

MASHONALAND WEST REGION

FISSURES IN THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE: THE DEPICTION OF VIOLENCE IN ZAKES MDA'S WAYS OF DYING AND JOHN MAXWELL COETZEE'S DISGRACE.

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Abstract

This study examines the way in which violence is portrayed in the two South African texts, Ways of Dying, (1995) by Zakes Mda and Disgrace, (1999) by John Maxwell Coetzee. It undertakes a close analysis of the literature related to the phenomenon of violence in South Africa. The aim of the study is to refute the claim that xenophobic violence in that country is caused solely by the economic threat caused by foreigners to black South Africans. We argue that violence in South Africa had reached cataclysmic proportions well before the influx of foreigners to that country. South African violence in all its forms is a result of the traumatizing and deracinating effects of colonialism and Apartheid. The brutality of the white colonialists has been internalized by the Black South Africans and is now used against fellow blacks, both local and foreign. Any solution to the problem of violence in South Africa requires an understanding of its historical rootedness and serious efforts to correct the racial inequalities that have persisted in that country for centuries. The research method adopted in this study is qualitative. The study emphasizes the close understanding of the phenomenon of violence by scrutinizing words, actions and records: these being novels and scholarly presentations by writers from various disciplines. It is discourse analysis as it involves itself in the relationship between language and society. The texts chosen are thoroughly studied and credible interpretations are made which are testable against the texts. This approach aims to critically evaluate how a particular writer uses a particular combination of words, plot structure and ideas.

Approval Form

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommended to the Zimbabwe Open University for acceptance a Research Project entitled:

DEPICTION OF VIOLENCE IN ZAKES MDA'S WAYS OF DYING (1993COETZEE'S DISGRACE (1996).

Submitted by John Simbarashe Kanoti, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree Bachelor of Arts in English and Communication Studies.

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ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Release Form

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FISSURES IN THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE: DEPICTION OF VIOLENCE IN ZAKES MDA'S WAYS OF DYING (1993) AND JOHN MAXWELL COETZEE'S DISGRACE (1996).

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES.

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Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge God for making all this possible. I would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance of my supervisor. He was always patient when I sometimes played truant.

Dedication

I dedicate this research to my dear wife and friend Epiphania and the army of sons and daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in law, and the precious grand-children for believing in your stubborn old man.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Introduction

This study examines the depiction of violence in John Maxwell Coetzee's novel Disgrace (1999) and Zacks Mda's Ways of Dying (1995). It seeks to explore the way in which South Africans react to the violence that has plagued their country for centuries. It investigates the historical causes of this violence, focusing on how xenophobic violence compares to other forms of violence prevalent in the South African society. After a critical review of the scholarly literature contributing to the South African violence debate and the primary texts, the study attempts to establish whether the claim by South Africans that xenophobia is a reaction to foreigners taking away their jobs and denying them business space can really be justified or sustained. The study proceeds on the understanding that, African literature is closely linked to the experience of the African in his family circle, his society, and his continent. (Cloete and Mlambo, ND). In discussing the determinants of South African violence, this study will be guided by theories of post-colonialism and inter group conflict.

1.2 Background of the Study

South Africa is arguably one of the most violent societies in the world. (Claassen. 2017, Tafira 2018, Ziyanda 2017). As Claassen, (2017:1) asserts, 'After widespread violence in 2008 and 2015, South Africa is now one of the most hostile destinations in the world for African migrants.' Mare, (1991) laments that; the violence that characterizes much of South Africa has reached dramatic proportions. According to him, in order to understand the causes of South African violence one needs to examine that country's past as this violence lies in the remnants of South Africa's colonial past. In the 17th century seven so-called frontier wars were fought between blacks and the colonizing whites. For centuries thereafter South Africa has not been free from conflict. These

hostilities pitted blacks against the British and the Boers who sought to establish political and economic hegemony over South Africa from as early as the 15th century. Tafira, (2018: v11) posits that, 'colonialism is not possible without violence' and that Blacks suffered untold, 'deprivation, dehumanization, dismemberment, and self-abnegation.' The colonialists ruled South Africa through the barrel of a gun. To the colonial overlords Africans were non-human thus they were fated to be forever 'drawers of water and hewers of wood.' The whites introduced rabid racism thereby sowing the seeds of racial hatred that bedevil South Africa up to this day. This violence and hatred became permanently lodged in the black people's psyche. Hatred against the whites turned inwards into violence against fellow blacks. The colonial project reached its inhuman height in the period between the 1940s, when the Boers introduced their policy of apartheid or racial separateness. In 1994 when South Africa attained black majority rule the hope of a prosperous future embodied in the description 'the Rainbow Nation' did not materialize. The whites still control and own the lion's share of the national cake. Most blacks are still wallowing in poverty.'(ibid viii). The violence has now progressed from being an intra-South African affair to a more global level of black South Africans against black immigrants from other African countries. It is against this background that this study interrogates the depiction of violence by the selected writers.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Black Africans from the continent seeking greener pastures in South Africa have been subjected to horrific violence by their South African compatriots. From 2008 to date this spate of violence against 'makwerekwere', as the foreigners are derisively called, has not abated. Horrifying images of public, execution-style murders have gone viral on mainstream and social media. The study seeks to establish whether ordinary South Africans, represented by their creative artists, endorse or vilify the actions of their fellow citizens. It also seeks to establish what, if any solutions have been offered in mitigation of this very real problem for the African continent as a whole.

1.4 Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Interrogate the way in which racial and ethnic violence are depicted in the selected novels and how they impact the cultural, economic, and political dynamics of South Africa in the region and the world.

2. Examine the vision of the two writers as they try to communicate the illegitimacy of apartheid and the possibilities for positive change.

3. Examine how the extent to which the two writers challenge received notions of racial and ethnic violence in their society.

4. Examine the point of view from which the two writers convey both political and racial violence.

5. Establish how far the two narrations of violence are a true reflection of the South African people's search for meaning.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the general understanding by critics of the causes of violence in South Africa?
2. How have the two authors, writing in the English language, depicted violence in their novels?
3. What are the similarities and differences in the approach of the two writers to violence?
4. What do the two writers offer as solutions to address violence in their country?

1.6 Significance of the Study

As recently as March 2022, reports of xenophobic violence against Africans from other African countries in South Africa are still making headlines in the media. With elections close politicians in that country are now riding on the popular sentiment against foreigners to curry favor with the electorate. They are chanting the mantra that foreigners are responsible for their country's misfortunes. This clearly shows that this problem is far from going away. In fact there are signs that it might escalate. South Africa is the powerhouse, not of the SADC region, but of the whole continent alongside Nigeria. Chaos in that country will have serious implications for the continent. The currency of this problem obviates the need for a permanent solution to be found to the problem of fractured relations on the continent. A study of this problem is important to politicians, economists, and policy-makers. The study aims to amplify the possibility that, if left unchecked, the situation might deteriorate to the level of regional war which Africa can do without.

