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COLONIAL NARRATIVE, ETHICS AND MORALITY IN *DISGRACE* BY JM

COETZEE

Dr Kouakou Bernard BAMENE

Université Alassane Ouattara (Cote d'ivoire)

bamenekouakou1972@gmail.com

Abstract: This article addresses the issue of colonial discourse, referring to the arguments put forward by Colonisers during the colonial era. It justifies colonisation by presenting values such as 'civilisation' as the exclusive domain of the colonisers. J. M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* encourages people to consider how colonial discourse constructs and perpetuates power relationships between colonisers and the colonised. Through an analysis of *Disgrace*, the article aims to demonstrate the collapse of stereotypical perceptions of the colonised, highlighting a new world founded on equality and the promotion of human rights. The article is grounded in postcolonial theory, an intellectual and critical movement that analyses the legacy of colonialism and its ongoing effects of domination on decolonised societies and populations.

Key words: Colonial discourse- Colonisation- colonised- colonisers- Human rights

Résumé : Cet article aborde la question du discours colonial, en se référant aux arguments avancés par les colonisateurs à l'époque coloniale. Ce discours justifie la colonisation en présentant des valeurs telles que la « civilisation » comme l'apanage exclusif des colonisateurs. Le roman de J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, invite les lecteurs à réfléchir à la manière dont le discours colonial construit et perpétue les rapports de pouvoir entre colonisateurs et colonisés. À travers une analyse de *Disgrace*, cet article vise à démontrer l'effondrement des perceptions stéréotypées des colonisés, en mettant en avant un monde nouveau fondé sur l'égalité et la promotion des droits de l'homme. Cet article s'appuie sur la théorie postcoloniale, un mouvement intellectuel et critique qui analyse l'héritage du colonialisme et ses effets persistants de domination sur les sociétés et les populations décolonisées.

Mots-clés : Discours colonial-colonisation-colonisés- colonisateurs- droits de l'homme

Introduction

Disgrace was written at the end of apartheid, a regime defined by the subjugation of non-white individuals. Consequently, the nation is undergoing a phase of social, psychological and economic rebuilding for every South African. Apartheid constituted a segregationist system predicated on the separate development of white and non-white populations, profoundly shaping South Africa's social and political landscape. The apartheid system ended in 1994 when multiracial elections were introduced. JM whose anti-apartheid literature gained wide recognition contributed to critical reflection on South African political affairs. *Disgrace*, among his most acclaimed titles, forms the focus of our analysis, "Colonial Discourse, Ethics, and Morality in *Disgrace* by J.M Coetzee". This paper seeks to show how colonial discourse understood as a set of narratives and cultural practices legitimising domination by portraying colonised societies as inferior, constitutes a breach of ethical and moral standards.

Indeed, this process underscores imperialist doctrines and the imposition of settler culture. It generates uneven power dynamics portraying colonisers as dominant and colonised people as subordinate. Consequently, it advances the notion of a European civilising mission that enforces Western culture, values, and knowledge frameworks, often to the detriment of indigenous cultures. As Homi Bhabha stated, "The aim of colonial discourse is to present the colonised as degenerate on the basis of their racial origin in order to justify conquest and establish systems of administration and instruction" (Bhabha, 1983, p. 7).

In this article, three essential concepts must be defined: colonial discourse, ethics, and morality. According to Edward Said (cited in Ashcroft, p. 51), colonial discourse denotes a framework through which dominant societal groups construct the domain of truth by imposing particular knowledge, disciplines, and values on subordinate groups. It comprises a set of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial peoples, as well as about colonising powers, and the connections between these two parties. It represents a body of knowledge and convictions about the world in which colonisation occurs. With respect to ethics, Mick Fryer (2019, p. 16) explains that they are frequently linked to the notions of "good" and 'right', together with their opposites 'bad' and 'wrong'. For example, we may label a given action as right or wrong, indicating that it is ethically appropriate or inappropriate.

