations. In *Fools*, as Suleman argues, Zamani withstands the pain endured from the white man, not to retaliate with the hatred of the apartheid era but to forgive instead (qtd. in Ukadike, 2002:295). For Suleman, his final sequence of sparing and forgiving "rather than killing off the white man [...] presents a more powerful argument" because in "letting him live and, hopefully, regret his deeds" (2002:295) as he maintains, he invites South Africans to peace-making as an alternative to retributive violence, and hence augurs well for a redemptive and optimistic future for South Africans. Similarly, I think that in Hood's film, *Tsotsi*'s recovery of his humanity, his restitution of the baby, and his valiant surrendering to the mixed-raced police suggests the restoration of a South African social order committed to a state of law and justice. In Hooper's *Red Dust*, by shedding the light on apartheid crimes against Mpondo and Sizela, the TRC's hearings appease apartheid trauma and bring black and white to forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace. Consequently, these films foster narratives of nation-building in the spirit of *ubuntu* and rainbow nationalism. Likewise, Jacobs's *Disgrace* could widen its redemptive scope to encompass black and female subjectivities in such a way to address its inherited controversies and meet the expectations of the local and African audiences.

Conclusion

In definitive, I have explored in this chapter the intertextual critique of Jacobs's *Disgrace* as an alternative reading of film adaptation beyond the fidelity discourse. I have focused my study on the cinematic intertextuality of Jacobs's *Disgrace* thereby demonstrating that the film epitomizes narrative acquaintances with contemporary South African films – *Fools*, *Tsotsi*, *Red Dust* – and postcolonial African film adaptations such as *Xala*, in terms of the thematization and the aestheticization of the intersectional violence of race, class, and gender relations. Such narrative acquaintances underline Jacobs's *Disgrace* embodiment of creative features associated with narrative and thematic aesthetics of transitional periods in post-apartheid South African and postcolonial African cinemas. Moreover, my analysis has revealed that films such as *Fools* and *Tsotsi*, unlike *Disgrace*, have complicated their narrative to speak to their contemporary moment of adaptation. In this respect, Jacobs's *Disgrace*

cinematic intertextual dialogue with its South African contemporaries has served as a benchmark to advocate a filmic rewriting that addresses its limitations, ethical, and political controversies. Meanwhile, in undertaking the intertextual approach to Jacobs's *Disgrace*, I have advocated an adaptation criticism beyond the fidelity model by orientating the analytical focus towards the film engagement with other cinematic productions which substantiates the argument of the autonomy of film adaptation and legitimizes its status *sui generis*.

Chapter 5: General Conclusion.

Re-examining the aesthetics of creation of Steve Jacobs's feature film *Disgrace* adapted from John Coetzee's novel has been the purpose of this dissertation. It responded to the call to fill in the scarcity of scholarships in African adaptation criticism which emergent development contrasts with the blossoming momentum of film adaptations of literary works (novels) in Africa generally, and South Africa particularly. Unlike previous critical works that are limited on exploring at a thematic level the fidelity discourse of the film regarding its literary source, this dissertation has first challenged the fidelity rhetoric about Jacobs's *Disgrace* from structural and postcolonial readings of the film narrative, then explored its specificity and poeticity as a different medium and an independent genre, and finally offered an intertextual critique "as a new language and a new set of tropes for speaking about adaptation" (Hutcheon, 2006:24) through the film dialogue and engagement with other post-apartheid South African and postcolonial African film adaptations beyond the fidelity paradigm. To this effect, I have argued that the fidelity rhetoric about Jacobs's *Disgrace* was inconsistent and the axiomatic hierarchy of the novel over the film inadequate for although Coetzee's novel has inspired Jacobs's *Disgrace*, the film adaptation constitutes a different and autonomous medium with its specifics and poetics and can be critically examined beyond the fidelity paradigm by resorting to intertextuality as an alternative reading of adaptation criticism. Drawing upon adaptation, structural, and postcolonial theories, the dissertation has shown that Jacobs's *Disgrace* displays an array of formal and thematic aesthetic features independent from Coetzee's *Disgrace* and based on the intersectional violence of race, gender, and class in post-apartheid South Africa and the inherent dialectics of truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

In this connection, Jacobs's *Disgrace* sits at the intersection of "general film aesthetics" (Dovey, 2009:11) and the "aesthetics of African cinema" (2009:11). On one side, the film's universal appeal exemplified by the international character of the film crew, the opening of the film to the international audience through renegotiated politics of landscapes among other things grant the film some salient features of general film aesthetics. On the other, Jacobs's *Disgrace* embodies aesthetics associated with an African form of "adapting violence to the screen" as Lindiwe Dovey would claim, that is, screening the aesthetics of violence associated with race, gender, and class. In this scenario, Jacobs's *Disgrace* narrative adheres to the thematic trends of South African national cinema which, according to Jacqueline Maingard,

explore South African representations of national identities which have been "deeply and singularly categorized under colonialism and apartheid, especially with regard to race, class, and gender" (2007:3). Hence, Jacobs's *Disgrace* shares with its contemporary film adaptations such as *Tsotsi* and *Fools* expressive features of violence amid power struggles between racial and gendered identities some of which – black and female subjectivities especially – having been made absent or been muted by male patriarchy and hegemony which are perceived as an integral part of colonial and apartheid legacies in need for deconstruction to foster the emergence of what Maingard calls the "plural subjective positionings" whereby the subaltern can freely locate themselves within powerful agencies to make their voice heard and partake in the building of new nationhood. This requires, as epitomized in the intertextual reading of *Disgrace* with *Tsotsi* and *Red Dust*, subjective and collective redemptions which are achieved through truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Besides, *Disgrace* also converses with postcolonial African films including *Xala* insofar as both films' aesthetics of creation intersect in their depictions of masculinity and the decline of the phallographic power in a context of political transitions of South Africa and Senegal. This connects my research with Lindiwe Dovey's investigation of contemporary South African and Francophone West African film adaptations to underline continental trends and eventual African identities among cinemas from diverse African regions (2009:4-5). Although I compare only two films from different African regions and do not deeply address the question as does Dovey's corpus, it also contributes to the conversation about aesthetical trends and movements in African cinema. In the end, intertextuality provides an alternative critical avenue for a rich exploration of film adaptation as an autonomous genre bearing equal status and value with the novel rather than being its adjunct owing to certain fidelity rhetoric.

From this perspective, the question ultimately arises as to how the film can enhance the novel, that is, how the novel can be reread through the film? The question has been already addressed with ways of filmic complementation of the novel resulting from the film's specificity and poeticity since the recreation of the film's ending, the choice of the spectacular landscapes, the film's soundtrack or musical aesthetics, the film's "incarnation" of the novel characters or what Stam calls "the ventriloquial model where the film lends voice to the mute characters of the novel" (2005:24) all partaking in the enrichment of the Coetzee's narrative. Furthermore, the film can enhance the reception of the novel's narrative in South Africa and Africa generally where a higher percentage of the audience is illiterate. This has prompted filmmakers such as Sembène Ousmane to venture into cinema and adapt most of his literary productions to the screen to reach a much wider audience. In this regard, further research may

be welcomed to explore in line with Litheko Modisane's *Renegade Reels* the public engagement or the aesthetics of reception of Jacobs's *Disgrace* and other films beyond their controversial aura so that to assess the films' impact on the cognition of their literary narrative as well as other forms of enrichment of literary texts by film adaptations.

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