1.7 Research Methods

The research approach adopted in this study is qualitative. Lunenburg and Irby, (2008) aver that, 'the science of qualitative research seeks to have the researcher look deeply into the world of individuals and phenomena.' The study emphasizes close understanding of the phenomenon of

violence by scrutinizing people's words, actions, and records; these words being novels and scholarly writings by writers from various disciplines. It is discourse analysis since it involves itself in the interrelationship between language and society. (ibid).Qualitative content analysis of the selected fiction enables the researcher to interpret and draw meaning from them. Generally in content analysis of literary works, the researcher focuses on a single aspect of the work, guided by a well-formulated thesis that allows her to make judgments about the subject. (Writing Center, 2003). Content analysis flows from the insights one has about aspects of the text that one wishes to communicate. It entails knowing a text thoroughly and making credible interpretations that are testable against the text. It is not merely a summary of the text. It is a critical evaluation of the work with the aim of demonstrating why a particular writer uses a particular combination of words, plot structure, and ideas. (ibid).

1. 8 Theoretical Frameworks

1.8.1 Post Colonialism

This section comments on the theories that inform this study. South African history is the story of the indigenous blacks' violent encounter with colonizing Europe. South Africa is a post-colony. Post-colonial theory is a construct that 'focuses on the colonial experience from the native's point of view.' As a literary theory it looks at writings in English from former colonies. (Savant, 2011: 1). The theory, according to Nayar, (2010), is a complex strategy that foregrounds racial differences in political, social, economic, and cultural relationships between Third World countries and their former colonizers. It also critiques the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized. Ethnic violence is one such effect. This study acknowledges the role that ethnicity plays in the violence experienced in South Africa. Issues of ethnic and racial difference were amplified by colonization which dehumanized and marginalized the natives,

casting them as inferior others. Apartheid entrenched this separateness between blacks and whites. It further separated the natives themselves in a Machiavellian form of divide-and-rule. The effects of this policy are still being strongly felt in South Africa today. Violence in South Africa takes many forms. Of particular interest in this study is ethnic violence as it manifests itself in the so-called xenophobia against foreign blacks from other African countries. Apart from the rabid hatred and suspicion promoted by apartheid, scholars like Claasen, (2017) offer several other possible sources of this phenomenon. This study examines the six theories of; (1) resource competition, (2) poverty, (3) relative deprivation, (4) frustration with government, (5) social mobilization and (6) symbolic threat.

In a study of xenophobic violence, Claassen (2017) conducted a survey using the six theories.

1.8.2 Resource Competition

This theory rests on the assumption that conflict between any two social groups arises as a result of competition for scarce resources, particularly when the economic situation is deteriorating. Black immigrants to South Africa are seen as competitors who should be eliminated.

1.8.3 Poverty

Poverty has also been advanced as a possible cause of violence. South Africans appear not to have benefited economically from independence. Claassen, (2017) cites Dollard et al, (1939) who make the claim that in such a situation, the frustrated party becomes aggressive and resorts to scapegoating. This violence is displaced onto some weaker and innocent parties.

1.8.4 Frustration with Government

When a government fails to deliver on the promises made to its citizens, people become frustrated and angry. This anger may lead to xenophobic violence.

1.8.5 Social Mobilization

Claassen, (2017) observes that anti-immigrant violence is collective. Participation in xenophobic violence presupposes the agency of mobilizing forces. A case in point is the mobilization of the Zulus by the Inkatha Freedom Party in the violence that rocked Kwazulu-Natal from 1987 to 1990 which left four-thousand people dead.

1.8.6 Symbolic Threat

When a social group adheres to traditions and cultures different from those of the indigenous population they may be perceived as a threat to cultural and national identity.

1.8.7 Relative Deprivations

At independence South Africans had high hopes of a better life. The government failed to deliver. The gap between this expectation and reality is relative deprivation. This again leads to frustration and aggression that may be vented on immigrants.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The literature on violence is vast. A full treatment of the concept of violence is not feasible in a study under fifty pages. The examination of theories and causes of violence in South Africa is thus limited to brief outlines. Moreover, the analysis of the chosen primary texts cannot be generalized and thus serves only as an indication of how some writers view the subject of violence. Limiting a study of these rich literary texts to discussing the way they depict violence only does not do full justice to the wider range of their thematic representation of the South African experience.

1, 10 Delimitation Of The Study

The study limits itself to the study or the theme of violence as depicted in the primary texts against the general treatment of violence in South Africa and the notion of xenophobic violence in particular. It narrows the thematic analysis of the two novels to how they portray violence in their country.

1.11 Definition of Key Terms

This section presents definitions of some of the key terms used in this study guided by the premise that, 'accurate definitions of phenomena are essential to any scientific enterprise.' (Hamby, 2017).

1. Agency– the ability to act or to perform an act. In post-colonial theory it refers to the degree to which an individual can freely initiate action and to what extent they are largely influenced in what they do by how their identities have been constructed.

2. Apartheid– an Afrikaans word that describes the policy of separating the races initiated by the Nationalist Government of South Africa in 1948.

3. Violence– 'Any form of behavior directed towards the goal of injuring or harming another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment.' (Moore, ND). This study adopts the view that violence can be physical or psychological.

4. Ethnic Violence– Violence carried out against one group of humans against another group on account of perceived differences in distinguishing characteristics like race, language, religion, or place of origin.

5. Identity– In ordinary terms this term means personal characteristics or attributes that cannot naturally be attributed to social category. In the social sciences, Fearon, (1999) perceives of

identity as a social category; a set of persons marked by a label or distinguished by rules of membership and other characteristics or attributes.'

6. African Renaissance– A movement spearheaded by former South African president Thabo Mbeki which celebrates the rebirth of a revitalized Africa free from deprivation and poverty. It also celebrates the death of colonialism and the reaffirmation of pride in being black. 'It promotes the economic independence of Africa and the cultural pride of the African people.'(Vambe, 2010:3-4).

1.12 Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter presented a conceptual summary of the research study. It started with an introductory section in which the researcher outlined briefly the rationale of the study; which is to examine the notion of violence in South Africa. Section two provided the colonial history of South Africa, linking violence in that society to the legacy of Apartheid. The third section presented the statement of the problem which is to ascertain the causes of violence in South Africa, particularly xenophobic violence. This was followed by a statement of the objectives of the study and its significance. The research method used was explained in the sixth section. The next section offered a short treatment of the theories guiding the study. Factors limiting and delimiting the study formed the substance of sections nine and ten. The chapter closed with a short summary of the issues discussed.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This literature review seeks to examine literature related to the concept of violence in South Africa. The two primary texts selected for study in this paper have been critiqued by several scholars (Hadebe, 2020, Faber, 2009, Mardorossian, 2011, Chou, 2009). In addition to the analysis of this body of literature the study also attempts to situate the two texts within the corpus of South African literature in general. In order to better understand how the two writers interrogate the notion of racial and ethnic violence in their society, it is important to consider the historical rootedness of this phenomenon. It is in this light that this review examines the literature dealing with the colonial history of South Africa, particularly the Apartheid era and how it traumatized and dehumanized both the black and white South Africans. The review examines the literature directly related to the two primary texts, Mda's Ways of Dying and Coetzee's Disgrace and rounds off with a brief look at some theoretical perspectives that have been used to interrogate the phenomenon of violence in South Africa. It is hoped that by the end of the chapter it will have been established that violence has become endemic to South African society. Black-on- black violence is rampant. The black immigrant in South Africa is just a small piece on the chessboard. Xenophobic violence is but a manifestation of the sickness that pervades the entire society; a sickness that is a result of the debilitating effect of Apartheid. The economic factors cited by many scholars are symptoms rather than the real causes of xenophobia.