The word 'morality' is intimately linked to ethics. It is described as the principles that deal with distinguishing good from evil, or proper from improper conduct. It also constitutes a specific system of values and behavioural guidelines. Although ethics and morality are closely

related a subtle distinction can be observed. Morality denotes a collection of values and principles that allow individuals to tell apart good from evil, right from wrong, acceptable from unacceptable, and to which we ought to conform. Conversely, ethics is not confined to a fixed set of values or doctrines. Instead, it functions as a contemplative discourse intended to foster proper conduct. It invites individuals to critically examine the moral values and principles that should guide conduct across diverse contexts. It invites individuals to critically examine the moral values and principles that should guide conduct across diverse contexts: “It is characterized as a perspective that aims to explain the enduring impacts of colonisation on former colonies, especially concerning matters of identity and the generation of knowledge”. (J. Robert, 2003, p. 4)

Postcolonialism rests chiefly on the claim that countries across the three non-Western continents, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, are generally subordinate to and economically disadvantaged compared with Europe and North America. It constitutes a philosophical stance and activist agenda that contests this imbalance, continuing historic anti-colonial movements in contemporary form. Moreover, it upholds the entitlement of African, Asian, and Latin American societies to obtain resources and material prosperity, while also acknowledging the vibrant influence these cultures now exert in reshaping Western societies.

Set after the post-apartheid era, *Disgrace* examines the difficulties of reconciliation in South Africa. This study is organised into three chapters. The initial chapter addresses post-apartheid South Africa and its historical legacy, analysing the conduct of several characters within the newly rebuilt African society. The second section, 'Ethics and Morality in a Society Undergoing Reconstruction', looks at the importance of virtuous behaviour in a fair society. The concluding section concentrates on 'othering' and hybridity in *Disgrace*.

1-*Disgrace* and the Socio-Political Context in Post-Apartheid South Africa.

Disgrace follows David Lurie, a 52-year-old white professor of communication studies. Even though he is divorced, he remains a womaniser. He paid women, both married and single, in exchange for sexual relations. His initial conquest was Soraya, a black woman compelled into prostitution to provide for her children. She turned into his confidante. However, because of his intense sexual urges, the communications professor could not be content with a single woman. His hands continue to lie on her cheek. She does not pull back nor submit” (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 7), and 'He offers no attempt to hold her back' (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 8). They were intimate multiple times, without any implication of assault. Afterward, Melanie started skipping

school. She later arrived at David Lurie's office accompanied by her boyfriend, alleging rape. 'Sexual victimisation or harassment' (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 7), and 'He offers no attempt to hold her back' (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 8). They were intimate multiple times, without any implication of assault. Afterward, Melanie started skipping school. She later arrived at David Lurie's office accompanied by her boyfriend, alleging rape. 'Sexual victimisation or harassment' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 39).

Melanie's drive for this behaviour originates from her rejection of being seen merely as another pupil after her sexual liaison with the professor. She even declined to enroll in Professor Lurie's class because she sought special consideration. In the end, she lodged a rape and sexual harassment complaint with the university's disciplinary board. The institution's code of conduct compels David Lurie to either admit guilt or step down. Nevertheless, he assumes Melanie would not have pursued such action on her own because she is overly naive (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 16).

Confronted with a dead end, David opts not to admit guilt. Consequently, he loses his job and relocates to live with his daughter Lucie in a different town. They had been intimate on multiple occasions, without any implication of rape. Subsequently, Melanie started skipping school. She arrives at David Lurie's office accompanied by her boyfriend, alleging that he raped her. She declines to be regarded as merely another student following her interaction with the professor. She even declined to enroll in Professor Lurie's course, demanding preferential treatment. Ultimately, she lodged a rape and sexual harassment complaint with the university's disciplinary board. The university's code of conduct mandated that David Lurie either admit everything or step down. "David thinks that Melanie would not have taken such action on her own because she is too innocent". (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 16).

Consequently, he is removed from the university and moves in with his daughter Lucie. It is suggested that most of the women David was intimate with were black, a detail that raises questions about representation. .. This facet prompts numerous inquiries and warrants examination. Through the selection of these black female figures, J. Coetzee underscores the social and economic vulnerability of women compelled to turn to prostitution for survival. This could also be perceived as an affront to black women in the new South Africa. It further reduces a particular race to objects subject to life's hardships. Prostitution is a societal vice, and it is indefensible for white colonisers to characterize black people thus. Melanie, a black woman, and Soraya are portrayed as deceitful individuals who conceal reality. One agrees to sexual intimacy yet later distorts facts to charge her partner with rape. The other, Soraya, although

married, consents to live a dual existence as a spouse and a prostitute. Moral and ethical standards are violated. Professor David Lurie's conduct teeters on misconduct and erodes ethical and moral principles. He engages in sexual relations with numerous women, declines marriage, and mistreats his female pupils. However, the text notes :

Not rape, not exactly yet utterly unwanted. As if she had elected to become slack, to perish within herself for the entire span, like a rabbit when a fox's jaws clamp around its throat. So that everything done to her might be carried out, as though it were not far away. (J. Coetzee, 1999, p.25)

Disgrace depicts a renewed South Africa undergoing rebuilding yet beset by numerous problems. Societal issues affect everyday citizens. When the university disciplinary board questions David, 'Do you regret what you did?' he answers, 'No, I am enriched by the experience.' This illustrates a culture where both men and women perform abnormal deeds without feeling contrition. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon denounces colonial morality, arguing that genuine ethics arise from decolonisation and the interrogation of the humanist values imposed by oppression.. David, ousted from university, chooses to travel to his daughter from a prior marriage. She received him at her estate located in another region.

Disgrace depicts a new South Africa undergoing reconstruction while beset by many afflictions. Social issues affect the lives of its citizens. When the university disciplinary committee asks David, "Do you regret what you did?", he answers, "No, I am enriched by the experience." This illustrates a society where men and women commit abnormal acts without remorse. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon condemns colonial morality, asserting that genuine ethics arise through decolonisation and the questioning of humanist values imposed by oppression

1-1. The Shame of David Lurie and his Daughter

David Lurie, a communications professor, was removed from his university post after a student named Melanie accused him of sexual misconduct. He now resides in the rural home of his daughter Lucie. Adjusting to this shift in his social standing proves challenging for the professor. He must adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and altered living conditions .When Lucie asks why he was dismissed, he dodges the question and offers no specifics. Burdened by the disgrace, he attempts to piece his life back together, as illustrated in this passage.

'So, a fresh venture. His daughter, whom he formerly drove to school, ballet lessons, the circus and the skating rink, now escorts him on trips to reveal life to him. She is introducing him to this unknown world" (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 30). Although the father appears to disapprove of his daughter's occupation, he wishes to be helpful at this animal clinic. He must look after dogs and goats alongside a woman called Bev Shaw, whom he enjoys. David realizes that the scandal will cling to him: "The scandal will follow me, stick to me" (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 37).

Even though he tried to keep busy and rebuild his life, shame and humiliation were David's lot. One morning, tragedy struck when some strange men visited Lucie's family, claiming they wanted to make a phone call because their sister was in labour. In reality, they were gangsters. They beat David and his daughter, locked Lucie up to rape her and took many of their possessions with them, including the car, shoes and other items. Armed with pistols, the gangsters were extremely violent. One of the thieves was one of Lucie's workers. Although she was hospitalised, Lucie refused to report the incident to the police. She would rather hide her face and he knows why. Because of the disgrace, because of the shame. That is what their visitor has achieved, that is what they have done to this confident, modern young woman like a stain, the story is speaking across the district (j. Coetzee, 1999, p.115)

J.M Coetzee depicts gangsters as black men. Indeed, black men in South Africa continue to face preconceived notions and damaging stereotypes. Tragically, Lucie ends up pregnant as a result of her attackers. Ethical and moral standards presume that sexual activity requires the consent of two people who experience shared pleasure. This suggests a quest for reciprocal enjoyment. Consequently, mistreating a woman violates moral, ethical, and societal norms. Moreover, the presence of a firearm makes her compliant and passive. Lucie identified as a lesbian who had relationships with other women, yet her existence shifted suddenly when she was assaulted. The following reflection highlights this: "Rape, god of chaos and mixture, rapists of recluses. Raping a lesbian is worse than raping a virgin: more than one blow" (J. Coetzee, 1999, p. 105)

1-2. A Community Characterized by Violence

Speaking about the notion of violence, Albert Memmi remarked: 'Conquest occurred through violence, and over-exploitation and oppression necessitate continued violence' (Memmi, 1957, p. 4). *This statement reflects the situation in post-apartheid South Africa* .The formation of the discriminatory apartheid regime has indeed imprinted numerous wounds on the community and on individuals' minds. Post-apartheid South Africa is a society marked by

violence. Similar to the incidents in Nadine Gordimer's novel *House Gun*, where a man kills his friend over relationship issues, *Disgrace* depicts a changing society where various forms of violence occur. It ranges from verbal to physical violence. Through J.M. Coetzee's characters, South Africa experiences a succession of events that testify to the seriousness of this evil plaguing society.