2.2 A Look at South African Literature

In a short, incisive article published in Carol Becker's essay collection, 'The Subversive Imagination: Artists, Society, and Social Responsibility' in 1994, Ndebele laments that South African literature is difficult to define. In this article, Ndebele is particularly interested in the distinction between 'white' South African literature and 'black' South African literature. He sees white writing in the era of Apartheid as literature severely constrained by historical circumstances, concerning itself with the description of what the other (the blacks) went through, written by people who could not themselves experience what the other went through. Even when this literature purported to take sides with the oppressed as in the case of Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetzee, to name only a few, Ndebele charges that it is still the product of its creators' troubled consciences and the special circumstances of the white writers as members of the oppressing class. This, according to Ndebele, is a source of both its limitation and enduring relevance. This literature became what Ndebele calls the standard. Literature by blacks in English and Afrikaans then came to be labeled as 'black' South African literature and was seen as alien and oppressed by the dominant literature of the whites. This situation mirrored what Ndebele calls, 'the appropriation of nationhood by a powerful racial group' Ndebele's piece came out during the period of transition when negotiations to end white rule were in progress. Violence was the order of the day hence the gloom that pervades it. Black writing was largely concerned with the articulation of the revolutionary aspirations of the indigenous population. It was literature of protest and struggle, which Ndebele and many other scholars view as being journalistic and concerned with the representation of the spectacle of Apartheid brutality at the expense of literary aesthetics. This piece is relevant to the present study as it came out at the time the two primary texts in this study

were published; a time at which South African writers would have, 'to engage in fundamental reflection on their cultural future.' ibid 3. The two texts, Ways of Dying and Disgrace mirror, in a sense, this polarity between white writing and black writing.

This preoccupation of South African literature with the ills of Apartheid makes it, in the case of white writing, 'an obsessional literature, haunted and introspective, urgent and compulsive.' (Lazarus, 1986-1987:1). Lazarus examines the use of modernism by white writers of fiction. He seems to agree with Ndebele that it is a project forever shadowed by a revolution they could not afford to ignore. Its creators see no cause for celebration, seeing only, 'the violence and domination that served to make the present what it is.' Lazarus makes the observation that white writing is a product of the artists' sharp sense of consciousness. He mentions in particular the works of Gordimer and Coetzee in which he detects a kind of truth-telling that gives it its ideological content. He seems to concentrate more on 'oppositional' white literature and ignores that part of the canon which leaned more towards justification and complicity with the Apartheid project.

Grzeda, (2013) in a study of the writings of Mkhize makes a stylistic comparison of white writing and black writing. Black writing in the seventies and eighties tended to 'moralize reality'p2. Grzeda observes an increasing tendency by black writers to shy away from realism towards fictional experimentation. This was necessitated by the growing need to break away from the bondage of truthful narration of the Apartheid experience. This, according to Grzeda, led writers like Ndebele and Mda to pioneer the use of magical realism as they sought to deploy elements of African story-telling and orality in their works. Thus he perceives a synthesis of social realism and post-modernism in contemporary black writing. The current study is particularly concerned with writing in the so-called transitional period which started around 1990 when Nelson Mandela was

released from prison. Indeed Mad's literature is concerned with social and historical accuracy and is a way of rewriting history.

2.3 The Reality of Violence in Ways of Dying

Mda is one writer who does not fear to criticize his own people, in the opinion of Valjee, (2009). Valjee makes this assertion in a study of the notion of cultural recovery in Ways of Dying. He makes the important observation that cultural resources, in the form of art, literature, and music must dignify the way a people live. Apartheid however restricted access to these resources. The effect of these restrictions was total dehumanization of both the oppressors and the oppressed. Mda, according to Valjee, manages to write, 'in the realities of their (South African people)'s existence.' Valjee concludes that Mda's project is a fitting answer to Ndebele's question as to what the South African writer was going to write about after the demise of Apartheid. Mda does this by attending to the minute details

of the cultural processes going on around him. His literature is a rediscovery of the ordinary and a break from the spectacular literature of the apartheid era. In the process he puts his own society under severe scrutiny. For, therefore, Valjee violence is a part of the wider spectrum of the ordinary processes going in South African society.

Malan and Mashigoane (1999), in their study notes on Ways of Dying, rightly point out that Ways of Dying is a pacesetter in the history of South African writing. In their view the book is an allegorical depiction of the contemporary life of Africans and authenticates the political changes taking place in South Africa. They further posit that the book is stylistically unique as it features the direct translation of the African idiom into English, articulating through the use of magic realism the African ethos through orality. Mda, aver Malan and Mashigoane, departs from the

much-criticized tendency of black writers to use literature as a political weapon at the expense of the aesthetic. Such literature, they charge, lacked artistic imagination and was no more than extended political slogans or journalistic reports. They list the major themes of the book as being, tradition, modernization, greed, ignorance, and social stratification. They fail to amplify violence as an important theme of the story.

South Africa is a country that has not stopped mourning despite gaining freedom from its colonizers. Ngom, (2014) sees Mda's task in Ways of Dying as an interrogation of what he calls the two outstanding features of the so-called rainbow nation: mourning and resistance. The city in which the story unfolds has been devastated by rampart violence and as such Ngom rightly observes, Ways of Dying unravels the dilemma of a nation caught between the painful memories of its past and the present trauma it has caused. The story demonstrates that violent death is an everyday occurrence in South Africa; hence mourning is also an everyday occurrence. Ngom, however does not concern himself with analyzing the cause of this debilitating violence.

Ways of Dying, as already alluded to, makes a clean break from the social realism of the protest literature of apartheid. Van Wyk, (1997), lists the features which make Ways of Dying literature of the transition. Political transition entails acute trauma and heightened productivity. Violent confrontation between the rulers and the ruled leads to violent death. There is a marked breakdown of the old order, represented in the book by constant flashbacks as the characters recollect the past. Van Wyk sees hope for South Africa despite the apocalyptic nature of the transition: hope of a rebirth. To him the book is a deconstruction of the past and a dynamic treatment of the broad spectrum of South African society. Van Wyk posits that the book also represents a deconstruction of the future, illuminating that future as a palimpsest marred by the narrative of the past.

2.4 Sovereign Violence in J.M.'S Coetzee's Disgrace

The major forms of violence in Disgrace are sexual. There are two rapes in the book, that of Melanie Isaacs by the protagonist David Lurie and that of her daughter, Lucy, by three black assailants. Mardorossian, (2011) posits that the book demonstrates that rape in South Africa is not solely a gender-based crime complicated by issues of race and class. It should be seen as an exposure, not only of, 'the contingency of justice, but also the deeply racialized nature of that contingency.' p3. It is an assessment of post-apartheid South Africa suffused with dark gloom and pessimism. Mardorossian quotes Nadine Gordimer when she comments that 'there is no single black person who is a real person in the whole book.'p1. The present writer agrees with this sentiment for a reason not shared by its utterer. It is argued here that the black characters seem inhuman because the story depicts present-day South African reality which defies all human reason. Indeed, Mardorossian opines that though the novel focuses on tracing out white middle-class subjectivities, it also exposes the effect of racist ideology and its close relation to gender.

Tare, (2009) asserts that Disgrace is a fitting lesson to those smarting from the wounds of the Apartheid past. Lucy comes out, in Tare's opinion, as someone who is learning to be 'differently human' by accepting what happens to her as a pointer to the possibility of a negotiated future for South Africa that could accommodate all. Tare argues that Disgrace is pedagogical in so far as it clearly demonstrates the inhuman treatment of women and blacks. It argues for the reeducation of the stubborn colonizer through the difficult learning of Lurie. This reeducation is played out in Lurie's imagined opera which, in the opinion of Seagul, (2005), is a reconstruction of the attack on Lurie and his daughter. The opera uses ghosts as 'specters of oppression' that inform on Lurie's, and by implication, South Africa's sordid, racialized past. This pedagogical potential of Disgrace also motivates Hadebe, (2020) in her study of the persistence of gender and racial violence in

South African schools. Hadebe sees value in Disgrace as it can be used in schools to help students understand and recognize the violence going on around them. She argues that South Arica's violent present can only be understood, and the violence eradicated through tracing the elements of the past.

Chou, (2009) argues that in writing Disgrace, Coetzee was engaged in a project to, 'open up discourse through narrative,' in order to convey, 'distorted human relations through experimentation with structure and form'p4. Mittal, (2016) takes up the refrain of novelistic discourse when he points out that Coetzee uses the novelistic narrative as an alternative to, 'normative modern historical discourse.'p1. This echoes Lurie's response to his daughter's avowal that her ordeal was a personal thing and a result of personal hatred, when he charged that, 'It was history speaking through them… a history of wrong…' Disgrace, 156. Affirming this implication of history in Disgrace, Poyner, (2018) reads the book as an allegory of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Poyner discusses the inadequacy of the difficult concepts of reconciliation and confession as pathways to personal and national healing. Echoing Krog, (1999), Poyner makes the claim that Lurie represents the apologies of the perpetrators of apartheid at the TRC which seems to have failed to bring about true justice and peace to South Africa. This section will end with Glenn's (2009) comment that Disgrace is both a cultural and sociological statement in which Coetzee comes out as a career of trauma in his depiction of violence. Disgrace, Glenn suggests, seems to imply that 'the new South Africa is not only not liberated for poor black South Africans, but pretty grim for whites as well'. The white Lurie, the former sovereign, 'rapes' Melanie, a colored girl. In poetic justice, Lucy, his daughter, is raped by three black assailants; the current sovereigns

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

South Africa is a post-colony. The literature of Mda and Coetzee can be classified as post-colonial literature which Lye (1998) defines simply as literature produced in countries that were or still are under the rule of another country. Such literature, Lye further points out, is based on notions of resistance and otherness. It resists the legacy imposed on it by colonialism even as it appropriates the very instruments of the former colonizer like language and the publishing mechanism to propagate its message. Lye interrogates the Manichean ordering of colonial society into binaries like haves/have-nots, black/white, male/female, and indigene/foreigner. This is echoed by Hutchinson (2021) who in examining the effect of colonialism on the Namibian social and political landscape also observes that, 'the history and legacy of colonialism are deeply ingrained in every aspect of South African society.'

Many theories that have been advanced to explain the violence bedeviling South Africa seem to proceed from the premise that violence begets violence. Tafira, (2018) makes a detailed study of xenophobia in South Africa through ethnographic research in the black townships. He argues that theorists like Claasen (discussed in Chapter One), who argue for purely economic causes of violence are somehow missing the point. He claims that these theorists ignore the historical rootedness of this violence. The present writer agrees with him when he makes the claim that the economic factors are symptoms rather than the main cause of xenophobia. He further observes that racism and ethnicism in South Africa are colonial legacies. Xenophobia, to him, is a direct result of the dehumanization and deracination, the self-hate and violence embedded in the South African psyche. It is violence perpetrated by blacks who have been conditioned by apartheid to see their fellow blacks as mortal enemies who should be physically and verbally assaulted. Brancovic, (2018) echoes this assertion in a study of factors that drive violence in South Africa. He uses the public health approach which deploys the tools of sociology, psychology, and criminology. He

concludes that the statistics point towards the chilling fact that South Africa has the singular distinction of topping the list of every form of known violence in the world. Brancovic is more embracing than Tafira as he acknowledges that South African violence is a result of the complex interplay between economic and political factors. Pillay, (2008) writing during the first wave of xenophobic violence in 2008, rightly points out that the African experience of nationhood and citizenship was formed by Apartheid and colonialism. His article considers the relationship of governance and citizenship to violence. He makes the discovery that fifty percent of all black South Africans are victims of violence in their neighborhoods. This, he avers, has led to a serious erosion of trust in the rule of law. He concludes that violence brings about forms of cohesion that clash with the cohesion envisioned by the government, leading to continued polarization and fragmentation in the rainbow nation.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has been a brief foray into a vast literary landscape. It started with an examination of South African literature in general, noting the polarization between white South African writing and the literary productions of the few black writers in the Apartheid era. Reviewed scholars tended to agree that in that period white literature was elitist and mirrored the supremacy of the white race over blacks. Those writers who tended to side with the oppressed blacks sought to depict the reality from their perspective; a reality of black suffering they could not themselves experience. Black writing on the other hand concentrated on exposing the inhumanity of the system of racial segregation. This literature, therefore, was the literature of protest and amplified its revolutionary agenda at the expense of aesthetics. This state of affairs lasted until the early nineties. Writers like Mda pioneered experimentation with form, incorporating elements of African orality and magic

realism as a more fitting mirror of the extraordinary social reality of their country. The literature on the two primary texts demonstrated the violent nature of post-apartheid South Africa. It exposed the two writers' concern with the unsettled nature of their society. Both books show that South Africa is a country that has not stopped mourning the death and trauma of the South African past. Mda views violence as a result of the effects of apartheid. Unlike the revolutionary writers of yesteryears, he implicates his fellow blacks in the perpetration of violence. Coetzee, on the other hand, interrogates the difficult territory of inter-racial violence. In what appears to be a parody of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he clearly demonstrates that violence in South Africa is a product of failed reconciliation. The chapter ended with an inquiry into how violence is conceived in post-colonial theory. Post-coloniality is a state that brings out the binaries in society. The colonizer arrogates to himself the right to decide the destiny of the subjugated subaltern, using overbearing and violent means to maintain his inferior position. Thus the violence bedeviling the nation is a result of the violence embedded in the South African psyche, both black and white. This study seeks to closely examine the depiction of violence in the two primary texts with a view to confirm the view of the writers towards violence as stated above.