David Lurie, a prominent educator, exerts verbal and financial coercion on young women. According to Melanie, she was raped and suffered physical abuse. By definition, rape constitutes a violent act that forces the victim into sexual activity. Pressuring vulnerable women into sexual acts using financial leverage is similarly violent. *When armed intruders stormed Lurie's home, they assaulted David and his daughter.* For J. M. Coetzee, the pursuit of financial and material resources pushes young individuals toward moral corruption. Ethical standards have been discarded, creating chaos. This passage highlights the situation: "The risk of owning everything: a car, a pair of shoes, a packet of cigarettes. There are not enough cars, shoes or cigarettes to go around. Too many people, too few things" (J. M. Coetzee, 1999, p. 41)

Destitution fuels aggression. When officers came to look into the matter, Lucie was too terrified of retaliation to be honest, even though her father instructed her to file charges. "There is no shame in being the victim of a crime" (J. M. Coetzee, 1999, p. 46). Lucie feels that reporting the assault would be futile, as the shift in political authority prevents any action. Such incidents occur constantly throughout South Africa. A close associate of Lucie was not present during the episode, leading David to suspect him. Out of embarrassment, Lucie avoided the market, fearing inquiries. At a protest arranged by Petrus, a colleague of Lucie, she spotted one of the assailants, Pollux. Nevertheless, she chose to pardon him, citing his youth.

2- Shared and Personal Accountability in the New South Africa

A reading of Disgrace reveals numerous problems undermining post-apartheid South Africa. In the book, JM Coetzee examines the shared guilt and humiliation born from apartheid, concentrating especially on the sexual domination and abuse suffered by women of various races. Both Melanie (a black woman) and a white woman (Lucy) experience rape. The work tackles postcolonial frictions that make reconciliation and justice efforts in the new South Africa more complex, underscoring how the subjugated become ensnared in cycles of authority, brutality, and disgrace. It also probes the boundaries of forgiveness and justice at both personal and political levels. The figure David Lurie represents moral contradictions. : *He embodies the wrongs of the colonial past while also being accountable for his personal downfall.* The book raises

issues concerning personal and collective accountability, the morality of power dynamics, and the difficulties of reconciliation after systemic oppression..

2-1. Post-Colonial Strains and the Path toward Reconciliation

David Lurie resembles the white coloniser, intent on domination and exploitation.

. His stance toward the women he dominates before exploiting them sexually arises because they are financially and materially vulnerable victims. This fragile circumstance cheapens his conquests, turning them into easy targets. After being fired from the university and left impoverished, David still engages in sexual encounters with women, especially his new co-worker, Bev Shaw. David Lurie seems to wrestle with his affairs with both older and younger women. He shows no concern for ethics or morals regarding women.

The disciplinary committee created by the university where David Lurie taught serves as a clear illustration of the purification of South African society. The panel seeks to embed justice, morality and ethics among the teaching personnel responsible for instructing young learners. David's daughter Lucy, who is a lesbian and engages in romantic relationships with women, is assaulted by three men. This is depicted as retribution for her "unnatural" conduct. David Lurie's view of women resembles that of a white colonizer aiming to dominate and exploit others. He regards the women he subjugates before exploiting them sexually as financially and materially vulnerable prey. This diminishes his conquests, rendering them easy targets. Even after being removed from the university and left impoverished, David persists in having sexual relationships with women, including his new co-worker Bev Shaw.

David's daughter, Lucie, a lesbian who engages in relationships with women, is assaulted by three men. This act is portrayed as retribution for her 'unnatural' conduct, perceived as contrary to social norms. The legacy of apartheid is a trail of tension, hatred, violence and division. *Disgrace* portrays this bleak setting, which slows the progress of reconciliation. The figures in *Disgrace* embark on this reconciliation effort, even though it appears challenging. The two central figures, David and Lucy, contribute to this process. Although dismissed over an alleged rape, David bears no resentment toward Melanie Isaac, the playwright who arranged his dismissal. He goes to Melanie's father to inquire about her and to express regret for the incident. Mr Isaac is very accommodating. David arrives with a present. "I brought an offering," he states, extending a bottle of wine (JM Coetzee, 1999, p. 50). They enjoy a meal together.