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING VIOLENT DEATH IN ZAKES MDA'S WAYS OF DYING

3.1 Chapter Introduction

'A blockbuster fictional work, Ways of Dying is arguably a riveting window on a nation caught between the painful memories of its harrowing past and the scourges that it has spawned.'

Ngom, (2014)

Ways of Dying is a gripping tale of dying and mourning. Mda mixes realism with fantasy to describe a reality that is stranger than fiction. It is the narrative of a horrific past; a past where the life of people of color was held in less regard than that of the dogs they breed. It is a bloody tale of the interregnum; the period of South Africa's transition from the dark era of apartheid to a future misted by uncertainty. Juxtaposed with the dying is the incessant mourning dramatically represented by the main character, Toloki. This chapter examines the depiction of violence in Ways of Dying. It interrogates the persistence of violence in post-apartheid South Africa as an offshoot of, 'formerly sanctioned and fully operational, institutionalized violence.' Bartnik, (2014:1).

3.2 Brief Biography of the Author

Zakes Mda was born Zanemvula Kizito Gatyeni Mda on the 6th day of October, 1948 in the Hershel District of the Eastern Cape Province.(Naidoo, 1948 cited in Bheamadu 2004: 4). His father was apolitical activist. Bheamadu asserts that while the family lived in Orlando East, Soweto, they maintained close relations with icons of the liberation struggle like Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. The youthful Mda got a taste of the apartheid medicine early in his life as he was constantly harassed by the Security Police on account of his father's activism. Township life was a corrupting influence. Mda fell victim to this influence and he dabbled in petty crime and gang violence. In 1964 the family fled into political exile in Lesotho where Zakes attended High School. It is here that Mda's love for literature was awakened and he started writing plays. He fell in love with politics, but he was revolted by the violence and for the rest of his life he shunned politics. He studied at the University of Lesotho and later moved to Ohio State University in America where he was awarded the PhD in 1990. He has since written numerous plays and novels which have earned him much international acclaim. Ways of Dying came out in 1995. The book established him as South Africa's foremost black writer of the post-liberation period. (Ngom, 2014:1)

3.3 A Revolution Eating Its Own Children: Violence in Ways Of Dying

The story begins on a Christmas day. Instead of celebrating the many ways of fun and festivity associated with this day, the narrator declares, 'There are many ways of dying.' (1). It is the funeral of Noria's second son, Vhuta. South Africa is mourning the death of a son instead of celebrating the birth of the son of God. Noria is homeless; her cabin having been burnt mysteriously after the death of her son. Toloki helps her to rebuild and later moves in with her. Violent death is

everywhere around them. There is no safety for anyone as political players have declared war against each other and the hapless township dwellers as well.

From the outset Mda departs from the norm in South African literature. The black writer during apartheid sought to promote unity among black Africans the better to fight the common enemy who was the white man. They eschewed division as being inimical to the struggle. The weaknesses and sins of fellow blacks were swept under the carpet. Mda is here broadening his perspective on violence. His is a wake-up call to the world to rise to the reality of black-on-black violence. The 'nurse at Vutha's funeral intones,

'This little brother was our own child, and his death is more painful because it is our own creation. It is not the first time that we bury little children: we bury them every day. But they are killed by our enemy … those we are fighting against. This, our little brother, was killed by those who are fighting to free us.'

Toloki fails to get to Noria as she is shielded by members of her street committee, who are not there to protect her but to make sure she does not say the wrong words to the wrong people. Mda is cautioning his compatriots to heed the danger of ethnic strife. This call was not heeded and the underlying issues were not addressed. This violence has now reached near cataclysmic proportions.

The second funeral clearly exposes the enormity of the problem. The nurse explains how she searched for the body of her relative who had gone missing. The search ended up in the mortuary. The situation in the mortuary was as pathetic as it was traumatic. The nurse,

'Was led to another room; with more naked bodies on the floor. These, she was told, had just been delivered that morning. Altogether there were about twenty bodies of old and young men and women, beautiful girls with stab wounds lying in grotesque positions, children who were barely in their teens, all victims of the raging war consuming our lives.'

This macabre picture reflects a grotesque society; a society at war with itself, where the identity of the combatant is no longer clear. Men and women, the young and the old, fall victim in this never-ending orgy of violent death. The nurse puts it quite graphically when she shouts,

'I tell you, mothers and fathers, there is death out there. Soon we shall experience the death of birth itself.'

The death of birth is annihilation; the total wiping out of a whole generation. Mda is implicating apartheid in sowing the seeds of the violence which has morphed from a justifiable expression of struggle against foreign occupiers to a senseless massacre of blacks by blacks. The body of the deceased man was discovered dumped in a garage. The brutality of the murder was mind-boggling. It, like many other bodies located by the police – had bullet wounds on the legs – and the heads had been hacked open and the brains were hanging out.

Such killings spawned further tit-for tat killings as the township dwellers blamed migrant workers in the hostels. The crowds shout,

'They have killed a lot of our people, and all we do is sit here and keep talking peace. Are we men or just scared rats?' The narrator explains that the murderous migrants owed allegiance to a tribal chief who armed them. These migrants were sometimes joined by the police and members of Battalion 77 of the army as a strategy of suppressing the liberation struggle. All this was the result of anger driven by genuine grievances and political opportunism; assert Levy, Hirsh, Nyandoro, and Nxele, (2021). Today, 'Race and ethnicity continue to dominate discourse in post-apartheid South Africa.' Rajab, (ND).

This tribal violence was a result of the apartheid government's divide and rule tactics. It was particularly ugly in the KwaZulu Natal area. Mare, (1991) argues for a longer historical perspective on the violence in the Natal province where the tribal leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi armed members of his Inkatha Freedom Party and unleashed violence on his perceived enemies. South Africa was divided into separate independent areas called Bantustans and Buthelezi was installed as the chief of KwaZulu which was formed in the 1950s. The Bantustan policy was an attempt at social engineering by the Afrikaner National party which had the unfortunate effect of fragmenting the country along tribal lines. Bloody clashes ensued between the Zulus of Inkatha and the Xhosa who owed allegiance to the African National Congress. A telling episode in this sad drama was

the so-called Inanda violence in 1985 where, ‘There were many deaths, looting, vigilante activity, arson, and racial violence following the murder of an Inkatha opponent.’ (ibid202.) By the 1990s, Mare avers, the violence had reached brutal levels of viciousness and the enemy was frequently defined as belonging to another ethnic group. It is against this backdrop that Ways of Dying is set.