2-2. Conflicted Exchanges within Dishonour

In essence, Bhabha maintains that the problem with colonial discourse is its intention to generate compliant individuals who copy the coloniser. Bhabha contends that:

Colonial discourse is compelled to remain contradictory, which proves overly threatening. Consequently, in the post-apartheid period, the coloniser is both sidelined and faced with the colonised's mimicry. This implies that the coloniser will endure violence, rape, and various forms of retribution from the colonised as compensation for having been colonised. (Huddart, 2006, p.18)

Disgrace mentions the economic, social, political and cultural connections, together with the societal difficulties, among people of every race in the new South Africa. The novel depicts a South Africa undergoing rebuilding, where the walls constructed and upheld by apartheid are slowly being removed. David Lurie, an educator and an Afrikaner, is portrayed delivering lessons in a racially diverse setting. The uncertainty about belittling black individuals, viewing them as inferior, and marrying or engaging in sexual relations with them is evident. *Observing Lucy, who owned several properties, relinquish them in search of safety among formerly oppressed black communities, indicates a shift.* Lucie believed that her oppressors would come back to assault her. Nevertheless, she declined to run away, even though her father appealed to her. Although men and women do share a community, this togetherness is undeniably filled with challenges and hazards.

3- Exclusion and Hybridization in *Disgrace*

When examined, the notions of “othering” and “hybridity” seem to be contrary to each other. “Othering” denotes the social and mental mechanism through which a person or group is labelled as distinct, and frequently lesser, compared with the dominant group. Such labelling may result in their exclusion or marginalisation. Originating in postcolonial theory, the idea of othering explains how colonial narratives construct ‘the other’ by portraying the colonized as inferior, exotic, barbaric, or subhuman. “Othering” creates a manufactured divide between the ‘self’ (the coloniser or dominant group) and ‘the other’ (the colonised or marginalised group), and it typically carries negative implications that reinforce power and domination.

Gayatri Spivak and Frantz Fanon introduced this notion to denote the systematic marginalisation of colonised peoples within imperial and cultural narratives. In postcolonial theory, hybridity denotes the merging of varied identities and discourses that gives rise to a culture. Homi Bhabha made this concept widely known, stressing that cultural borders are fluid and identities are no longer static or entirely separate in postcolonial contexts. Hybridity

signifies a transitional condition where colonial and native influences intermix, questioning the classic binary split between coloniser and colonised, and between self and other. This idea is essential for grasping how postcolonial actors contend with their identity in a world shaped by colonisation and its aftereffects. The relationship between different racial groups in the new South Africa is said to have progressed since the first multiracial election, thereby creating equality among the nation's various groups. Yet, many issues remain unsettled in practice.

The "other" seems to be a novel component that calls for a fresh perspective, and this new outlook or vision demands customized learning. White individuals, who have held authority for many years, are struggling to embrace the transformations brought about by democracy. David Lurie, a teacher by trade, relished all the benefits granted to him by his position as a white man. He could misuse his power by sleeping with as many women as he wished, including his pupils, especially black girls, who were regarded as inferior to him. *Melanie, Bev, and Soraya are portrayed as victims with no rights, unable to complain.. This raises the question of whether they are victims or complicit in their own downfall .This question must be explored to find answers. However, constant sexual contact between white people, as symbolised by David Lurie, will create a new category of individuals born from these relationships. When black bandits sexually assault and beat Lucy Lurie, she becomes pregnant. This union therefore results in the probable birth of a mixed-race child who is the link between two races that are otherwise opposed in their vision and philosophy. Hybridity leads to the creation of new forms and the enrichment of existing biological, cultural and identity-based relationships. It therefore challenges existing boundaries. By recognising the impure nature of cultures, hybridity becomes a productive process that values differences.*

3-1: Hybridity as a Catalyst for Reconciliation

Disgrace has unintentionally produced a hybrid condition worthy of examination.

In *Disgrace*, the new South Africa encourages coexistence and shared living. This push for unity has yielded a society that blends the coloniser and the colonised, based on the former's will. Lucie and her family are assaulted, and Lucie is raped by black gangsters. Because of the assault, she becomes pregnant with a mixed-race child. This event shows how sexual relations can generate cultural and racial ambiguity, contesting established doctrines, ideologies, and conventional colonial power. It signals the demise of white supremacy and the breakdown of notions of racial purity and white domination.

The coexistence and interweaving of cultures opens a path toward equality and racial integration. Sexual domination, as depicted in *Disgrace*, exposes the complexities of acceptance and resistance in post-apartheid society. Sexual domination, as depicted in *Disgrace*, exposes the complexities of acceptance and resistance in post-apartheid society.

Lucie's decision not to report her assailants reflects her wish to build a new basis of trust and her fear of possible retaliation. Following the assault and her pregnancy, Lucy consents to marry Petrus...