As the nurse explains at the beginning of the narrative, violence in South Africa did not discriminate on grounds of age. Young children were brutalized every day. In one of the many flashbacks in the story the narrator tells of a young girl who belonged to Noria and Toloki’s class at school. She was a member of the school choir. After singing beautifully at a funeral in the city someone offered to record them. In a feat of jealousy, a man fired a gun at the choir, killing the young girl. The voice of Mda rings clear through the nurse as he declares,

‘People of the city killed our daughter because she had a beautiful voice.’ 33; an indictment on a people hose chords of sense and sensibility have been rend asunder by a dehumanizing past. At another funeral attended by Toloki in his professional capacity, the deceased was a young boy of six who had gone missing. His body was discovered in a veld. It had been savagely mutilated. The police blamed a muti killer. The people, however, blamed the police and their vigilante groups. Noria also tells Toloki that her son Vhuta the Second, another six-year-old, was brutally killed for visiting the hated hostel dwellers and accepting their hospitality. For thus fraternizing with the enemy the young boy was burnt to death using a tyer necklace. Politics was not the only source of violence in South Africa.

Mda acknowledges that violent crime is rampant. When Toloki left the village fleeing from a brutally insensitive father, he came across a bizarre incident in a certain village. A group of thugs had terrorizing the village for a long time. They had thrived for a long time on raping maidens, and robbing and murdering defenseless community members.

‘The previous week, in a moment of mass rage, the villagers had set upon a group of ten men, beat them up, stabbed them with knives, hurled them into a shack and set it alight.’ (50)

They danced around the shack as they celebrated their victory. A journalist characterized the incident thus, 'it was as if the killing had, in a mind-blowing instant, amputated a foul and festering limb from the soul of the community.' (50) But the action had numbed the villagers. Indeed, even today the violence in South Africa continues to numb the people. As the narrator observes, the villagers,

'…had become prosecutors, judges, and executioners. But every one of them knew that the village would forever be enshrouded by the smell of burning flesh. The community would never be the same again, and for the rest of their lives, its people would walk in a daze.' (49)

One could say that South Africa is today enshrouded by the smell of burning flesh and rubber as the violence consumes a soft target; the migrants from other countries of Africa fleeing the untenable conditions in their countries.

In another incident that indicts the apartheid authorities, the narrator describes the hell-ride on which the police would take the taxi drivers. The police would kidnap these drivers, take them to the mortuary and force them to make love to the corpses of beautiful women (143). This, according to Barnard, (2004:296) seems: to vindicate the assertion that acts like this proved that, 'colonial power is detached from its usual justificatory rationale (that of ensuring control for the sake of productivity) and assumes the brutal pointlessness of tyranny: it is precisely the kind of violence Archille Mbembe associates with the post-colonial commandment.'

Mervis, (2016) makes the point that Mda eschews the insincerity and the indecision that has been drummed into the mentalities of the different population groups in South Africa by decades of oppression and suppression. There is deep-rooted communal fear and hopes are severely crippled. Toloki is a political novice but his honesty and forthrightness in fighting against poverty and deprivation are salutary. His creation of the role of professional mourner carves for him a niche in society .Amidst the dying and pain, he comes across as a symbol of the birth of new men and women capable of taking their place proudly at the helm of a democratic South Africa. According to Mervis, Ways of Dying is a pointer to new ways of life freed from the mindset of oppression.

Toloki grew up as a marginalized boy cast as ugly and dull. He rises as his people's Moses through his dreams. He learns to make a living amidst the self-generating funerals and deaths of the victims of violence. He establishes himself as an indispensible part of the community. People pay for his services as testimony of their appreciation of the value of one who relieved them of the burden of mourning. Mda seems to be saying that Toloki's services have become valuable to a people tired of mourning every day for their dying relatives. Even then, they do not fully accept him as a legitimate member of society.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

In a quotation cited by Naidoo, 1997 in Bheamadu, (2004:4), Mda admits that, 'Every one of these deaths happened, those were deaths reported in the news.' This chapter has been a foray into the murky waters of transitional South Africa. Ways of Dying is a map of the journey the two protagonists Toloki and Noria travel along the turbulent path of historical transformation. Mda mixes reality and fantasy in his quest to fictionalize the trauma of violence in his society. Mda was born in the trying times of apartheid's genocidal brutality. With a father who was politically active, Mda had many harrowing encounters with apartheid's Nazi security police. The family had to flee into political exile in Lesotho where he went to university and started writing. Ways of Dying is one of his most celebrate and critiqued fictional works.

The story offers Toloki, the main character, as a self-styled professional mourner moving from funeral to funeral mourning for the dead. It is a story of intense human struggle as South Africa moves from apartheid exclusivity to multi-ethnic democracy. The transition is a time of horrific killing and bloodletting which has left an indelible mark on the South African psyche. Mda describes a spectacle of everyday funerals; events that had to be held every day to avoid congesting the mortuaries. He departs from the norm in South African literature, broadening his perspective on violence to acknowledge the real and present danger of black-on-black violence. Hitherto black writers were wont to sweep under the carpet the transgressions and atrocities committed by fellow black combatants purportedly to avoid giving ammunition to the enemy. Ways of Dying is a chilling reminder that if left unchecked and unacknowledged ethnic violence is a bomb waiting to explode. This confirms Mda as some kind of shaman as the bomb has exploded. South Africa now tops the list in the world for all forms of violence.

CHAPTER 4

ENGAGING WITH THE PROPHET OF PAIN; PORTRAYAL OF VIOLENCE IN DISGRACE

4.1 Chapter Introduction

'Coetzee's works warn his readers that forgetting forfeits learning from lessons of the past.'

Meskell and Weiss, (2015:1)

Attridge, (2000) asserts that Coetzee is one writer who does not think twice about offending the sensibilities of his readers. He does not shrink from unmasking the false pieties that were used to protect the young democracy of South Africa. He wrote Disgrace against the backdrop of the rampant crime bedeviling Cape Town and the Eastern Cape, the setting of the book. Coetzee is mainly concerned with the violence of rape; the not-quite rape of Melanie by David Lurie and the gang rape of his daughter Lucy by a group of black men. This chapter looks at Disgrace as a 'forceful portrayal of a disgraceful situation; the continued flourishing of racist and sexist attitudes in post-apartheid South Africa.' (Attridge, 2000: 5) As the epigraph at the head of this chapter asserts, Coetzee is warning South Africans that sexual violence, like all other forms of violence in that country, is rooted in the deracinating legacy of apartheid.

4.2 Brief Biography of the Author

John Maxwell Coetzee was born on the ninth day of February in the year 1940. Like Mda's father who was directly involved in the struggle, Coetzee's father condemned the racist policies of the Afrikaner National Party. He lost his government job as a result. Most of his relatives spoke Afrikaans, but John Maxwell had an early exposure to English in the schools he attended and he also spoke it frequently at home. Coetzee entered the University of Cape Town in 1957 to study English and Mathematics. After graduation Coetzee left for London where he worked as a

computer programmer. Whilst in London he received his Master's in English from Cape Town University. In 1965 he went to study at the University of Texas in America. Thereafter he started teaching English Literature. In 1971 he came back home to teach at the University of Cape Town. He has written many novels which brought him international acclaim. Disgrace won him an unprecedented second Main Booker prize. In 2003, a year after he had immigrated to Australia, he won the ultimate prize, the Nobel Prize in Literature.