The ethical problem lies in Petrus demanding that she transfer all her material and financial holdings into his name in return for his protection. Petrus is already wed, yet he wants her as a second wife. This provokes discussion of polygamy within African society and highlights its cultural variety. *The blending of cultures and perspectives fosters new forms of coexistence.*

Lucie, a white woman with considerable property assets, finds herself effectively pressured to enter a polygamous marriage. Such unions, whether coerced or consensual, have produced a form of cohabitation between the groups. The setbacks, difficulties, and political, social, and psychological obstacles generated by the apartheid regime are slowly being eliminated. Reconciliation among the various social factions is gradually emerging, clearing the way for forgiveness. Melanie's family has pardoned Professor David Lurie for his reckless behaviour, while Lucy Lurie, who was assaulted, raped, and left with bodily scars, has chosen to forgive her aggressors. This emerging solidarity among former opponents is reshaping power relations in post-apartheid South Africa.

3-2. Reappraisal of the Power Issue

Fundamentally, apartheid privileged white individuals. In essence, the coloniser exercised complete authority in all domains. *Disgrace*, a book authored by J. M. Coetzee, reflects the new regime through its story. The protagonist, David Lurie, a university lecturer, represents white supremacy by exploiting the advantages he effortlessly possessed. *He indulged in an extravagant lifestyle without restraint.* Consequently, he engaged in sexual relations with numerous women. His standing as an Afrikaner benefited him. After being tried by the university's disciplinary board, he lost his standing. His resignation, triggered by the board's rulings, stripped him of the assorted benefits of a changing society. He ended up vulnerable to his own difficulties.

David was taken in by his sole daughter in a rural area, where he grew nearly ineffective and wound up performing low-level work in her clinic. : *He now associates with Bev Shaw, a woman of modest background who works at the animal clinic.* After the assault by a group of black men, his daughter Lucy turned into the subject of ridicule among her peers. She was stripped of all her belongings by the perpetrators, especially Petrus and his protégé Pollux, both black. *This suggests that the balance of power has shifted.* The powerful figures of the past are undergoing a sharp downfall.

The distribution of power between black and white individuals appears to be changing. Political, social and economic influence is moving toward black people, who have historically been subordinate to those in authority. Apartheid, a regime of racial segregation, aimed primarily at the separate development of white and non-white populations. From that viewpoint, whites functioned as the privileged group before the system was abolished. Yet post-apartheid South Africa shows a new complexion that could be described as a reshuffling of the cards. Consequently, whites, who for many years fiercely protected their dominance, now find themselves unsettled in the democratic context. In the novel *Disgrace*, David Lurie and his daughter Lucy Lurie experience transformation in a harsh manner. Professor David Lurie pretends to be oblivious to the ongoing changes by clinging to the resentful outlook he formed during the apartheid era. He is consumed by sexual excess and shows no regard for women. His affair with Melanie, one of his students, proves ruinous, resulting in the loss of his university post and bringing him disgrace. His position as a white academic cannot shield him from termination. Lucy Lurie, who owns several properties, is assaulted, raped, and robbed of all her belongings. Her assistant Petrus exploits her tragedy by proposing marriage and offering to safeguard her assets. Examining these incidents reveals that the equilibrium of fear has turned. Black individuals, once fearful, are slowly regaining confidence as power dynamics shift. In contrast, white individuals fear the changes and their repercussions. Ultimately, the destinies of David Lurie and his daughter Lucy move from a life of comfort to one of hardship.

CONCLUSION.

Colonial discourse includes the coloniser's injurious, scornful and dehumanising views and convictions about the colonised. The principles and values meant to steer human conduct have been ignored and breached. Via its characters, *Disgrace* demonstrates the outcomes of

neglecting ethical and moral standards. David Lurie, a scholar and teacher, *allowed himself to fall into sexual excess and immorality*.

Ethics and morality constitute the foundation of a stable and fulfilling existence. The domination, exploitation and dehumanisation of colonised peoples under the pretext of alleged civilizational superiority trample moral and ethical standards. In his book *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire asserts that “colonial discourse dehumanises both the colonised and the colonisers by basing colonisation on contempt and corrupting morality” (A. Césaire, 2000, p 50).

The connection between Lucy Lurie and her partner Petrus illustrates the change in the power dynamic between the colonised and the coloniser. Their union creates a new link across racial lines in the post-apartheid period. *Rather than manifesting as overt imperialist proclamations.* Colonial discourse takes the form of a complex structure involving rights, land ownership, and racial and sexual hierarchies. *Coetzee highlights colonial violence through the lens of personal shame* Lurie’s ethical deterioration, triggered by his affair with Melanie, reflects the nation’s decline under the apartheid regime. This shows how private morality is closely bound to public history.

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