4.3 The Truth And Reconciliation Commission

In Disgrace Coetzee writes about what human beings do to other human beings. The TRC was an attempt to expose to the public gaze what human beings had been doing to other human beings in apartheid South Africa. It attempted to achieve some form of national catharsis and closure through remembering and confessing. It sought to grapple with notions of forgiveness, justice, memory, truth, and reconciliation. Dube, (2008) sees Disgrace as representing the response of South African fictional literature to the TRC's assumptions. Dube further posits that the TRC had two main tasks: first, to uncover as much as possible the truth about the past, gross human rights violations; second, to promote national unity and reconciliation.' (8). Dube charges that the TRC failed to adequately define the two terms that formed its reason for being, the concepts of truth and reconciliation. Lurie pleads guilty to the charges leveled against him, but refuses to explicitly state exactly what it is he is guilty of. Pressed, he says, 'Of everything Mr. Isaacs avers, and of keeping false records.' D21. Lurie clearly declares that, 'what goes on inside my mind is my business, not yours, Farodia.' He continues, 'Frankly, what you want from me is not a response but a confession.' Therein lies the problem of the TRC. Charges were brought against people who felt justified by the circumstances of their situation. There was no repentance as David Lurie clearly claimed, 'Repentance is neither here nor there. Repentance belongs to another universe of discourse.'D25

4.4 Portrayal of Violence In Disgrace

The females in Disgrace are depicted as sex tools. The opening sentence of the book bears this out. The narrator explains, 'for a man of his age, fifty-two, divorced, he had, to his mind, solved the problem of sex quite well.'D1. The solution is to visit a sex worker every Thursday afternoon. No emotional bond develops between him and Soraya during the one year they were seeing each other. She was just a convenient contrivance he used to assuage his sexual urges. When the arrangement

ceases, David acquires another toy, Melanie her student, who like Soraya, is young enough to be his daughter as he himself admits. He brushes off the age gap quite smugly by saying, '…but then technically a man can become a father at twelve.'91). In the subsequent sexual encounters with the girl, she neither resists nor participates. The narrator observes, '…she slips under the quilted counterpane like a mole burrowing, and turns her back on him.' This evokes the image of helpless surrender, of ineffectual flight. David himself describes the encounter as, 'Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core. As though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck.' David's solution to the problem of sex takes the form of young women of color. Soraya is Indian and Melanie is colored. This dredges up the unsavory colonial practice where it was acceptable for white males to rape black women but it was a taboo punishable by death for a black man to sleep with a white woman. It is in this vein that we agree with Mardorossian, (2011:80) when she makes the claim that, 'Lurie can only see rape as what black men do to white women, an attitude that ultimately exposes him as a white anachronism of the colonial era.'

These relationships cast David as the unrepentant Boer, whose mind is still gripped by the imperial imaginary of unquestioned domination. Bartnik,(2014: 2) makes an apt observation when he says 'As result, the frame of apartheid rule and culture must be held responsible for providing delinquent behavioral patterns which laid the grounds for a violent disavowal of the other.' Non-whites were confined to the periphery of life and violence was considered a legitimate means of depriving the other of her humanity.

Bartnik, quoting Sanders, agrees that the mechanisms of violent deprivation have spread across South Africa and help to explain the violent nature of that country's mental map. The life of the woman of color is insignificant and bare and subject to the aggressive mentality of the male Caucasian as of right. Coetzee is registering his aversion to the lack of balance in post-apartheid race relations where women still suffer the double jeopardy of color and gendered inferiority. The life of the colored other continues to be considered unworthy and disposable, without value and is subject to be discarded without dignity; all over South Africa.

Coetzee highlights a South African world as seen through the eyes of a privileged white male of high social standing and tries to expose and reach an understanding of, 'the ingrained culture of violence.' (Bartnik, 26). David should be held accountable for his deeds but Coetzee seems to be

saying that his responsibility subsists in his being a member of the former privileged class. His actions expose the power dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa. David feels invincible and exploits the unequal relationship between him and Melanie to commit forcible and statutory rape. He uses his power to compel a student and racial other to submit to his will. The rape of Melanie is carried out in the absence of blood and physical brutality, but is no less violent.

Coetzee indicts the apartheid regime for nurturing this culture of impunity in its people as engendered in David Lurie, a spirit the much publicized TRC seems to have failed to exorcise. Sexual and racial violence have spread across the country. Amidst blatant denial of this cancer that is eating away at South African society, xenophobia has been characterized as a legitimate response to the danger of foreign blacks usurping the lion's share of that country's resources. This violence makes Lurie feel the violence and disgrace suffered by the blacks under apartheid. The blacks are turning against him; a white male and authoritative figure. Poyner sees this as Coetzee's avowal that the Eurocentric agenda has failed in South Africa. Lurie emerges from the encounter, 'tired to the bone, without desires, indifferent to the future,' (107) Coetzee's message seems to be that violence dehumanizes. It dehumanizes not only the victim, but the perpetrator as well.

Defeated and disgraced Lurie leaves Cape Town to go and leak his wounds under the wing of his lesbian daughter. It is here that David meets his, 'day of testing.'(40.) After her rape, Lucy asks her father, 'David, when people ask, would you mind keeping to your side of the story, to what happened to you.' (42). Though they report to the police, nothing is done. South Africa is a country where the agents of law and order are overwhelmed by the extent of crime. Petrus tells David in no uncertain terms, 'The best is, you save yourself, because the police are not going to save you, not anymore, you can be sure.' (43.) Lucy offers a simple solution on leaving the hospital, 'It was never safe, and it's not an idea, good or bad. I'm not going back for the sake of an idea. I'm just going back.' Madden, (2017:61) sees the rape incident as history speaking through the three men, 'people who deliberately showcase their human evil in order to inspire terror in their victims.' Oriaku, (2016) views the rapists as representing the black race who have been waiting for a chance to repossess what the white man had stolen. Coetzee seems to be arguing for cultural hybridity. Lucy is seen as a strong character as she is able to bend with the tempest. Poyner asserts that she is able to adapt and is thus seen as a candidate or a future prosperous South Africa, She suffers the

pain of sexual violence as atonement for the wrongs committed by her ancestors. She tries to justify her own rape as the price to be paid for staying on.

4:.5 Chapter Conclusions

Coetzee uses fiction in Disgrace to serve the purpose of examining issues of ethics and the complex relationships of life in modern-day South Africa which is full of pain, frustration and disorder. This chapter examined the two major events in the book, namely, the 'rape' of Melanie by David Lurie and the gang rape of his daughter, Lucy, by three black men. Coetzee has often been accused of being too pessimistic and bleak in his outlook, but there is evidence that he had a hope for a better future for his country. Lucy sees her rape as a justifiable retribution by the blacks for past wrongs. The child she carries is therefore the payment for those wrongs. By deciding to keep it she is signaling her hope in a future hybrid South Africa. The child can thus be read as an allegory of the nation. Lucy's attitude seems to point to the compromise and understanding that South Africa desperately needs. The last word will go to Roberts, (2017: 9) who avers that Coetzee, 'Seems to be pointing to cultural hybridity as the natural, least violent and most humanly satisfying way for South Africa to seek its post-Apartheid identity.' South Africa needs to accept this complexity of its relations and seek ethical ways of responding to its growing cosmopolitanism.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Chapter Introduction

This study set out to investigate the portrayal of violence in South African fiction through the close reading of two texts, Ways of dying by Zakes Mda and Disgrace by J.M Coetzee. The motivation

of this study is the horrific violence against fellow blacks perpetrated by black South Africans. The reasons given by South Africans for this behavior is that these foreigners from other countries of Africa are taking away jobs meant for them. The foreigners are also accused of bringing violent crime and disease to that country. The study aimed to provide answers to several questions.

5.2 Restatement of the Problem

The primary question this study aimed to answer was how the two writers of the primary texts portrayed the violence bedeviling their country. Secondly it aimed to discover how the two writers differ in their attitudes towards violence. Thirdly the study sought to establish what the two writers seem to offer as a solution to this problem.

The study proceeded on the assumption that one cannot separate a writer from his social, historical, political, and cultural milieu. Writers work within the confines of their historical conditions. It was demonstrated in the study that South African writers during apartheid were motivated by the conditions of colonialism and its virulent successor, Apartheid. It has been highlighted that liberal white writers like Gordimer and Coetzee wrote in solidarity with the oppressed blacks. However these writers were working within the constraints of a watchful regime and could not come out directly in support of the struggle. Black writers tended to favor the journalistic approach, realistically portraying the effects of the brutality of apartheid on their people. Their sole mission was to advance the cause of the revolution at the expense of the aesthetic.

The questions and aims of this study are motivated by the persistence of violence in South Africa. Xenophobic violence has reached unprecedented levels. Hundreds of people have lost their lives in a brutal manner. The authorities in South Africa seem to be reluctant to deal decisively with the problem. This implicates them in this sorry situation. There also seems to be a lack of concerted response by the nations whose subjects are affected. The significance of this study is that it sought to answer questions that are germane to this escalating problem.

5.3 Findings

The study was guided by the theory of post-colonialism. This theory looks at the literature written by colonized people during and post the period of their bondage. It is therefore a theory of the other, the subalterns, trying to come to grips with the reality of their situation and offering perspectives on the way forward towards emancipation. The literature of Mda and Coetzee fit the bill: the two artists write during the interregnum; the period of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democratic rule. The theme that appears to preoccupy them in these projects is that of violence.

Coetzee is concerned with the persisting racialized nature of South African society where a small percentage of whites still control a disproportionately large portion of the South African economic cake. The gains of liberation remain an illusion for the majority blacks. He chooses to examine this race problem through the crime of rape. Mda, on the other hand, demonstrates a realization that the violence that his people were taught during colonialism and its accompanying hatred has become a cancer eating away at the fabric of his nation. Other writers, particularly white scholars like Claasen, have sought to rationalize South African violence by putting it down to purely economic causes. Such writers seem to play directly into the hands of those in South Africa who are arguing that the economic cake is so finite that it cannot be shared with their brethren from other African countries. Theorists like Tafira argue for the historical rootedness of violence.

This study recognizes the value of these economic approaches but, advances the argument that the deprivation lamented by black South Africans is not the real reason behind their xenophobic tendencies. It is the violence that is internalized in their national psyche that is decimating their country and making a mockery of their revolution.

The study is limited by the fact that generalizations are being made from just two selected texts. Despite this, it is the argument in the study that the two writers are fairly representative of the general sentiment in the South African literary community. The fact that the writers have since achieved iconic status through their works, with Coetzee winning no less than the Nobel Prize for Literature, would seem to be proof enough of this. Many writers have written on the subject of

violence in South African society. .Many scholars have written volumes on the subject. A perusal of these works undertaken in the second chapter revealed that writers are generally agreed that violence in South Africa has reached alarming levels. These scholars straddle the racial line. Many attempts have also been at critiquing the two primary texts selected for this study. Violence in most of these pieces is treated together with other themes in the two narratives. A few have concentrated on an in-depth analysis of the theme of violence. Many writers analyzing Ways of Dying seem to agree that in this offering Mda was breaking new ground in South African fiction. He shies away from the documentary fiction of the struggle and looks inwards to pry open his society and expose the duplicity of those who seek to cover up the weaknesses and fissures in the nation. Critics of Coetzee see him as the prophet of pain, exposing the pain hidden underneath the veneer of normalcy espoused by the proponents of the Rainbow nation.

This study comes to the conclusion that writers in South Africa, both black and white, acknowledge and lament the high levels of violence in their society. Both break away from accepted norms in the canon of their country. Many voices have been raised in protest about this. Both Writers have remained steadfast in their denouncement of violence in their country. Both of them are writers of the transition; with Mda situating his story in the period just before the attainment of freedom. Coetzee's offering comes a few years after independence but shows a society still struggling to come to terms with its historical legacy. His story came out soon after the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings which sought to bring closure to the trauma of apartheid. The 'trial' of David Lurie has been characterized as a parody of these hearings. Coetzee has drawn fire for this as he was considered too pessimistic. This study comes to the conclusion that both writers demonstrate hope despite the gloom pervading their narratives. The reconciliation of Toloki and Noria points towards a future of common understanding. Toloki institutes a new form of educating the youth in the township as opposed to the traumatizing political lessons of the struggle. Coetzee also shows that the violence in his land is a birth pang for a better society. Lucy's decision to keep the baby after her rape by black people casts her in the role of mother of the nation with the child being an allegory of the compromise that South Africa needs so much. His decision to permanently leave South Africa to settle in Australia seems, however, to show that his hope was misplaced. Current events in that country show that reconciliation has failed.

5. 4 Recommendations

This study argues that efforts at reconciliation in South Africa have not achieved the required results. South Africans are in need of education. They need to be taught that isolationism does not offer any hope for them as a nation. During apartheid thousands of foreigners slaved in the mines of that country. Wenela is a famous example of these mines where foreigners helped South Africa to be the powerhouse she is today. That history should forge the spirit of African renaissance espoused by their former president Thabo Mbeki. South Africa should learn from the example of the USA which has grown to be the world's superpower by embracing and harnessing the talents of people from all over the world. More research is required using more writers from the country as it is the opinion in this study that the ideas offered by the writers of fiction represent the distilled wisdom of a nation. In particular this study urges research into the impact of violence on the economic prospects of ordinary South Africans. TT Moyana, cited in Ndebele caustically characterizes South Africans as being,

'…still gripped by the spectacle of absurdity. The necessary displays of these ingredients are, precisely, the triteness and barrenness of thought, the almost deliberate waste of intellectual energy on trivialities.'

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